



**SOCIAL
ENGINE**

Housing Review consultation

**Final report
October 2023**



Contents

Executive Summary.....	2
Introduction.....	7
Methodology and approach to engagement	9
Responses to the consultation	11
Findings	13
Who responded to the consultation?	39
Conclusions.....	50



About Social Engine

Social Engine was founded in 2015 to support organisations to adopt an evidenced-based and insight-led approach. We work with charities, local authorities, social enterprises and other social purpose organisations to overcome organisational challenges through engagement, research and the application of evidence into practice.

Our work involves conducting research, gathering insights and applying behavioural insights to support service improvement across a wide range of policy and service areas in order to improve outcomes for individuals and communities.

www.social-engine.co.uk

Executive Summary

Introduction

Following a review of the way they deliver housing services, Newcastle City Council (NCC) concluded that bringing the housing services currently provided by Your Homes Newcastle (YHN) back into the council was the option with the greatest potential to deliver benefits to tenants. They wanted to consult tenants, leaseholders and residents to see if they agreed or disagreed with this proposal, and to explore their views around housing provision and services in Newcastle upon Tyne.

The council commissioned Social Engine to support a consultation on the proposed changes to housing management arrangements, to inform the council's decision making around the future of housing services.

In proposing to bring housing services currently managed by YHN back into the council, four main benefits were identified:

1. Meeting the needs of residents more effectively
2. More money to spend on improving housing and services to tenants and leaseholders.
3. Improving communication between tenants and leaseholders and the council
4. Improving accountability and giving tenants a stronger voice

The consultation, which ran from 1st September and ran until 15th October 2023, sought the views of tenants and leaseholders on the proposed changes and on the future of housing services.

Engagement approach and consultation methodology

Social Engine worked with council staff in the Communications and Engagement team to devise a comprehensive approach to engagement to enable as many tenants and leaseholders as possible to participate.

Information about the consultation, explaining what was being proposed and why, was posted on a dedicated page of Newcastle City Council's website and shared through the council's social media channels. Easy-read and BSL versions were also produced, along with a set of answers to Frequently Asked Questions and additional formats of the consultation were also made available, such as large print.

Invitations to respond to the survey and information explaining the proposed changes were sent to all tenants and leaseholders, via email, text message, a postal survey or phone call. A total of 13,360 calls were made to 10,086 customers and 7,423 postal surveys were sent to customers where no other contact information was held. Emails and text message reminders were also sent out periodically to customers over the course of the consultation period. To incentivise responses, a prize draw was used, with all those who completed the consultation survey eligible to win a £200 shopping voucher or runners up prizes of £100 or £50 vouchers.

Drop-in sessions held across the city by the NCC Communities Team, including tailored information to engage with and support ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) and neurodiverse customers, such as Easy Read versions of information and questions. (Easy Read is a format which is easier for some people with learning disabilities to read.) Residents were able to talk to council staff about the proposed changes and supported to respond to the consultation.

Information was also disseminated through VCS organisations and to registered members of the council's consultation portal, Let's talk Newcastle Online.

Members of the public (who were not tenants or leaseholders) were also given an opportunity to respond and comment on the proposals with a separate survey, which was promoted via the council's website and on Let's talk Newcastle Online.

Responses to the consultation

A total of 4,323 responses were received to the consultation survey from tenants and leaseholders. This represents a response rate of 14.7% of the 29,427 tenants and leaseholder details provided¹. In statistical terms, a response rate of 14.7% is strong. It equates to a confidence interval (margin of error) of +/-1.4%. 4,242 of these were from tenants and leaseholders using a personalised link, and 81 further responses were received from tenants and leaseholders who did not use the personalised links which were provided.

There were also 289 responses to the general public consultation survey. Of these, 87 people who responded said they were tenants or leaseholders and were then invited to complete the tenant and leaseholder survey, meaning we received 202 responses from residents.

In total, 4,612 responses were received from tenants and leaseholders and from members of the public.

Findings

The consultation survey included two questions on the proposed changes in which we asked tenants, leaseholders and residents to indicate whether they agreed or disagreed with the proposals. We also had 'open' questions, where we invited respondents to give us their comments on the proposal to transfer housing services back into the council and seeking views on how these services could be improved in the future.

Do you support the proposal to transfer housing services managed by YHN back into the council?

The majority – 85.7% (3,515 responses) – of tenants and leaseholders supported the proposed transfer of housing services back into the council, whilst 14.3% (586 responses) did not support this.

Among members of the general public who responded to the consultation, a majority of 79.9% (123 responses) said they supported the proposed transfer and 20.1% (31 responses) said they did not

¹ This is made up of 27,105 tenants and 2,321 leaseholders.

support it. 135 people did not answer this question, including 87 respondents who indicated that they were tenants or leaseholders and were consequently routed to the generic tenant and leaseholder survey and did not complete the remainder of the survey for the general public.

The low margin of error means that if we had heard from every single tenant and leaseholder, we can be confident (with 95% certainty) that support for the proposed transfer would be between 84.3% and 87.1%.

Comments made on the proposal

Tenants and leaseholders offered a range of comments on the proposed transfer of housing services back into the council.

The main themes related to service quality, repairs and maintenance services, communication with tenants and leaseholders, accountability and the financial implications (savings and costs) of the proposed change.

Do you understand that the proposed changes will not affect your tenancy, rent or lease conditions?

A total of 87.1% (3,639 responses) of tenants and leaseholders said they understood that the change would not affect their rent, tenancy or lease conditions, whilst 2.5% (105 responses) said they did not understand this. 435 tenants and leaseholders - 10.4% of respondents - said they did not know whether the proposed changes would affect their tenancy, rent or lease conditions.

Suggestions on how housing services could be improved in the future

These broadly reflected the same issues as we saw in comments about the proposed housing service transfer. Tenants and leaseholders want to see a high-quality housing service, with improvements to repairs and maintenance; improved communication and responsiveness to tenants, better online and off-line customer experience and increased housing standards and availability of homes.

What different groups of respondents thought

To understand whether particular groups of tenants and leaseholders held different views to the majority of respondents (which might be obscured by the overall findings) we analysed their responses to see how their views differed.

We found that support to bring housing services back under council control was consistently strong among all groups of tenants and leaseholders.

Regardless of age, gender, sexual orientation, physical or mental health condition or disability, ethnicity, religion and housing tenure, tenants and leaseholders strongly supported the proposed change.

Responses to the question around whether people understood that the proposed change would not affect people's rent, lease or tenancy conditions were also generally consistent, with a significant

majority of all sub-groups saying they understood that there would be no change to these. However, we did observe some variation in the proportion of tenants and leaseholders who were unsure or did not know whether the proposal would affect them. Specifically, resident leaseholders (16%), Black/Black British and Asian/Asian British (both 19%), Hindu (17%) and Muslim (19%) respondents were all more likely to say they did not know.

Tenants and leaseholders who responded to the consultation

- **Housing tenure** - 90.8% of respondents were tenants and 7.2% were leaseholders and 2.1% said 'other' most of whom indicated they were tenants but were unsure whether their tenancies were secure or not, or indicated that they were unsure of their housing tenure.
- **Geography** – respondents broadly reflect the proportion of housing across wards, with the proportion of responses falling within +1.92% (Ouseburn) and -1.13% (Walker) of the representative level.
- **Gender** – more women (54.7%) responded than men (37.1%), with 8.1% preferring not to say.
- **Physical or mental health condition** - 40.7% of respondents said they were disabled or had a long-term physical or mental condition that limited their day-to-day activities, while 44% said they did not. 15.4% preferred not to say.
- **Religion or belief** - 42.9% said they were Christian, 33.2% said they had no religion or faith. Other religions made up 7.9% of responses collectively. 16.1% preferred not to say.
- **Age** - Tenants and leaseholders were a range of ages, though there were fewer respondents aged 34 and younger (9% in total).
- **Ethnicity** – Three-quarters of responses (76.2%) were from tenants and leaseholders from White ethnic backgrounds, whilst 4.1% were Black/Black British and 4.6% Asian/Asian British and 1% from mixed ethnic backgrounds. 11.4% preferred not to say.
- **Sexuality** - 78.9% of respondents said they were straight, whilst 2.7% said they were gay, lesbian or bisexual. 17.4% preferred not to say.
- **Gender identity** - 89.6% said the gender they identify with was the same as their sex registered at birth and 0.5% of respondents said it was not. 9.9% preferred not to say.

Conclusions

It is clear from the consultation findings that there is very strong support among tenants and leaseholders for bringing the management of housing services back into the council. This is true across all groups regardless of their age, gender, sexual orientation, disability, ethnicity and religion.

The fact that the proposed transfer of housing services back into the council will not affect people's tenancies, rent or lease conditions is widely understood, though there is a relatively small proportion of tenants and leaseholders who are unsure about this. It will be important for the council to continue to communicate this information – as there is some evidence that this could cause some anxiety if people are worrying about what the change will mean.

There are significant wider communications issues which are felt to be less good than they could be and there is significant scope to improve the housing service by addressing them. In particular, making it easier for people to contact housing services, such as call waiting times, better online user

experience and more face-to-face contact for those who require it. Further improvements could be made to the responsiveness of communications, keeping tenants and leaseholders better informed about the progress of repairs, housing options and other services.

Improving the housing service in future needs to go beyond communication – tenants and leaseholders want to see enhancements made to delivery too. Repairs in particular is an area where tenants and leaseholders want to see significant improvements, both in terms of the quality of work carried out, the time taken to complete it and the wider customer experience.

Introduction

Newcastle City Council recently conducted a review of the way they deliver housing services, including those delivered by Your Homes Newcastle (YHN). They concluded that bringing the housing services provided by YHN back into the council was the option with the greatest potential to deliver benefits to tenants. The council commissioned Social Engine to support a consultation on the proposed changes to housing management arrangements, to inform the council's decision-making around the future of housing services.

Background to the consultation

YHN was originally set up by the council in 2004 to access government funding to improve homes. In 2004, the government at the time agreed that councils which set up 'Arm's Length Management Organisations' (ALMOs) – separate organisations created to manage and improve all or part of the council's housing – could access extra funding to enable them to improve the housing they provided and bring it up to the Decent Homes Standard. As government policy changed and the funding available through these Arm's Length Management Organisations (ALMOs) was withdrawn, so the number of ALMOs declined. There were once around 70 ALMOs, managing half of all UK council housing; since 2010 that figure has declined steadily, to just 22 today.

Currently, YHN manages and maintains over 24,000 council homes on behalf of the council. The council owns the homes and is the legal landlord and YHN is responsible for managing and letting homes and, providing a range of support services to tenants. More recently they also started delivering repairs and maintenance services. Whilst some housing services have continued to be delivered directly by the council, such as homelessness services and building new council homes, others are delivered by both the council and YHN such as employability support and debt advice.

Four main benefits to bringing YHN services back into the council have been identified:

1. Meeting the needs of residents more effectively

The council want to deliver a more people-focused approach to housing services and continue to improve the housing and other services offered to residents. They believe that bringing the services provided by YHN back into the council and joining them up with other council services will help them to meet people's needs more effectively – moving towards a 'whole housing system' approach which puts residents at the heart of everything they do.

For example:

- Supporting tenants in financial difficulty.
- Tackling criminal activity and anti-social behaviour.
- Keeping local areas clean, collecting rubbish, and cutting the grass.

- Repairing homes and keeping buildings safe.

2. More money to spend on improving housing and services to tenants and leaseholders.

Bringing all housing services together is expected to improve value for money and reduce waste and duplication, which will enable greater investment in improving homes. The council believes that having a separate organisation managing and maintaining their homes costs more money as some tasks are done by both the council and YHN, for example IT (information technology) and HR (human resources). The council estimates that bringing YHN services back under their control will free up around £1 million each year that could be invested in improving homes and services for tenants.

3. Improving communication between tenants and leaseholders and the council

Bringing services provided by YHN back into the council is expected to give the council a more direct relationship with their tenants and leaseholders. They believe this will make communication clearer and easier, help them to better understand tenants' needs and enable them to react to suggestions and comments more effectively.

4. Improving accountability and giving tenants a stronger voice

Changes in social housing regulations increase the accountability of the council for the quality of their homes and how they are let and managed. Bringing housing services provided by YHN back into the council is expected to make it easier for the council to do this and help increase tenant satisfaction. It also means staff who deliver services to tenants and leaseholders will report directly to senior council managers and councillors.

An important part of this will be to ensure residents' voices are heard in decision-making on service design and delivery. The council plans to work with tenants and leaseholders to create new ways for them to share their views, including having direct conversations with senior council managers and councillors.

Consequently, the council launched a consultation to seek the views of tenants and leaseholders on the proposed changes, in order to inform decision-making on the future of its housing services.

The consultation was launched on 1st September and ran until 15th October 2023.

Methodology and approach to engagement

Given the importance of ensuring that all tenants and leaseholders were asked their opinion and able to participate in the consultation, Social Engine worked with council staff in the communications and engagement team to devise a comprehensive approach to engagement.

In designing the consultation survey, we drew on examples adopted by other councils, to devise a concise set of specific questions which would provide a clear response to the proposed changes. We also incorporated opportunities for tenants and leaseholders to share their thoughts on how housing services could be improved, as well as commenting more generally on the proposal.

Information about the consultation was produced, explaining what was being proposed and why. Easy-read versions were also produced, along with a set of answers to Frequently Asked Questions. We produced a video in British Sign Language explaining what the consultation was about, and how people could take part in it. Additional formats of the consultation were also made available, such as large print. An invitation to respond to the survey and information explaining the proposed changes were sent to all tenants and leaseholders, via email, text message, a postal survey or phone call.

We provided each tenant and leaseholder with a unique personalised link so that they could complete the consultation survey online. This allowed us to monitor responses as they were received, and to ensure that reminders and phone calls were only made to those who had not yet completed the survey.

Information about the consultation was posted on a dedicated page of Newcastle City Council's website and shared through the council's social media channels.

Postal surveys were sent to customers where no other contact information was held by the council or YHN and emails and text messages were also sent out periodically to customers over the course of the consultation period.

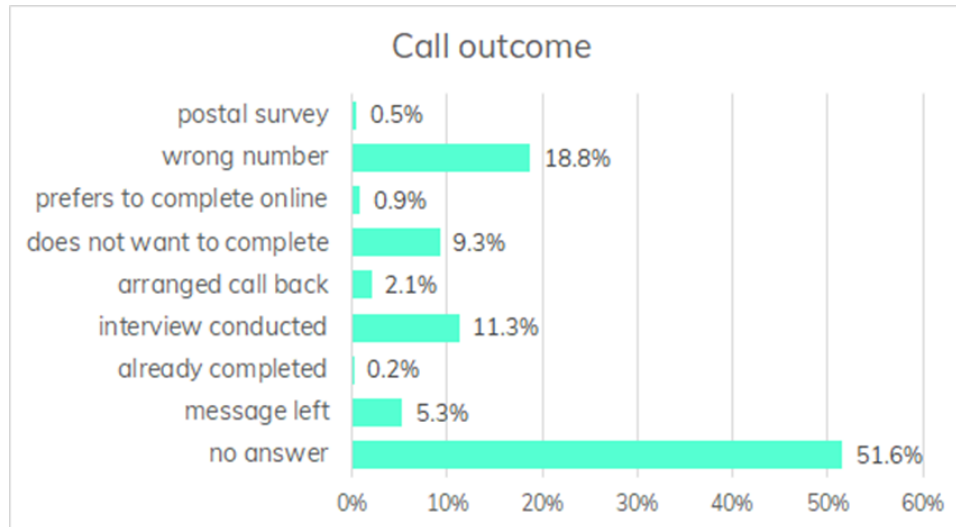
In addition, all registered members of the council's consultation portal, Let's talk Newcastle Online were sent information about the consultation and invited to take part in it, as were VCS (voluntary and community sector) organisations and support groups working with communities in the city such as carers and older people, including the Elders Council, Newcastle Carers and Connected Voice.

