

Housing Management Damp and Mould Policy

Analysis of stakeholder consultation

August 2024

Consultation and Participation Team
The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea
consult@rbkc.gov.uk



THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF
KENSINGTON
AND CHELSEA

Introduction

Background

The Council is introducing an improved approach to addressing damp and mould in residents' homes due to its impact on health, well-being, and home conditions. The policy adopts a zero-tolerance approach and aims to ensure residents' safety and health. The policy identifies different types of damp, outlines the Council's responsibilities, provides timescales, includes risk assessments, and offers advice. Recognising the importance of residents' input, the Council sought feedback to help shape the policy.

Methodology

An online survey was promoted through the Council's Consultation and Engagement Hub. The consultation was advertised via posters on estate notice boards and letters sent to tenants and leaseholders, which included a QR code linking to the consultation page. These letters also provided information on how to obtain a physical copy of the policy and survey, as well as instructions for requesting them in a different language or having them delivered directly to their residence. To further gather residents' views, the survey was additionally promoted by the Service Improvement Team at several events, including the World's End Engagement Day on 20th June, a 'Meet the Contractor' event at Bramley House on 26th June, the Money Café on 4th July, and the Kensal Resource Centre Pantry on 11th July. The consultation was open from 27 May to 16 July 2024 and received a total of 27 responses.

Acknowledgements

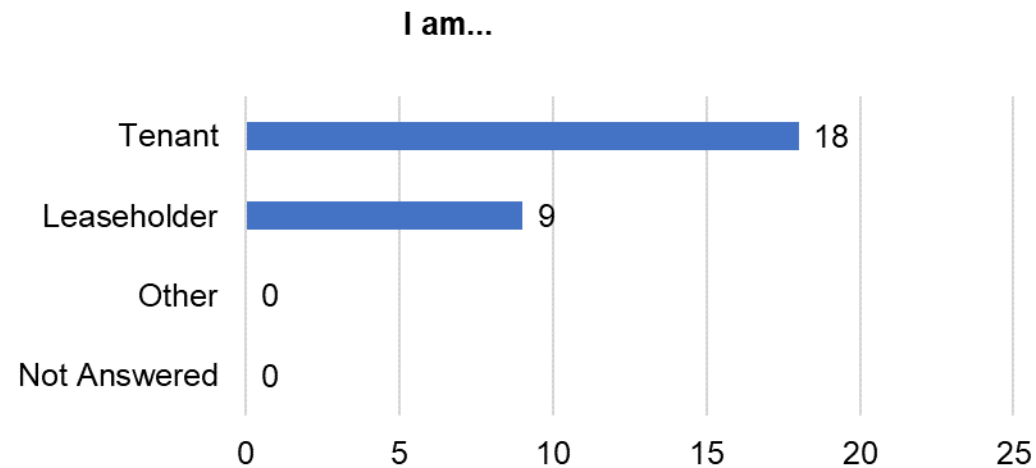
The Council would like to thank all residents that took the time to provide feedback on Housing Management Damp and Mould Policy.



Capacity in which responding

Respondents were asked in what capacity they were responding.

- The majority of respondents (18) indicated they were responding as tenants.
- Nine respondents indicated they were responding as leaseholders.

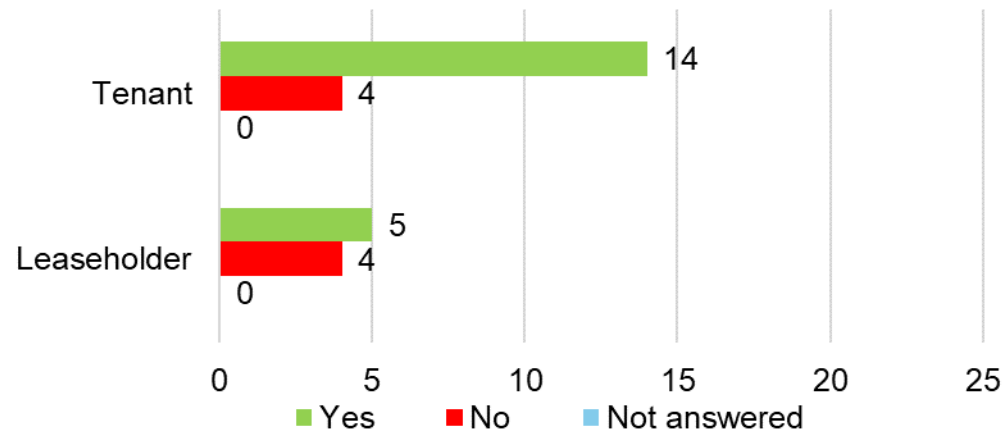


Language used in the policy

Respondents were asked if they found the Damp and Mould Policy clear and easy to understand.

