

## Older Persons' Accommodation Survey and Consultation 2019

York has a long and proud tradition of providing older residents with the accommodation they need and want. From a 10<sup>th</sup> century almshouse and medieval St Leonard's hospital, the city is now home to a range of options including independent living schemes and Hartrigg Oaks, a European exemplar of a retirement village.

Support to live independently in the right kind of housing can keep people healthy for longer and can reduce the need for home care or residential care. City of York Council's Older Person's Accommodation Programme recognises that housing needs and preferences change with age and people may want or need to make adaptations to how and where they live. We also recognise that there is a need to generate York-specific data so that we can best meet the needs and aspirations of York residents in the future.

This summer, City of York Council talked to over 500 residents to gain a better understanding of the priorities and preferences of York residents when thinking about accommodation for later life. To refresh our Older People's Accommodation Programme, data was drawn from a survey as well as consultation and engagement events with advocacy groups, interest groups and community groups. We also conducted in depth interviews with a number of York residents to gain a deeper insight into their survey answers. We believe that this approach provided us with a rich source of data which can help to inform a practical and effective older persons' housing strategy.

### **National and local context**

To best understand the findings of our research it is useful to first consider the national context of accommodation for older people and the UK's ageing population. By 2022 it is expected that 6.6 million people in the UK will be aged 75 or older. Predictions by the Office for National Statistics suggest that the number of people aged 65 and over will increase by more than 20% from 11.4 million in 2014 to 13.8 million by 2024. It has also been predicted that the 65+ age group will increase from 16% of the total UK population in 2004 to 25% by 2044. As a consequence there will be further increases in demand for accommodation for older people in the very near future.

However, current demand already outstrips supply with figures for Age UK suggesting that of the 128,000 retirement homes built for private sale, there were over 1 million people who would consider moving into one. Furthermore research by the Elderly Accommodation Council (EAC) found that whilst there are currently around 520 000 units of specialist housing which offer some degree of support or care, there will be a national shortfall of around 400 000 units of specialist accommodation for older people by 2035.

Evidence from the 2011 census shows that York's older population has grown in recent years, specifically the 85+ age group. Whilst this is likely to be part due to people living longer there is also some suggestion that cuts to public transport in North Yorkshire and the East Riding has prompted older people from rural areas who no longer drive to move into towns, particularly those with hospital facilities. Consequently York has become a net importer of older people and the provision of accommodation for this age group has become more pressing over recent years.

Within an ageing population older people are now key players in the wider housing market. According to the Local Government Association older people live in around a third of all homes and the ageing population will account for around 60% of household growth with the greatest increase in the 85+ age group. Research by Age UK and Independent Age shows that as they age older people and their families face considerable problems accessing information on housing and care options.

According to the National House Building Council (NHBC) Foundation there is evidence to suggest that there is a willingness amongst older people to pay a premium for to gain the benefits of a good quality retirement home. It is thought that 72% of owner occupiers in this age group are living in homes with three or more bedrooms and nearly a third of whom are in single occupancy. Releasing these large dwellings back into available stock would cascade homes down through all age and need profiles. However, levels of retirement homes built for sale have been low and do not reflect the significant numbers of people who say they would consider moving to a retirement property. It is estimated that if people lived in homes more suited to their needs then 50 000 fewer additional homes would need to be built each year.

Current data on the population of York suggests that the number of York residents aged 60+ will increase from 49 340 in 2019 to 58 300 in 2029. This increase of 8,960 represents a 19.6% increase in this population over the next ten years. Over the next twenty years this population is predicted to rise by 26.2% to 62 300. The 75+ age group is expected to increase from 18,500 in 2019 to 23 600, this is an increase of 5100 or 21% of this population. One of the largest increases can be found in the 85+ age group which is predicted to grow by 31% from 5,500 to 7,100 between 2019 and 2029.

Consequently it can be reasonably assumed that demand for age appropriate accommodation to meet the needs of the York's ageing population will continue to rapidly increase over the next decade and beyond.

## Methodology

Data collection for the Older Person's Accommodation Survey took place from 15 July to 16 August 2019. A total of 406 people completed the questionnaire which was made available online and in paper format in order to reach as wide an audience as possible. Not all those who completed the questionnaire answered every question, the total number of respondents for each question is noted in the findings section below. In addition to the survey we also spoke to numerous community and interest groups as well as conducting interviews with individual York residents. Given the sensitivity and importance of the topic we felt that utilising both quantitative and qualitative research methods would enable us to explore beyond the limitations of the questionnaire. This allowed us to gain a greater insight into personal opinions and learn from lived experience.

Shown below are a series of definitions of different types of accommodation for older people which we provided as part of the survey. It became clear during the qualitative phase of the research process that prior to completing the survey many respondents were not aware of the distinctions between different types of accommodation for older people. This highlighted a need to make people more aware of the different types of accommodation for older people, in particular the different types of independent living properties available and the opportunity for a range of tenures.

### Definitions of different housing types for older people

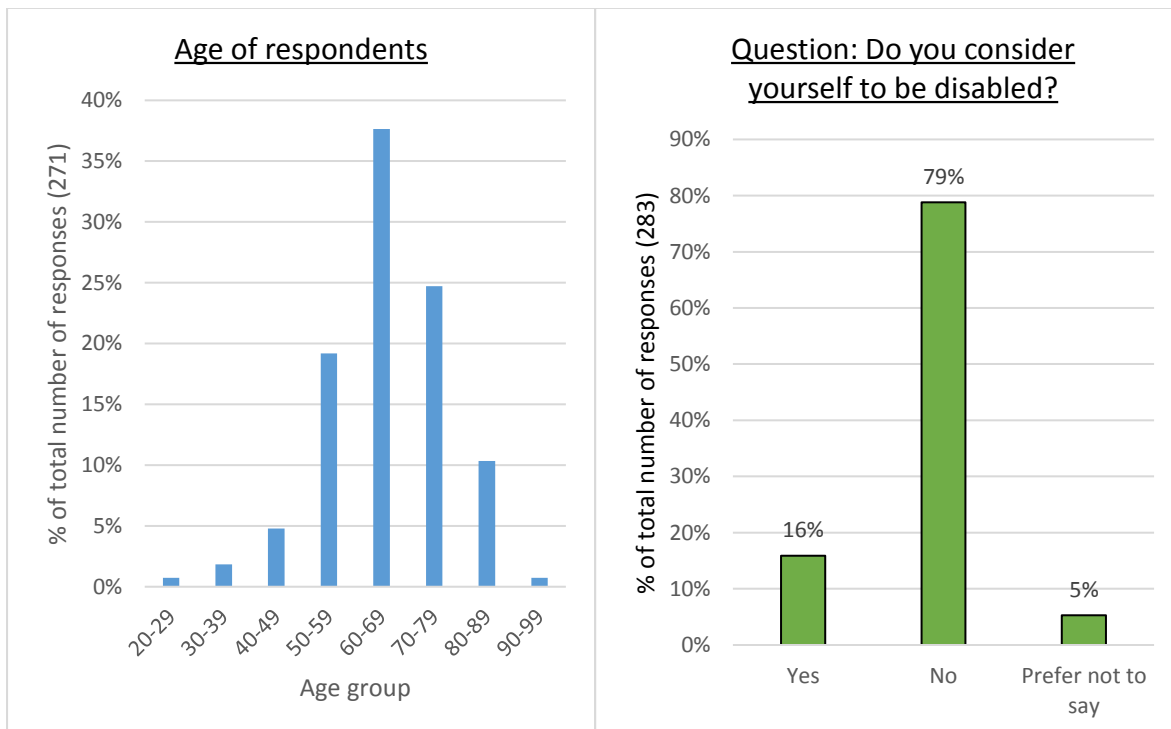
Retirement Housing	Accommodation situated in either the general community or retirement community specifically for older people. These can be adapted to suit the needs of the occupant, such as level access, hand rails, wet rooms etc. Retirement housing allows older people to live completely independently. Available to buy or rent
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Assisted Living/Sheltered Housing	A self-contained type of accommodation governed by a scheme manager and operates a 24-hour emergency call system. Communal areas and activities are often available. Available to buy or rent.
Extra Care	Aimed at the frailer population, provides a 24hr on-site personal care service, services subject to eligibility for those with existing care needs, communal facilities. Available for rent with additional monthly charges for use of communal facilities and care services.
Residential & Nursing Care	A private bedroom & en-suite for each resident, 24hr personal care available with meals served in a communal dining room, a shared recreational area for activities, paid for on a weekly basis via self-funding & top ups from the local authority.