Drop-in sessions held across the city by the NCC Communities Team in the Galafield Centre, West End CSC (Customer Service Centre), St Martin's Community Centre, City Library and Kenton CSC.

Additionally, the council's engagement team also had a stall at the Jobs Fair event on 4th October 2023, which was organised by NCC and YHN and held at the Civic Centre. The stall provided tailored information to engage with and support ESOL and neurodiverse customers (the final hour of the fair was specifically focussed on these service users), with a TV showing a BSL video, publicity banners and Easy Read information. Tenant, leaseholders and residents were able to talk to council staff about the proposed changes and supported to respond to the consultation. The drop-ins were promoted to all tenants and leaseholders of YHN via letters, texts, emails and city-wide promotion with posters and through the council's social media channels.

7,423 postal surveys were mailed to tenants and leaseholders where no other contact details were held, with a personalised survey link and QR code, together with a paper copy of the survey and freepost return envelope for those who wished to complete the survey in writing.

Social Engine’s research team conducted telephone interviews with customers throughout the period of the consultation. A total of 13,360 calls were made to 10,086 customers.



To try and ensure that the response to the consultation was representative of tenants and leaseholders across the city, we monitored responses at a ward level, to track whether the proportion of responses received was in line with the proportion of council housing stock in that ward. To do this we used HRA² (Housing Revenue Account) figures provided by the council to calculate the proportion of housing stock located in each ward³. Where the distribution of responses was found to be below the expected level, Social Engine’s research team targeted calls in that ward or wards to secure responses which were proportionate to the amount of housing stock in the ward. This dynamic targeting approach was employed for the second half of the consultation period, with the research team making telephone calls adjusting the focus daily to target wards with lower levels of responses. Response levels by ward can be found in the ‘who responded to the consultation’ section below.

Given the important strategic decision facing the council, members of the public (including non-tenants and leaseholders) were also given an opportunity to respond and comment on the proposals via a generic survey link with a separate survey, which was promoted via the council’s website.

² The Housing Revenue Account is an account recording how much the council spends on housing services, such as maintenance, and how much it receives in income from tenants. It includes information about how many properties are in the local authority area.

³ We understand that the HRA figures may exclude a small proportion of housing stock. However, the proportions were felt to be sufficiently accurate for the purposes of monitoring and targeting purposes.

Approach to analysis

The consultation generated a significant amount of qualitative and quantitative data. To guide our approach to analysis and to reduce the risks of cognitive biases and other common errors made when analysing data, we:

- Finalised data sources and the variables within each source;
- Identified covariates to be analysed;
- Devised an approach to explore each data source.

Quantitative data analysis

For the quantitative data, the headline analysis was supplemented by exploring a range of covariates to identify any differences in responses to the questions among different groups of tenants and leaseholders, in order to ensure the views of particular groups were not overlooked.

For the covariate analysis, we investigated whether there are any statistical associations with demographic characteristics collected within the survey. These include protected characteristics such as; gender, disability, sexuality, ethnicity, age and religion.

Tenant and leaseholder responses were analysed separately to those received to the survey of the general public.

Qualitative data – thematic analysis

For the qualitative data in our open survey questions, we used thematic analysis to uncover the issues raised by tenants and leaseholders. Thematic analysis is a theoretically flexible qualitative analytical method which searches for themes or patterns in the data. It is a method suitable for a wide range of research questions but is particularly appropriate for questions around people's experiences, views and perceptions. To identify themes, we used the principles of 'grounded theory'. The phrase 'grounded theory' refers to theory that is developed inductively from a body of data, rather than from the preconceptions of the researchers.

For comments on the proposed transfer of housing services, we also analysed responses from those who supported the proposed changes separately from those who did not support it.

'Quantitative data' is data in the form of counts or numbers, such as the percentage of people who supported the proposal.

A 'covariate' is a particular aspect of the survey response which varies according to how someone answers. In this instance it refers to the characteristics of the people who responded, such as their gender or age. Analysing these helps us to break down the data to find out more about what different groups think.

'Qualitative data' refers to data on what people think and their opinions and feelings on the topic under discussion

Responses to the consultation

Responses to the tenant and leaseholder survey were analysed separately to responses received to the general public consultation survey. Whilst the results from the generic tenant and leaseholder survey (i.e., where tenants or leaseholders responded without using their personalised survey link) have been collated separately, the results were aggregated for analysis purposes.

A total of 4,323 responses were received to the consultation survey from tenants and leaseholders, a response rate of 14.7%. 4,242 of these were from tenants and leaseholders using their personalised link and 81 further responses were received from tenants and leaseholders who did not use the personalised links which were provided⁴.

There were also 289 responses to the general public consultation survey. Where respondents indicated that they were tenants or leaseholders, they were redirected to complete the generic tenant and leaseholder survey instead. 87 people who responded to the general public consultation indicated that they were tenants or leaseholders and consequently, did not complete the remainder of the survey. Their responses are therefore not included in the remainder of the general public survey.

⁴ Whilst these cannot be proven to be from tenants and leaseholders, there is no reason to think that they are not from genuine tenants and leaseholders.

Findings

The consultation survey included two quantitative questions, on the proposed changes, as well as inviting comments on the proposal to transfer housing services back into the council and seeking views on how housing services could be improved in the future. It also asked a number of demographic questions about the respondent, in order to understand whether there were differences between the views and experiences of different groups of tenants and leaseholders.

Tenant and leaseholder survey

Do you support the proposal to transfer housing services managed by YHN back into the council?

85.7% (3,515 responses) of tenants and leaseholders supported the proposed transfer of the housing service back into the council, whilst 14.3% (586 responses) did not support this.

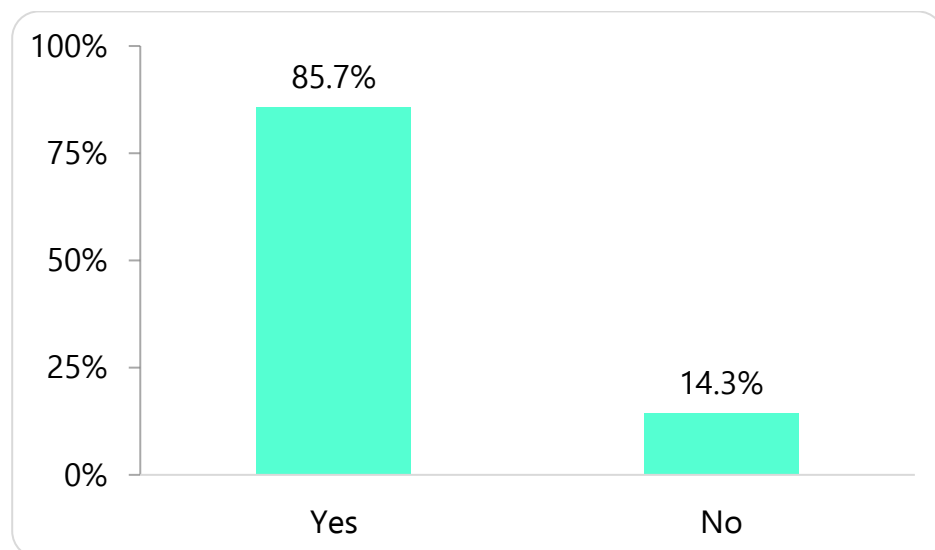


Figure 1 – Support for proposal - Total tenant and leaseholder survey responses (n=4,102)

These figures were made up of 4,022 tenants and leaseholders who used their personalised link and 80 responses to the generic tenant and leaseholder survey. The results of these are shown separately below.

85.6% (3,442 responses) of tenants and leaseholders supported the proposal to bring housing services back into the council and 14.5% (579 responses) people did not support it. 139 people did not answer the question.

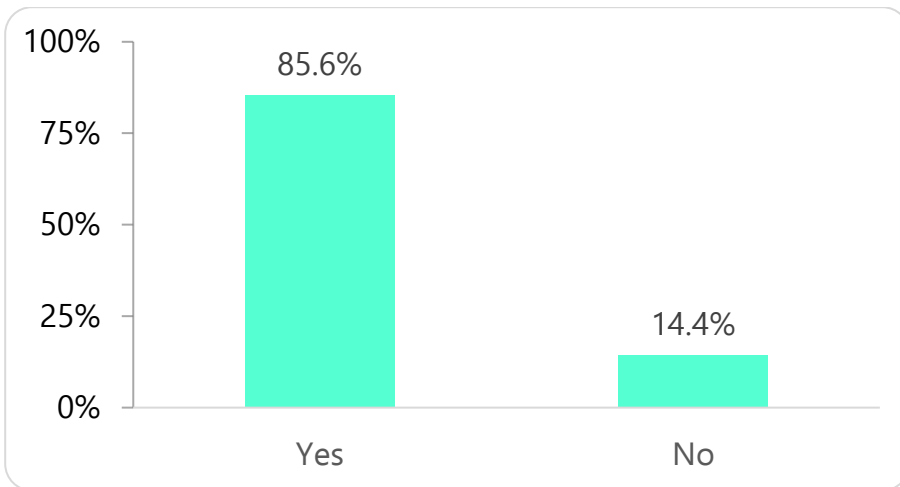


Figure 2 – Support for proposal - Tenant and Leaseholder survey responses (n=4,022)

Of the 81 responses to the generic tenant and leaseholder survey, 91.3% (73 responses) supported the proposal and 8.8% (7 responses) people did not support it. 1 person did not answer the question.

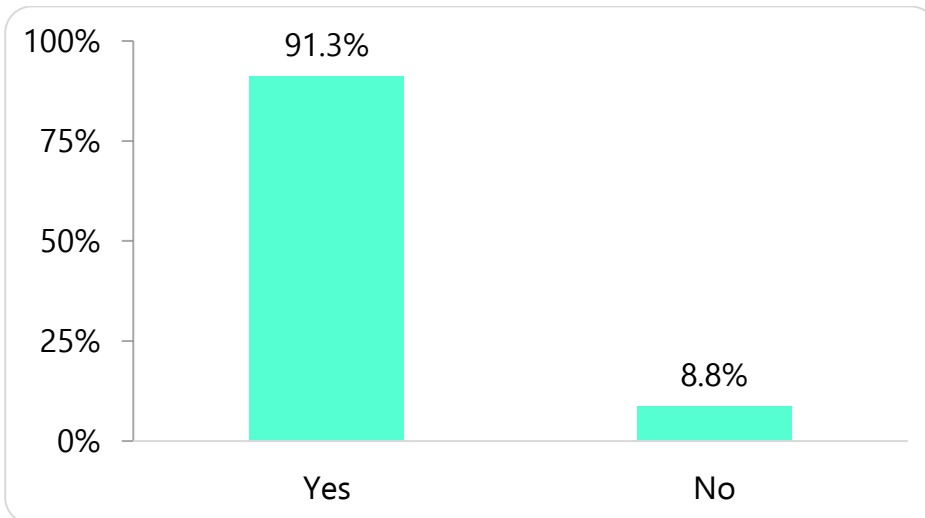


Figure 3 – Support for proposal - Tenant and Leaseholder generic survey responses (n=80)

Do you have any comments on the proposal to transfer housing services managed by YHN back into the council?

Tenants and leaseholders offered a range of comments on the proposed transfer of housing services back into the council. We analysed comments given from respondents who supported the proposal and those who did not separately.

Comments from those who supported the proposal

A number of themes emerged from responses from tenants and leaseholders. Within each of these, some comments referred to negative experiences or perceptions of the current arrangements, whilst others expressed hope or expectations about improvements if the service was run by the council.

1. Quality of service

This was regularly mentioned, both in terms of negative tenant and leaseholder experiences with YHN, and also feeling that the council would offer improved management and coordination of services.

Dissatisfaction with current services:

A significant number of respondents expressed dissatisfaction with YHN's services, citing slow response times, poor repair services and a lack of attentiveness to tenant needs.

" Was happy with Newcastle City Council when they were directly in charge, not very positive experience with YHN"

"YHN's service slow and not helpful"

Optimism about the council:

Other respondents expressed hope that transferring responsibilities back to the council would result in improved services, better management and less bureaucracy. Others felt having direct contact with the council would also be beneficial.

"Yes, I think the council (will) do a better job in terms of the services, YHN are ok but very slow and the lack of housing is poor."

"I think the council will be much more competent in managing and if there are issues it will be much better to turn to the council."

"YHN have no power so the council taking control mean we can talk to right people and cut out the middle man"

2. Repairs and maintenance

This was frequently mentioned as a source of current frustration and disaffection among tenants and leaseholders. Many respondents felt the current provision was poor and that transferring housing services back into the council would improve this.

Negative experiences of repairs service:

Complaints about YHN's repair services were extremely common in comments, with tenants and leaseholders mentioning frustration with the length of time taken to carry out repairs, poor quality workmanship, a lack of punctuality and consistency in attending appointments and general challenges in getting work carried out.

"Since YHN took over repairs times have gotten longer."

"I think services will improve as YHN have let standards fall particularly on repairs."

"I support this because they don't have enough employees for repairs of the housing."

Expectations of an improved repair service:

Some tenants and leaseholders expressed the hope that they expected a more efficient repairs service under the council, with better management of work carried out, reduced waiting times and improved communication. A number of responses referred to the use of contractors and the hope that the council would employ staff directly who would be more accountable for delivering a high-quality service.

"Hopefully it will make the repair service better"

"If it helps with repairs and appointments then transfer back to council."

"Think the contractors are far less efficient than the council workers so keen for the proposal to go ahead."

" Had bad experiences with contractors from YHN."

3. Communication

Frustrations with the current communication with tenants and leaseholders was another common theme to emerge from respondents' comments and an area which was felt could be improved under council management.

Difficulties trying to speak to housing services:

There were frequent mentions of frustrations with not being able to get through to request a repair or to speak to someone about an issue and the length of time people had to wait on the phone. Others expressed concern over what they felt was an over-reliance on online communications that excluded those who lacked digital skills and knowledge. There are concerns about inadequate information regarding the implications of the change and how it will affect tenants.

"YHN have repeatedly ignored my requests for support."

"I've never been listened to! Have repeatedly requested meeting with housing officer which has been ignored."

"I don't have insulation in my loft, I've requested at the time I've moved in, it's never been resolved."

"It's about time maybe we can have the old council back to do jobs properly and not have to wait months for repairs (and be able to speak to people directly) not going online as a lot of people can't use this service."

Expectations for improved communication:

A number of respondents expressed the belief that the Council would offer better communication and that more direct contact with tenants would be beneficial.

"Looking forward to a more cohesive service with better communications."

"Would hope the communication would improve under the council."

4. Financial implications

Some tenants and leaseholders mentioned the financial consequences of the proposed change and felt bringing housing services back into the council would provide efficiency savings. However, even among those who supported the proposal, some were unclear about the costs of undertaking this change and what the implications might be.

Potential savings:

Some respondents saw the potential for significant cost savings through increased efficiency and reduced duplication of staffing costs and organisational support services.

