



# Social Housing Allocation Policy Consultation Report 2024

A consultation process has been completed regarding the proposed changes to the Social Housing Allocation Policy. The consultation ran from 5<sup>th</sup> August 2024 to 20<sup>th</sup> October 2024, 11 weeks in total. The process aimed to:

- Be legally compliant;
- Promote and raise understanding of the policy to residents, partners and other stakeholders;
- Gather valuable insight in a range of ways, from a representative cross-section of residents, partners and other stakeholders to inform the final version of the policy.

The following design principles have been used:

- To be proportionate to requirements;
- Provide 'self-serve' digital feedback options to participate in the consultation, for the convenience of residents and partners;
- Provide for easy read and inclusive consultation approaches where required;
- Using existing networks of groups and partnerships;
- Enable opportunities for providing structured views and responses to open dialogue, where required.

## Methodology

A copy of the draft policy was published on the Hillingdon Council website with a link to an electronic survey form and offer to provide the survey in different formats and translations, on request. Paper copies of the survey could also be requested and were made available in the housing needs reception, at the Civic Centre.

The survey has been promoted via various channels, including the Hillingdon People magazine, e-newsletters, local media and the council's social media channels with a link to the survey form. Posters with a QR code link to the survey have been placed in council buildings, libraries and housing estates.

A range of partner organisations have been written to directly, inviting their comments on the draft policy and directing them to the online consultation. These include:

- Housing and support providers.
- All schools, colleges and universities.
- Existing community groups, faith groups.
- Voluntary sector networks.
- Neighbouring local authorities.

The Customer Engagement Team reached out directly to residents who had previously expressed interest in participating in council-run surveys. This initial contact was followed by an invitation extended to all residents' associations, encouraging their participation.

Consultation meetings have been held with Children's Social Care, Leaving Care Team, Housing Managers and front-line housing staff. A consultation event was also held on 18<sup>th</sup> October 2024 in order to gain active engagement and interaction with residents, with a question-and-answer session.

The council's Residents' Services Select Committee were invited to comment on the proposed changes and the consultation process at their meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> September 2024. Some useful feedback was received which resulted in the consultation period being extended by an extra week and the two sessions for residents being included on the 18<sup>th</sup> October 2024. These have allowed for a richer qualitative response through conversations with residents to add to the quantitative data.

## Consultation results

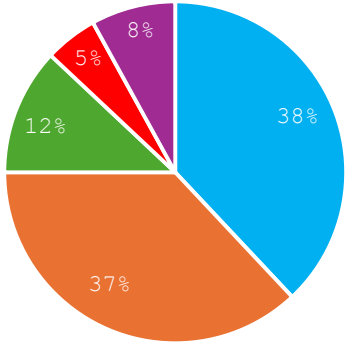
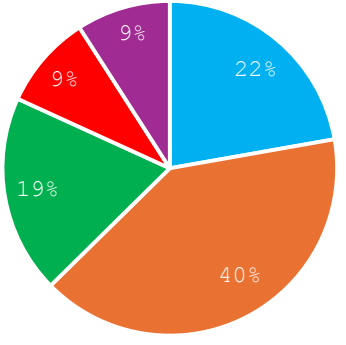
The consultation was promoted across the council's social media channels, including Facebook, Instagram, X/Twitter, and Nextdoor. Each post detailed the proposed changes and included a direct link to the consultation webpage for residents to provide their input. Facebook experienced the highest engagement compared to other channels. In the final week of the consultation, two posts were boosted to further increase reach.

### Social Media

Channel	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8	Total
Facebook (clicks)	2632	362	2567	397	32	743	197	156	<b>7086</b>
Instagram (reach)	925	750	1119	1196	921	495	411	738	<b>6555</b>
X/Twitter (views)	666	637	592	453	565	485	384	389	<b>4171</b>
Nextdoor	2614				2859				<b>5473</b>
Hillingdon People e-newsletter	97 clicks on 18 <sup>th</sup> October 2024								<b>97</b>

## Online Survey Results

There were a total of 373 responses to the online survey.

