

Public Document Pack

Housing Select Committee Supplementary Agenda

Wednesday, 16 November 2016

7.30 pm,
Civic Suite
Catford
SE6 4RU

For more information contact: John Bardens (02083149976)

Part 1

Item		Pages
6.	Allocations scheme consultation	1 - 40
7.	Key housing issues	41 - 56

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Housing Select Committee			
Title	Allocations Policy Review – results of consultatuion		
Key decision	No	Item no	6
Wards	All		
Contributors	Executive Director Customer Services		
Class	Part 1	16 nd November 2016	

Reasons for lateness and urgency

This report is late due to a problem relating to reporting accurate equalities data from the Allocations database to inform the Equalities Analysis Assessment, which had to be rectified by the supplier. It is urgent as there is no other opportunity for Committee to consider this report prior to it being presented to Mayor and Cabinet at its meeting on 7 December.

1 Purpose of report

- 1.1 In January 2016 Housing Select Committee received a report outlining proposed changes to the Council’s Allocations Policy. On 2 May 2016 Mayor and Cabinet agreed that officers should consult with residents and partners about the proposed changes. The consultation opened in August and concluded on 4 September 2016.
- 1.2 This report presents the results of that consultation, to allow Housing Select Committee the opportunity to scrutinise the proposed changes in light of the results of the consultation prior to these being presented to Mayor and Cabinet in December.

2 Summary

- 2.1 Demand has increased significantly over recent years means whilst the number of homes for social rent – either new build or re-lets – has reduced over recent years. Between 2010/11 and 2015/16 the number of households in temporary accommodation increased by 89% and over the same period there was a 39% reduction in the number of available lets.
- 2.2 There is increased demand for housing in a context of reducing supply. The council has taken a number of steps to address this challenge, including building new Council homes for the first time in a generation, so that the Council is directly providing new homes for social rent itself. The Council also continues to work in partnership with Housing Associations and other developers to build new homes

in the borough.

- 2.3 In this context, Lewisham's Allocation Policy sets out how we will allocate households as fairly and efficiently as possible to the properties that become available to the Council. It sets out the principles of how we will do this and how we will make sure we comply with legislation and court rulings in this area.
- 2.4 Demand for social housing remains far higher than the supply available to the Council. The Allocations Policy was last reviewed in detail in 2012. Since that review, the number of households on the waiting list has grown from approximately 7,800 to over 9,300. Lewisham has also seen an increase in homelessness, with the number of households living in temporary accommodation increasing from less than 1,000 in 2010/11 to over 1,750 as at September 2016.
- 2.5 For these reasons, Mayor and Cabinet considered a number of proposed changes to the policy in order to help manage demand and bring the policy into line with other London Boroughs and DCLG guidelines. The proposed amendments are presented in this report, including analysis of the outcome of the consultation and a summary of comments provided by respondents.

3 Recommendations

- 3.1 It is recommended that Housing Select Committee notes and scrutinises the proposed changes to the Allocations Policy in light of the results of the consultation, and provides commentary prior to the presentation of this report at Mayor & Cabinet on the 7th December.

4 Policy context

- 4.1 The contents of this report are consistent with the Council's policy framework. It supports the achievements of the Sustainable Community Strategy policy objectives:
 - Ambitious and achieving: where people are inspired and supported to fulfil their potential.
 - Empowered and responsible: where people can be actively involved in their local area and contribute to tolerant, caring and supportive local communities.
 - Healthy, active and enjoyable: where people can actively participate in maintaining and improving their health and well-being, supported by high quality health and care services, leisure, culture and recreational activities.
- 4.2 The proposed recommendations are also in line with the Council policy priorities:
 - Strengthening the local economy – gaining resources to regenerate key localities, strengthen employment skills and promote public transport.
 - Clean, green and liveable – improving environmental management, the cleanliness and care for roads and pavements and promoting a sustainable environment.

4.3 It will also help meet the Council's Housing Strategy 2015-2020 in which the Council commits to the following key objectives:

- Helping residents at times of severe and urgent housing need
- Building the homes our residents need
- Greater security and quality for private renters
- Promoting health and wellbeing by improving our residents' homes

5 Background

5.1 Housing Allocations schemes are governed by legislation which requires housing authorities to determine and publish an allocations scheme setting out how it will prioritise applications for social housing. The relevant area of legislation is Part 6 of the Housing Act 1996, which sets out the parameters for the allocation of housing accommodation. In this context, this refers to the allocation of social housing to which the Council has nomination rights. It does not cover how the Council allocates to other types of accommodation, such as temporary accommodation for homeless households.

5.2 It is a requirement that certain groups are given "reasonable preference" within the policy. These groups include:

- People who are homeless within the meaning of Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996
- Those living in unsatisfactory housing, e.g. overcrowded or lacking amenities
- Those who need to move on medical grounds
- Those owed a duty under other relevant legislation such as a closing order on a property.

5.3 Allocations scheme must give preference to these groups above others. There is no requirement to give an equal weighting to all of the reasonable preference categories.

5.4 A key element of the allocations scheme is the Annual Lettings Plan which should be agreed by Members each year. This outlines the distribution between applicants with differing needs of the supply of lettings expected over the coming year. The proposed Annual Lettings Plan for 2016/2017 was approved by Mayor and Cabinet on 18th May 2016.

5.5 Lewisham extensively reviewed its Housing Allocation Scheme in 2012 in response to changes in legislation introduced by the Localism Act, as well as the changing trends in the supply and demand of social housing. These changes were approved by Mayor and Cabinet on 20th June 2012. The changes made as part of that review included the deletion of band 4 to reflect that the reduction in the number of lets meant that people in this band were extremely unlikely to receive an offer of social housing. In 2012 the local connection rule was also introduced which meant that an applicant had to have been a Lewisham resident for two years in order to qualify to register.

5.6 The proposals outlined in this report are designed to further ensure that the Council is able to continue to best allocate our supply of social housing and manage demand fairly within the challenging housing context where demand has increased by 90 per cent over the last five years whilst supply has decreased by 40 per cent, ensuring the policy manages the expectations as well as meeting the needs of service users, that it reflects the demands on the service and fosters good working relations with our partners.

5.7 At its meeting in January 2016, Housing Select Committee considered the proposed changes and made the following comments:

- It should be clarified in the report whether any of the proposed changes apply to people who are on the housing register under section 6 of the Housing Act, section 7 of the Housing Act or whether the changes would apply to both.
- It should be clarified in the report whether the limited offers rule of one offer (paragraphs 6.9 and 6.10) and the limited offers rule of three offers (paragraphs 6.18 and 6.19), applies people who are on the housing register under section 6 of the Housing Act, section 7 of the Housing Act or whether the changes would apply to both.
- It should be clarified in the report that the rent arrears rules (paragraphs 6.16 and 6.17) only refer to people that have current rent arrears, and not to people who have ever had rent arrears that have since been cleared.
- It should be clarified under the section for bedroom standard (paragraphs 6.20 to 6.22) that any proposed changes allow exemptions for people with medical and/or special needs.
- It should be highlighted in the report that there is the possibility that temporary accommodation provided outside the borough can become permanent if it is fit for purpose so people are aware of this possibility.

5.8 Clarification around these points has been provided in section seven where the proposed changes are further outlined.

5.9 The Allocations Scheme governs how the Council allocates to social housing properties which become available for let. Offers of Private Rented Sector (PRS) accommodation are governed by the PRS Discharge Policy. A revised PRS Discharge Policy was considered by Mayor and Cabinet on 19 October 2016 and will be the subject of separate consultation. This is due to commence imminently, and the results will be brought back to Housing Select Committee early next year.

6 Housing supply and demand

6.1 Housing Select Committee have received a number of reports over the past years about the increased housing demand in the borough alongside the reduction in the supply of new homes for social housing and re-lets.

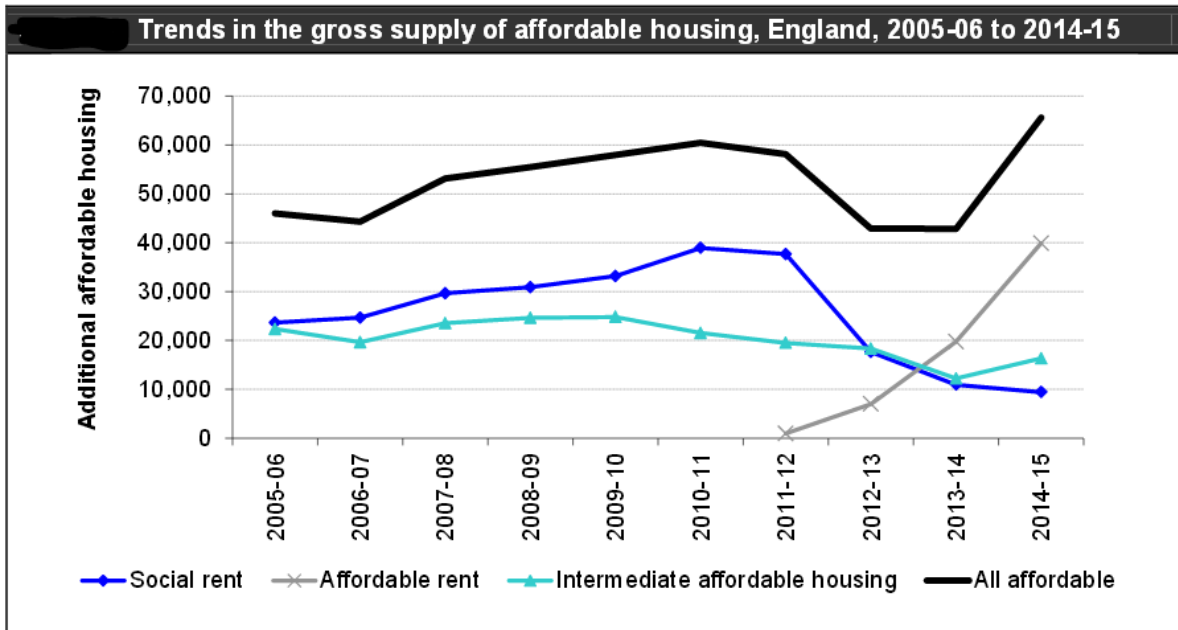
6.2 As of September 2016, there were over 9,300 households on Lewisham’s housing register, an increase of over 1,500 since 2012. In the same period, the number of lets has reduced from over 1,500 per year to just over 1,100 per year. The tables below set this out in more detail:

2012/13	Total Lets	1562
	Number on Housing Register	7830
2013/14	Total Lets	1219
	Number on Housing Register	8294
2014/15	Total Lets	1158
	Number on Housing Register	8442
2015/16	Total Lets	1138
	Number on Housing Register	9058

6.3 Lewisham has also seen an increase in homelessness, with the number of households living in temporary accommodation increasing from less than 1,000 in 2010/11 to over 1,750 as at September 2016. This increased number of households in high housing need has also increased the demands on the service.

6.4 Based on the number of lets as at September 2016 and the number of households on the housing register as at September 2016 it would take over 4 and a half years to let a studio or one bedroom property to everyone on the register, over 9 years to let a 2 bedroom property to everyone on the register, just under 11 years to let a 3 bedroom property to everyone on the register and over 18 years to let a 4 bedroom property or larger to everyone on the register. This does not account for any new applicants joining the register.

6.5 Government policy over the past five years has meant that fewer homes for social rent have been built. In particular, changes in the amount of grant available had a significant impact on the tenure of new affordable housing. Whilst there was an increase in housing for social rent due to the 2008-2011 National Affordable Housing Programme, the 2011-15 programme resulted in a dramatic decrease in the amount of social rented housing completed, as shown in the chart below. There was a concurrent increase in the number of new homes for ‘affordable rent’.



Source: DCLG, Affordable Housing Supply: April 2014 to March 2015 England

6.6 The last government announced a further series of policies which are likely to further reduce the number of properties available for social rent. Therefore the supply of new social homes beyond the Council’s own programme and those provided by some Housing Associations is likely to remain low, which means that the ability to meet demand will remain challenging.

7 Proposed changes and summary of consultation responses

7.1 The proposed changes are intended to help manage the growth of the housing waiting list within this context of housing demand increasing whilst supply reduces. To that end, the main proposed change is to increase the local connection rule from two years to five years. As this is intended to slow the growth of the waiting list, it would only apply to new applicants and will not affect those currently on the register. It will also not affect a household which approaches the Council to make a homeless application, as this is governed by separate legislation.

7.2 The other proposed changes aim to improve the operation of the policy, as well as incorporate changes in regulations and guidance which have been issued by the government since the policy was last reviewed.

7.3 The consultation opened in August and concluded on 4 September 2016 and was carried out using the council’s online consultation tool and was promoted on the website and with key housing partners. 144 responses were received. Respondents were asked to give detail of the context in which they were responding to the consultation. The breakdown of responses to this is given below.

Social housing tenant/applicant	41 %
Housing Association	21%

Charity or Voluntary Organisation	2%
Local Authority employee	24%
Landlord	1%
Other	10%

7.4 A detailed analysis of the consultation and its recommendations is available as Appendix 1.

Local Connection

7.5 In order to qualify for social housing in the borough, an applicant must demonstrate that they have a local connection. Currently, this means that they must be resident in Lewisham and have been resident for a period of two years.

7.6 It is proposed to increase the Local Connection criteria to five years to help manage demand for the service as well as the expectations of service users. This is also in line with partners in the South East London Housing Partnership (Southwark, Bexley, Greenwich and Bromley), creating geographic consistency.

7.7 This proposal will affect all new Part 6 applicants to the Council's general housing register, but will not affect those currently on the register. It will also not affect households making a homeless application under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996.

7.8 Over 68% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with this proposal, whilst fewer than 20% disagreed. It is therefore proposed that officers proceed to recommend that this change to the policy is made.