"My understanding is that this will mean savings and more efficient service."

"If it saves money and doesn't impact services then, it's a no brainer."

Concerns about costs:

There were a small number of comments which reflected a lack of clarity about the financial implications of the proposed changes. Despite the consultation information clearly stating that the change would not affect rent levels, some tenants still questioned whether it might result in changes to their rent.

"And no information on how the initial cost of the project will be paid for."

"There's no information about whether rent is going to be affected. And no information on how the initial cost of the project will be paid for."

5. Accountability and responsibility

Having an arm's length management company was felt by a number of respondents to have weakened accountability to tenants and leaseholders and that restoring the council's relationship with those who live in its homes would be a positive development.

Issues with YHN's accountability:

Several respondents expressed negative experiences of the current arrangements and felt that YHN was unaccountable and unresponsive.

"YHN have consistently let me down as a tenant in a lot of areas."

Hope for increased accountability:

The move back to the council was perceived by some as a means of increasing accountability and responsibility and would ensure that tenants and leaseholder interests were better addressed.

"Tenants in Newcastle will have their own council again so therefore more should get done for the tenants with the council having sole responsibility"

"In the past I have experienced instances where YHN have denied responsibility and passed me onto Newcastle City Council, and vice versa. This should end this sort of behaviour."

6. Questions over the rationale for change

Even among those who supported the proposal there were some who questioned the rationale for changing things. Whilst many felt there were efficiencies and improvements to the quality of service which could be achieved, some felt it was unnecessary and that the current system was functioning perfectly adequately. Others expressed concern for YHN staff and said they hoped that current employees would keep their jobs.

"I think I understand that the council has no other options but to do this. I am worried that the council no longer has the facilities, staff and tech to do this seamlessly and practically, that the changeover will be difficult or could be and wonder how that impacts services."

"I do not trust NCC to use the supposed million in savings to put back into their housing stock. However, I hope the Government will hold them to account, which NCC has, by their own admission, noted as a driving factor for these changes."

"Always been satisfied with YHN, but like most services things progress. Hopefully YHN employees keep their jobs."

"I hope you will build more homes and also keep jobs for workers employed by YHN at the moment."

"As long as there is no disruption to the services currently being offered, and no less of jobs."

Comments from those who did not support the proposal

Among those who opposed the proposed change, we found a different set of themes emerged from responses from tenants and leaseholders. Some of these were to do with satisfaction with the current provision, others expressed uncertainty over the council's ability to deliver improvements, whilst another set of issues related to a lack of clarity and uncertainty over how the proposals would affect them.

1. Satisfaction with YHN

Respondents expressed a general satisfaction with the services provided by YHN. They praised their performance and efficiency, questioning the need for a change in management when they felt that the current system was effective.

"YHN have done a great job, why change?"

"I am happy with YHN I hope nothing changes."

"YHN does everything when I request so they should keep going as is."

2. Concerns about Council management

Past experiences and perceived inefficiencies were reflected in comments from tenants and leaseholders who opposed the proposed transfer, who were sceptical about the council's capacity to improve services. Respondents doubted whether services would improve under council management and felt there was a real risk of increased bureaucracy, longer response times and more complex processes.

"Last time the council had control it was a shambles"

"The council doesn't do anything now so they won't do anything better if they take control"

"Council services are currently in crisis, with HUGE cuts."

"I believe it will mean too much red tape and too long for responses."

3. Job security among YHN employees

Some tenants and leaseholders expressed concern over what the proposal would mean for current YHN staff and that they hoped the transfer would not result in redundancies and job losses.

"It will mean a loss of jobs"

"How many YHN jobs will be lost as a result of this?"

4. Lack of information or understanding

A number of respondents indicated that they felt they did not have sufficient information to fully understand the implications of the proposed transfer and were satisfied with the current provision.

"I don't know anything about this. First I'm hearing of it is from this survey"

"Don't understand this, happy with YHN not happy with council"

"Not too much knowledge on the proposal. Content with current situation, however."

5. Fear of change

The uncertainty and anxiety associated with change are central to this theme, with people mentioning the unknown impact of transferring management back to the council, leading to a preference for the status quo.

"It's going to cause unnecessary worry, transferring management to people the tenants are unfamiliar with."

"Quite happy with the services at the minute. But very unsure of what the changes might bring."

"Working well so leave it as it is"

Do you understand that the proposed changes will not affect your tenancy, rent or lease conditions?

A total of 87.1% (3,639 responses) of tenants and leaseholders said they understood that the change would not affect their rent, tenancy or lease conditions, whilst 2.5% (105 responses) said they did not understand this. 435 tenants and leaseholders - 10.4% of respondents - said they did not know whether the proposed changes would affect their tenancy, rent or lease conditions.

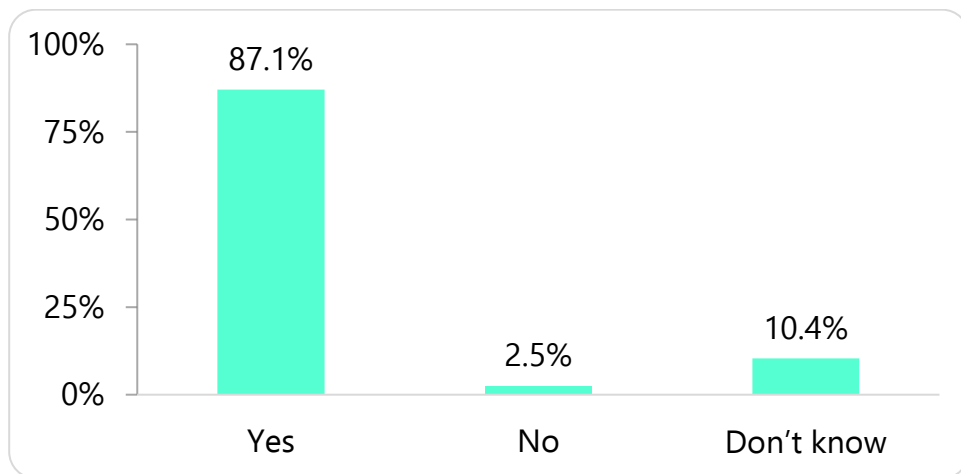


Figure 4 – Understanding – all tenant and leaseholder responses (n=4,181)

These figures were made up of 4,101 tenants and leaseholders who used their personalised link and 80 responses to the generic tenant and leaseholder survey. The results of these are given separately below.

87% (3,568 responses) of tenants and leaseholders responding to the consultation via their personalised link said they understood that the changes would not affect their tenancy, lease or rent conditions, 2.5% (102 responses) said they did not understand and 10.5% (430 responses) said they didn't know or were unsure.

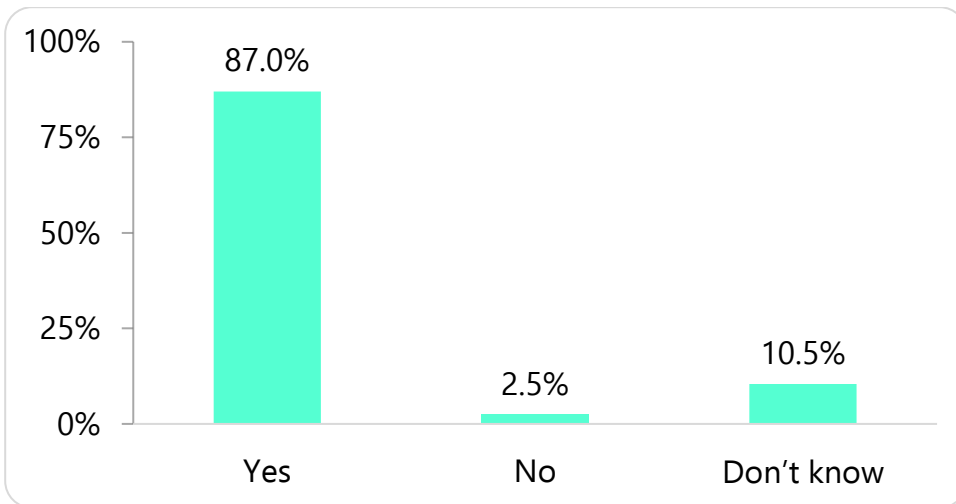


Figure 5 – Understanding - Tenant and Leaseholder Survey responses (n=4,102)

Among those tenants and leaseholders who responded using the generic survey link, 89.9% (71 responses) said they understood that the changes would not affect their tenancy or lease, 3.8% (3 responses) said they did not understand and 6.3% (5 responses) said they didn't know.

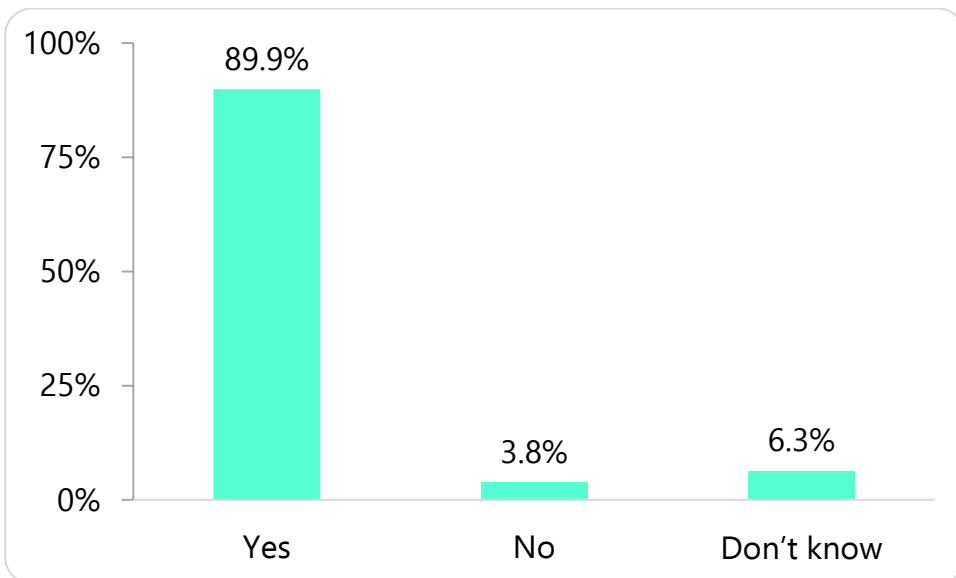


Figure 6 – Understanding - Tenant and Leaseholder generic survey responses (n=79)

Percentages given only reflect those respondents who chose to answer the question and do not include the 140 people who chose not to answer the first question and 61 who chose not to answer the second question.

How do you think housing services could improve in the future?

Tenants and leaseholders offered a wide range of comments on how they felt housing services could be improved in the future. Many of these reflected the themes that emerged from comments on the proposed transfer of housing services back into the council, such as repairs and communication.

However, we also found a number of additional themes relating to the condition and availability of housing stock, face-to-face contact with housing services and issues relating to wider estate management and public realm.

1. A high-quality housing service

Respondents mentioned the desire for simplified and more streamlined processes and services as a means of increasing efficiency, reducing waiting times and improving service delivery.

"It takes forever to get anything done; there are too many steps for even simple services."

"I feel like the service would be so much better if there wasn't so much red tape."

Tenants and leaseholders felt that key to ensuring a high-quality housing service, was making improvements to the repairs service. Many participants expressed concerns over the current provision, which they found slow and inefficient and expressed a desire that waiting times – both for carrying out repairs and reporting processes – could be improved. Enhancing communication relating to scheduling and keeping tenants and leaseholders informed about progress was also mentioned.

"Repairs done faster. More weekend and 2/3h slots for repairs as let's face it - most of us work."

"I have been waiting for nearly 4 years for my kitchen window to be fixed and my kitchen ceiling to be replaced."

"I was on hold for over an hour trying to report a broken heating system."

"Well for a start they can respond to my emails about the kitchen window."

Another area for improvement which emerged from respondent's comments was the availability and quality of staff. In particular the need to have sufficient contact centre capacity to reduce waiting times and enhanced training to improve service quality.

"Maybe employ more contact centre staff as waiting times are sometimes as long as 45mins."

"More staffing - to give more support to tenants."

2. Improved communication with tenants and leaseholders

Respondents offered a range of suggestions about improvements to housing services relating to communication, including more responsive interactions with housing services, and less complexity in navigating services in order to report issues or have them dealt with. across both YHN's and the council's websites.

Whilst some tenants and leaseholders wanted to see improvements to digital services to enable them to interact more easily with housing services, others wanted to see less emphasis on online communication which they found inaccessible, and wanted more face-to-face contact.

Technology and digital services

Among those who favour digital communication, there were suggestions that online services were more user-friendly and offered a greater range of functionality and interactivity.

"A more interactive online portal would be good as at present, the YHN and Council websites are separate."

"I wish the repair scheduling could be done online, with real-time updates on the technician's arrival."

"The online portal is a nightmare to navigate. It needs to be more user-friendly."

Local and face-to-face contact

A number of tenants and leaseholders said they value personal interactions and wish to see more opportunities for face-to-face contact. Some called for local housing offices to be reintroduced and missed the personal, local contact that these offered. Others felt the emphasis on digital communication was not accessible, particularly for older and disabled people.

"Would like to revert to face-to-face contact with people managing housing services."

"Housing services need to be easily accessible for everyone."

"Bring back local housing officers."

"Having a local officer would help resolve issues faster."

"I felt YHN Housing Officers were remote and not hands on. YHN invested in poor digital services that don't work. I think they thought online services meant you don't have to invest in people and this shows."

"Communication between housing officers and tenants, there is a lack of interactions and it is not how it is used to be."

3. Housing standards and the availability of homes

Numerous tenants and leaseholders commented on the quality and quantity of housing in the area and made suggestions for how it could be improved.

Housing quality / maintenance

Concerns revolved around the deteriorating condition of older housing stock and called for improved maintenance and refurbishments.

"Well overdue for new windows and roof replacement."

"Make the houses more modern and keep up to date with everything. The houses can look tacky, and things fall apart."

Appropriate housing and availability

Others raised issues surround housing allocations policies and the availability of suitable housing, particularly for families and single people households, and suggestions that the council build more social housing.

"More availability of council housing for single people."

"Build more affordable homes. Protect locals from being priced out by 2nd home owners."

"More buildings and better quality buildings."

Energy efficiency

People emphasised the need for improved energy efficiency, both to reduce utility bills for tenants and leaseholders and to reduce CO2 emissions and environmental impact.

"Making sure heating and insulation is up to date so people can afford to put heating on."

"Solar panels on every council property."

4. Estate management and public realm

Numerous comments from tenants and leaseholders referred to improvements to the local area and efforts to tackle anti-social behaviour. A wide range of issues were mentioned including street cleansing, safety and crime reduction, littering and fly-tipping, as well as the maintenance of trees and hedges.

"Anti-social behaviour is a constant problem; more needs to be done to tackle this issue."

"Cut overgrown hedge back so you can walk on the pavement. Get rid of one household rubbish in garden and make them pay it keeps rats down."

"The area is absolutely horrid they could clean it up more."

5. A stronger voice for tenants and leaseholders

Some comments articulated a desire for tenants and leaseholders to have a greater say in decisions and saw the proposed changes as an opportunity for this to be realised. They expressed the need for people's voices to be heard and considered in the decision-making processes within housing services but also more generally.

"Our opinions matter, we should have a say in major decisions."

"Involve tenants in decision-making for improvements and changes."

