

# Growth and Regeneration



## Bristol Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019-24

Consultation Feedback Report  
June 2019



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## 1. Executive Summary

Bristol City Council has a **statutory duty** under the [Homelessness Act 2002](#) to conduct a homelessness review and produce a homelessness strategy based on that review at least every five years. [Part 3 \(Section 8\)](#) of the Act states that before we adopt the document the Council must consult with 'such public authorities, voluntary organisations and other persons as they consider appropriate'. We have interpreted this as broadly as possible and have taken into account the views of organisations (both statutory and voluntary) who are involved in the delivery of homelessness/rough sleeping and/or homelessness prevention services, people who may have used or have experience of, homelessness/rough sleeping services as well as local residents who may have a view about the impact that homelessness/rough sleeping has on their neighbourhoods or the city as a whole.

The previous 2013-18 Preventing Homelessness Strategy is due for update and legislative changes, such as the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 (which came into effect in April 2018) needed to be reflected in a new strategy.

In August 2018 central government published a [National Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018](#). This included new requirements relating to local authority homelessness strategies, including the publication of an annual Action Plan which will be monitored by central government.

The revised Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019-24 integrates with other corporate and citywide strategies such as the [Council's Corporate Strategy](#), and the [Bristol One City Plan](#).

This report sets out both qualitative and quantitative feedback to the consultation survey and explains the methodology used for the consultation process.

Some key findings from the consultation:

- There were 377 responses
- Between 83% and 97% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with the five priorities
- The top five identified actions to take forward were:
  - Provide more 'move on'<sup>1</sup> accommodation for people sleeping rough
  - Reduce the numbers in TA through prevention work and range of more affordable options
  - Increasing the supply of affordable homes, and ensuring that the right homes are delivered to meet housing needs
  - Build on existing links with health services
  - Review and where needed change the range of supported accommodation options available

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<sup>1</sup> Move on accommodation provides a stepping stone between hostel type accommodation and more independent living.

## 2. Context

In 2016 the Bristol Homes Board commissioned a newly created multi agency group the **Early Intervention and Preventing Homelessness Challenge Group** (EI&PHCG) to lead on the delivery and of the homelessness strategy for the city. The EI&PHCG includes membership from both statutory and voluntary services across the city and meets quarterly.

There has been a large amount of pre-consultation engagement with key stakeholders citywide which has helped co-design the strategy. Further details of this early engagement work are listed in section 5 of this document.

During the course of the year the EI&PHCG widened its membership and has continued to provide a robust steer to the document. It was through the work of EI&PHCG that the **five key priorities** of the draft strategy were identified.

## 3. The aims of the consultation

To comply with statutory and legal requirement as set out in the Homelessness Act 2002 ([\*Part 3, Section 8\*](#)) *Before adopting or modifying a homelessness strategy the authority shall consult such public or local authorities, voluntary organisations or other persons as they consider appropriate.*

In addition the consultation's aim was to:

- Collect views on the five priorities & key actions and give us the opportunity to amend documents where feedback is compelling.
- Set out our intent as a city on how we intend to provide homelessness and rough sleeping services over the next five years.
- Raise the profile of homelessness and rough sleeping issues in the city (through, for example, engagement with Cardboard Citizens).

## 4. Other related strategies and consultations

Bristol One City Plan 2019, Bristol Corporate Strategy 2018-23, Bristol Rough Sleeping and Encampments Policy consultation 2018, Vehicle Dwelling and Encapment on the Highway Policy Consultation 2018, Bristol Housing Strategy 2015-20, Bristol Quality of Life Survey

## 5. Methodology

There are a lot of stakeholders and partnerships linked to the provision of homelessness prevention services in Bristol; these include statutory, voluntary and faith organisations in housing, health, education and social care support services as well as many others. There is also a strong network of those people who have direct experience of using these services who we wanted to include in our feedback.

### Questionnaire

The questionnaire was designed to set out the current position and challenges of homelessness in the city and capture views on the five priorities and their associated

objectives and approaches, as set out in the draft strategy. It asked how strongly respondents agreed with these priorities and invited any comments in a free text section. It also invited respondents to identify the top five actions (from a list of 16) the city should focus on to reduce rough sleeping and homelessness also with additional comments in a free text section.

In total 680 paper copies with prepaid envelopes were circulated and 3720 electronic copies of the survey were posted by e-mail.

#### Citizen Space/Consultation Hub

[Citizens Space](#) is the Consultation platform for the City Council. The Consultation Survey for the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019-24 was launched at 2pm on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> April as an electronic survey, complemented with the draft strategy document and the homelessness review document in pdf format. The survey was closed on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> June. A link to [Citizens Space](#) was also created from the [Housing Options](#) webpage.

#### Social Media Toolkit

At the launch the Press and Public Relations Team published messages through City Council social media channels (Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn) and posted a [press release](#) through the Newsroom with a message to encourage participation in the survey. On the days following the launch of the survey there was TV coverage (an interview with Dom Wood from 1625 Independent People and a later interview with Cllr Paul Smith). The consultation was also included in two BBC Bristol website headline reports, two Bristol Evening Post articles and an article in Bristol 24/7. Publicity about the strategy was tweeted ten times during the course of the consultation which generated a number of likes, retweets and replies. The same number of posts was made to facebook which also generated 22 comments, 43 shares and 20 likes.

#### Materials

Postcards fliers and hard copies of the survey questionnaires were circulated to all libraries and customer service points from 10<sup>th</sup> April. On 11<sup>th</sup> April we delivered hard copies and fliers by hand to the majority homeless providers and homeless hostels in the City. The Probation Service requested and took delivery of hard copies. We also circulated copies to service user hubs in the city e.g. Wild Goose, One25, Youth MAPS, Bristol Old Vic.

#### Equalities/Community/Stakeholder Engagement

During the development of the draft strategy and review we were advised at a briefing with Cabinet Member for Communities to seek the expertise and advice of the [Voice and Influence Partnership](#) to help us understand how we might reach groups and communities in the city whose voices aren't always heard or listened to. The Partnership supported the EI&PHCG and delivered a presentation to the group (05/12/18), it also offered guidance on best practice consultation methodology and backed our approach to undertake a comprehensive pre-consultation engagement exercise with stakeholders of homelessness prevention services in the city to promote equality and community engagement activities and supplement the final consultation report. The equality and community engagement activities we have completed during the pre-consultation period included the following:

<b>Stakeholder Activities</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Stakeholders</b>
<b>Round table meeting with Associate Medical Director NHS Clinical Commissioning Group</b>	09-04	Stakeholder - Associate Medical Director NHS CCG (Bristol/Subregion)
<b>Event at St Mungos with St Mungos Outreach Manager and Team</b>	18-04	Event to link strategy with providers of services to people sleeping rough
<b>Meeting at City Hall with Public Health Managers</b>	19-04	Meeting to link strategy to Public Health issues created by homelessness in Bristol
<b>Event with provider of women's services</b>	25-04	Event to link strategy with women who use homelessness prevention services
<b>Providers event with National Housing Federation – member briefing (Clearing House &amp; Homelessness Reduction Act)</b>	02-05	Event to link strategy with south west sub-region social housing providers Multi-Agency (sub-regional)
<b>Meeting with providers of commissioned services to homeless young people</b>	02-05	Event to link strategy with young people who use homelessness prevention services
<b>Meeting with providers of commissioned services to homeless with complex needs</b>	17-05	Event to link strategy and people with complex needs who use homelessness prevention services
<b>Multi agency event with stakeholders to discuss MHCLG Rough Sleeping Initiative</b>	25-05	Event to link a City Council and Housing Associations in the provision of Housing First/Clearing House models for those sleeping rough with complex needs
<b>Early Intervention &amp; Preventing Homelessness Challenge Group</b>	06-06 19-07 15-08	Strategy governance and specialist meets to agree Priorities for strategy
<b>Homelessness Prevention Commissioning Team</b>	23-08	Briefing to link strategy with homelessness prevention service commissioners
<b>Cllr Paul Smith</b>	10-09	Cabinet Member briefing
<b>Bristol Supported Housing Forum</b>	11-09	Event to link strategy with voluntary organisations who deliver homelessness
<b>Cllr Asher Craig</b>	11-10	Cabinet Member Communities linking strategy with equalities services
<b>Cllr Helen Godwin</b>	17-10	Cabinet Member for Women, Children and Young People linking the strategy with children and young people services
<b>Richard Hawkrige</b>	31-10	Meeting linking strategy with Streetwise activities and Clean Streets
<b>Bristol Refugee Rights event</b>	07-11	Meeting linking the strategy with stakeholders delivering homelessness prevention services to refugees
<b>Round table meeting with Provider of Housing Services to women who suffer Domestic Abuse</b>	07-11	Meeting to link strategy with women who use homelessness prevention services
<b>Round table meeting with Equalities Advisor (Care Forum)</b>	07-11	Meeting to link strategy with hard to reach groups
<b>Event with provider of</b>	08-11	Event to link strategy with women who