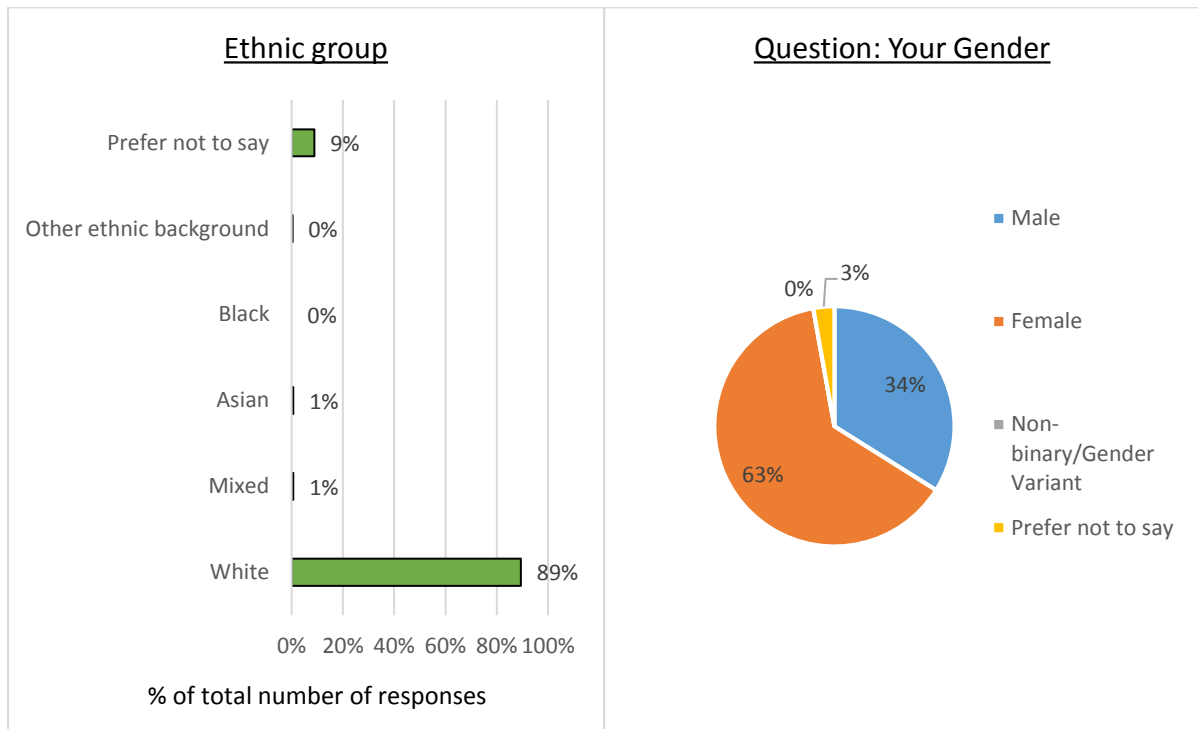
### Demographics of the sample

The response rates for questions relating to demographic information varied from 227 to 293. This variation may be explained by a sensitivity towards disclosing personal information on certain topics.

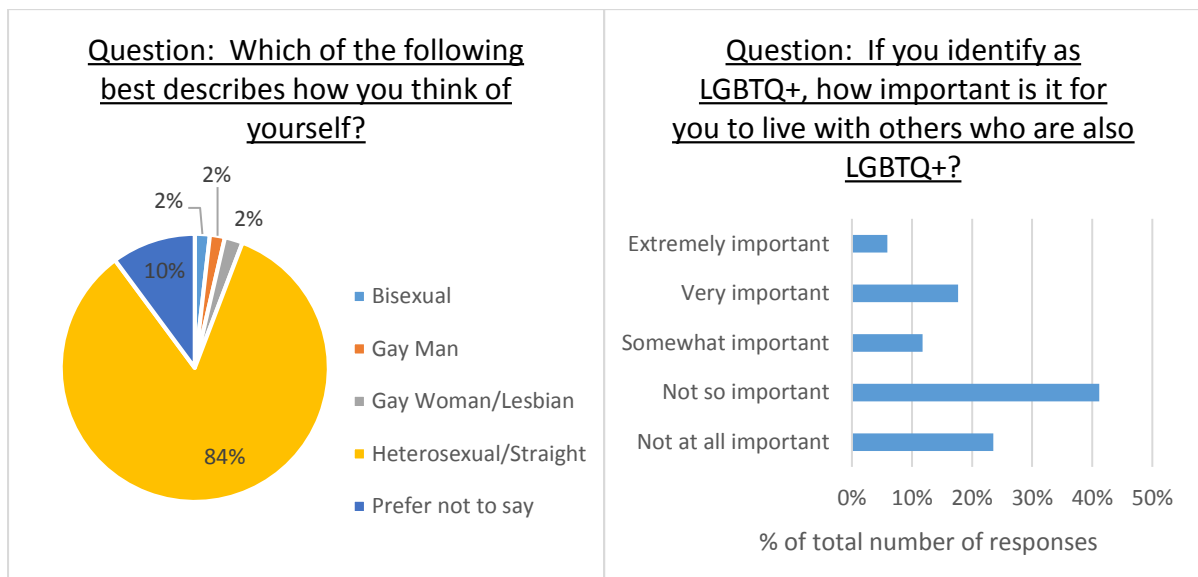
In terms of age, 73% of respondents were aged 60 or above. It could therefore be argued that the data collected by the survey as a whole is most representative of the views of older people. It is interesting to note that responses were received from all age ranges. Around 16% of those asked stated they considered themselves to have a disability, 79% stated they did not and 5% opted not to disclose.



When asked about their ethnicity 89% identified as white, 1% identified as mixed, 1% identified as Asian and 9% opted not to disclose. The gender split of the sample was 63% female, 34% male, 0% non-binary and 3% opted not to disclose.

