



DRAFT COUNTYWIDE HOMELESS STRATEGY

SURVEY RESULTS

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BACKGROUND

Warwickshire County Council, North Warwickshire Borough Council, Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council, Rugby Borough Council, Warwick District Council and Stratford-on-Avon District Council recognise the importance of tackling and preventing homelessness in Warwickshire. In developing the draft countywide strategy on homelessness, joint working and collaboration has taken place with a wide range of stakeholders, including; health, police, probation, county and district and borough councils, the voluntary and community sector.

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 came in to force on 3 April 2018. It introduced fundamental changes to how Local Authorities assess and assist homeless applicants. The intention of the Act is to give a greater focus on prevention. The aim of the changes is to reduce homelessness by introducing systems to ensure early intervention and prevention. In October 2018, the Duty to Refer brought a wide range of other statutory organisations into firm collaboration with local authorities to implement the legislation.

The legislation requires statutory agencies to act to promote positive outcomes for applicants. The inclusion of the Duty to Refer in the Act indicates Government awareness that better partnership working is needed to resolve homelessness when it occurs. In addition, a recent consultation paper – ‘Tackling Homelessness Together’ set out Government concerns that partners are not engaging positively to resolve homelessness and not co-operating. As a result, Government is now proposing statutory requirements to provide for specific structures which could include a duty to co-operate and the establishment of Homelessness Reduction Boards. The development of the Strategic Homelessness Board in Warwickshire supports the legislative changes and anticipates the Government’s further proposals.

The Board is developing a Warwickshire-wide Homeless Strategy, proposing recommendations for consideration by partners which are concerned with how statutory agencies in Warwickshire will work together to promote and deliver the changes expected by Government and which will benefit residents. These objectives are intended to define a new culture of collaboration and effective joint working arrangements. They include:

- Supporting and fully utilising the Homelessness Strategic Board to promote collaboration, challenge systems of work, develop new initiatives and deliver joint training.
- Evolving the strong partnership working built during the COVID-19 pandemic to anticipate challenges to residents from a recession – particularly in connection with their financial circumstances, unemployment and the actions of private landlords to evict tenants.
- Enabling front line teams to act in partnership to intervene early where there is a housing issue – to encourage a culture of professional curiosity and ensure teams know that homeless is everybody’s business.
- Developing agreed pathways for referrals which underpin a culture of collaboration
- Agreeing formal monitoring systems to provide information to the Board about the effectiveness of joint working.
- Setting out specific actions to include joint working with regard to tackling domestic abuse, working with



young people and offenders, health and financial inclusion.

- Using Local Plans, Lettings Schemes and intervention in the private sector housing market to deliver a sufficient range of affordable housing options to meet housing needs in Warwickshire.

Views were sought on the Draft Countywide Homeless Strategy using an online survey that was available between 5th October and 1st November 2020. Responses were invited from the general public, businesses, statutory partners, local councillors/elected members, and voluntary and community sector. The results and feedback will assist in getting the strategy right for those who are at risk of homelessness, currently homeless or sleeping rough on Warwickshire streets. It will inform the priorities and recommendations of the final version of the strategy being presented to the Health and Wellbeing Board in March 2021.

METHODOLOGY

In order to gather views, an online survey was available on Ask Warwickshire using Citizen Space (a paper-based version of the standard online survey could be requested by telephone or email and alternative formats and languages could also be requested). Respondents were also able to respond directly via email or in writing to Public Health Warwickshire.

This report is structured in three main sections. First, the key messages of the analysis on the Draft Countywide Homeless Strategy. The main section of the report presents the results from the survey which includes: about respondents, our vision, strategic priorities, recommendations, further comments and Housing Related Support. This is followed by a section that presents the equality and diversity analysis.



KEY MESSAGES

- The Draft Countywide Homeless Strategy survey received 45 responses. Of these, 28 were from members of the general public and the remainder from other groups (business, statutory partner, local Councillor/elected member, voluntary community sector).
- In total, 91.1% (n=41) of all respondents stated that they agreed (either agree or strongly agree) with the vision set out for this strategy. Just 6.8% (n=3) disagreed (either disagree or strongly disagree) with the vision.
- Respondents generally agreed with each of the strategic priorities.
 - Priority 3 (domestic abuse) had the greatest agreement – 93.3% (n=42) of all respondents stated they agreed or strongly agreed with this priority.
 - A small percentage, 8.9% (n=4), of all respondents disagreed (disagree or strongly disagree) with Priority 1 (health).
- Respondents were asked whether there were any other priorities, issues, drivers, policies or strategies that they felt should be considered and addressed. In total, almost half of all respondents (48.9%, n=22) stated that there were other priorities to consider. A wide variety of themes and issues were mentioned, with concerns regarding health (including mental health) and the need to consider specific groups (e.g. asylum seekers, those with a disability or long-term health condition, single parents with children) featuring in multiple comments.
- Overall, respondents either agreed or agreed to some extent that the recommendations proposed for each strategic priority are the correct ones to focus on for 2021/22:
 - Priority 1 – Health: 62% agreed, 31% agreed to some extent
 - Priority 2 – Young People: 60% agreed, 24% agreed to some extent
 - Priority 3 – Domestic Abuse: 73% agreed, 15.6% agreed to some extent
 - Priority 4 – Offending: 57.8% agreed, 24.4% agreed to some extent
 - Priority 5 - Financial inclusion: 64.4% agreed, 22.2% agreed to some extent
- For each priority a small number of respondents (n=1-3) said the recommendations were not the correct recommendations to focus on. Proposed recommendations under the financial inclusion priority had the most negative responses with 6.7% (n=3) of all respondents stating that the recommendations were not the right recommendations to focus on.
- The final section of the survey focused on eligibility criteria for Housing Related Support (HRS). The majority of respondents felt that all of the statements provided should be included as a criteria that makes a person eligible for HRS. In particular, 93.3% (n=42) considered 'Their health needs impacting their ability to maintain their tenancy (disability/mental health/substance misuse)' should be eligible. A large amount of debt which may affect their tenancy was the only eligibility criteria that received less than 75% support (71.1%, n=32).