<b>homelessness One25 prevention services for women</b>		use homelessness prevention services
<b>Meeting with Children &amp; Families Partnership Board</b>	08-11	Meeting to link up strategy with Children and Families who receive social care support
<b>Meeting with Adult Services DMT</b>	15-11	Meeting to link up strategy with Children and Families who receive social care support
<b>Event Adverse Childhood Experiences Task &amp; Finish Group</b>	20-11	Meeting to link up strategy with Children and Families who receive social care support
<b>Meeting with Jacqui Jensen EDM</b>	21-11	Meeting to link up strategy with Children and Families who receive social care support
<b>Bristol Supported Housing Forum</b>	20-11	Event to link strategy with voluntary organisations who deliver homelessness
<b>Bristol City Council - Policy Network</b>	21-11	Event linking strategy with BCC internal multi agency group
<b>National Housing Federation Roadshow</b>	11-12	Event sub-regional Stakeholders - External Agencies involved with homelessness & housing delivery
<b>Adverse Childhood Experiences Conference</b>	17-01-19	Meeting to link up strategy with Children and Families who receive social care support
<b>Querim Nurendini - Bristol Refugee Forum</b>	23-01-19	Event linking the strategy with stakeholders delivering homelessness prevention services to refugees
<b>Round table meeting with Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) SI Co-ordinator</b>	15-01	Briefing to link strategy with Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) Co-ordinator MHCLG
<b>Round table meeting with EI&amp;PHCG Lived Experience representative</b>	05-03-19	Meeting linking strategy with people who have had experience of sleeping rough
<b>Meeting with Crisis centre ministries</b>	06-02-19	Meeting linking strategy with stakeholders of non –commissioned homeless services
<b>Meeting with Cardboard Citizens</b>	08-02-19	Event linking strategy with Cardboard Citizens
<b>Meeting with co-ordinator Golden Key Service User involvement</b>	25-04	Meeting linking strategy with people who have had experience of sleeping rough
<b>Womens Pathway event – 1 New Street</b>	01-05-19	Event to link strategy with women who use homelessness prevention services
<b>Bristol Homeless Action Week</b>	11-05-19 to 18-05-19	Series of events and workshops to promote the consultation survey at The Café (City Centre) with service users and providers throughout the week



A number of themes/key issues emerged from these discussions, including:

- The need to consider wider societal factors that can lead to homelessness
- The need to take account of the many non-commissioned services working in the city and provide a joined-up citywide response to tackling homelessness and rough sleeping
- The importance of hidden homelessness (sofa surfing, people with no recourse to public funds, exploitation)
- Need to consider impact of issues such as Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE's) as a contributory factor which can lead to homelessness, as well as more 'housing related' issues
- The need to include service user/people with lived experience in shaping services
- The need to increase the supply of 'move-on' accommodation for people who have been sleeping rough
- The need for better data collection and data sharing between services tackling homelessness and rough sleeping.
- The need for adequate support services. Access to appropriate and timely drug, alcohol and mental health treatments can play a vital role in moving people away from homelessness and into long term recovery.

These and other issues were incorporated into the draft strategy and action plan prior to the launch of the public consultation.

#### Other events

The consultation period coincided with [Bristol Homlessness Action Week](#) (11<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> May). Events during the week were based in the YMCA café at The Kitchen in the city centre and we took the opportunity to circulate copies of the consultation survey during the week. On Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> May we ran a 2 hour drop-in session at the café to share and outline the priorities included in the draft strategy with people who have experienced homelessness in the city. An additional 32 hard copy responses to the survey were added as a result of this event.

Cardboard Citizens organisers of [Bristol Cardboard Camp](#) with a residency at Bristol Old Vic ran a Forum on the 15<sup>th</sup> May during the consultation period to promote the survey and support citywide circulation amongst camp members.

#### E-mails to stakeholders

On the 16<sup>th</sup> April we circulated more than 3,500 e-mails to those service users who had engaged with the Bristol Housing Advice Service in the 12 months from the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act in April 2018. We also e-mailed 200+ stakeholders and asked them to recirculate the email to their colleagues to raise the profile of the consultation. Each e-mail included a link to the survey.

#### Circulation to Councillors and elected members

Prior to formal launch an e-mail with attached easy-link to the survey was circulated to all 70 City Councillors with a request for it to be shared with their networks. At launch we sent an e-mail to each of Bristol's 4 elected Members of Parliament with a request for it to be



circulated to networks. We posted 10 paper copies of the survey per Councillor with postcard fliers to each of the Members Offices in Bristol City Hall.

### How people heard about the consultation

Given the wide range of approaches we took to engage our citizens in the consultation, we were keen to explore how people heard about the consultation to strengthen approached for future consultations about homelessness services in the city. See figure 4 below.

## 6. Responses to Survey

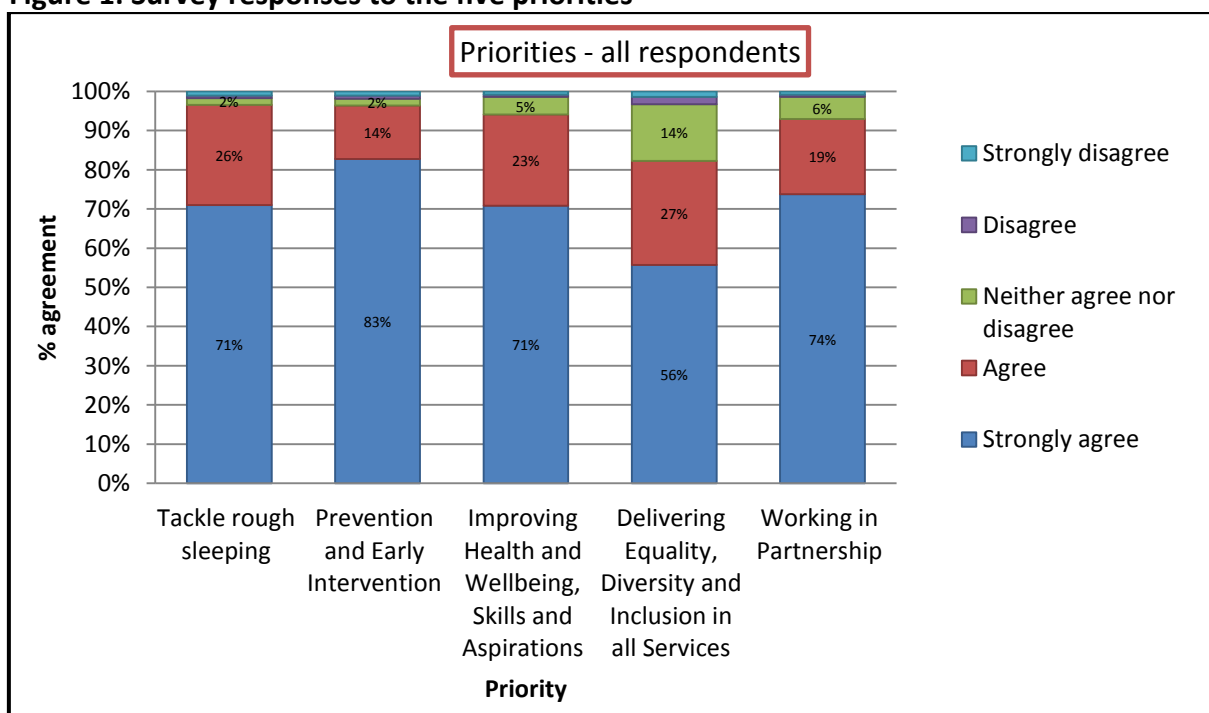
Overall, there were 377 responses to the survey.

