

Housing Management Repairs Policy

Analysis of stakeholder consultation

August 2024

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THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF
KENSINGTON
AND CHELSEA

Introduction

Background

The Repairs Policy is up for review as the current version, published in 2019, needs a refresh. Kensington and Chelsea Council sought the views of tenants and leaseholders via a survey to gather opinions and suggestions for improvement.

The Repairs Policy outlines the responsibilities of the Council, tenants, and leaseholders. It mainly focuses on the responsive repairs service but also covers communal repairs, planned maintenance, and adaptations.

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. The letters also provided information on where to obtain a physical copy of the policy and survey, as well as instructions on how to request translations or have them delivered directly to their residence. Further promotion was carried out by the Service Improvement Team at various events: the World's End Engagement Day on 20th June, the Bramley House 'Meet the Contractor' event on 26th June, the Money Café on 4th July, and the Kensal Resource Centre Pantry on 11th July. The consultation was open from 22 May to 16 July 2024, receiving a total of 22 responses.

Acknowledgements

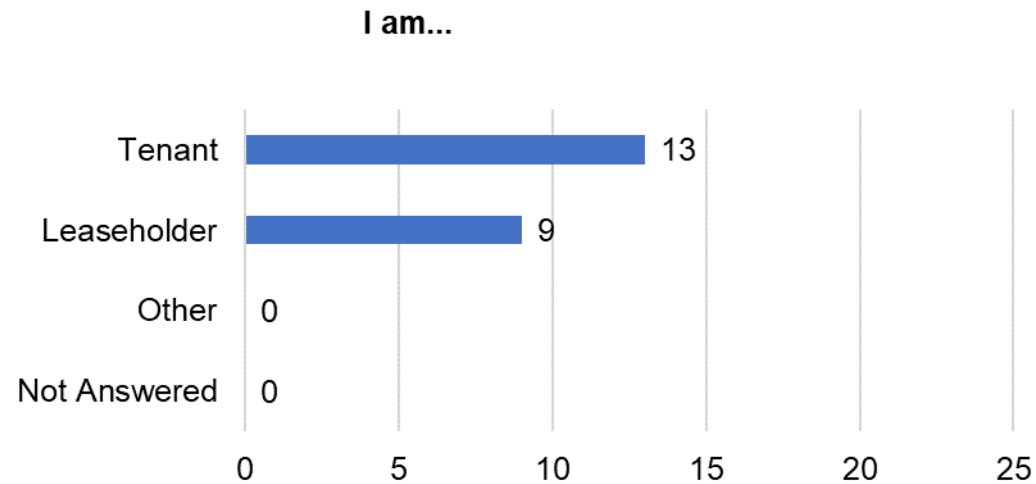
The Council would like to thank all residents that took the time to provide feedback on Housing Management Repairs Policy.



Capacity in which responding

Respondents were asked in what capacity they were responding.

- The majority of respondents (13) indicated they were responding as tenants.
- Nine respondents indicated they were responding as leaseholders.



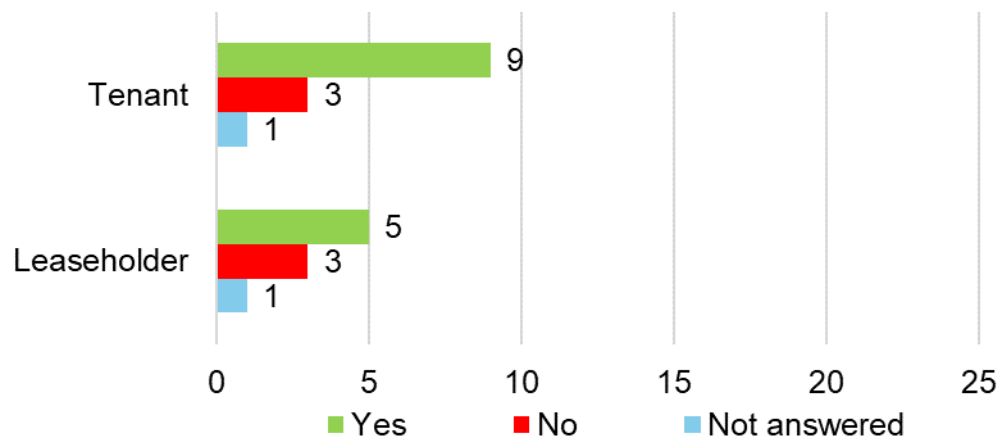
Base: All respondents (22)

Language

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

- The majority of respondents (14) said the policy was clear and easy to understand, this includes nine of the 13 tenants responding. Five leaseholders found the policy clear and easy to understand.
- However, six respondents selected 'no' for their answer (three tenants and three leaseholders) and two respondents did not answer.

Did you find the Repairs Policy clear and easy to understand?