DRAFT COUNTYWIDE HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY RESULTS – SURVEY ANALYSIS

ABOUT RESPONDENTS

In total, the online survey received 45 responses. At the beginning of the survey, respondents were asked to state in what capacity they were responding to this questionnaire. Depending on how a respondent answered, they were then asked which Warwickshire district or borough they live in, work in or represent. The results of this are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Respondent background and Warwickshire borough/district

	General public	Business	Statutory partner	Local Councillor / elected member	Voluntary and community sector	Other	Total
North Warwickshire	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Nuneaton & Bedworth	2	1	0	0	0	3	6
Rugby	5	0	1	1	0	0	7
Stratford-on-Avon	9	0	0	1	0	1	11
Warwick	11	0	0	0	3	2	16
Countywide	N/A	0	1	0	3	0	4
Outside of Warwickshire	N/A	0	0	0	0	0	0
Not answered	N/A	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	28	1	2	2	6	6	45

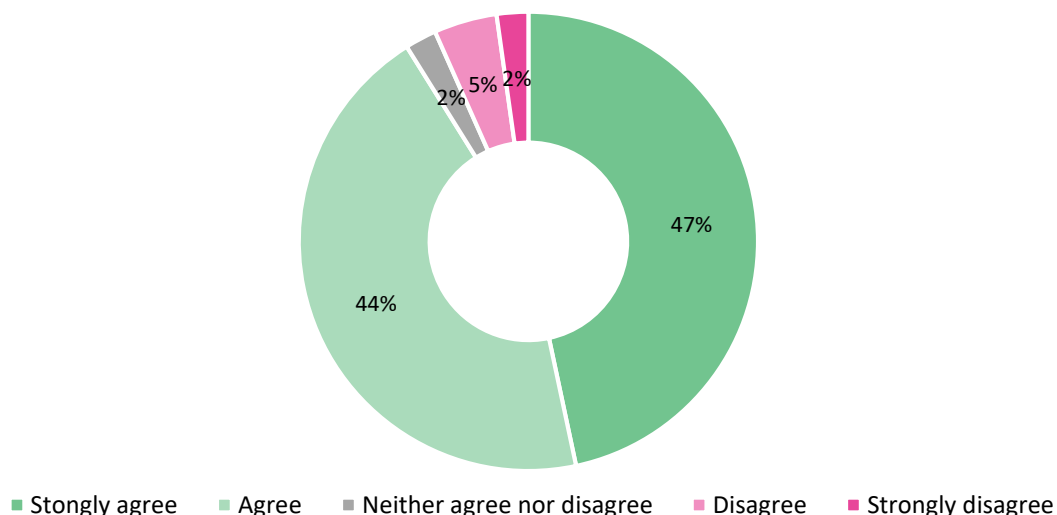
The figures in Table 1 indicate that the majority of respondents who completed the survey were members of the public (62.2%, n=28), with 11 residing in Warwick District and 10 in Stratford-on-Avon District. There were six respondents who answered in their voluntary and community sector capacity, two local councillors/elected members (WCC, District/Borough, Town Council) and just one business. Of those who stated 'other', there were two householders/landlords, a housing solutions team member, a health/nursing service and an adult social care practitioner. Indeed, 60% (n=27) of all respondents stated they live, work or represent either Stratford-on-Avon District or Warwick District (see Table 1).



OUR VISION

The first section of the survey focused on Our Vision (that statutory agencies in Warwickshire will work together to promote and deliver the changes expected by the Government in the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, for the benefit of our Warwickshire residents). Respondents were asked to what extent they agree or disagree with the vision set out for this strategy. The results of this are presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the vision set out for this strategy?



As Figure 1 shows, 91.1% (n=41) of all respondents stated that they agreed (either agree or strongly agree) with the vision set out for this strategy. Just 6.8% (n=3) disagreed (either disagree or strongly disagree) with the vision.

Those respondents who stated they disagreed or strongly disagreed with the vision were asked to explain their answer in the open text box. However, only two of the three respondents who disagreed with the vision chose to comment. A further five respondents (who answered strongly agree, agree or neither agree nor disagree) also made a comment. All seven comments are presented below along with the capacity in which the respondent answered the survey:

- “A young girl and her partner that I know who have fallen on hard times and have had to sleep on people’s sofa’s for the last two months were told by RBC that they wouldn’t be housed as this young girl wasn’t pregnant so they didn’t meet the criteria for housing these two young people are only 20 years old so why is the council promoting young adults who have no job or place to live to create a life to get someone to help them. Absolutely disgusting. Especially when there are several properties flats and houses sat empty in the town” (General Public; disagree with vision).
- “There is a need to get to the root of the problem with homelessness and the cause. The problem does not necessarily stop with providing a roof over someone’s head. It may have complied with a ‘duty’ but, there needs to be intensive work needed for some of our counties most vulnerable. Also, a ‘hidden homeless’ and vulnerably housed community need to be better supported” (General Public; disagree with vision).
- “It’s too long and wordy to be a vision. A simple statement of what you’re aiming to do is required” (Local Councillor/elected member; neither agree nor disagree with vision).

