

Agenda Item	14
Report No	CP/30/25

The Highland Council

Committee: Communities and Place

Date: 6 November 2025

Report Title: Public Conveniences and Comfort Scheme Agreements 2026-2029

Report By: Assistant Chief Executive - Place

1 Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Highland communities highly value the Council's Public Convenience Service. It makes a significant contribution to the Highland's tourism economy, and provides an essential amenity for our residents, businesses, and visitors.
- 1.2 The Council provides Comfort Scheme Agreements with businesses and community groups. These agreements are aimed at meeting demand in areas that are not served by Council run facilities and they are the most cost-effective way to increase provision. There are four levels of payment (£50, £100, £200, or £300 per month), and these are dependent on the facilities offered.
- 1.3 The current three-year Agreements expire on 31 March 2026, and this paper details the proposals for the next three-years.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to:
 - i. **Note** the update from the Public Convenience team and the most recent survey of Comfort Schemes providers; and
 - ii. **Scrutinise** and **note** the proposals for the new 3-year Comfort Scheme Agreements from 2026-2029

3 Implications

- 3.1 **Resource** – The Council currently operates 72 Public Conveniences throughout the Highlands and has 54 Comfort Scheme agreements with local businesses and Community Groups. The budget for this service for this financial year is £1,293,673.
 - 3.1.1 The cost of the previous 54 Agreements was £124,700 per annum.
 - 3.1.2 The cost of the proposed 57 Agreements is £128,900 per annum; this cost can be met from the existing service budget.

- 3.2 **Legal** – The Council does not have a statutory responsibility to provide or operate Public Conveniences.
- 3.3 **Risk** – There are no known risk implications at this time.
- 3.4 **Health and Safety (risks arising from changes to plant, equipment, process, or people)** – There are no health and safety risks arising from this report.
- 3.5 **Gaelic** – There are no Gaelic implications.

4 Impacts

- 4.1 In Highland, all policies, strategies or service changes are subject to an integrated screening for impact for Equalities, Poverty and Human Rights, Children's Rights and Wellbeing, Climate Change, Islands and Mainland Rural Communities, and Data Protection. Where identified as required, a full impact assessment will be undertaken.
- 4.2 Considering impacts is a core part of the decision-making process and needs to inform the decision-making process. When taking any decision, Members must give due regard to the findings of any assessment.
- 4.3 **Integrated Impact Assessment - Summary**
 - 4.3.1 An Integrated Impact Assessment screening has been undertaken on 6 October 2025. The conclusions have been subject to the relevant Manager Review and Approval.
 - 4.3.2 The Screening process has concluded that there are only positive impacts by increasing the number of Comfort Scheme facilities across Highland. Members are asked to consider the summary within **Appendix 1** to support the decision-making process.

5 Current Service Provision

- 5.1 The Council currently operates 72 Public Conveniences throughout the Highlands.
- 5.2 The Council also operates 54 Comfort Scheme Agreements with businesses and community groups. These Agreements assisted in meeting the demand for facilities in areas that are not served by Council run facilities. The total cost of the 54 Agreements is £124,700 per annum.
- 5.3 There are four levels of payment (£50, £100, £200 or £300 per month), and these are dependent on the quality of the facilities offered. Details can be found within **Appendix 2**.
- 5.4 The Council also has four Service Level Agreements with community groups in Dornie, Kyle of Lochalsh, Invermoriston and with Transport Scotland to operate the A9 south bound at Kessock.
- 5.5 The success of the Scheme is evidenced with results from the annual survey carried out with all Comfort Scheme providers at the end of the 2025 season. Full survey results are shown within **Appendix 3**.

- 5.6 The survey has shown 86% of providers have found the scheme beneficial, with 91% of them wishing to become providers again. 91% would recommend others to sign up to the Scheme and over 54% believe being involved in the Scheme attracts more customers to their business and/or local community.

6 Agreements 2026-2029

- 6.1 The proposed three-year agreements to be offered from April 2026 to March 2029 are detailed in the table below:-

