

Housing Allocations Scheme

Consultation report and findings

March 2022

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Introduction

Background

The current Housing Allocations scheme was introduced in 2014 and a revision introduced in 2017. The current scheme was introduced before the Grenfell Tower tragedy, the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 (HRA) and the Covid-19 Pandemic. Over the last few months, the Council has sought the views of the local community on updates to the Housing Allocations scheme. A consultation was designed enabling respondents to share their views on these updates.

This report contains an analysis of the consultation activities comprising of a survey open to the general public and a series of focus groups and interviews with residents and key stakeholders. The findings in this report aim to support the Council in understanding the views of residents and stakeholders on the Housing Allocations Scheme.

Methodology and report

The consultation activities were developed with colleagues from the Putting Communities First Team and the Housing Needs Team and were made available to the public through the Consultation and Engagement Hub.

The survey open to the general public closed on 24 February 2022 and received 137 responses. The focus groups and interviews with residents and key stakeholders took place throughout the consultation period with approximately 95 attendees across 12 sessions. The results of these activities are included in section 3 of this report.

Where graphs are shown, percentages are used. Where there were 'no responses' to questions, if these made up less than five per cent of responses, they have been excluded from the graphs.

Appendix

The appendix documents contains details of all themed comments made by respondents in relation to the consultation survey and the focus groups. All other responses and data are in the report. The appendices report is available upon request.

Equalities

Equalities data is presented in the 'About Respondents: Demographic Breakdown' sections.

Acknowledgements

The Council would like to thank all respondents that took the time to take part in the exercise and gave their views.



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Results at a glance – Public survey findings

- **Local connection qualification:** There was no clear preference amongst respondents with both **'I think three years is about right'** and **'I don't think three years is long enough'** receiving the same level of response (39 per cent).
- **Overcrowding priorities:** A total of 40 per cent of respondents **strongly agreed** or **somewhat agreed** with the proposed approach to priorities those who need two or more bedrooms to no longer be considered overcrowded. Of those who disagreed, a total of 29 per cent agreed with the statement, **only overcrowded families with children should be given a higher priority than others on the housing register.**
- **Adult children:** A total of 63 per cent of respondents said they thought the Council **should look to rehouse adult children in their own homes to alleviate the overcrowding** and 61 per cent of respondents said the Council should **decrease the age two children of the same sex can share a bedroom from 21 to 18.**
- **Waiting times:** Most respondents (83 per cent) thought **someone on the housing register should receive additional points if they have been waiting for a significant amount of time.** Just under half (43 per cent) of respondents thought these points should be awarded by **the same number of points added each year for everyone.**
- **Paid work priorities:** A total of 47 per cent of respondents said paid work points **should be kept the same.** Of those who thought paid points should be amended, a total of 29 per cent said the minimum number of hours worked each week should be **more than 16.**
- **Prevention of homelessness using private rented homes:** Over half (59 per cent) of responded said **yes, homeless households voluntarily moving to affordable private rented accommodation should remain on the housing register.** A total of 41 per cent of respondents said **the same number of points should be issued to those in private rented accommodation as those homeless households remaining in temporary accommodation.**
- **Enhances support pathways:** Over two thirds (67 per cent) of respondents answered **yes,** the extended list of situations and groups looked appropriate to them with 34 respondents providing additional situations or groups they believe should also be considered.



Results at a glance – Public survey findings

- **Awarding priorities:** When asked to priorities different reasons for being on the housing register, meaning who do they think should be priorities for being rehomed, the highest ranked reasons were **domestic abuse and/or other serious risk of harm** (3.4) followed by **those moving for health or disability reasons** (3). The lowest were **homeless households moving to private sector instead of Council temporary accommodation** (0.1) and **residents who are homeless but where the Council does not have a legal responsibility to rehouse them** (0.3). More than half (58 per cent) or respondents said **yes**, we should allocation a proportion of Social Housing to all of the different priority groups.
- **Points-based and layer priority ranking systems:** A total of 45 per cent of respondents said **we should consider a mixed points-based priority ranking scheme**.
- **Choice-based lettings and direct offers:** A total of 85 per cent of respondents said they **agree with the use of a combination of choice-based lettings and direct offers**.
- **Penalties:** More than half (59 per cent) or respondents said **yes**, we should remove penalties for non-homeless households on the general housing register so that residents have more choice over where they move to.
- **Flexibility:** More than three quarters (80 per cent) of respondents said **yes**, there should be more flexibility on the criteria people are allowed to place on the location and types of homes they want to be considered for when applying for housing.



Section 1:

Housing Allocations Survey

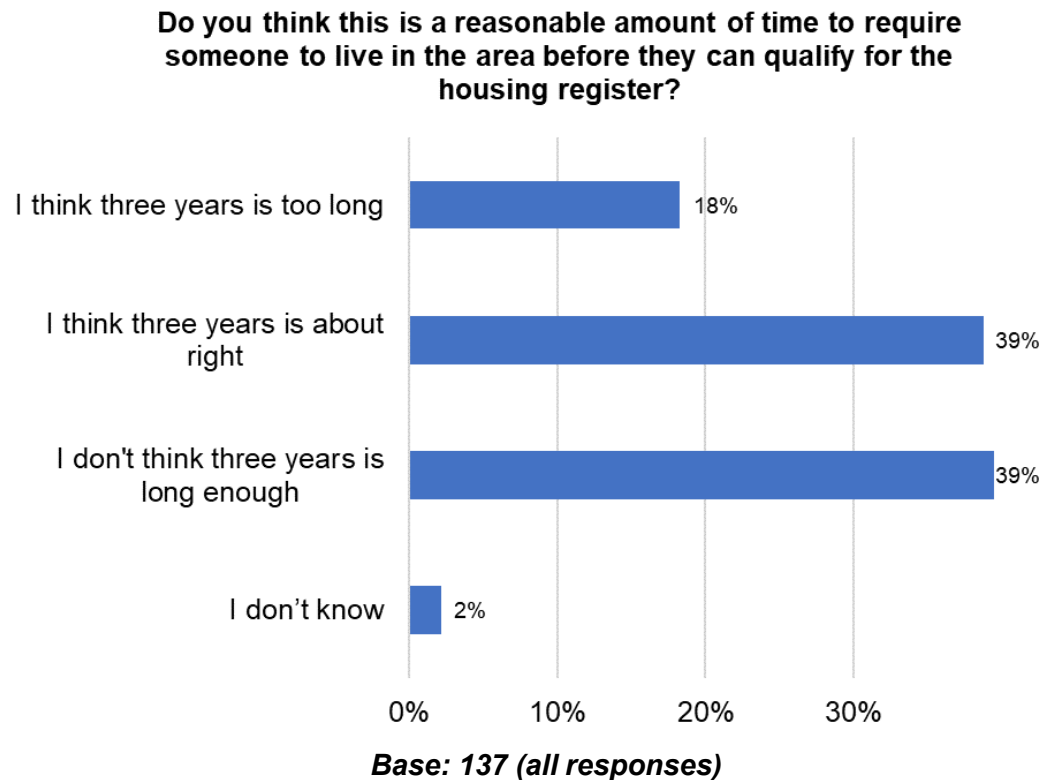


Local connection qualification

Currently, the local connection qualification (how long someone must have lived in Kensington and Chelsea before being able to join the housing register) is three years. Respondents were asked if they thought this is a reasonable amount of time to require someone to live in the area before they can qualify for the housing register?

There was no clear preference amongst respondents with both 'I think three years is about right' and 'I don't think three years is long enough' receiving the same level of response (39 per cent).

A total of 18 per cent of respondents stated 'I think three years is too long'.

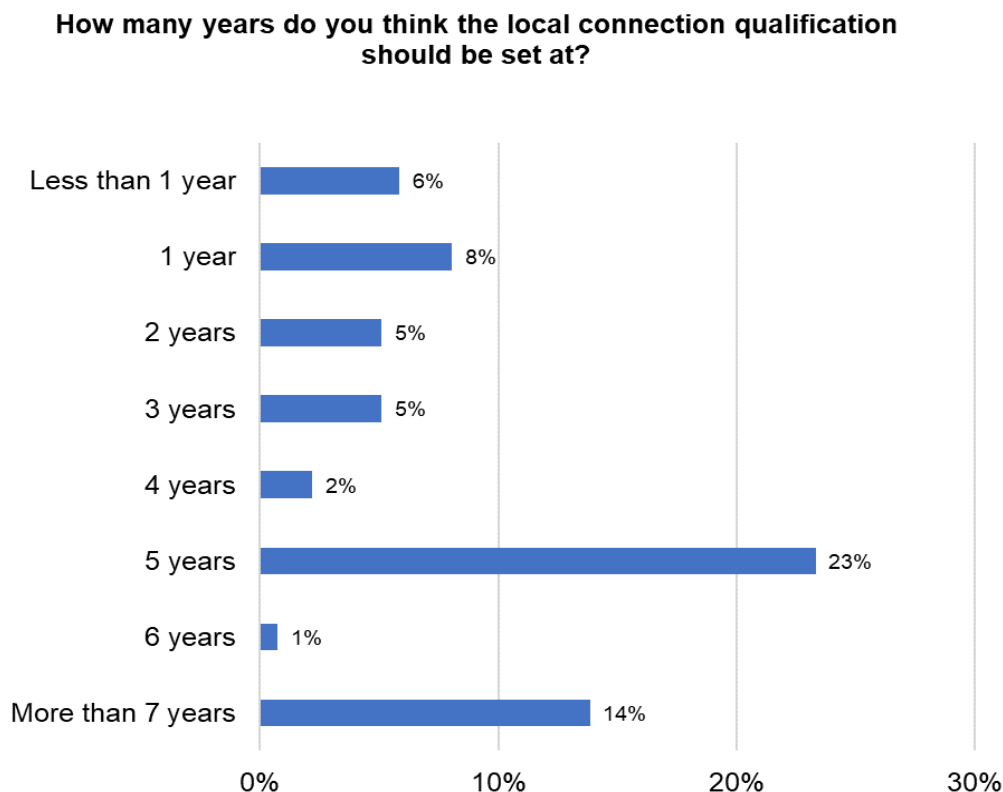


Local connection qualification – length of time

Respondents were asked to expand on how long they would consider to be a reasonable amount of time to require someone to live in the area before they can qualify for the housing register.

A total of 23 per cent of respondents thought that 5 years was a reasonable amount of time, followed by 'more than 7 years', selected by 14 per cent of respondents.

The least commonly selected answers were '6 years' with 1 per cent of responses and '4 years' with 2 per cent.



Base: 137 (all responses)



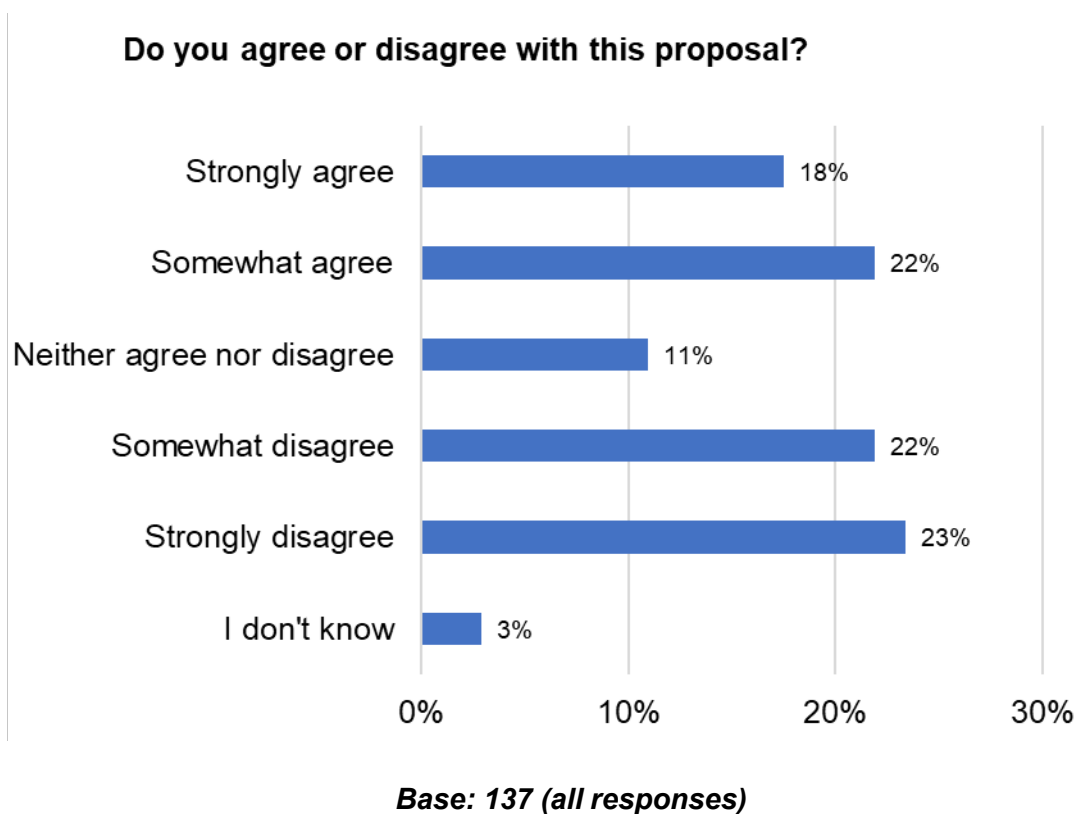
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Overcrowding priorities

Respondents were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with the following approach: 'Families with young children who need (lack) two extra bedrooms to no longer be considered overcrowded would have a high level of priority. Families with young children, or adult-only households, who need (lack) one extra bedroom to no longer be considered overcrowded would have a lower priority.'