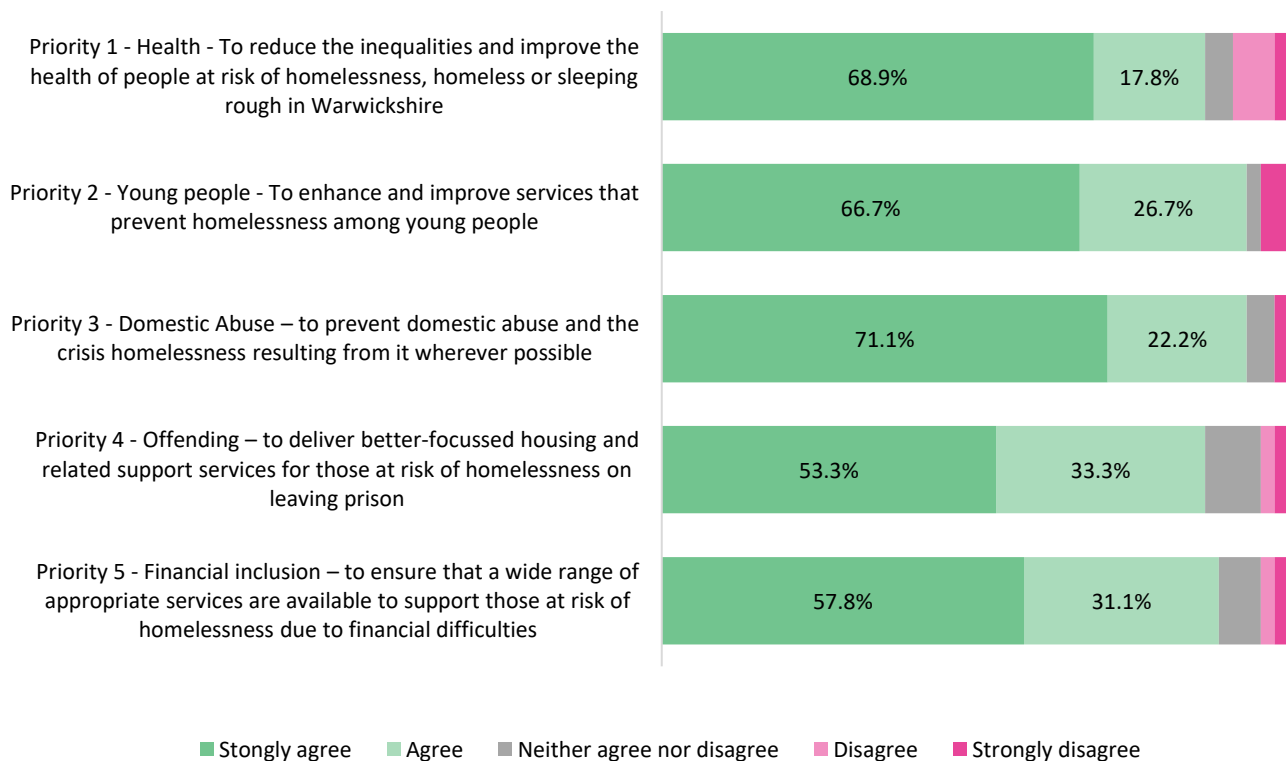


- “Ensuring early intervention and prevention is the best way to try and reduce homelessness. Now, particularly, with COVID-19, agencies across Warwickshire need to work together to ensure nobody is at risk of being homeless. Joined up thinking and working will be crucial” (General Public, agree with vision).
- “Anything that benefits the residents is good” (Business; strongly agree with vision).
- “I believe we all want to achieve the best possible outcome & this will only be reached by working together, and highlighting any barriers we feel we face” (Statutory partner, strongly agree with vision).
- “I agree there needs to be promotion of working together between statutory agencies, and feel it is also imperative there is clarity regarding roles and responsibilities e.g. we often find Housing Dept's state someone is vulnerable as they are homeless and therefore require residential care to be provided when the individual has no care and support needs. By virtue of being homeless, any individual could be considered to be vulnerable, but that does not mean residential care should be provided when the need is for accommodation NOT care and support” (Other respondent; strongly agree with vision).

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The next section of the survey focused on the five strategic priorities. Respondents were asked how strongly they agreed or disagreed with each of the strategic priorities – health, young people, domestic abuse, offending, and financial inclusion. The results of each of these are presented in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the five strategic priorities?



As Figure 2 shows, respondents generally agreed with each of the strategic priorities. For Priority 3 (domestic abuse), 93.3% (n=42) of all respondents stated they agree or strongly agree with this priority. Further to this, both Priority 4 (offending) and Priority 5 (financial inclusion) saw 8.9% (n=4) and 6.7% (n=3) of respondents respectively state that they neither agreed nor disagreed with these priorities. Interestingly, 8.9% (n=4) of all



respondents disagreed (disagree or strongly disagree) with Priority 1 (health). In terms of the capacity in which they were responding to the survey, there was no statistical significance in the way respondents answered.

Following this, respondents who disagreed or strongly disagreed with any of the five priorities were asked to explain why. In total, five respondents made a comment, and these are presented below. Two of the comments related specifically to the health priority:

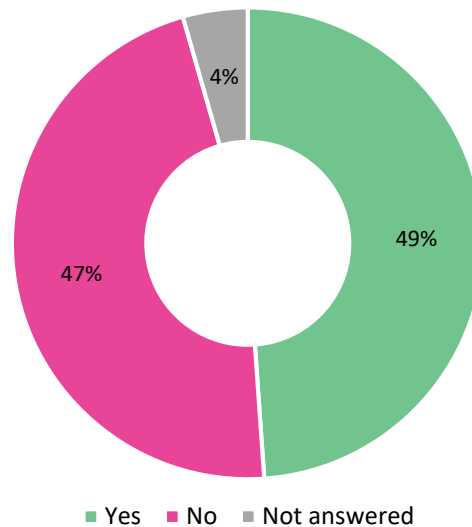
- *“Health - needs to be clear on the lack of mental health support availability and drug and alcohol services. Where an individual has a mental health issue and a substance addiction, Mental Health decline to support unless the individual will engage with substance misuse support services such as Change, Grow, Live, even where the individual is misusing substances as a form of self medication and/or feel unable to begin to address addiction issues, and/or has a long standing serious mental health condition. Mental Health services overall are seriously lacking and needs are not being addressed across the board. Financial inclusion - should consider whether this is because for example an individual is not claiming the correct benefits or needs to be supported to manage their money as they have mental capacity issues. I think it is more difficult in situations where addiction is at play and an individual is spending all money on substances to feed their addiction, therefore placing their tenancy at risk”* (Adult Social Care practitioner).
- *“I don’t agree with the Health priority - if you can identify who’s at risk of being homeless you should be offering appropriate support to prevent it rather than improving their health. I’m guessing that this priority was included at the request of your health partners. Strongly agree with assisting young people and offenders from drifting into homelessness”* (Local Councillor/elected member).
- *“I think people hitting poverty is more of a priority than single people coming out of custody due to people having children and living in poor conditions”* (Business).
- *“I see no mention of support for homeless veterans who have put their lives on the line for this Country”* (General Public).
- *“Please refer to previous statement as telling young couple who have lost their home and job through no fault of their own to get pregnant to get houses is disgusting”* (General Public).