6.2

Location	Monthly Offer	Term (months)	Annual Value	Value over 3 years	Notes
Achiltibuie	£200	12	£2400	£7200	No change
Applecross	£200	12	£2400	£7200	No change
Arisaig	£200	12	£2400	£7200	No change
Armadale	£200	7	£1400	£4200	No change
Ardnamurachan	£200	7	£1400	£4200	New owners
Aultbea	£200	12	£2400	£7200	No change
Avoch	£200	12	£2400	£7200	No change
Ballintore	£300	12	£3600	£10800	No change
Broadford	£200	12	£2400	£7200	No change
Cannich	£200	7	£1400	£4200	No change
Caol	£200	12	£2400	£7200	No change
Drumnadrochit	£300	12	£3600	£10800	No change
Eigg	£300	12	£3600	£10800	No change
Elgol	£200	12	£2400	£7200	No change
Forsinard Flows	£100	7	£700	£2100	No change
Fortrose	£200	12	£2400	£7200	No change
Fort William, Nevis Centre	£300	12	£3600	£10800	No change
Foyers	£200	12	£2400	£7200	No change
Gairloch	£200	12	£2400	£7200	No change
Glendale	£200	12	£2400	£7200	No change
Glenelg	£300	7	£2100	£6300	No change
Glenugie	£200	7	£1400	£4200	No change
Glenshiel	£200	12	£2400	£7200	No change
Grantown	£200	12	£2400	£7200	No change
Helmsdale	£300	12	£3600	£10800	No change
Invercassley	£100	12	£1200	£3600	No change
Invergarry	£200	12	£2400	£7200	No change
Inverness, Eden Court	£300	12	£3600	£10800	No change
John O' Groats	£200	12	£2400	£7200	No change
Keiss	£200	12	£2400	£7200	Move from Hotel to Community
Kilmallie	£200	12	£2400	£7200	No change
Kinlochewe	£200	12	£2400	£7200	No change
Kinlochleven	£200	7	£1400	£4200	No change
Kyleakin	£200	12	£2400	£7200	No change
Laggan	£100	12	£1200	£3600	No change
Lybster	£200	12	£2400	£7200	No change
Mallaig	£300	12	£3600	£10800	No change

Minginish	£300	7	£2100	£6300	No change
Muck	£200	12	£2400	£7200	No change
Nethybridge	£100	12	£1200	£3600	No change
North Kessock	£200	12	£2400	£7200	No Change
Plockton	£200	7	£1400	£4200	No change
Poolewe	£200	12	£2400	£7200	No change
Rosemarkie	£200	12	£2400	£7200	No change
Rum	£100	7	£700	£2100	No change
Salen	£300	12	£3600	£10800	No Change
Shielbridge	£200	12	£2400	£7200	No change
Shieldaig	£200	12	£2400	£7200	No change
Staffin	£200	12	£2400	£7200	No change
Strontian	£200	12	£2400	£7200	No change
Thurso Harbour	£300	7	£2100	£6300	No change
Tomatin	£300	12	£3600	£10800	No change
Tougal Morar	£200	12	£2400	£7200	No change
Traigh Beach	£50	12	£600	£1800	No change
TOTAL	£11,350		£124,700	£374,100	

- 6.3 The proposal is to provide three additional Comfort Scheme at a cost of £12,600 per annum to be met from the existing service budget.

Boat of Garten Village Hall	£200	12	£2400	£7200	
Glen Nevis Lower Car Park	£50	12	£600	£1800	
Ozone Café Cape Wrath	£100	12	£1200	£3600	
TOTAL	£350		£4200	£12,600	

- 6.4 All participating sites will be issued with Highland Council standard signage to advertise that they are part of the Comfort Scheme. Details of this signage is shown at **Appendix 4**.

Designation: Assistant Chief Executive - Place

Date: 6 October 2025

Author: David Lamont, Acting Amenities Manager (South)

Background Papers: None

Appendices: Appendix 1 – Integrated Impact Assessment
Appendix 2 – Comfort Scheme Visual Examples
Appendix 3 – 2025 Comfort Scheme Survey Results
Appendix 4 – Comfort Scheme Signage

Appendix 1 – Integrated Impact Assessment

By increasing the number of Comfort Scheme Agreements across the Highlands, this can only have a positive impact on all Highland residents and visitors to the areas.

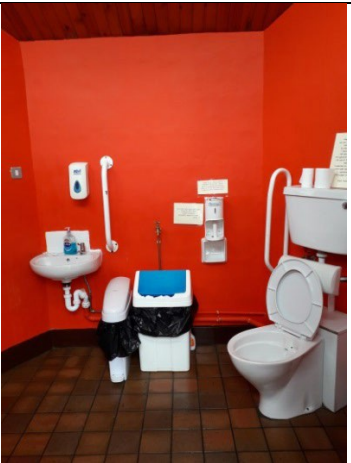
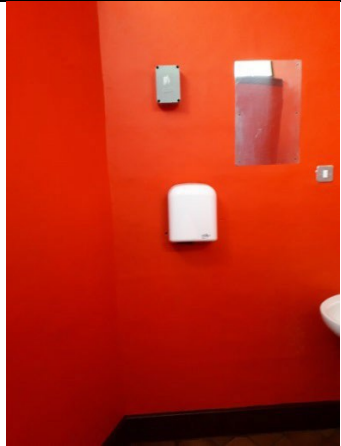
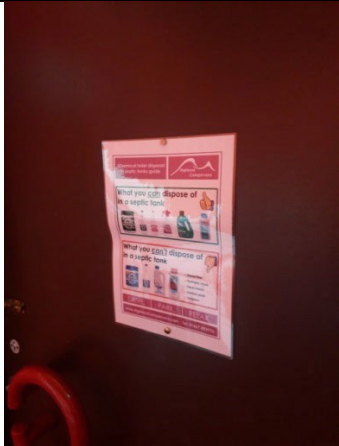
Renewing 54 Agreements and adding 3 more facilities to the Comfort Scheme provision this will provide a positive impact on protected characteristics of sex, age, disability and pregnancy and maternity.