Just under half of respondents (45 per cent) strongly disagreed or somewhat disagree with the proposed approach (23 per cent and 22 per cent respectively). A total of 40 per cent of respondents strongly agreed or somewhat agreed with the proposed approach (18 per cent and 22 per cent respectively).

Eleven per cent of respondents said they neither agree nor disagree with the proposal.

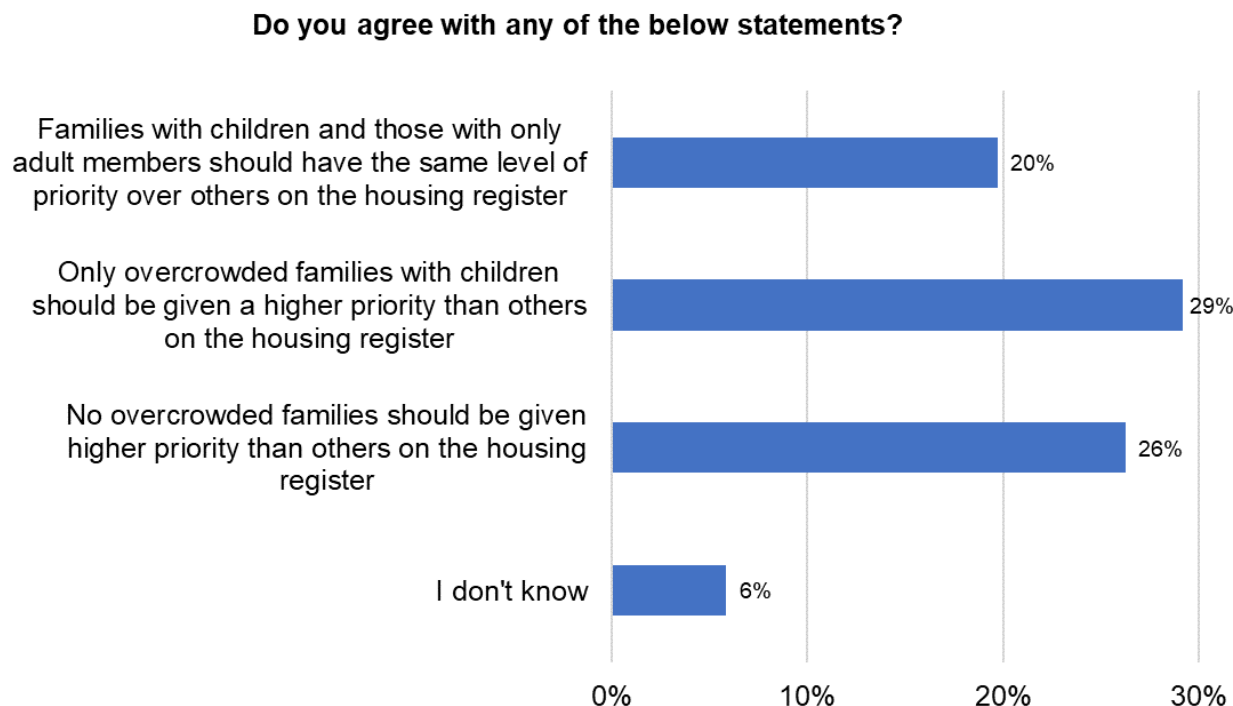


Overcrowding priorities – agreement with statements

Respondents who disagree with the proposal to prioritise housing for people who are overcrowded outlined in the previous question, were asked if they agreed with one of the statements outlined in the graph below. Respondents could only choose one statement to agree with.

A total of 29 per cent of respondents agreed with the statement ‘Only overcrowded families with children should be given a higher priority than others on the housing register’.

Six per cent of respondents said they did not know which of the statements they agreed with.



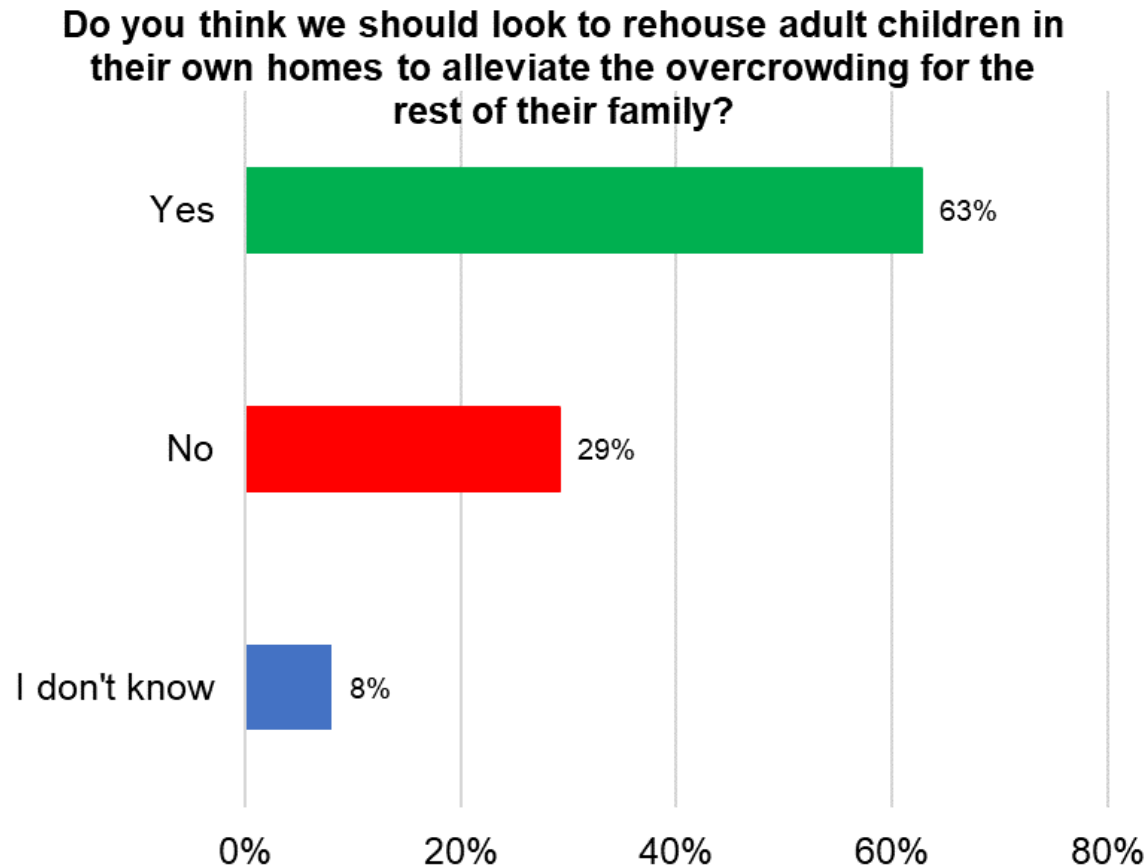
Base: 137 (all responses)



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Overcrowding priorities – Adult Children

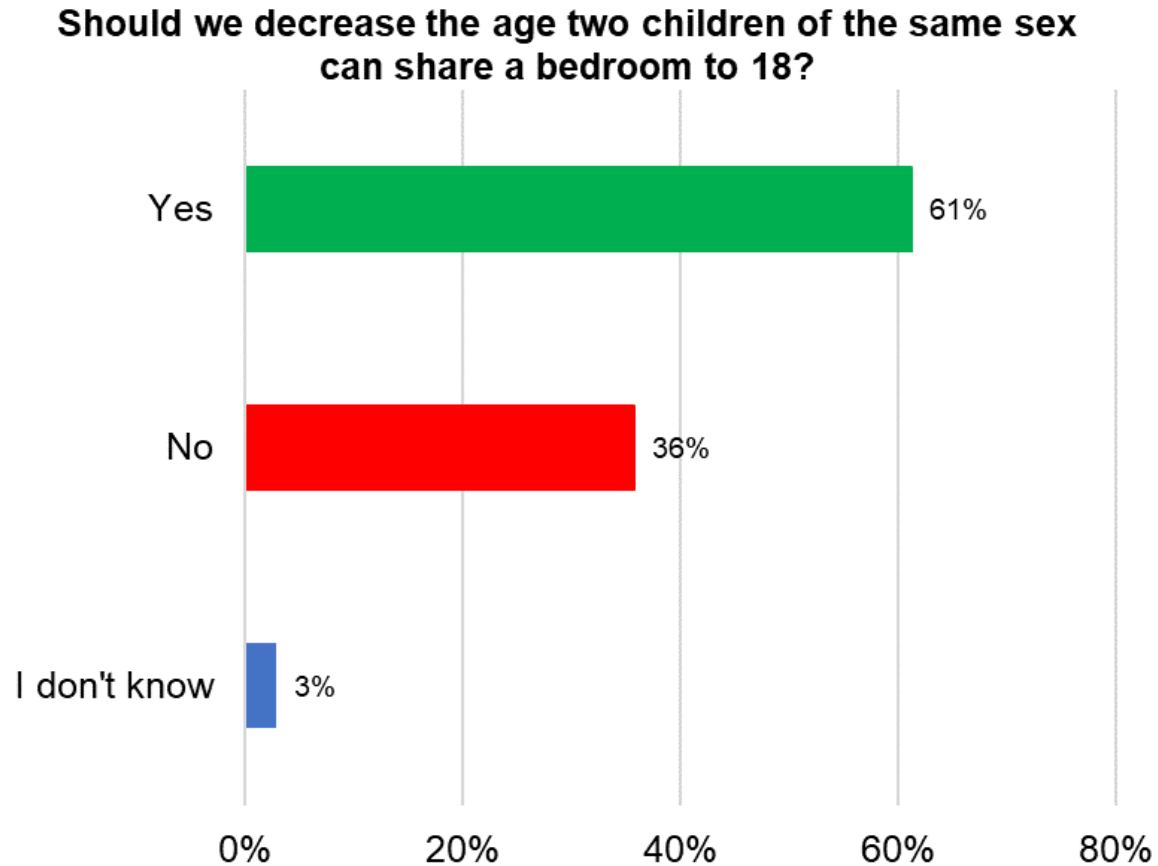
When asked if they thought the Council should look to rehouse adult children in their own homes to alleviate the overcrowding for the rest of their family, just under two thirds of respondents (63 per cent) said 'yes'.



Base: 137 (all responses)

Overcrowding priorities – Shared Bedrooms

When asked if they thought the Council should decrease the age two children of the same sex can share a bedroom from 21 to 18, more than half of respondents (61 per cent) said 'yes'.

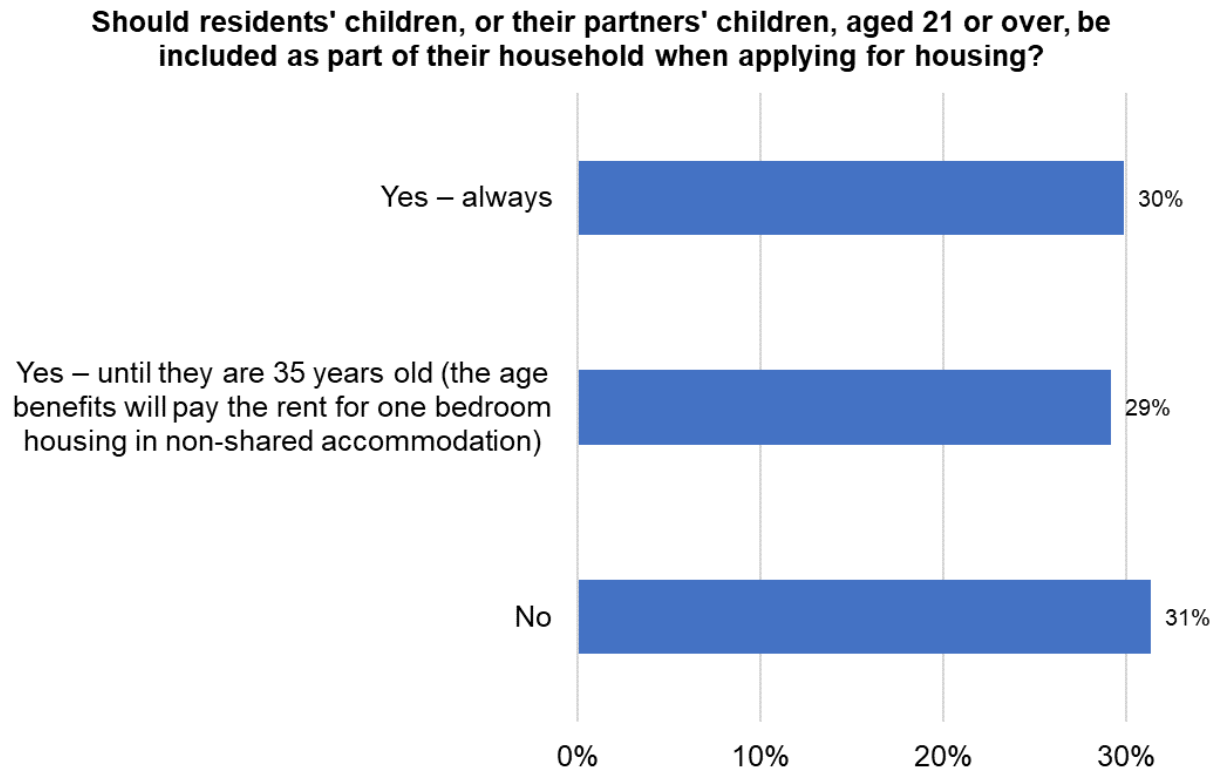


Base: 137 (all responses)

Overcrowding priorities – Adult children as household members

Currently adult children aged over 21 are not automatically included on a housing application. Respondents were asked if they thought adult children aged over 21 should be included as part of their household when applying for housing.