The final question in this section asked respondents whether there were any other priorities, issues, drivers, policies or strategies that they felt should be considered and addressed. In total, almost half of all respondents (48.9%, n=22) stated that there were other priorities to consider. Similarly, 46.7% (n=21) said no. Just two respondents did not answer this question (see Figure 3).

In terms of the capacity in which they were responding to the survey, 17 (60.7%) respondents who identified as members of the general public felt there were other policies or strategies to consider compared to 5 (29.4%) from the other groups. This is a statistically significant difference in response to this question.



Figure 3. Are there any other, priorities, issues, drivers, policies or strategies that should be considered and addressed?



Those respondents who stated 'yes' were asked to explain their answer in more detail. In total, 21 respondents left a comment to this question and these are presented below. A wide variety of themes and issues were mentioned, with concerns regarding health (including mental health) and the need to consider specific groups (e.g. asylum seekers, those with a disability or long-term health condition, single parents with children) featuring in multiple comments:

- *"1 - Health - homeless people are less likely to want to or comply with health services for fear being sent into the hospital or because they have bad experiences with authority. Community-led nursing services should be increased. 2 - Young people - there are good initiatives from St Basils and other charitable organisations but, young people are more likely to 'sofa surf' or enter into risky and dangerous situations to keep from being homeless. Also, the transition from being a 'looked after child' to becoming independent is a fraught one and additional steps need to be in place to make sure a stable home life is in place. There needs to be a wrap-around and holistic approach to reducing homelessness. Sadly, it is not one size fits all - people often have had chaotic lives and traumatic experiences. All agencies need to be involved. We might be able to house people but, if they cannot read to pay bills, manage a bank account or have basic cooking skills being able to manage a tenancy successfully becomes untenable"* (General Public).
- *"Mental Health, substance misuse"* (Adult Social Care practitioner).
- *"Asylum seekers/refugees"* (General Public).
- *"Consider issue of companion animals being allowed in shelters/housing. Consider idea of community and sense of belonging. Consider employment and communities/projects offering housing for work/labour"* (General Public).
- *"Digital inclusion - with more and more services mainly accessed online (UC with its journals), all the housing bidding services etc it does disadvantage those that struggle with technology or literacy. I guess you are including disabilities in with health but learning difficulties may not be a medical issue as such"* (Voluntary and community sector).
- *"Disability should be explicitly referenced, not just health"* (General Public).
- *"Greater account to be taken of the fact that many people need support to access the help that is often out there and available to them, they just cannot access it. They are not being lazy or feckless but genuinely are unable to access help they are entitled to without support"* (General Public).



- *“How staff respond to each case and being forthcoming with all information of all help available to these young people who have never had dealings with the councils before so are not aware of what help is available such as your discretionary funds”* (General Public).
- *“Interdependencies of drug and alcohol being a barrier to people being able to secure or sustain tenancies”* (General Public).
- *“It would be good to see mental health more called out specifically in the listed priorities, perhaps including it in Priority 1”* (Local Councillor / elected member).
- *“Mental health issues such as schizophrenia”* (General Public).
- *“More work needs to be done to ensure that all agencies working with those who are homeless do so in a trauma informed way. Also, more needs to be done to address the trauma suffered by those who become homeless. Counselling those who have suffered trauma in their lives is essential if the hard work to house such individuals is to be sustained”* (General Public).
- *“Need to ensure alcohol drug related homelessness addressed i.e. If not already covered by 'health' priority”* (General Public).
- *“Old people who are homeless should also be included”* (General Public).
- *“Referral of those already homeless”* (General Public).
- *“Single parent families with children”* (General Public).
- *“Support our veterans!”* (General Public).
- *“The issues associated with COVID-19 (furlough and job losses, health etc). Also, more longer-term, how Brexit may need to be considered”* (General Public).
- *“There is a very big gap in service provision in this area, for patients who are alcohol dependent. Although they can get help at CGL for this addiction, for those patients who want to continue drinking and who are homeless, who may or may not have mental health issues on top of their dependency, there is little provision for them. Often they slip through the gap of all services and the only alternative presently, is to end up rough sleeping. This area needs a supported "wet house" or equivalent for a certain, small number, of patients”* (Health / nursing service).
- *“There is evidence that the number of homeless people is higher than official/reported statistics. Any scheme to tackle homelessness needs to ensure that we can include ALL of the homeless. We need to ensure that children in homeless families or children leaving care services do not fall into homelessness by giving more focused support in their teenage years”* (General Public).
- *“Yes - you're only looking at the demand side - you should also be looking at supply, i.e. affordable housing. Unfortunately the whole strategy seems to be light on data - how many people are genuinely homeless now, how many are expected to become homeless in future, how many appropriate units of affordable housing are available now, how many are needed in future, what are you doing to ensure their provision”* (Local Councillor / elected member).