Appendix 2 – Comfort Scheme Visual Examples

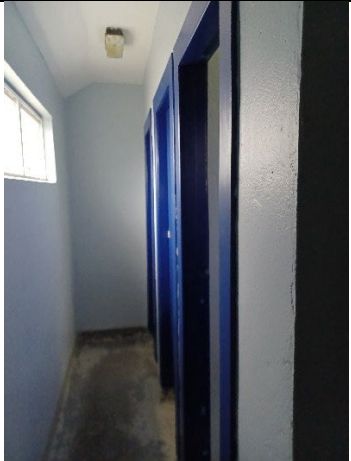
£50 a month – Traigh Beach, Purpose built composting facility

Exterior of Building	Funding through payment
	

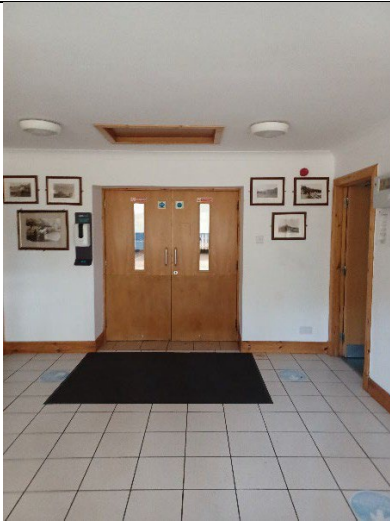
£100 a month – Laggan, Ex Council Facility

Exterior of Building	Directional Signage	Clean Facility
		
Hand Dryer	Good internal information	Disabled toilet provision
		

£200 a month – Shildaig, Ex Council Facility

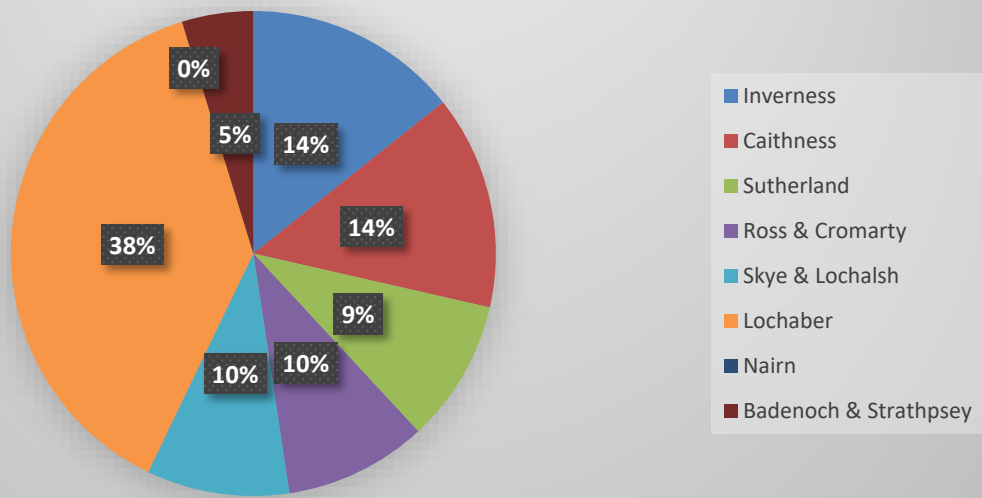
Signs in place	Clean & maintained	Community Initiative to paint & decorate building
		

