



**Isle of Man**  
**Government**

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# **Review of Consultation Responses – Jury Eligibility Criteria**

**Cabinet Office**

**July 2025**

## Introduction

In April 2025, Cabinet Office, on behalf of the Council of Ministers' Sub-Committee on Justice, launched a consultation exercise relating to the eligibility criteria for jury service on the Isle of Man.

This exercise was conducted to gain the public's views on this important matter affecting the whole Island. It sought views on making the first substantial change to the Jury Act 1980 since the act was introduced 45 years ago, helping to ensure the Island's jury system remained fair and reflective of the community.

Currently, a jury list is compiled each year from those names on the electoral register and arranged into sheadings. Where a jury trial is required, the Coroner of that sheading will select individuals from the jury list in accordance with the Jury Act 1980. Under the Jury Act 1980, several professions are automatically exempt. This includes 7 categories which can be found [here](#).

Key proposals in the consultation included:

- A review of automatic exemptions
- Moving to a case-by-case exclusion system, similar to what is used in the UK
- Ensuring that juries are drawn from a wider cross-section of society.

## Overview of Responses

The consultation ran from 3 April to 23 May 2025.

223 responses were received via the online consultation hub. Eight were on behalf of organisations. Five additional responses were received via written submissions from Government officials, Departments and local authorities.

**It is important to note that these proposals are still subject to modification and final adjustments may be made following the publication of this document.**

**'Do you think the current list of those exempt on the Isle of Man should be updated? – Comments box:**

Over 85% of respondents agreed that there was a need to revise the current eligibility criteria. Responses to this question can be summarised in the following themes:

- **Excessive Exemptions:** Many respondents believe that the current list of exemptions is too extensive and that too many professions are exempt without valid reasons, which limits the diversity and representativeness of juries.
- **Age Limit Concerns:** There is a strong sentiment that the age limit for jury service should be increased. Respondents suggest that people over 65 should not be automatically exempt, as many are still mentally agile and capable of serving. For clarity, it should be noted that anyone between the ages of 18 and 75 are currently already eligible for jury service.
- **Review of Exempt Professions:** Several comments call for a review of the professions currently exempt from jury service. Respondents argue that many exempt professions, such as teachers, medical personnel, and civil servants, could

serve without significant disruption to their work, particularly for those cases which may only last a single day.

- **Impact of Small Population:** Respondents highlight the challenges of having a small population on the Isle of Man, which makes it difficult to form a diverse jury pool. They suggest that the exemptions should be reconsidered to ensure a broader selection of jurors.
- **Case-by-Case Basis:** Many comments advocate for excusals to be determined on a case-by-case basis rather than having a blanket exemptions list. It was argued that this approach would allow for more flexibility and ensure that only those with valid reasons are excused from jury service.

**'Would moving to a system similar to England and Wales whereby individuals may not be exempt from ever serving on a jury because of their profession, but can be excused under certain circumstances and on a case by case basis be more appropriate? - Comments box':**

Over 70% of respondents agreed that it would be more appropriate to move to a case-by-case excusal system. Responses to this question can be summarised in the following themes:

- **Case-by-Case Exemptions:** Many comments support the idea of assessing jury service exemptions on a case-by-case basis, arguing that it promotes fairness and inclusivity. This approach allows for genuine conflicts and hardships to be considered without granting permanent immunity.
- **Concerns About Administrative Burden:** Several comments highlight the potential administrative challenges and increased costs associated with case-by-case exemptions. It was argued that this approach could create additional administrative burden and be more time-consuming and costly for the system.
- **Impact on Professionals and Services:** There were concerns raised about the impact of jury service on professionals, particularly in small communities like the Isle of Man. Comments mention the potential disruption to essential services, such as healthcare and education, and the financial losses for individuals in certain professions.
- **Fairness and Representation:** Some comments emphasised the importance of a diverse and representative jury pool. They argue that removing automatic exemptions would increase the diversity and representativeness of juries, leading to a more balanced and impartial judicial process.
- **Unique Challenges of Small Jurisdictions:** Comments highlight the unique challenges faced by small jurisdictions like the Isle of Man. These include the higher likelihood of jurors knowing the defendant or other parties involved in a case, which could lead to perceived bias and conflicts of interest.

The case-by-case exclusion system will take into account concerns regarding individuals being taken away from front-line services, and the Chief Registrar will continue to have the power under Section 12 of the Act to excuse an individual from having to serve on a jury if it is not viable for them to do so and a legitimate reason is provided. Additionally, whilst concerns regarding increased administration and their associated cost are noted, it is anticipated that changes to jury eligibility will continue to be administered within existing

resources and should not lead to any increased costs.

**'If exemptions by profession were to remain standard practice, are there any of those currently listed as exempt you feel should remain exempt?'**

Group A: The Legislature and associated bodies – There was moderate support for those listed under Group A to remain exempt, with professions listed within this group receiving between 30-50% support to remain exempt, with Tynwald Members receiving the most support. Due to the separation of powers between the judiciary and the legislature, it is likely that Tynwald Members and some other groups linked to the legislature will remain automatically exempt.

Group B: The Judiciary and associated persons – There was strong support for most professions listed under Group B to remain exempt. Due to clear conflicts of interest of such professions being involved in a trial as a juror, it is likely that the vast majority of professions listed under this group will remain exempt.