There was a fairly even split between responses with 31 per cent of respondents selecting 'No', 30 per cent of respondents selecting 'yes – always' and 29 per cent of respondents selecting 'Yes – until they are 35 years old'.

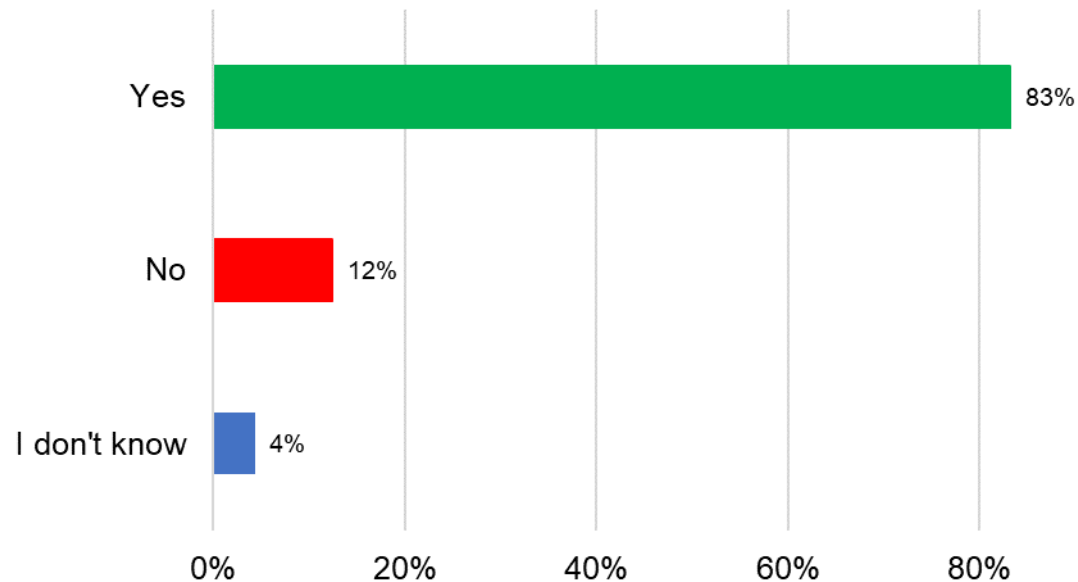


Base: 137 (all responses)

Waiting time priorities – Time on the register

When asked if they thought someone on the housing register should receive additional points if they have been waiting for a significant amount of time, most respondents (83 per cent) said 'yes'.

Do you think someone on the housing register should receive additional points if they have been waiting for a significant amount of time?



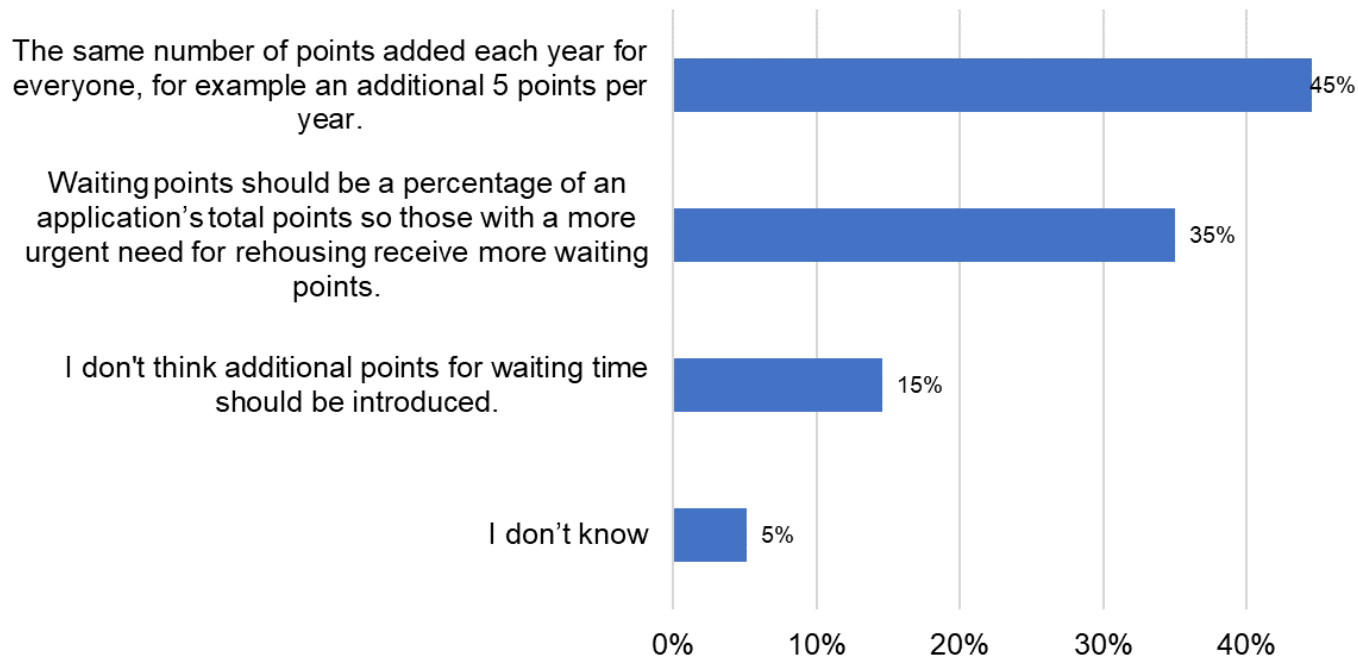
Base: 137 (all responses)

Waiting time priorities – Points for time on the register

If they thought points should be introduced for the length of time someone has been on the housing register, respondents were asked how should the points be awarded.

The option with the highest number of responses was 'the same number of points added each year for everyone' (45 per cent) with 15 per cent of respondents confirming they didn't think additional points for waiting time should be introduced.

If points for waiting time were introduced, should they be:

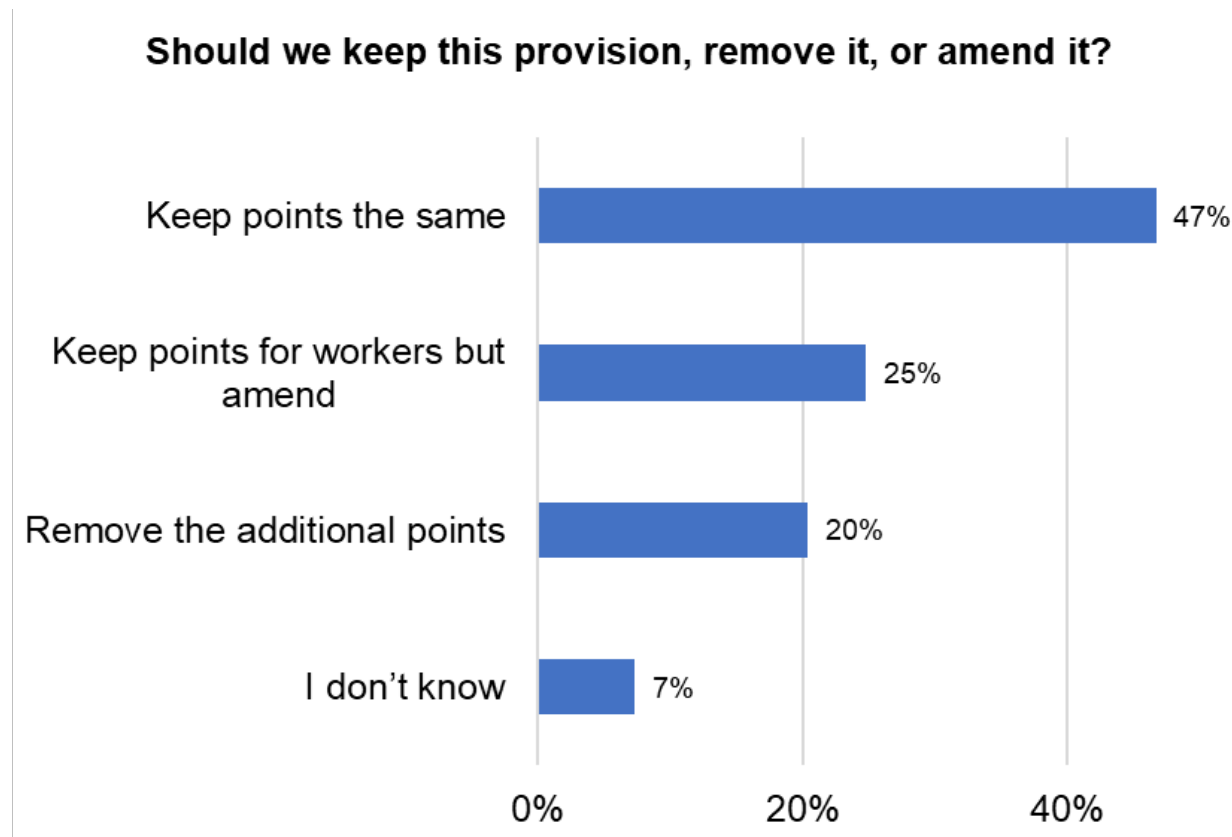


Base: 137 (all responses)

Paid work priorities

Kensington and Chelsea Council currently award additional points to residents on the housing register who are in paid work for 16 or more hours per week. Respondents were asked if these additional points should be kept, removed or amended.

Just under half (47 per cent) of respondents said the points should be kept the same. One quarter of respondents (25 per cent) said the points should remain but be amended and 20 per cent of respondents said they should be removed.



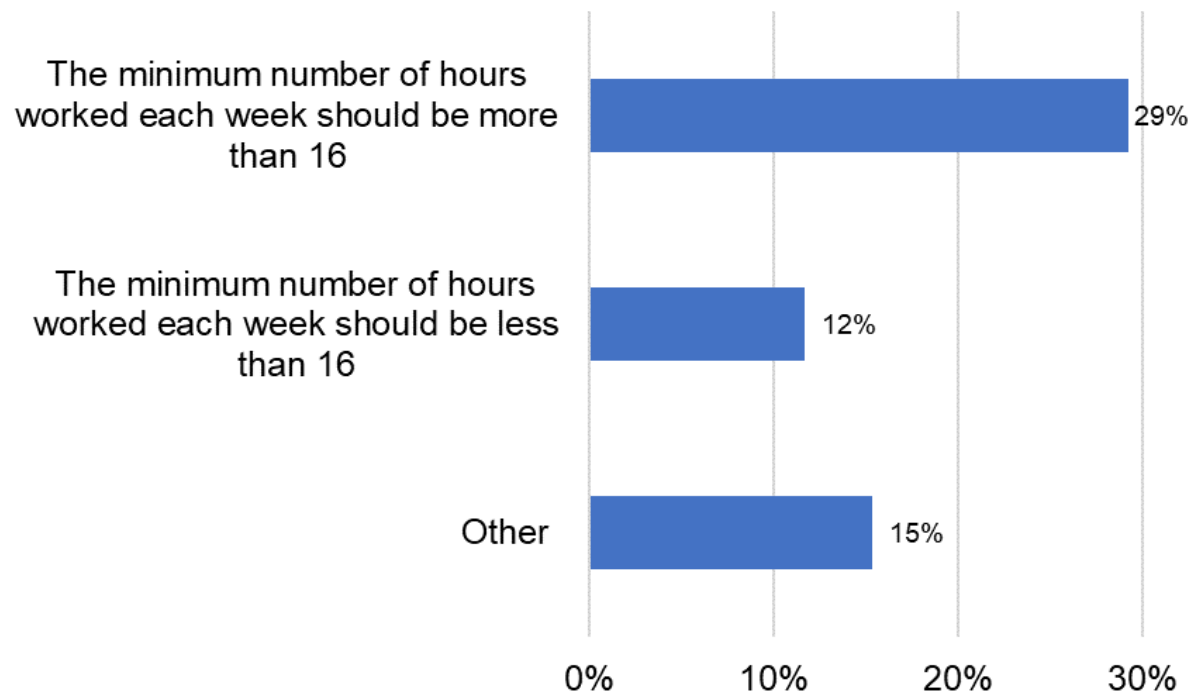
Base: 137 (all responses)

Paid work priorities – Additional points

If respondents felt the additional points for those in paid work for 16 or more hours per week should be amended, they were asked how did they think this could be done.

A total of 29 per cent of respondents said the minimum number of hours worked each week should be more than 16 with 15 per cent of respondents selecting 'other'.

If you think the extra points should stay but be amended, please indicate how this could be done.



Base: 137 (all responses)

Paid work priorities – Other comments

Respondents who selected 'other' when asked how they thought the points for those in paid work for 16 or more hours per week should be amended were asked to write their comments in free text.

Comments made have been themed and those with two or more comments are summarised in the table below.

Examples of comments made can also be seen below, with the full list of themes and comments made found in the appendices report.

Theme	Count
There needs to be more points awarded	6
Those unable to work due to health should also be considered for points	4
No points should be awarded for working	3
Volunteering time should be considered for points	3
It should be calculated differently	3
Remain the same	2

“Consider the implications for single parent families in contrast to two parents - i.e. do all adults in household work to qualify for points? So as to make it fairer on single parent households who are less able to work than multiple adult households.”

It should be calculated differently

“Credit points awarded to people who cannot work, e.g. disabled, longterm sick or over 55s.”