### Question 1: Do you agree with the following priorities identified in the Bristol Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy?

362 people responded to this question (96% of all respondents). The response to the identified priorities was very positive, with between 297 (83%) and 349 (97%) of respondents either 'strongly agreeing' or 'agreeing' with the five identified priorities. Priority 4: 'Delivering Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in All Services' was the least popular priority, yet 297 (83%) of respondents still either strongly agreed - 201 (55.7%) or agreed 96 (26.6%) with the priority. A further 52 (14.4%) 'neither agreed nor disagreed' with the priority and only 7 (1.9%) and 5 (1.4%) either 'disagreed' or 'strongly disagreed', respectively.

Overall, it was felt that the results of the consultation indicated that the five identified priorities were largely supported.

**Figure 1: Survey responses to the five priorities**



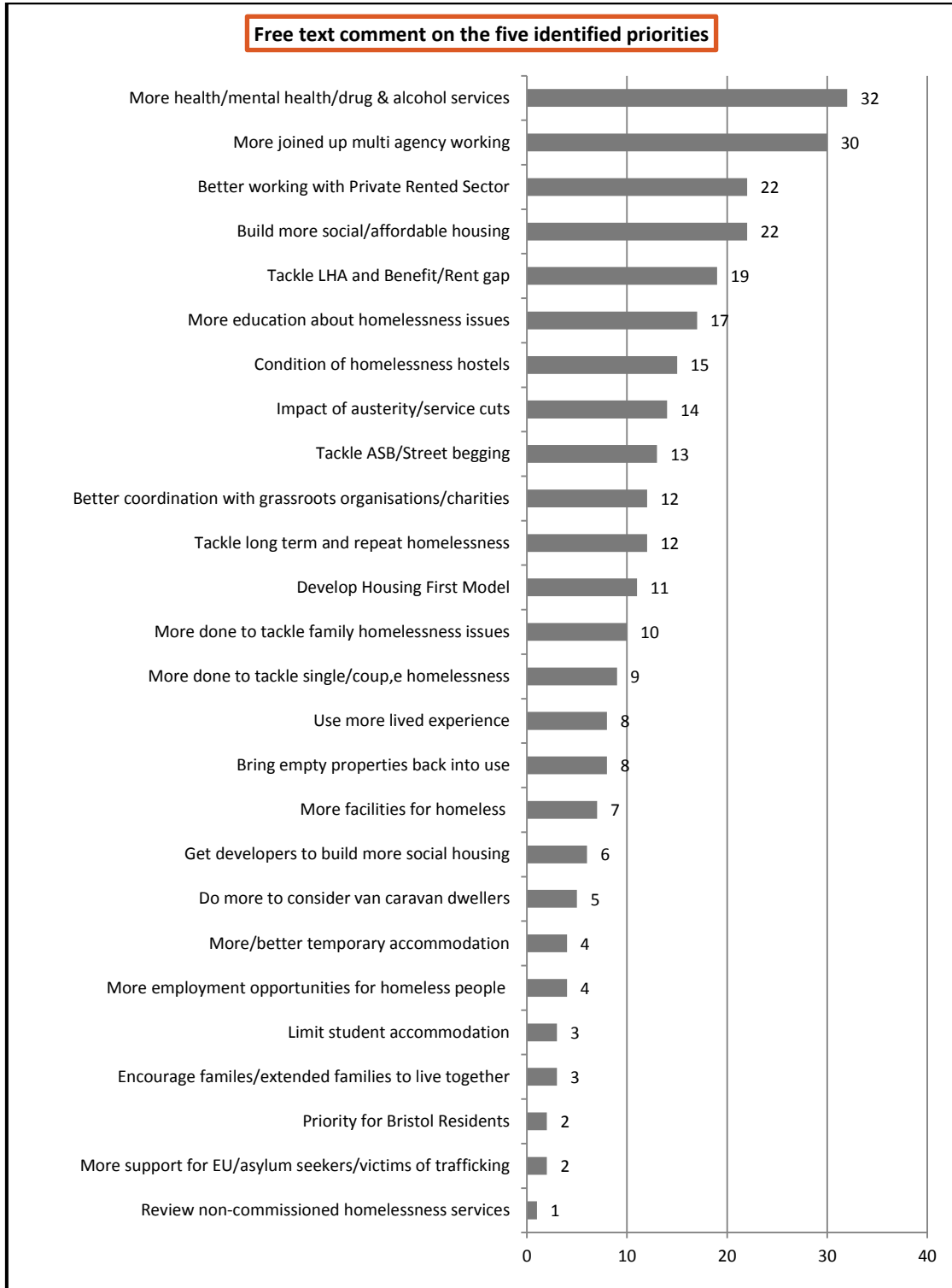
## **Question 2 - 'If you have any suggestions for other priorities, please provide them below'.**

This was a free text question which yielded 148 responses (39% of all respondents). Overwhelmingly, the comments did not state alternative priorities, but rather provided more detail on issues they felt needed to be prioritised/emphasised within the strategy and action plan. All of the comments made were grouped together, using qualitative content analysis, into a number of themes. This approach yielded 291 thematic comments (some responses covered more than one theme). A list of the themes raised is presented below:

- The need for more health/mental health and drug and alcohol support services (32 comments)
- The need for more partnership/joint working approaches to tackle homelessness (30 comments)
- The need for a greater supply of affordable housing (22 comments)
- Better working with/regulation of, the private rented sector (22 comments)
- Need to tackle the gap between LHA and private sector rents (19 comments)
- The need for more education/awareness raising of homelessness issues (17 comments)
- Issues raised about homeless hostels/shelters (ie. increasing the number of hostels available, concerns over the conditions of existing hostels, and questions about their flexibility – a number of people, for example, raised the issue that dogs should be allowed in hostels) (15 comments)
- Comments highlighting the negative impact of austerity/service cuts (14 comments)
- The need to tackle issues such as anti-social behaviour/begging on the streets (13 comments)
- More work needs to be done to tackle long term and repeat homelessness (12 comments)
- Better co-ordination with grassroots organisations/charities etc (12 comments)
- Develop a 'Housing First' Model (11 comments)
- More done to tackle family homelessness issues (10 comments)
- More done to tackle single/couple homelessness issues (9 comments)
- Engage more with actual homeless people/people with lived experience (8 comments)
- Bring empty properties back into use (8 comments)
- Make more facilities available for the homeless (showers, safety deposit boxes, postboxes etc) (7 comments)
- More working with/regulation of developers who do not build social housing (6 comments)
- Do more to consider needs of caravan/van dwellers (5 comments)
- More opportunities for homeless people (ie. employment and skills) (4 comments)
- More/better temporary accommodation (4 comments)
- Limit the growth of student accommodation (3 comments)
- Encourage families/extended families to live together (3 comments)

- More priority needs to be given to Bristol residents (2 comments)
- More support for EU citizens/Asylum Seekers/victims of trafficking etc (2 comments)
- Issues with some non-commissioned services (1 comment)