Group C: Others concerned with the administration of justice – There was strong support for exempting professions closely involved in the administration of justice—such as advocates and constables—due to potential conflicts of interest. Similarly, there was broad backing for exempting certain front-line service roles, given concerns about the impact on essential services if individuals are required to serve as jurors. However, determining which front-line roles should be exempt poses a significant challenge. Applying a fair and consistent criterion is difficult, and creating a blanket exemption for all front-line service providers could overly restrict the juror pool, undermining its representativeness. To balance these concerns, it is proposed that all such professions remain eligible for jury service. As with any other selected juror, individuals in these roles may apply for excusal if their participation would significantly affect the delivery of critical services or for any other valid reason.

Group D: The Clergy etc.– 70% of respondents did not support any listed roles within this group remaining exempt. Going forward this group will likely be removed from Schedule 1 of the Act as being automatically exempt. Individuals who have roles connected to the Clergy can still apply for an excusal if they feel as though serving as a juror will take away from their key duties.

Group E: Others – There are multiple wide-ranging professions listed in this category, and in order to broaden the pool of potential jurors and make the pool more representative of the Island all professions listed within this group will likely be removed from automatic exemptions. None of the professions listed in this group received majority support (over 50%) for remaining exempt. Again, individuals in these roles may apply for excusal if their participation would have an adverse effect on their role, or for any other valid reason.

Group F: Mentally disordered persons; and Group G: Disabled persons – There was strong support for these groups to remain exempt, particularly for those listed in Group F. However, automatic exemptions for mental disorders and disabilities from jury service in the Isle of Man are outdated and conflict with the spirit of Equality Act 2017. Approaches in England, Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland emphasise case-by-case assessment and reasonable adjustments, ensuring inclusion and fairness. Removing blanket exclusions respects human rights, promotes diversity, and aligns with Equality Act. It is therefore proposed that these categories of exemptions be removed going forward. Those who would no longer fall under an automatic exemption but feel as though their condition would still prevent them from being able to serve as a juror would still be able to apply for an excusal

on the basis of having a mental or physical disability, provided that supporting evidence or documents were submitted, or for any other valid reason.

**'Can you identify any other specific jobs or circumstances not currently on the list that should be considered for inclusion?'**

Respondents cited concerns about carers, front-line staff, self-employed individuals or similar being drawn away from their role/responsibilities to serve on a jury and the impact this could have on public services and/or businesses. The case-by-case exclusion system will still take into account such factors and the Chief Registrar will continue to have the power to excuse an individual from having to serve on a jury if it is not viable for them to do so and a legitimate reason is provided.

There were also concerns raised that whilst someone may be excused from the role, this relies upon the potential juror making an application for excusal, which some may not apply for or may not be aware of. General Registry, who support the courts, will be publishing additional guidelines ([which can already be found here](#)) expanding on how the case-by-case excusal system operates and the process for a potential juror to apply for an excusal where they believe there is a valid reason to do so.

**'Currently, individuals in exempted professions remain exempt for a 10-year period after they have left that profession. Do you think individuals in exempted professions should continue to be exempt for 10 years after leaving their profession, or do you think that this period could be shortened (e.g. to 5 years) or end immediately upon leaving.'**

The majority of respondents (79.37%) suggested that the 10-year exemption period should either be shortened (48.43%) or removed (30.94%).

Going forward, any time-bound exemptions will be removed. However, there will still be scope for a person to potentially be excused from jury service, if they previously worked within an automatically exempt profession within a timeframe which would mean there could be a conflict of interest or other factor which would have an impact upon their ability to serve as a juror. As already stated, additional guidelines expanding on how the case-by-case excusal system operates and the process for a potential juror to apply for an excusal where they believe there is a valid reason to do so will be expanded upon.

## **Next Steps**

The responses show that there is a consensus that jury eligibility needs to change. Many believe that the current exemption system is outdated and overly restrictive, limiting the pool of potential jurors and affecting the representativeness of the jury. There is strong support for moving to a more flexible, case-by-case exemption system, which would allow valid reasons for exemption to be considered individually. This approach is seen to create a fairer, more inclusive jury system that better reflects the diversity of the community. While there were concerns about the administrative challenges and potential disruptions to front line services, the overall sentiment is that reform is necessary to ensure the integrity and impartiality of the jury system on the Isle of Man.

The proposed amendments to the Act mean that more potential jurors may be excused on an individual case-by-case basis, as per Section 12 of the Act. Enhanced guidance will be

developed by General Registry, to provide more information on common 'good reasons', which can be updated over time based upon reasons received. These may include:

- knowing the defendant
- pre-arranged medical appointment or operation
- mental or physical disability that would cause doubt as to capacity to act effectively as a juror
- student studying off Island
- pre-booked travel arrangements
- no longer resident on the Island
- self-employed and would suffer substantial personal or financial hardship
- front line service provider and the community would suffer substantial hardship by not being able to provide that service.

The Jury Act 1980 stipulates that Schedule 1 of the Act, which sets out the list of professions automatically excluded from jury service, can be amended by an amendment Order. Work is underway to prepare an amending order which will be brought to Tynwald for approval before the end of 2025.

A full copy of the extended results of the consultation exercise can be found at **Annex A**.