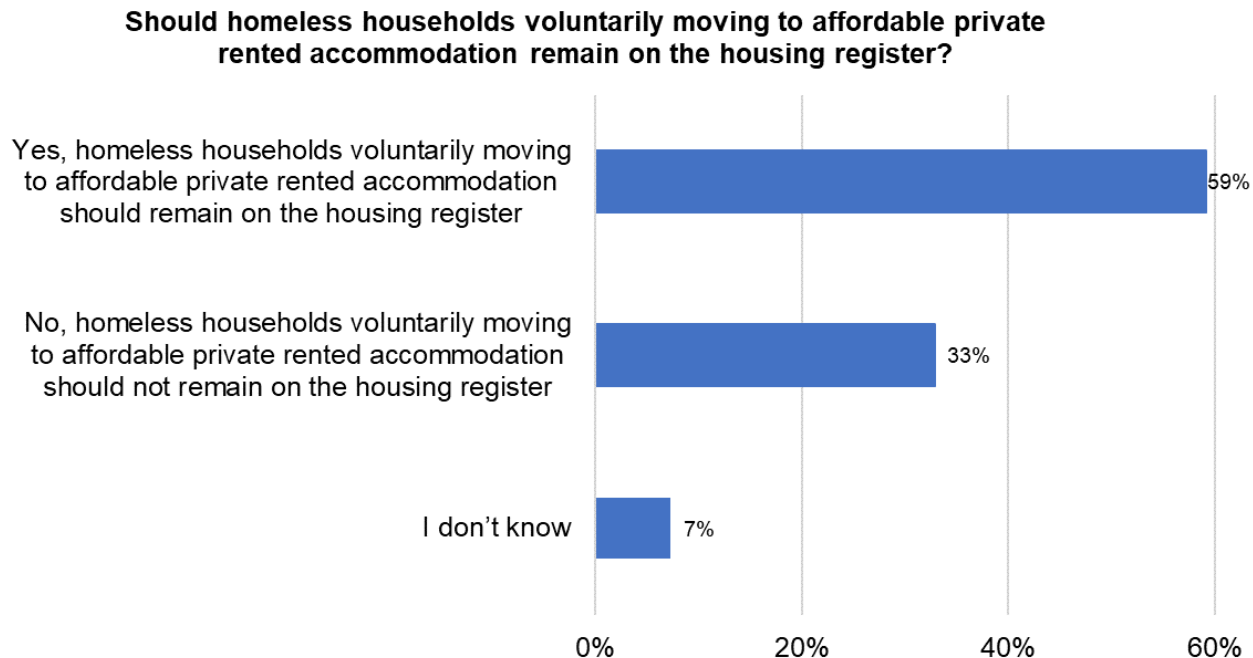
Those unable to work due to health should also be considered for points



Prevention of homelessness using private rented homes

Respondents were asked if they thought homeless households currently in, or who are potentially about to be moved into, temporary accommodation provided by the Council should still qualify for the housing register if they choose to voluntarily move to suitable and affordable private rented accommodation of their choice instead.

Over half (59 per cent) responded 'yes, homeless households voluntarily moving to affordable private rented accommodation should remain on the housing register'. Seven per cent did not know if homeless households voluntarily moving to affordable private rented accommodation should or should not remain on the housing register.

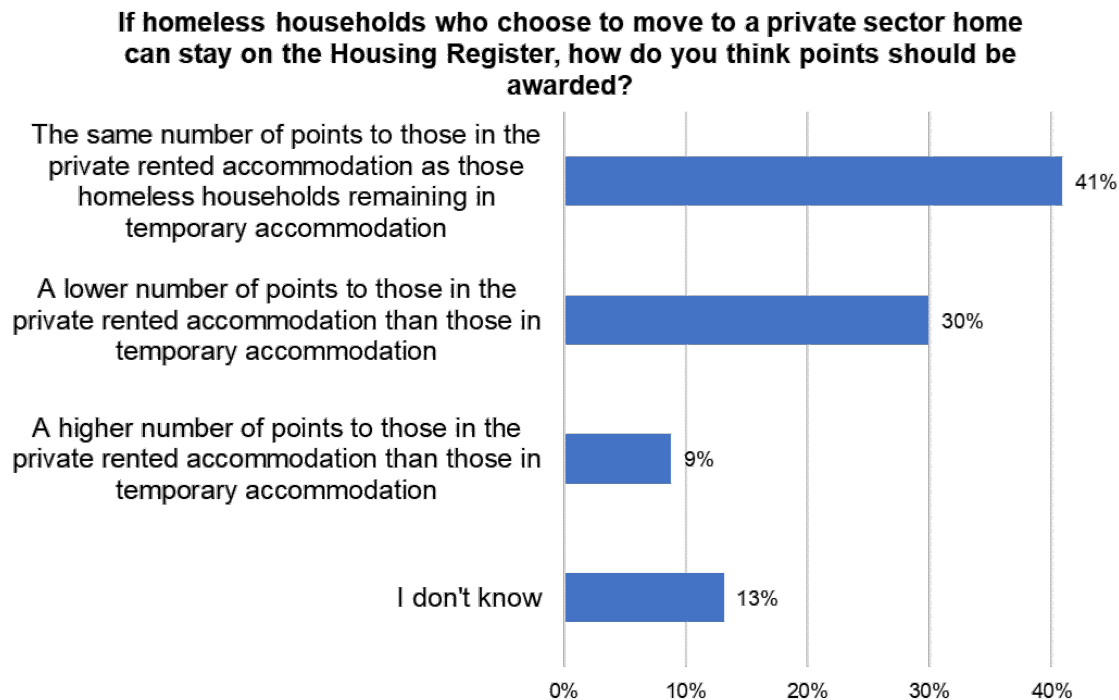


Base: 137 (all responses)

Prevention of homelessness using private rented homes – awarding points

A follow on question regarding the prevention of homelessness using private rented homes was then asked of respondents, this was: If homeless households who choose to move to a private sector home can stay on the Housing Register, how do you think points should be awarded?

The answer with the largest number of responses was for 'the same number of points to be issued to those in private rented accommodation as those homeless households remaining in temporary accommodation' (41 per cent). A total of 13 per cent of respondents said they did not know how the points should be awarded.



Base: 137 (all responses)

Enhanced support pathways

Kensington and Chelsea Council recognise that some households need additional support to access rehousing due to their particular vulnerabilities. There are currently some special schemes with dedicated routes to rehousing already in place for example, for people in supported accommodation.

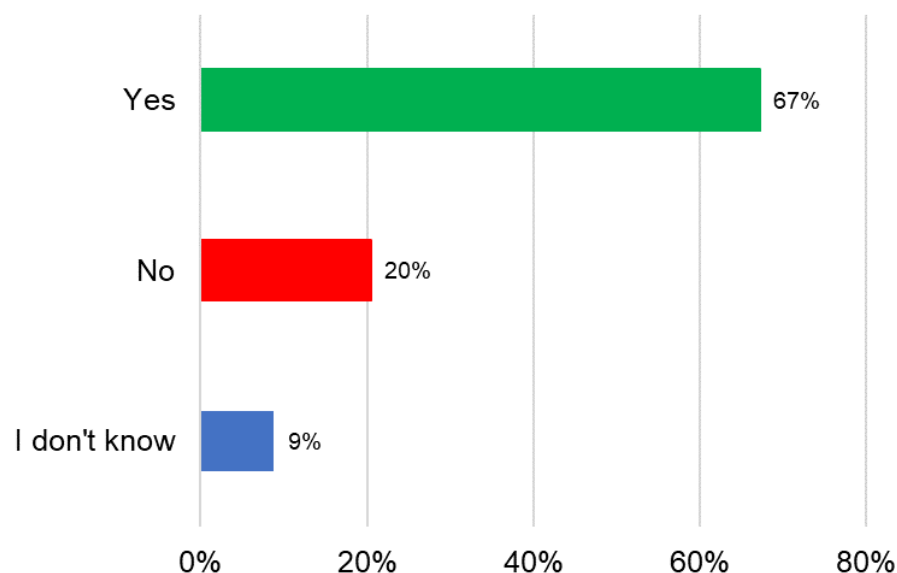
The below list represents a proposed new list to widen this service to a more diverse set of situations and groups.

- Care leavers
- Vulnerable people leaving hospital
- Vulnerable people leaving supported accommodation
- Complex and enduring mental health problems
- Adults with learning difficulties
- Families with children with learning difficulties
- Foster carers
- Rough sleepers
- Female former rough sleepers and/or in supported accommodation
- People with physical disabilities

Respondents were asked if this proposed extended list looks appropriate to them.

Over two thirds (67 per cent) of respondents answered 'yes'.

Does this proposed extended list look appropriate to you?



Base: 137 (all responses)



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Enhanced support pathways – Missing groups

Respondents were also asked if they thought any group of people were missing from the list. Respondents were given a space to write their comments in free text.

Comments made have been themed and those with two or more comments are summarised in the table below.

Examples of comments made can also be seen below, with the full list of themes and comments made found in the appendices report.

Theme	Count
Abuse victims (including domestic abuse)	7
Carers	5
Elderly people	4
Key workers	3
Those with hidden illnesses	2
Family connections in the borough	2
Male and female former rough sleepers	2

“Adults who give daily care for disabled family in the borough.”

Carers

“People escaping violence or abuse.”

Abuse victims (including domestic abuse)

“People who have been in the Borough since they were small and has family connections in the borough.”

Family connections in the borough



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How priorities should be awarded

There are lots of different reasons why people need a more suitable home or why they might be on the housing register. Legally, certain situations must be given some priority on the register.

Respondents were given a list of 10 reasons why people might need a more suitable home or why they might be on the housing register and were asked to rank which they considered to be the top five categories they thought should have the highest priority on the housing register.

They were asked to number their top five reasons from one to five. Each option was assigned a score and a mean score calculated to establish the priority order, which can be found in the chart on the next page.

The highest ranked reasons which respondents thought should have the highest priority were 'domestic abuse and/or other serious risk of harm' (3.4) followed by 'those moving for health or disability reasons' (3).

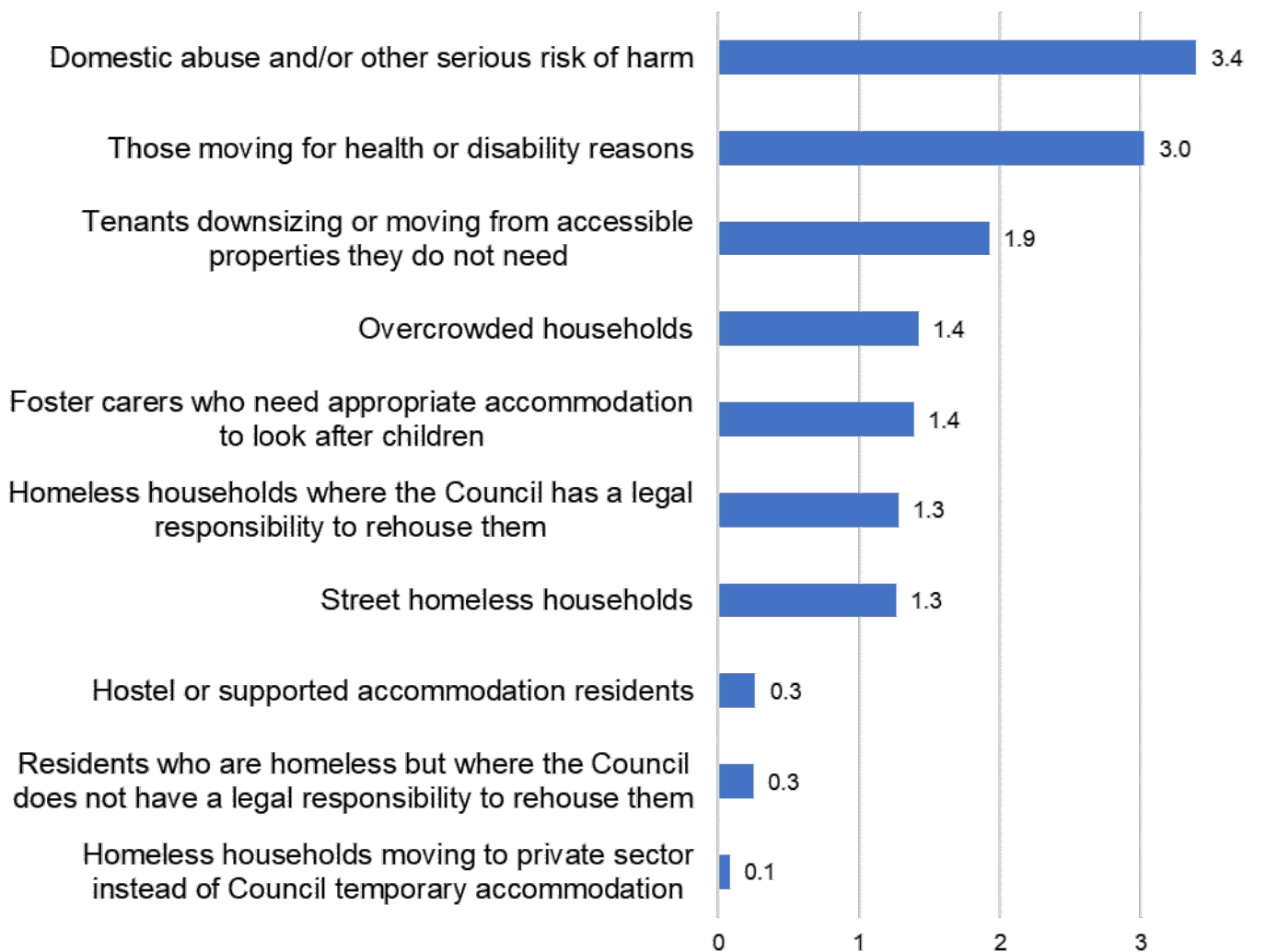
The lowest ranked reasons were 'homeless households moving to private sector instead of Council temporary accommodation' (0.1) and 'residents who are homeless but where the Council does not have a legal responsibility to rehouse them' (0.3).