- The majority of respondents (19) said the policy was clear and easy to understand. This included 14 out of 19 tenants, while views were more evenly split among leaseholders, with five stating the language was clear and easy to understand and four saying it was not.
- Eight respondents selected 'no' for their answer and one respondent did not answer.

Did you find the Damp and Mould Policy clear and easy to understand?



Language used in the policy - comments

Respondents who found the language unclear were asked to explain why. There were six comments:

- I cannot understand the policy as it relates to penetrating damp and leaks which are caused by wider defects in the fabric of the building. My understanding of the policy as written, is that the Council's only strategy for dealing with such issues will be to sell or dispose of the building.
- I do not understand the policy.,
- A lot information and difficult to understand if, when reporting it, the complaint will be taken seriously.
- Online documents are hard to read.
- So much writing ...I only have a phone to read it.
- I haven't received any information.

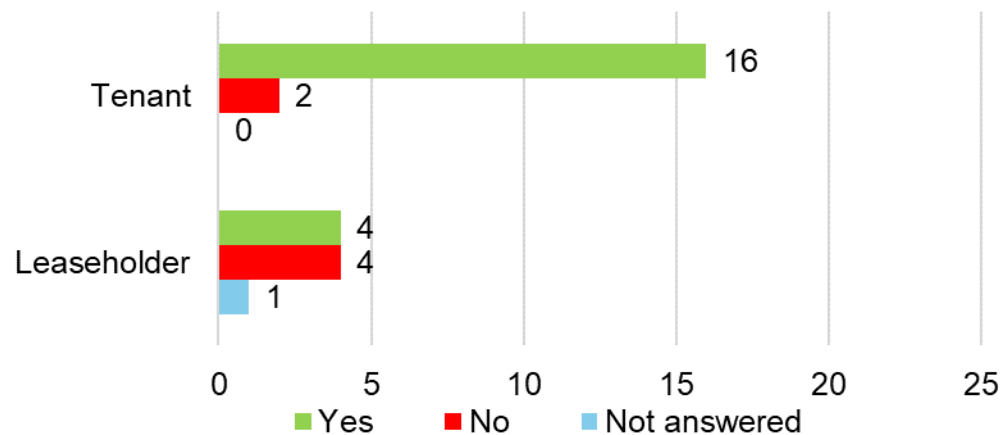


Responsibilities of the Council to tenants

Respondents were asked if, after reading the policy, the responsibilities of the Council to tenants were clear.

- The majority of respondents (20) said "yes," indicating that the policy clarifies the responsibilities of the Council to tenants. This includes 16 out of 18 tenants.
- However, six respondents said that the policy does not clarify the Council's responsibilities to tenants, and one respondent did not provide an answer. The response from leaseholders was evenly split between yes and no (four each).

Having read the policy are the responsibilities of the Council to tenants clear?

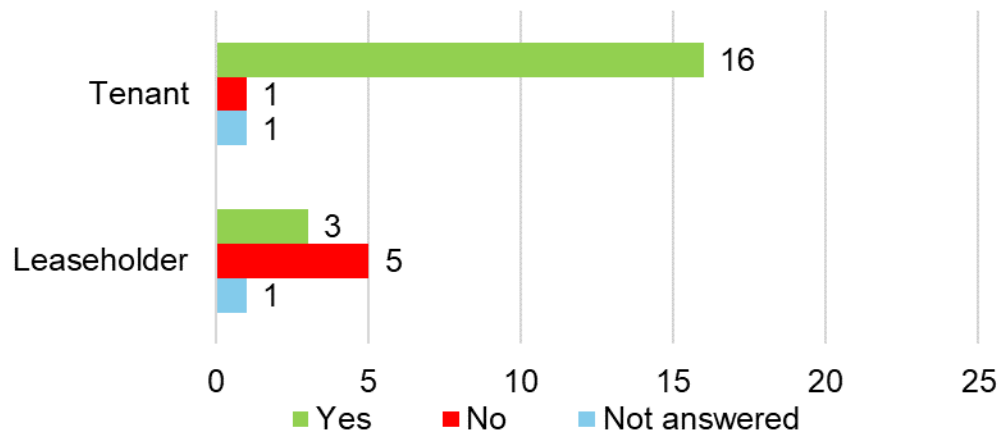


Responsibilities of a tenant/leaseholder

Respondents were asked if, after reading the policy, the responsibilities of a tenant/leaseholder were clear.