## **Annex A**

### Jury Eligibility Criteria Consultation

<https://consult.gov.im/cabinet-office/jury-eligibility-criteria-consultation>

This report was created on Thursday 29 May 2025 at 09:34

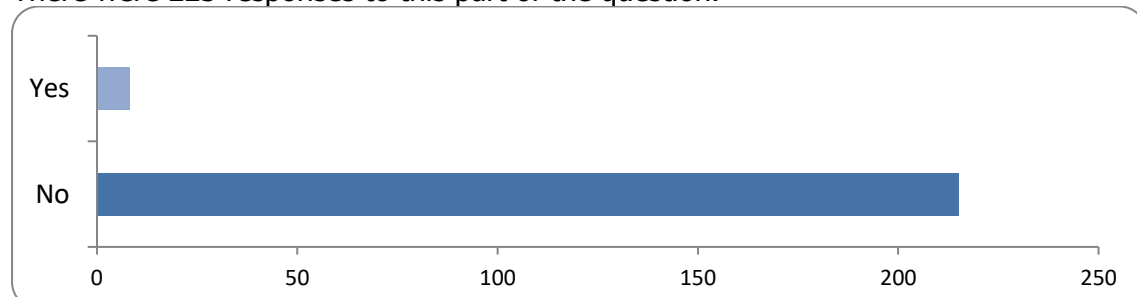
The activity ran from 03/04/2025 to 23/05/2025

Responses to this survey: **223**

#### 1: Are you responding on behalf of an organisation?

##### **organisation yes / no**

There were 223 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Yes	8	3.59%
No	215	96.41%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

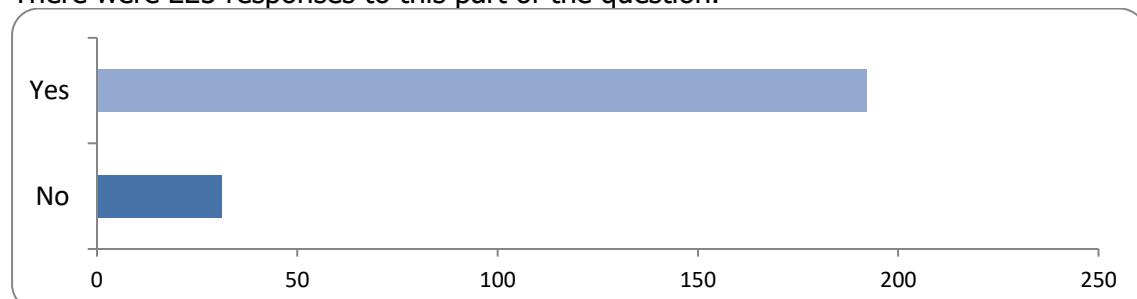
#### **Organisation**

There were 8 responses to this part of the question.

#### 2: Do you think the current list of those exempt from jury service on the Isle of Man should be updated?

##### **Select one: Yes / No**

There were 223 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Yes	192	86.10%
No	31	13.90%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

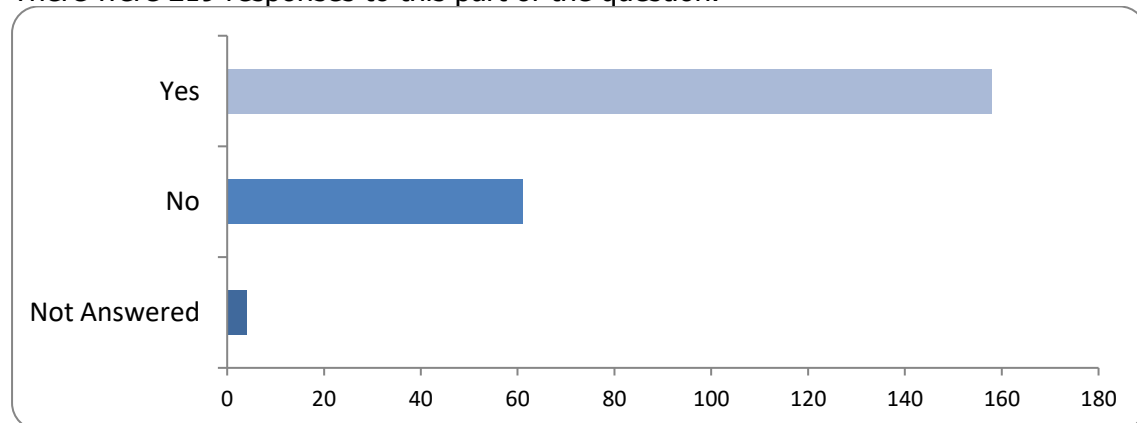
**Comments box**

There were 164 responses to this part of the question.

3: Would moving to a system similar to England and Wales whereby individuals may not be exempt from ever serving on a jury because of their profession, but can be excused under certain circumstances and on a case by case basis be more appropriate?

**Select one: Yes / No**

There were 219 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Yes	158	70.85%
No	61	27.35%
Not Answered	4	1.79%