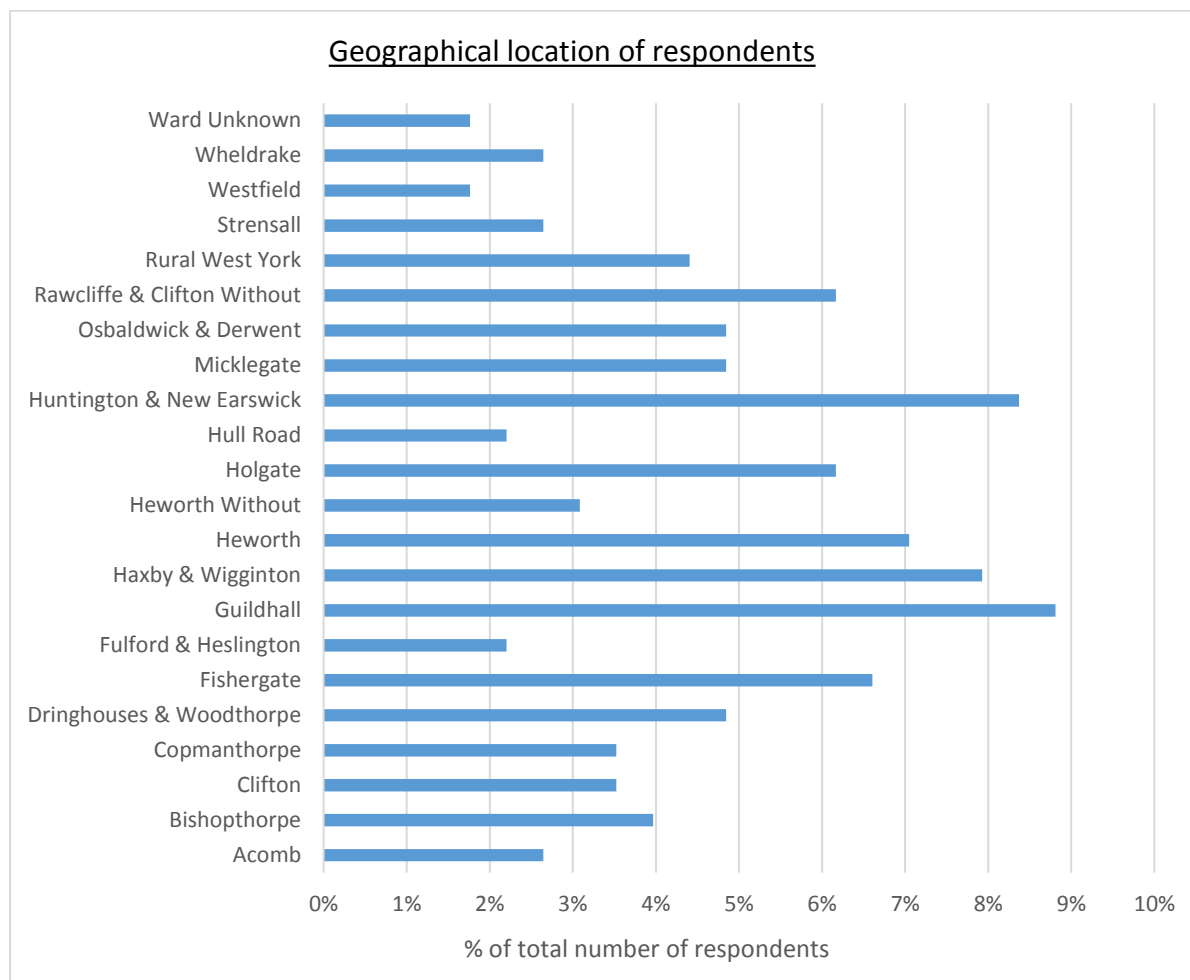


In terms of sexuality 84% stated they identified as heterosexual, 2% as bisexual, 2% as gay men, 2% as gay women and 10% opted not to disclose. When those who identified as LGBTQ+ were asked about the importance of living with other members of the LGBTQ+ community 6% stated it was extremely important, 18% stated it was very important, 12% stated it was somewhat important, 41% stated it was not important and 24% stated it was not important at all. Only one person identified as trans and 10 opted not to disclose.



When asked about where they lived, it can be seen from the chart below that all areas of the city were represented. There is some indication that areas with the highest response rate were areas

with the highest number of older people living in them. As a result it could be argued that the survey was most representative of the views of older people.



### Key Findings and Results

**Question: There are lots of different types of accommodation available for older people.**

**Thinking of your later years, what type of property would you like to live in?**

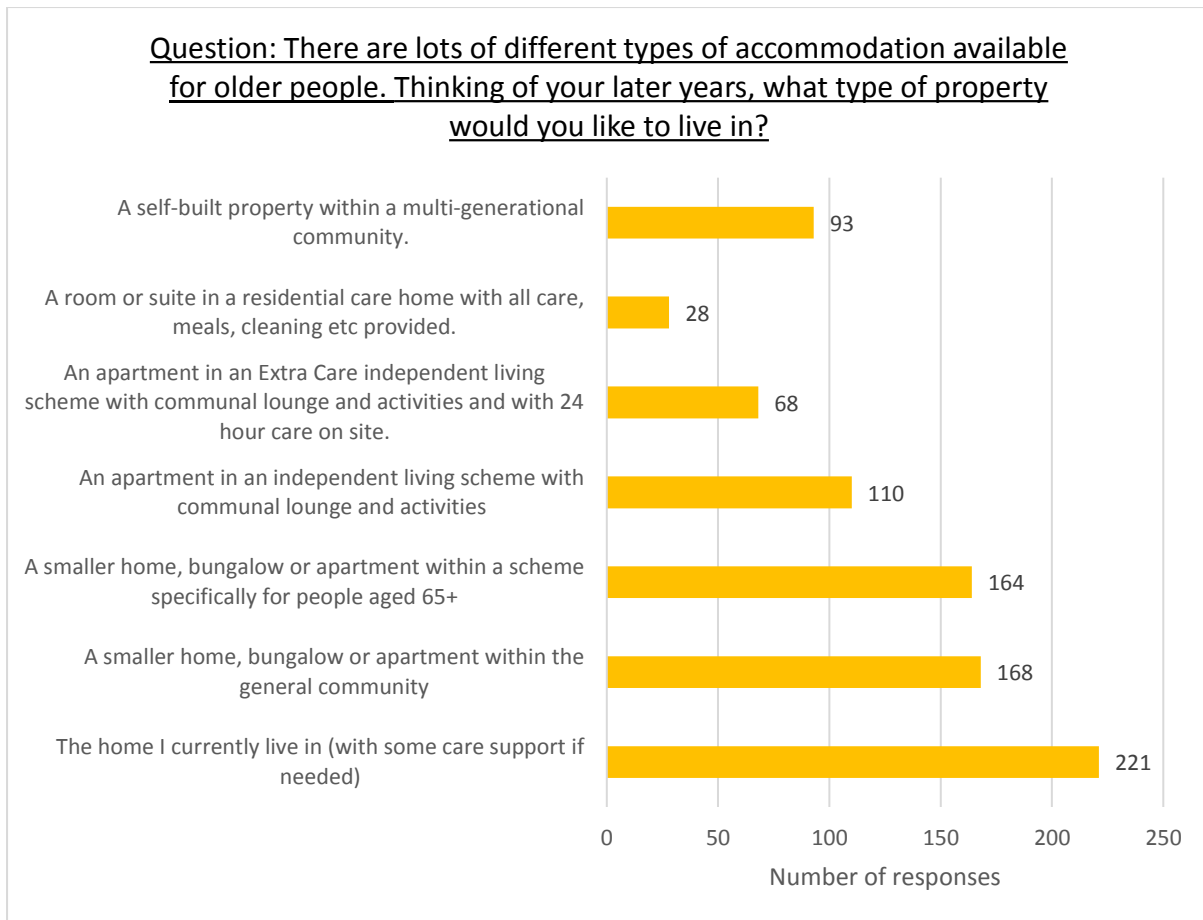
When asked this question the most popular response was that they would like to live in their own home with care and support provided, if needed (26% of all responses). A number of additional points were raised in relation to this during the qualitative element of the research.