1. Do you agree that we should move from 4 bands to 14 bands to make it clearer where your and others' priority is on the housing register	Strongly agree	38%	 <table border="1"> <caption>Data for Question 1 Pie Chart</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Response</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Strongly agree</td> <td>38%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Agree</td> <td>37%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Neutral</td> <td>12%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Disagree</td> <td>5%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Strongly disagree</td> <td>8%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Response	Percentage	Strongly agree	38%	Agree	37%	Neutral	12%	Disagree	5%	Strongly disagree	8%
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Strongly disagree	8%														
Of those agreeing with this question 79% have lived in the borough for over 10 years.															
2. Additional comments	<p>There were numerous respondents who mentioned favourably the 10-year residency criteria. Some thought 14 Bands was too many and were concerned that it meant being a lower priority and would be confusing. Others were in favour of the 14 bands to provide greater clarity over relative priority.</p>														
3. Do you agree with the priority order	Strongly agree	22%	 <table border="1"> <caption>Data for Question 3 Pie Chart</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Response</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Strongly agree</td> <td>22%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Agree</td> <td>40%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Neutral</td> <td>19%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Disagree</td> <td>9%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Strongly disagree</td> <td>9%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Response	Percentage	Strongly agree	22%	Agree	40%	Neutral	19%	Disagree	9%	Strongly disagree	9%
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4. If you don't agree with the proposed order of priorities for rehousing, please provide further information on your reasons for this.	<p>Some respondents wanted to see some housing being made available for working households on low incomes. Again, there is considerable support for prioritising those with a long living and working attachment to the borough. There is some support for higher priority for overcrowding and for medical conditions. There is some concern about older being forced to give up their family homes. This isn't included in the policy, but the policy does give a high priority for those that choose to downsize. Incentives are available for this.</p>														

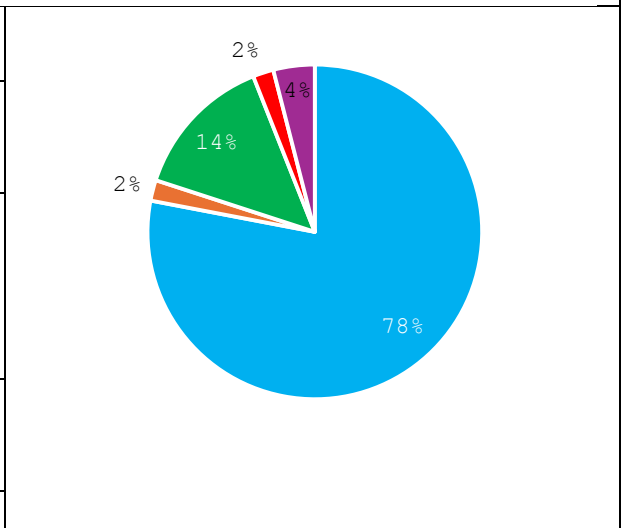
<p>5. Do you agree with the change in additional priority categories to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ten years or more continuous residency in Hillingdon</li> <li>• Members of the British Armed Forces who have continuously resided in the borough for ten years or more prior to signing up for the service and have not been dishonourably discharged</li> </ul>	<table border="1"> <tr><td>Strongly agree</td><td>40%</td></tr> <tr><td>Agree</td><td>35%</td></tr> <tr><td>Neutral</td><td>12%</td></tr> <tr><td>Disagree</td><td>6%</td></tr> <tr><td>Strongly disagree</td><td>6%</td></tr> </table>	Strongly agree	40%	Agree	35%	Neutral	12%	Disagree	6%	Strongly disagree	6%	<table border="1"> <caption>Data for Question 5 Pie Chart</caption> <thead> <tr><th>Response</th><th>Percentage</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>Strongly agree</td><td>40%</td></tr> <tr><td>Agree</td><td>35%</td></tr> <tr><td>Neutral</td><td>12%</td></tr> <tr><td>Disagree</td><td>6%</td></tr> <tr><td>Strongly disagree</td><td>6%</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Response	Percentage	Strongly agree	40%	Agree	35%	Neutral	12%	Disagree	6%	Strongly disagree	6%
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<p>6. Do you agree with the Band change for these priority groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vulnerable care experienced young people (care leavers)</li> <li>• People moving on from social care supported accommodation</li> <li>• Vulnerable single people moving on from homeless supported accommodation based on a recommendation of a social letting from the Single Homeless Move On Panel</li> </ul>	<table border="1"> <tr><td>Strongly agree</td><td>26%</td></tr> <tr><td>Agree</td><td>38%</td></tr> <tr><td>Neutral</td><td>26%</td></tr> <tr><td>Disagree</td><td>6%</td></tr> <tr><td>Strongly disagree</td><td>4%</td></tr> </table>	Strongly agree	26%	Agree	38%	Neutral	26%	Disagree	6%	Strongly disagree	4%	<table border="1"> <caption>Data for Question 6 Pie Chart</caption> <thead> <tr><th>Response</th><th>Percentage</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>Strongly agree</td><td>26%</td></tr> <tr><td>Agree</td><td>38%</td></tr> <tr><td>Neutral</td><td>26%</td></tr> <tr><td>Disagree</td><td>6%</td></tr> <tr><td>Strongly disagree</td><td>4%</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Response	Percentage	Strongly agree	26%	Agree	38%	Neutral	26%	Disagree	6%	Strongly disagree	4%
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<p>7. Do you agree with the change to allow overcrowded households to bid for a property with fewer bedrooms than they need so long as it doesn't result in statutory/severe overcrowding?</p>	<table border="1"> <tr><td>Strongly agree</td><td>29%</td></tr> <tr><td>Agree</td><td>40%</td></tr> <tr><td>Neutral</td><td>13%</td></tr> <tr><td>Disagree</td><td>9%</td></tr> <tr><td>Strongly disagree</td><td>9%</td></tr> </table>	Strongly agree	29%	Agree	40%	Neutral	13%	Disagree	9%	Strongly disagree	9%	<table border="1"> <caption>Data for Question 7 Pie Chart</caption> <thead> <tr><th>Response</th><th>Percentage</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>Strongly agree</td><td>29%</td></tr> <tr><td>Agree</td><td>40%</td></tr> <tr><td>Neutral</td><td>13%</td></tr> <tr><td>Disagree</td><td>9%</td></tr> <tr><td>Strongly disagree</td><td>9%</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Response	Percentage	Strongly agree	29%	Agree	40%	Neutral	13%	Disagree	9%	Strongly disagree	9%
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8. Are there any additional comments you would like to make regarding the proposed policy