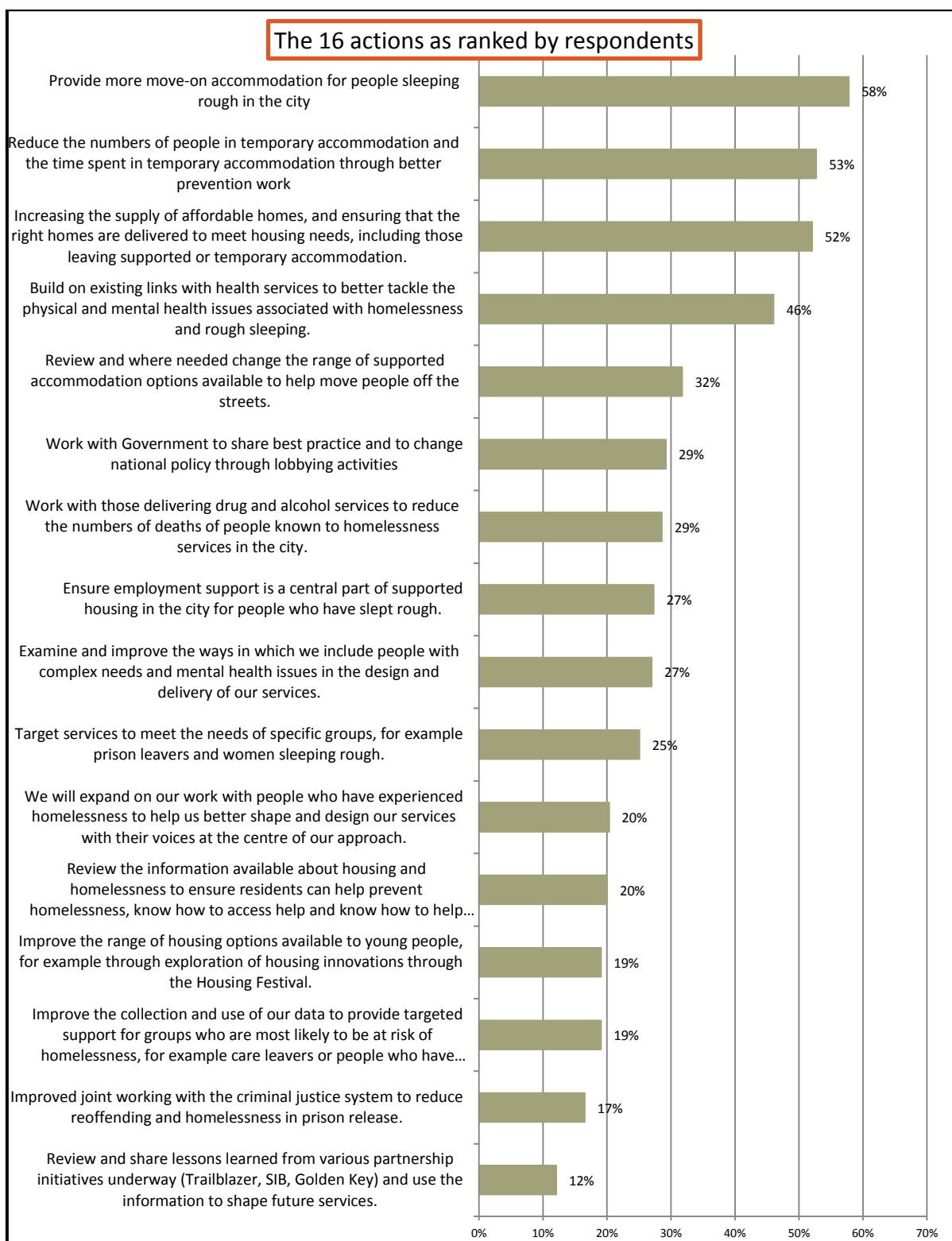
**Figure 2: Themed Free Text Comments on the five priorities**



### Question 3 - What actions do you think the city should focus on in order to reduce homelessness and rough sleeping in Bristol? (Please select your top five actions)

332 people responded to this question (88% of all respondents). 16 key actions were identified in the consultation document, and respondents were asked to identify their top five actions.

**Figure 3: Themed Comments on the 16 actions**



As can be seen the most popular actions to take forward were:

- Provide more move on accommodation for people sleeping rough
- Reduce the numbers in TA through prevention work and range of more affordable options
- Increasing the supply of affordable homes, and ensuring that the right homes are delivered to meet housing needs
- Build on existing links with health services
- Review and where needed change the range of supported accommodation options available

**Question 4 - If you have any suggestions for other actions, please provide them below:**

This was another free text question which yielded 102 responses (27% of all respondents). The additional comments were again grouped together, using qualitative content analysis, into a number of themes. This approach yielded a further 222 thematic comments. A list of the themes suggested by the comments is indicated below:

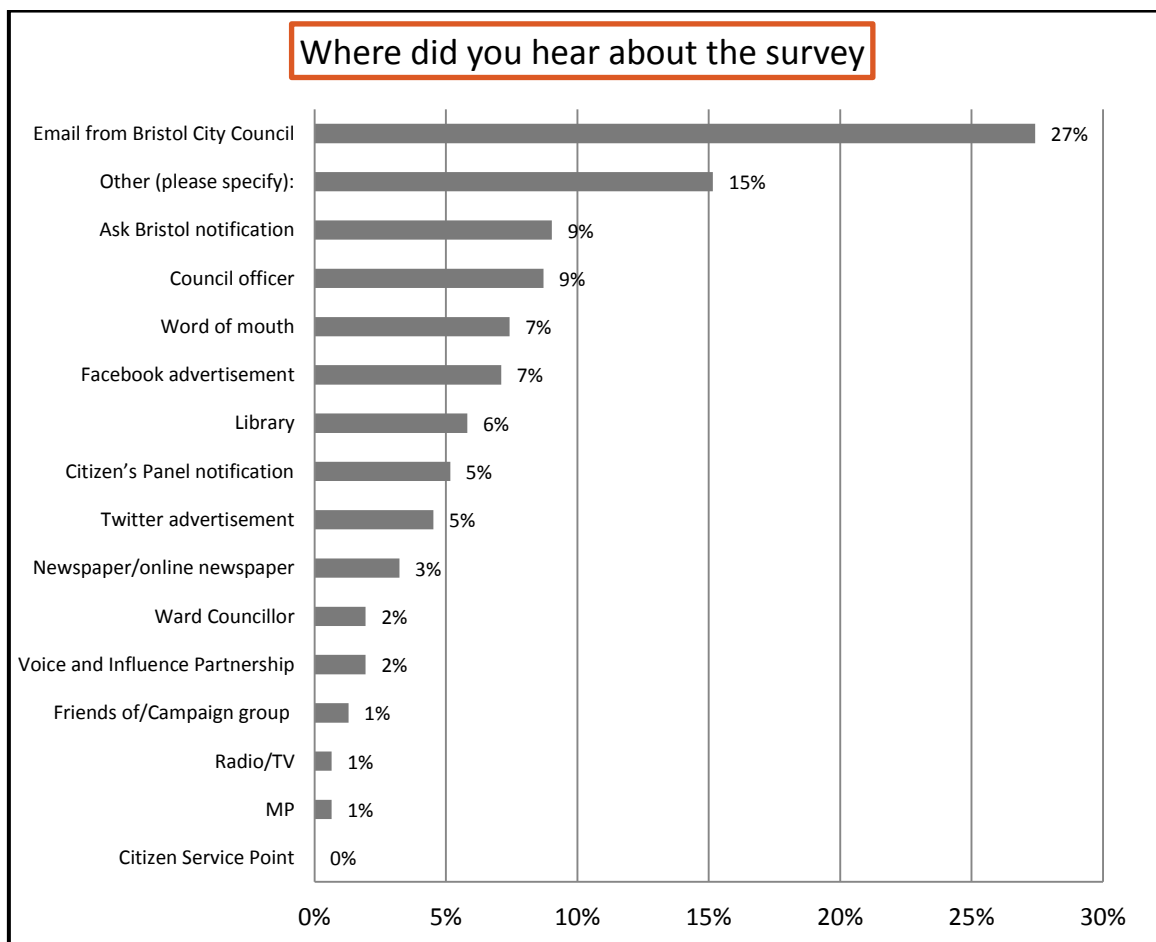
- The need for more partnership/joint working approaches to tackle homelessness (19 comments)
- A need to focus on health and wellbeing as well as relieving homelessness (18 comments)
- A need to review/reconsider existing services and approaches to tackling homelessness and rough sleeping (14 comments)
- An emphasis on doing more to tackle street homelessness (13 comments)
- Lack of affordability in housing (13 comments)
- Increase the supply of social housing (12 comments)
- More support/funding for drug and alcohol related services (11 comments)
- Need for more employment/social activity/skills training opportunities for homeless people (11 comments)
- A focus on prevention and early intervention activities (10 comments)
- Increase Housing First supply (9 comments)
- Supply container/quick build options (8 comments)
- Expensive poor quality PRS (8 comments)
- Tackle LHA/Rent cap issues (7 comments)
- Issues raised over the suitability of existing hostel and refuge accommodation (7 comments)
- Improve data collection (7 comments)
- All actions identified are important (7 comments)
- Co-design services with service users (6 comments)
- Focus on effective move on (6 comments)
- Bring empty properties back into use (6 comments)
- Joined up council services required (5 comments)
- Improve TA options (5 comments)

- Tackle street begging and anti-social behaviour (4 comments)
- More lobbying of central government to make changes to national policies (4 comments)
- Action plan required (4 comments)
- There needs to be a focus on Bristol residents (2 comments)
- Address equality issues (2 comments)
- Do more for people facing prison release (2 comments)
- Do more for homeless veterans (1 comment)
- Do more to support people with caravans (1 comment)

Again, it was felt that a number of these responses were already identified in the priorities of the strategy and high level action plan, particularly the priorities on prevention and early intervention, working in partnership and the focus on improving health and wellbeing (including employment and skills). The comments will be taken into account when revising the action plan which will accompany the strategy.