- The importance of futureproofing of homes was raised and the fact that if people are going to stay in their own homes then they may have to adapt them
- If older people carry out minor adaptations to their homes (such as grab rails, hand rails or easy access bathing) then they are more likely to feel safe in their homes and feel that these adaptations have a positive impact on their health
- Living in an unsuitable home can lead to fear and anxiety for older people, especially around using the bathrooms and stairs
- Some people said that they didn't know what services was available to them
- Another said that she had had some adaptations done to her property by the council, she highly praised the service and the way that the work was carried out

Sixty percent of all responses to this question showed a preference for some type of independent living apartment or bungalow, referred to by some of the respondents as “a small, safe and manageable home”. Within this category the most popular options were to live in a smaller home either within the general community or a smaller home within a scheme specifically designed for people aged 65+. The qualitative engagement highlighted the following points:

- A manageable home reduces the stress and cost of running a larger home. It also allows residents to move easily around their home. These benefits can support residents to keep healthy, support them to live independently and reduce the need for home care or residential care.
- When talking about these schemes people were very worried about a service charge - although people understood the need for it, they were worried about it increasing once they had moved into a property. One respondent spoke about a service charge being increased but the amount of services being offered decreasing.
- Many people spoke about resident participation in such schemes, they liked the idea of a residents’ board and people getting a say in how the scheme is run
- Although people want a private home, the idea of having a community was seen as very important – all groups and individuals spoken to brought this up, any scheme should be integrated into the local community
- The desire to live in a multigenerational community was strong
- This would help to combat social isolation as 24.2% said that they had days with no social contact
- Most people were open to the idea of downsizing as they saw the benefits of wanting a safe and manageable property.
- The major factors in this were the cost of running a larger property which did not appeal to them and stress of running a larger home
- People are receptive to the idea of self-build
- There must be provision of more specialist housing such as extra care apartments
- This option was selected by 9% of respondents and when care is needed this option was preferred to residential care.
- One man spoke about living in a bungalow which was within a care community complex: he liked that he could maintain his independence but he knew that he had the safety net of having care services which were easily available to him
- Many people spoken to fear going into a residential or nursing or care home, however well designed homes and flexible care can reduce the level of admissions into residential care and can enable lifelong independence.

During qualitative interviews it became apparent that although respondents’ current homes were important because they were well known surroundings which held memories, home ownership and having something to pass on to relatives was also a key factor. It was also found that respondents were often reluctant to think about being in poor health or requiring care in later life.



### Making decisions about where to live

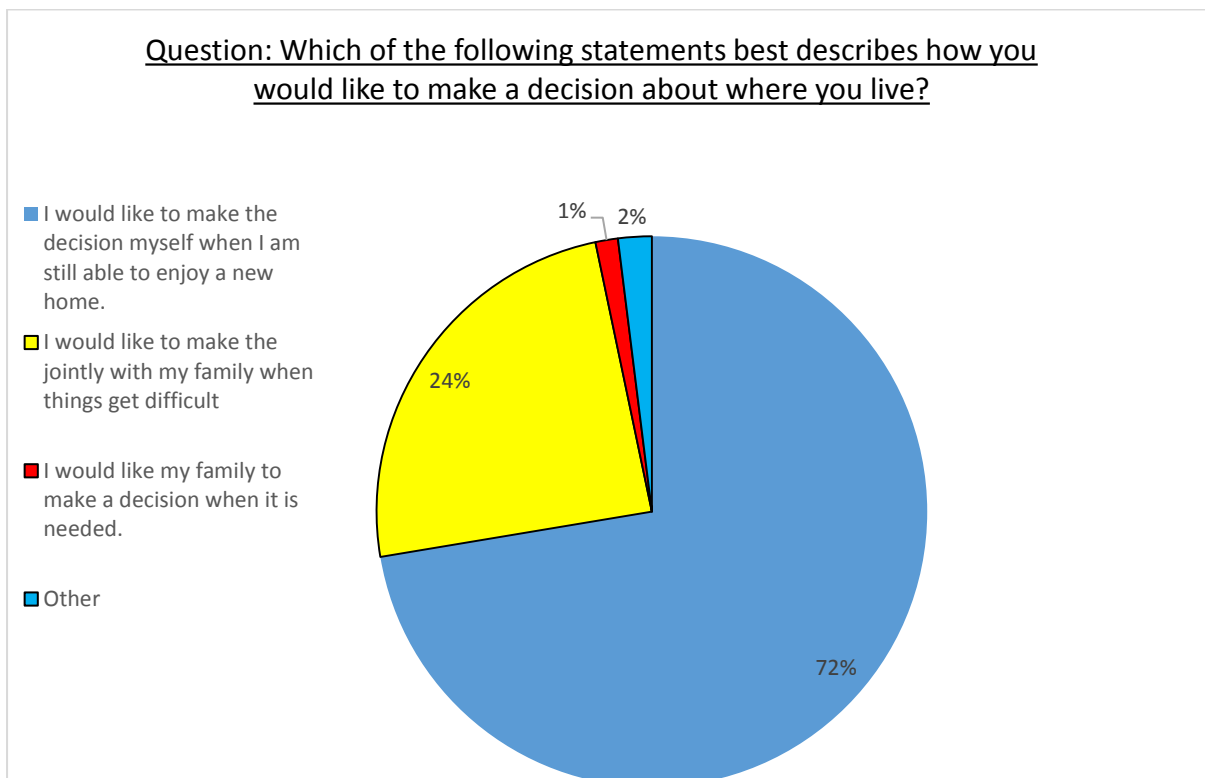
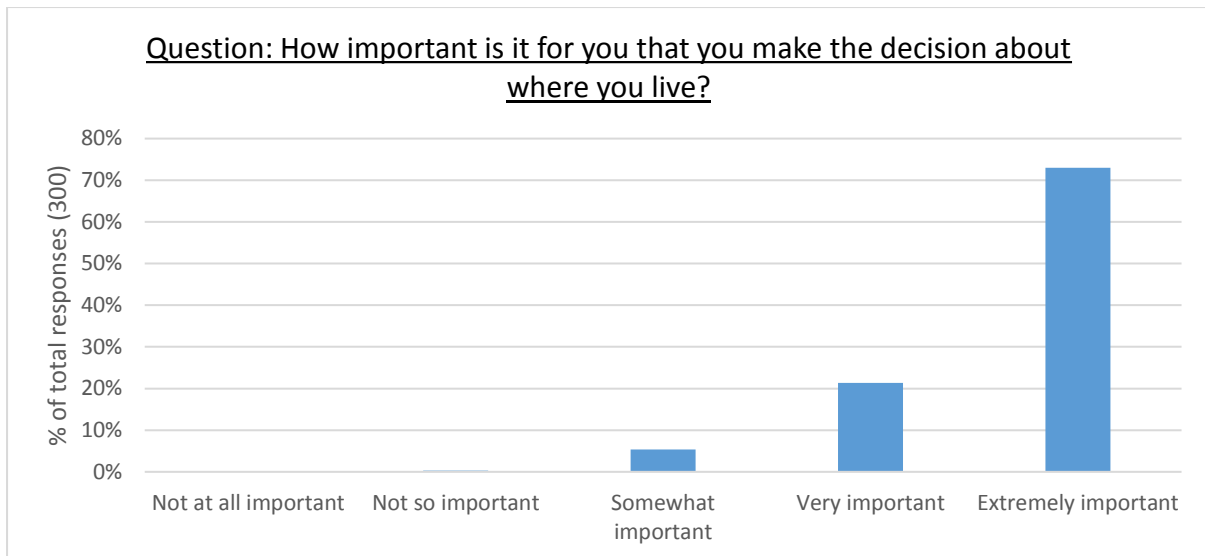
When asked how important it was for respondents to make the decision about where to live the vast majority felt that it was extremely important (73%) or very important (21%). 72% of respondents indicated that they would like to make the choice about where to live themselves when they are still able to enjoy a new home. Just under a quarter felt that they would like to make this decision with their family when things got difficult. From this it can be seen that personal choice and autonomy are felt to be crucial when making a decision about where to live.