Responses from the general public

Members of the public were invited to indicate whether or not they supported the proposal to transfer housing services managed by YHN back into the council. The question on whether people understood that the proposed change would not affect tenancies, rent or lease conditions was only asked of tenants and leaseholders and was not included in the survey for the general public.

Among members of the general public who responded to the consultation, 79.9% (123 responses) said they supported the proposed transfer and 20.1% (31 responses) said they did not support it. 135 people did not answer this question, including 87 respondents who indicated that they were tenants or leaseholders and were consequently routed to the generic tenant and leaseholder survey and did not complete the remainder of the survey for the general public.

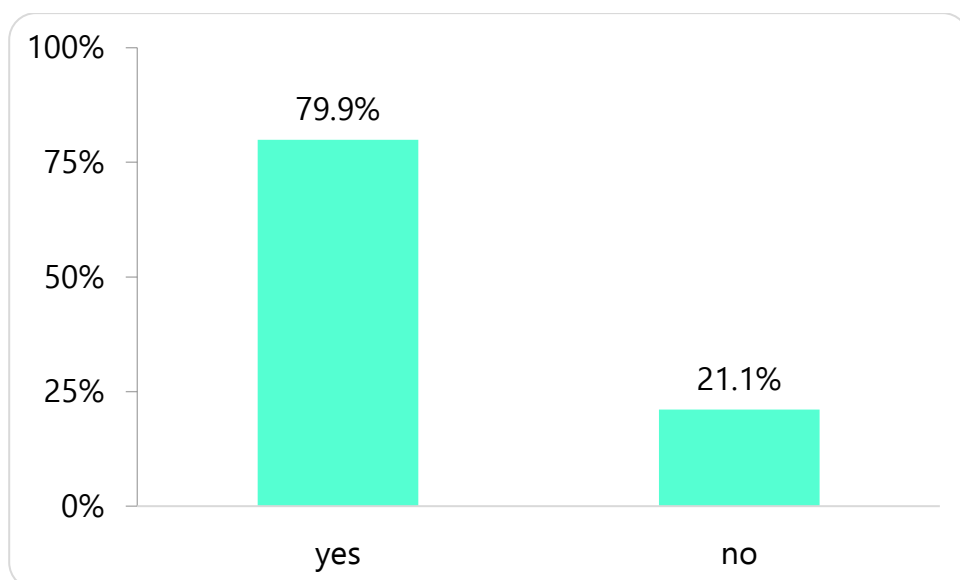


Figure 7 – Support for proposal - General public survey responses (n=154)

Do you have any comments on the proposal to transfer housing services managed by YHN back into the council?

With the general public survey qualitative analysis, we adopted a similar approach to that taken with the tenants and leaseholders survey. We separately analysed responses from those who supported the proposal and those who did not.

Comments from those who supported the proposal

1. Efficiency and accountability

Members of the public who supported the proposal expressed the hope that transferring the management of housing services back to the council will lead to greater efficiency and accountability. They also saw the proposed change as a means of improving the overall quality of housing services, and expressed dissatisfaction with the current provision.

"I'm hoping that the housing service will be run in a more efficient manner."

"Hopefully services will be more accountable & improved for all concerned."

"The services need to be more centralised and under the control of the council."

"YHN have allowed standards to drop over the last few years."

"Repairs always took ages to get done."

"In principle I believe all such services should be run by the democratically accountable body."

2. Communication and support

Respondents felt that there could be improvements to the current approach to communication and support available to tenants and leaseholders. They expressed the view that bringing housing services back under council control will lead to improved communication and make support more available and accessible.

"It would make it easier for different teams to communicate with the Housing Department if they were within the council."

"It's hard to contact YHN."

"Hopefully information and support will be more accessible to those who need it."

"Hopefully residents will feel more supported and will have access to adaptations that keep families safe and well."

3. Financial savings and public ownership

Some respondents focused on the potential financial benefits of bringing housing services back under council control, whilst others commented on the positive principle of public ownership. Whilst a number of these comments were factually inaccurate - such as YHN paying shareholder profits or that the current arrangement meaning that housing was not publicly owned – they were clearly perceived by some members of the public.

"Anything that can reduce the burden on the stretched tax-payers is a good thing."

"Council would save money as there are no shareholder profits to be made."

"I agree with the proposal to save taxpayers money."

"It's better to bring services under public ownership."

"Local housing should be run by local councils."

4. Concern for YHN staff

Some respondents expressed fears over the job security of current YHN employees and hoped that the proposed change would not result in redundancies and job losses.

"I worry that some people may lose their jobs as a result of any 'duplication' identified by the review."

"Hoping that staff won't lose jobs!"

Comments from those who did not support the proposal

1. Doubts / scepticism

Among those who opposed the proposed change, some expressed scepticism about the likelihood of realising savings of £1 million. They felt that the assumptions and calculations behind the anticipated saving were unclear and that there were likely to be additional costs – at least in the short-term – associated with bringing housing services back into the council.

"I think the saving of 1 million pounds and the reasons given for this is very dubious to say the least."

"I don't believe that this will provide the council with the money it claims it will save especially in the initial years."

"I am not sure on where the figure of £1 million has come from considering the extra costs of regulation, net zero and support services that YHN offer?"

"The information provided doesn't explain how the £1m will be saved, it refers to duplication but can that not be sorted out now as there will be a huge cost to transferring services back to the council."

2. Concerns about service quality and support

Rather than delivering improved service quality and better support for tenants, some respondents expressed concerns that the transfer might lead to a decline in the quality of housing services and support provided to tenants.

"I feel you will lose the support YHN provides to its tenants."

"Local YHN have helped me to get on the list, I like YHN."

"Seems totally unnecessary. YHN has delivered a great service and I'm worried the council simply won't."

"I'm not sure if the support to people will be as good."

3. Policy context surrounding ALMOs

A small number of responses referred to the historical policy context relating to the drivers for ALMOs being created and reasons why councils have decided over recent years to bring housing management back in-house.

"Based on a false premise that councils brought ALMOs back in house to improve performance. All ALMO dissolution were due to financial issues only."

"If you remember why the Housing Stock initially transferred from the Council back in 2004 it was to fund the Decent Homes Programme because the City had no Budget to complete the repairs, etc."

How do you think housing services could improve in the future?

Members of the general public who responded to the survey offered a similar range of ideas to tenants and leaseholders on how housing services could be improved in the future.

1. Housing quality and availability

Respondents expressed concern about the physical state of houses, emphasising the need for regular maintenance and improvements to repairs services. Others emphasised the need for more social housing and called for the council to build more homes, whilst some commented on the need to improve energy efficiency and making homes more sustainable.

"Maintenance of grounds definitely needs improving."

"Repairs done quickly, efficiently & effectively."

"Repairs service needs serious work in terms of shoddy work, waiting times, communication issues."

"Better maintenance of properties."

"There needs to be more affordable housing and more options for a variety of people."

"More council houses need to be built."

"Ensure that all new housing is properly and safely insulated and incorporates cost-effective heating."

" Insulate radically: not just lofts and glazing as these are easy wins, but applied to exterior walls. Install solar widely so tenants can be less reliant on energy prices."

2. Communication

Respondents expressed the need for better, more efficient communication channels between housing services and tenants.

"Face to face options - many of my clients are digitally disadvantaged and even telephone call expenses can make it difficult to speak to someone about an issue."

"Ensure phones are answered quickly and that it is clear who can help."

3. Tenant empowerment and appropriate support

Respondents consistently mentioned the importance of strong support mechanisms for tenants, particularly those who were more vulnerable or excluded, particularly those who were digitally disadvantaged was essential. Other focused on giving tenants a greater voice in housing policy and decision-making.

"Vulnerable tenants should also have support in place."

"Give tenants a real voice, remove so-called independents from YHN board."

"Provide better communications services for more public engagement-through an app or a face-to-face meetings."

" Empowering tenants to have a voice about social housing services and policies."

4. Community safety and anti-social behaviour

A number of respondents expressed concerns over community safety, particularly tackling anti-social behaviour, and improvements to the local environment and estate management.

"Stricter tenancy agreements to improve anti-social behaviour and better allocation of tenants to neighbourhoods to improve integration."

"Effectiveness of anti-social behaviour team to be looked at, as well as monitoring tenants' compliance with their tenancy agreements and powers to discipline tenants when they breach the terms."

Covariate analysis

To understand whether particular groups of tenants and leaseholders held different views to the majority of respondents (which might be obscured by the overall findings) we conducted covariate analysis⁵ of the two quantitative survey questions⁶.

A 'covariate' is a particular aspect of the survey response which varies according to how someone answers. In this instance it refers to the characteristics of the people who responded, such as their gender or age. Analysing these helps us to break down the data to find out more about what different groups think.

We looked at a range of variables including gender, age, ethnicity, disability, sexuality and religion to see whether the responses given by particular sub-groups of tenants and leaseholders differed. The detailed findings from the covariate analysis are set out below. However, the key finding from this analysis is that support to bring housing services back under council control was consistently strong among all groups of tenants and leaseholders⁷. Regardless of age, gender, sexuality, physical or mental health condition, ethnicity, religion and housing tenure, tenants and leaseholders strongly supported the proposed change.

There was a similar consistency in responses to the question around understanding that the proposed change would not affect rent, lease or tenancy conditions. Again, we found consistent understanding that these things would not change if housing services were brought back into the council. However, we did observe some variation in the proportion of tenants and leaseholders who were unsure or did not know whether the proposal would affect them. Specifically, resident leaseholders (16%), Black/Black British and Asian/Asian British (both 19%), Hindu (17%) and Muslim (19%) respondents were all more likely to say they did not know.

⁵ In statistics, a covariate is like an independent variable, which means it is complementary or related to the dependent variable. In this instance it refers to the relationship between a tenant or leaseholder's demographics and their responses to our survey questions.

⁶ The survey included two quantitative questions – that is questions where the answers can be quantified in numerical terms, as opposed to qualitative questions which seek people's opinions, experiences and perceptions.

⁷ Although a minority of Jewish respondents did not support the proposal, the number of responses (3) was too small to provide a reliable finding, with a margin of error of +/-57%.

Do you support the proposal to transfer housing services managed by YHN back into the council?

Housing tenure

Although a slightly lower proportion of resident leaseholders supported the proposal than tenants and non-resident leaseholders, a significant majority (81%) were still in favour of the change.

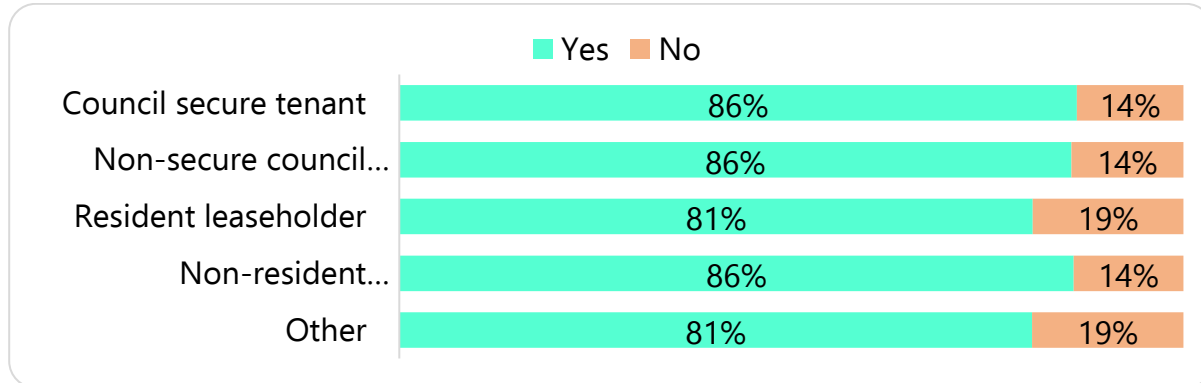


Figure 8 – Support for proposal by housing tenure - Tenant and Leaseholder survey responses (n=3,901)

Gender

We found no difference in the level of support for the proposal between men and women, however those who preferred not to say were slightly less likely to support the proposal (albeit a significant majority still expressed support).

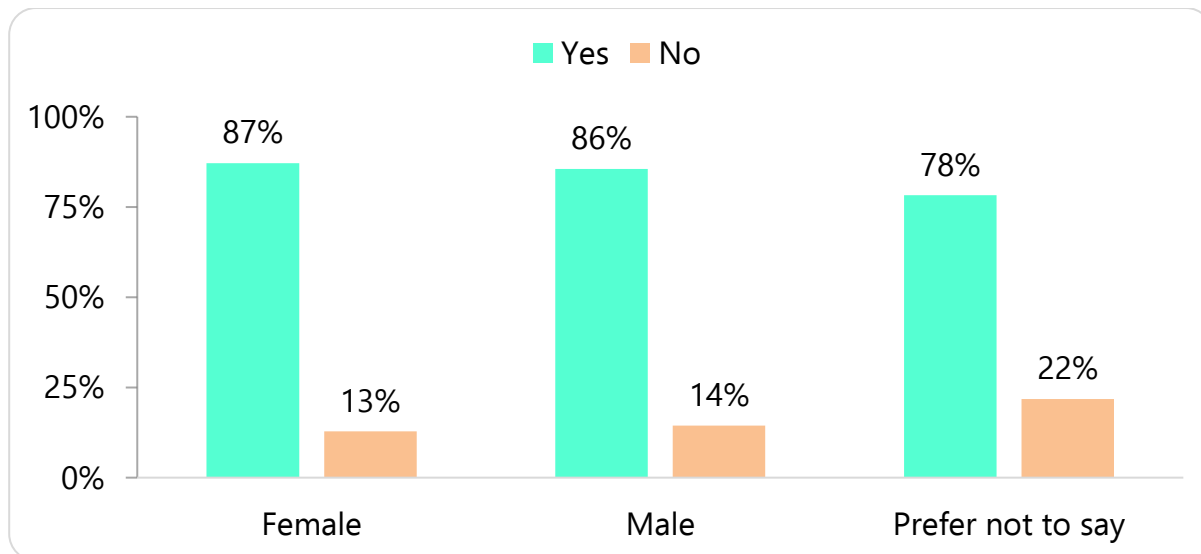


Figure 9 – Support for proposal by gender - Tenant and Leaseholder survey responses (n=3,917)

Age

When examining responses according to respondents' age, we found no significant variation in the level of support for the proposed change.