Language- comments

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

- I am having to ask my son to help me.
- What's the window frame? Is it the metal/plastic part? The hole in the wall?
- There is no explanation of how to deal with a long-standing - in my case 5 years incident of disrepair.
- As a leaseholder, it is difficult to understand why the replacement of the front door and the increased buildings insurance should be paid by the leaseholder. These items should be borne by the council.
- I struggle reading online documents and only read the changes that were inserted. I have not received any correspondence about this consultation.
- This is a good example of assuming things. I have not read the whole policy but rather the proposed changes, so I can't answer yes or no to this.
- Ambiguous.
- Does not include damage in communal areas due to antisocial behaviour from tenants and makes it a responsibility of the leaseholder to pay for the repair.

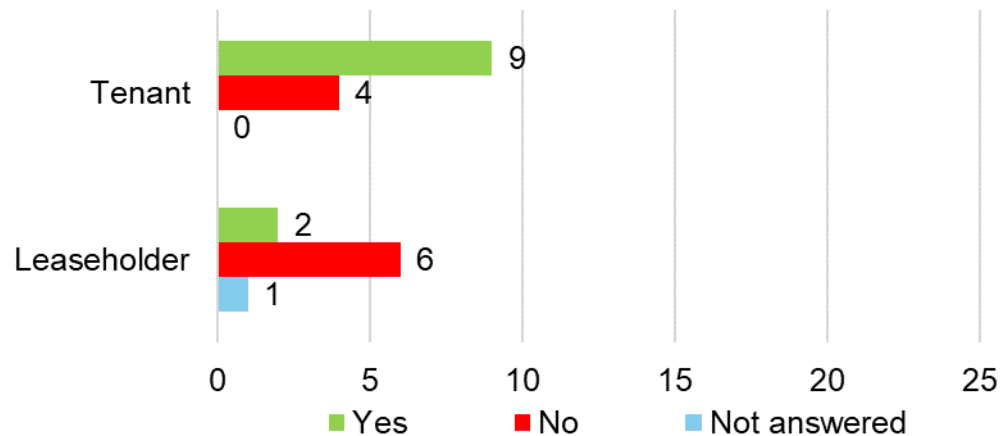


Repair obligations as a tenant/leaseholder

Respondents were asked that having read the policy is the repair obligations as a tenant/leaseholder.

- Half of the respondents (11) said 'yes' that the policy clarifies the repair obligations for a tenant/leaseholder.
- However, ten respondents said that the policy does not clarify the tenant/leaseholder repair obligations, this includes six of the nine leaseholders responding . One respondent did not provide an answer.

Having read the policy do you understand your repair obligations as a tenant/leaseholder

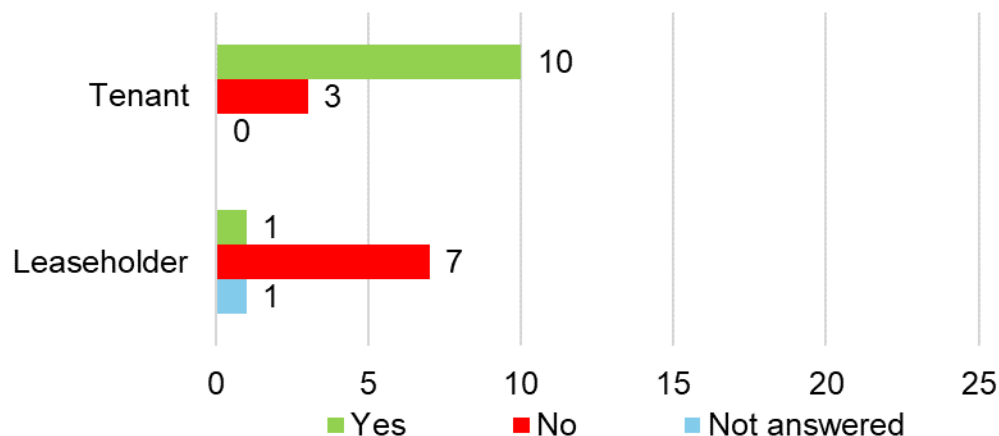


The Council's repair obligations as a landlord

Respondents were asked if they understood the Council's repair obligations as a landlord after reading the policy.

- Half of the respondents (11) said 'yes,' the policy clarifies the Council's repair obligations.
- However, ten respondents stated that the policy does not clarify the Council's repair obligations, this includes seven leaseholders and three tenants. One respondent did not provide an answer.

Having read the policy do you understand the Council's repair obligations as a landlord



Repair obligations - 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:

- The Council's repair obligations are unclear and give no time frames as to when repairs must be completed and to what standard.
- To me the rules have been contrived to bear on the leaseholder.
- Where there is water damage inside a flat emanating from an internal supply riser pipe leakage etc. (i.e. than directly from plumbing to sinks, baths, showers, washing machines etc.) or external sourced water ingress from balconies seeping into a flat, it should be made abundantly clear that the repair and any damage to the leaseholder's property and contents are the responsibility of the Landlord to make good. In the past there has been ambivalence on this, and insurance claims and repairs have been refused on the grounds that it was the leaseholder's responsibility, despite the water entering the flat from the Landlord's property (roof, balcony, risers, internal wall pipes etc.)
- My lease refers to windows - my liability as leaseholder is to the Plate glass only. However, where the windows are now UPVC double glazed, I would expect the council to pay for the frames and myself just the glazing. This needs to be differentiated. Also, there are subsidence cracks to the building. This should be done now, and not rolled into an external repairs and redecoration programme that the leaseholders subsidise. Also, leaseholders on the Denbigh Road side, should only pay / contribute to the Denbigh Road side of the proposed works."
- It is hard to read documents online
- You are turning around the words to make it more confusing
- Please read my comments above. For example, I pay a hefty service charge for poor service or no service at all!