£300 a month – Glenelg Comfort Scheme, Glenelg Community Hall

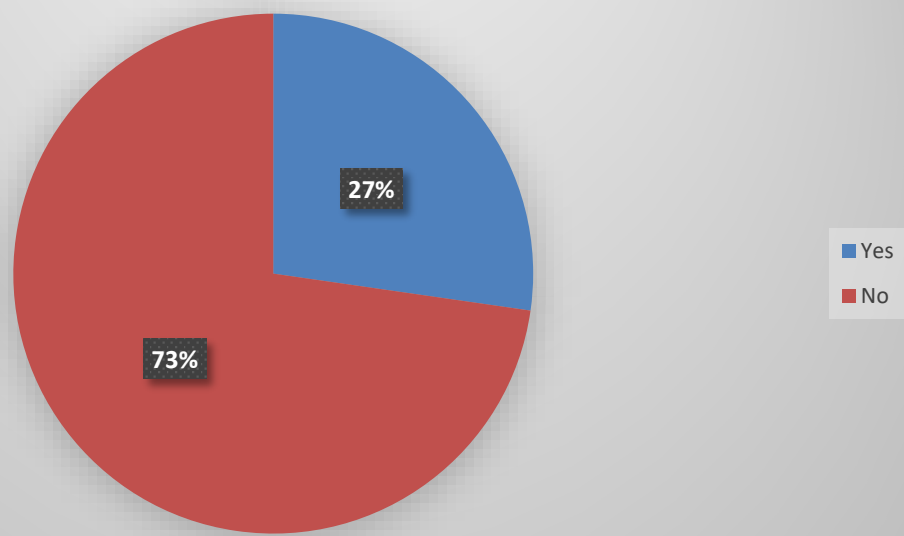
Community Hall	Large room with several stalls	Private shower facilities
		
Several Sinks with hot water/soap	Clean welcoming environment	Displaying CS Logo
		

Appendix 3 – 2025 Comfort Scheme Survey Results

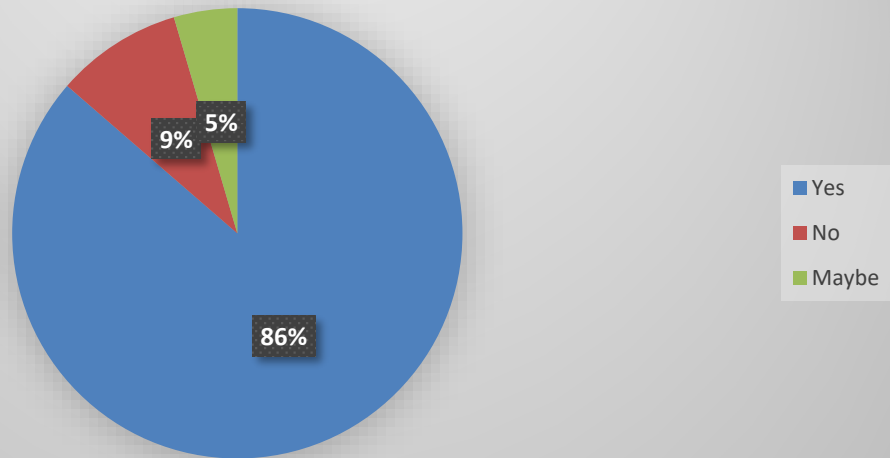
Which Highland Area is the Comfort Scheme in?



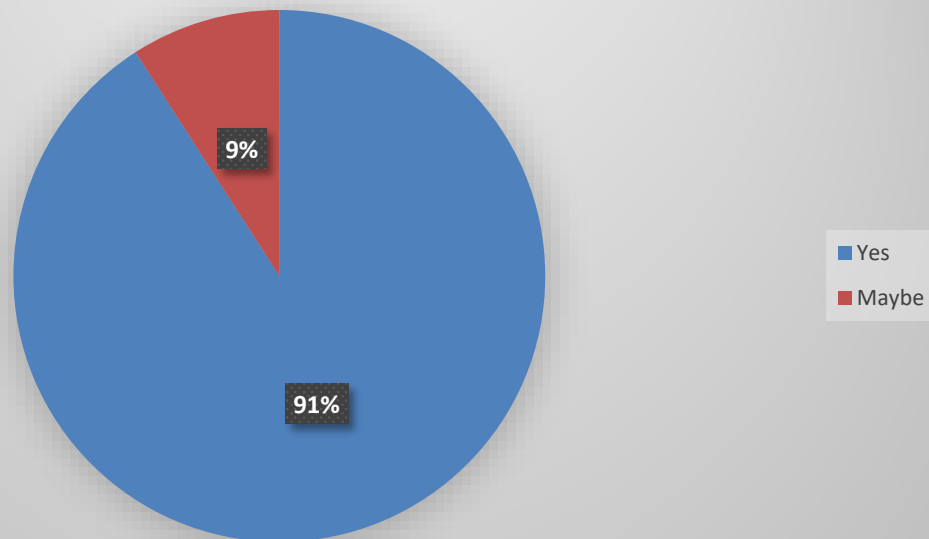
In the Comofrt Scheme on the NC500?