The full ranking order of all 10 reasons can be seen on the graph on the next page.



How priorities should be awarded - Continued

Please rank the top five categories you think should have the highest priority?

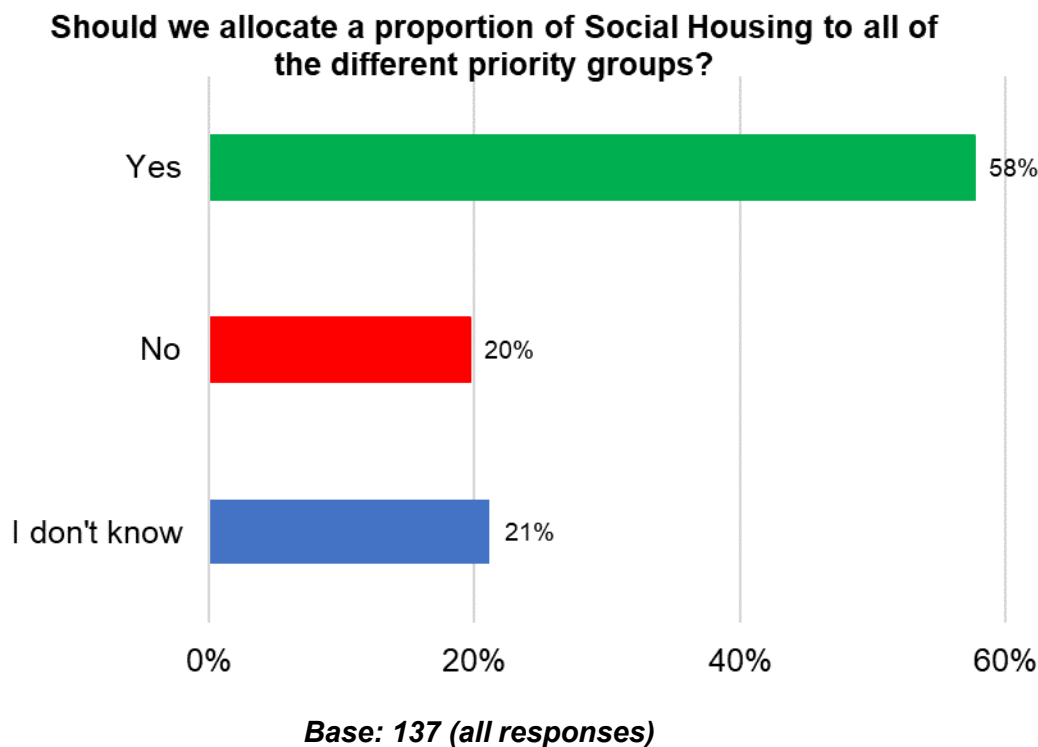


How much housing should each priority group receive

Kensington and Chelsea Council currently try to ensure that a certain percentage of the Social Housing that becomes available every year is split between those who the council have assessed to be homeless and those from other priority groups.

The Council is proposing to allocate a proportion of Social Housing to different priority groups. This would not increase the overall availability of properties but would enable a level of certainty that there would be movement for all types of priority groups.

More than half (58 per cent) of respondents said 'yes', we should allocate a proportion of Social Housing to all of the different priority groups, with 21 per cent of respondents saying they 'don't know'.

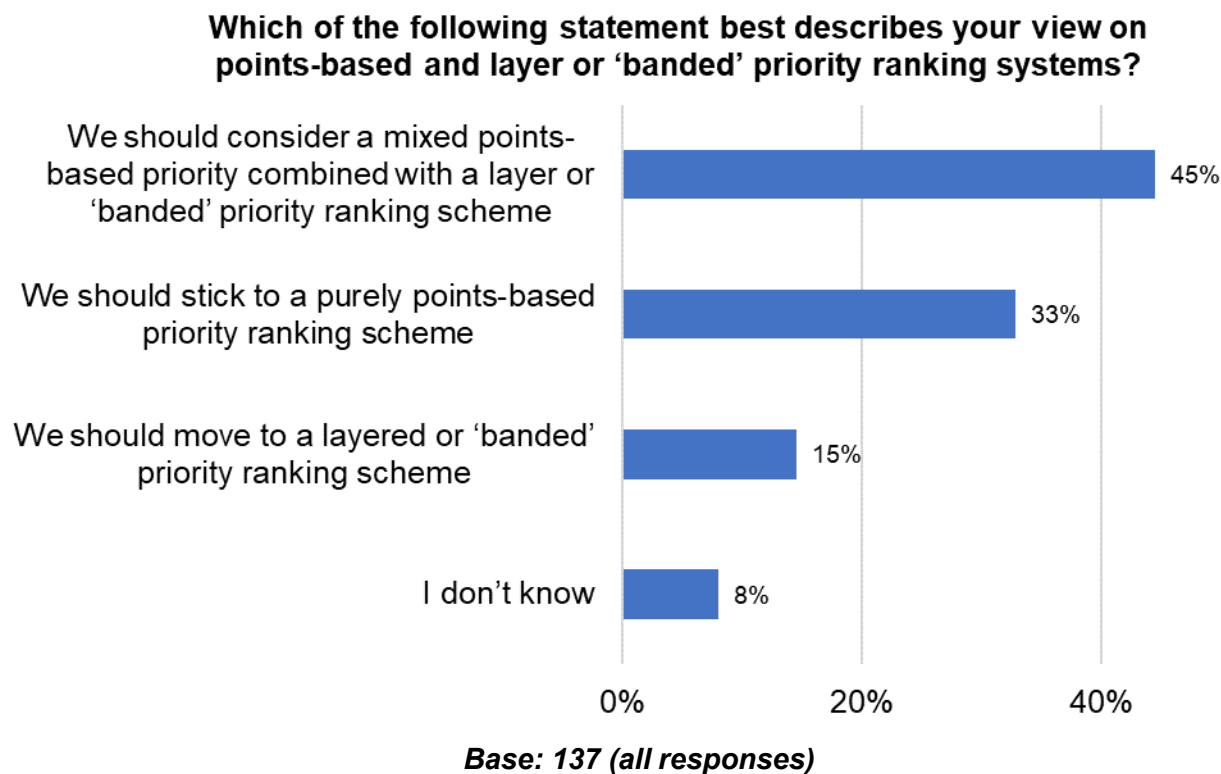


Points-based and layer priority ranking systems

Kensington and Chelsea Council are considering implementing a system that streamlines points into layers or 'bands', such as high, medium, or low so that it is clearer for residents to see at a glance where they are in relation to the other main priority groups.

Respondents were asked which of the three statement listed in the graph below best described their view on points-based and layer or 'banded' priority ranking systems.

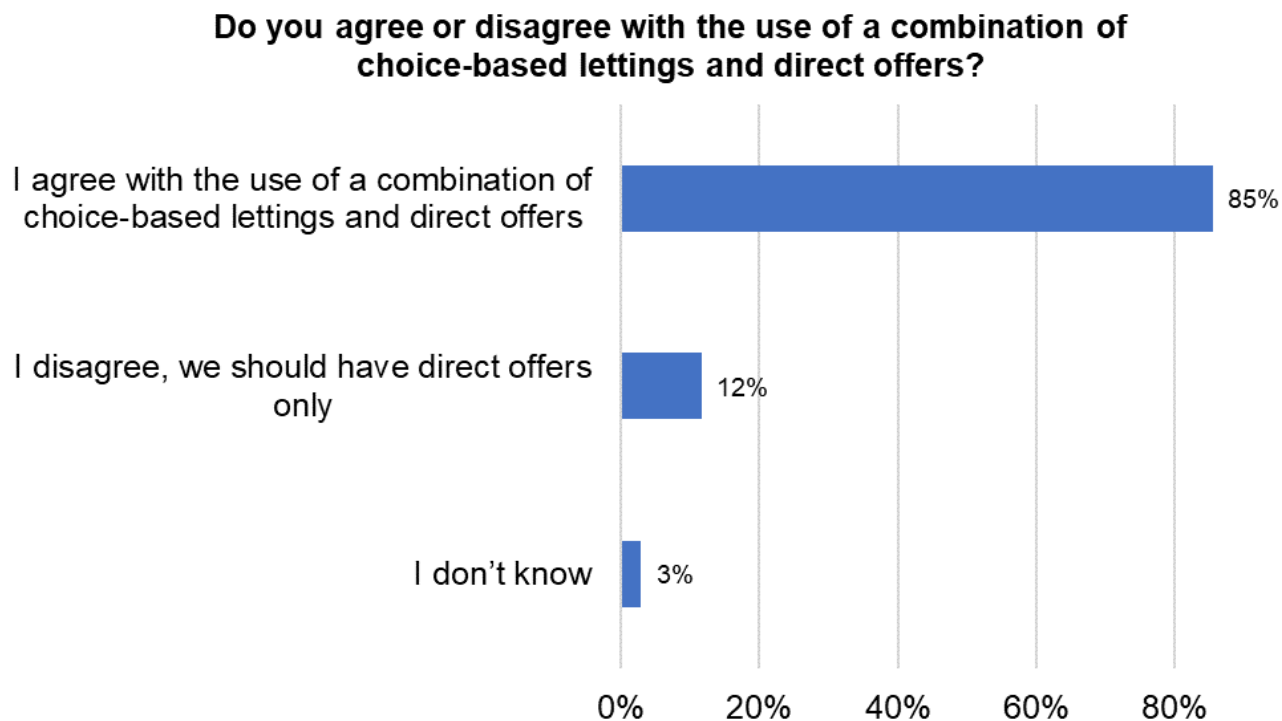
A total of 45 per cent of respondents said 'we should consider a mixed points-based priority ranking scheme', followed by one third (33 per cent) of respondents who said 'we should stick to a purely points-based priority ranking scheme'.



Choice-based lettings and direct offers

Kensington and Chelsea Council currently use a combination of choice-based lettings and direct offers to households on the housing register. This means, depending on your circumstances, you may be made a direct offer of a property you have not chosen yourself.

A total of 85 per cent of respondents said they 'agree with the use of a combination of choice-based lettings and direct offers'.



Base: 137 (all responses)



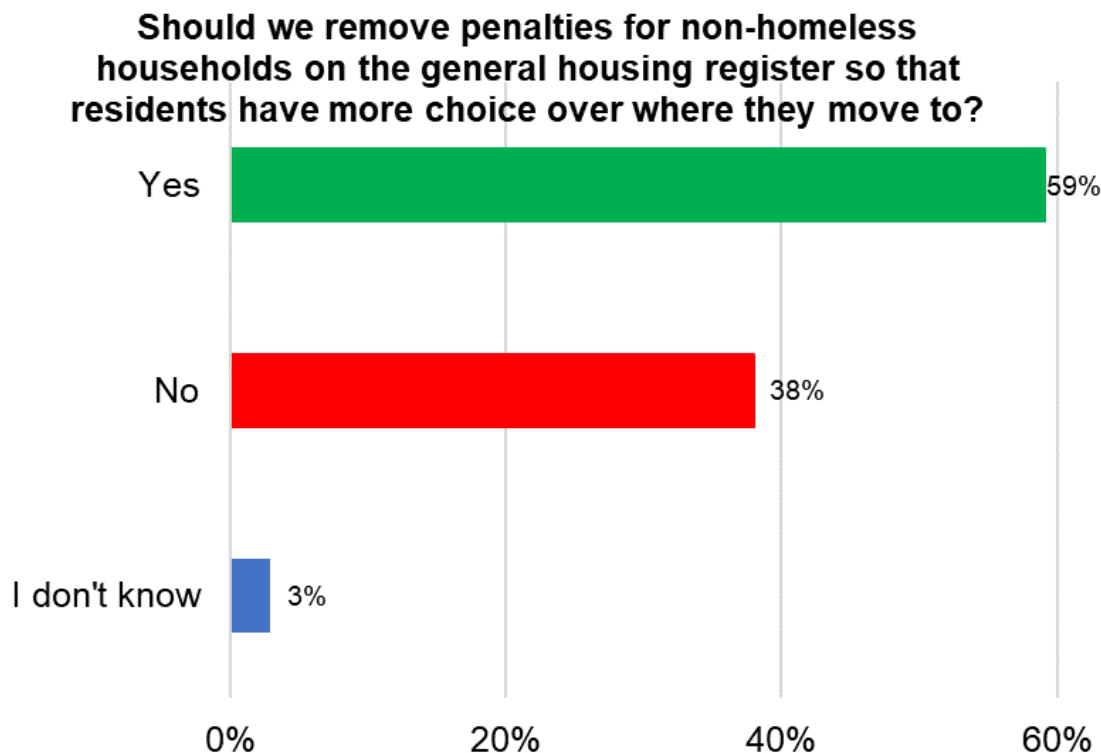
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Penalties

Currently, non-homeless residents can be suspended from the Housing Register for one year if they refused suitable offers of housing.

More than half (59 per cent) of respondents said 'yes', we should remove these penalties for non-homeless households on the general housing register so that residents have more choice over where they move to'.