**Comments box**

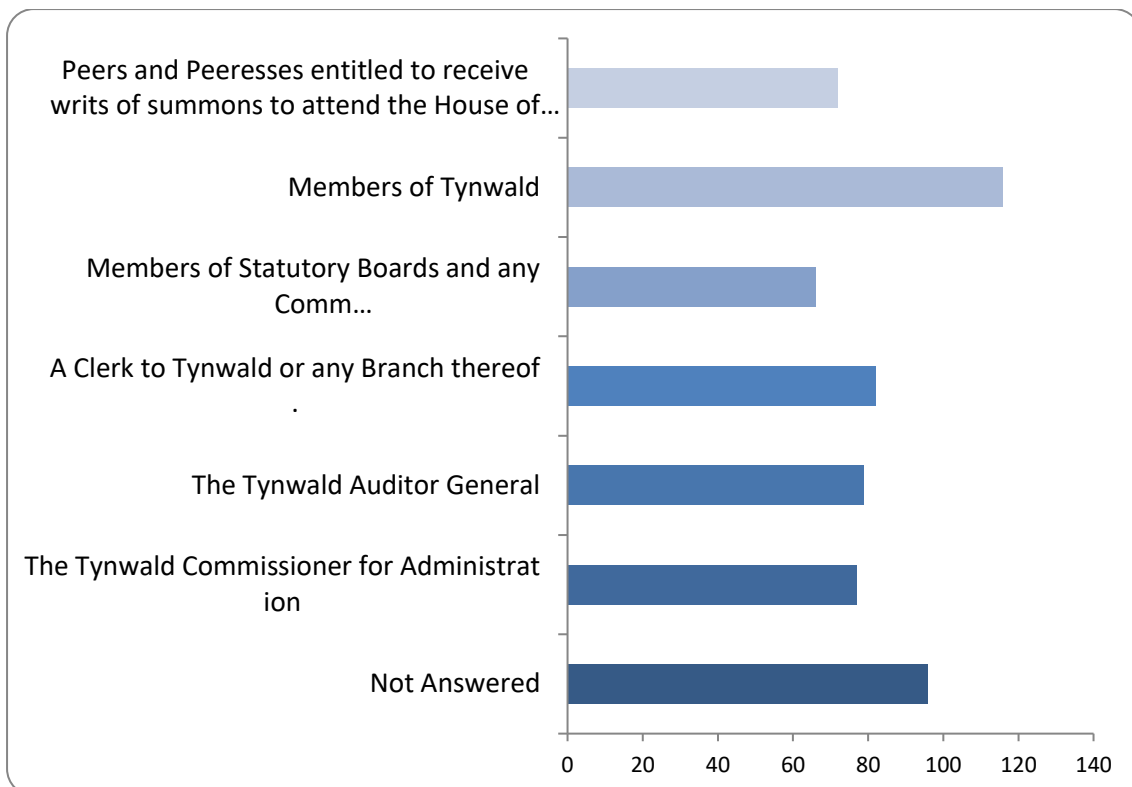
There were 121 responses to this part of the question.

4: Group A – The Legislature and associated bodies - If exemptions by profession were to remain standard practice, are there any currently listed as exempt under Group A that you feel should remain exempt? (Please select all that apply).

**Select all that apply**

There were 127 responses to this part of the question.