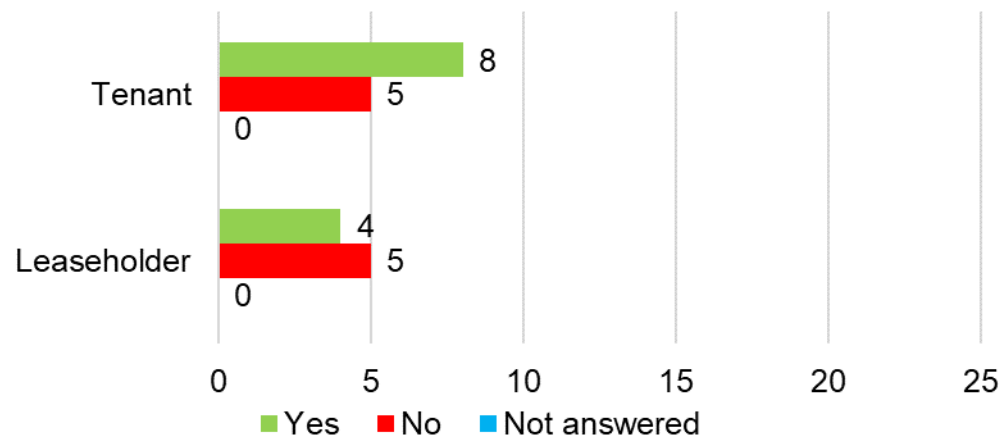


Views on the changes

Respondents were asked if they were happy with the changes to the Repairs Policy.

- More than half (12 respondents) said they were happy with the changes (eight tenants and four leaseholders).
- However, ten respondents said they were not satisfied with the changes (five tenants and five leaseholders).

Given the summary which outlines the changes to the policy, are you happy with the changes?



Views on the changes- comments

Respondents who said that they were not happy with the changes to the policy were asked to explain why:
There were five comments:

- Some tenants are very old and need extra help.
- Not happy with the policy
- The RBKC are taking less responsibility as our landlords to save money and pushing back on the tenant.
- The Laminate flooring was unclear
- It's a really helpful idea to include what a leaseholder can/can't expect from repairs.

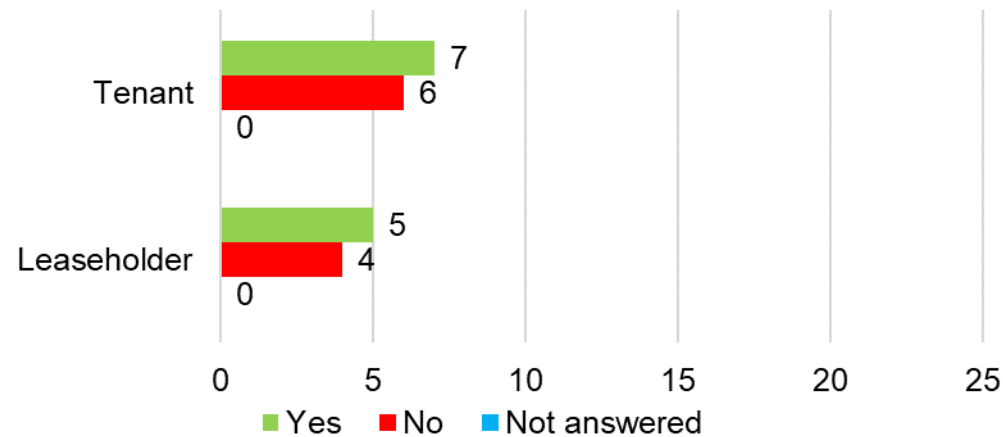


Additional items to the policy

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

- More than half of the respondents (12) said there were items they expected the policy to cover but did not (seven tenants and five leaseholders).
- However, ten respondents said the policy covered everything they expected (six tenants and four leaseholders).

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



Additional items to the policy

Respondents who answered that there were items they expected the policy to cover but did not, where asked to explain their answer. There were 11 comments.

Comments made have been themed and themes are summarised in the table below. Examples of comments made can also be seen on the next page. Full list of comments can also be found in the appendix one.