Just over a third (38 per cent) said 'no'.



Base: 137 (all responses)

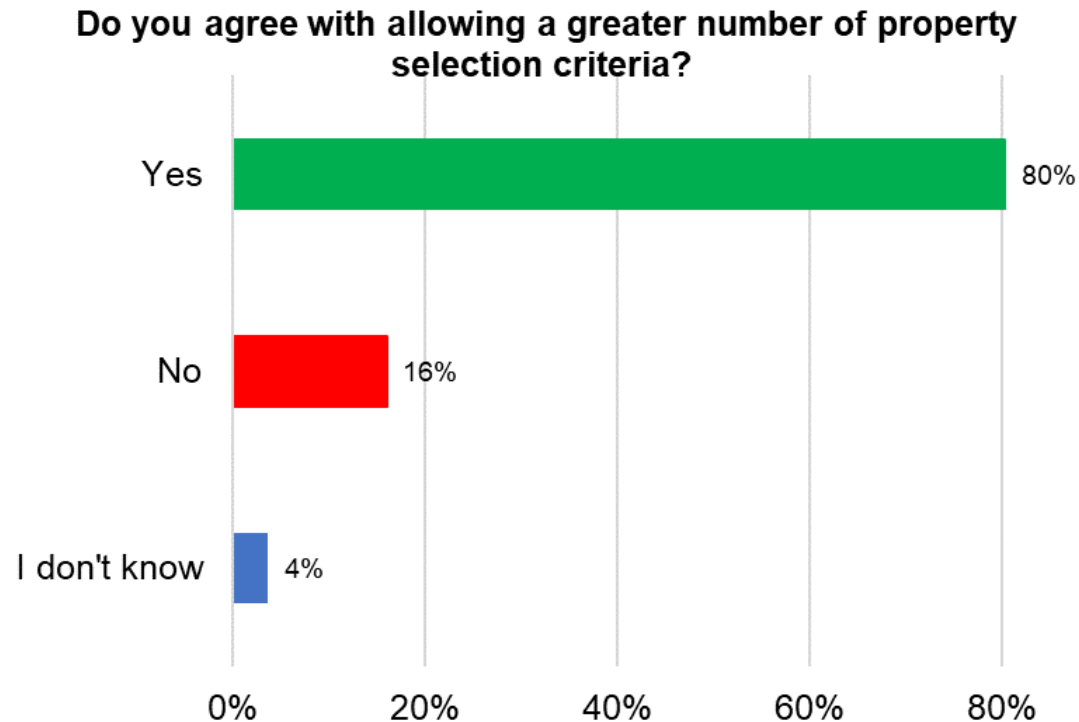


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Flexibility

Kensington and Chelsea Council are considering if there should be more flexibility on the criteria people are allowed to place on the location and types of homes they want to be considered for when applying for housing.

More than three quarters (80 per cent) of respondents agreed with this approach.



Base: 137 (all responses)

Additional comments

Respondents were asked to share if they had any further comments or observations on how they think the Allocations Scheme should work. Respondents were given space to write their comments in free text.

Comments made have been themed and those with three or more comments are summarised in the table below.

Examples of comments made can also be seen on the next page, with the full list of themes and comments made found in the appendices report.

Theme	Count
Priority suggestion - Those who live/work in the borough	11
Priority suggestion	11
Priority suggestion - Children and families	10
Suggestion to reduce property rejection	6
Personal story	6
Priority suggestion - Complex needs	6
Priority suggestion - Adult Children	4
Priority suggestion - Homeless	4
Accessibility of bidding process	3



Additional comments - examples

“Priority given to those families in temporary accommodation out of borough over those in temporary accommodation already within RBKC.”

Priority suggestion - Those who live/work in the borough

“Please have a care to those leaving prison with no home - they are more likely to reoffend if they are on the streets.”

Priority suggestion

“In regard to overcrowding and the sharing of bedrooms, I think if children of different sexes need their own room at 11, children of the same sex should need their own room too. I'm not sure the benefit if moving it from 21 down to just 18.”

Priority suggestion - Children and families

“People in supported and hostel accommodation with complex mental health, social needs and with a proven local connection of 5- 10 yrs should have a priority.”

Priority suggestion - Complex needs



“In order to avoid penalties, I think it would be a good idea for photographs of the inside of the properties to be included on the home connection advertisement website. This would reduce/prevent applicants rejecting the property after viewing.”

Suggestion to reduce property rejection

“Family’s with a long connection to the borough should be given extra points like they do in other boroughs.”

Priority suggestion - Those who live/work in the borough

“Keep the scheme simple, straight forward and forgo this ridiculous 'bidding' for properties. Many residents do not have access to the internet to bid, housing officers are supposed to do this for them - do they really have the time?”

Accessibility of bidding process



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Section 2:

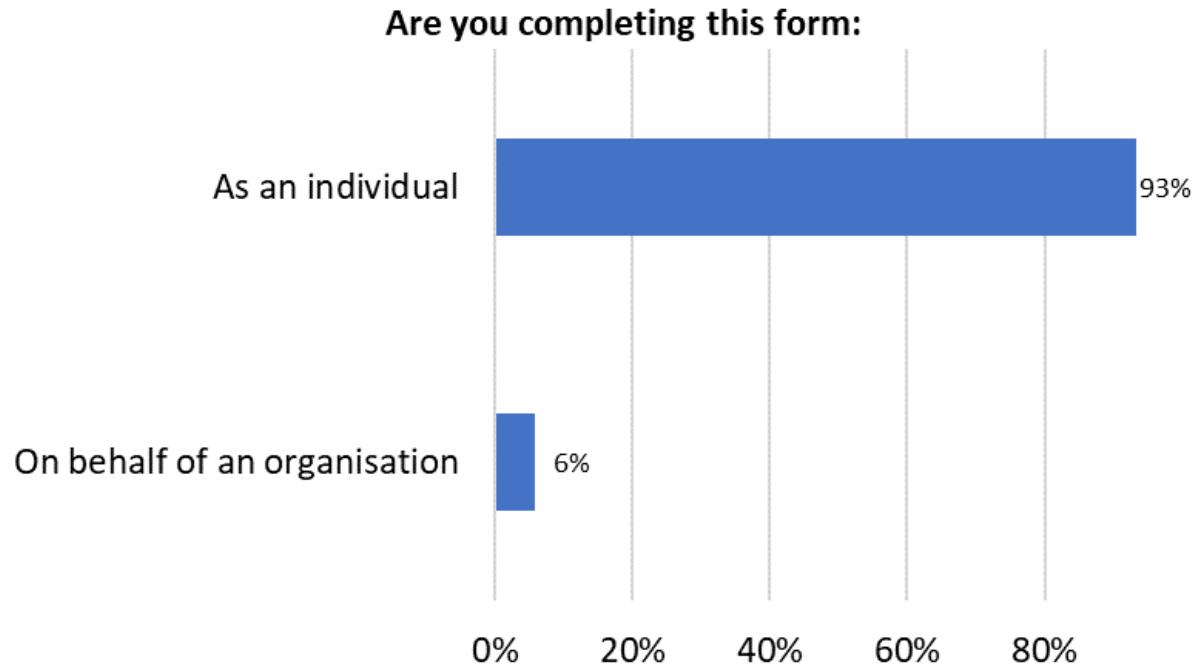
Housing allocations Survey About Respondents – Demographic Breakdown



About respondents: Organisation or individual

Most (93 per cent) of respondents answered this survey as an individual with six per cent answering on behalf of an organisation.

Those answering on behalf of an organisation were asked to state the name of their organisation in free text. A full list of answers can be found in the appendix report.



Base: 137 (all responses)

Respondents locations

Respondents were asked to share their full postcode. This information has been sorted into Kensington and Chelsea borough Wards and has been used to understand the views of respondents from across the borough and beyond.

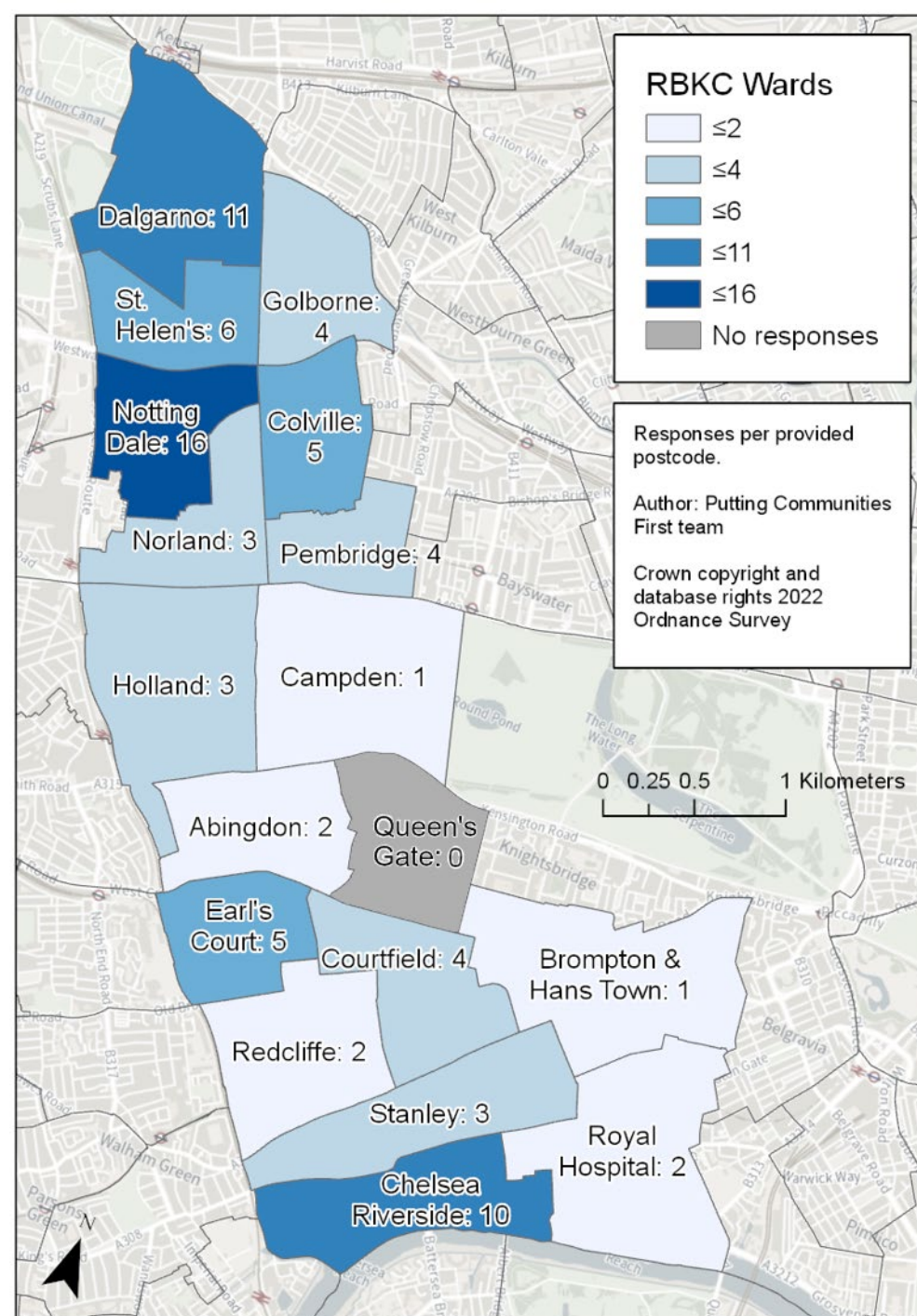
There were a total of 118 responses to this question. A total of 27 responses came from outside of Kensington and Chelsea with the remaining 91 responses covering 17 of the 18 Wards within Kensington and Chelsea.

- The two Wards with the highest number of responses to this survey were Notting Dale (16) and Dalgarno (11).
- The Ward with the least number of respondents to this survey was Queen's Gate with zero responses.