## 7. How did you hear about the survey

Figure 4: Where did you hear about the survey – responses



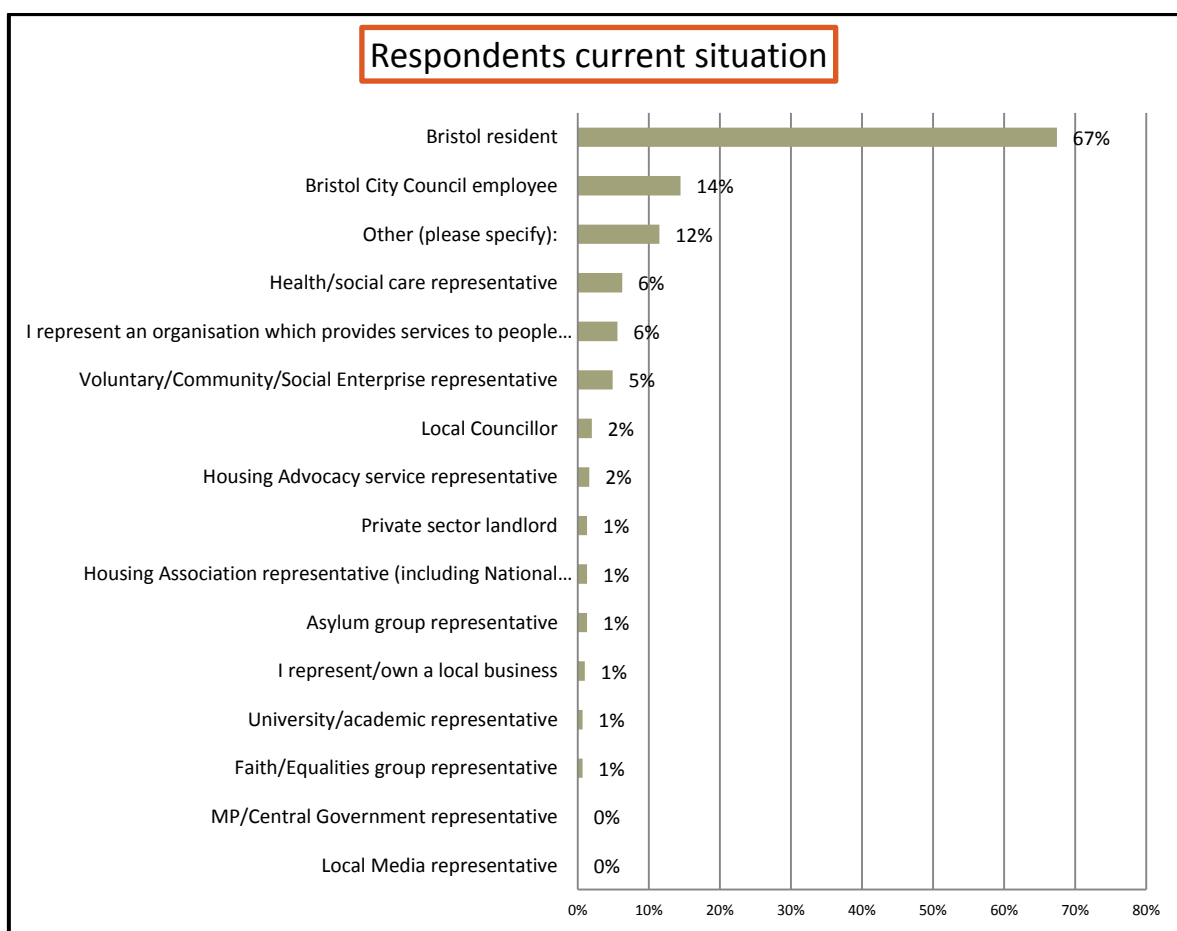
There were 315 responses to this question (84% of respondents). The most common way that people heard about the consultation was via an email from Bristol City Council - 85 responses (27%). As noted, the Council sent out an email alerting some 3,500 previous

service users of the consultation, as well as an email to many key stakeholders in the city (who were asked to recirculate the email to their colleagues).

The second most common method was 'Other' - 49 responses (15%). A breakdown of this category indicates that 11 respondents heard about the consultation through their workplace, and a further 11 as a result of the pre-consultation discussions we had with stakeholders. The remainder identified that they had heard of the consultation through a variety of networks, or through publicity provided either by the Council or by the local media.

## 8. In what capacity are you responding

Figure 5: In what capacity are you responding to the survey – responses



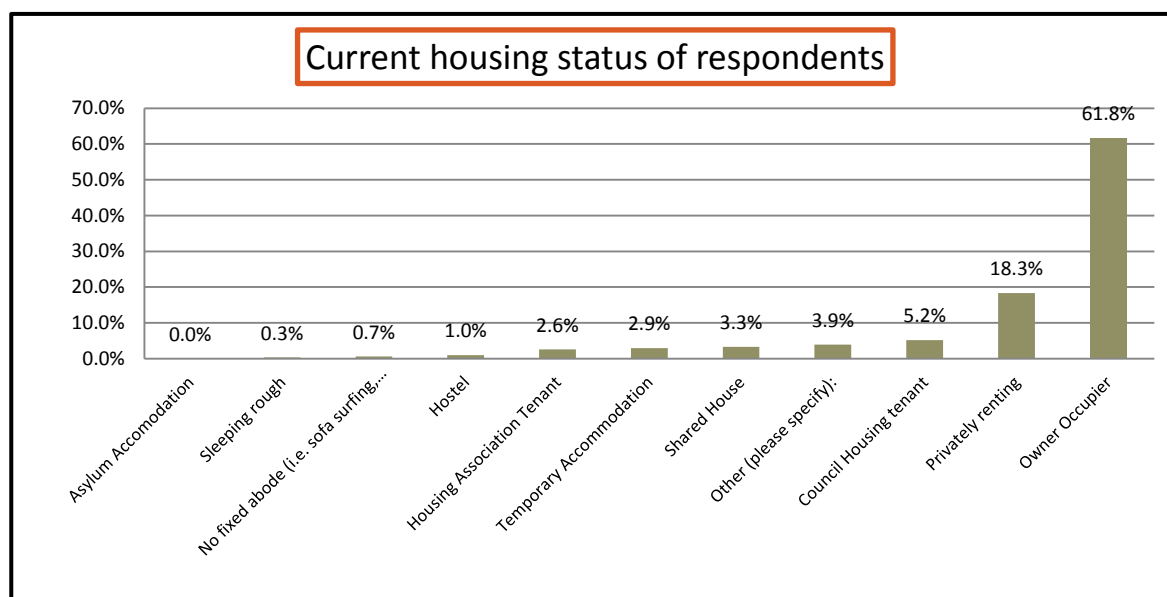
310 people responded to this question (82% of all respondents). The majority of respondents (210 or 67%) simply identified themselves as 'Bristol Residents'. Bristol City Council Staff - 44 respondents (14%) were the second most common category.