*“We should talk about moving house and getting the right size of home with our families. Moving should not become a taboo subject”*

Alice, 73

The responses to these questions highlighted:

- the need for information and advice around the housing options that are available.
- that residents are keen to make informed choices about where to live and to find an age appropriate home that they can enjoy.

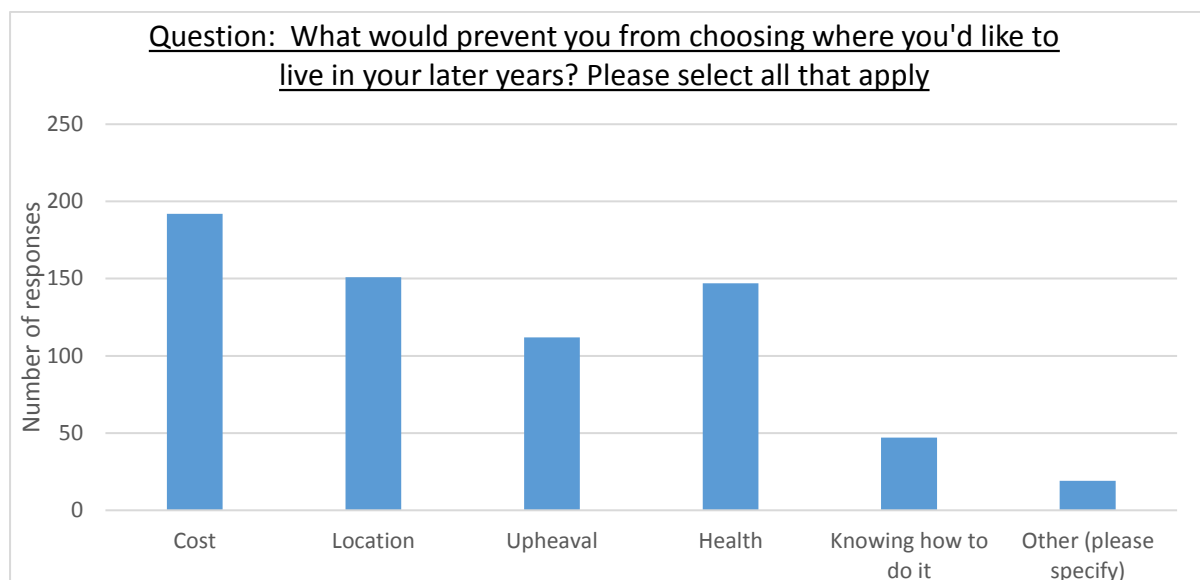


The main factors identified as barriers to people from choosing where to live in later life were cost, location and health. Upheaval was also considered a significant issue. Around a sixth of those who answered also felt that knowing how to move could also be a barrier to them making a choice. Other factors that were identified as barriers included the availability of appropriate housing, a lack of outdoor space, having to care for other dependent family members and concerns regarding the loss of independence.

Through conversation it was clear that lots of these issues could be avoided if people had the most appropriate information available to them and people moved into a suitable property when the time was right for them



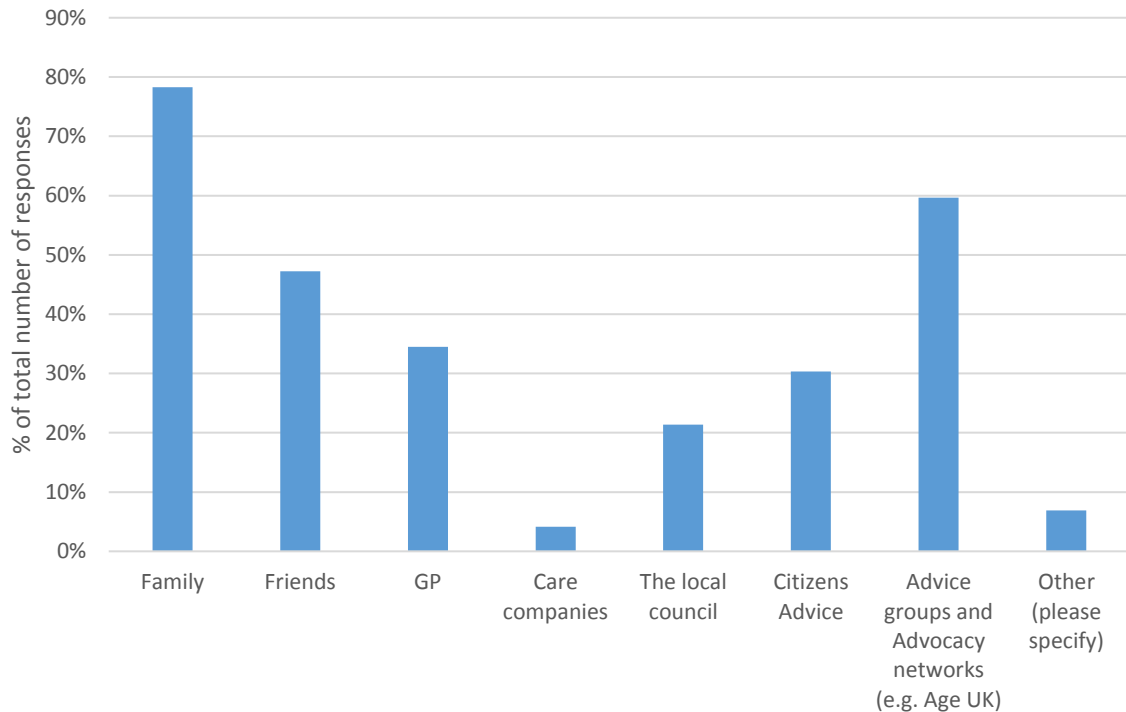
Within this a number of people that I spoke to brought up the issues of Stamp Duty and Land Tax and many people were worried about losing capital if they decided to right size or down size. Older people's advocacy bodies have raised these issues on a national basis.



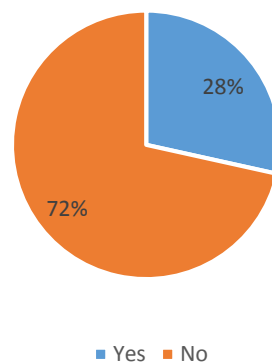
When looking to make an informed and positive choice about where to live, seeking advice from family was identified as the most preferable option. Advice and advocacy networks such as Age UK were seen as the second best source of advice followed by friends and GPs. Care companies themselves were seen as the least preferable option when seeking advice. This was also reflected by 72% of stating that they do not feel that care providers and stakeholders have their best interests at heart.