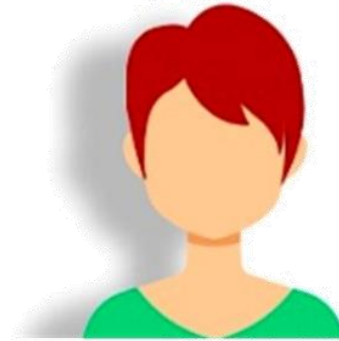
Theme	Count
Quality of repairs	5
More clarification on repair responsibilities	3
Considerations for vulnerable residents	2
Other	2



Additional items to the policy

“It should be knitted that the council should check their repairs are to a good standard -as often they are not.”

Quality of repairs



“Some tenants are old and need extra care.”

Considerations for vulnerable residents

“Leaseholders apparently responsible for all. Apparently, leaseholders responsible for blockages and leaks but it doesn't specify. We cannot be held responsible for blockages and leaks for communal pipework. Council apparently responsible for all floors and ceilings. Does that mean the council will replace my floorboards. And my ceiling if damaged as a leaseholder, because I'm not aware of that.”

More clarification on repair responsibilities

“Better quality repairs carried out in a timely manner with more input from residents.”

Quality of repairs

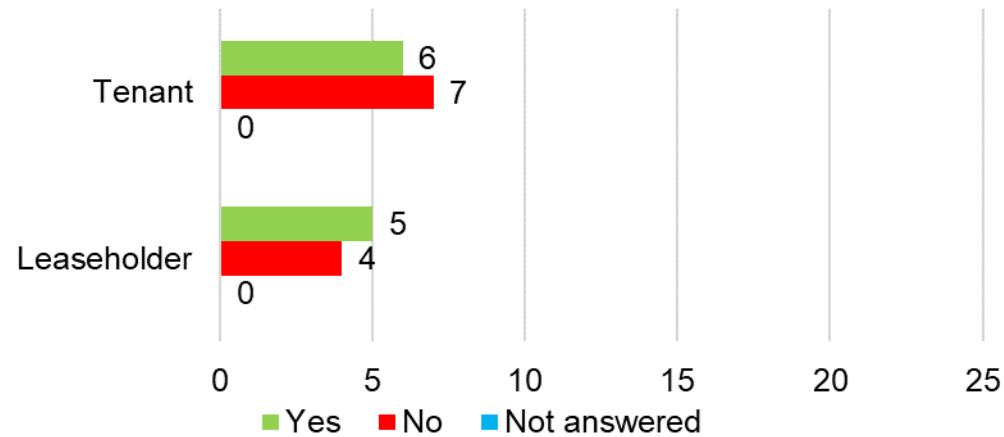


Repairs charges

Respondents were asked if they knew which repairs the Council charges for before reading the policy.

- Half of the respondents (11) said they knew what repairs the Council charges for.
- The other half (11) said they were not aware of the repairs the Council charges for

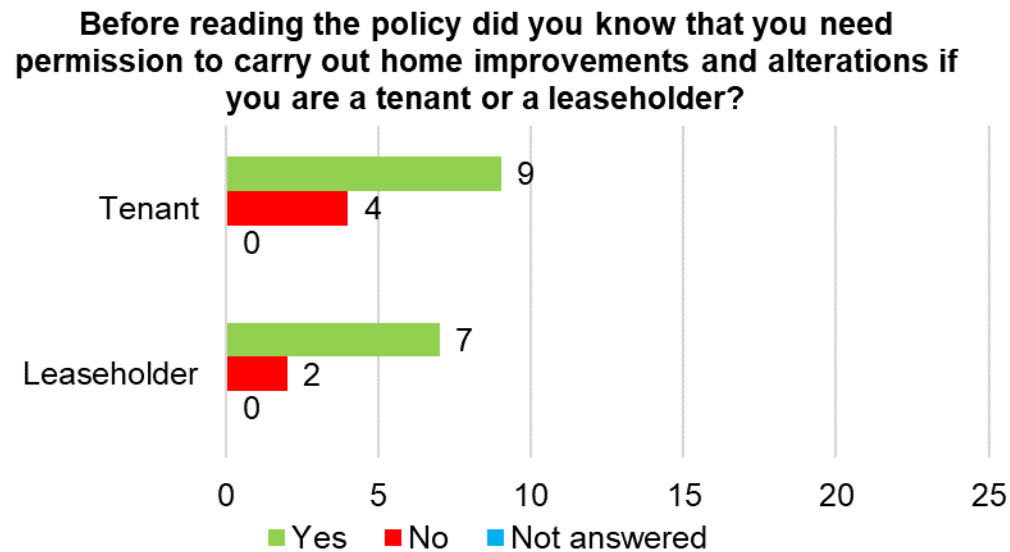
Before reading the policy did you know which repairs the Council charges for?



Permission for home improvements

Respondents were asked if they knew they needed permission to carry out home improvements and alterations as a tenant or leaseholder before reading the policy.

- Most respondents (16) said they knew they needed permission; this includes nine out of 13 tenants.
- Six respondents said they did not know they needed permission.