Bedroom standard

7.9 It is proposed to adopt the Department for Communities and Local Government's guidance bedroom standard when determining the number of bedrooms required by an Applicant. This has been designed to take into account Housing Benefit regulations regarding bed sizes. The Bedroom Standard allocates a separate bedroom to each:

- married or cohabiting couple
- adult aged 21 years or more
- pair of adolescents aged 10-20 of the same sex
- pair of children aged under 10 regardless of sex

7.10 The policy will also be amended to note that under existing rules, applicants may be entitled for a home of one size but not be eligible for Housing Benefit at the same level.

7.11 DCLG has recommended that all housing authorities adopt the bedroom standard as an appropriate measure of overcrowding for allocation purposes.

- 7.12 The proposed change would allow exemptions for people with medical needs, as set out further in section 7.42 below.
- 7.13 Over 47% of respondents agreed with the changes and over 42% disagreed. Those who disagreed with the changes largely referred to concerns around privacy in their response.
- 7.14 Whilst there is a case for people over 18 to be allocated their own bedroom, the level of demand for larger properties means that requiring more bedrooms could mean that a household has to wait longer to successfully bid for a property. On balance, therefore, officers propose to recommend that this change is made to the Allocations Policy.
- 7.15 This proposal will affect all new Part 6 applicants and transfers to the Council's general housing register. It would not affect homeless applicants where they are allocated temporary accommodation under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996.

Rent arrears

- 7.16 Our policy is clear that a household with significant rent arrears at the time of being matched to a property must clear these before they move into a new home. However the way in which our policy is currently worded means that applicants with arrears over four weeks will be suspended. This causes administrative issues and can delay the letting of properties.
- 7.17 It is proposed to simplify this clause by amending section 2.2.4 regarding suspension for significant rent arrears. Where an offer is made in future it will be necessary for the applicant to have a rent account balance of zero as well as no outstanding former tenant arrears. The Housing Needs Group Service Manager will still retain the delegated authority to permit a 'move despite arrears' where necessary.
- 7.18 This proposal will affect all applications at the point at which they are made an offer of social housing under the Council's Allocations Scheme. It would only apply to an applicant with current rent arrears, and not to people who have ever had rent arrears that have since been cleared.
- 7.19 A large majority of respondents agree with this proposed change, with over 72% of respondents strongly agreeing or agreeing, and less than 13% disagreeing.
- 7.20 There was clear support for this change in the consultation, so officers propose to recommend that this change is adopted.

Right to Move

- 7.21 New statutory guidance was introduced in March 2015 to introduce the 'Right to Move'. The intention behind this was to make it easier for social tenants to move if they need to for work reasons. The implications of the regulation is that local authorities are prevented from applying a local connection test that could disadvantage tenants who need to move across local authority boundaries for work related reasons
- 7.22 It is therefore proposed to introduce a quota ensuring that at least one per cent of all lettings are to households eligible under the 2015 'Right to Move' guidance, to publish the quota as part of the Allocation scheme and to report locally on demand and outcomes through the Annual Lettings Plan. This will build upon the provisions of section 2.2.2 of the Allocations policy which awards a local connection to those who require housing in the borough to be able to work in the borough.
- 7.23 This change would only apply to households eligible under the 2015 'Right to Move' guidance.
- 7.24 Over 71% of respondents agreed with the proposed changes around the right to move and less than 6% disagreed.
- 7.25 There was clear support for this change in the consultation, so officers propose to recommend that this change is adopted.

Timescales clarification

- 7.26 In certain cases, the Council operates a policy of only making one offer of social housing to an applicant. These are high priority households where it is important that the household is found stable housing quickly.
- 7.27 It is proposed to change the wording of section 2.2.3 in relation to the 12 week period in which Emergency Housing Panel and Supported Housing Priority cases may bid for themselves. The change will reflect that this does not guarantee that an offer will be made or a bid will be successful in that time, and that the actual waiting time for a property may be longer dependent on availability and demand for properties. This will provide more clarity and help to manage the expectations of residents.
- 7.28 This change will only apply to households which are Emergency Housing Panel or Supported Housing Priority cases.
- 7.29 Over 88% of respondents agreed with the proposed clarification of timescales whereas less than 2% disagreed.
- 7.30 There was clear support for this change in the consultation, so officers propose to recommend that this change is adopted.

Clarification of temporary to permanent scheme

- 7.31 Section 3.4.5 of the Policy allows the Council to offer a household in temporary accommodation the home they are occupying on a more permanent basis if the accommodation is suitable and it is possible to do so. Currently this only applies if the household has occupied the accommodation for at least 12 months.
- 7.32 It is proposed to amend the section 3.4.5 of the policy to allow households placed in suitable Temporary Accommodation to be signed up as permanent within as short a timeframe as is possible and appropriate.
- 7.33 Where this is an offer of social housing allocated under the Allocations Scheme, this offer would be to social housing within Lewisham. Offers of accommodation outside of the borough into private rented accommodation would fall under the scope of the PRS Discharge Policy. At the time of this report being submitted, the Council is due to consult on a revised PRS Discharge Policy imminently.
- 7.34 Over 89% of respondents agreed with this change and less than 2% of respondents disagreed.
- 7.35 There was clear support for this change in the consultation, so officers propose to recommend that this change is adopted.

Facilitate chain lettings

- 7.36 Our current policy encourages 'chain lets' whereby in certain areas a large unit of accommodation household becomes available, and is let to an overcrowded household to improve their situation and the unit that has been vacated is in turn let to another household as requested to enable a further move.
- 7.37 It is proposed to amend the section relating to Chain Lettings to allow properties that become available through this means to be advertised for a specific purpose. This will encourage the best use of the stock, ensuring that the Allocations policy is responsive to the needs of customers and the demands of the service.
- 7.38 Over 76% of respondents agreed with the proposed changes and less than 3% disagreed.
- 7.39 There was clear support for this change in the consultation, so officers propose to recommend that this change is adopted.

Applications suspension

- 7.40 Occasionally, some applicants will view a number of properties but not accept the tenancy of any of them. This causes additional cost for the Council and delays a household being able to move into a new home.

- 7.41 Therefore it is proposed to introduce a 'Limited Offer' rule, suspending applications from the register for 12 months where they have rejected three offers and to clarify the policy to note that not attending an accompanied viewing to sign a tenancy that has been offered will be considered a rejection.
- 7.42 This proposal will affect Part 6 housing applications who are not subject to the 'one offer only' policy.
- 7.43 Over 73% of respondents agreed with the proposed changes, whilst under 11% disagreed.
- 7.44 There was clear support for this change in the consultation, so officers propose to recommend that this change is adopted.

Medical assessments

- 7.45 To clarify that the Council's medical advisor may recommend an extra bedroom on medical grounds.
- 7.46 This proposal will apply to all Part 6 and Part 7 applications.
- 7.47 Over 77% of respondents agreed with the proposed changes whereas under 5% disagreed.
- 7.48 There was clear support for this change in the consultation, so officers propose to recommend that this change is adopted.

8 Next steps

- 8.1 Subject to the comments of Housing Select Committee, officers propose to recommend that the Mayor approves the changes to the Allocations Scheme and agree that officers publish the revised Allocations Scheme.

9 Financial Implications

- 9.1 As has been previously reported, the current housing issues experienced both nationally and in the borough are putting severe pressure on the council's housing budgets.
- 8.2 The changes to the allocations policy set out in the report are expected to assist in managing those pressures and assist in officers making the best use of the resources available to them.

10 Legal Implications

- 10.1 In compliance with section 166A,(1) (of the 1996 Act,) Lewisham Housing Authority has an Allocations Policy, "... for determining priorities,..." which sets out the procedure to be followed when allocating housing accommodation.

- 10.2 The statutory guidance on social housing allocations is entitled “Allocation of accommodation: Guidance for Local Authorities in England and was revised in June 2012. Authorities are obliged to have regard to this guidance when devising and implementing their schemes.
- 10.3 The Government launched a consultation exercise on proposals to issue new statutory guidance “to help local authorities make full use of their new allocation freedoms by tailoring their allocation priorities to meet the needs of their local residents and their local communities.” One of the proposals involved amending existing guidance to “strongly encourage all local authorities to adopt a two year residency test as part of their qualification criteria.” Consultation closed on 22 November 2013 and new supplementary statutory guidance was published in December 2013: *Providing social housing for local people*
- 10.4 On 9 March 2015 the Government announced an intention to ‘ensure local connection requirements do not prevent social tenants from moving into the area to take up work or apprenticeship opportunities.’
- 10.5 The Localism Act 2011 received royal assent on 15th November 2011. The 2011 Act introduces a number of significant amendments to Part 6 of the 1996 Act. Of particular relevance here are the following provisions: Section 160ZA replaces s.160A in relation to allocations by housing authorities. Social housing may only be allocated to ‘qualifying persons’ and housing authorities are given the power to determine what classes of persons are or are not qualified to be allocated housing (s.160ZA(6) and (7)).
- 10.6 Section 166A requires housing authorities in England to allocate accommodation in accordance with a scheme which must be framed to ensure that certain categories of applicants are given reasonable preference for an allocation of social housing. Section 166A(9) includes a new requirement for an allocation scheme to give a right to review a decision on qualification in s.160AZ(9), and to inform such affected persons of the decision on the review and the grounds for it. This is in addition to the existing right to review a decision on eligibility.
- 10.7 Section 166A(12) provides that housing authorities must have regard to both their homelessness and tenancy strategies when framing their allocation scheme. The requirement for an allocation scheme to contain a statement of the authority’s policy on offering a choice of accommodation or the opportunity to express preferences about their accommodation is retained. (s.166A(2)). However, the requirement to provide a copy of this statement to people to whom they owe a homelessness duty (under s.193(3A) or s.195(3A) of the 1996 Act) is repealed by s.148(2) and s.149(3) of the 2011 Act. This is because, following the changes to the main homelessness duty made by the Localism Act 2011, there can no longer be a presumption that the homelessness duty will be brought to an end in most cases with an allocation under Part 6.

10.8 The European Convention on Human Rights states in Article 8 that “Everyone has the right to respect for his private and family life, his home and correspondence”. The Human Rights Act 1998 incorporates the Convention. Whilst it does not, however, necessarily mean that everyone has an immediate right to a home, (because Article 8 is a “qualified” right and therefore is capable in certain circumstances, of being lawfully and legitimately interfered with,) the provision by an Authority of a relevant and considered Allocations Policy does assist to reinforce the Article 8 principles.

10.9 The Equality Act 2010 (the Act) introduced a new public sector equality duty (the equality duty or the duty). It covers the following nine protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

10.10 In summary, the Council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

10.11 The duty continues to be a “have regard duty”, and the weight to be attached to it is a matter for the Mayor, bearing in mind the issues of relevance and proportionality. It is not an absolute requirement to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity or foster good relations.

10.12 The Equality and Human Rights Commission has recently issued Technical Guidance on the Public Sector Equality Duty and statutory guidance entitled “Equality Act 2010 Services, Public Functions & Associations Statutory Code of Practice”. The Council must have regard to the statutory code in so far as it relates to the duty and attention is drawn to Chapter 11 which deals particularly with the equality duty. The Technical Guidance also covers what public authorities should do to meet the duty. This includes steps that are legally required, as well as recommended actions. The guidance does not have statutory force but nonetheless regard should be had to it, as failure to do so without compelling reason would be of evidential value. The statutory code and the technical guidance can be found at: <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/legal-and-policy/equality-act/equality-act-codes-of-practice-and-technical-guidance/>

10.13 The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) has previously issued five guides for public authorities in England giving advice on the equality duty:

1. The essential guide to the public sector equality duty
2. Meeting the equality duty in policy and decision-making
3. Engagement and the equality duty
4. Equality objectives and the equality duty

5. Equality information and the equality duty

10.14 The essential guide provides an overview of the equality duty requirements including the general equality duty, the specific duties and who they apply to. It covers what public authorities should do to meet the duty including steps that are legally required, as well as recommended actions. The other four documents provide more detailed guidance on key areas and advice on good practice. Further information and resources are available at: <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/advice-and-guidance/public-sector-equality-duty/guidance-on-the-equality-duty/>

11 Crime and disorder implications

11.1 There are no crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

12 Equalities implications

12.1 An equality analysis assessment of the proposed changes is attached to this report at Appendix 2.

13 Environmental implications

13.1 There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

14 Background Documents and Report Originator

14.1 Appendix 1 – Detailed results of consultation

14.2 Appendix 2 – Equality Equalities Analysis Assessment

14.3 The current Allocations Policy is available here:

14.4 <https://www.lewisham.gov.uk/my services/housing/find/Documents/Lewisham%20Housing%20Allocations%20Scheme.pdf>

14.5 The government has published Allocations Guidance which is available here:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/5918/2171391.pdf

14.6 If you have any queries relating to this report please contact Genevieve Macklin on 020 8314 6057.

Appendix 1 – Detailed response to the consultation

Local Connection

Consultation Responses

To what extent do you agree or disagree that Lewisham should increase the local connection criteria from two years to five?

Strongly Agree	32.64% - 47 responses
Agree	36.11% - 52 responses
Neither Agree Nor Disagree	10.42% - 15 responses
Disagree	9.03% - 13 responses
Strongly Disagree	10.42% - 15 responses
No Response	1.39% - 2 responses

To what extent do you agree or disagree that Lewisham should increase the local connection criteria, from two years to five?