Base: 137 (all respondents)



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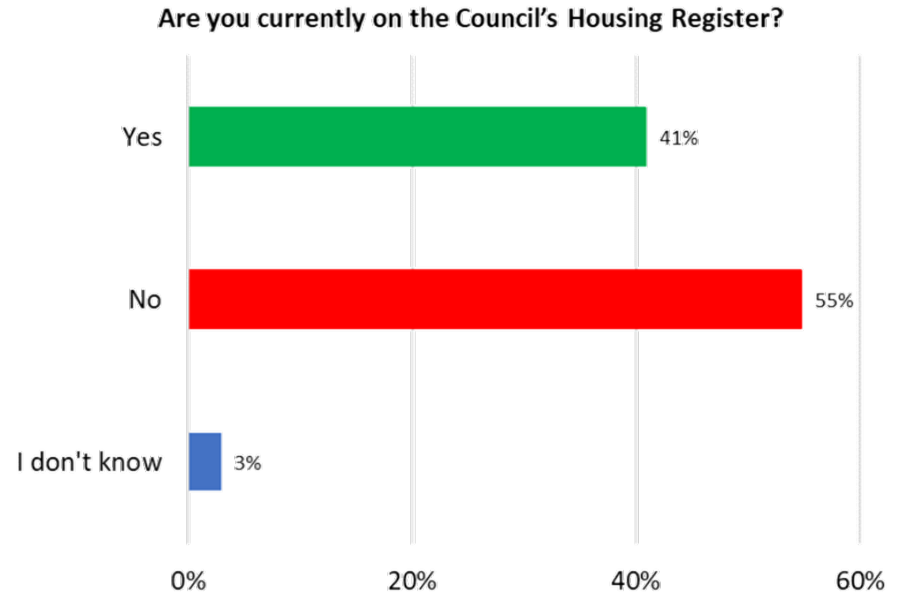


About respondents: Housing Register Status

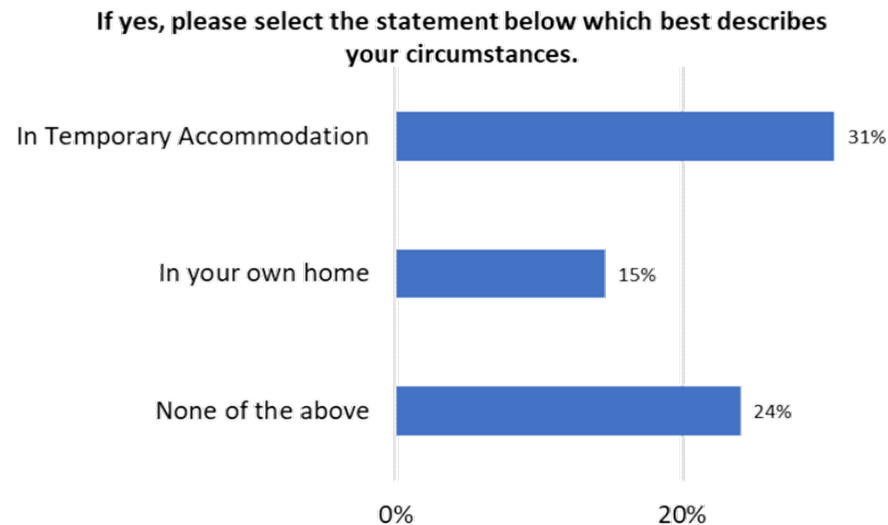
Respondents were asked a series of questions about themselves, to understand who had responded to the public survey as part of this consultation exercise.

Graphs representing the answers to these questions can be found on this and the following six pages.

Where respondents have selected 'prefer to self describe', respondents were given space to provide their answers in free text. A full list of these answers can be found in the appendix report.



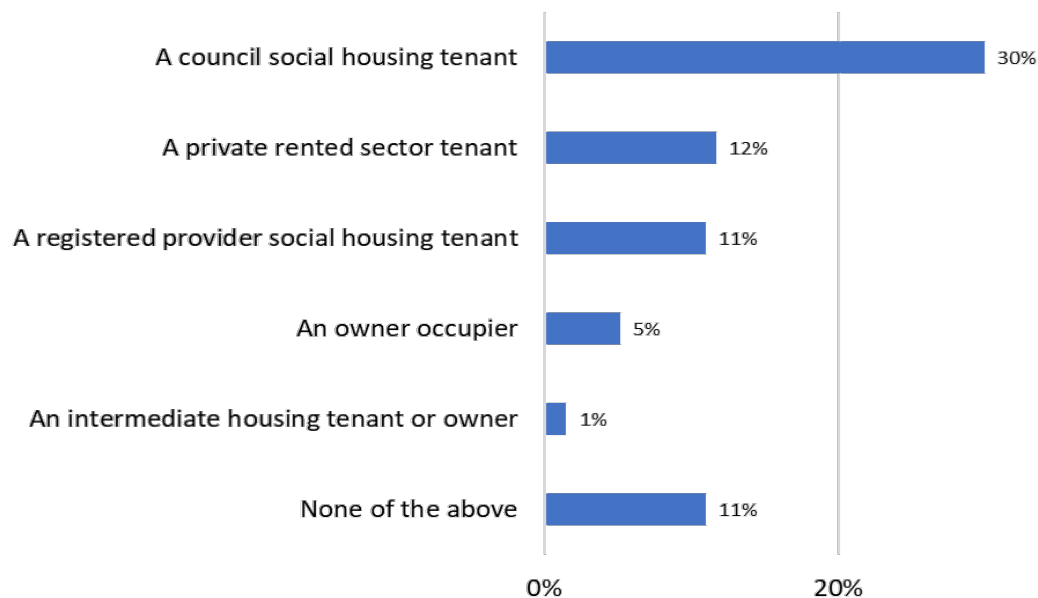
Base: All responses (137)



Base: All responses (137)

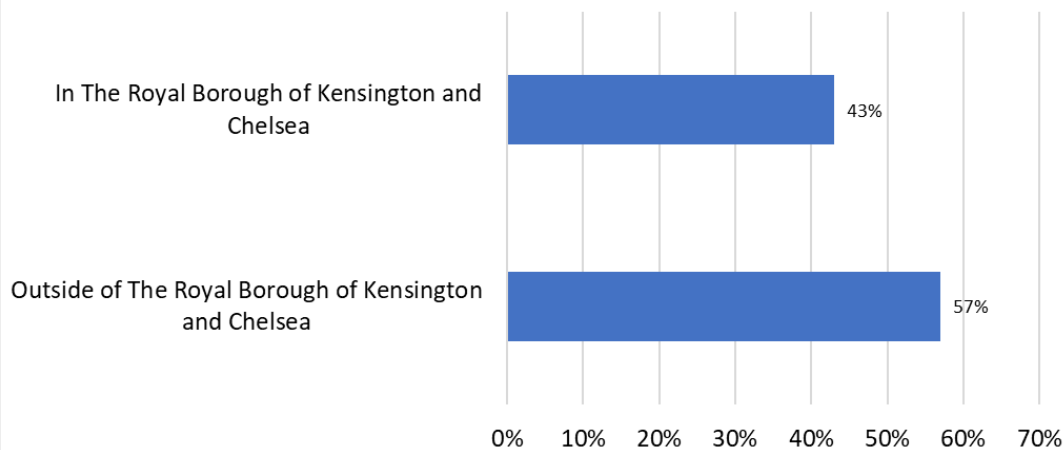
About respondents: Housing Register Status (continued)

If no, please select the statement below which best describes your circumstances.



Base: All responses (137)

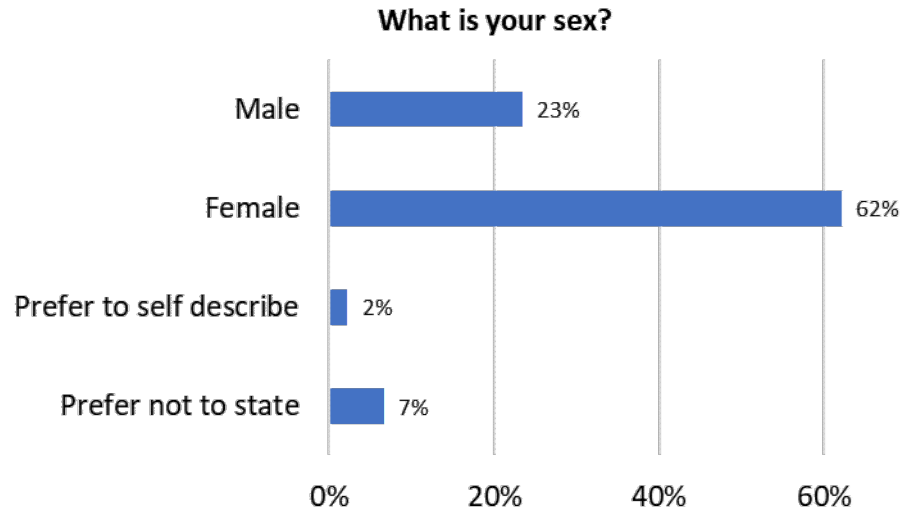
If you are living in Temporary Accommodation please select where this is.



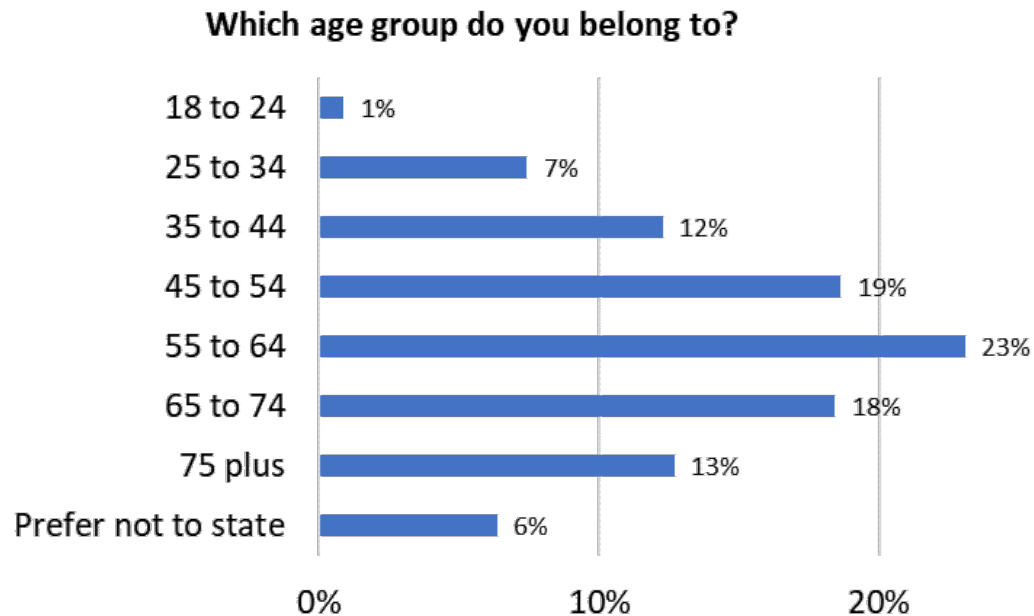
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Base: (54)

Survey findings: Profile of respondents



Base: All responses (137)

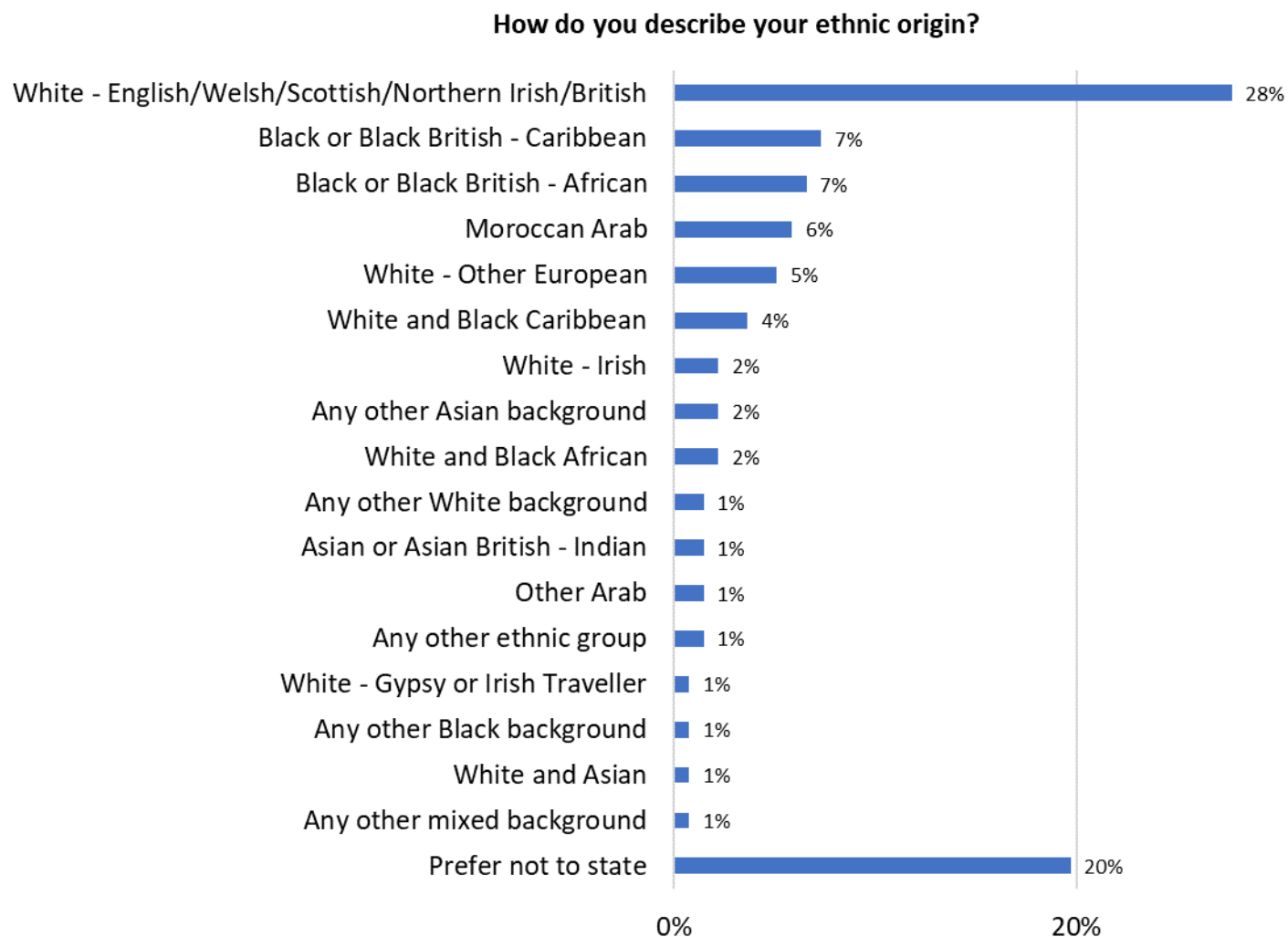


Base: All responses (137)



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About respondents: Demographic Breakdown