- The need to be able to trust those who are offering support and guidance was raised frequently in conversations.
- One group that we spoke to said that they wanted advice and planning when looking into changing accommodation and downsizing, they said that any change came with fear and uncertainty
  - They wanted checklists for moving and downsizing guides
  - Some people had seen Elderly care advisors, who provide advice and assistance with moving for a fee. Many liked the idea of such services although some were wary about the costs of them.
- Residents in one group recommended that the council should work out a way to ensure that people have good quality information about the types of accommodation, locations and costs so that people can make informed choices in a timely and considered way.
  - "It is all about nudging people in the right direction, it is not about new council policy, it is about supporting people to make their own choices".

Question: There are a number of advice networks available for older people when they are looking into types of residential care. When making informed and positive choices, of the options below, who would you trust to help you make these choices?



Question: There are many different stakeholders and providers that play a role in the provision of care. Do you think that these stakeholders have your best interests at heart?



### Home ownership

Given that 81% of York's over 75s own their own home, more people than expected were open to other types of tenure.

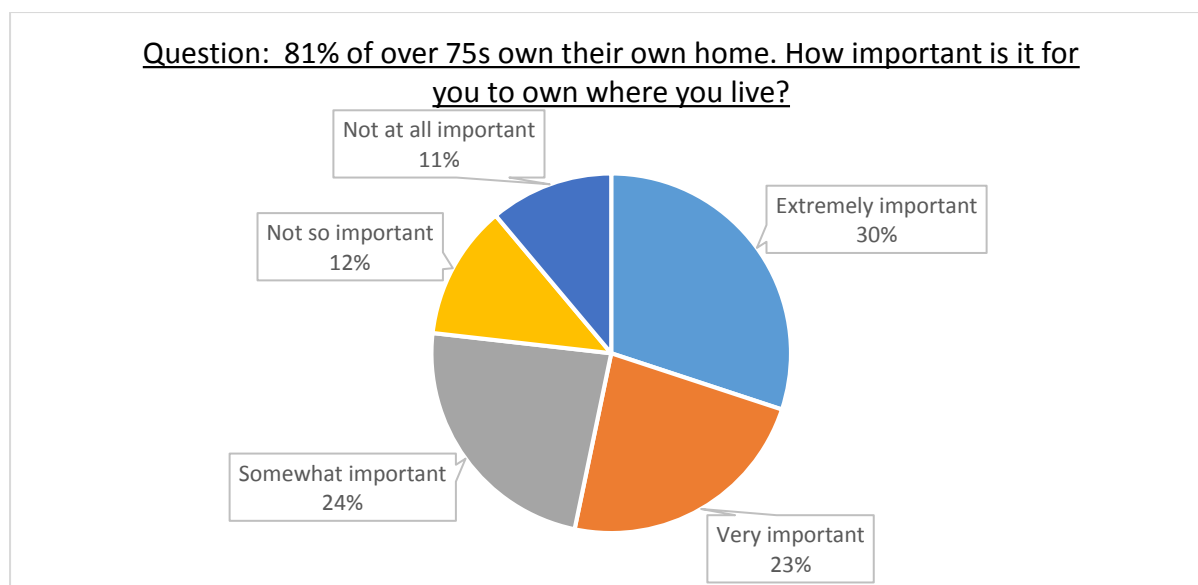
More than half of those who answered the question about home ownership stated that owning their own home was either extremely important (30%) or very important (23%). Around a quarter of

respondents stated that home ownership was not so important (12%) or not important at all (11%). As previously discussed, having an asset to pass on to relatives was a key factor in home ownership, however knowledge of shared ownership schemes appeared relatively low.

A mixture of tenures is needed so that people have the opportunity to make a choice about where and how they live, these options could include shared ownership.

*"I want to leave something behind for my children, if I rent then it is more difficult to do so"*

Elizabeth, 65



### Onsite facilities and services

The following section explores the opinions of respondents when asked to consider 15 facilities and services in accommodation for older people.

- Access to amenities and public transport is vital
  - Unsurprisingly it is vital for this age group to be close to both shops and public transport, having amenities close to older persons accommodation makes it easier for people to live independent lives for longer
  - One group highlighted the importance of not being dependent on a car
  - Being close to family and friends was identified as extremely important by over half of respondents. The main motivation was to avoid being dependent on a car due to concerns driving could become an issue in later life.

*"Nowadays I want to drive less and less - even to places I know well"*

Norman, 77

- Private space is of paramount importance – The issues raised included:
  - Having a safe and secure property
  - Facilities to cook own meals is part of this
  - An area where you can be totally yourself

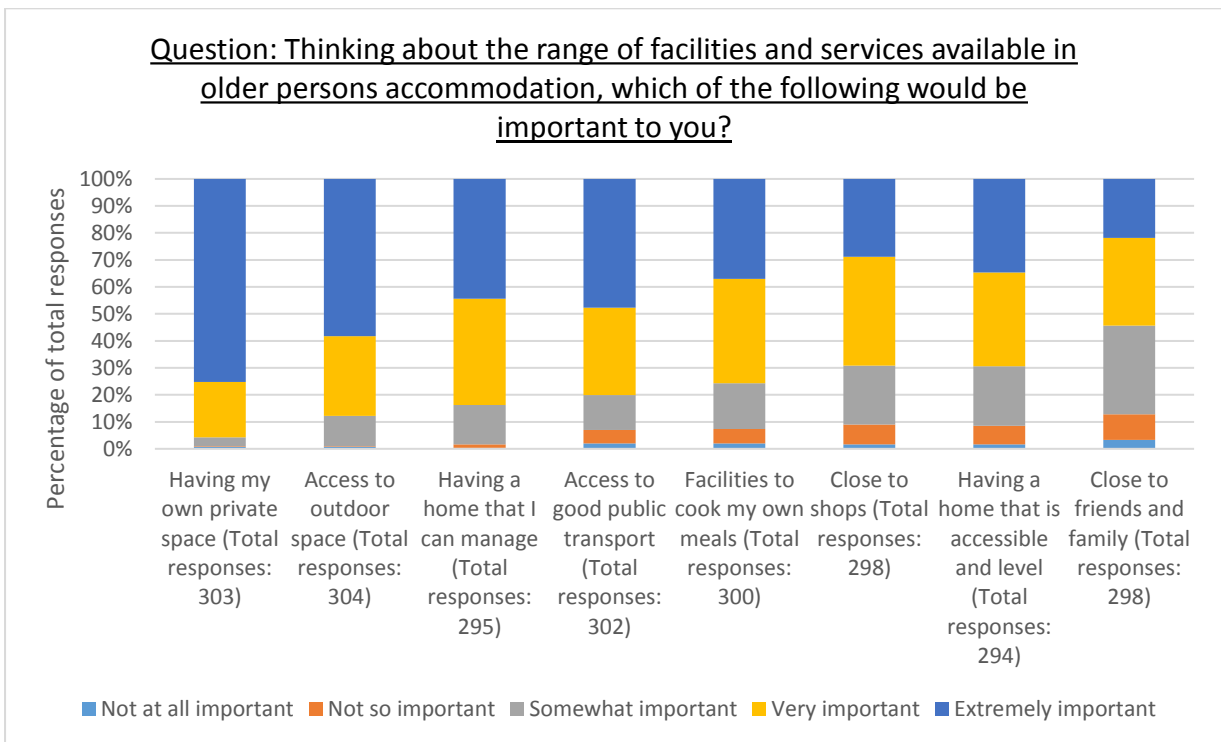
- This includes LGBTQ, there is a risk that people go back into the closet.
  - There should be schemes which are LGBTQ friendly
  - Care home training, nobody should be forced to go back into the closet
- A manageable home that is accessible and level – many respondents highlighted the benefits of having a home that is accessible and level.