Table .1

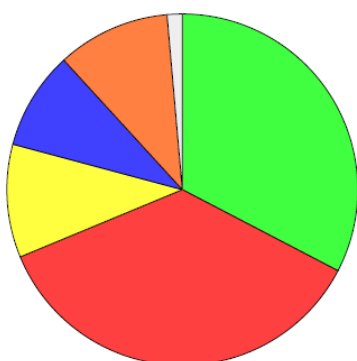


Table .2

	% Total	% Answer	Count
Strongly Agree	32.64%	33.10%	47
Agree	36.11%	36.62%	52
Neither Agree Nor Disagree	10.42%	10.56%	15
Disagree	9.03%	9.15%	13
Strongly Disagree	10.42%	10.56%	15
[No Response]	1.39%	--	2
Total	100.00%	100.00%	144

Agree comments by category

Same as neighbouring boroughs which makes it fair	Enables more priority for Lewisham residents and builds better communities	Good but no effect to residents moving between partners?	Will reduce waiting list
5	2	1	1

Disagree Comments by category

No effect on problem of need for housing, just reduces demand	Will increase street homelessness	It will increase waiting list	Delays inevitable
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	/ rough sleeping		homelessness for people
1	1	1	1

Other Comments by category

Will increase stay in TA and unsuitable accommodation	5 years is too long - 3 years would be a compromise?	How will it affect homeless persons leaving institutions who have previously lived in Lewisham?	What about people with no local connection?
2	1	1	1

Over 68% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with this proposal, whilst fewer than 20% disagreed.

Bedroom Standard

The current Policy sets out how many bedrooms a household is entitled to:

“In calculating how many bedrooms you need, we will allow you:

- one bedroom or a studio for you and your partner, if you have one
- one bedroom for every two children of the same sex, aged under eighteen
- one bedroom for a child of the opposite sex to another child, if the child is aged over ten
- one bedroom for any other adult”

It is proposed to adopt the Department for Communities and Local Government’s guidance bedroom standard when determining the number of bedrooms required by an Applicant. This has been designed to take into account Housing Benefit regulations regarding bed sizes. The Bedroom Standard allocates a separate bedroom to each:

- married or cohabiting couple
- adult aged 21 years or more
- pair of adolescents aged 10-20 of the same sex
- pair of children aged under 10 regardless of sex

The policy will also be amended to note that under existing rules, applicants may be entitled for a home of one size but not be eligible for Housing Benefit at the same level.

Consultation responses

To what extent do you agree or disagree that Lewisham should adopt a new bedroom standard that increases the age to be considered an adult from 18 to 21?

Strongly Agree	20.83% - 30 responses
Agree	27.08% - 39 responses

Neither Agree Nor Disagree	7.64% - 11 responses
Disagree	20.83% - 30 responses
Strongly Disagree	21.53% - 31 responses
No Response	2.08% - 3 responses

To what extent do you agree or disagree that Lewisham should adopt a new bedroom standard that increases the age to be considered an adult from 18 to 21?

Table .1

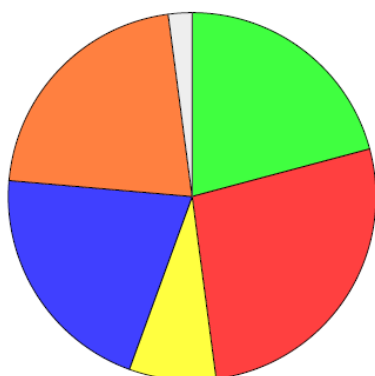


Table .2

	% Total	% Answer	Count
Strongly Agree	20.83%	21.28%	30
Agree	27.08%	27.66%	39
Neither Agree Nor Disagree	7.64%	7.80%	11
Disagree	20.83%	21.28%	30
Strongly Disagree	21.53%	21.99%	31
[No Response]	2.08%	--	3
Total	100.00%	100.00%	144

Agree Comments by category

Will encourage progression to higher education	Children mature at different ages, 18 not necessarily right age to leave home	Prevents people having children to get social housing	More fair in comparison to cost for comparative families in PRS	Manages impact of population increase and social housing reduction
2	1	1	1	1

Disagree Comments by category

No privacy/puberty/age issues	People will remain in unsuitable homes for longer	A person is an adult at 18 by law	Will increase refusals and difficulty in letting units	We shouldn't need to support adults over 18
6	2	2	1	1

Other Comments by category

18 is adult by law and	Won't manage incidents between
------------------------	--------------------------------

deserve own space	children/step children of different parents?
1	1

There was a range of views expressed in the consultation regarding this proposal. Whilst 47% agreed with the proposal, a significant minority of around 42% disagreed.

A number of respondents raised concerns regarding privacy as the proposed change will mean that the age at which an adult is entitled to their own room will increase from 18 to 21.

There are currently 347 households on the waiting list where there is at least one person aged 18-20 and where there is someone else of the same sex who is aged 10-17, which represents 3.7% of the housing register.

Rent Arrears

Consultation Responses

To what extent do you agree or disagree that Lewisham should change the policy to require applicants to have a clear rent account at the point of offer?

Strongly Agree	35.42% - 51
Agree	37.50% - 54
Neither Agree Nor Disagree	12.50% - 18
Disagree	6.25% - 9
Strongly Disagree	6.25% - 9
No Response	2.08% - 3

To what extent do you agree or disagree that Lewisham should change the policy to require applicants to have a clear rent account at the point of offer?

Table .1



Table .2

	% Total	% Answer	Count
Strongly Agree	35.42%	36.17%	51
Agree	37.50%	38.30%	54
Neither Agree Nor Disagree	12.50%	12.77%	18
Disagree	6.25%	6.38%	9
Strongly Disagree	6.25%	6.38%	9
[No Response]	2.08%	--	3
Total	100.00%	100.00%	144

Agree Comments by category

Sensible incentive	Will help reduce waiting list
1	1

Disagree Comments by category

Individual circumstances should be assessed	Adds to tenant's mental stress
4	1

Other Comments by category

Individual circumstances should be assessed	Landlords often can be the issue	Exemption policies need to be added
2	1	1

Right to Move

Consultation Responses

Under the 2015 'Right to Move' regulations, which are intended to make it easier for social tenants to move if the need to for work reasons, we are proposing the introduction of a quota ensuring that at least one per cent of all lettings are to households eligible under the 'Right to Move' guidance.

Strongly Agree	25.69% - 37
Agree	45.83% - 66
Neither Agree Nor Disagree	19.44% - 28

Disagree	3.47% - 5
Strongly Disagree	2.08% - 3
No Response	3.47% - 5

Under the 2015 'Right to Move' regulations, which are intended to make it easier for social tenants to move if the need to for work reasons, we are proposing the introduction of a quota ensuring that at least one per cent of all lettings are to households eligible under the 'Right to Move' guidance.

Question responses: 139 (96.53%)

Table .1

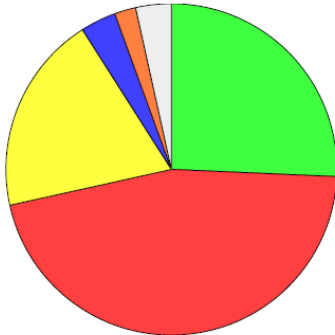


Table .2

	% Total	% Answer	Count
Strongly Agree	25.69%	26.62%	37
Agree	45.83%	47.48%	66
Neither Agree Nor Disagree	19.44%	20.14%	28
Disagree	3.47%	3.60%	5
Strongly Disagree	2.08%	2.16%	3
[No Response]	3.47%	--	5
Total	100.00%	100.00%	144

Timescales Clarification

Consultation Responses

Clarify the likely timescales for Emergency Housing Panel cases to receive an offer. This would help manage expectations of service users and clarify timescales.

Strongly Agree	49.31% - 71
Agree	38.89% - 56
Neither Agree Nor Disagree	7.64% - 11
Disagree	0.69% - 1
Strongly Disagree	0.69% - 1
No Response	2.78% - 4

Table .3



Table .4

	% Total	% Answer	Count
Strongly Agree	49.31%	50.71%	71
Agree	38.89%	40.00%	56
Neither Agree Nor Disagree	7.64%	7.86%	11
Disagree	0.69%	0.71%	1
Strongly Disagree	0.69%	0.71%	1
[No Response]	2.78%	--	4
Total	100.00%	100.00%	144

Clarification of the temporary to permanent scheme

Consultation Responses

Clarification around the temporary to permanent scheme allowing households to be moved into properties more quickly.

Strongly Agree	52.08% - 75
Agree	37.50% - 54
Neither Agree Nor Disagree	5.56% - 8
Disagree	0.00% - 0
Strongly Disagree	1.39% - 2
No Response	3.47% - 5

Clarification around the temporary to permanent scheme allowing households to be moved into properties more quickly.

Question responses: 139 (96.53%)

Table .5

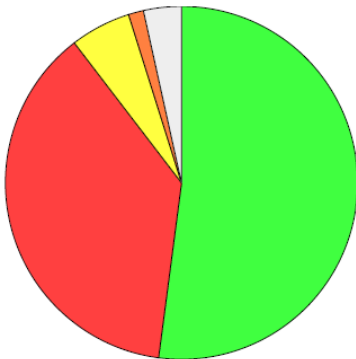


Table .6

	% Total	% Answer	Count
Strongly Agree	52.08%	53.96%	75
Agree	37.50%	38.85%	54
Neither Agree Nor Disagree	5.56%	5.76%	8
Disagree	0.00%	0.00%	0
Strongly Disagree	1.39%	1.44%	2
[No Response]	3.47%	--	5
Total	100.00%	100.00%	144

Facilitate Chain Lettings

Consultation Responses

Allow officers to facilitate 'chain lettings' which free up larger properties for large households.

- Large majority for agree - Over 76% agree
- Less than 2% disagree

Strongly Agree	45.83% - 66
Agree	30.56% - 44
Neither Agree Nor Disagree	17.36% - 25
Disagree	2.08% - 3
Strongly Disagree	0.69% - 1
No Response	3.47% - 5

Allow officers to facilitate 'chain lettings' which free up larger properties for large households.

Question responses: 139 (96.53%)

Table .7

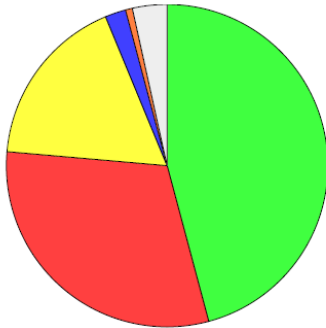


Table .8

	% Total	% Answer	Count
Strongly Agree	45.83%	47.48%	66
Agree	30.56%	31.65%	44
Neither Agree Nor Disagree	17.36%	17.99%	25
Disagree	2.08%	2.16%	3
Strongly Disagree	0.69%	0.72%	1
[No Response]	3.47%	--	5
Total	100.00%	100.00%	144

Allocations Suspension

Consultation Responses

Allow applications to be suspended if applicants on the waiting list continually reject offers, causing delays in letting the properties and creating additional cost.

Strongly Agree	46.53% - 67
Agree	27.08% - 39
Neither Agree Nor Disagree	14.58% - 21

Disagree	6.25% - 9
Strongly Disagree	4.17% - 6
No Response	1.39% - 2

Allow applications to be suspended if applicants on the waiting list continually reject offers, causing delays in letting the properties and creating additional cost.

Question responses: 142 (98.61%)

Table .9

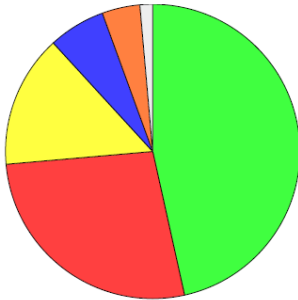


Table .10

	% Total	% Answer	Count
Strongly Agree	46.53%	47.18%	67
Agree	27.08%	27.46%	39
Neither Agree Nor Disagree	14.58%	14.79%	21
Disagree	6.25%	6.34%	9
Strongly Disagree	4.17%	4.23%	6
[No Response]	1.39%	--	2
Total	100.00%	100.00%	144

Medical Assessments

Consultation Responses

Clarify that medical assessments may recommend an extra bedroom only on medical grounds.

Strongly Agree	43.06% - 62
Agree	34.03% - 49
Neither Agree Nor Disagree	15.28% - 22
Disagree	4.86% - 7
Strongly Disagree	0.00% - 0
No Response	2.78% - 4

Clarify that medical assessments may recommend an extra bedroom only on medical grounds.

Question responses: 140 (97.22%)

Table .11



Table .12

	% Total	% Answer	Count
Strongly Agree	43.06%	44.29%	62
Agree	34.03%	35.00%	49
Neither Agree Nor Disagree	15.28%	15.71%	22
Disagree	4.86%	5.00%	7
Strongly Disagree	0.00%	0.00%	0
[No Response]	2.78%	--	4
Total	100.00%	100.00%	144

Equalities Information of Respondents

Age Group

18-24	5.56% 8
25-29	15.28% 22
30-34	12.50% 18
35-39	16.67% 24
40-44	5.56% 8
45-49	11.81% 17
50-54	9.72% 14
55-59	6.94% 10
60-64	4.86% 7
65+	0.69% 1
I'd rather not say	6.94% 10

Please select your age group

Table .1

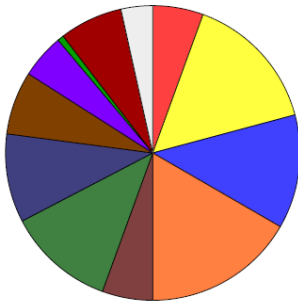


Table .2

	% Total	% Answer	Count
Under 18 years	0.00%	0.00%	0
18-24	5.56%	5.76%	8
25-29	15.28%	15.83%	22
30-34	12.50%	12.95%	18
35-39	16.67%	17.27%	24
40-44	5.56%	5.76%	8
45-49	11.81%	12.23%	17
50-54	9.72%	10.07%	14
55-59	6.94%	7.19%	10
60-64	4.86%	5.04%	7
65+	0.69%	0.72%	1
I'd rather not say	6.94%	7.19%	10

Ethnicity

White English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British	31.94% - 46
Irish	2.08% - 3
Gypsy or Irish Traveller	0.00% - 0
Any other White background	7.64% - 11
White and Black African	0.69% - 1
White and Black Caribbean	2.78% - 4
Any other mixed/multiple ethnic background	1.39% - 2
Bangladeshi	0.69% - 1
Pakistani	0.69% - 1
Indian	0.69% - 1
Any other Asian background	2.08% - 3
African	13.19% - 19
Caribbean	17.36% - 25
Any other Black/ African	1.39% - 2
Other ethnic group	0.69% - 1

I'd rather not say	12.50% - 18
No Response	4.17% - 6

What is your ethnic group?