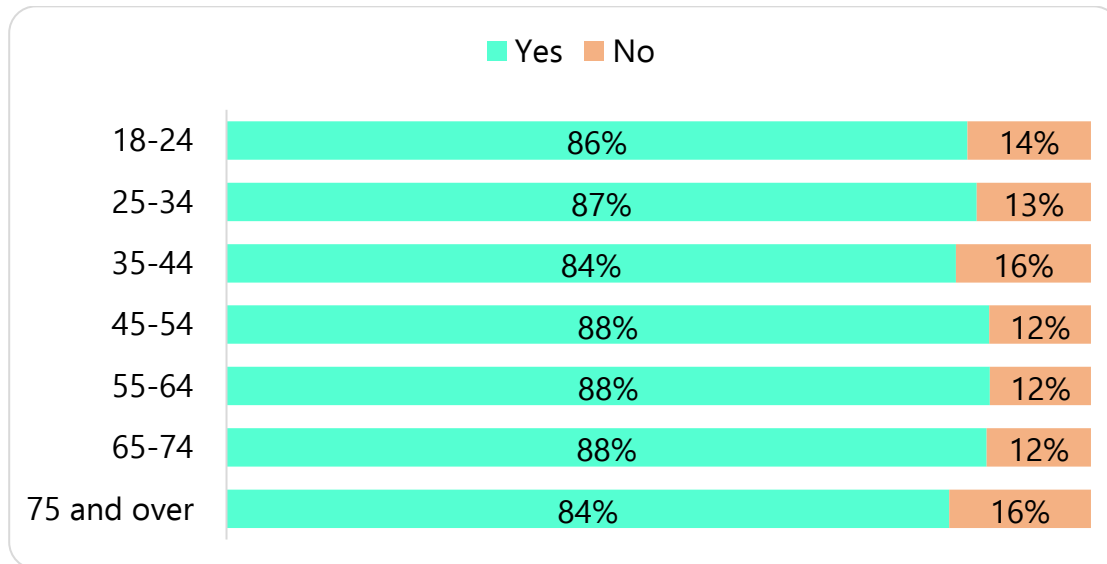


Figure 10 – Support for proposal by age - Tenant and Leaseholder survey responses (n=3,476)

Ethnicity

We found no significant difference in the level of support for the proposed change among tenants and leaseholders of different ethnic backgrounds.

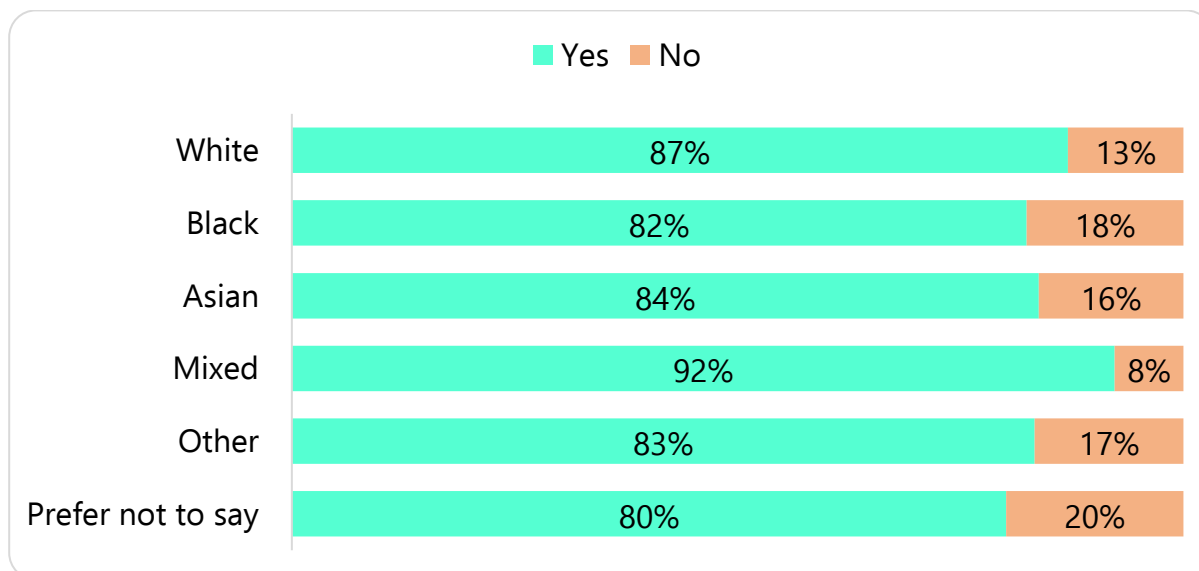


Figure 11 – Support for proposal by ethnicity - Tenant and Leaseholder survey responses (n=3,897)

Physical or mental health condition or disability

We found no significant difference in the level of support for the proposed change among tenants and leaseholders who said they had a limiting physical or mental health condition, compared with those who did not.

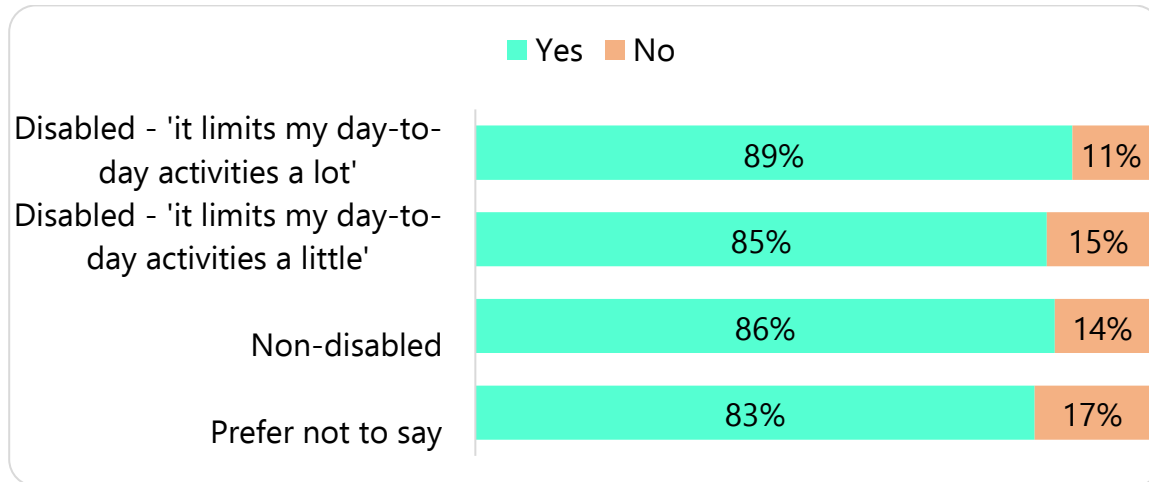


Figure 12 – Support for proposal by physical and mental health - Tenant and Leaseholder survey responses (n=3,868)

Sexuality

Although there were slight differences in the level of support from different groups in terms of people’s sexuality, all groups were strongly supportive of the proposed change. Furthermore, the numbers in most of the sub-groups was small and therefore more susceptible to random variation.

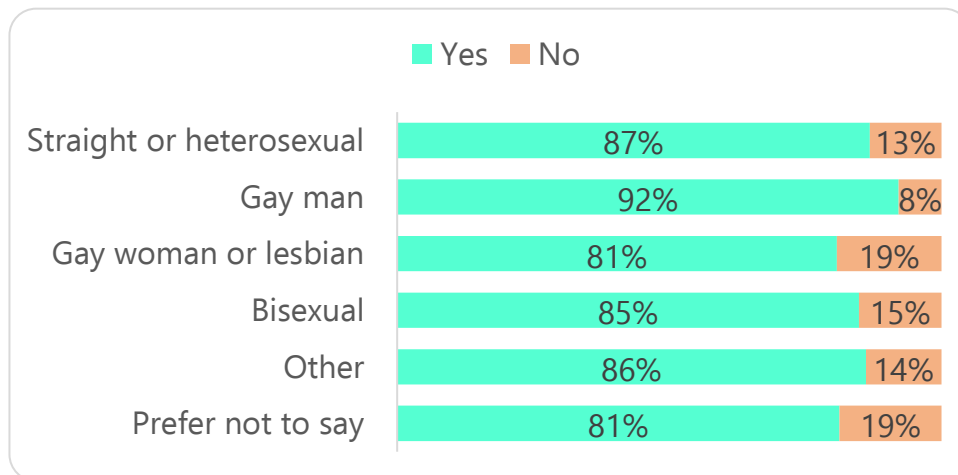


Figure 13 – Support for proposal by sexuality - Tenant and Leaseholder survey responses (n=3,834)

Religion

Due to very small sample sizes within most sub-groups, other than ‘Christian’ and ‘no religion or belief’, the results from respondents within different religions were more liable to fluctuation.

Although a minority of Jewish respondents did not support the proposal, the number of responses (3) was too small to provide a reliable finding, with a margin of error of +/-57%⁸.

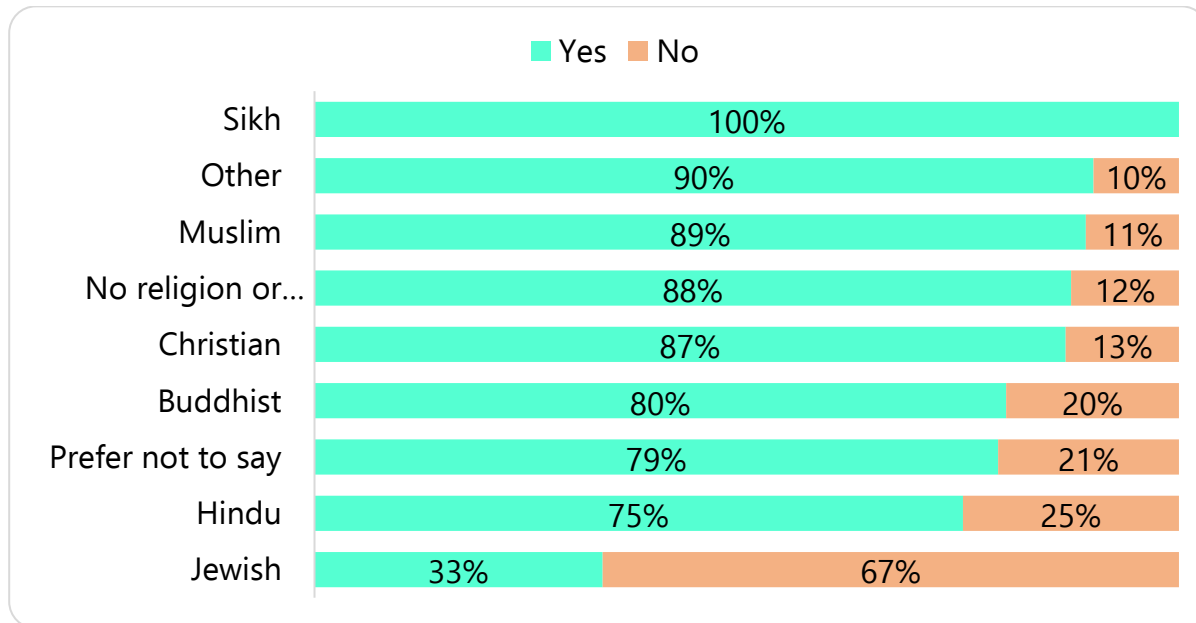


Figure 14 – Support for proposal by religion - Tenant and Leaseholder survey responses (n=3,902)

Do you understand that the proposed changes will not affect your tenancy, rent or lease conditions?

Housing tenure

Although resident leaseholders were slightly more likely to say they did not know whether the proposed changes would affect their lease conditions, a significant majority (82%) still said they did understand it would not.

⁸ With such a large margin of error, the true level of support for the proposed changes among Jewish tenants and leaseholders would be expected to fall between +90% and -23% (95% confidence level).

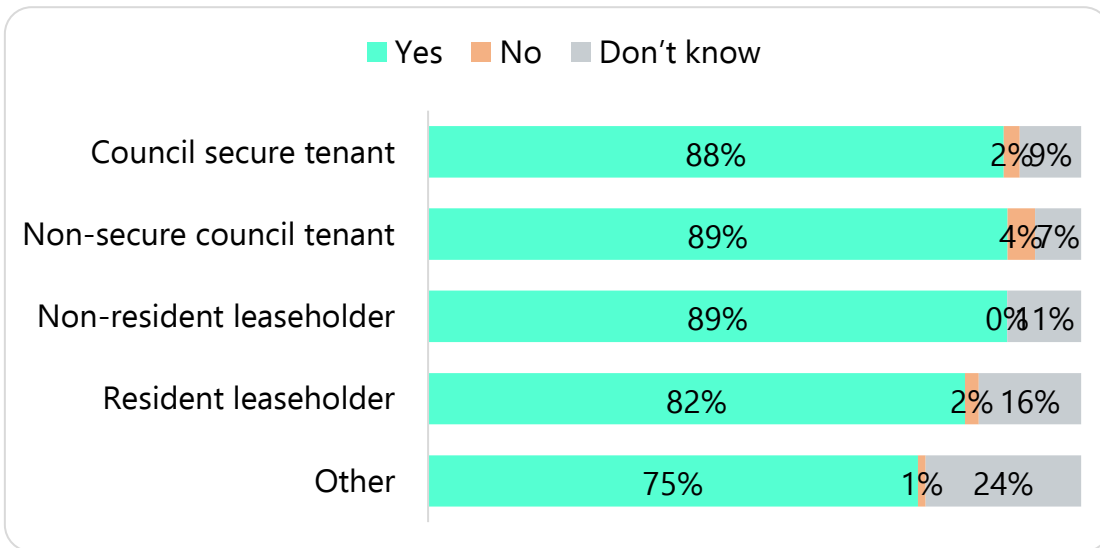


Figure 15 – Understanding by housing tenure - Tenant and Leaseholder survey responses (n=3,994)

Gender

We found no significant difference in responses according to gender.

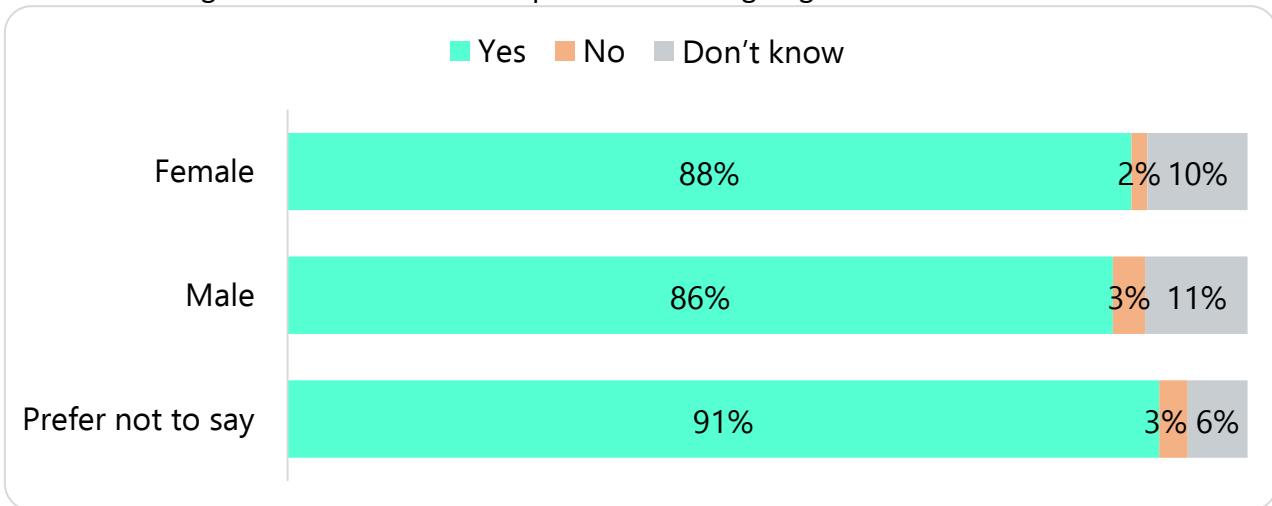


Figure 16 – Understanding by gender - tenant and Leaseholder survey responses (n=4,007)

Age

We found no significant variation in responses to this question according to the age of tenants and leaseholders.