RECOMMENDATIONS

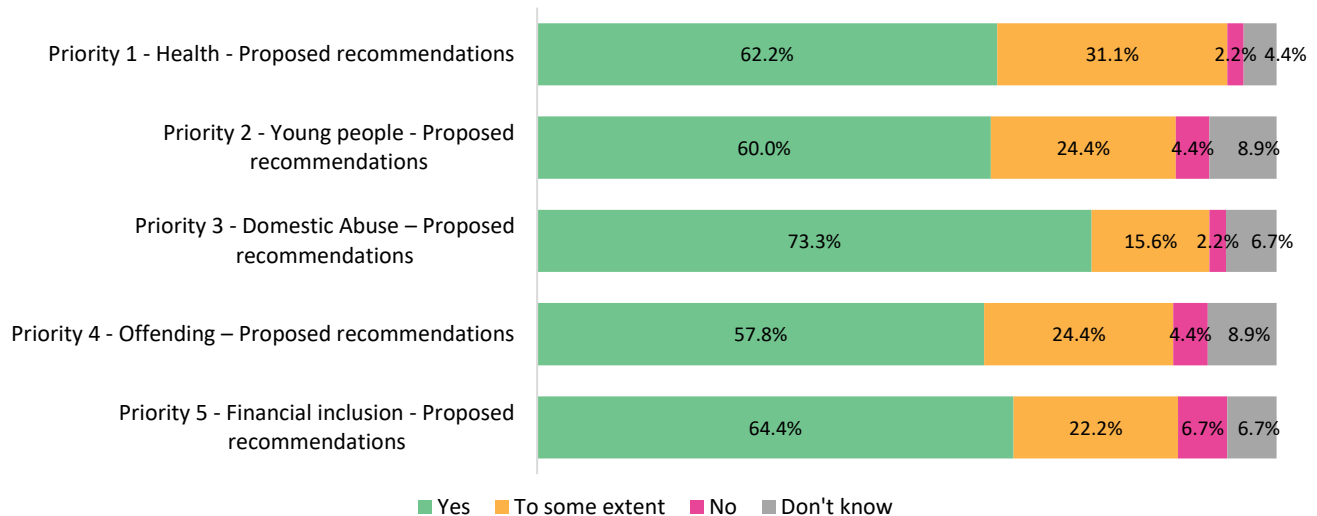
The next section of the survey focused on recommendations. The draft Strategy outlines recommendations under each strategic priority for actions to focus on for 2021/22 and the survey sought to understand respondents' thoughts about the recommendations they would like to see being undertaken under each of the five strategic priorities.

For each strategic priority, respondents were asked whether the proposed recommendations were the right recommendations to focus on for 2021/22. The results of this are presented in Figure 4 below. As the chart shows, there is general agreement that each of the recommendations are the correct ones to focus on for 2021/22, wholly or to some extent. In particular, 73.3% (n=33) of all respondents suggested that the



recommendations regarding Priority 3 (Domestic Abuse) are the right ones to focus on. However, 6.7% (n=3) of all respondents stated that the recommendations put forward regarding Priority 5 (financial inclusion) were not the right recommendations to focus on. There was no statistical significance in responses based on the capacity in which they were responding (general public v all other groups) to the recommendations.

Figure 4. Are these the right recommendations to focus on for 2021/22?



If a respondent answered 'no' or 'to some extent' to any of the five proposed recommendations, they were then asked to explain why.

For Priority 1, fifteen respondents made a comment on the recommendations regarding health. These are presented below. A wide variety of themes and issues were mentioned, with concerns regarding mental health featuring in multiple comments:

- “Add help to overcome communication barriers to the issues to cover” (General Public).
- “COVID-19 and its implications need to be present (this may be linked to mental health)” (General Public).
- “It would be good to see something here that recognises the impact of trauma on those who are homeless. Trauma counselling needs to be offered to enable traumatised individuals to work on putting their lives back together. If the trauma is not addressed, we just see a continuing revolving door of homelessness and addiction” (General Public).
- “Mental health services are severely stretched and some effort needs to be made to ensure that people do not drift into homelessness by ensuring a preventative policy is closely linked to existing mental health services” (General Public).
- “Need to focus on mental health for those at risk of homelessness, not just for those who are already street homeless/rough sleeping. Prevention is better than cure! This would take into account the preventative agenda/approach” (Adult Social Care practitioner).
- “Not sure all alcohol/drug uses recognise or would describe their condition as mental health issue - so need to ensure 'pathways' are not restricted to mental health labels. Are all homeless people in the system? Do you need to think about establishing outreach services?” (General Public).
- “Priority One should be to quantify, address and eradicate homelessness. The whole strategy is predicated on an assumption that we will always have homeless people. You’re addressing symptoms not the cause” (Local Councillor / elected member).
- “Promote awareness of the right to access a GP when homeless” (General Public).



- *"Should also include better access to GPs services" (General Public).*
- *"The dual diagnosis work needs to be very robust since most of these patients have drug or alcohol issues and presently fall through the gap of mental health service support- if they are using they cannot be treated by M Health services. It is very frustrating as they cannot stop using to get their mental health treatment- the 2 things are inextricably linked" (Health/nursing service).*
- *"There is a great deal in these recommendations which is aspirational - I would like to see more focus on action and less: - "development" - "consideration" etc." (General Public).*
- *"These pathways and interventions should not be restricted to those that are street homeless/rough sleeping. Many people who are at risk of becoming homeless or are sofa surfing will also have these needs, surely it is better to help them before they end up sleeping rough" (Voluntary and community Sector).*
- *"These points sound good but, in an overworked, under-resourced service I would like to see this in action before I pass judgment. Needle exchange, homeless women to be able to access free sanitary products, sexual/ domestic violence support. This needs to be conducted in a non-judgmental way" (General Public)*
- *"They appear to be the right focus from a lay person's perspective" (General Public).*
- *"We must remember that some people choose to be homeless. The fact that they have chosen an alternative lifestyle to most of us doesn't give us the right to impose our lifestyle on them" (General Public).*

For Priority 2, twelve respondents made a comment on the recommendations regarding young people. These are presented below. A variety of themes and issues, with support, communication and joined-up thinking featuring in multiple comments:

- *"I think you need also to consider more substantially funding to Doorway, they are an important partnership and provide more support than the house project. I also think WCC should consider rent guarantor schemes for people on UC and benefits major stumbling block in private renting" (Housing Solutions team member).*
- *"I would like to see the Housing First model used across the county in its original form, provide accommodation quickly and make sure that the wrap around collaborative support is set up to then tackle the problems and issues. At the moment it is hard to house people unless they are tenancy ready, this is very hard to achieve while someone is homeless whether they are rough sleeping or sofa surfing" (Voluntary and community sector).*
- *"There needs to be emphasis on developing a cross county protocol for care leavers -
- Local connection - as WCC care leavers can apply to all 5 district/boroughs but some district/boroughs are not accepting care leavers that do not have a local connection. This is not in line with government guidelines. - Care leavers should not have to go through the homeless route to gain priority - it should be automatic care leaver priority across all 5 councils - special agency referral for all care leavers that are tenancy ready. - An emphasis on pre-tenancy training standardised across the county for all care leavers...almost a passport for independent living - this could be introduced into schools for all young people not just care leavers" (Statutory partner).*
- *"To free up accommodation on the housing register for young people. Not acceptable for young people to be in supported accommodation for 2-3 years. Young people become very disillusioned and demoralised negative impact on their recovery" (Voluntary and community sector).*
- *"Very young people i.e. 18-21, do not have a need for, or the resources to deal with conventional accommodation. Something like Halls of Residence would be more appropriate" (Local Councillor / elected member).*
- *"Add - overcome any communication barriers" (General Public).*
- *"Are three flats per year sufficient for the number of care leavers?" (General Public).*