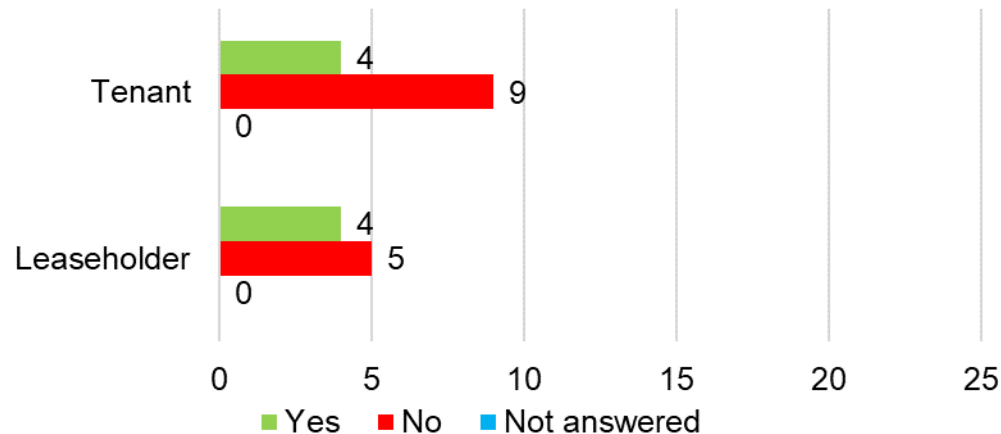


Laminate flooring

Respondents were asked whether they were aware of the Council's position on laminate flooring before reading the policy.

- More than half of the respondents (14 out of 22) indicated they were not aware of the Council's position before reading the policy.
- In contrast, eight respondents were aware of the Council's position prior to reviewing the policy.

Before reading the policy did you know our position towards laminate flooring?



Other comments about the policy

Respondents were asked if they have any other comments about the Repairs Policy. There were 13 comments.

Comments made have been themed and themes are summarised in the table below. Examples of comments made can also be seen on the next page. Full list of comments can also be found in the appendix two. A letter was also 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.

Theme	Count
Delays and quality of repairs	5
Issues with the policy	3
Other	3
Issues with consultation promotion	1
Considerations for vulnerable residents	1



Other comments about the policy

“Repairs take so long and most of the time they are done in the fastest and cheapest ways possible, which results in a bad job. Some things are achieved using spending cuts. But when it comes to mould and humidity, You really have to take the air we breathe seriously and to add on top we live next to the west way.”

Delays and quality of repairs

“I keep reporting the same repairs waiting for a response.”

Delays and quality of repairs

“There has been no correspondence to me about this consultation. I only came across this as I was going to complete the mould and damp one as I have received a letter for this one...”

Issues with consultation promotion



“I was surprised to see the part about wooden/laminate flooring and the council’s supposed position on asking residents to remove/cover this if it causes noise complaints because I have had this exact issue with neighbours above for many years and have complained numerous times and they have never had to remove or cover it. What is the point of a policy if you don’t enforce it.”

Issues with the policy

“I think it was required earlier for Operatives to have shoe covers when visiting to the disabled/vulnerable people's homes because they are unlikely to be able to e.g. wash the floor after repairs visit, for example in the rainy days their shoes are wet and dirty. I would like to see this requirement in this new document, too. Also, and as we have many medically vulnerable residents the Operatives should wear face mask (PPE) if requested by the resident, and it should be compulsory whenever visiting residents’ homes who are medically vulnerable.”

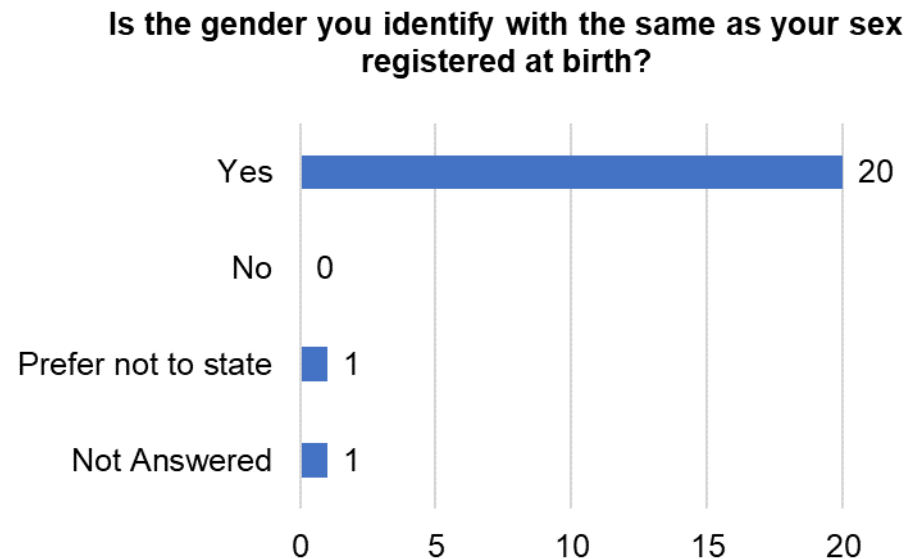
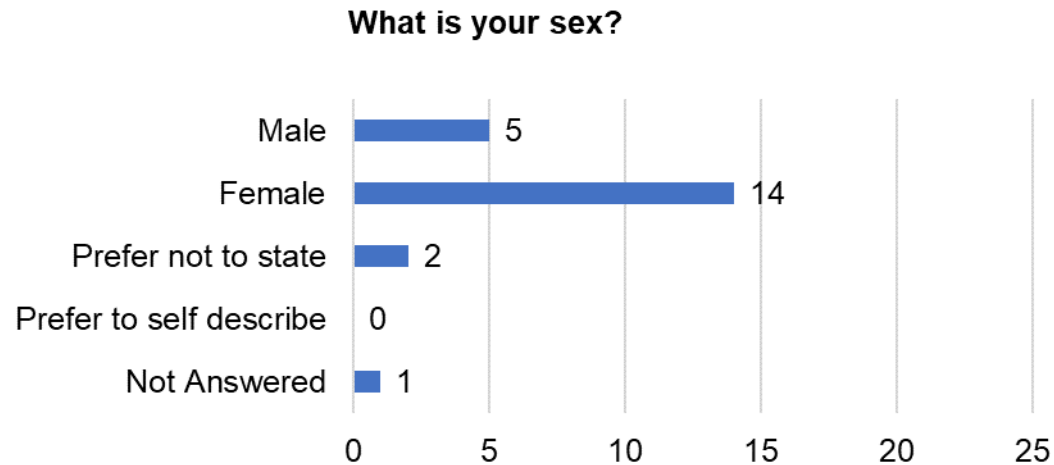
Considerations for vulnerable residents