Table .1

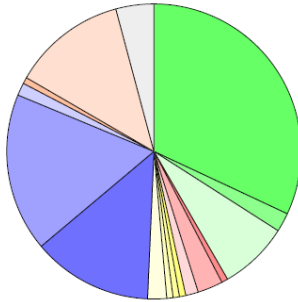


Table .2

	% Total	% Answer	Count
White			
English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British	31.94%	33.33%	46
Irish	2.08%	2.17%	3
Gypsy or Irish Traveller	0.00%	0.00%	0
Any other White background	7.64%	7.97%	11
Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Groups			
White and Asian	0.00%	0.00%	0
White and Black African	0.69%	0.72%	1
White and Black Caribbean	2.78%	2.90%	4
Any other mixed/ multiple ethnic background	1.39%	1.45%	2
Asian/Asian British			
	% Total	% Answer	Count
Chinese	0.00%	0.00%	0
Bangladeshi	0.69%	0.72%	1
Pakistani	0.69%	0.72%	1
Indian	0.69%	0.72%	1
Any other Asian background	2.08%	2.17%	3
Black/ African/ Caribbean/ Black British			
African	13.19%	13.77%	19
Caribbean	17.36%	18.12%	25
Any other Black/ African/ Caribbean background	1.39%	1.45%	2
Any other ethnic group			
Arab	0.00%	0.00%	0
Other ethnic group	0.69%	0.72%	1
I'd rather not say	12.50%	13.04%	18
[No Response]	4.17%	--	6
Total	100.00%	100.00%	144

Gender

Male	20.83% - 30
Female	63.19% - 91
I'd rather not say	9.03% - 13
No Response	6.94% - 10

Are you:

Table .1

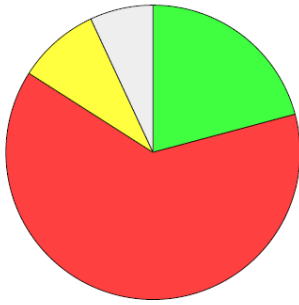


Table .2

	% Total	% Answer	Count
Male	20.83%	22.39%	30
Female	63.19%	67.91%	91
I'd rather not say	9.03%	9.70%	13
[No Response]	6.94%	--	10
Total	100.00%	100.00%	144

Disability

Yes	8.33% -12
No	77.78% - 112
I'd rather not say	9.72% - 14
No Response	4.17% - 6

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Housing Allocations Policy Review

Equalities Analysis Assessment

Introduction

Public bodies such as local authorities are legally required to consider the three aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty (set out in the Equality Act 2010) and document their thinking as part of the process of decision making. The Act sets out that public bodies must have regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share that characteristic;
- foster good relationships between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share that characteristic.

Background and Context

Housing Allocations schemes are governed by legislation which requires housing authorities to determine and publish a lettings scheme setting out how it will prioritise applications for social housing. It is a requirement that certain groups are given “reasonable preference” within the policy. These groups include:

- People who are homeless within the meaning of Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996
- Those living in unsatisfactory housing, e.g. overcrowded or lacking amenities
- Those who need to move on medical grounds
- Those owed a duty under other relevant legislation such as a closing order on a property.

Allocations policies must give preference to these groups above others. There is no requirement to give an equal weighting to all of the reasonable preference categories

Identification of the aims/objectives

The proposed changes to the Allocations policy seek to achieve a number of ends. Many of the recommendations are clarifying the existing policy and formalising the approach that the borough is taking. Other recommendations are seeking to improve the process by providing tools to facilitate the letting process and through disincentives to behaviour that restricts the ability of the council to let property. The changes also seek to build on the policy to ensure that those most in-need are able to access the Housing Register.

The most significant change proposed is to change the local connection rule from two years to five years for new applicants as a way of managing demand.

Assessment of relevant data and research

The key data needed for this Equalities Assessment is the profile of service users. Much of this information is provided as part of a housing application and can be sourced from the in-house system. Analysis has been undertaken into the profile of applicants who are on the Housing Register as at November 2016. Where key data is not available this will be clearly stated alongside the action that will be taken to minimise any potential negative impact.

Analysis of Protected Characteristics

Age

Age of the Primary Applicant on the Housing Waiting List as at November 2016

Age Band	Number on Waiting List	%
Under 20	68	1%
20-24	407	4%
25-39	3349	36%
40-59	4113	44%
60+	1492	16%
Total	9430	

London Borough of Lewisham – Census 2011

Age Band	Total	%
Under 20	70,058	25%
20-24	20,883	8%
25-39	79,338	29%
40-59	69,668	25%
60+	35,921	13%
Total	275,868	

Key considerations/potential impacts:

44% of main applicants on the housing waiting list are aged between 40 and 59, and a further 36% are aged between 25 and 39. These age groups are over-represented when comparing the waiting list to the population of the borough, however this is reflective of the legislation governing the reasons why a household would be accepted on to the housing register.

The policy document recommends changes to the age criteria at which a household member would be classed as an adult from 18 years old to 21 years old. This would have an impact on the number of bedrooms that a household would be eligible for. Over 1,200 households on the register have an 18-21 year old included in their application and would be immediately impacted

by this change, although the number of households which would see a change in their bedroom entitlement is much smaller as this is dependent on the composition of the household. There are currently 347 households on the waiting list where there is at least one person aged 18-20 and where there is someone else of the same sex who is aged 10-17, which represents 3.7% of the housing register.

Whilst there may be a negative impact on 18-21 year olds as the proposal could mean that they were no longer entitled to their own bedroom, this would be mitigated by the increased likelihood of the household being able to successfully bid for a property due to the larger number of smaller properties available.

Clarification of the wording and timescales around households accepted through the Emergency Housing Panel is likely to have a positive impact on all, by clearly setting out the steps that will be taken to assist those prioritised through this method and to ensure that those approved through the housing panel are aware of the pressures on the housing register and the likely timeframes involved.

Disability

Over 2,100 households recorded either the primary applicant or the joint applicant as having an impairment, representing 23% of the Housing Register.

Number of Households on the waiting list in November 2016 and their disability

Nature of Impairment	Number of Households	% of Register
Learning disability or Cognitive impairment	117	1%
Long-standing illness or health condition	606	6%
Physical impairment	456	5%
Sensory impairment	98	1%
Mental health condition	354	4%
Other	1171	13%

The above table captures the number of households where either the primary applicant or the joint applicant recorded that they have an impairment and the nature of this impairment. Over 500 households recorded more than multiple impairments.

Key considerations/potential impacts:

The proposed changes include a provision that an additional bedroom can be recommended by the medical advisor on medical grounds. This is a clarification of existing policy and will result in no substantive change in the impact of the policy towards those with a disability.

Proposed changes to the bedroom standard might have an impact on aged those between 18 and 21 who have a disability and who would no longer be automatically entitled to a bedroom because of age. This is mitigated by the clarification of the policy with regards to the medical officer and their authority to permit an extra bedroom on medical grounds.

The inclusion of a 'Right to Move' quota as per the 2015 statutory guidance could have a positive impact on those with a disability. This will make it easier for applicants with a disability who are employed by an organisation to continue to work for them in the event that their employer re-locates to the borough. For example, where the employer has made adjustments to facilitate their ability to maintain their employment.

Clarification of the wording and timescales around households accepted through the Emergency Housing Panel is likely to have a positive impact on those with a disability, by clearly setting out the steps that will be taken to assist those prioritised through this method and to

ensure that those approved through the housing panel are aware of the pressures on the housing register and the likely timeframes involved.

Changes proposed to suspend applicants from the register where they refuse a number of properties could impact on those with a disability. To mitigate this, there should be clear warnings noting this policy change and officers should be clear and consistent in the application of this.

Individuals applying to be on the Housing Register are asked whether they consider themselves to be a disabled person and if so, what type of impairment they have. The service should continue to monitor the impact of the policy and any changes on those who consider themselves to be disabled and to take measures to mitigate any impact.

Gender reassignment

Over 90 applicants on the Housing Register recorded themselves as transgender, representing almost 1% of the register.

Key considerations/impacts:

The proposed changes to the bedroom standard may have an impact on those who have a different gender identity to that assigned at birth, as those aged between 18 and 20 will be required to share a bedroom with any other member of the household of the same sex who is aged 10 to 17. The service should ensure that any applications including transgender household member are allocated a number of bedrooms based on the application of the policy in accordance with the gender which the household member identifies as rather than the gender they were assigned at birth.

Individuals applying to be on the Housing Register are asked whether their gender identity is different to the gender they were assigned at birth. The service should continue to monitor the impact of the policy and to take measures to mitigate the impact on those who are transgender.

Marriage and Civil Partnership

Whilst no specific marital status data is captured when an individual is applying to join the Housing Register, the application requests that the relationship between the primary applicant and household members is recorded for those present within the household.

1,210 household members were described as having a relationship of Husband or Wife with the main applicant, broken down as below.

Number of Household members on the Housing Register that are husband or wife to the primary applicant

Relationship	Number of Household Members
Husband	636
Wife	574

Key considerations/impacts:

The proposed changes to the bedroom standard may have an impact on household members who are married and not the main or joint applicant, as the marital status of those who are not the core applicants is not considered when determining the bedroom allocation of a household. To mitigate the potential impact of this the service should ensure that applications affected in this manner are assessed to ensure that the bedroom allocation is appropriate based on the

household composition and does not unduly impact on household members that are married or in a civil partnership.

The service should continue to monitor the impact of the policy and to take measures to mitigate the impact on those who are married or in a civil partnership.

Maternity and Pregnancy

192 households on the Housing Register are recorded as having a pregnancy as at November 2016.

Key considerations/impacts:

The proposed changes will result in no disproportionate change in the impact of this policy on households with a pregnancy. The service should continue to monitor the impact of the policy and to take measures to mitigate the impact on pregnant households.

Race

Ethnicity of the Primary Applicant for all Households on the Housing Register

Ethnicity	Primary Applicants	%
African	980	10%
Any other Asian background	125	1%
Any other Black/ African/ Caribbean background	190	2%
Any other ethnic group	176	2%
Any other mixed/ multiple ethnic background	74	1%
Any other White background	282	3%
Arab	17	0%
Bangladeshi	31	0%
Caribbean	915	10%
Chinese	68	1%
English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British	1392	15%
Indian	25	0%
Irish	56	1%
Not disclosed	4894	52%
Pakistani	23	0%
White and Asian	11	0%
White and Black African	38	0%
White and Black Caribbean	133	1%
Total	9430	

London Borough of Lewisham – Census 2011

Ethnicity	Total	%
White	147,684	54%
Mixed	20,468	7%
Asian or Asian British	25,533	9%
Black or Black British	74,933	27%
Other Ethnic Groups	7,251	3%
Total	275,869	

Key considerations/impacts:

For 52% of households that are on the Housing Register we do not have information as to their ethnicity, either due to this data not being part of the form at the time of application or due to non-disclosure by the applicant.

Of those who have provided a response there is a greater proportion of households from BME groups than in the borough as a whole. The proposed changes will result in no disproportionate change in the impact of this policy on households from a BME group. The service should continue to monitor the impact of the policy and to take measures to mitigate the impact on applicants from BME groups.

Religion or belief

Religion	Primary Applicants	%
Any other religion/belief	62	1%
Buddhist	36	0%
Christian (all denominations)	1596	17%
Hindu	22	0%
Jewish	1	0%
Muslim	316	3%
None	610	6%
Not disclosed	6747	72%
Prefer not to say	37	0%
Sikh	3	0%
Total	9430	

London Borough of Lewisham – Census 2011

Religion	Total	%
Christian	145,580	53%
Buddhist	3,664	1%
Hindu	6,561	2%
Jewish	643	0%
Muslim	17,760	6%
Sikh	531	0%
Other Religion	1,478	1%
No religion	75,149	27%
Religion not stated	24,503	9%
Total	275,868	

Key considerations/impacts:

For 72% of households that are on the Housing Register we do not have information as to their religion, either due to this data not being part of the form at the time of application or due to non-disclosure by the applicant

The proposed changes to the bedroom standard may have an impact on those who express a religion or belief and who are aged between 18 and 20 with another household member of the same sex aged 10 to 17. The reduction in bedroom allocation for those identifying as having a religion or belief could have an impact on their ability to freely express this.

The service should continue to monitor the impact of the policy and to take measures to mitigate the impact on applicants based on their religion or belief.

Sex

Sex	Primary Applicant	Joint Applicant
Female	6836	1278
Male	2471	1401

Key considerations/impacts:

The vast majority of primary applicants are female, therefore any changes to the Allocations Scheme will have a larger impact on women than on men.

The majority of cases considered by the Emergency Housing Panel involve female applicants. However the proposed change is intended to provide further clarity around this process, in particular as regards timings. It will not change the workings of the panel nor the level of service received. Therefore this is likely to be a positive change.

Sexual orientation

Sexual Orientation	Primary Applicant	Joint Applicant
Bisexual	15	2
Gay/Lesbian	11	2
Not disclosed	3633	1163
Other	10	0
Prefer not to say	53	12
Straight/Heterosexual	2903	624

Key considerations/impacts:

A large number of applicants have not informed the service of their sexual orientation, so the data presented is unlikely to give a true picture of the current waiting list.