- Most respondents (19) said "yes," indicating that the policy makes the tenant/leaseholder responsibilities clear, including 16 out of 19 tenants.
- However, six respondents said that the policy does not clarify the tenant/leaseholder responsibilities, and two respondents did not provide an answer. Again, more leaseholders (5) felt that the responsibilities of a tenant/leaseholder were unclear, compared to only one who stated they were clear.

Having read the policy are the responsibilities of a tenant/leaseholder clear ?



Base: All respondents (27)



Responsibilities of Council and tenants/leaseholders - comments

Respondents who said they did not understand the repair obligations set in the policy for tenants/leaseholders and the Council as a landlord were given the opportunity to explain why. There were seven comments:

- Unclear about leaseholders' / Council's responsibilities in cases of penetrating damp and leaks which are caused by wider defects in the fabric of the building.
- Feels like we're supposed to deal with this on our own while the extremely poor construction standards constitute the issue.
- I reported a mould issue recently, I was wondering the process for installing vents. I was told that I should pay £500 for a planning application for vents and that I should review my lease myself to check whose responsibility it is. Customer service should have in fact suggested to book a surveyor's visit who are experts in the matter. Why was not this offered? It seems it is the policy ?
- I think so. What is unclear is whether upon inspection the tenant is given a similar report as the council one.
- It's obviously biased against leaseholders. The following shows this : 13.2. The Council will not carry out damp and mould remedial works to leasehold properties unless it is covered by the lease or if the damp and mould is having a severe negative affect on surrounding properties. In the latter case ,the leaseholder will be re-charged.13.3. Any neglect by the leaseholder to manage or carry out repairs for which they are responsible for and where this has a direct impact on the condition of a Council owned property will be dealt with in accordance with the lease and may result in recharges. I had damp in my flat for over a decade, caused by lack of and poor maintenance by the council. Endless complaints, no action. The usual lies from Council employees.
- Because it's hard to read.
- I'm not sure what you are referring to.

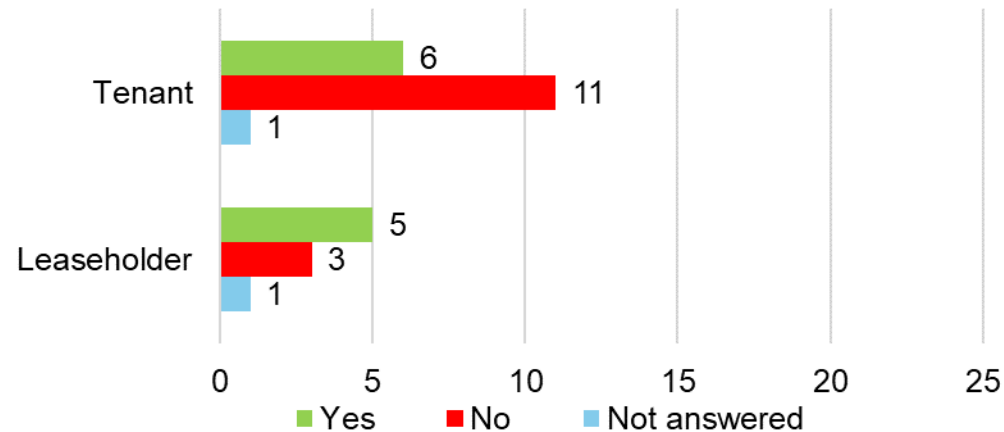


Additional items to the policy

Respondents were asked if there was anything they expected to see covered in the policy that was not included.

- There were 11 respondents who said that there were items they expected the policy to cover but did not (six tenants and five leaseholders).
- However, 14 respondents said the policy covered everything they expected, including 11 out of 18 tenants. Two respondents did not provide an answer.

Is there anything you expected to see covered in the policy that has not been?



Additional items to the policy – comments

Respondents who answered that there were items they expected the policy to cover but did not, were asked to explain their answer. There were nine comments.