The 'Other' category – 35 respondents (12%) featured a range of responses, some of whom identified as living with family/friends, considered themselves at risk of becoming homeless or were living in supported accommodation.



## 9. Current housing status

**Figure 6: Current housing status of respondents to survey**



312 people responded to this question (82% of all respondents). People who identified as owner occupiers were the most common category of respondents – 191 respondents (61%). A further 57 (18%) identified as private renters. 17 respondents (5%) identified as Council Housing tenants and a further 10 (2.6%) as Housing Association tenants. Collectively, 15 (4.9%) respondents identified as either sleeping rough/no fixed abode/living in Hostels or living in temporary accommodation.

## 10. Equalities Characteristics of Respondents

The table below highlights the survey responses to each equalities related question in both actual numbers and the percentage of the total number of responses to that question. The final column highlights a comparison with citywide averages, where known. For example, 12.6% of survey respondents identified as being within the 35-44 age range, which is very close to the proportion of people aged between 35-44 within the Bristol population as a whole (13%).

**Figure 7: Equalities Characteristics of Respondents**

	Respondent Characteristic	Number of Survey responses	% of Survey responses	Citywide % (if known)
Age (318 responses)	16-17 year old	0	0	2
	18-24	22	6.9	14
	25-34	61	16.2	20
	35-44	40	12.6	13
	45-54	69	21.7	11
	55-64	65	20.4	9
	65-74	36	11.3	7
	75-84	12	3.8	4

	85+	2	0.6	2
	Prefer not to say	11	3.5	-
Disability (316 responses)	Yes	34	10.8	16.7
	No	263	83.2	83.3
	Prefer not to say	19	6.0	-
Sex (317 responses)	Female	196	61.8	49.9
	Male	100	31.6	51.1
	Prefer not to say	20	6.3	-
	Other	1	0.3	-
Gender reassignment (314 responses)	Yes	4	1.3	-
	No	294	93.6	-
	Prefer not to say	16	5.1	-
Ethnicity (318 responses)	White British	244	76.7	77.9
	White Irish	5	1.6	0.9
	White Other	22	6.9	5.1
	Black/African/Caribbean/Black British	7	2.2	6.0
	Asian/Asian British	3	0.9	4.5
	Mixed/Multi Ethnic Group	8	2.5	3.6
	Gypsy/Roma/Irish Traveller	2	0.6	0.1
	Prefer not to say	21	6.6	-
	Any Other Ethnic Background	6	1.9	0.9
Sexuality (314 responses)	Bisexual			5-7
	Gay Man			
	Gay Woman/Lesbian			
	Heterosexual/Straight	249	79.3	93-95
	Prefer not to say	40	12.7	-
	Other	3	0.9	-
Religion/Faith (317 responses)	No religion	172	54.3	37.4
	Buddhist	7	2.2	0.6
	Christian	92	29	46.8
	Hindu	1	0.3	0.6
	Jewish	0	0	0.2
	Muslim	4	1.3	5.1
	Pagan	2	0.6	-
	Sikh	0	0	0.5
	Prefer not to say	22	6.9	8.1
	Other	17	5.3	0.7
Pregnant in last 26 weeks (314 responses)	Yes	8	2.5	-
	No	285	90.8	-
	Prefer not to say	21	6.7	-
Refugee or asylum seeker (313 responses)	Yes	3	0.9	-
	No	294	93.9	-
	Prefer not to say	16	5.1	-

## **Age**

318 people responded to this question (84% of respondents). A broad range of age groups who responded to the survey, with the 45-54 age group being the most common (69 respondents - 22%), but with significant input also from the 55-64 age group (65 respondents or 20%) and the 25-34 age group (61 respondents or 19%). There was also a good response from the 35-44 (40 respondents or 13%) and 65-74 age groups (36 respondents or 11%).

In terms of their relative proportion in the Bristol population as a whole, the 45-54 age group were overrepresented in the survey – comprising only around 11% of the Bristol population. The 55-64 age group (9% of Bristol population) and the 65-74 age group (7% of Bristol population) were also overrepresented in the survey.

The number of respondents in the 25-34 age group was in line with their relative proportion in the Bristol population as a whole, as was the 35-44 age group. The 18-24 population was underrepresented, comprising around 7% of survey respondents but around 14% of Bristol residents as a whole. There were no recorded responses from 16-17 year olds, who comprise around 2% of the Bristol population.

## **Disability**

316 people responded to this question (83% of all respondents). 34 (11%) of respondents identified themselves as 'disabled'. This is lower than the proportion of Bristol residents who stated that their 'day-to-day activities are limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months' in the 2011 census, which was 16.7%.

## **Sex**

317 people responded to this question (84% of respondents). Twice as many women as men responded to the survey – 196 female compared to 100 male respondents. This is disproportionate to women's representation within the Bristol population as a whole – which is broadly a 50/50 split between male and female. The results were cross tabulated examining whether gender made a difference to the responses, but no major differences in responses were noted.

## **Gender Reassignment**

Respondents were asked if they had/or intended to go through a gender reassignment process. 314 people responded to this question (63 skipped). 4 people (1.2%) stated that they had/or intended to go through a gender re-assignment process.

## **Ethnicity**

318 people responded to this question (84% of all respondents). The majority (244 respondents or 76.5%) identified themselves as 'white British', which is close to the citywide figure of 78%. The 'non-white British' survey respondents comprised, in total, 53 (17%), which is lower than the 22% noted for the city as whole.

## **Refugee or Asylum Seeker**

Respondents were also asked if they were a refugee or asylum seeker. 313 people responded to this question (64 skipped). 3 respondents (0.9%) identified as being a refugee or asylum seeker.

### **Sexuality**

314 people responded to this question (83% of all respondents). The majority of survey respondents identified as heterosexual/straight (249 or 79.5%). Some 22 respondents (7%) identified as either bisexual or as a gay man or woman.

There's very little reliable data about the size of the LGBT population, but government estimates range between 5-7% of the population of England and Wales and these results are in line with that estimate.

### **Religious Belief**

317 people responded to this question (84% of all respondents). The majority of identified as having no religion (172 respondents or 55%), with 'Christian' being the second most common response (92 or 29%). Responses from other faith groups were relatively low, with 7 (2%) identifying as Buddhist, 4 (1%) Muslim and 2 (1%) Pagan. The 'Other' category (17 respondents or 5%) featured people who identified themselves, for example, as 'spiritual but not religious', Quaker, Sufi or Taoist.

When compared to results derived from the 2011 census, only 37% identified themselves as having 'no religion', therefore people with no stated religious belief were overrepresented in the survey results. Buddhists were also slightly overrepresented as they constituted around 0.6% of the Bristol population in the 2011 census.