The service should take steps to improve the quality of the data held, and continue to monitor the impact of the policy and to take measures to mitigate the impact on applicants based on their sexual orientation.

Overall assessment of impact on service users

The matrix on page 10 details the mitigating actions that will need to be taken relating to the proposed changes. In particular, officers will need to monitor the impact of changes where data held may be incomplete or not current.

Overall it is considered that the majority of changes will have a positive impact as they will either provide greater clarity to service users or will help to improve the efficiency of the allocation of properties, which is positive for all applicants. Otherwise, it is considered that the identified mitigating actions are reasonable and practicable.

Action plan and timetable

Activity	Details	Timescale
Monitor the impact of policy changes	Ensure that the proposed changes do not have any equalities implications which have not already been accounted for and mitigated	Ongoing, every three months
Ensure staff have had recent training on equalities issues	Ensure that adequate training is made available to all officers and monitor completion of the training to ensure compliance	Within 12 months
Ensure equality analysis is cascaded to all staff	Provide this equalities analysis to all staff within the service alongside the revised policy.	Within four weeks of date revised policy is approved
Regular discussion of equalities issues at staff briefings	Ensure that a discussion of equalities monitoring and assessment of impact is a standing item for service meetings	At every team meeting

Publication of Results

The results of this EAA will be reported on the Council's web pages as part of wider equalities data reporting appropriate.

Monitoring

The EAA Action plan and timeline for the proposed policy changes will be monitored through the project reporting structures.

Matrix of changes and mitigating actions			
Proposed change	Equalities Category	Assessment of impact	Actions/Mitigation
Change in Local Connection	All	<p>This change will only apply to new applicants, and the length of time they have lived in the borough is not directly linked to any protected characteristic.</p> <p>Making the local connection longer could make it more difficult for some applicants to demonstrate how long they have lived in the borough.</p>	Officers will need to make reasonable adjustments where necessary to support people to provide appropriate evidence of a local connection.
Bedroom standard	Age Gender reassignment Marriage/civil partnership Disability Religion or belief	<p>This proposed change will mean that some people aged 18-20 will have to share a bedroom with another household member of the same sex aged 10-20. Under the current policy they would be given their own room.</p>	Officers to ensure that appropriate action is taken to ensure that the protected characteristics of a household or an individual household member are taken into account where these are affected by this policy change in a way that might unduly impact on said characteristic.
Rent arrears	All	<p>Households who are in rent arrears will no longer be prevented from bidding for a property, however they must clear their arrears before being accepted for a property.</p> <p>This change will provide clarity to households on the register.</p>	<p>This will have a positive impact on all households as they will not be prevented from bidding for properties if they are in rent arrears, and the requirement will be to clear rent arrears upon successfully bidding for a property.</p> <p>The Housing Needs Group Service Manager will still retain the delegated authority to permit a move despite arrears where necessary.</p>
Right to Move	Disability	<p>New statutory guidance was introduced in March 2015 to introduce the 'Right to Move'. The intention behind this was to make it easier for social tenants to move if they need to for work reasons. The implications of the regulation is that local authorities are prevented from applying a local connection test that could disadvantage tenants who need to move across local authority boundaries for work related reasons.</p>	<p>This change will have a positive overall impact in allowing households that are eligible for social housing to join the register and access a quota of properties in the locale to which their employment has moved.</p> <p>There will be particular benefit for those with a disability as this will allow those households to continue working for employers that have made adjustments to facilitate their continued employment.</p>
Timescales clarification for Emergency Housing Panel cases	Disability Age Sex	<p>It is proposed to change the wording of section 2.2.3 in relation to the 12 week period in which Housing Panel and Supported Housing Priority cases may bid for themselves. The change will reflect that this does not guarantee that an offer will be made or a bid will be successful in that time, and that the actual waiting time for a property may be longer dependent on availability and demand for properties.</p>	<p>This proposed change will have a positive impact as it will provide more clarity and help to manage the expectations of residents. This formalises existing practice and the actual operation of the panel at present.</p>
Clarification of temporary to permanent scheme	All	<p>It is proposed to change the wording of section 3.4.5 of the policy. Currently this states that appropriate households in eligible properties may be signed up for permanent tenancies in those properties</p>	<p>The proposed change will have an impact in reducing the number of properties that are available to let to the general housing register through Choice-Based lettings. However, this is mitigated by allowing homeless applicants to settle more quickly and to facilitate a speedier transition to long-term, suitable accommodation.</p>

		after 12 months has elapsed. The changes would permit this to be done within 12 months where suitable.	
Facilitate chain lettings	All	It is proposed to change the wording of section 3.4.6 of the policy. The proposed changes would allow properties that become available through Chain Lettings to be advertised for a specific purpose.	By enabling properties to be advertised for a specific purpose when they have been made available through a chain let, this will have a positive impact on all groups. This will allow the service to respond to the needs of its customers and to respond to demand drivers as and when they occur.
Applications suspension	Disability	There is currently no provision within the policy to limit the number of bids that a part 6 applicant can refuse, which can lead to a loss of revenue and unavailable stock. It is proposed that part 6 applicants who refuse 3 properties which they bid successfully for are suspended from bidding for 12 months to reduce loss of revenue and maximise the use of stock.	Officers to ensure that the process is clear to all users and that an appropriate warning system is in place to advise households of the potential outcome of refusing a number of properties.
Medical assessments	Disability	This change formalises and clarifies the process whereby the medical officer may allocate an extra bedroom to a household where there is suitable medical grounds to do so, and only on this basis.	This change will have a positive impact as it formalises existing procedure and clarifies the grounds on which a household may be eligible for an extra bedroom.

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Housing Select Committee			
Title	Key Housing issues		
Key decision	No	Item no	7
Wards	All		
Contributors	Executive Director for Customer Services		
Class	Part 1	16 November 2016	

Reasons for lateness and urgency

This report is late to ensure that Housing Select Committee have the most up to date information regarding the Handypersons service consultation, which concluded at the end of October. It is urgent as there is no other opportunity for Committee to consider the Handypersons saving proposals before final proposals are presented to Mayor and Cabinet.

1 Summary

- 1.1 Key Housing Issues is a general report that aims to update the Housing Select Committee on current and new issues important to housing.

2 Update on legislation timetable

- 2.1 Housing Select Committee will be aware that the government is due to publish a number of regulations relating to the Housing and Planning Act, in particular regarding the Pay to Stay and High Value Voids policies. At the time of this report being submitted these regulations had still not been made available, but if they are published before the Committee meets officers will provide an update on the night.

3 PLACE/Ladywell awards and event programme

- 3.1 In addition to the two awards won by PLACE/Ladywell earlier this year at the New London Architecture awards, it has also now been shortlisted for two further awards:

- London Planning Awards: “Best New Homes to Live In”
- Local Government Chronicle Awards – “Best Housing Initiative”

- 3.2 There continues to be a large amount of interest in PLACE/Ladywell from a wide range of partners. Recent visitors include senior civil servants from DCLG and a number of representatives from the Housing and Land team at the GLA. The

table below shows some of the events and visits planned in the next few months to exemplify the level of interesting the development is generating

PLACE/Ladywell Event and Visit Plan	
<i>Date and Time</i>	<i>Description</i>
14 November	Tour for representatives of Transport for London
16 November	“Cathy Come Home” screening & fundraiser for the 999 Club
17 November	Tour for representatives of the Cabinet Office
22 November	Tour for delegation from the Indian Civil Service
22 November	Tour for “Legacy London”
8 December	Tour London Assembly Planning Committee

4 Results of Handypersons Consultation

- 4.1 At its meeting on 7 September 2016, Housing Select Committee considered a number of savings proposals relating to Housing Services, and asked for the opportunity to scrutinise the proposal relating to Handypersons again in November in light of the results of a consultation with service users.
- 4.2 The current proposal is to stop providing this service in order to contribute to the overall savings target of £1.5m that is required in Housing and NRPF by 2020. There are also underlying pressures totalling £0.7m for the service that require tough decisions in terms of service provision over the next few years and as a result this proposal is to stop the handypersons service with the budget of £151,000 per year to contribute to the overall savings target.
- 4.3 Consideration was given to providing the service in other ways at no cost to the council such as Lewisham Homes, Police and Age UK as well as looking at whether the Disabled Facilities Grant could be used to cover service costs. We also consulted with residents on whether they would be willing to pay for the service going forward.
- The Police Handyperson service based in Bromley (Blue), offer a handyperson service via ex officers who live in Bromley however will not be able to offer the service in Lewisham. They do not have any ex officers who live in the borough and they say they prefer not to go into London. Lewisham Police were also approached but do not offer a similar service.
 - Lewisham Homes provide a day to day repairs service to housing tenants however this does not include the type of jobs provided in the handypersons service such as fixing curtain rails etc. The repairs service in Lewisham Homes is funded from tenants rents (HRA), whereas the handyperson service is provided largely to homeowners through the general fund. Whilst Lewisham Homes may be able to provide the service they would need to charge recipients of the handyperson services for the work undertaken to cover the costs as it would not be appropriate to use tenants’ rents to provide services to homeowners.
 - Voluntary Sector – Age UK currently provide a free service to Southwark residents that is funded through grant provided by Southwark Council

and complements Southwark's in-house service. Age UK have indicated they may be interested in taking on the service if Lewisham grant funded it like Southwark but this would not deliver the savings required.

- Disabled Facilities Grant – this grant is used to provide major adaptations to make it easier for elderly and vulnerable people to live at home such as level access showers, stair lifts etc. Only costs associated with large expenditure items can be recovered from the grant therefore this option does not deliver the savings required.

3.4 In addition to establishing if users of the service were prepared to contribute to the costs of this non-statutory service the survey also gauged satisfaction with the current service. A postal questionnaire was sent on 23 September 2016 to residents in the borough who had used the handypersons service during the 16 month period, April 2015 to August 2016 inclusive. The survey included a return envelope to increase the number of returns and included 500 or so members of the Positive Ageing Council as well as being uploaded on the Positive Ageing Council website.

Results

- 4.5 A detailed summary of the results is attached to this paper in Appendix 1
- 3.6 Of the 1408 surveys sent, 525 responses (37.29%) were received by the closing date of 19 October 2016. Of the 525 responses 432 had used the service before and 97.37% of the 432 respondents stated they thought the service was good, 2.05% (7 responses) stated it was neither good nor poor and 0.58% (2 responses) stated it was poor. 93 people did not need to answer this question as they had not used the service before.
- 4.7 Responses to contributions to the costs of the service were more varied ranging from £0.00 to £100.00 per job; 139 responses (26%) stated they would not want to contribute at all and a small number (14) said they would pay whatever it costs; the average contribution amounted to £ 20.00 against an actual cost per job of £37.27 based on 15/16 outturns.
- 4.8 Similarly, in terms of suggested contributions per hourly rate these ranged from £0.00 to £20.00 per hour; 100 responders or 19%, stated they would not want to contribute to the hourly rate, whilst 19 people or 3.6% said they would be willing to cover any cost; the average contributions were £6.11 per hour against an actual cost per hour of £36.00 based on 15/16 outturns.

Conclusion

- 4.9 Whilst any contribution would be welcome the contribution amounts suggested by responders do not cover the current average price of a job or the current hourly rate and whilst a few responses stated they would pay whatever was required per hour and would pay any amount per job, the contributions are too few in number and in amount to have any impact on the proposal to stop the service.

5 Government Consultation - Houses in multiple occupation and residential property licensing reforms

5.1 DCLG is currently consulting on potential changes to the licensing of HMOs, in particular they are proposing to:

- Remove the current rule, which defines a mandatory HMO as having 3 or more stories, so all houses (regardless of how many floors) with 5 or more people from 2 or more households are defined as an HMO – this will further enable local authorities to tackle poor standards, migration and the problems being seen in high risk smaller properties as the sector has grown; such as a 2 storey house which has been subdivided into rooms.
- Extend mandatory licensing to flats above and below business premises (regardless of the number of storeys) - as the evidence shows more problems in these properties;
- Introduce mandatory national minimum sizes for rooms used as sleeping accommodation in licensable HMOs, that being:
 - 6.52 sq. m for one person
 - 10.23 sq. m for two persons.
- It is proposed that the minimum size would exclude any floor space, other than the usable floor area of a room, based on the minimum height of the room measured from the floor to the ceiling. It is proposed that height should be 1.5 metres.
- Impact Assessments on landlords to estimate the costs to landlords as businesses in extending mandatory HMO licensing.
- Evidence relating to the “fit and proper person” test which are contained in The Housing and Planning Act 2016, and how they may be used in relation to HMO and Selective licensing.
- Proposals to make it a condition of a mandatory HMO licence that the licence holder provides adequate receptacles for the storage and disposal of waste.
- The evidence available of the success of the current regulations surrounding purpose built student housing.

5.2 Overall officers are in support of many of the proposals but also need to seek clarity on some of the proposals such as licensing all flats above and below business premises. The extension of the regulations to all HMOs, regardless of the number of floors in the building, will give the opportunity to tackle the increasing number of landlords acquiring or converting smaller properties into poor standard HMOs that fail to meet the minimum HMO standards. Officers are receiving reports of this type of acquisition in the Bellingham area. The extension of the regulations will help to increase the fire safety standards in these properties as well as give us the opportunity to engage more robustly with landlords around issues surrounding their management of their properties.

- 4.3 Further work is required by officers to examine the fee discount suggestions posited under the Student Housing section of the consultation and how this may be expanded to the whole licensing fee structure in Lewisham to incentivise good landlords and encourage better engagement with the sector as a whole.
- 4.4 The consultation closes on 13 December; officers are currently preparing a detailed response.