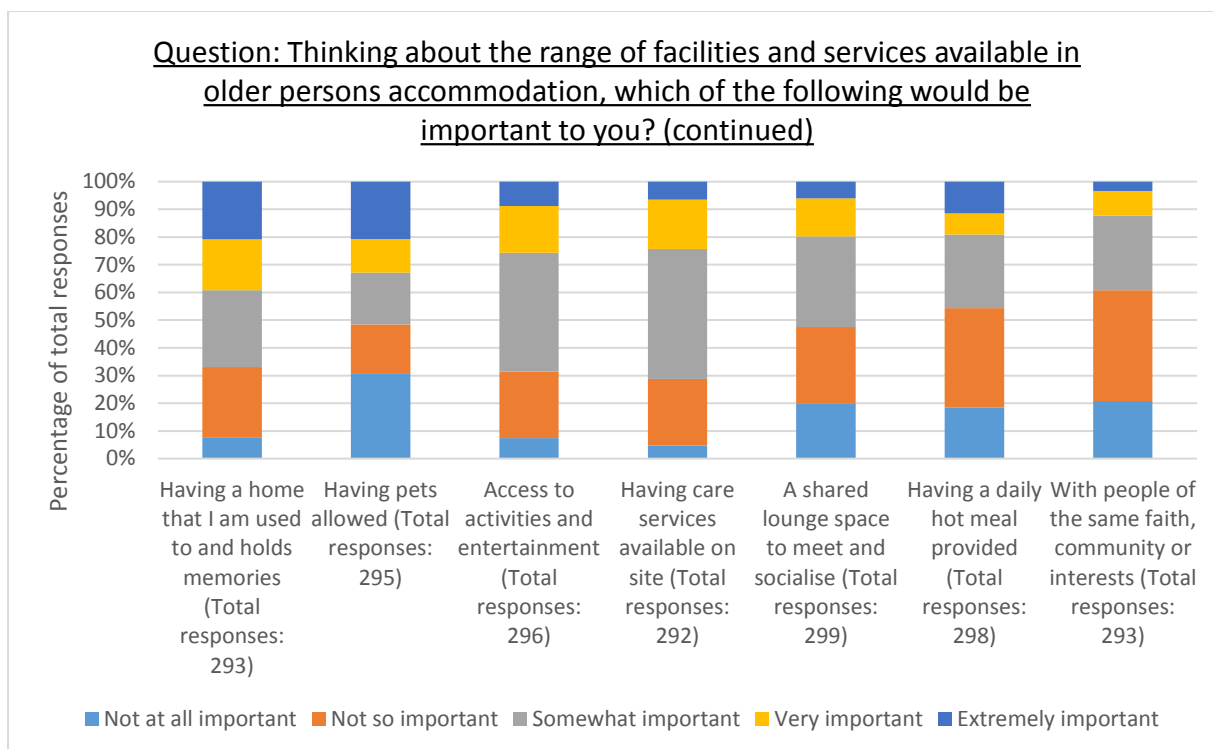
“One of my biggest fears is falling”

Mary, 80

- The benefits of a manageable and single storey home are plenty
  - Everyone that we spoke to said this was important
    - This is more important for respondents than having a home that is familiar and holds memories
  - Outdoor space is seen as very important, some people were keen to have a private garden and others were open to a communal garden or courtyard
    - If people were living in a flat then many people were keen to have a balcony
    - The importance of not feeling trapped was significant
    - If people were unable to have any outdoor space then one group said that proximity to a park would be acceptable as an alternative
  - Some people receive call rounds and reminders, they liked this as a non-intrusive way of checking up
- It was somewhat important for almost 50% of people that care services were available on site. If people have age friendly homes then elements of care provision can be built in
  - Although people want to live independent lives it is still important for people to have access to care
  - People must therefore have information readily available to them about the types of care services that are available to them
  - This links into having artificial intelligence and technology
  - Many people do not think it is their responsibility to pay for care themselves
- Respondents regularly raised the lack of appropriate information about older persons’ accommodation – Information to enable positive choices
  - One of the views expressed the most when talking to people is that they did not know the types of accommodation that were available to them

- People stay in their own homes which are often unsuitable because they don't know what is available to them
  - We spoke to a number of people who said if they knew what was available then they would have moved.
    - This was especially prevalent for home share, when asked in interview people had not heard of the scheme but many were receptive to the idea of it
  - In addition to this people don't know what is available to them and what they are entitled to
  - People don't know what the council can offer them
  - The local council was only trusted by 1/5<sup>th</sup> of respondents, this could be because many were unsure of the support available and believed that budget cuts meant that they couldn't get help.





Specific questions about cost and affordability were not included in the questionnaire but were topics that often came up during qualitative interviews. It was also identified that there was a need for affordable housing for older people that sat between social rented markets and luxury private developments.

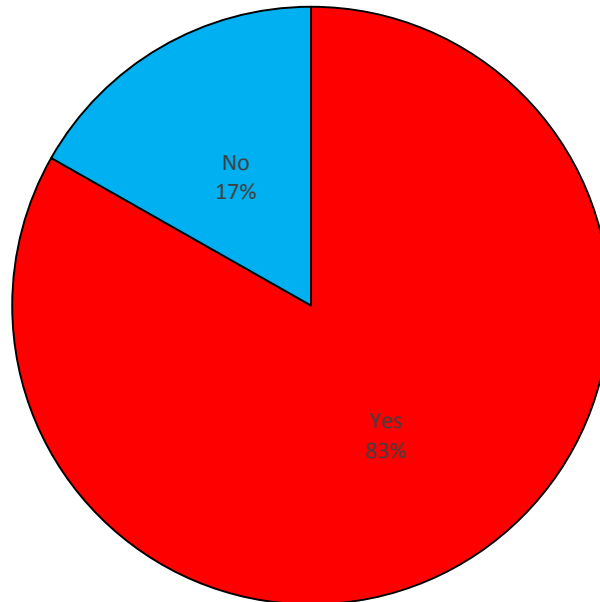
### Assistive technologies

In addition to questions about the importance of onsite services and facilities respondents were also asked a series of questions about their thoughts and feelings towards the use of assistive technologies and the potential application of such technologies within their homes.