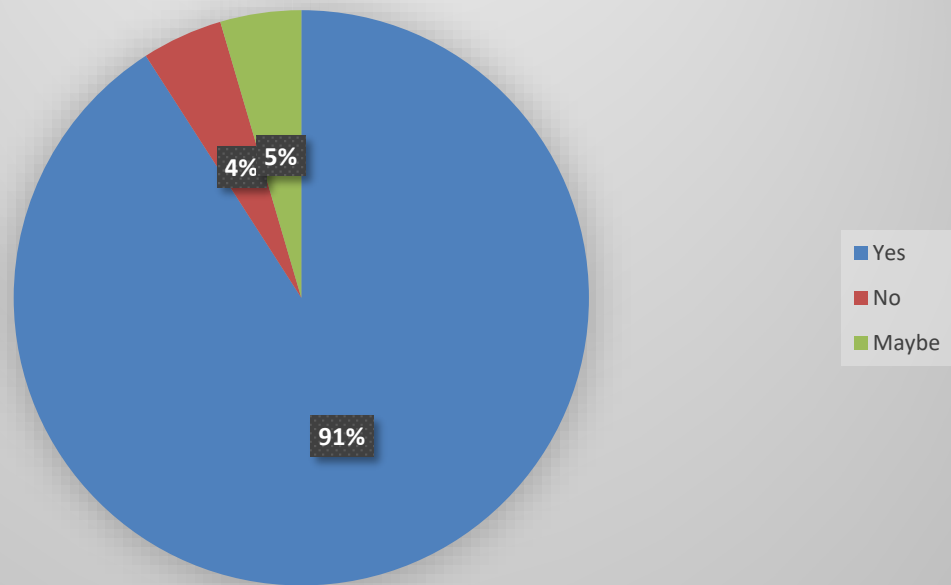
Has being a Comfort Scheme provider been beneficial?



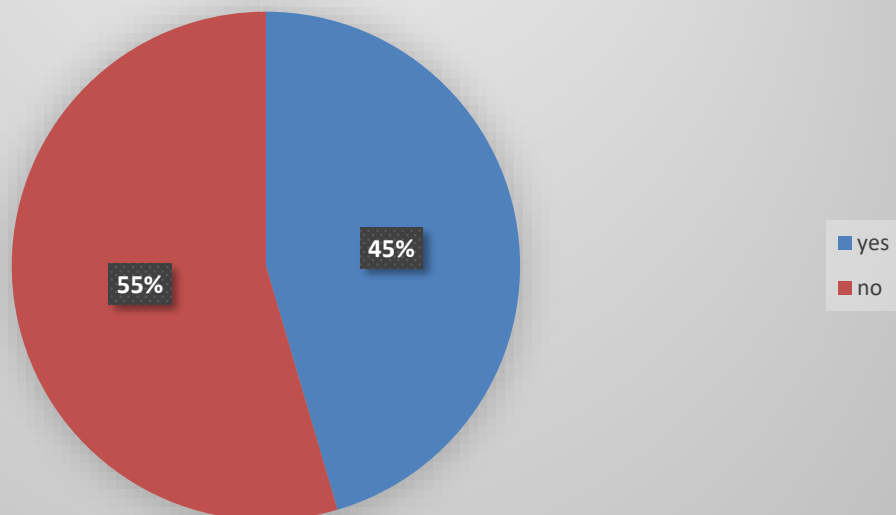
Would you become a Comfort Scheme Again?



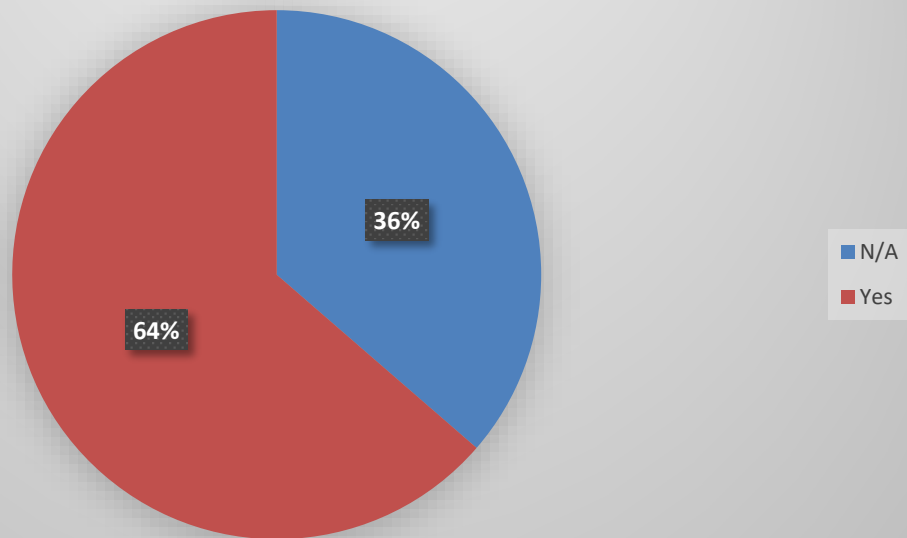
Would you recommend others to sign up to the Comoft Scheme Agreement