6 Allocation of Housing and Homelessness – eligibility of immigrant families

- 6.1 On 21 October DCLG wrote to local housing authorities notifying them of the commencement (on 30 October 2016) of the Allocation of Housing and Homelessness (Eligibility) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016.
- 6.2 The effect of the Amendment Regulations is that persons granted leave to enter or remain in the UK under the Immigration Rules on the grounds of family or private life are eligible for social housing and homelessness assistance, provided their leave is granted with recourse to public funds.
- 6.3 This change restores the previous position prior to July 2012, before changes to the Immigration Rules meant that this specific cohort became ineligible for housing allocation or homelessness assistance.

7 Consultation on Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan

- 7.1 Following its consideration at Full Council on 21 September 2016, the Council's Planning department is currently consulting on a Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan which aims to identify a site to meet the local accommodation needs of the borough's travelling community.
- 7.2 The consultation is on two potential locations for a new residential site. Only one of these sites will be needed. The sites are:
- New Cross Social Club and adjoining land in Hornshay Street, New Cross, SE15 1HB
 - Land next to Pool Court, Catford, SE6
- 7.3 The consultation runs until Wednesday 30 November 2016. More information can be found at www.lewisham.gov.uk/travellingcommunity

8 Legal Implications

- 8.1 There are no specific legal implications arising from this report.

9 Financial implications

- 9.1 The purpose of this report is to update Members on current housing issues. As such, there are no specific financial implications arising from the report itself.

9.2 The deletion of the handypersons service will contribute £151k to an overall savings target for the strategic housing Service of £1.5m to be achieved between 2017/18 and 2019/2020.

10 Crime and disorder implications

10.1 There are no crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

11 Equalities implications

11.1 There are no equalities implications arising from this report.

12 Environmental implications

12.1 There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

13 Background Documents and Report Originator

13.1 Appendix 1 – detailed summary of the Handypersons Consultation response.

13.2 If you have any queries relating to this report please contact Jeff Endean on 020 8314 6213.

Handyperson questionnaire – survey results

1 November 2016

Rationale

On 7th September 2016, Housing Select Committee commented on the review being undertaken with regards to the handyperson service and noted a need to focus on the current level of satisfaction with the service and the impact that a requirement to contribute to the service might have. A consultation was launched to capture feedback from clients and key partners with regards to the above points and to capture additional information around the client group and their needs to inform future decision making.

Methodology

On 23 September 2016 a postal questionnaire was sent to 1408 elderly and disabled residents in the borough who had used the handypersons service between April 2015 and August 2016 inclusive. To increase the likelihood of response a return envelope was included in all questionnaires. The questionnaire was also sent to approximately 500 members of the Positive Ageing Council and was uploaded to their website.

Key Results

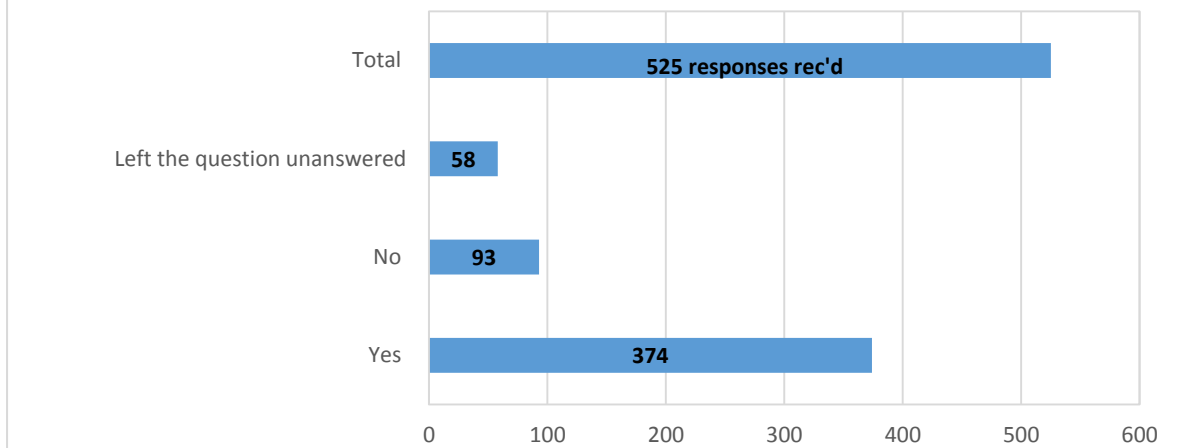
525 responses were received representing a 37% response rate amongst those contacted directly. Not all respondents answered all of the questions, and as such the below analysis may contain less than 525 responses in some sections.

Over 97% of those who responded recorded satisfaction with the current service, not including the 90 responses which were left blank. The vast majority of service users said they would be unhappy to lose the service with over 92% of those answering the question stating this. 48 respondents did not answer this question. When asked whether they would be willing to contribute towards the cost of the service, 119 respondents did not answer. Over 65% said they would be willing to contribute between £0 and £10 per hour whereas under 4% responded that they would pay whatever the cost of the work was. Last year's financial data suggests the cost of providing the handyperson is £36 per hour.

Detail

Analysis of the responses to each question can be found below.

Question 1: Have you used Lewisham's handy person service?



Of the 525 respondents;

- 374 (71%) had used the service before
- 93 (18%) had not used the service
- 58 (11%) left this question unanswered

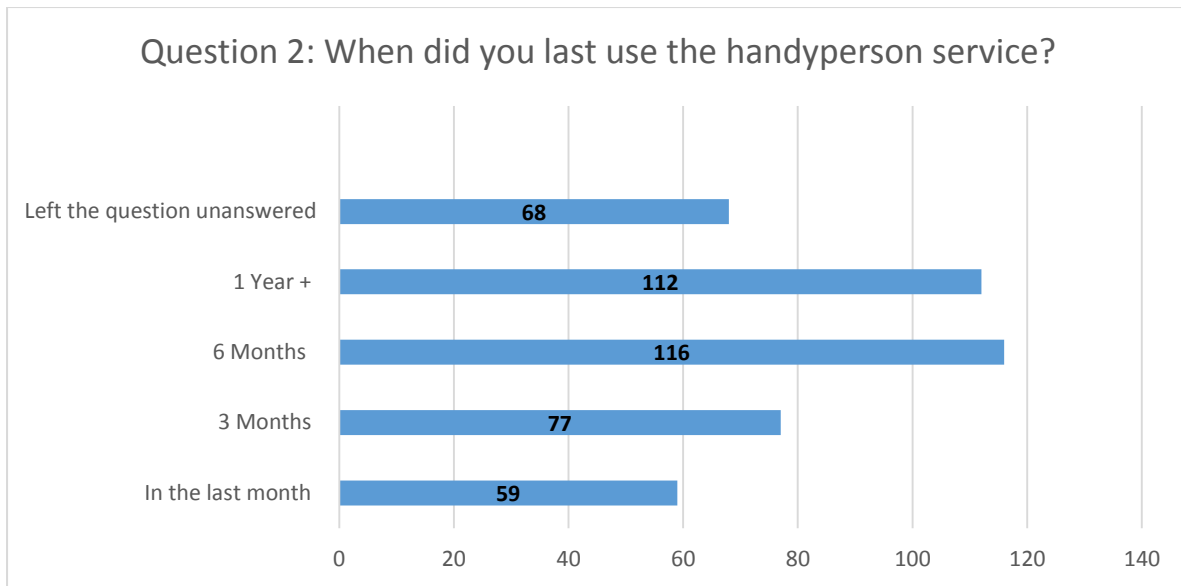
Many of the 58 who left the question above unanswered have answered later questions relating to satisfaction with the service.

Of those who had used the service before women were by far the highest users (85%) with an even split between those of white and BME backgrounds.

Of the males who responded and have previously used the service 64% were white and 36% were from BME backgrounds.

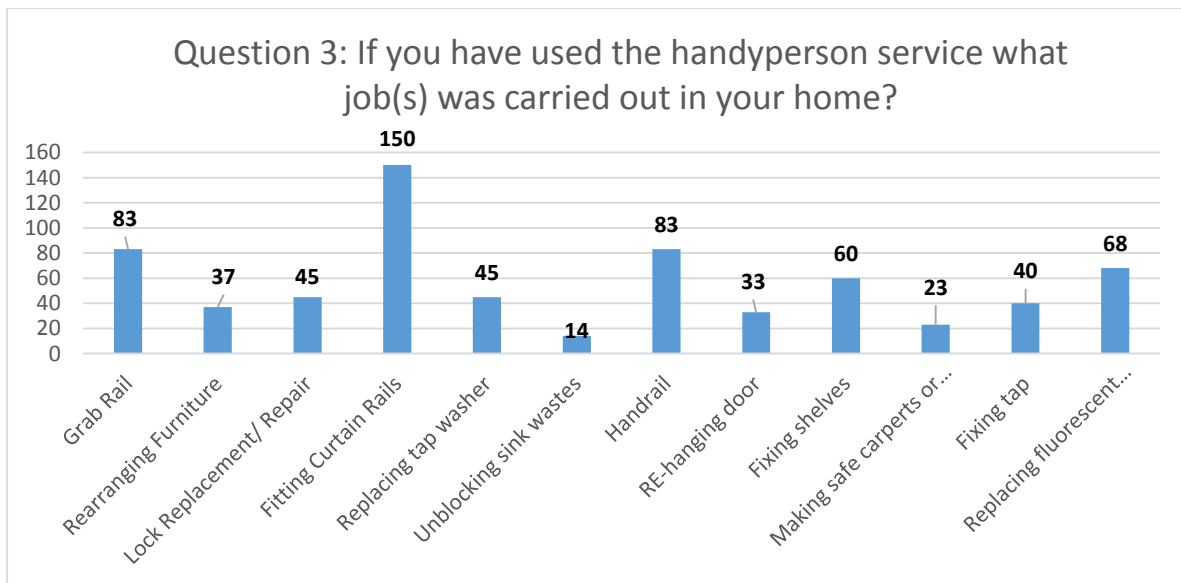
The age group who stated they used the service most were 70 to 79 year olds; this was similar for both male and females. There was no difference to the age category having not used the service, with 70 - 79 years being the most prevalent responders.

Those people who had never used the service before, offered contributions averaging £10.00 per hour, compared to an average of £5.80 per hour for those who had used the service.



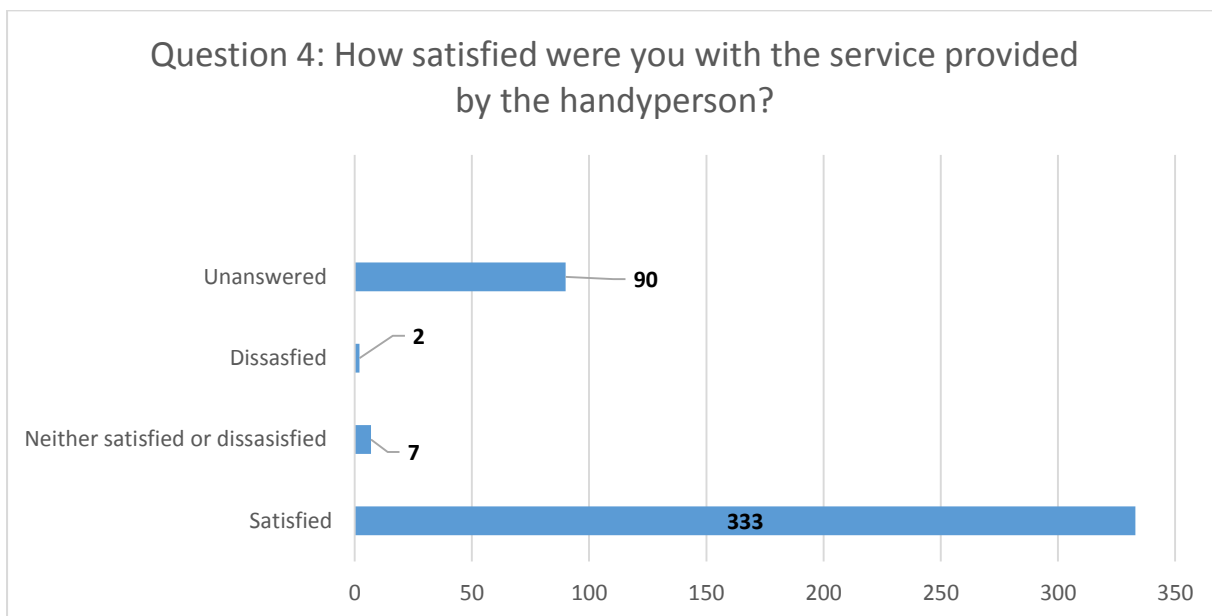
Of the 364 who answered this question;

- Over 16% (59) had used the service in the last month
- Over 21% (77) had used the service in the past 3 months
- Almost 32% (116) had used the service in the last 6 months
- The remaining just under 31% (112) had used the service over a year ago



The below table outlines the responses which respondents gave when asked which jobs had been carried out at their property. 35% of respondents recorded that the handyman had fitted curtain rails, representing 22% of all jobs recorded. 19% recorded that the handyman had fitted a handrail and 19% recording that they had fitted a grab rail each of which represented 12% of the total jobs recorded.