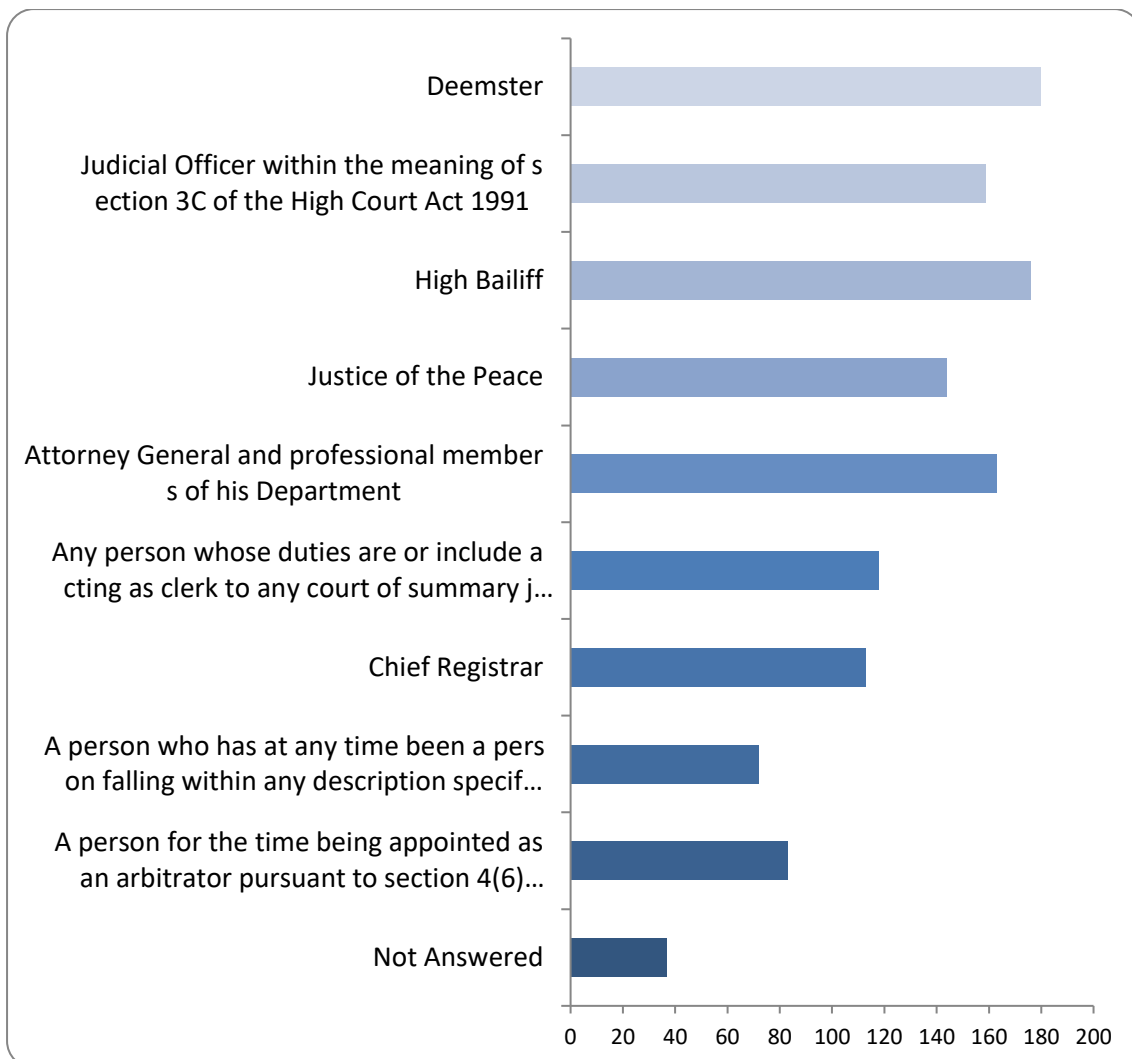


Option	Total	Percent
Peers and Peeresses entitled to receive writs of summons to attend the House of Lords	72	32.29%
Members of Tynwald	116	52.02%
Members of Statutory Boards and any Committees thereof	66	29.60%
A Clerk to Tynwald or any Branch thereof.	82	36.77%
The Tynwald Auditor General	79	35.43%
The Tynwald Commissioner for Administration	77	34.53%
Not Answered	96	43.05%

5: Group B – The Judiciary and associated persons - If exemptions by profession were to remain standard practice, are there any currently listed as exempt under Group B that you feel should remain exempt? (Please select all that apply).

**Select all that apply**

There were 186 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
<b>Deemster</b>	180	80.72%
<b>Judicial Officer within the meaning of section 3C of the High Court Act 1991</b>	159	71.30%
<b>High Bailiff</b>	176	78.92%
<b>Justice of the Peace</b>	144	64.57%
<b>Attorney General and professional members of his Department</b>	163	73.09%
<b>Any person whose duties are or include acting as clerk to any court of summary jurisdiction</b>	118	52.91%
<b>Chief Registrar</b>	113	50.67%
<b>A person who has at any time been a person falling within any description specified above in this Group</b>	72	32.29%
<b>A person for the time being appointed as an arbitrator pursuant to section 4(6) of the Administration of Justice Act 1983</b>	83	37.22%

<b>Not Answered</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>16.59%</b>
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6: Group C – Others concerned with the administration of justice - If exemptions by profession were to remain standard practice, are there any currently listed as exempt under Group C that you feel should remain exempt? (Please select all that apply).

**Select all that apply**

There were 179 responses to this part of the question.



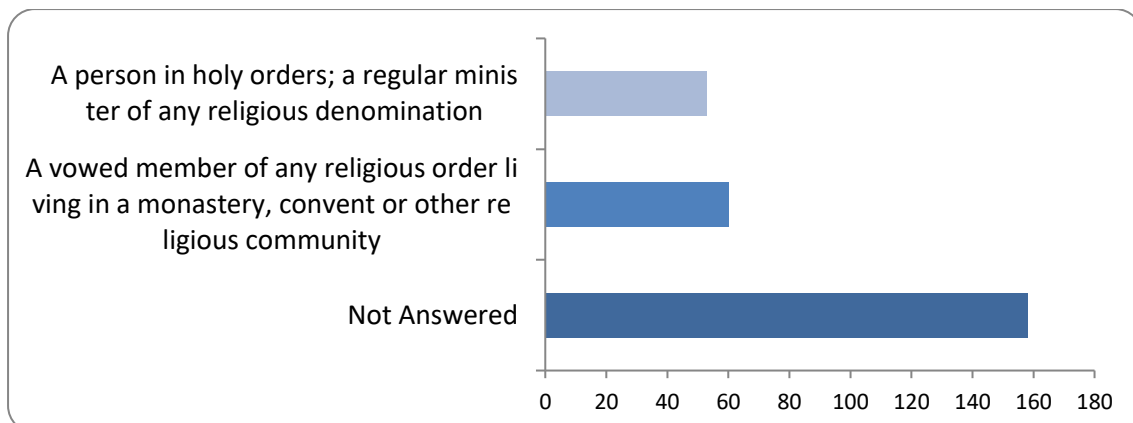
Option	Total	Percent
<b>Advocates, barristers or solicitors whether or not in actual practice as such</b>	126	56.50%
<b>Articled clerks</b>	91	40.81%
<b>Coroners</b>	118	52.91%
<b>Professionally qualified legal executives in the employment of advocates</b>	85	38.12%
<b>Lockmen</b>	72	32.29%

<b>Officers and staff of any court, if their work is mainly concerned with the day to day administration of the court</b>	106	47.53%
<b>A shorthand writer in any court</b>	76	34.08%
<b>Probation officers and persons appointed to assist</b>	121	54.26%
<b>Members of the Staff of any remand centre, detention centre, probation home, probation hostel or bail hostel</b>	117	52.47%
<b>Members of the Parole Committee</b>	121	54.26%
<b>Members of the body established under section 18(1) of the Police Act 1993</b>	101	45.29%
<b>A constable</b>	140	62.78%
<b>The governor and other officers of the Isle of Man Prison</b>	138	61.88%
<b>Persons employed for police purposes by the Department of Home Affairs</b>	112	50.22%
<b>Employees of the Public Services Commission assigned to the Department of Home Affairs</b>	60	26.91%
<b>The Chief Secretary, and those members of the staff of the Cabinet Office whose work is concerned with the administration of justice and who have been designated as such, in writing, by the Chief Secretary</b>	90	40.36%
<b>A person who at any time within the last ten years has been a person falling within any description specified above in this Group</b>	67	30.04%
<b>Not Answered</b>	44	19.73%

7: Group D – The Clergy etc. - If exemptions by profession were to remain standard practice, are there any currently listed as exempt under Group D that you feel should remain exempt? (Please select all that apply).