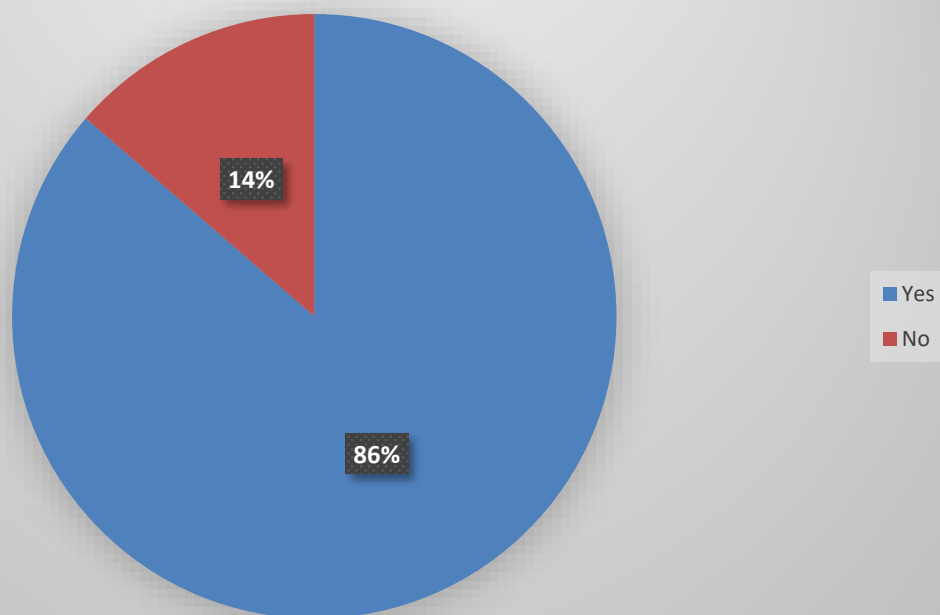
Does the Comfort Scheme have an honesty box installed?



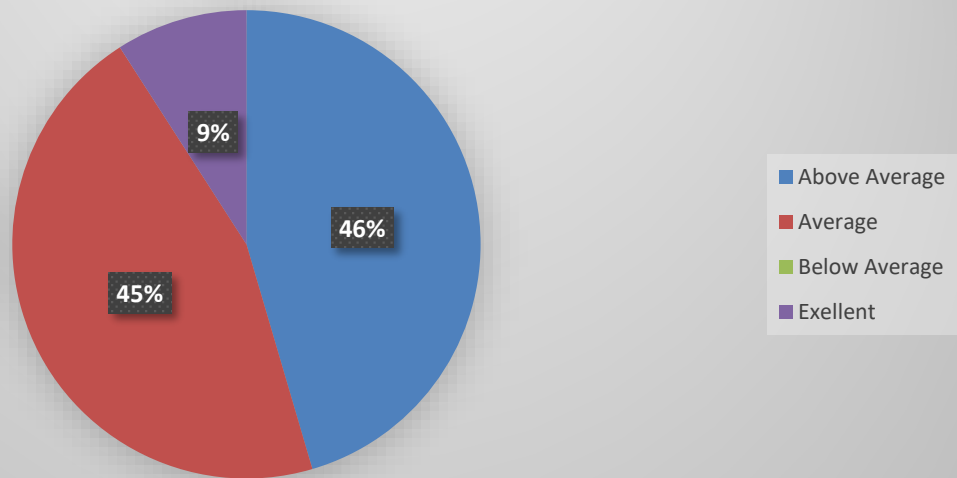
Have you found having an honesty box beneficial?