- *“Consider outreach services and develop pilot schemes to explore fostering of homeless people; with appropriate training and support” (General Public).*
- *“Engage with charities such as St Basils who have a reputation of providing a good standard of supported accommodation for all levels of homeless young people. Again wrap around help and support, to be able to keep and manage their tenancy it is likely they will have to work therefore, having access to education support and training opportunities is important. Young homeless people can often be NEET or estranged from their family due to broken relationships, abuse or broken foster/adoption placements. Therefore, it is important not to just focus on the housing as without all the other strands of support offered the young person may fail to thrive” (General Public).*
- *“If young people are old enough to vote then they are old enough to start accepting some personal responsibility” (General Public).*
- *“More work needs to be done to ensure that Children’s Services teams operate in line with the Countywide protocol. At present the imperative appears to be to reduce or restrict the number of young people in foster care rather than ensuring the best outcome possible for young people” (General Public).*
- *“What about other support for young people e.g. developing their life skills, e.g. how to manage a budget, cook etc... developing employability skills” (General Public).*

For Priority 3, seven respondents made a comment on the recommendations regarding domestic abuse. These are presented below. The themes of communication and support were mentioned in multiple comments, and the consideration of domestic violence in relation to other groups (such as the LGBTQ+ community) was also mentioned:

- *“Need more rooms in local Refuges, we are currently having to place too far away” (Housing Solutions team member)*
- *Need to consider domestic abuse from an inclusive perspective eg: by stating 'women only spaces' is there an assumption domestic abuse happens to women? What about men, transgender, children and young people, etc?” (Adult Social Care practitioner)*
- *“Add - overcome any communication barriers” (General Public).*
- *“More work to be done to ensure that those experiencing domestic abuse do not need to flee their homes, local areas and support networks” (General Public).*
- *“Provision of intensive psychological support to engender positive relationships going forward and a process of healing. Access to justice - legal advice or improving legal aid to allow perpetrators to be brought to justice or apply for non-molestation orders. Increasing funding for more refuges. During lockdown, it was reported that up to 5 women a week were being murdered by their partner however, if there was access to a safe place for women this would not such a stain on our nation. Improving domestic violence services for LGBTQ+ community. It is often this community that suffers the most due to stigma firstly attached to being part of the LGBTQ+ community and the stereotype of what a domestic violence survivor is meant to be” (General Public).*
- *“Raise awareness of what domestic abuse is - often victims don't recognise/acknowledge the abuse. Establish victim abuse help line on similar lines to 'child line' - many 5 year olds I meet now quote what is acceptable and not acceptable behaviour from adults and this is a great success in terms of educating victims so they can refer themselves” (General Public).*
- *“There's nothing around long term support for counselling and development/learning opportunities. Women are usually at a disadvantage when it comes to their career options so a part of this should be around empowering women to be able to be financially independent. When you need two wages to be able to live then you set the system up to fail, people won't leave if they can't see a way out” (General Public).*



For Priority 4, eleven respondents made a comment on the recommendations regarding offending. A variety of different themes and issues were mentioned and these are presented below:

- *"DTR, need to give local housing teams more notice, very often people are released from detention and DTR are received the same day"* (Housing Solutions team member).
- *"These people also need more support post offending re job opportunities. A lot of boredom is involved and there are very limited opportunities to have a future once offended"* (Health / nursing service).
- *"Really need to improve the notice periods for prison release and possibly improve the communication options for prisoners and support workers prior to release. I know that at the moment referrals are made maybe a week before release and that is the first thought about housing after release. If more assessments and interviews can be done by councils and the voluntary sector while the prisoner is still in prison it would make the transition so much smoother"* (Voluntary and community sector).
- *"Add - overcome any communication barriers. Additionally, focus on encouraging change of setting/relocation - so previous unhelpful 'friendships' can be addressed"* (General Public).
- *"Agreements to be sought with housing providers that they will provide suitable and affordable housing to ex-offenders"* (General Public).
- *"Don't work in isolation with this one - set up collaborative project with Nacro or similar organisation they have the expertise and have already done plenty of research on this issue. They are nationwide and already work closely with prisons, offenders, local authorities, probation etc etc"* (General Public).
- *"Seem good but don't understand who is involved in the joint working - is that probation & housing"* (General Public).
- *"There is a tendency to push ex-offenders to the back of the queue for funding. This is why it is important that when an offender is released from prison it must be to an address. Also, improving the quality and standard of hostels and halfway houses and understanding the nature of offender on release. Having a stable, safe home with intensive support whilst expensive at the outset when balanced against the costs of the justice system reconvicting and imprisoning offenders it is fiscally irresponsible to allow these placements to breakdown with no other support provided, leading to reconviction and further imprisonment"* (General Public).
- *"They offended and must not be ranked above veterans"* (General Public).
- *"Why do services have to be re-tendered so frequently? It must be difficult for providers to really develop and embed services which could end before implementation and makes everything feel so 'temporary'"* (General Public).
- *"Work with colleagues who re supporting offenders before they are released to put in place accommodation provision to avoid last minute referrals. Understand the needs of ex-offenders better to enable suitable wrap around support to be considered and delivered locally"* (General Public).

For Priority 5, twelve respondents made a comment on the recommendations regarding financial inclusion. These are presented below. There was a stronger negative sentiment regarding this recommendation than the other four, and this comes across in several of the comments:

- *"CFISO, who are they? Where are they based?, how do LA refer to the house project, money better spent with the LA team or already established providers i.e. Doorway, P3. More floating support needed"* (Housing Solutions team member).
- *"I haven't seen (maybe I missed it) any proposals to involve the private rented sector in the various schemes. As a landlord with two two bed low rent (£450/month) properties, I do not rent to persons on UC, and in fact my agent, a well-known Estate Agent doesn't either. The apparent discrimination occurs for financial reasons - the need for a deposit and a month's rent in advance and failure to prove adequate income to maintain the lease. Landlords, especially small ones may be relying on the income for a pension, live in fear of having to evict a tenant or for that matter having to find a new tenant. The costs plus lost*



income and delays for eviction are horrendous. The costs to find a new tenant are not insignificant. My agent charges me £560 a time and the Council charges me full council tax while it's empty. If private landlords could be supported to take on 'high risk' tenants, there would a noticeable increase in available accommodation" (Private landlord).