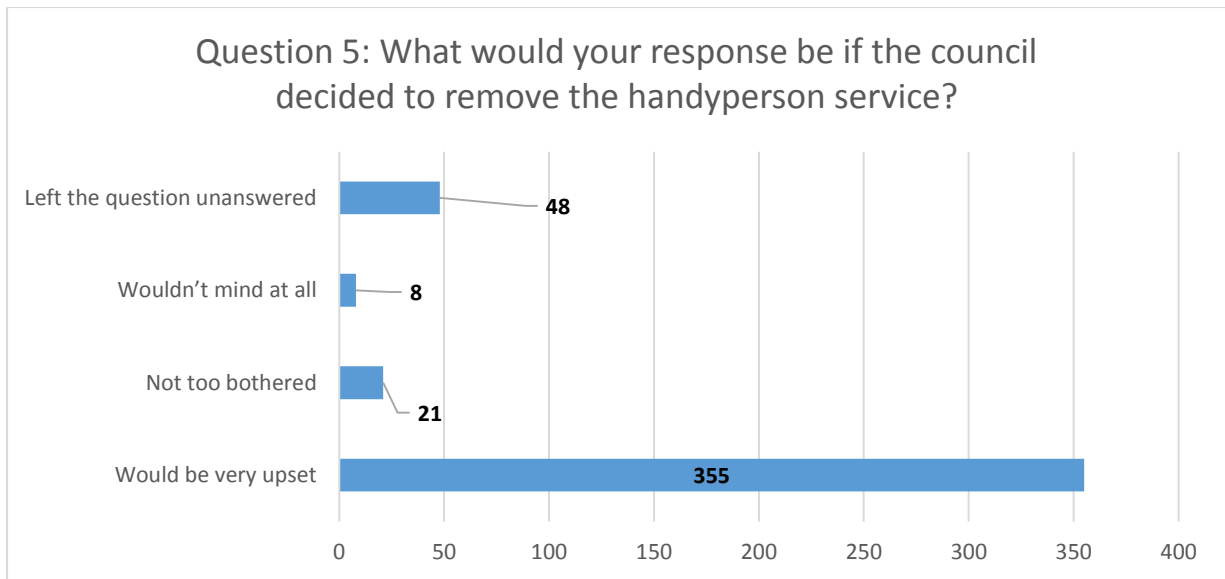
Jobs carried out	Percentage	Number of people
Fitting Curtain Rails	35%	150
Handrail	19%	83
Grab Rail	19%	83
Replacing Fluorescent Lights	16%	68
Fixing shelves	14%	60
Replacing Tap Washer	10%	45
Lock Replacement/repair	10%	45
Fixing tap	9%	40
Rearranging Furniture	9%	37
Re-hanging door	8%	33
Making carpets and flooring safe	5%	23
Unblocking sink wastes	3%	14



Of the 342 respondents who answered this question;

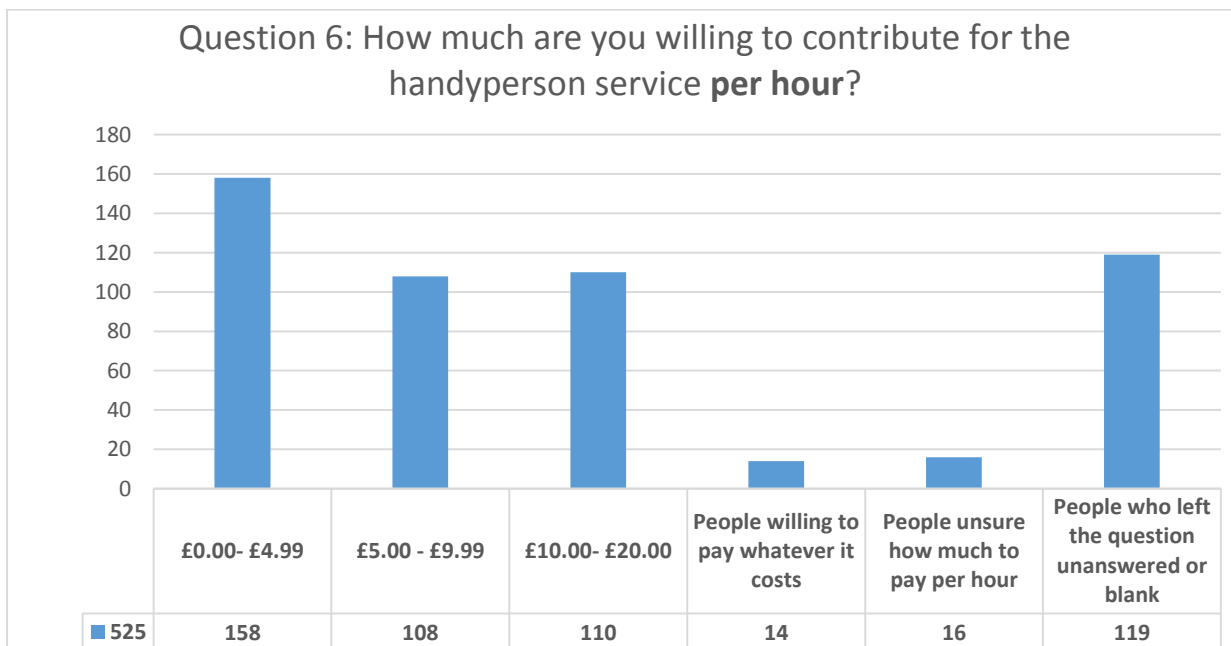
- 333 (97%) were satisfied with the handy person service
- 7 service users (2%) responded they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- 2 (1%) people said they were dissatisfied.

43 of those who are recorded as satisfied in the above figures had crossed out satisfied and written very satisfied.



Of the 384 respondents who answered this question;

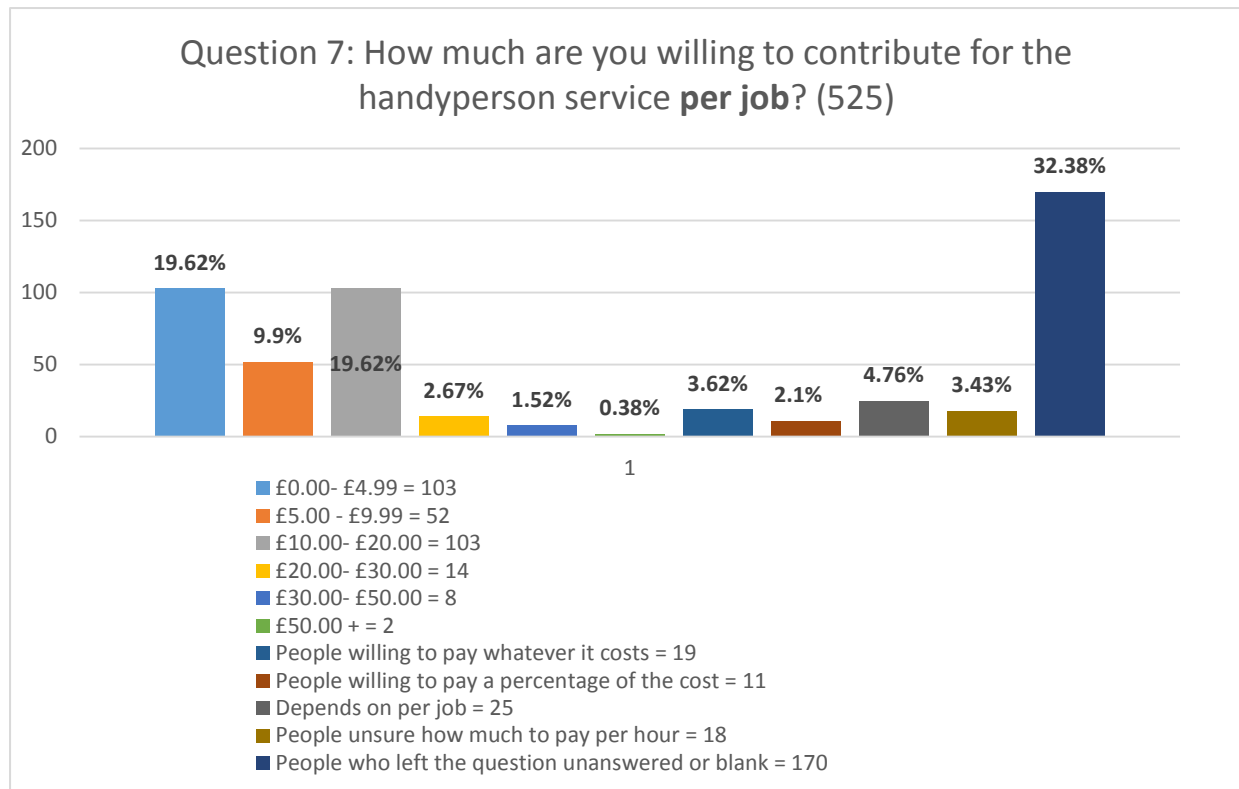
- 355 (92%) of respondents would be very upset if the service was taken away
- 29 (7%) said they would not be too bothered or wouldn't mind at all



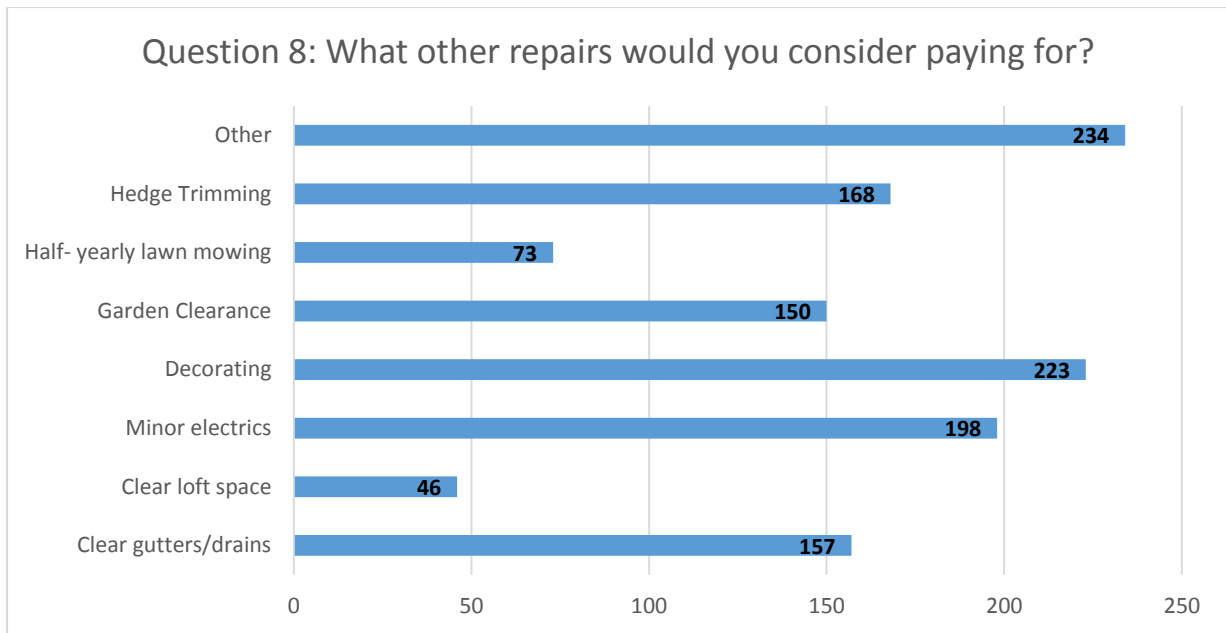
406 respondents answered question 6 relating to the potential contribution of users to the service, of which;

- 39% (158) responded that they would be willing to contribute between £0 and £4.99 per hour for the service
- 27% (108) responded that they would be willing to contribute between £5 and £9.99 per hour for the service
- 27% (110) responded that they would be willing to contribute between £10 and £20 per hour for the service
- 3% (14) responded that they would be willing to pay whatever the cost of the service was
- 4% (16) responded that they were unsure of how much to pay per hour

Last years' outturn shows the cost of providing the handyman per hour is £36.00 (including vans and overheads).



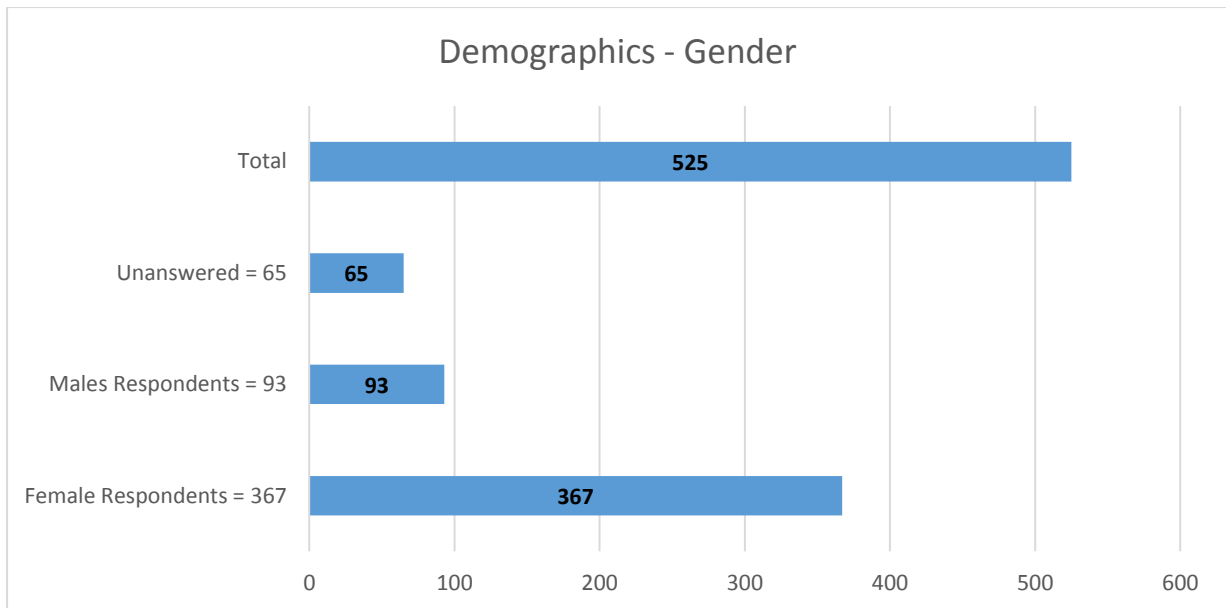
- Just under a third of all responders left the question of contributions per job blank.
- Just under a fifth of all responders said they would pay up to £5.00 per job, and the same again for those willing to pay between £10.00 and £20.00 per job.
- 19 people (3.62%) were willing to cover the costs whatever they may be, however, 100 responders (19%) said they would not want to contribute at all.
- A total of 84 of all responders (16%) stated they would not want to contribute to either an hourly rate or per job rate.
- The average amount people were willing to pay for the service was £20.00 per job. The average cost of a job provided by the handyman service amounted to £37.27 based on 15/16 outturn (plus corporate overheads plus cost of vans).