**Select all that apply**

There were 65 responses to this part of the question.

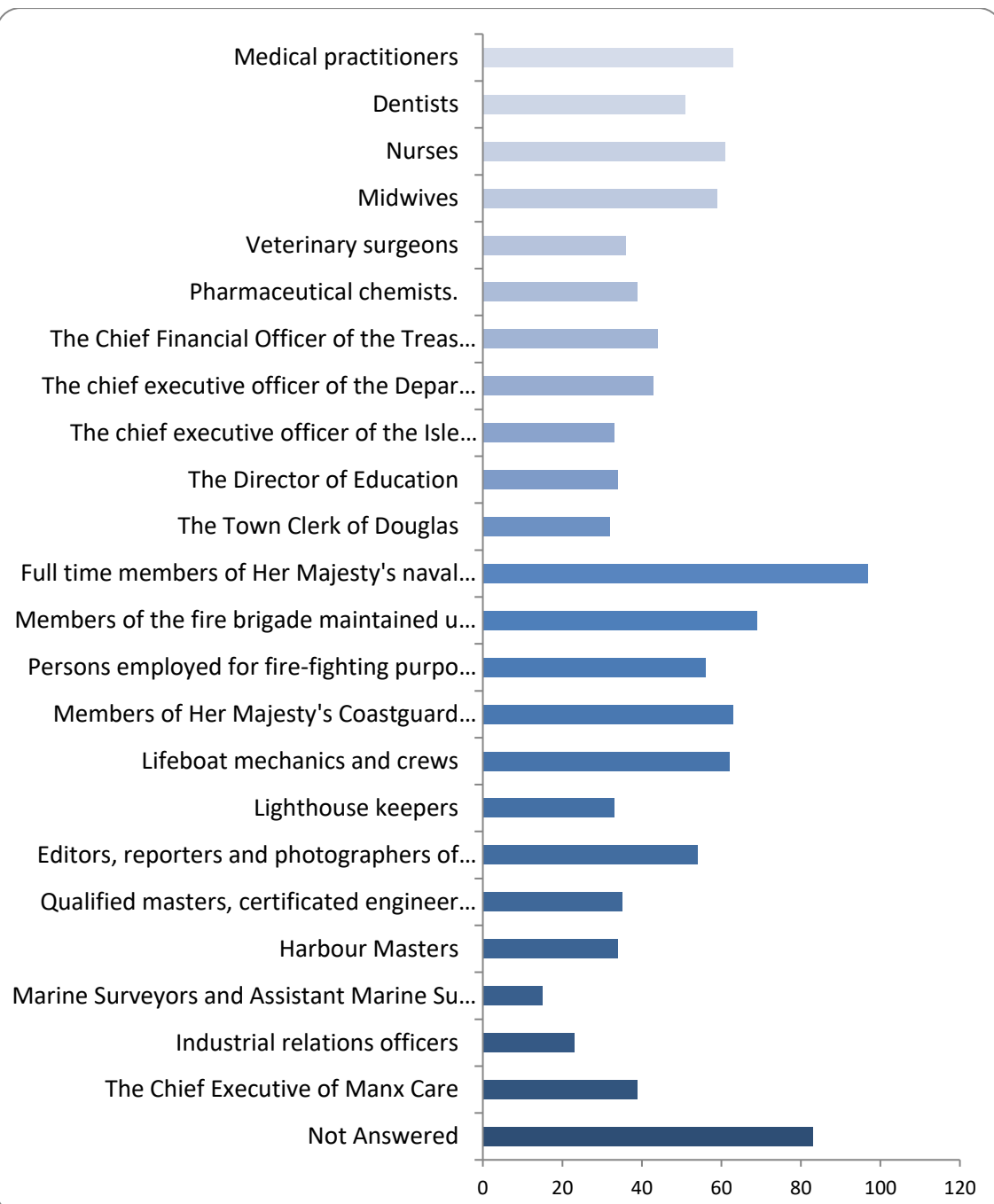


Option	Total	Percent
A person in holy orders; a regular minister of any religious denomination	53	23.77%
A vowed member of any religious order living in a monastery, convent or other religious community	60	26.91%
Not Answered	158	70.85%

8: Group E – Others - If exemptions by profession were to remain standard practice, are there any currently listed as exempt under Group E that you feel should remain exempt? (Please select all that apply).

**Select all that apply**

There were 140 responses to this part of the question.