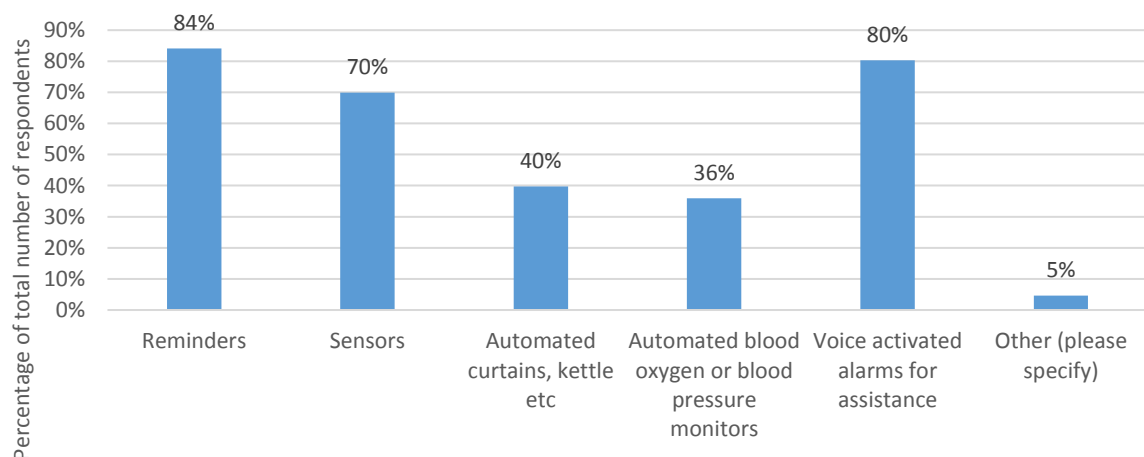
When asked for their opinion of assistive technologies such as sensors and prompts in their properties the vast majority (83%) of respondents stated that they would be comfortable with the presence of such technologies.

- People were open to the idea of having reminders, sensors and voice activated alarms for assistance
- Where people selected 'Other' types of technology responses included: Help with household maintenance e.g. cleaning robots grocery shopping, locating items (keys, glasses etc)
- Respondents were on the whole very comfortable with this data being seen by GPs, Families and to a slightly lesser extent to care companies
- One interviewee said that “if my information could be shared with my GP and that could save me a trip to the doctors, then that would be great”
- This area is the one with the most scope for development and innovation as it offers an exciting opportunity to enable independence

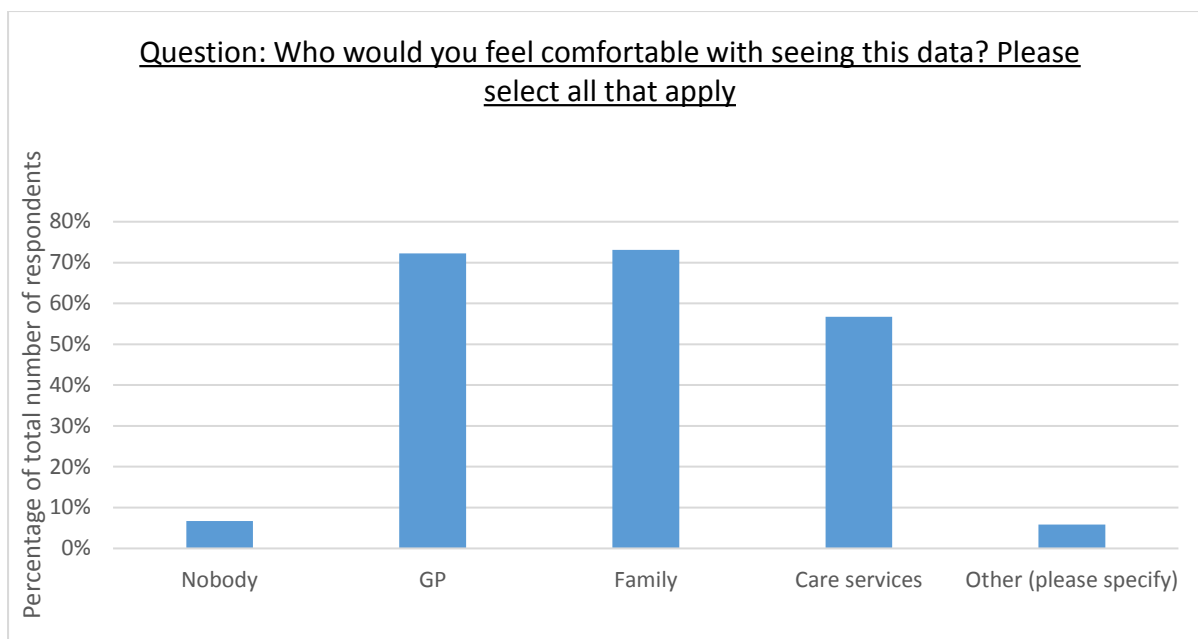
Question: Technology and artificial intelligence have advanced into assisting people with their lives and care. Would you feel comfortable with this type of technology (e.g. sensors and prompts) in your property?



Question: This technology may have the capacity to provide assistance and also gather data. What do you think would be helpful? Please select all that apply



When it came to who they felt comfortable seeing the data generated by assistive technology only 7% of respondents stated that they would not want anyone seeing the data. Additional suggestions of who this data may be shared with included friends and neighbours, anyone with a need for the data, companies that handle data, city planning departments, homebuilders and emergency services.



### Conclusions

Autonomy when making decisions about where to live in later life is extremely important, however awareness of the types of accommodation and support available varies. Raising awareness of the types of accommodation available should be prioritised to enable people to make informed decisions and select the type of accommodation most suitable for them. Home ownership is also extremely important therefore opportunities for different types of tenure, including shared ownership should be made available and well publicised.

The most trusted sources for help and advice when making a decision about where to live are family and advocacy groups like Age UK, therefore making sure comprehensive up to date information is readily available through a variety of means should be a priority.

When thinking about accommodation in later life the most important factors are privacy, access to outdoor space and living in a manageable home. Being part of a community and the benefits of living in appropriate accommodation in the right location are also viewed as key factors.

York needs to adapt to changing demographics and preferences, it should address the lack of purpose built affordable accommodation for retirement living. There is a demand for homes which are safe, manageable and affordable within the city. The city should seek to support developers who can provide homes which are age friendly. Pursuing this would have knock on beneficial effects for the city, it would free up more family homes into the market.

There appears to be a strong appetite for assistive technologies with the potential benefits recognised by many. With this in mind pursuing opportunities to integrate assistive technologies into accommodation for older people would seem prudent. In the future further research targeted at minority groups within the city would be beneficial to ensure that views are represented and all needs are met.

### Recommendations



In response to this research and to make sure that York's residents benefit from these findings the following actions are recommended:

- Considering the population increases that are expected over the next 10 years it is imperative that action is taken to ease the strain on housing supply, the city should look to attract developers to help to increase the number of age friendly housing units.
- The provision of housing in the city should include a mix of housing types and tenures to meet the needs of our older residents.
  - A focus should be on age friendly apartments and bungalows, but options including independent living schemes and provision of extra care should also be available
  - Opportunities should be taken to ensure that major housing sites have a 10% provision for age friendly accommodation
- Alongside any development there should be an information campaign which shows older people the types of options and support that are available. This should be a joint campaign between council services and advocacy networks, so that all partners are providing similar information. This would be a cost effective way of informing people so that they know their options. This should include:
  - Training for front line staff about housing options and the benefits of manageable homes
  - Easily accessible information about the housing options, the process for moving house and the financial implications of moving home.
  - Greater cohesion between the council and advocacy networks to ensure that information is shared and advice and support is consistent.
- This research should only be a starting point and those involved in supporting people to live well in later life must listen to people throughout the process about what is important to them
- Opportunities to develop and introduce assistive technology to support independence should be explored.
- To help make life long independence a reality there should be an increase in specialist housing advisors and advocates to provide more support.
- Consider the development of Help to Move schemes.
- Ensure that developments have an accessible transport network close by to avoid isolation

Ends

With thanks to all of our consultees and partners who participated in this research.

Thank You to Age UK York who helped to distribute the survey questionnaires and who have given their backing to the results and recommendations in this report.