The most commonly requested repair from the responses that is not currently available through the handypersons service is decorating, followed closely by minor electrical works. Some other local authorities do offer this service. A detailed breakdown of these comments is below.

Job	Percentage	Number
Other	45%	234
Decorating	43%	223
Minor Electrics	38%	198
Hedge Trimming	32%	168
Clear gutters/drains	30%	157
Garden Clearance	29%	150
Half-yearly lawn mowing	14%	73
Clear Loft space	9%	46

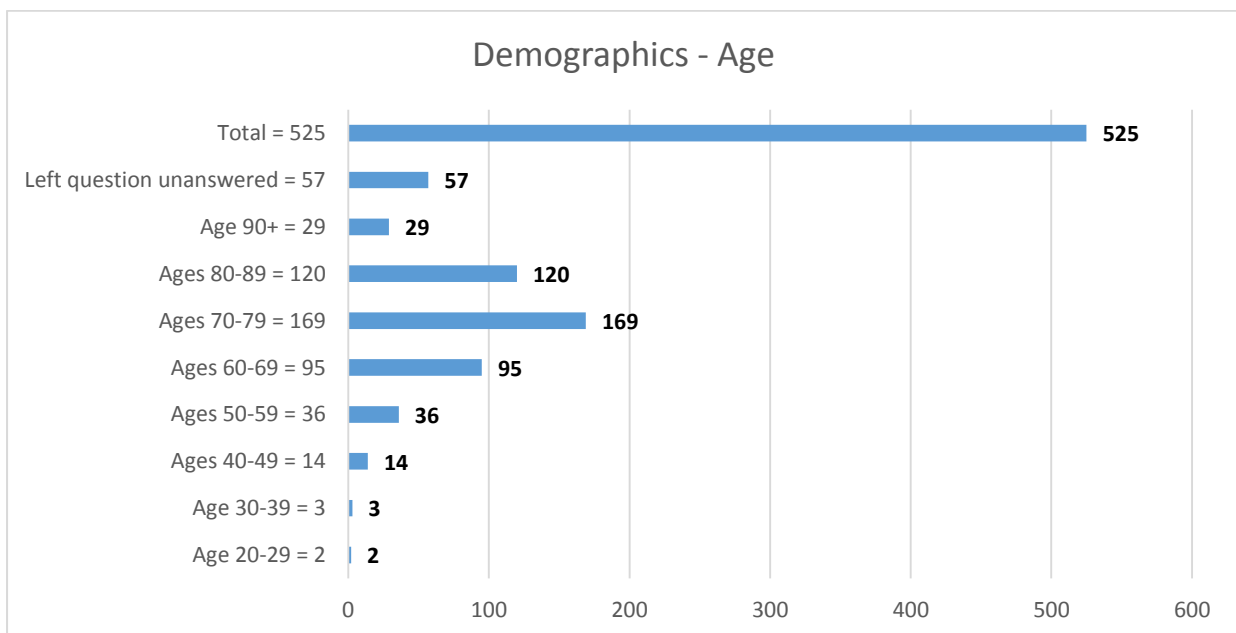
Respondents who indicated they would be willing to pay for other repairs chose minor plumbing and odd jobs round the house such as clearing blockages to toilet/sinks as the most popular job types. 17% who had used the service before, compared to 16% of all responders, said they would not be willing to pay for any of the above jobs.



Of all 525 respondents;

- 70% were female
- 18% were male
- 12% left the question answered.
-

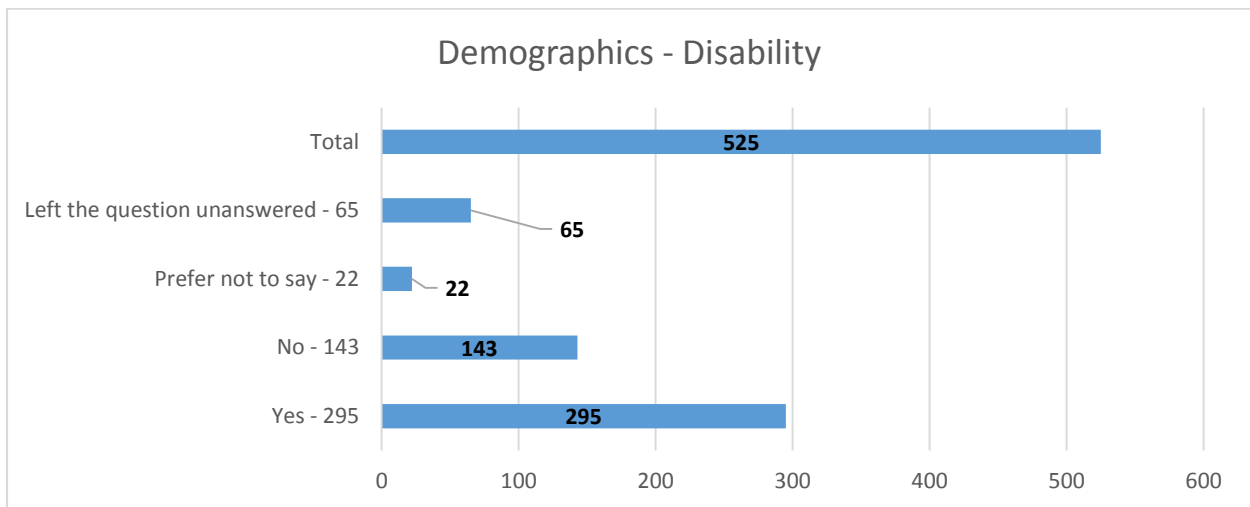
Of those who had used the service before 85% were female, whilst 15% were males.



The age group of the respondents varied from 23 up to 97.

- 32% of respondents were aged 70-79, this group were the majority of respondents
- 23% of respondents were aged 80-89
- 18% of respondents were aged 60-69
- 7% of respondents were aged 50-59
- 5% of respondents were 90 or older
- 4% of respondents were aged 50 or below

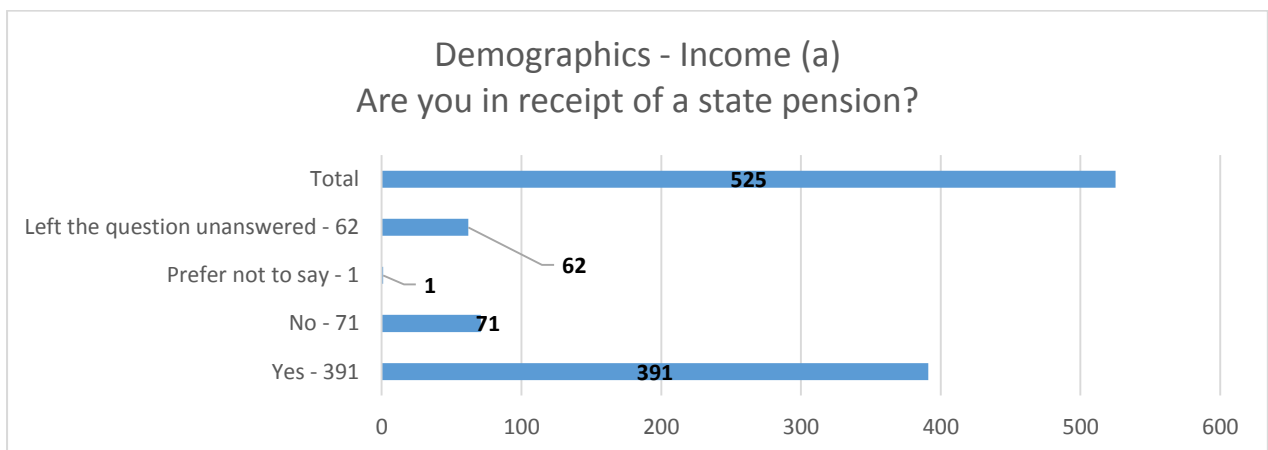
The remaining 11% did not answer this question.



Of all 525 respondents;

- 56% (295) considered themselves to have a disability
- 27% (143) declared they were free of any disability
- 13% (87) left the question unanswered or preferred not to say

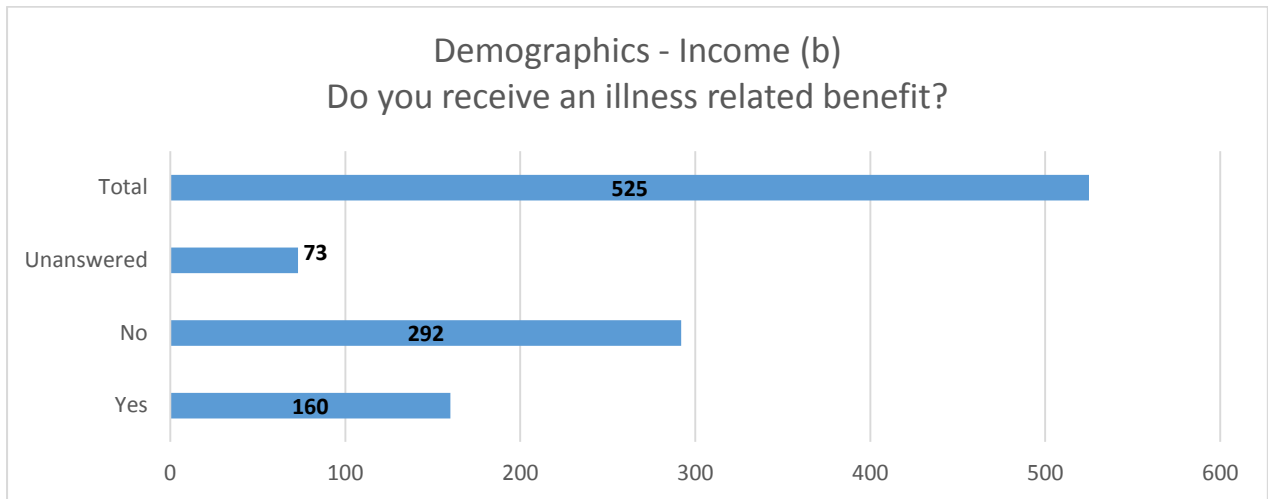
Out of those who did consider themselves to have a disability, almost three quarters were female. The highest proportion of respondents who considered themselves to have a disability were those aged 70-79 accounting for 35% of the respondents. Of the 295 who considered themselves to have a disability, 41% (120) stated poor mobility or arthritis as their disability.



Of the overall 525 respondents;

- 74% (391) were in receipt of a state pension
- 14% (71) were not in receipt of a state pension
- 12% (63) left the question unanswered or preferred not to say
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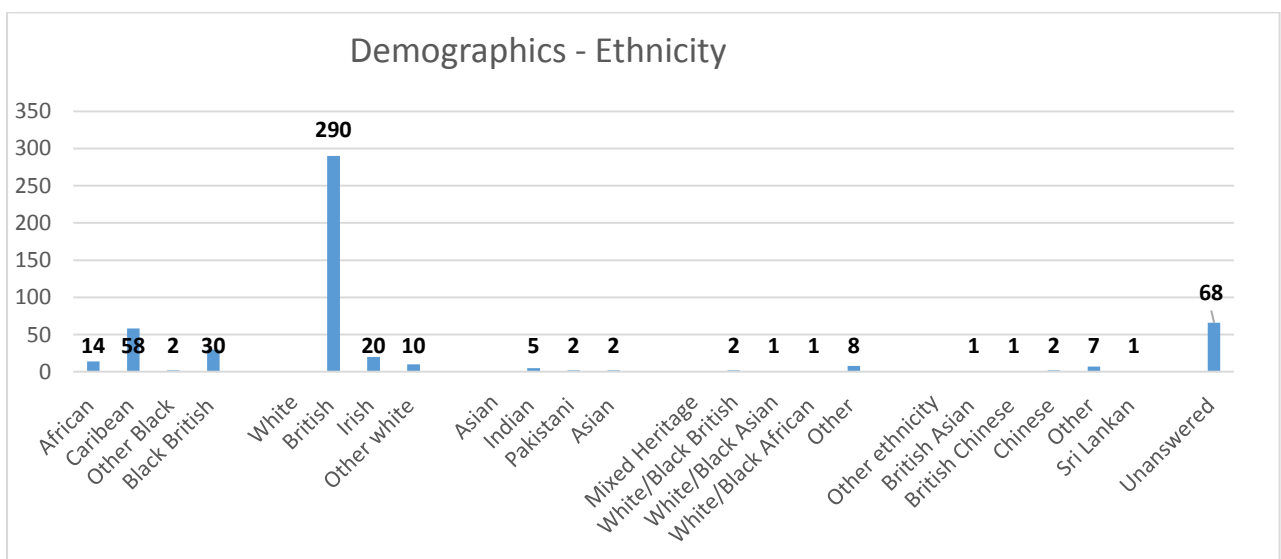
A total of 17% of the respondents who considered themselves to have a disability were in receipt of a state pension and received an illness related benefit.



Of all respondents;

- 56% (292) did not receive an illness related benefit
- 30% (160) did receive an illness related benefit and
- 14% (73) left the question unanswered

Of those who did receive an illness related benefit 70% were female and of the 452 who answered the question, 29% considered themselves to have a disability but did not receive an illness related benefit.



The above chart captures the ethnicity recorded by respondents to the consultation.

Of those using the service who responded;

- 262 (61%) were White
- 97 (22%) were Black
- 9 (2%) were Asian
- 12 (3%) were of mixed heritage
- 10 (2%) were from another ethnic origin
- 42 (10%) left this question blank