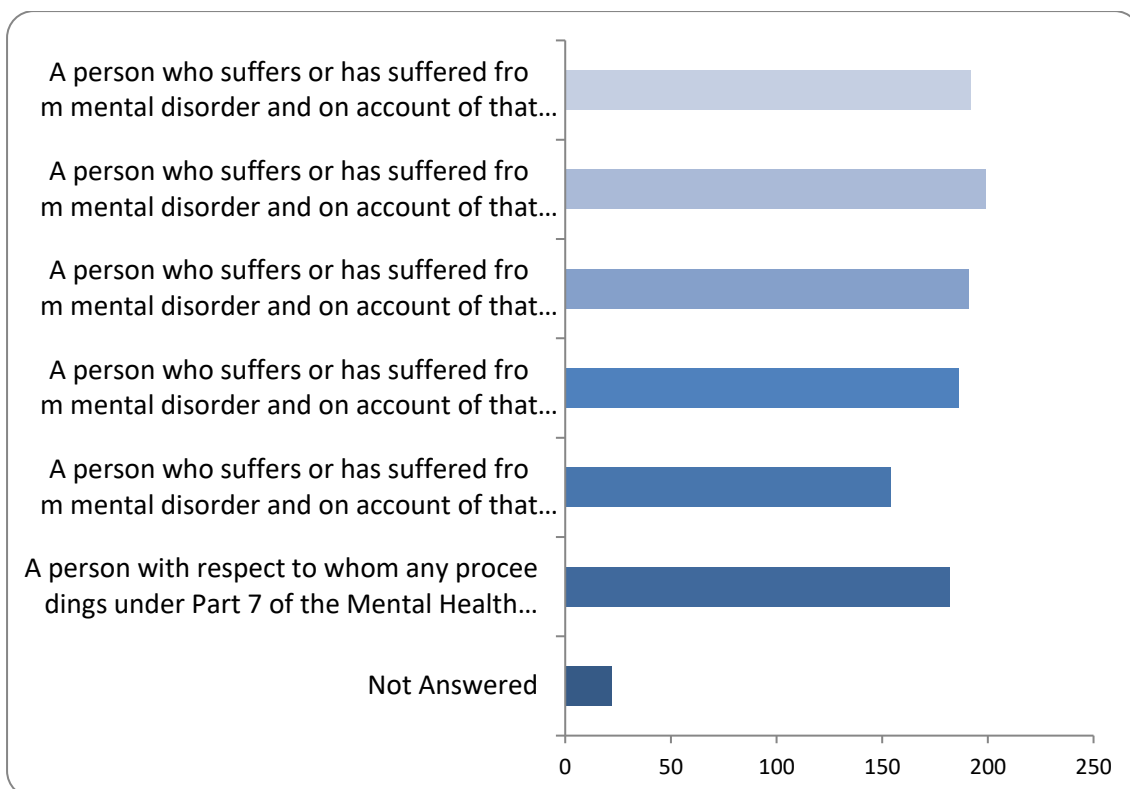
Option	Total	Percent
Medical practitioners	63	28.25%
Dentists	51	22.87%
Nurses	61	27.35%
Midwives	59	26.46%
Veterinary surgeons	36	16.14%
Pharmaceutical chemists.	39	17.49%
The Chief Financial Officer of the Treasury	44	19.73%
The chief executive officer of the Department of Health and Social Care	43	19.28%
The chief executive officer of the Isle of Man Post Office	33	14.80%

<b>The Director of Education</b>	34	15.25%
<b>The Town Clerk of Douglas</b>	32	14.35%
<b>Full time members of Her Majesty's naval, military or air forces</b>	97	43.50%
<b>Members of the fire brigade maintained under the Fire Services Act 1984</b>	69	30.94%
<b>Persons employed for fire-fighting purposes at an aerodrome by the Department of Infrastructure</b>	56	25.11%
<b>Members of Her Majesty's Coastguard Service</b>	63	28.25%
<b>Lifeboat mechanics and crews</b>	62	27.80%
<b>Lighthouse keepers</b>	33	14.80%
<b>Editors, reporters and photographers of newspapers circulating in the Isle of Man and radio and television news reporters</b>	54	24.22%
<b>Qualified masters, certificated engineers and licensed officers of vessels and aircraft actually employed</b>	35	15.70%
<b>Harbour Masters</b>	34	15.25%
<b>Marine Surveyors and Assistant Marine Surveyors</b>	15	6.73%
<b>Industrial relations officers</b>	23	10.31%
<b>The Chief Executive of Manx Care</b>	39	17.49%
<b>Not Answered</b>	83	37.22%

9: Group F – Mentally disordered persons - Do you think any individuals who would fall under Group F should remain exempt? (Please select all that apply).

**Select all that apply**

There were 201 responses to this part of the question.