- Proposals for dealing with difficult-to-resolve issues such as cold bridging.
- I would like the repair/customer service team to be aware of the possibility to book a surveyor's visit; I was told I should diagnose the issue. However, I am not an expert, and my tenant (AST Tenancy) is an elderly lady who was not able to explain the issue, except that the ceilings in the bathroom, and kitchen are damp/mouldy and that there is a spot of mould by the balcony door.
- The time frame in which it would take to investigate and resolve the issue..
- If I paid for repairs and redecoration and the mould ruined it
- Not sure as online documents are hard for me to read.
- It states that as a leaseholder is it our responsibility to sort any mould issues, however, if the mould and damp is caused by faulty windows or rising damp or other structural issues then would this not come under the landlord responsibility?
- Fix the issue not just covering it with paint.
- Proper responsibility from the council and fair treatment of leaseholders.
- Not only on policy but you have to understand when you have no mould in your house, but mould builds up after some work was carried out on the property. So is the workers to blame for not being prepared for this?



Other comments about the policy

Respondents were asked if they have any other comments about the Damp and Mould Policy. There were seven comments.

- My official residence in the RBKC but I'm living temporarily out of the Borough since 2017. Will my voice be heard or not?
- I'm happy there is no damp at all.
- We've been dealing with mould for 1.5 years, at some point having black spots all over one of the rooms while one of the windows is not opening, and it took 6 months to identify the issue in an external wall that I checked later was previously known and published when the refurbishment planning had started. I feel we're taken for a ride.
- Online documents are hard for me to read.
- I've been suffering from leaks and mould for 3 years. I expect more leaks come autumn. While the policy is clear, the execution and communication regarding repairs is painful. The reality is, when you communicate damp or leaks to repair teams, there is no follow up or follow through with appointments. Often having to start the process 3 or more times because the case has been closed or wrong teams sent. The policy is clear, but the process is very lacking. The repairs team consult the online capital works programme. The online Capital works programme is out of date. In my case after 3 years of begging for a response, capital works responded to me "due to financial restraints, no works would be considered until 2027/2028, roof repairs will be managed by the repair team" and endless loop of no authority or decision making.
- The vast majority of damp in leaseholders' flats is caused by tenants and poor maintenance by the council. Leaseholders should be compensated.
- I have made complaints about mould in my property after 15yrs the work took place. Survey took place but no response or results. This is breach of policy so let's talk about this and how to sue the landlord

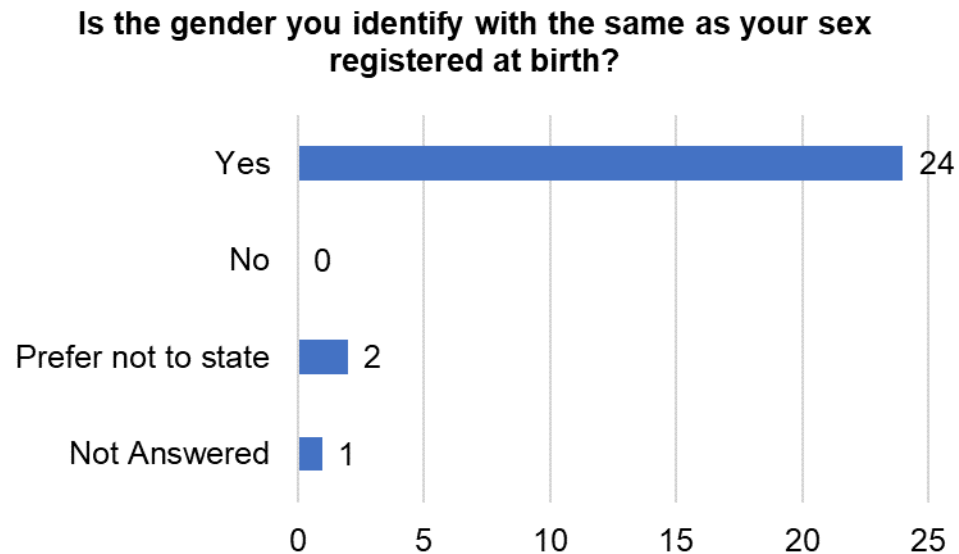
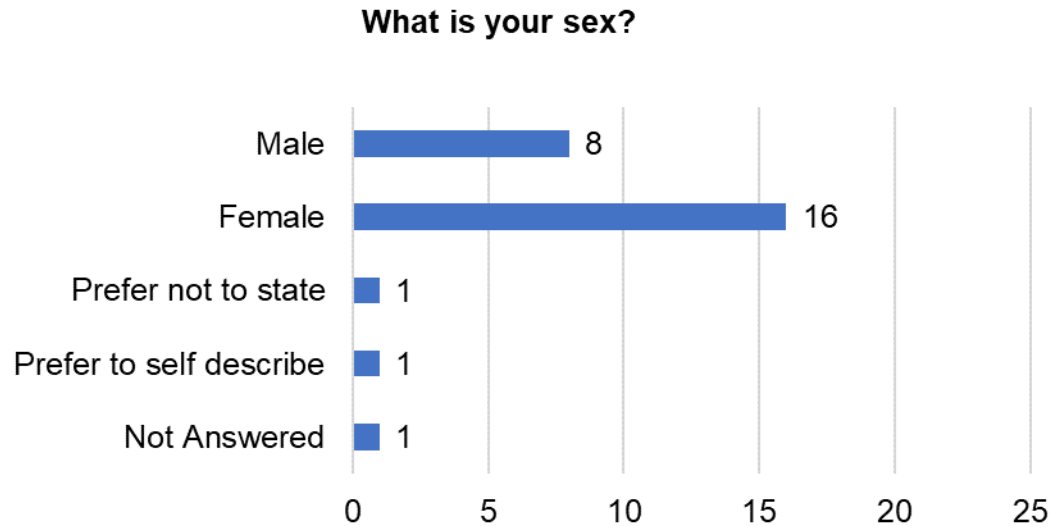
Resident's Concerns on Policy Implementation