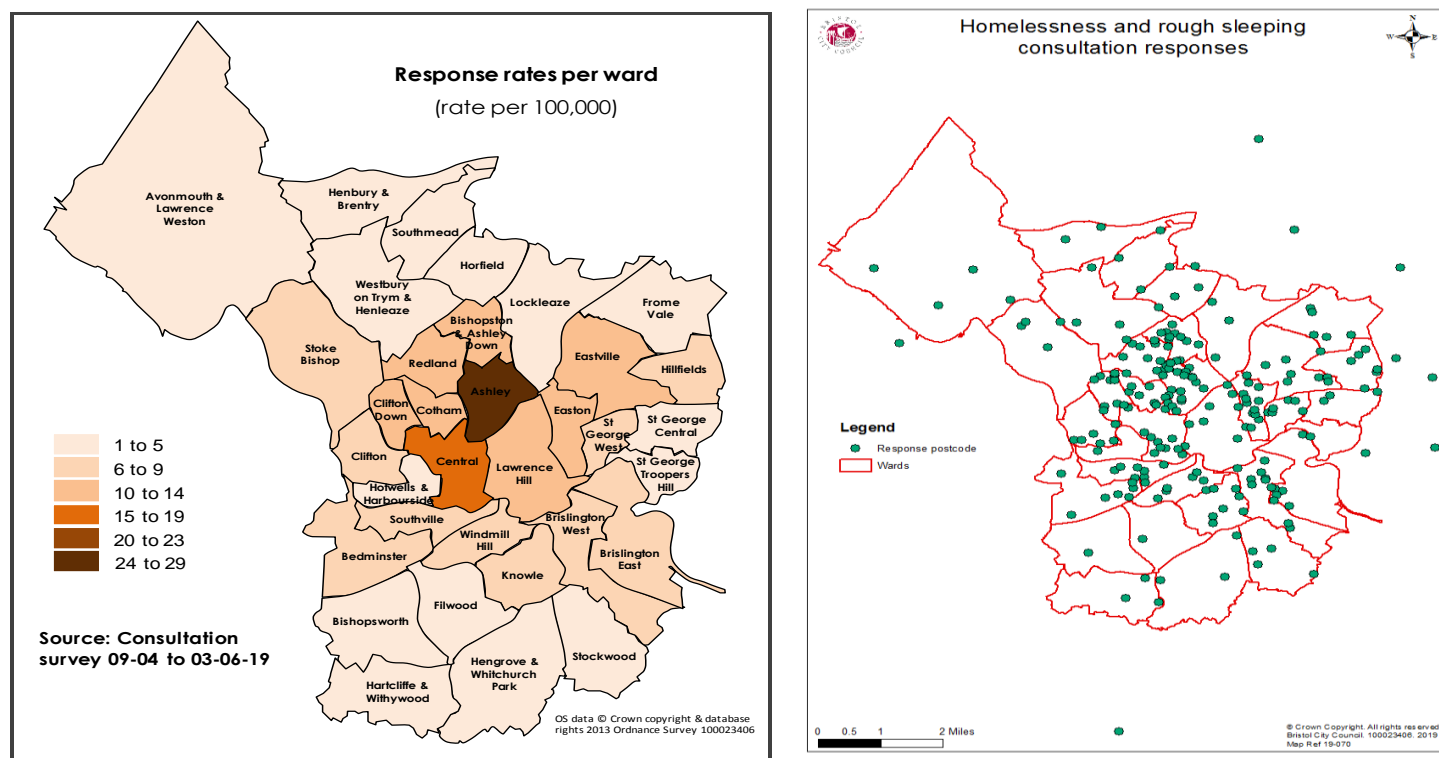
Christians and Muslims were under-represented, constituting 46.8% and 5.1% of the Bristol population respectively in the 2011 census.

### **Pregnant within the last 26 weeks**

Respondants were asked whether they were pregnant or had given birth in the last 26 weeks. 314 people responded to this question. 8 respondents (2.5%) stated that they were pregnant or had given birth in the last 26 weeks.

## 11. Response Rates by Geographical Area

Figure 13: Response rates per ward (overall responses per ward and dot map of postcodes)



285 people provided their postcodes for this question (75% of all respondents). Ashley and Central wards saw the highest response rate, and other central wards saw higher response rates than wards closer to the edges of the city.

## 12. Other Consultation Responses/Additional Research

### Submission from Places for People Living+

In May 2019 we received a written response to our consultation from Places for People Living+. This was submitted to our strategy e-mail address and not via the online consultation. In brief, the submission stated that:

- Partnership working by all agencies is the only way to support individuals who are Rough Sleeping. One provider cannot support all aspects of a complex individual in recovery.
- Commissioners need to outline expectations with housing providers, particularly with respect to addressing refusals on risk grounds for more complex individuals who are presenting as homeless.
- Some statutory services have highly ring-fenced services and will not necessarily step in early, if services are already being offered by other organisations. This fractures early action and intervention in many cases.
- Universal Credit is placing immense pressure on the most vulnerable in the city, delaying payments and increasing rent arrears. Evictions are inevitable in both private and social housing.

- Rough Sleepers need to be identified via Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) with some form of notification/warning system highlighting when an applicant may have difficulties in maintaining their claim.
- Individuals should be allowed a 12 week period from making their initial application up to attending their first required appointment. This could increase access to internet services and allow some form of support to be put in place to reduce potential sanctions.
- Wished to see a greater supply of social housing but also more support services dealing with trauma/Adverse Childhood Experiences/drug and alcohol issues.
- Wished to see more control of private sector landlords who are charging rents which are unachievable for many people in recovery.
- Wished to see more support for the revolving Rough Sleeping population, who are often the most at risk due to health or prolonged drug/alcohol use.
- Wished to see a variety of drop in locations and a varied timetable of outreach/Social Impact Bond activity to access hard to reach individuals and offer them support to get off the streets

### **West of England Combined Authority (WECA)**

In May 2019, the West of England Combined Authority (WECA) submitted a statement to Bristol City Council stating that they:

- Strongly support Bristol's strategy for tackling homelessness and rough sleeping via a combination of partnership working and preventative measures
- That they agreed with the five priorities and key objectives
- That the city-wide approach to reducing rough sleeping is an excellent approach with the potential to be extended across the WoE sub-region, as it is understood that Bristol may act as a magnet for those who are street homeless in the neighbouring areas, drawn into the city because of the services it provides.
- WECA would support exploring opportunities for further cross boundary working on this issue.

### **Quality of Life Survey 2018**

In addition to the responses to the Strategy survey, we also took into account comments made during other Bristol City Council consultations. For example, we considered comments from the 2018 Quality of Life Survey.

In 2018 the annual Bristol Quality of Life survey was mailed to 29,000 Bristol residents, including a follow up mailing with paper survey option, and a third phase to boost numbers from low responding groups. There were approx. 3,800 responses to the survey (with 3,500 final "usable responses" with all required fields). The survey was open for two months (Sept – Oct 2018) to residents aged 16 and over in selected households. The methodology used was a return to seeking a robust randomised sample of the population, following a 2017 'self-selecting' methodology.

In the 2018 survey an open text question was asked: "What action or change do you feel would most improve your overall quality of life in Bristol?" Almost 3,500 responses were given, with over 5,600 issues raised.

In terms of responses to housing related issues - the biggest concern raised was the perceived increase in homelessness witnessed through an increase in numbers of rough sleepers and street begging in the city. The majority of comments were sympathetic and asked for the provision of relevant support (eg housing plus drug/alcohol, mental health). People were less understanding of the rise in caravans/vehicles being used as permanent accommodation. Some respondents were critical of the waste, hygiene and/or behavioural issues of “van dwellers”, while others raised parking issues or the negative impact that the vehicles have on their street/neighbourhood.

### **Rough Sleeping Encampments Policy Consultation**

The Rough Sleeping Encampments Policy Consultation took place between 29 June 2018 and 26 August 2018 and sought views from the public (including businesses and organisations which represent non-domestic rate payers) about the draft policy.

545 responses were received to the Rough Sleeping Encampments survey via online and paper-based surveys. The consultation was focused on the issue of rough sleeping encampments (any tent, shelter, temporary structure and/or collection of bedding and belongings on a specific area of Council owned land). However, there were also open questions, whereby people could give their opinion on the wider issue of homelessness within Bristol. Question 3, for example, asked if people had any other comments or suggestions about the Rough Sleeping Encampments Policy. A number of the responses touched on issues of relevance to the revised homelessness strategy, including:

- It was felt that not enough is being done to address rough sleeping (66 comments)
- It was felt that there needed to be more accommodation made available to address rough sleeping in the city (50 comments)
- It was felt that there was not enough support services available for people sleeping rough (28 comments)
- More needs to be done to address substance misuse (18 comments)
- It was felt that support services did not have enough capacity to cope with the demand for services (16 comments)
- It was stated that we should do whatever we can to help people sleeping rough (15 comments)
- It was stated that more mental health support needs to be provided (10 comments)
- It was noted that there was a perception that homeless shelters were unsafe (5 comments)
- It was noted that there were problems with some service providers (5 comments)

Overall, it was felt that the comments made were broadly in keeping with the comments made in the Homelessness Strategy Consultation.