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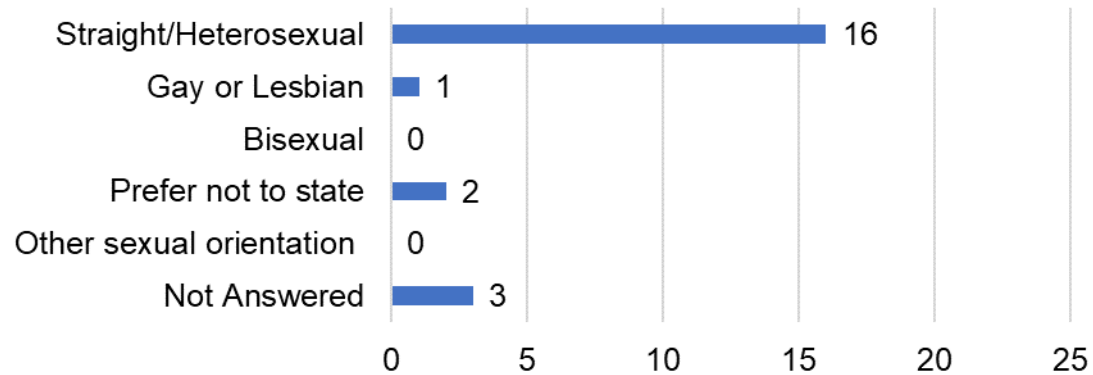
Profile of respondents

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

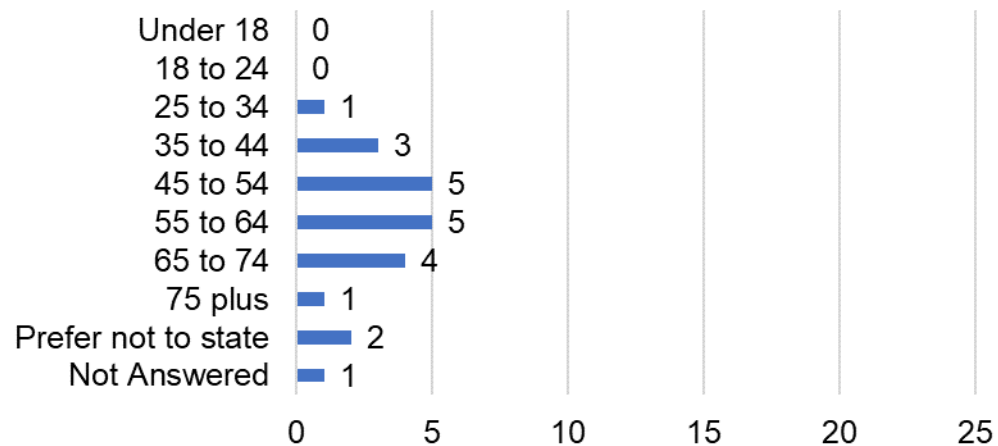


Profile of respondents

Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation?