- One letter was received from a resident expressing concerns about the execution of the Repairs and Damp and Mould Policies, noting that while the policy itself is well-intentioned, the practical procedures could be more effective.



Profile of respondents

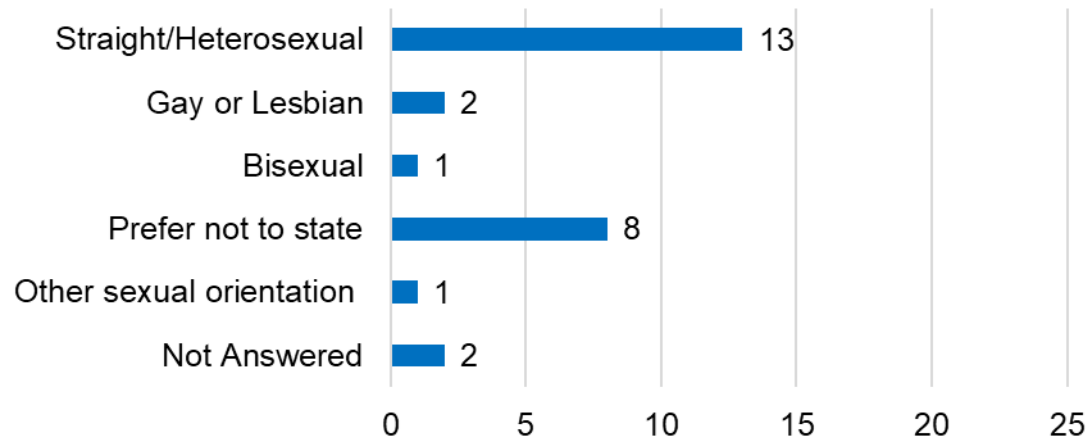
Respondents were asked a series of questions about themselves, to understand who had responded to the consultation.



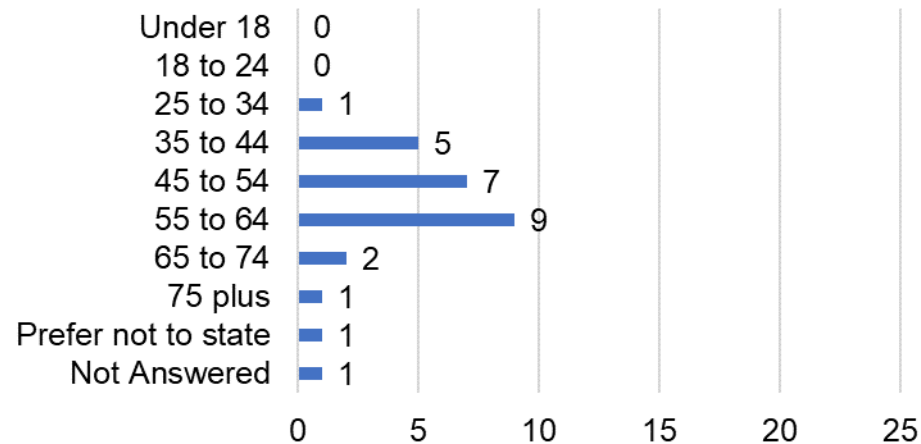
Profile of respondents

Respondents were asked a series of questions about themselves, to understand who had responded to the consultation.

Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation?