- *"None of this actually provides homeless people with a sustainable income. Why is there nothing about employment - trains and supporting homeless people to get jobs? The whole strategy seems based on low level state support which will do nothing other than maintain a dependency culture amongst the homeless"* (Local Councillor / elected member).
- *"See previous comments relating to financial inclusion"* (Adult Social Care practitioner).
- *"Add - overcome any communication barriers"* (General Public).
- *"Clarify expectations in commissioning of services such as CAB, what their role will be to support referrals from HRS providers as there is often a suggestion that there is duplication and confusion about who is paid to deliver the service. (General Public).*
- *"consideration of the impacts of COVID-19 (furlough, job losses) and the potential impact of Brexit (funding cuts) (General Public).*
- *"Fully support"* (General Public).
- *"Housing First needs to include work on the impact of trauma on the homeless and rough sleepers. Provision of housing on its own without suitable support and counselling will not be sufficient to prevent such individuals from becoming homeless again in the future. (General Public).*
- *"This all smacks of jobs for the boys syndrome - lots of words and minimal action. We know the financial factors that lead to homelessness. Work more closely with job centre plus. Set up system of short and long term interest free loans to help people who have lost their jobs and also consider grant scheme - develop similar approach to furlough/ grant scheme that govt produced to help with impact of COVID-19. Offer training on household budget and house maintenance management to those facing eviction"* (General Public).
- *"What a load of waffle"* (General Public).
- *"What are financial inclusion services, is this benefits or job opportunities? Focus surely needs to be on preventing homelessness where at all possible as so much harder to climb out of the whole/start from nothing than have shelter and a safe space from which to get your life back on track. When people become homeless it sounds like a 'housing first' approach is a good way to go. People need basic needs met before they can get their head above water & swim"* (General Public).

FURTHER COMMENTS

Following the section on recommendations, respondents were asked if they had any additional comments that they would like to share in relation to the Draft Countywide Homeless Strategy. In total, 16 respondents gave a comment to this question. These included general comments in relation to the Draft Countywide Homeless Strategy, with many respondents returning to issues and themes raised earlier in the survey:

- *"Council cutbacks on supported housing have frustrated the needs and causes of homelessness. WCC need to stop naval gazing and get back to basics - focus on front line services, stop indulging in pointless ventures such as 'WOW' awards and trim down tall management structures. Too much time spent conducting internal reviews and re-structuring and not enough attention given to service delivery"* (General Public).
- *"Encourage a culture within the general population wherein people know how to inform the relevant services of a person in need of help/intervention. This could be done through ads/posters online and in*



public places with high numbers of foot traffic. Use the community to help the vulnerable” (General Public).

- *“I am impressed with the strategies that are being put in place for 2020/2021” (Business).*
- *“I believe the strategy needs to take a more preventative proactive approach as currently appears to be focussed on those who are street homeless/rough sleepers, rather than those whose tenancy is at risk. Need to consider how the needs of those with mental health issues and substance/alcohol misuse can be supported to prevent loss of tenancy. Need more clarity around roles and responsibilities of lead agencies e.g. Housing Dept's, Adult Social Care, etc. Housing tend to take the stance when they evict from accommodation, this then becomes a Social Care responsibility and they no longer have a duty to house (e.g. where there is substance misuse issues and challenging behaviours as a result, etc) even where the individual has no social care needs” (General Public).*
- *“It’s a bit wordy and could maybe be simplified somewhat?” (General Public).*
- *“More work needs to be done to have a coherent strategy in relation to begging in the area. Most members of the public assume beggars are homeless when in fact most beggars are doing so to fuel drug and alcohol addictions and have their own accommodation. Countywide support and promotion of the Meaningful Change campaign could act to educate the public in this area. More work to combat loneliness and social isolation. Some rough sleepers and homeless individuals are reluctant to take on their own tenancies as they rely on the street community for their social interactions. More opportunities should be provided for positive social interaction in order to break the street links that result in a continuation of negative habitual behaviour. More work to be done on peer mentoring for homeless and former rough sleepers. Those with lived experience who have turned their lives around can deliver a powerful message that change is possible and achievable. More survey work to be undertaken to understand the causes of rough sleeping and the motivations and aspirations of those who sleep rough” (General Public).*
- *“Multi-agency working is defiantly necessary sharing proportionate and lawful risk information supporting individuals with homelessness and staff with safety” (Other, not specified).*
- *“Need to look at ways to encourage private LL to rent to social housing tenants” (Housing Solutions team member).*
- *“Not at this time, but would like to see the actions and benefits that arise from this initiative on a regular basis” (General Public).*
- *“Prevention is better than cure - there is nothing in the strategy that overtly looks at the reason people become homeless - to build in any preventative work that could be done prior to becoming homeless. You almost need an 'at risk of becoming homeless' strategy to run alongside this strategy -that various services could tap into as they see someone at risk of becoming homeless” (General Public).*
- *“Stop advising people to have children they can’t afford so that they can get somewhere to live. Work closely with the job Centre and place where people can train for a career so you can all work in conjunction with each other to get these people back on their feet” (General Public).*
- *“Targeted prevention is always crucial. More consideration to the draft around COVID-19 and it's direct and indirect impact on homelessness” (General Public).*
- *“The impacts of the pandemic must make reducing and addressing homeless a higher priority than ever. Not only in the short term to get people of the street while the virus is out there but to help reduce people slipping into trouble as financial & job losses hit. Fear of losing your home places massive strain on mental health, relationships, families and individuals” (General Public).*
- *“The objectives are admirable, but implementation is the key” (General Public).*
- *“The strategy is negative and reactive and based on the assumption that we’ll always have homeless people who will be dependent on the state. From my experience there are all sorts of categories of homeless people. Those who find themselves on the street because of unfortunate circumstances - coming out of prison, family break up, job loss etc. These people need a short-term support to get them back functioning in society. There are people with mental health issues - they will probably always need*



state support. There are some who are temporarily homeless - falling out with parents, domestic abuse etc. Again, short term, bespoke support. And there are some who make a deliberate lifestyle choice - the homeless 'industry' doesn't like to recognise this preferring to categorise all homeless people as victims of an uncaring society. The strategy seems more aimed at perpetuating the homeless industry than in doing something about it. There's no analysis of numbers, no data, nothing about solving the problem, nothing about employment, very little about housing supply. Have you actually taken the trouble to involve homeless people? No, I thought not" (Local Councillor / elected member).