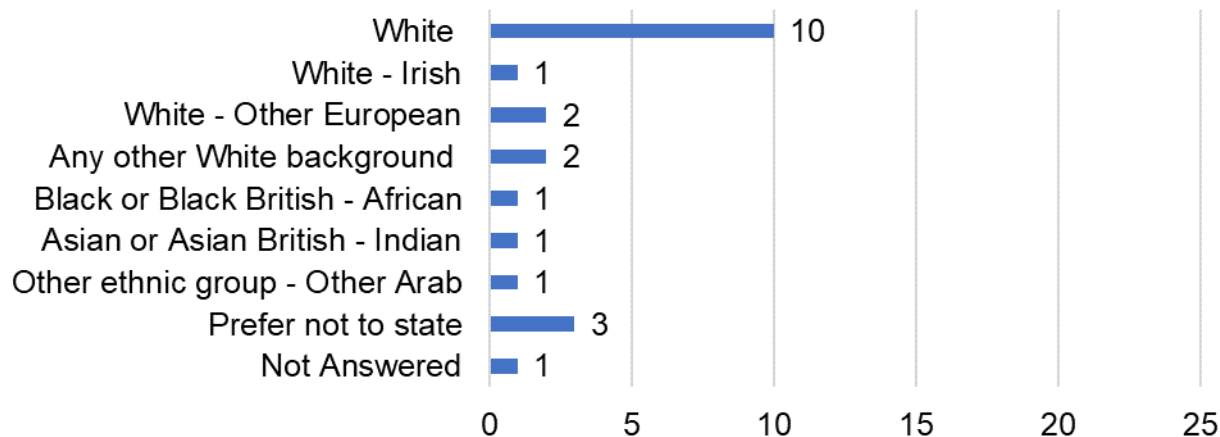


Which age group do you belong to?



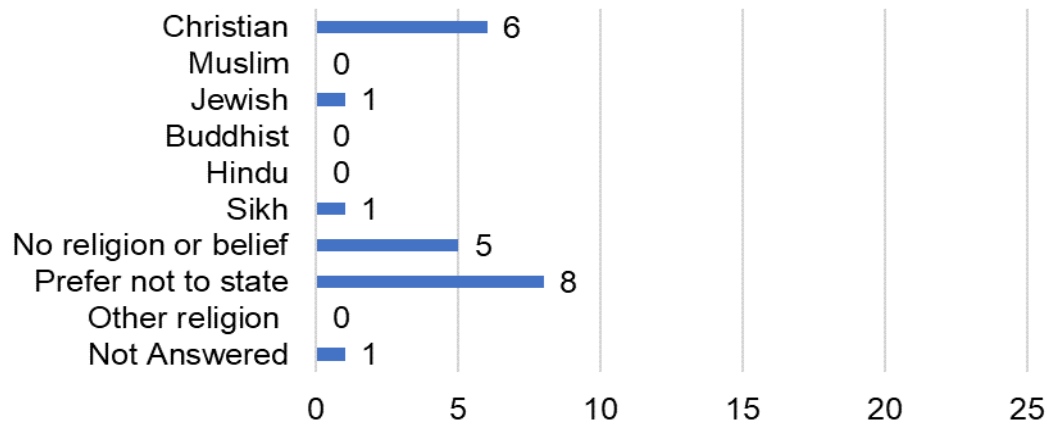
Profile of respondents

How do you describe your ethnic origin?



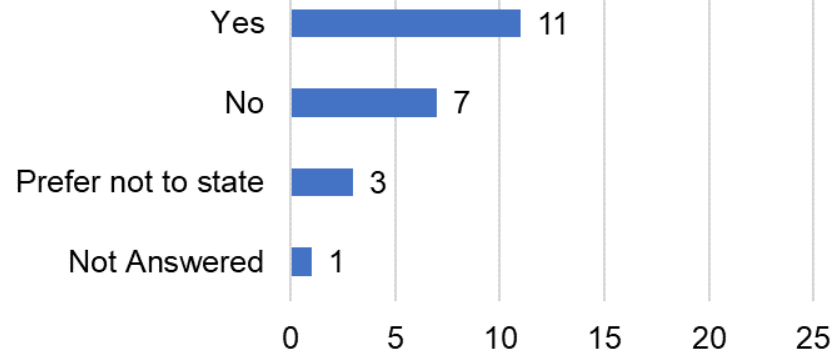
The graph shows the ethnic origins that were selected by respondents

What is your religion or belief?