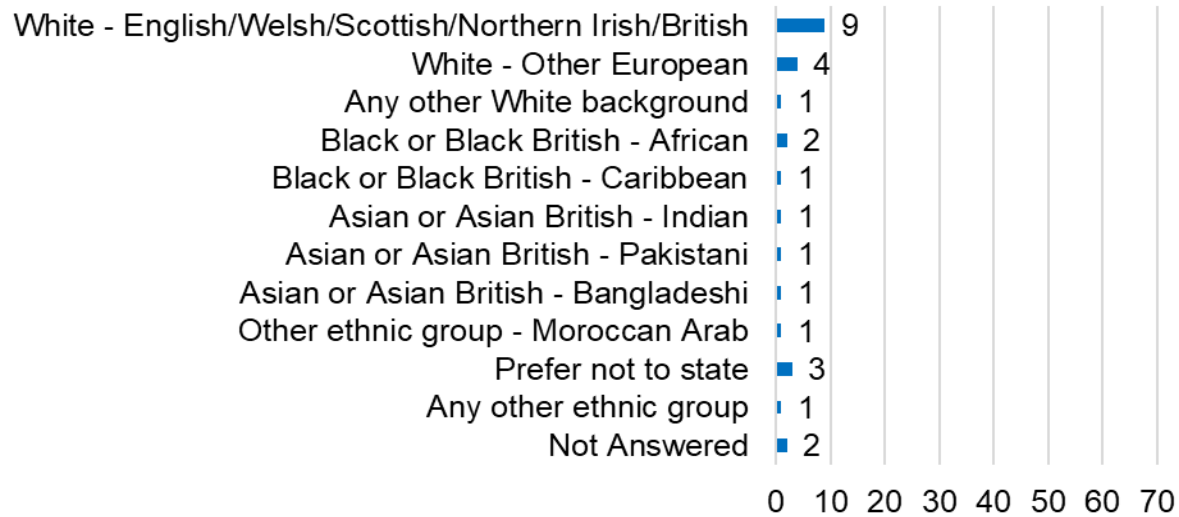
Which age group do you belong to?



Profile of respondents

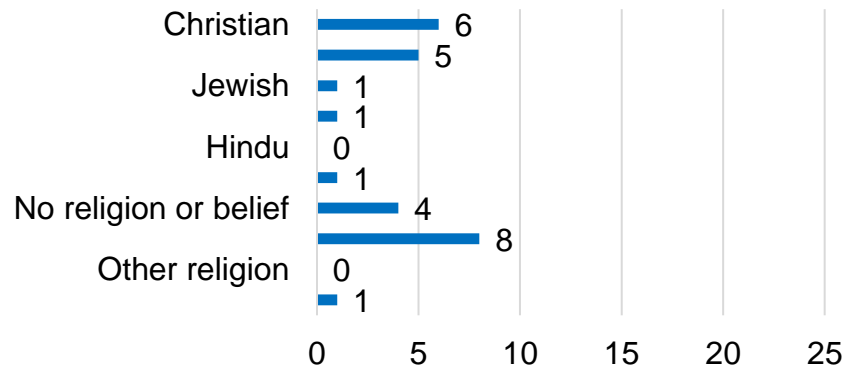
Respondents were asked a series of questions about themselves, to understand who had responded to the consultation.

How do you describe your ethnic origin?



The graph shows the ethnic origins that were selected by respondents

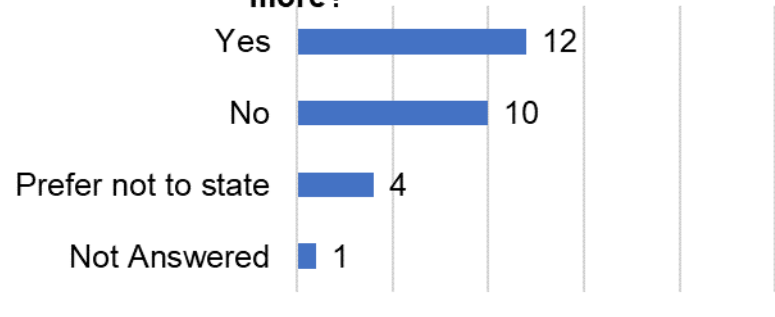
What is your religion or belief?



Profile of respondents

Respondents were asked a series of questions about themselves, to understand who had responded to the consultation.

Do you have any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expected to last 12 months or more?



**If yes, what is the nature of your physical or mental health condition or illness?
(Select all that apply)**

