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For immediate release

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Churchgoers favour reduction in the welfare budget

Attitudes to the welfare budget

A recent survey by YouGov for the Westminster Faith Debates finds that 60% of Anglicans think the welfare budget is too high, and 14% think it should be increased. This is true for all Anglicans, regardless of frequency of church attendance or strength of belief.

Fewer people within the general population (54%) think that the UK welfare budget is too high, while 18% think that it is too low and should be increased.

Attitudes to the welfare system

Among Anglicans, the proportion which believes that the system creates dependency rises to 74%. There is no difference if attention is restricted to those Anglicans who go to church or those who believe definitely in God.

Of all respondents, 67% believe that Britain's welfare system creates dependency, while 33% believe that most welfare beneficiaries are victims of circumstances beyond their control.

(All figures exclude "don't knows.")

Professor Linda Woodhead comments:

The survey results show there is a gulf between recent church statements on welfare and the attitudes of a majority of churchgoers in the CofE. Overall, Anglicans are more right-leaning than the general population, but are increasingly liberal over issues like same sex marriage and permitting assisted dying. You could say that the CofE is now more like the Coalition government at prayer than the Tory Party at prayer.

Ends

Notes to Editors

Survey was designed by Linda Woodhead for Westminster Faith Debates and carried out online by YouGov. Fieldwork undertaken 5th – 13th June 2013.

Sample sizes: 4018 representative sample of GB adults aged 18+, which includes 1120 self-identified Anglicans, of whom 166 say they belong to a church/are regular church attenders. (The general population of course includes Anglicans themselves.)

The Survey Questions:

Which of these statements comes closer to your view?

The welfare budget is too high and should be reduced
The welfare budget is about right and should be maintained
The welfare budget is too low and should be increased
Don't know

Which of these statements comes closer to your view?

'Britain's current welfare system has created a culture of dependency, whereby many people, and often whole families, get used to living off state benefits; the system needs to be radically changed to get such people to take more responsibility for their lives and their families'

'Most people who rely on welfare benefits are victims of circumstances beyond their control. The benefits they receive are far from generous, and are the least a civilised society should provide in order to help them and their families avoid abject poverty'

Don't know

Survey and data available [here](#).