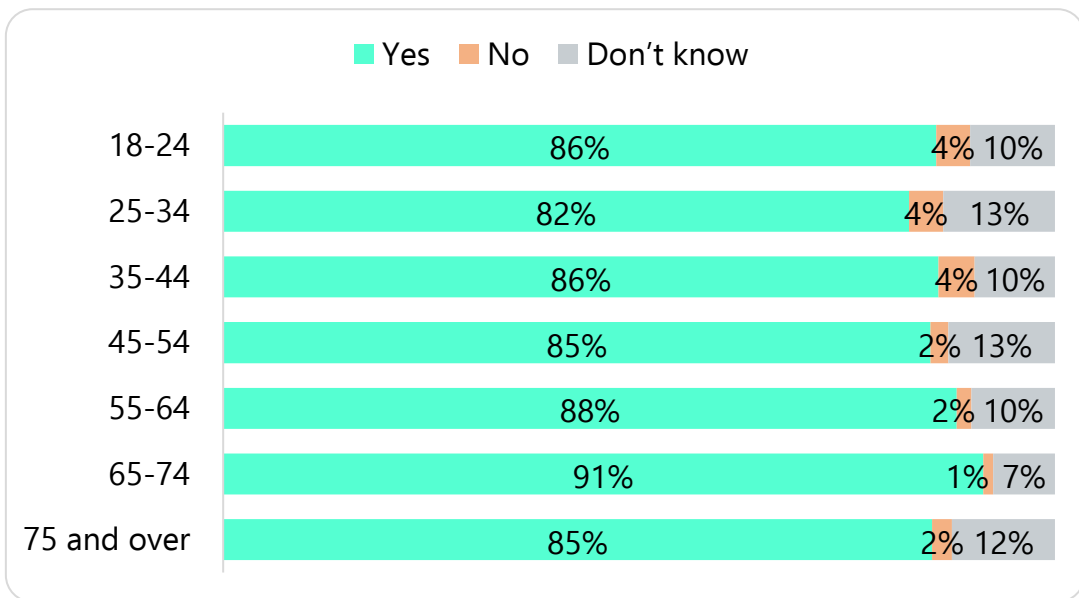


Figure 17 – Understanding by age - tenant and Leaseholder survey responses (n=3,552)

Ethnicity

Whilst Black/Black British and Asian/Asian British respondents were slightly less like to say they understood that the proposed changes would not affect their tenancy, rent or lease conditions, a significant majority said they did understand. Whilst the proportions who said ‘yes’ were slightly lower, these were due to an increase in the proportion who said they did not know, rather than any significant increase in those who said ‘no’.

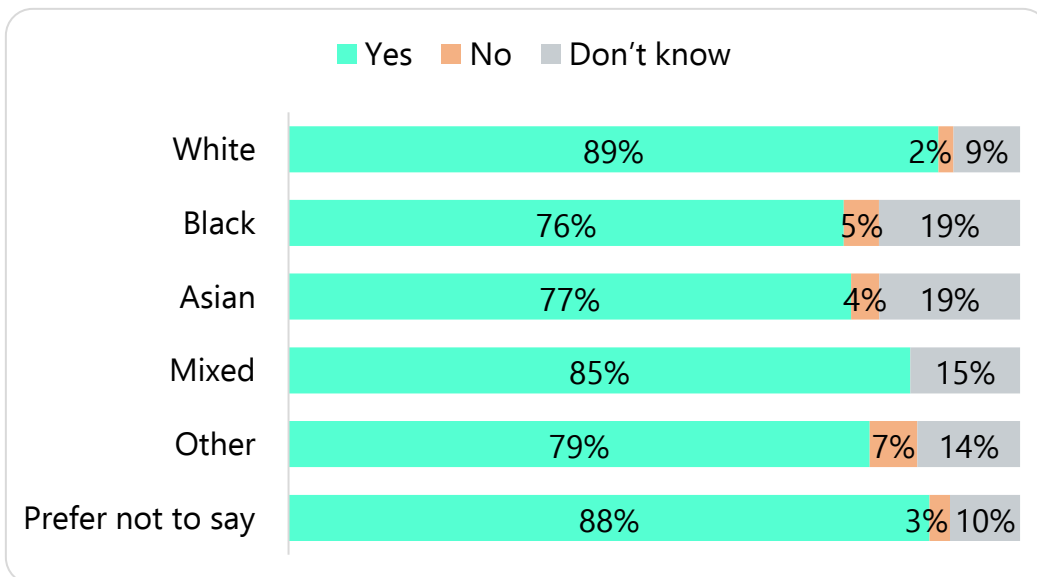


Figure 18 – Understanding by ethnicity - tenant and Leaseholder survey responses (n=3,983)

Physical health or mental health condition

We found no variation in responses to this question according to whether or not tenants and leaseholders had a physical or mental health condition.

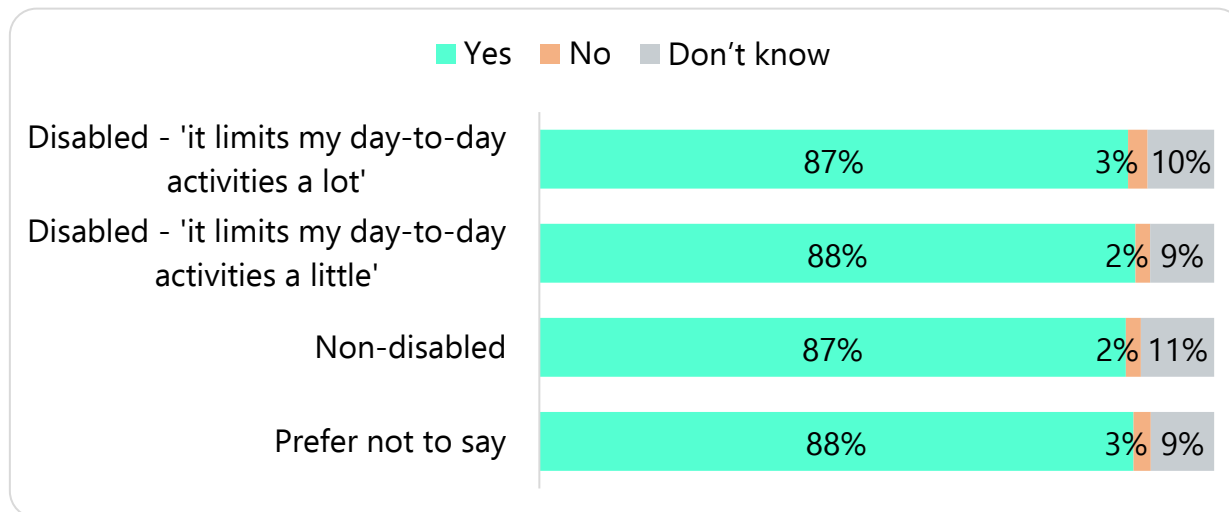


Figure 19 – Understanding by physical or mental health - tenant and Leaseholder survey responses (n=3,955)

Sexuality

We found no significant variation in responses to this question according to the sexuality of tenants and leaseholders.

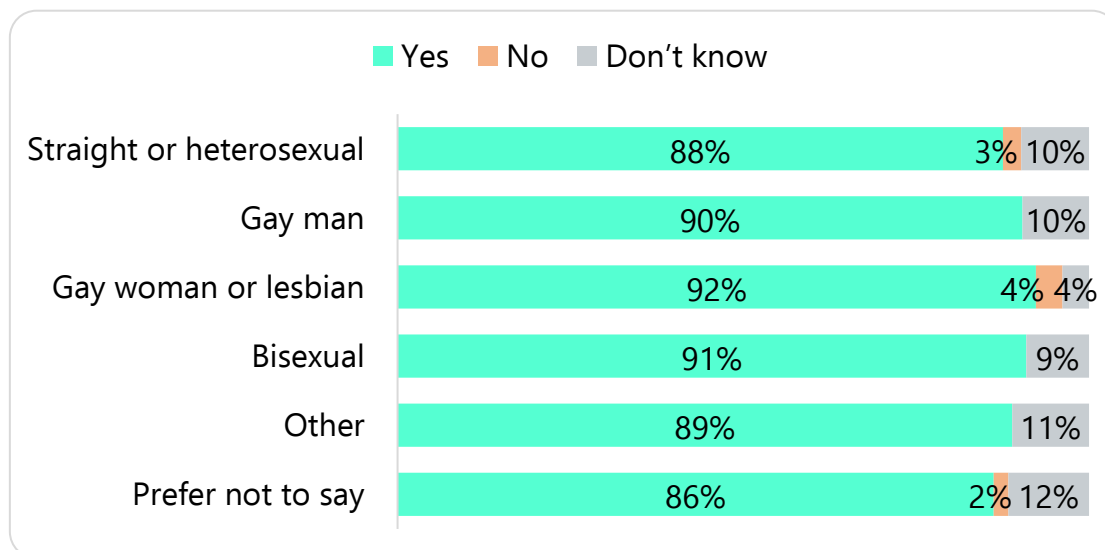


Figure 20 – Understanding by sexuality - tenant and Leaseholder survey responses (n=3,917)

Religion

Whilst there was some slight variation between responses from tenants and leaseholders from different religions, the relatively small sub-group sample sizes mean that these were all within an expected confidence interval (margin of error) and not significant.

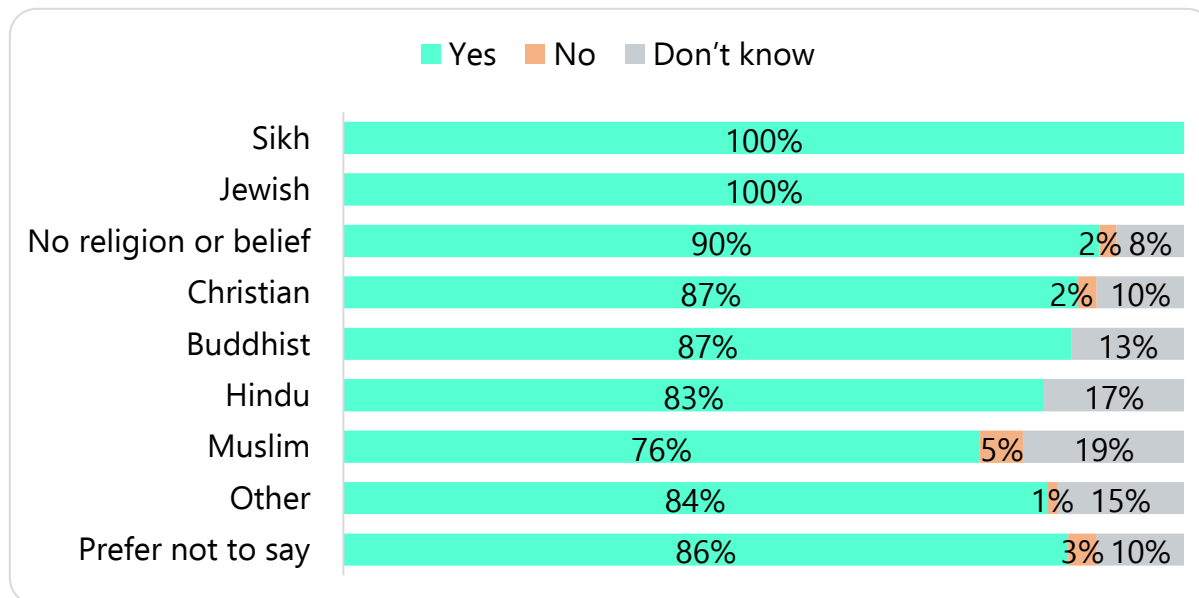


Figure 21 – Understanding by religion - tenant and Leaseholder survey responses (n=3,986)

Who responded to the consultation?

Tenants and leaseholders

The following demographic information is drawn from the Tenant and Leaseholder survey, from people who provided this information as part of their survey response. The figures in brackets (beneath each chart) reflect the number of responses to each demographic survey question (n values).

Housing tenure

90.8% of respondents were tenants and 7.2% were leaseholders. These were made up of: 89% secure tenants and 1.8% non-secure tenants. Resident leaseholders made up 5.8% of respondents and there were 1.4% non-resident leaseholders. 2.1% of respondents said ‘other’, most of whom indicated they were tenants but were unsure whether their tenancies were secure or not, or indicated that they were unsure of their housing tenure.

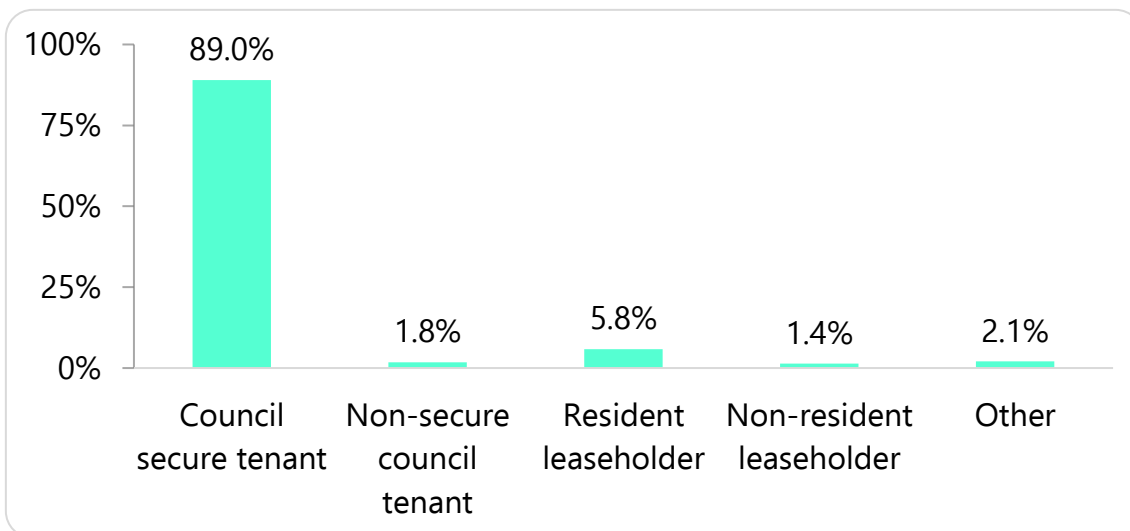


Figure 22 – Housing tenure of Tenant and Leaseholder survey responses (n=4,092)

Geography

To assess whether responses to the consultation were representative of tenants across the city, we calculated the proportion of housing managed by YHN on behalf of the council in each ward and compared this with the proportion of responses from tenants and leaseholders which were received in that ward.

Responses by ward broadly reflected the distribution of council housing stock across Newcastle. Compared with the proportion of council housing in each ward, slightly more responses were received from tenants and leaseholders in Ouseburn (+1.9%) and Denton & Westerhope (+1.3%). In one ward, Walker, the proportion of responses from tenants and leaseholders, was slightly less than 1 per cent below the proportion of housing in that ward. At 13.3%, the proportion of housing in Walker is nearly twice as large as any other ward, and whilst the proportion of responses (12.13%) was substantially higher than from any other ward, it was still -1.13% below the representative level.