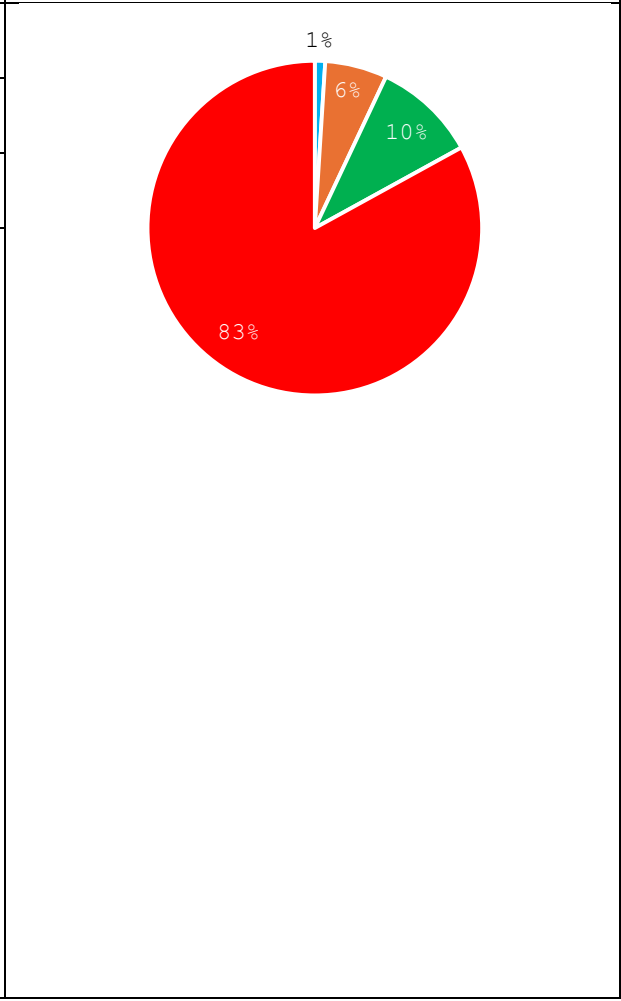
26 respondents (32%) answered **needed** for this question.