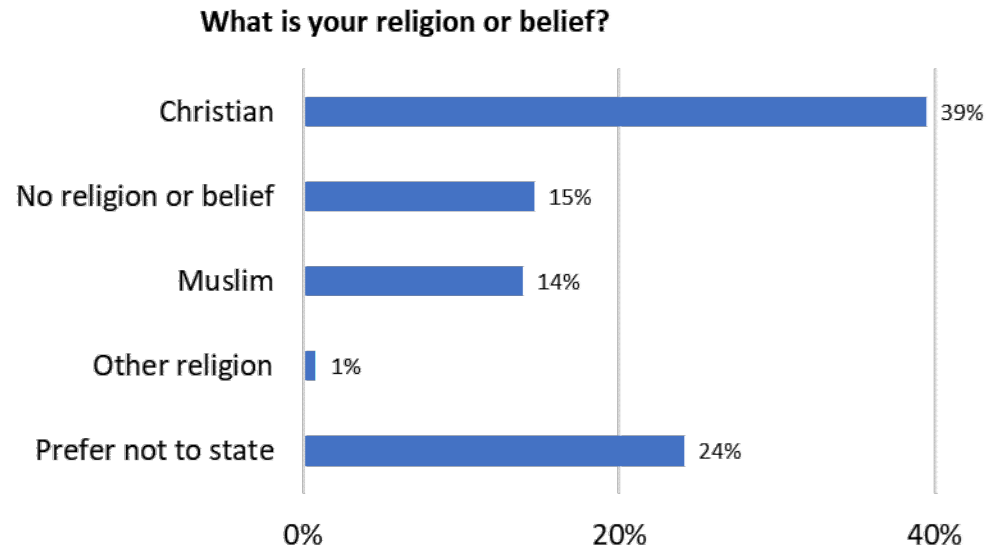


Base: 137 (all responses)



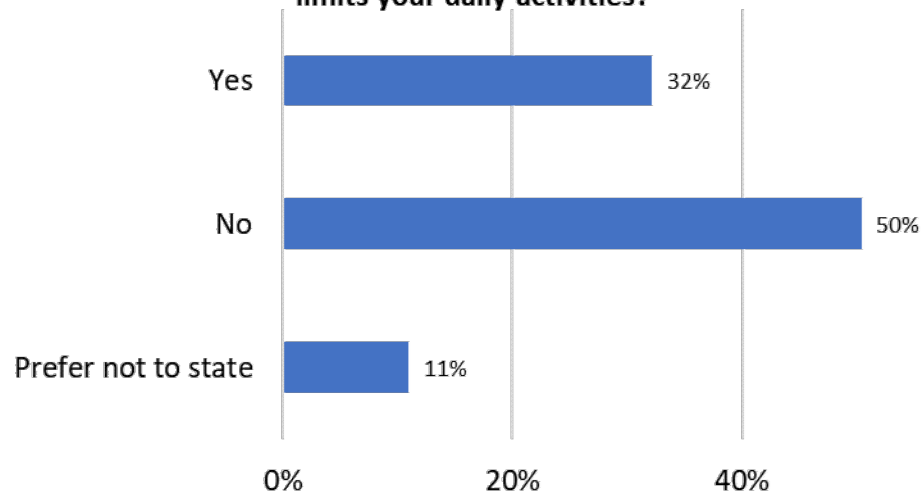
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Profile of respondents



Base: All responses (137)

Do you have a long-term illness, health problem or disability which limits your daily activities?



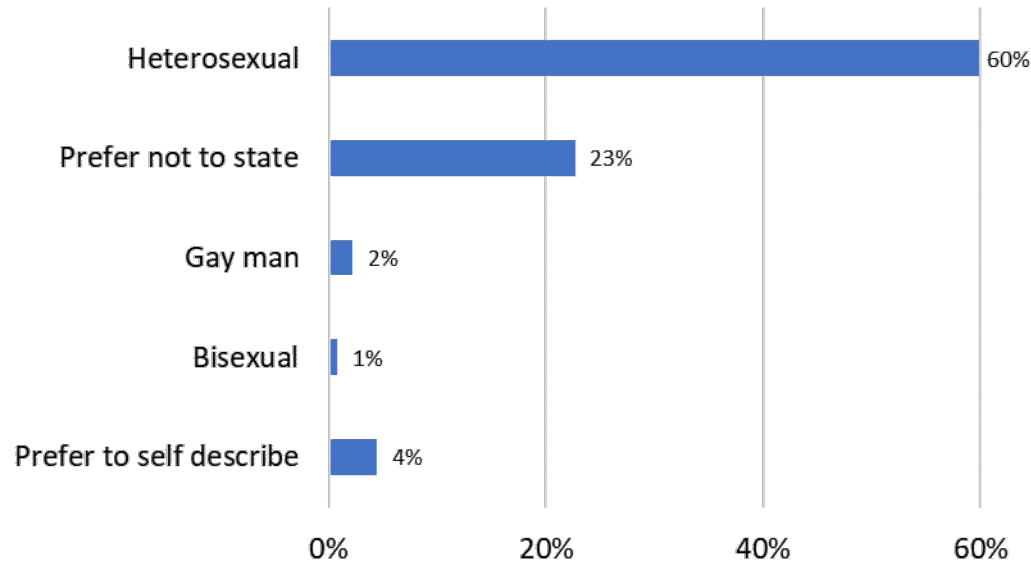
Base: All responses (137)



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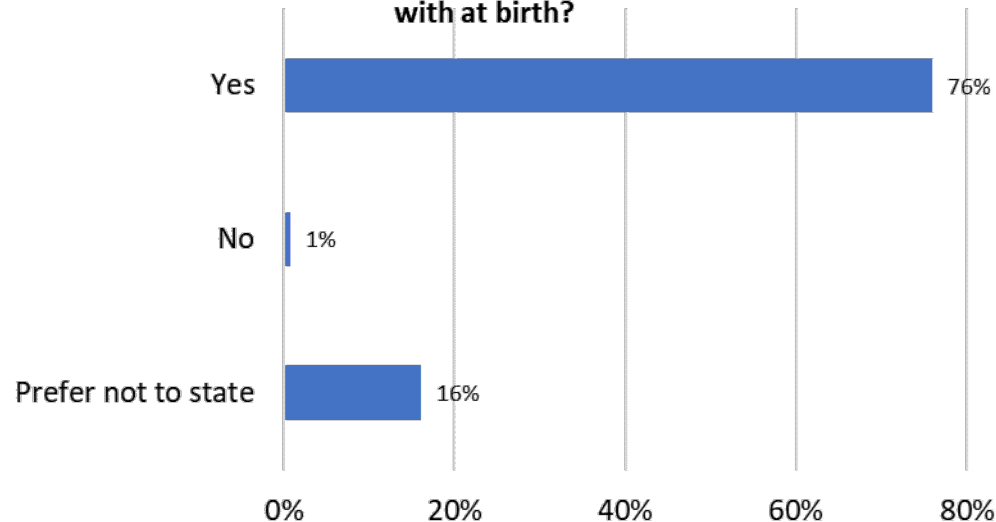
Profile of respondents – Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

How would you describe your sexual orientation?



Base: All responses (137)

Does your gender identity match the sex you were registered with at birth?



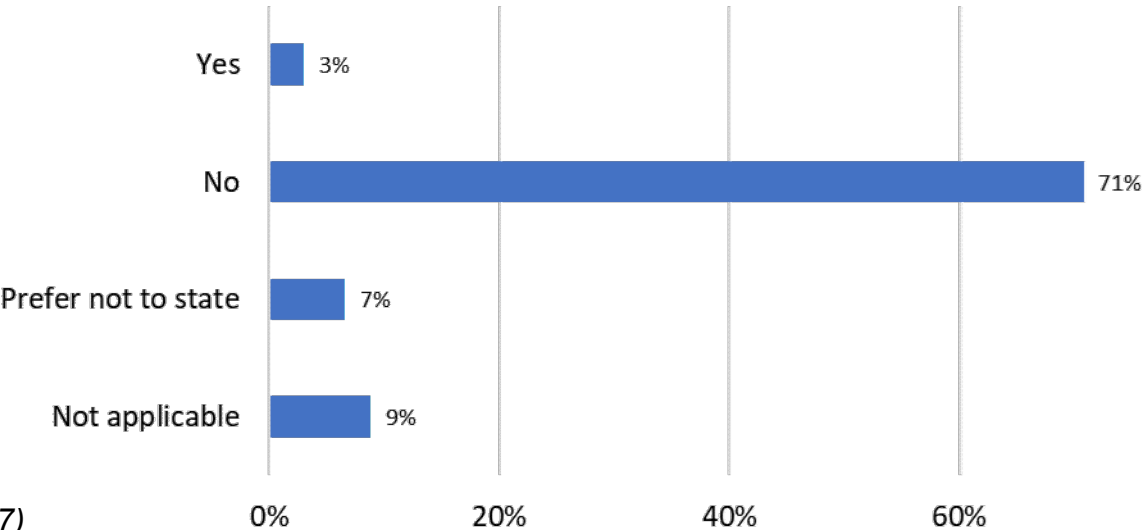
Base: All responses (137)



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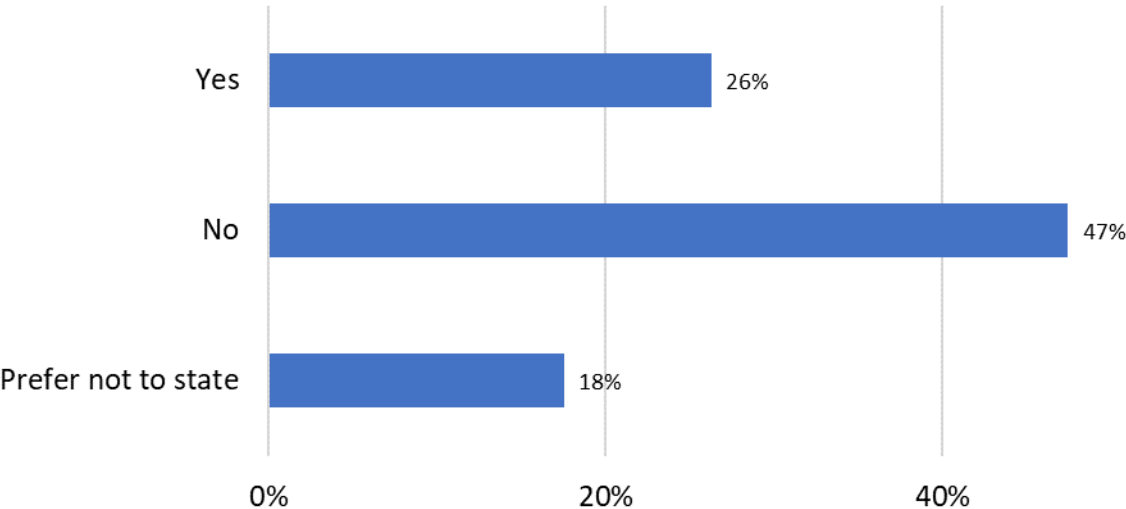
Profile of respondents – Pregnancy and Relationship Status

Are you pregnant or in your maternity phase?



Base: All responses (137)

Are you married/ in a civil partnership?



Base: All responses (137)

Section 3:

Focus Groups and meetings



Focus groups and meetings

Theme	Count
Bedroom sharing	52
Overcrowding	51
Working points	46
Household members	42
Penalties and disqualifications	41
Prevention points	31
Waiting time points	30
Points v banding	24
Accessibility (of scheme and moving)	14
Quotas and value of priorities	12
Accumulation of points	9
Length of residence	2

A total of 12 focus groups and interviews with residents and key stakeholders were held to allow participants to share their views on the current Allocations Scheme and highlight any changes they feel need to be made or considered as part of this consultation exercise.

These session took place with:

- Housing providers
- Local community groups
- Children's services
- Family services
- Allocations teams
- Sessions open to the wider public to attend

Comments made during these session have been themed and summarised in the table on this page.

Examples of comments made can also be seen on the next two pages, with the full list of themes and comments made found in the appendices report.



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Base: 354 (all comments)

Focus groups and meetings comments

“strongly supports efforts to get under occupiers to move to smaller properties - should be prioritised in new scheme.”

Overcrowding

“For those who cannot work they are left with 100 points and cannot get the extra 50 points. This discriminates those who cannot work.”

Working points

“Adverts are not reflective of the properties in real life, needs to be more upfront information.”

Penalties and disqualifications

“Longest waiting should get the social housing property; person who has been waiting should be considered, those who have been waiting for a very long time.”

Waiting time points

“Could this be lowered to GCSE age (15-16) to allow for better conditions for studying. Meaning that young peoples ability to obtain good grade and go into higher education is not hindered.”

Bedroom sharing

“Time for a change to consider what a family is - there is a need for family members to support one another.”

Household members

“Should consider whether those who move out of the borough actually deserve more points.”

Prevention points



Focus groups and meetings comments - examples

“The points system should be easy to explain to the customer.”

Points v banding

“Factor the choices of the residents - make their own planned choices.”

Accumulation of points

“If we know, by the end of the financial year, each band will get X% of homes, it will at least give us clarity and allow us to be more definitive with our residents.”

Quotas and value of priorities



“Older people have difficulties with packing and moving.”

Accessibility (of scheme and moving)

“It's not easy - some people are more vocal and some cannot speak out.”

Accessibility (of scheme and moving)

“opposite sex distinction should be removed as the one size fits all policy does not acknowledge different circumstances.”

Bedroom sharing

“Reduced equality of life – [when] changing the living room into a bedroom.”

Overcrowding



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