Ward	Responses %	Housing %	Variance
Arthur's Hill	3.7%	4.0%	-0.3%
Benwell & Scotswood	4.0%	4.7%	-0.8%
Blakelaw	6.7%	6.6%	0.1%
Byker	4.7%	4.9%	-0.2%
Callerton & Throckley	3.8%	4.3%	-0.5%
Castle	2.4%	2.0%	0.4%
Chapel	0.3%	0.0%	0.2%
Dene & South Gosforth	0.5%	0.5%	0.0%
Denton & Westerhope	7.1%	5.8%	1.3%
Elswick	7.8%	8.3%	-0.5%
Fawdon & West Gosforth	4.2%	4.4%	-0.2%
Gosforth	1.1%	0.9%	0.2%
Heaton	1.0%	1.0%	0.0%
Kenton	7.8%	7.2%	0.6%
Kingston Park South & Newbiggin Hall	5.9%	6.2%	-0.3%
Lemington	2.8%	3.3%	-0.5%
Manor Park	2.3%	1.8%	0.5%
Monument	1.7%	1.9%	-0.3%
North Jesmond	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%
Ouseburn	7.2%	5.3%	1.9%
Parklands	0.7%	0.7%	0.0%
South Jesmond	1.1%	0.8%	0.3%
Walker	12.1%	13.3%	-1.1%
Walkergate	4.9%	5.7%	-0.8%
West Fenham	3.7%	3.7%	0.0%
Wingrove	2.5%	2.5%	0.0%

Table 23 - consultation responses by ward

Gender

There were somewhat more women who responded to the survey than men, with 37.1% saying they were men and 54.7% women. 8.1% of respondents preferred not to say.

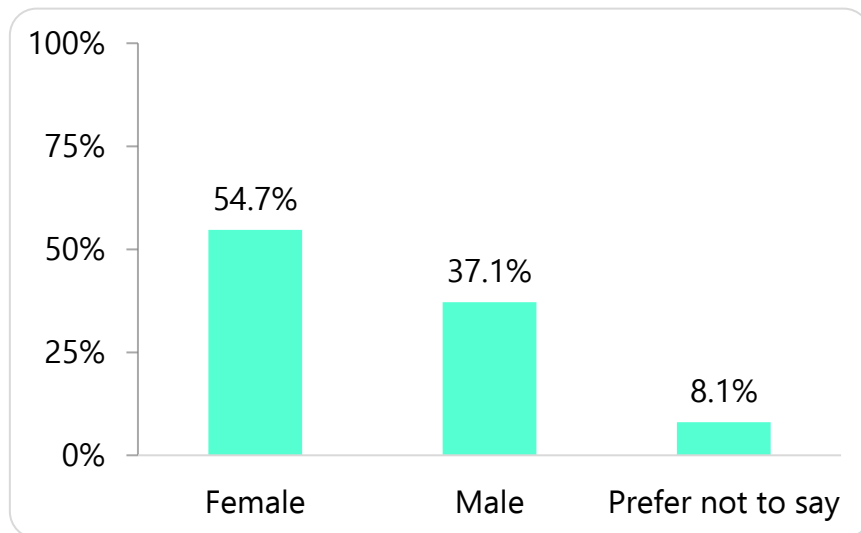


Figure 24 – Gender of Tenant and Leaseholder survey responses (n=4,109)

Physical or mental health condition or disability

40.7% of respondents said they were disabled or had a long-term physical or mental condition that limited their day-to-day activities. Of these, 24.5% said it limits their day-to-day activities a lot and 16.2% said it limits their day-to-day activities a little. 44% said they did not and 15.4% preferred not to say.

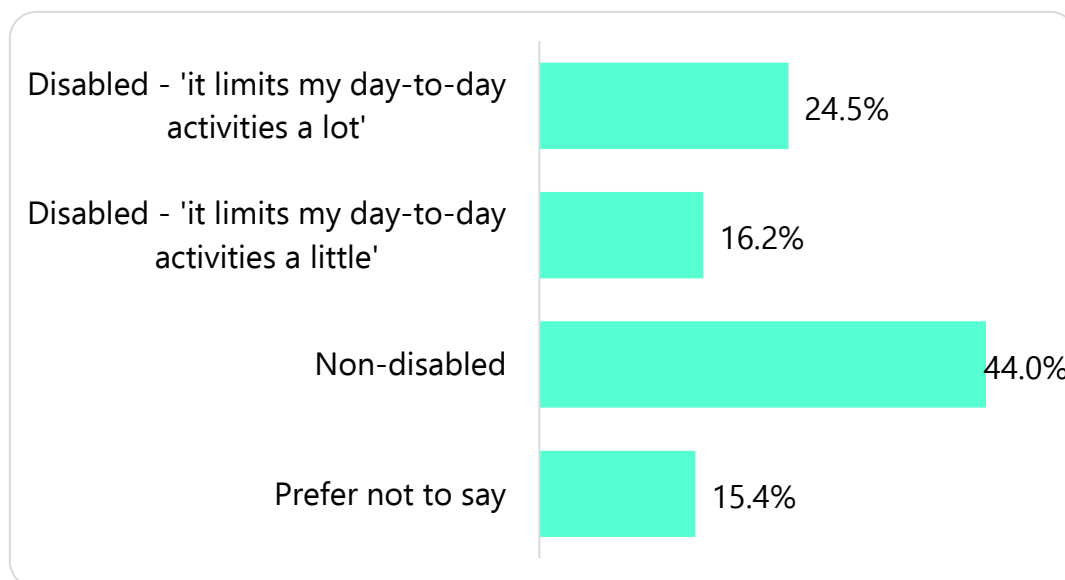


Figure 25 – Physical and mental health of Tenant and Leaseholder survey responses (n=4,054)

Religion or belief

42.9% said they were Christian, 33.2% said they had no religion or faith. 4.8% indicated that they were Muslim and 2.2% said 'other'. Collectively Buddhists, Hindus, Jews and Sikhs made up 0.9% of responses and 16.1% preferred not to say.

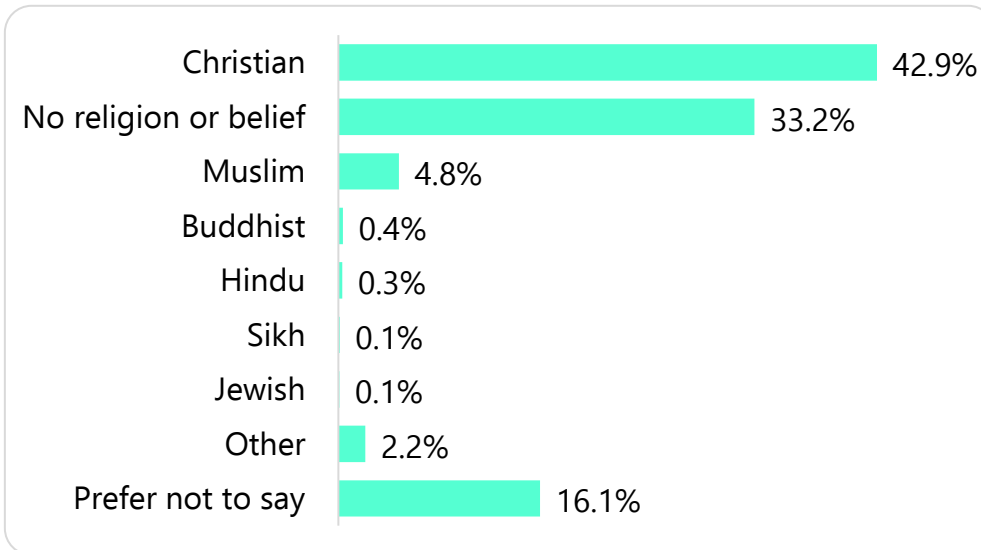


Figure 26 – Religion of Tenant and Leaseholder survey responses (n=4,088)

Age

Tenants and leaseholders were a range of ages, though there were fewer respondents aged 34 and younger (9% in total).

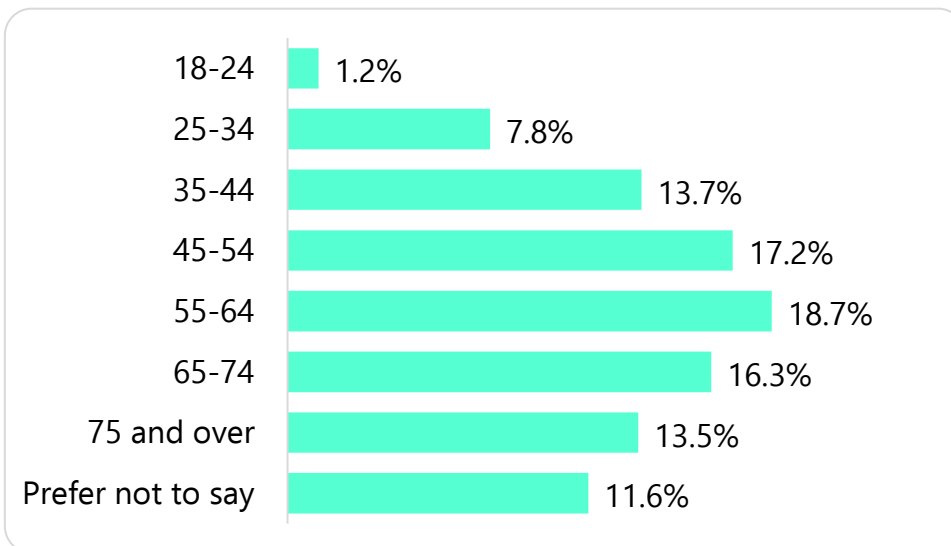


Figure 27 – Age of Tenant and Leaseholder survey responses (n=4,094)

Ethnicity

Three-quarters of responses (76.2%) were from tenants and leaseholders from White ethnic backgrounds, whilst 4.1% were Black/Black British and 4.6% Asian/Asian British and 1% from mixed ethnic backgrounds. 11.4% preferred not to say.

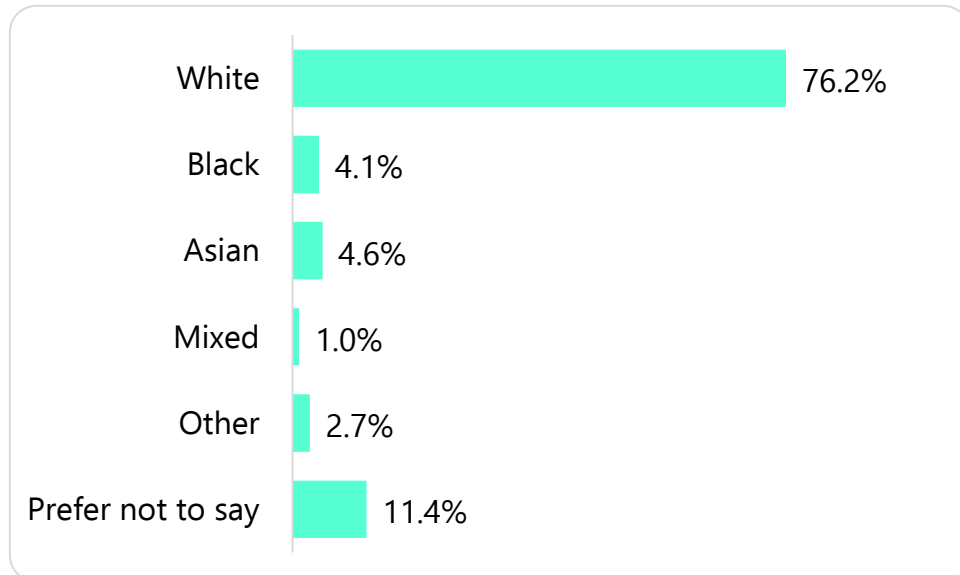


Figure 28 – Ethnicity of Tenant and Leaseholder survey responses (n=4,085)

Sexuality

78.9% of respondents said they were straight, whilst 2.7% said they were gay, lesbian or bisexual and 17.4% preferred not to say.

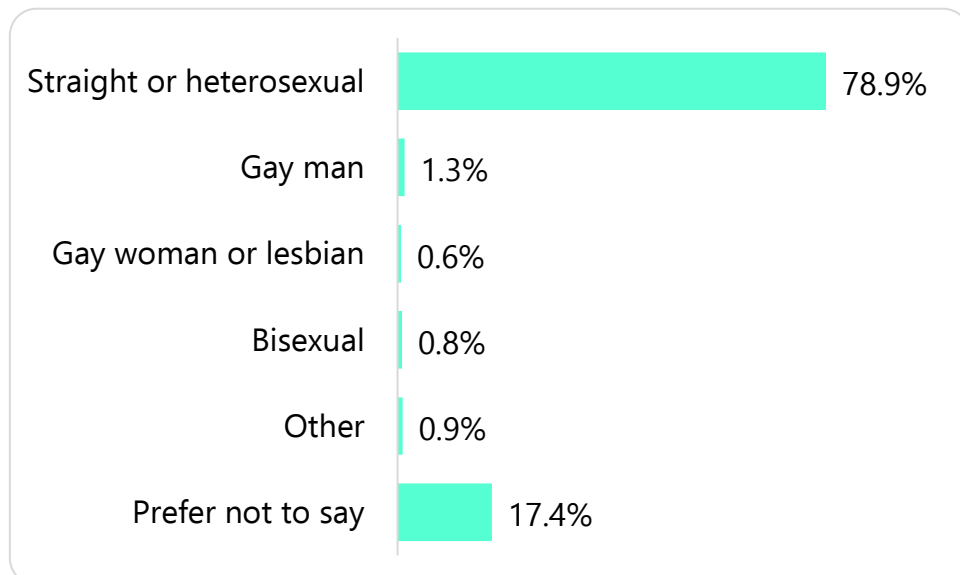


Figure 29 – Sexuality of Tenant and Leaseholder survey responses (n=4,016)

Gender identity

89.6% said the gender they identify with was the same as their sex registered at birth and 9.9% preferred not to answer the question. 0.5% of respondents said the gender they identified with was different from that registered at birth.

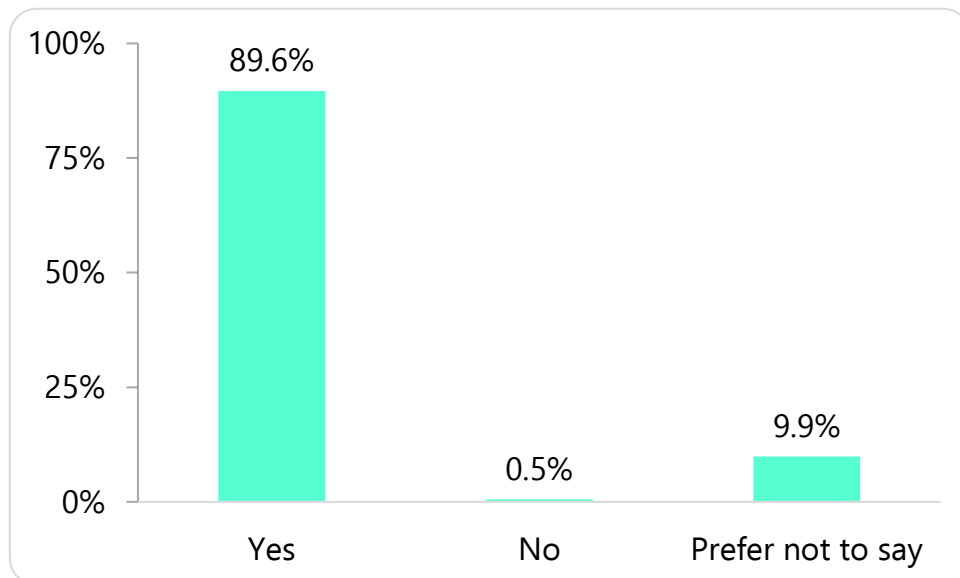


Table 30 – Gender identity of Tenant and Leaseholder survey responses (n=4,067)

Responses from the general public

289 responses were received to the survey for the general public. 87 respondents (30.2%) said they were tenants or leaseholders and were then routed to the generic tenant and leaseholder survey (above) and did not therefore complete the remainder of the survey for the general public. However, they are recorded as 'did not answer' in the remainder of the survey questions. 59.4% of respondents said they lived, worked or studied in Newcastle. 10.4% said 'other'.