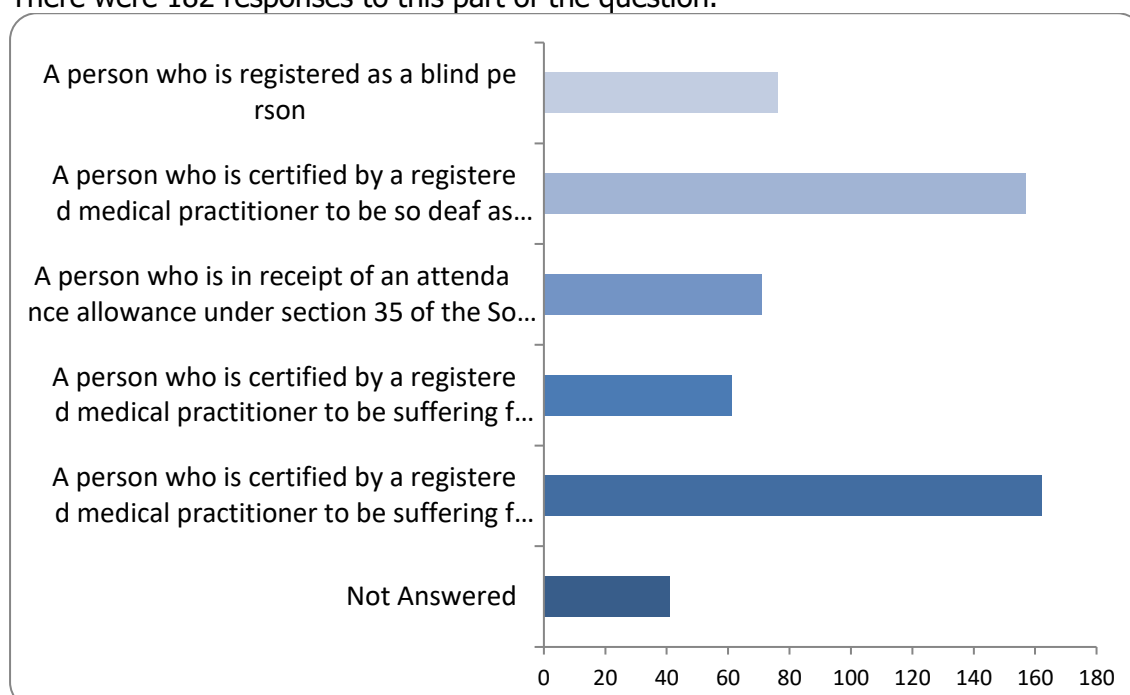
Option	Total	Percent
<b>A person who suffers or has suffered from mental disorder and on account of that condition is liable to be detained (otherwise than by virtue of an application for admission for assessment)</b>	192	86.10%
<b>A person who suffers or has suffered from mental disorder and on account of that condition is resident in a hospital or mental nursing home</b>	199	89.24%
<b>A person who suffers or has suffered from mental disorder and on account of that condition is subject to guardianship</b>	191	85.65%
<b>A person who suffers or has suffered from mental disorder and on account of that condition is subject to after-care under supervision</b>	186	83.41%
<b>A person who suffers or has suffered from mental disorder and on account of that condition regularly attends treatment by a registered medical practitioner</b>	154	69.06%
<b>A person with respect to whom any proceedings under Part 7 of the Mental Health Act 1998 have been commenced and have not been terminated</b>	182	81.61%
<b>Not Answered</b>	22	9.87%



10: Group G - Disabled persons - Do you think any individuals who would fall under Group G should remain exempt? (Please select all that apply).

**Select all that apply**

There were 182 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
<b>A person who is registered as a blind person</b>	76	34.08%
<b>A person who is certified by a registered medical practitioner to be so deaf as to be unable to perform the functions of a juror</b>	157	70.40%
<b>A person who is in receipt of an attendance allowance under section 35 of the Social Security Act 1975 (an Act of Parliament), as it has effect in the Island</b>	71	31.84%
<b>A person who is certified by a registered medical practitioner to be suffering from a condition which is likely to persist for more than 12 months</b>	61	27.35%
<b>A person who is certified by a registered medical practitioner to be suffering from a condition which is such as to render him incapable of performing the functions of a juror</b>	162	72.65%
<b>Not Answered</b>	41	18.39%

11: Can you identify any other specific jobs or circumstances not currently on the list that should be considered for inclusion?

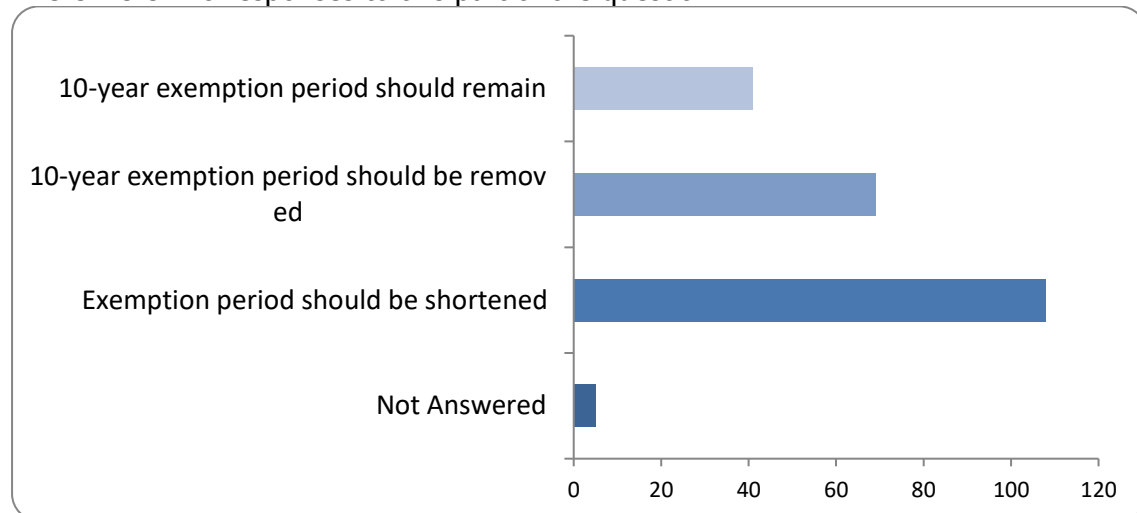
**Comments box**

There were 62 responses to this part of the question.

12: Currently, individuals in exempted professions remain exempt for a 10-year period after they have left that profession. Do you think individuals in exempted professions should continue to be exempt for 10 years after leaving their profession, or do you think that this period could be shortened (e.g. to 5 years) or end immediately upon leaving?

**Select one: 10-year exemption period should remain / 10-year exemption period should be removed / exemption period should be shortened**

There were 218 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
10-year exemption period should remain	41	18.39%
10-year exemption period should be removed	69	30.94%
Exemption period should be shortened	108	48.43%
Not Answered	5	2.24%

13: Do you have any other comments to help inform the consultation?

**Comments box**

There were 70 responses to this part of the question.