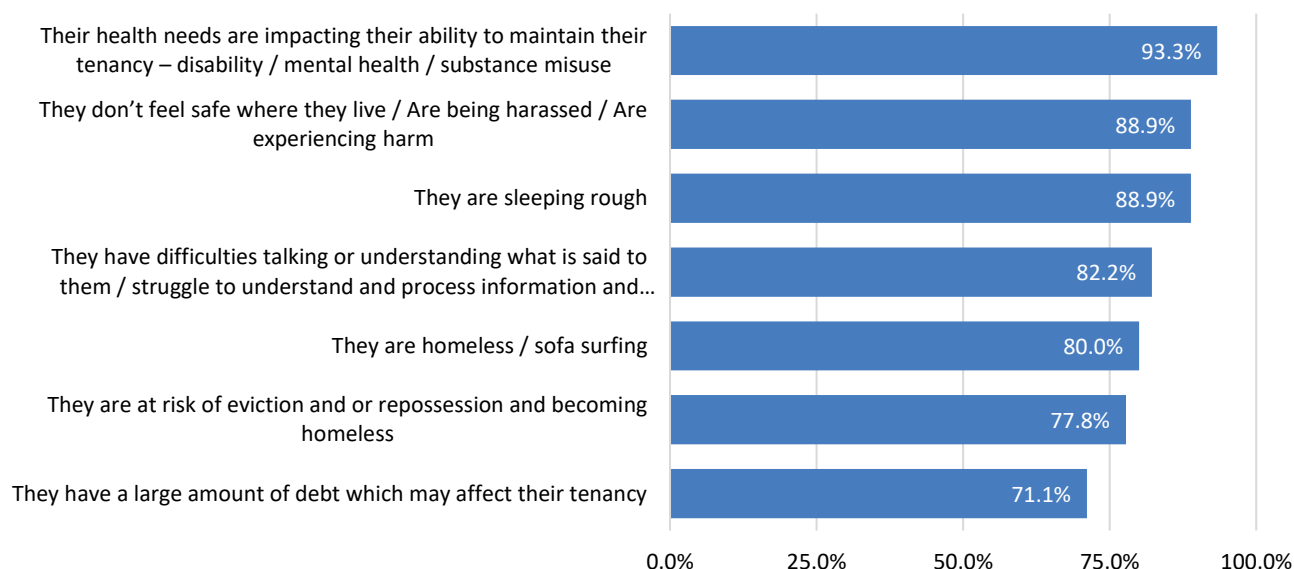
- "What awareness raising and preventative work will be undertaken with schools and colleges to support and help young people? Can you link with existing groups working with young people eg: princes trust, groundwork, Prospects?" (General Public).

HOUSING RELATED SUPPORT

The final section of the survey focused on Housing Related Support (HRS). Warwickshire County Council is preparing to re-tender HRS services in 2021. Since Housing Related Support services are considered a preventative service for homelessness across Warwickshire, the survey sought respondents' views on the eligibility criteria.

A person is eligible for an HRS Support assessment if one or more of the statements (listed below) is true. Respondents were asked to select all of the statements that they felt should be included as eligibility criteria (and could therefore select multiple options). The results of this are presented in Figure 5 below.

Figure 5. A person is eligible for an HRS Support assessment if one or more of these statements is true. Please tick all the ones you feel should be included



As Figure 5 shows, the majority of respondents considered each of the statements should be included as an eligibility criteria for housing-related support. In particular, 93.3% (n=42) considered 'Their health needs are impacting their ability to maintain their tenancy (disability/mental health/substance misuse)' should be eligible. A large amount of debt which may affect their tenancy was the only statement that received less than 75% support (71.1%, n=32). There was no statistical significance in responses based on the capacity in which they were responding (general public v all other groups) to the statements.



EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ANALYSIS

The online survey asked respondents to complete information regarding equality and diversity. The results are set out in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Overall online respondent profile

Gender	Female	31
	Male	12
	Non-binary	0
	Prefer to self-describe	0
	Prefer not to say	1
	Not answered	1
Gender identity	Yes	43
	No	0
	Prefer not to say	1
	Not answered	1
Age in years	Under 18	0
	18-29	1
	30-44	14
	45-59	16
	60-74	10
	75+	2
	Prefer not to say	0
	Not answered	2
Long standing illness or disability	Yes	7
	No	34
	Prefer not to answer	3
	Not answered	1
Ethnicity	White-English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/ British	39
	White - Irish	2
	White - Gypsy or Irish Traveller	0
	Other White background	1
	Black or Black British - African	0
	Black or Black British - Caribbean	0
	Other Black background	0
	Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0
	Asian or Asian British – Indian	0
	Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0
	Chinese	0
	Other Asian Background	0
	Mixed – White and Asian	0
	Mixed – White and Black African	0
	Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0
	Other Mixed background	0
	Arab	0
	Other Ethnic background	0
	Prefer not to say	2
	Not answered	1
Religion	Buddhist	0



	Christian	18
	Jewish	0
	Muslim	0
	Hindu	0
	Sikh	0
	Spiritual	1
	Any other religion or belief	1
	No religion	19
	Prefer not to say	4
	Not answered	2
Sexual orientation	Heterosexual or straight	40
	Gay man	0
	Gay woman / lesbian	1
	Bi / bisexual	0
	Other	0
	Prefer not to say	3
	Not answered	1