Gender

36.3% of respondents were men and 55.5% were women, whilst 7.5% preferred not to say.

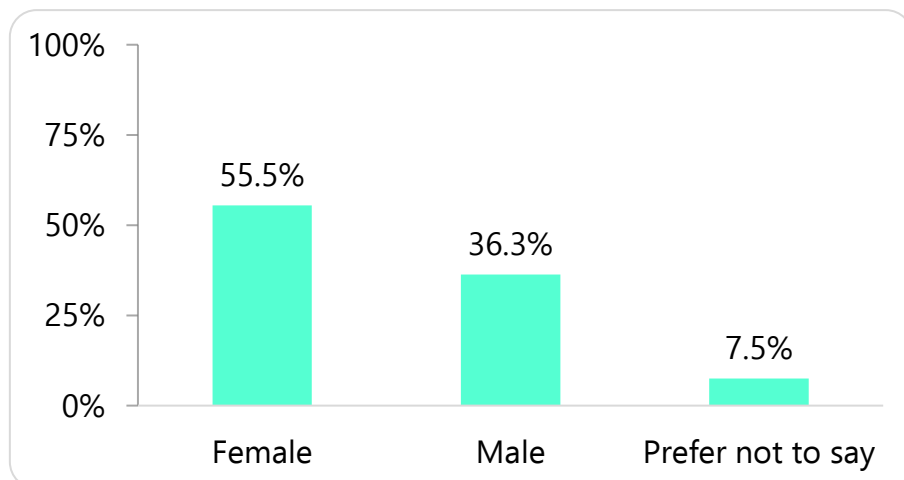


Figure 31 – Gender of general public survey responses (n=146)

Physical and mental health condition or disability

25.4% of respondents said they were disabled or had a long-term physical or mental condition that limited their day-to-day activities. Of these, 8.9% said it limits their day-to-day activities a lot and 16.4% said it limits their day-to-day activities a little. 67.1% said they did not have any limiting physical or health condition and 7.5% preferred not to say.

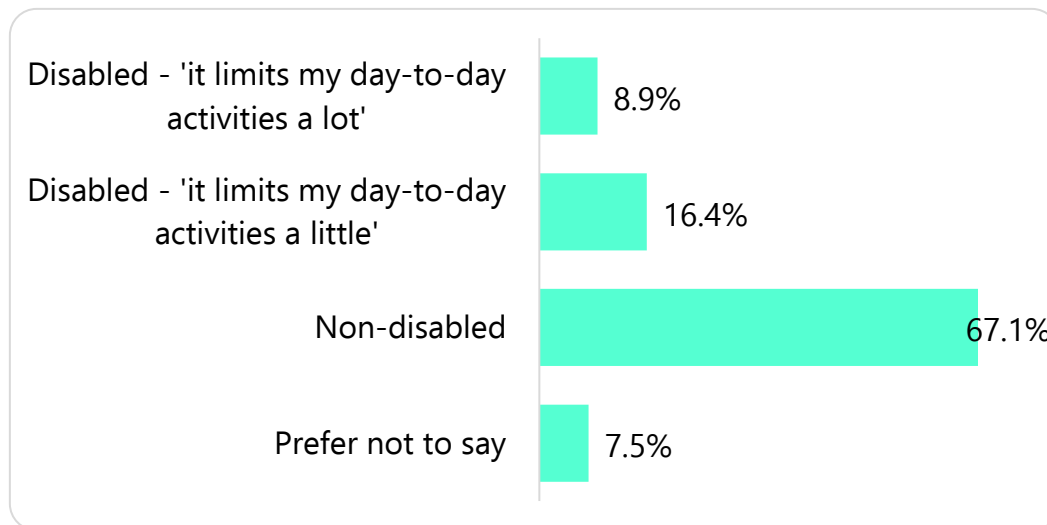


Figure 32 – Physical and mental health of general public survey responses (n=146)

Religion or belief

37.2% of respondents said they were Christian and 43.5% said they had no religion or belief. Collectively Buddhists, Hindus, Jews, Muslims and Sikhs made up 4.2% of responses and 3.5% said 'other'. 11.7% of respondents preferred not to say.

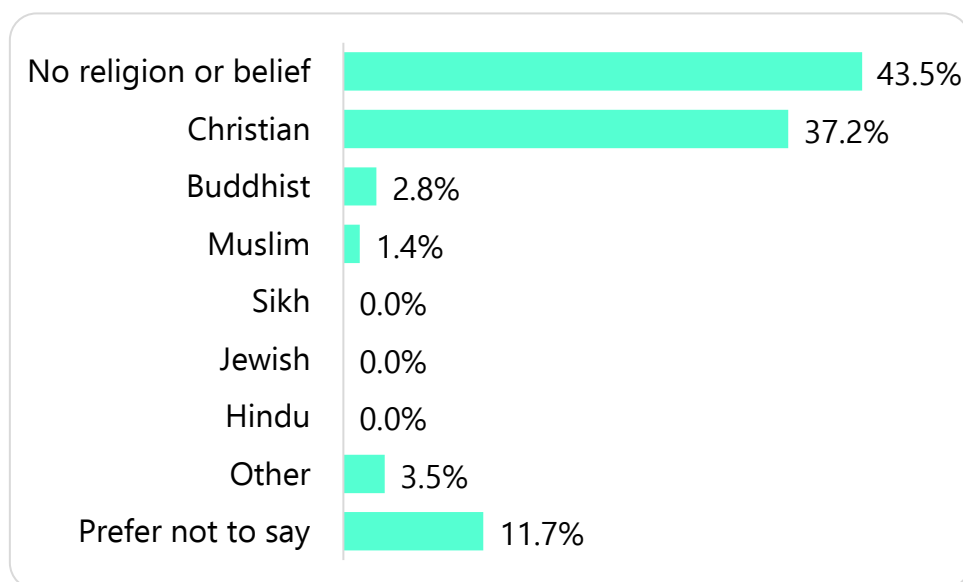


Figure 33 – Religion of general public survey responses (n=145)

Age

Respondents were a range of ages; however, they were less likely to be aged 34 or younger, over 75 or aged 45-54 and more likely to be aged 55-64 years old.

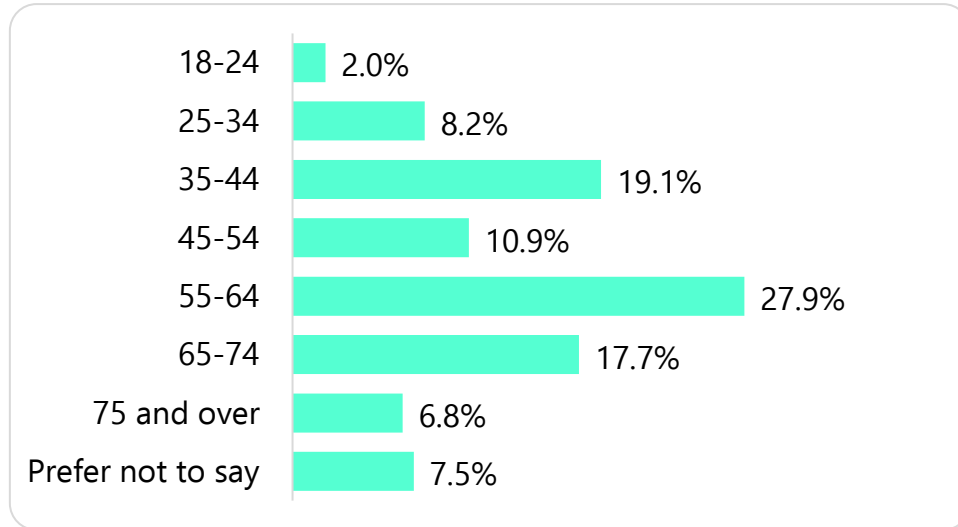


Figure 34 – Age of general public survey responses (n=147)

Ethnicity

86.3% of responses came from people from White ethnic backgrounds, with 3.4% from Asian/Asian British ethnic backgrounds. Responses from people from Black/Black British, Mixed, or other backgrounds equalled 2.1% in total and 8.2% preferred not to say.

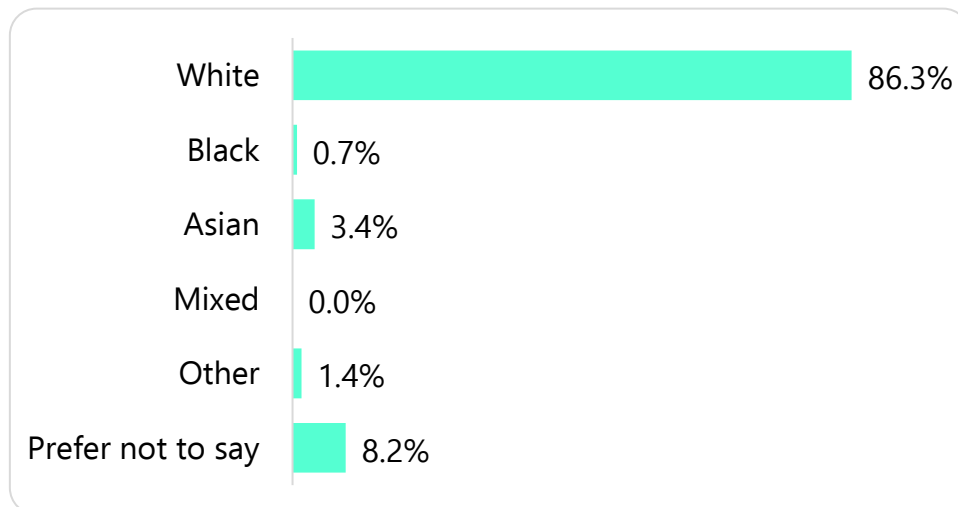


Figure 35 – Ethnicity of general public survey responses (n=146)

Sexuality

80.3% of respondents said they were straight and 8.9% said they were gay, lesbian or bisexual and 0.7% said 'other'. 10.2% of respondents preferred not to say.

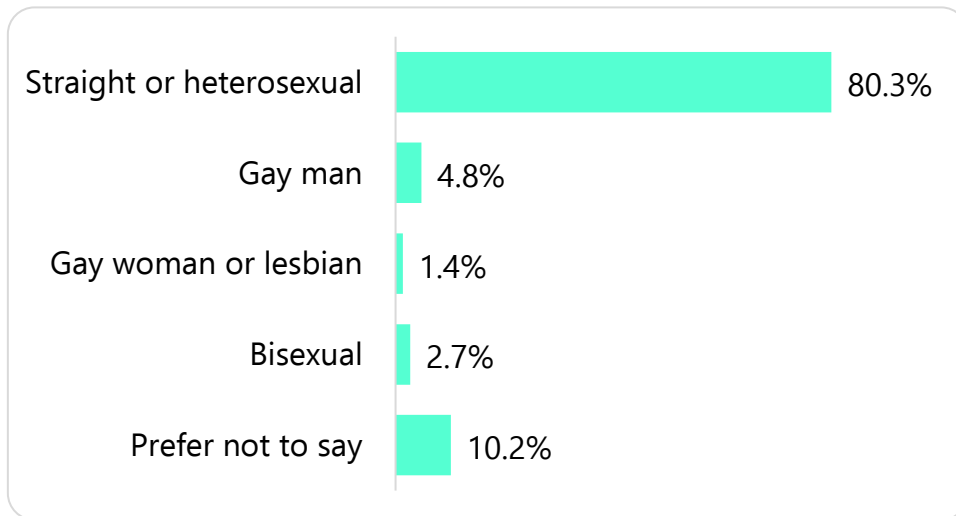


Figure 36 – Sexuality of general public survey responses (n=147)

Gender identity

94% said the gender they identify with was the same as their sex registered at birth and 6% preferred not to answer the question. No respondents said the gender they identified with was different from that registered at birth.

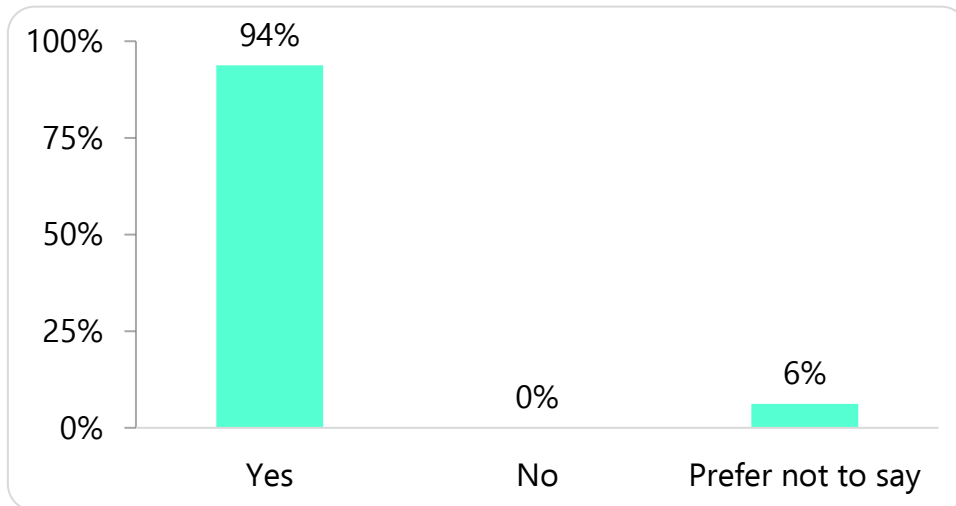


Figure 37 – Gender identity of general public survey responses (n=145)

Conclusions

It is clear from the consultation findings that there is very strong support for the proposal to bring the management of housing services back into the council among tenants and leaseholders. This is true across all groups regardless of demographics (including all protected characteristics).

The fact that the proposed transfer of housing services back into the council will not affect people's tenancies, rent or lease conditions is widely understood, though there are a relatively small proportion of tenants and leaseholders who are unsure about this.

It will be important for the council to continue to communicate this information – as there is some evidence that this could cause some anxiety if people are worrying about what the change will mean. It is clear too that some tenants and leaseholders are concerned about how the transfer would be undertaken, both in terms of what it means for them and the services they receive, but also what it means for YHN and NCC. Undoubtedly many tenants and leaseholders will either be employed by YHN or NCC or know people who are. Given the close ties between the two organisations and with tenants and leaseholders, both internal and external communication will be important to manage sensitively.

There are significant wider communications issues which are felt to be less good than they could be and there is significant scope to improve the housing service by addressing them. In particular making it easier for people to contact housing services, such as call waiting times, better online user experience and more face-to-face contact for those who require it. Further improvements could be made to the responsiveness of communications, keeping tenants and leaseholders better informed about the progress of repairs, housing options and other services.

Improving the housing service in future needs to go beyond communication – tenants and leaseholders want to see enhancements made to delivery too. Repairs in particular is an area where tenants and leaseholders want to see significant improvements, both in terms of the quality of work carried out, the time taken to complete it and the wider customer experience.

Tenants and leaseholders are supportive of the proposal to bring management of housing services back into the council as they see it as an opportunity for improvements to be made across a range of issues which they currently feel are not as good as they can be. However, the transfer of housing services back into the council will also generate considerable expectations that these improvements will be made, that the anticipated savings will be realised and that the ambitions set out in the consultation document can be delivered.



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