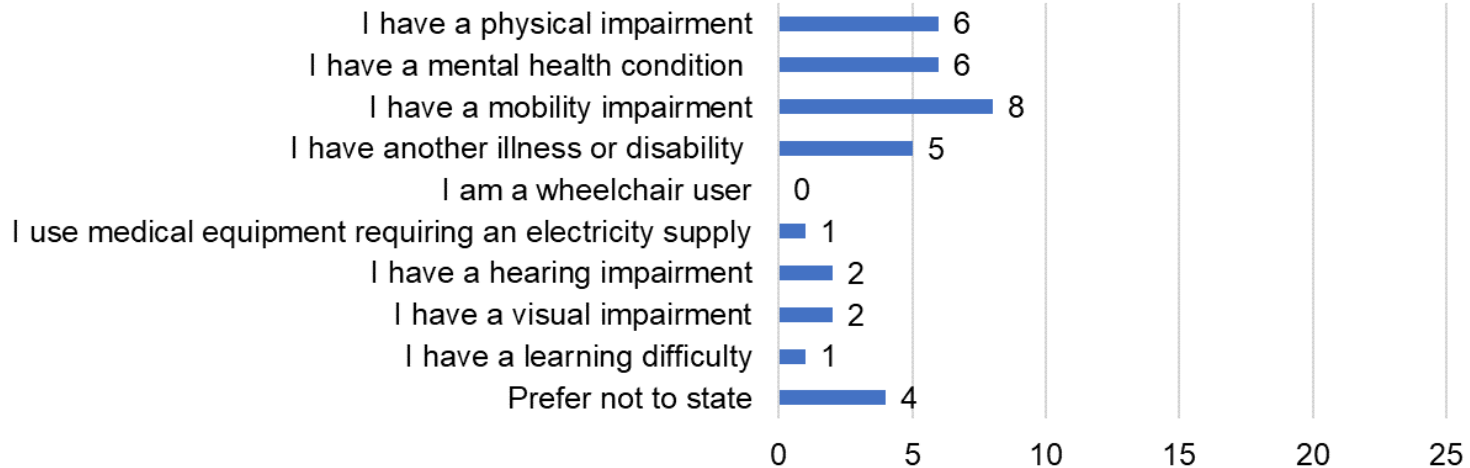


Profile of respondents

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)**



Appendix one: Comments made in the survey

This section of the report lists all comments made in response to the following question:

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

Quality of repairs

- It should be knitted that the council should check their repairs are to a good standard -as often they are not.
- Long-standing disrepair, failures of a repair.
- Better quality repairs carried out in a timely manner with more input from residents.
- See above Subsidence / UPVC windows / Fire doors
- Yes, transparency and chain or responsibility from the RBKC on the repairs. Also lack of quality assurance.

More clarification on the repair's responsibilities

- Leaseholders apparently responsible for all. Apparently, leaseholders responsible for blockages and leaks but it doesn't specify. We cannot be held responsible for blockages and leaks for communal pipework. Council apparently responsible for all floors and ceilings. Does that mean the council will replace my floorboards. And my ceiling if damaged as a leaseholder, because I'm not aware of that.
- Everything should be covered.
- Yes, transparency and chain or responsibility from the RBKC on the repairs. Also lack of quality assurance.

Considerations for vulnerable residents

- Some tenants are old and need extra care.
- I think it was required earlier for Operatives to have shoe covers when visiting to the disabled/vulnerable people's homes because they are unlikely to be able to e.g. wash the floor after repairs visit, for example in the rainy days their shoes are wet and dirty. I would like to see this requirement in this new document, too. Also, and as we have many medically vulnerable residents the Operatives should wear face mask (PPE) if requested by the resident, and it should be compulsory whenever visiting to the residents' homes who are medically vulnerable.

Other

- I could not read the changes in full.
- See comment above in 4.



Appendix Two: Comments made in the survey

This section of the report lists all comments made in response to the following question:

If you have any other comments about the repairs policy, please outline these in the comment box below.

Delays and quality of repairs

- Repairs take so long and most of the time they are done in the fastest and cheapest ways possible, which results in a bad job. Some things are achieved using spending cuts. But when it comes to mould and humidity, You really have to take the air we breathe seriously and to add on top we live next to the west way.
- I have left all the explanations blank for this reason, because no one has helped me so far, in the flat studio where I have been living for more than 3 years, the bathroom, sink, and water tap are broken and not suitable for my conditions, when taking a bath, the water I am not cold, I said this many times and called, but unfortunately, once the repairman came, he gave a false report and wrote that there was no problem, while when he saw the problem, he wondered why when you turn on the hot water, the cold water stops. Two years ago, a repairman came and said that the boiler is broken and needs to be replaced, but unfortunately no one helps in practice.
- "Any repairs by the council or its third parties must be inspected on completion by a qualified member of the council's team. Frequently this is overlooked, and very shoddy work is left for years to deteriorate further. This is just what unscrupulous third parties hope for, and they get paid by the council whether they do a good job or not."
- The repairs carried out by RBKC are terrible and take ages once reported, there is no care to make things looks better and materials used are cheap and don't last. There are no standards on finish, no scrutiny of works and zero feedback allowed via tenant. It has got much worse than it's ever been. We pay for services that you don't supply, and residents are not happy with the poor service supplied by RBKC , what's astounding is you've put up rents and service charges, but we get less services or services that are seriously failing, RBKC should be in special measures!!!!"
- I keep reporting the same repairs waiting for a response

Issues with the policy

- Did you seriously feel like you had to include that leaseholders don't have to pay for tenants' kitchens? Anything else we should pay for?
- I was surprised to see the part about wooden/laminate flooring and the councils supposed position on asking residents to remove/cover this if it causes noise complaints because I have had this exact issue with neighbours above for many years and have complained numerous times and they have never had to remove or cover it. What is the point of a policy if you don't enforce it.
- The present policy is an expensive mess