Word cloud terms: **needed**, **property**, **family bed property**, **bedroom home**, **bedrooms housing**, **social housing**, **property is available**, **smaller properties**, **Overcrowding bedroom properties**, **bid**, **bedroom properties**, **extra bedrooms**, **houses**, **rooms**, **priority**, **armed forces**, **people with children**, **Bigger properties**.

9. In what capacity are you responding to this consultation?	As a resident	78%
	On behalf of a resident	2%
	As an applicant on the housing register	14%
	Housing Association tenant	2%
	Other	4%

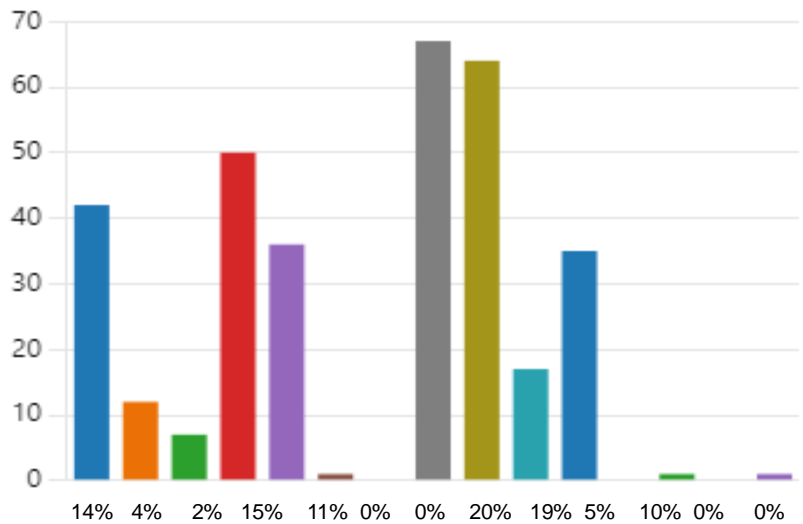


10. If you are a resident or an applicant, how long have you lived in Hillingdon	Under 1 year	1%
	1 to 5 years	6%
	Over 5 years	10%
	Over 10 years	83%



### 11. What is your postcode

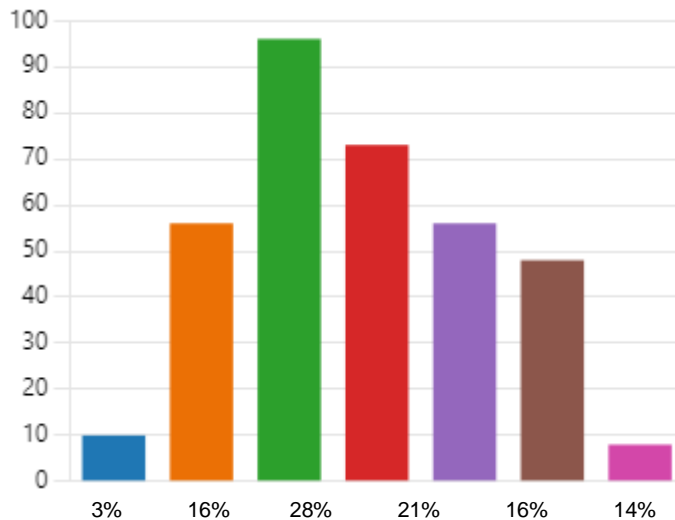
- HA4
- HA5
- HA6
- UB3
- UB4
- UB5
- UB6
- UB7
- UB8
- UB9
- UB10
- TW6
- TW19
- WD3
- Other



Of the 333 responses with data; only 3 were from out of borough residents. 76% of in borough responders were from the south of the borough with 39% being from West Drayton and Uxbridge.

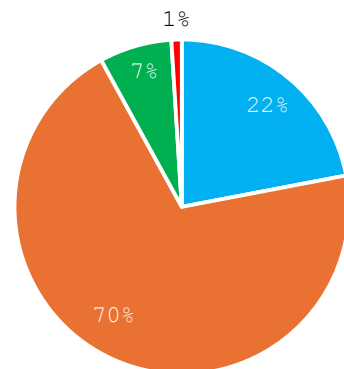
### 12. Which age group do you belong to?

- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65+
- Prefer not to say

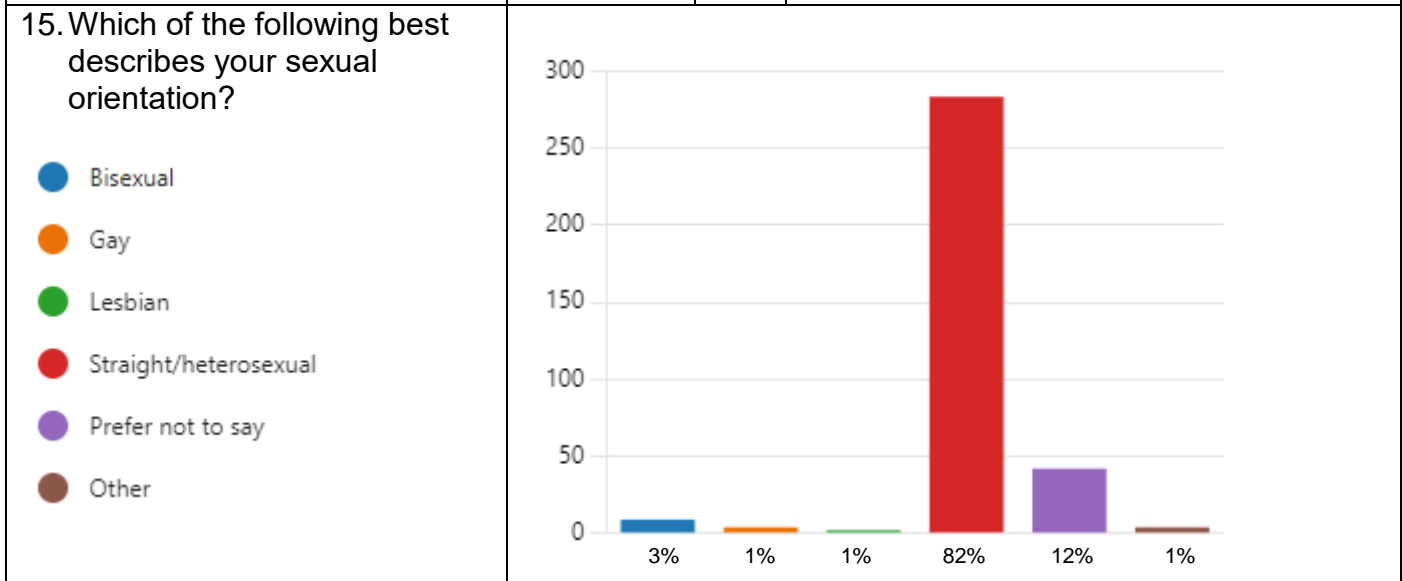


### 13. What is your gender

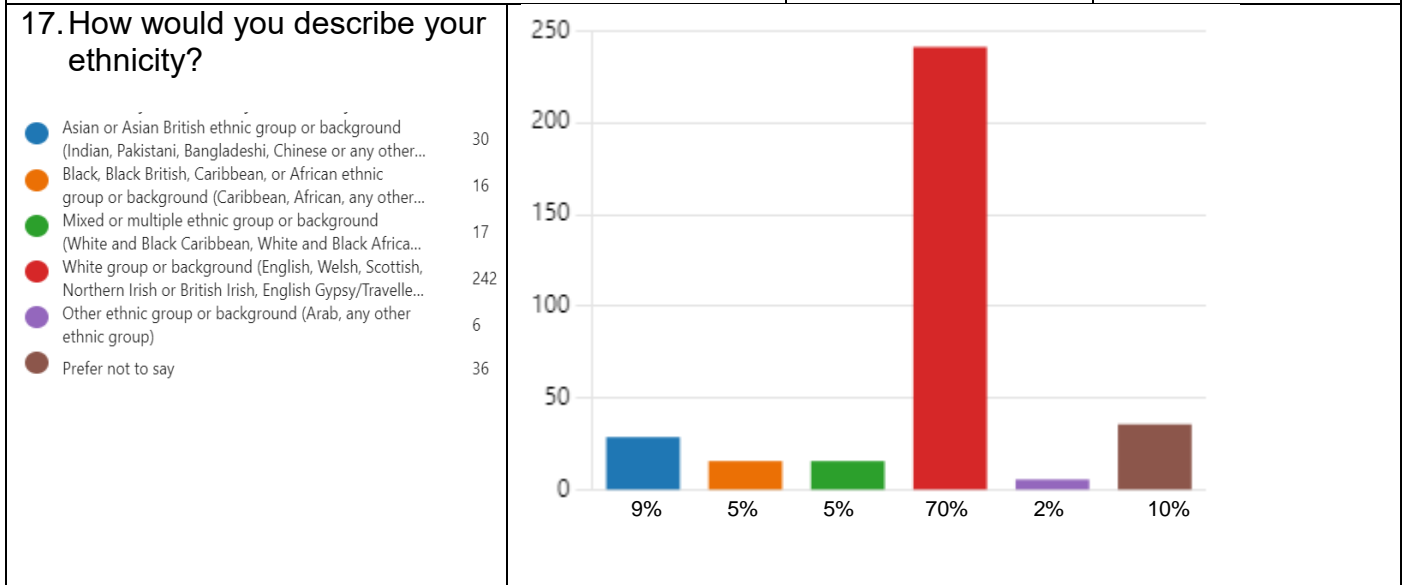
Male	21%
Female	72%
Prefer not to say	6%
Other	1%



14. Have you undergone or are you undergoing a sex/gender reassignment?	Yes – 1 person		
	No	92%	
	Prefer not to say	8%	

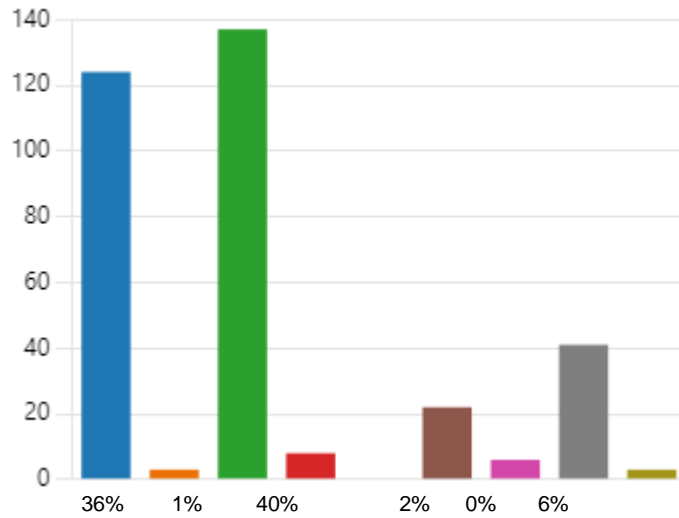


16. Do you have a disability? A physical or mental illness or condition that has a substantial and long-term effect on your ability to carry out normal day to day activities	Yes	100 people (31%)
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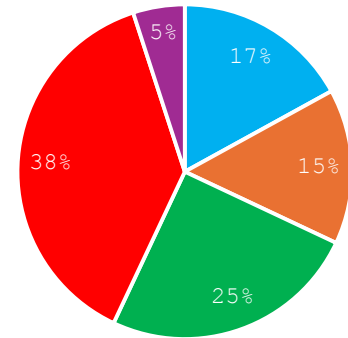
18. What is your religion or belief?

<span style="color: blue;">●</span> No religion	124
<span style="color: orange;">●</span> Buddhist	3
<span style="color: green;">●</span> Christian (Catholic, Church of En...	137
<span style="color: red;">●</span> Hindu	8
<span style="color: purple;">●</span> Jewish	0
<span style="color: brown;">●</span> Muslim	22
<span style="color: pink;">●</span> Sikh	6
<span style="color: grey;">●</span> Prefer not to say	41
<span style="color: olive;">●</span> Other	3



19. Which best describes your household?

Single Person	17%
Couple without children	15%
Single parent	25%
Couple with children	38%
Other	5%

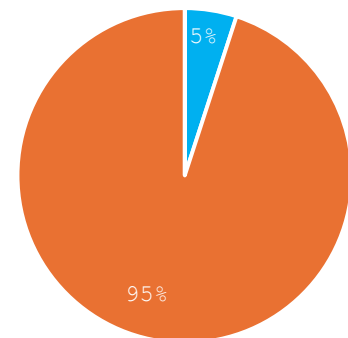


20. How many people live in your household? Please specify the number of adults and children separately.

71% of responders had children within their household and 40% with 4 or members within their household; 13% were single person households.