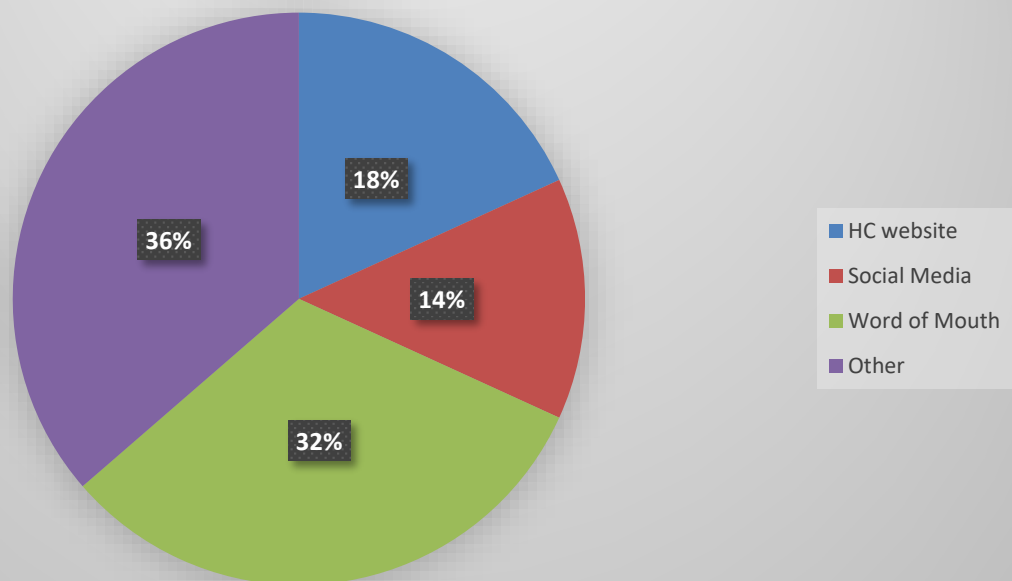
Do you have disabled facilities?



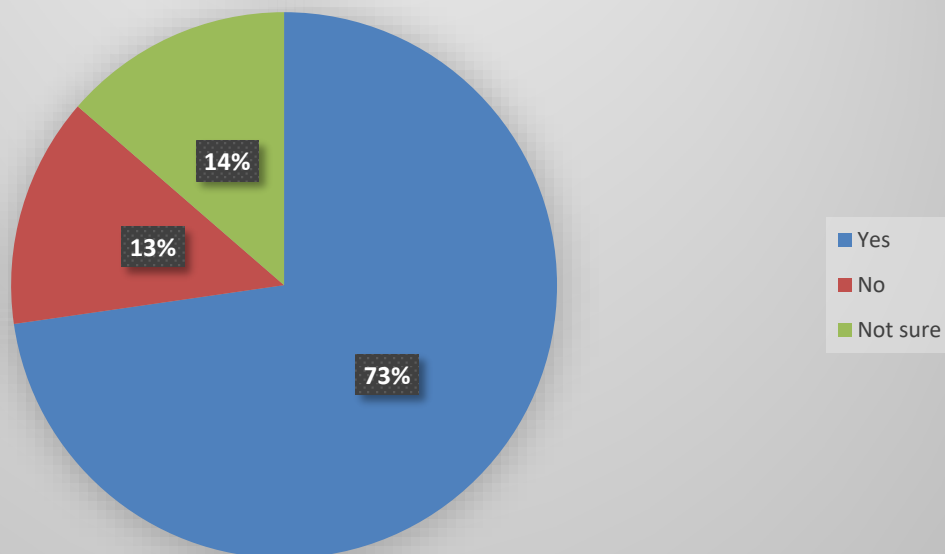
How would you describe the Comfort Scheme Initiative?



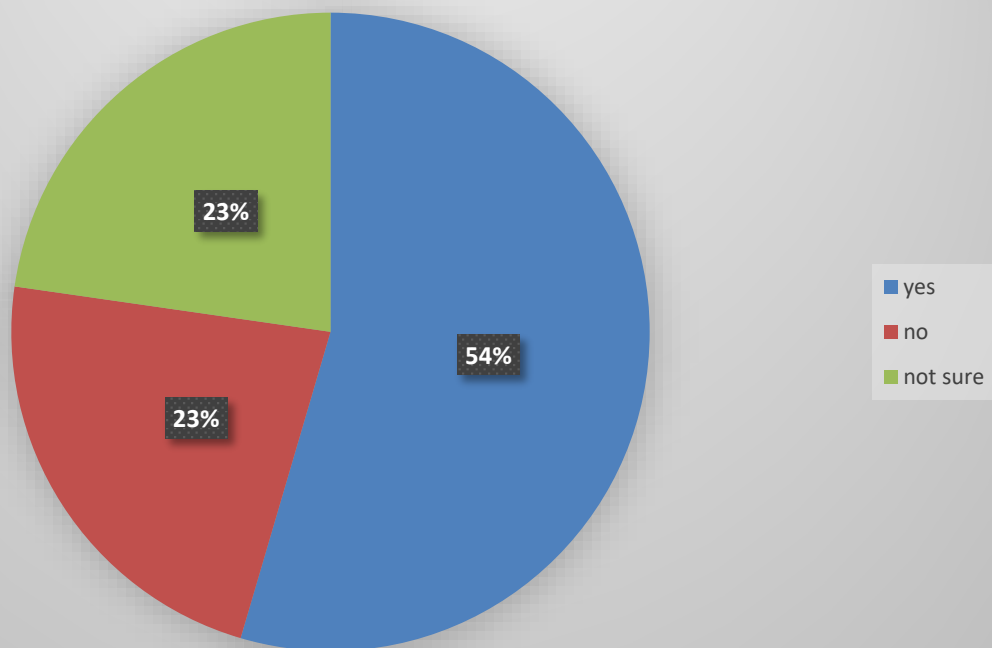
How did you hear about the Highland Comfort Scheme ?