### **Local Government Information Unit (LGIU) Homelessness Commission: Final Report**

This [report](#), which was published in June 2019, provides an assessment of the state of homelessness prevention from the perspective of local government. Bristol City Council took part in the Commission’s research, and our Homelessness Prevention Trailblazer service, which offers early interventions to those identified as at risk of homelessness, featured as a



case study in the final report. The report makes a number of recommendations (primarily to central government) which expand upon a number of the issues raised during our own consultation on this issue:

- A sustainable housing and homelessness strategy, with adequate funding - the government should commit itself to a coherent, combined housing and homelessness strategy with sustainable funding for local authorities to put preventative programmes in place. This must include a firm commitment beyond the 2020 deadline for new burdens funding<sup>2</sup>.
- Local variation of housing allowance - In many parts of the country Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates are well below local market rents. Local government should, therefore, have the power to vary Local Housing Allowance rates to better reflect local housing market conditions.
- Private Rented Sector - To address instability and uncertainty in the private rented sector, the government should introduce minimum three year tenancies. In return, the importance of good landlords should be acknowledged and they should be supported to stay in the market. This would provide greater long-term security and stability for people renting private sector housing.
- A homelessness prevention toolkit, designed around the needs of local government - To build a homelessness prevention toolkit for councils, the government should invest in a project to identify what information local government needs, particularly from central government departments, where the information is held, and what would make it most useful for preventing homelessness. The project should be led by councils and based on the experience of council staff and service users.

### **13. How will this report be used?**

This report will be taken into account to develop the draft strategy and action plan further before they are considered by Cabinet for approval in September 2019. Further detail on how the responses to the consultation have shaped the draft strategy and action plan is indicated in Appendix 1.

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<sup>2</sup> Central government has provided additional funding (known as ‘new burdens funding’) to local authorities to help meet the cost of the new homelessness duties that were introduced by the Homelessness Reduction Act. This additional funding is currently available up until 2020.

## Appendix 1: What will we do with the feedback from the consultation?

A significant majority of respondents ‘strongly agreed’ or ‘agreed’ with the five priorities identified in the Strategy, so we are not proposing any change to these priorities.

However, some changes have been made to the key objectives under each priority in the draft Strategy in response to the most commonly raised issues. More specific recommendations will also be taken into account when revising the action plan. How a number of the comments have been incorporated into the draft Strategy and action plan is indicated below:

You Said	Our Response
<p><b>Top five actions to prioritise are (according to survey feedback):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Provide more ‘move on’<sup>3</sup> accommodation for people sleeping rough</b></li> <li>○ <b>Reduce the numbers in TA through prevention work and range of more affordable options</b></li> <li>○ <b>Increasing the supply of affordable homes, and ensuring that the right homes are delivered to meet housing needs</b></li> <li>○ <b>Build on existing links with health services</b></li> <li>○ <b>Review and where needed change the range of supported accommodation options available</b></li> </ul>	<p>These top actions have been prioritised in the draft action plan, along with a number of measures to monitor progress against these priorities.</p>
<p><b>It was felt that there was a need for more partnership/joint working approaches to tackle homelessness. A number of comments also highlighted the need for better co-ordination with grassroots organisations/charities etc.</b></p>	<p>This has been reflected in the draft Strategy. There is a priority dedicated to ‘Working in Partnership’ and an overarching commitment to take a ‘one-city approach’ and work closely with partner organisations across the city to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping.</p> <p>A number of actions have also been identified under the Working in Partnership priority in the draft action plan</p>
<p><b>It was felt that there was a need for more health/mental health and drug and alcohol support services</b></p>	<p>This has been reflected in the draft Strategy. There is a priority dedicated to ‘Improving Health and Wellbeing’ and under the key</p>

<sup>3</sup> Move on accommodation provides a stepping stone between hostel type accommodation and more independent living.

objectives are commitments to ‘work with those delivering drug and alcohol services to ensure joined-up support for people is in place and to reduce the deaths of people known to homelessness services in the city’. It is also a key objective to ‘increase access to mental health support and improve advice and training for staff working with complex needs clients to create ‘psychologically informed environments’ within all homelessness services’.

Better linkages between homelessness prevention services, drug and alcohol and mental health services is identified as an action in the draft action plan

**It was suggested that there is a need for better working with/regulation of, the private rented sector and a need to tackle the difference between local housing allowance and average private sector rents**

This has been reflected in the draft Strategy. Under the ‘Working in Partnership’ priority, there is a key objective to ‘address the gap between Local Housing Allowance (LHA) and private sector rents by building relationships with landlords to increase the supply of affordable rented accommodation in the city’.

**That the Council needs to build more social housing to alleviate homelessness**

This has been reflected in the draft Strategy and action plan, under as a key objective of the ‘Working in Partnership’ priority.

Working with our partners, Bristol City Council has set up a council-owned housing company to accelerate the development of new homes and communities in Bristol and beyond.

We are also working closely with our West of England partners. The Joint Spatial Plan for the West of England will deliver a step-change in housing delivery of all tenures with a target of 24,500 Affordable Homes, and the four Unitary Authorities have recognised the need to work across administrative boundaries to meet the needs of the Greater Bristol area.

**It was felt there was a need for more education/awareness raising of homelessness issues**

This has been reflected in the draft Strategy. Under the key objectives for the ‘Prevention and Early Intervention’ priority are commitments to ‘change perceptions and expectations of homelessness services

	<p>among members of the public through an effective communication plan, increasing the effectiveness of prevention through understanding the realities of the services available, including reducing stigma'. In addition, there is a commitment to 'tackle the causes of homelessness by influencing local, national and regional policies, strategies and approaches, including through campaigning'.</p>
<p><b>That the strategy/action plan needs to address long term/repeat homelessness</b></p>	<p>This has been reflected in the draft Strategy. Under the key objectives for both the 'Prevention and Early Intervention' and 'Improving Health and Wellbeing' there is a commitment to reducing long term and repeat homelessness.</p>
<p><b>It was suggested that the city adopt a Housing First approach to tackling homelessness and rough sleeping.</b></p> <p><b>A 'Housing First' approach is designed for those who have been homeless for a long time or those who repeatedly end up homeless. They are offered housing as a first priority – this is then followed up with additional intensive support, to help the address other needs and help them to maintain their tenancy.</b></p>	<p>This has been reflected in the draft Strategy under the Tackling Rough Sleeping priority. A key objective is to 'build on existing work with our partner organisations to develop a 'Housing First' approach for homeless people with the highest level of need'.</p>
<p><b>It was suggested that we engage more with people with lived experience of homelessness</b></p>	<p>This has been reflected in the draft Strategy under the Health and Wellbeing priority, there is a key objective to 'make effective use of clients with lived experience to shape our services' and under the Delivering Equality and Diversity priority, there is a key objective to 'work with people with lived experience of homelessness - to provide a more personalised, inclusive approach to the overall quality of the services provided'.</p> <p>There is an action to 'Examine and improve the way we involve people with lived experience including those with complex needs and mental health issues in the way we design our services' in the draft action plan.</p>
<p><b>There were a number of comments highlighting the negative impact of austerity/service cuts</b></p>	<p>We share these concerns. The draft Strategy does highlight the impact that wider socio-economic changes and welfare reform have had on homelessness and rough sleeping in</p>

the city.

However, Bristol has been successful in securing additional Central Government funding for a range of homelessness initiatives, such as a Rough Sleeper Initiative award of around £580,000 – which led to the opening of Bristol’s first 24 hour shelter in St Annes and the Private Rented Sector Access Fund (£400,000) which promotes tenancy sustainment where private landlords deliver high quality accommodation.

It is anticipated that the revised Homelessness Strategy will allow us to continue to bid for funding for such initiatives.

**There is a need to bring more empty properties back into use**

Every year, hundreds of empty homes are being brought back into use in the city, helping to manage the high housing need.

The city council wants to improve access to decent affordable housing by encouraging the owners of empty properties to bring these much needed homes back into occupation. During 2017/18 we brought 381 previously empty private sector homes back into occupation.

**There needs to be a way for residents to let the Council know about someone who they see sleeping rough**

This service already exists. You can report someone sleeping rough via [Streetlink](#). You will need to sign up to Streetlink in order to use the service. You can also call StreetLink on 0300 500 0914 (freephone). Lines are open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Further information about homelessness services in the city can also be found on the Bristol City Council [website](#) and at [Bristol Homeless Connect](#).