21. How are you completing this survey?

Over the phone	5%
Online	95%
Face to face	0%





## **Staff Consultation**

### Leaving Care Team

A consultation meeting was held with the Leaving Care Team on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2024. Discussion was primarily focused on the revised banding for those transitioning from care along with some other vulnerable groups. Although in the banding structure they would be awarded a Band 7 or 8, this is the equivalent of a current Band A and as such is a higher band than the Band B currently awarded. It is estimated that on average this will mean a 6 month rather than an 18 month wait. Key concerns for those transitioning from care are for a timely move to independent living to avoid creating dependency and to effectively manage public sector resources. The proposed changes are seen as a positive and great move forward.

### Housing Staff

A consultation meeting was held with housing staff on the 10<sup>th</sup> October 2024. A specific request has been made by Housing Staff to allow for some flexibility with regard to verification checks for under-occupying households wishing to downsize, who have rent arrears and have not fulfilled the requirement of the policy to have been maintaining an agreed repayment plan for at least 6 months. Release of family sized accommodation is of benefit to the council in meeting housing needs and in some instances the build-up of rent arrears may be related to living in a property that is bigger than their housing need.

A suggestion has also been made for an existing exception to the qualification rule relating to 'the need to have a demonstrable housing need to join the housing register' to be removed. This exception relates to 'people over 60 who would benefit from sheltered housing'.

A similar suggestion has been made to remove an exemption from the qualifying requirement to have been 'continuously living in the borough for at least 10 years'. The exception concerned is for 'people over 60 who are currently resident in the borough and who would benefit from sheltered housing'.

## **Residents' meetings**

Two meetings with residents were held on 18th October 2024, one face to face in the morning and one on-line in the evening. The purpose of the residents' meetings was to provide opportunities for an interactive approach to the consultation, allowing questions about the policy to be asked and responded to, along with receiving specific comments on the proposed changes to the policy. It was decided to hold the residents' meetings following discussion about the proposed changes to the Social Housing Allocation Policy at the Residents Services Select Committee on 24th September 2024. The Committee asked officers to consider expanding the consultation approach to ensure the process captured a representative range and depth of views, to balance the views gathered through the on-line survey.

### Face to face meeting

There were six residents present. Some of the residents thought that the proposal for 14 priority groups was too much, although not all of the members agreed. A suggestion of 8 to 10 groups was made. Some thought it would be better to relate the changes more to the existing groups i.e. Band A split into the now 8 sections; Band B split into two; Band C split into two etc. Some would prefer to see a points-based system.

Those present were in favour and very much supported the retention of the 10-year residency criteria. Ideally, they would like to see extra 'points' for time on the register and were pleased that

where other aspects are equal the person who has been on the register the longest takes priority under Hillingdon's policy.

All of those present were in favour of the increased banding for vulnerable groups and the impact this can have on ensuring that move on from supported accommodation is effectively facilitated.

There was also support for the extension to allow applicants to bid for a property which was slightly smaller in bed-size than they required, so long as they are not statutorily or severely overcrowded; and of the reduction in additional priority reasons.

#### On-line meeting

The on-line evening meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> October 2024 was attended by some currently on the housing register. They understood the reasoning for the additional bands but thought that 14 made it look complicated and thought it may be better to have bands split into those with and without additional priority. They were in favour of the increased position for vulnerable households. They were also in favour of the removal of 'childless couples over 21' as an additional preference group but disagreed with the removal of 'working households' as an additional preference group. They were particularly pleased to see the amendment to allow overcrowded households to bid for properties smaller than their assessed need so long as it doesn't result in statutory or severe overcrowding and thought this would be a big help for families waiting to move.