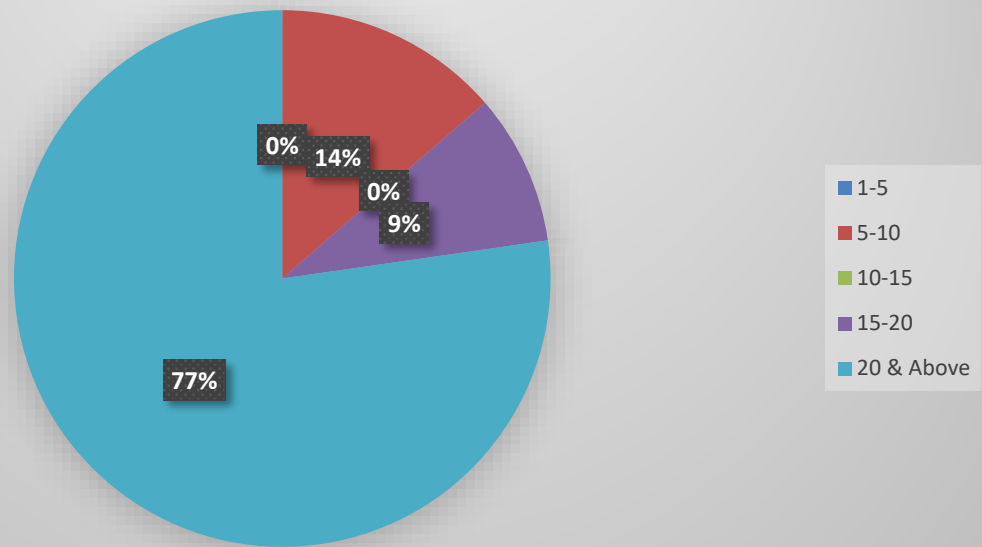
Are Comfort Scheme providers adequately advertised?



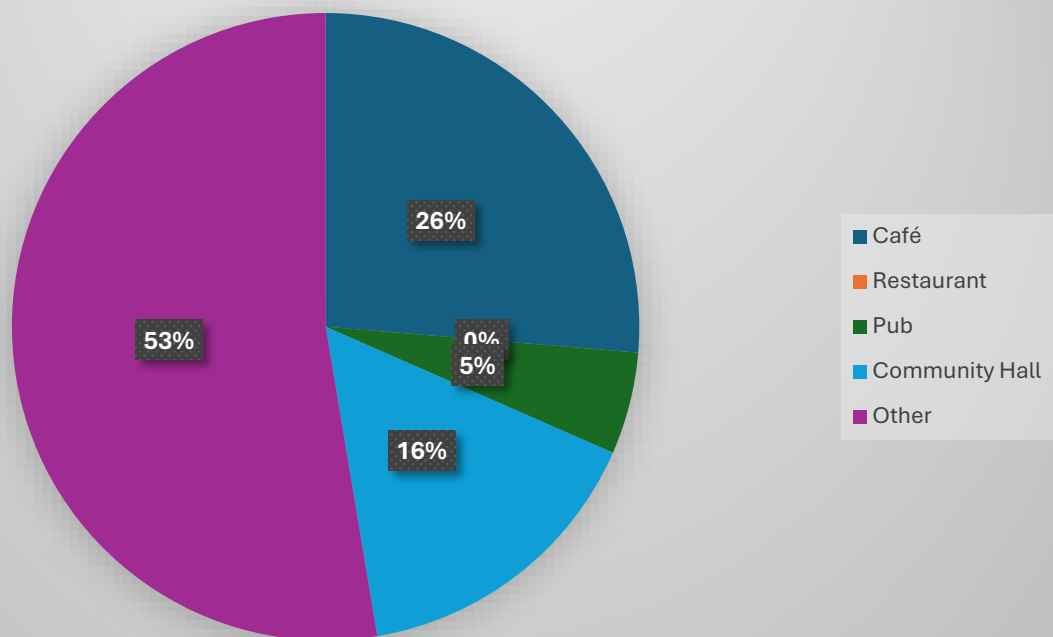
Does providing a Comfort Scheme attract more custom to your bussines and/or community?



On Average how many people use the facility daily?



What type of facility is the Comfort Scheme?



Appendix 4 – Comfort Scheme Signage

