



NORTH YORKSHIRE HOME CHOICE

The North Yorkshire Home Choice Partnership consulted on its allocations policy from 10 September 2012 to 2 November 2012.

The survey considered a number of areas that may need to be revised or potentially introduced following the initial 12 months of the NYHC choice based lettings partnership, the Localism Act 2011 and the Welfare Reform Act 2012.

The survey was completed by 326 people and this document contains the results.



Theme A: Considered who should qualify for the housing register

Questions 1 & 2 asked whether homeowners and older homeowners (60 or over) should be allowed to join the register.

Overall 67% said no to homeowners joining the register. Comments generally agreed that in the current economic climate that there were a number of homeowners that were struggling financially, whether it be through reduced income/job loss/redundancy or divorce to keep their homes and acknowledged that in cases of severe hardship the home may have to be sold due to arrears or to prevent the risk of repossession. In these instances there may be a need to allow homeowners onto the register. Additionally there was support in cases of family breakdown where a homeowner may not be in a position to buy another property.

It was noted support for older (60 or older) homeowners who may have little income to keep up the standard of their property or make adaptations to help with declining health needs or looking to liquidate their assets to provide an improved standard of living. It was agreed that many older people wanted to maintain their independence and move from homeownership into sheltered housing. Overall 66% agreed that older homeowners (60 or more) should be allowed to join the housing register.

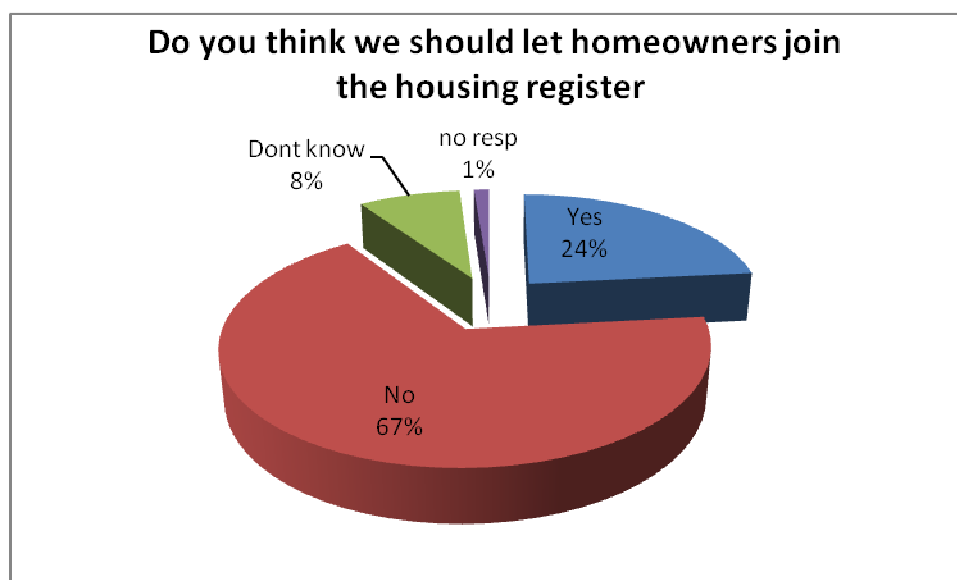
Questions 5 & 6 asked what was considered to be a reasonable threshold of gross annual income and assets for applicants being allowed onto the housing register.

In general those who left a comment felt that it was difficult to set income/savings thresholds. Those with a higher income may potentially have more outgoings. Some thought that social housing should be for those on low incomes or benefits only. Those with high incomes or assets should be directed to private landlords as they had the means to pay high rents. In today's financial markets higher deposits were needed to obtain a mortgage and this may not be achievable for many years.

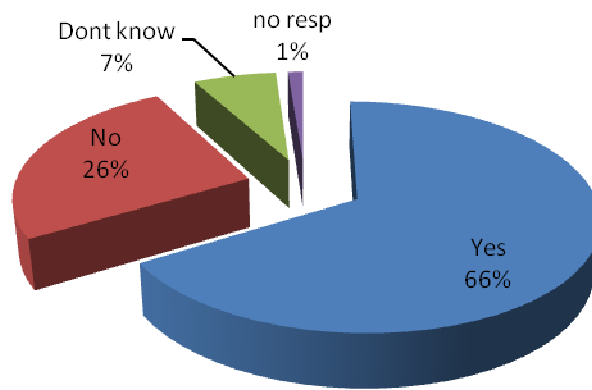
Question 6, 7 & 8 asked should we exclude from joining the register those without a local connection, recognised housing need or those who have a poor tenancy records. A poor tenancy record could include those with rent arrears, breaches of tenancy or serious anti social behaviour records.

Most comments to these questions centred on poor tenancy. 64% answered no to letting people with a poor tenancy record join the housing register. There were clear comments for the need to establish why people had arrears. Many stated that arrears could have resulted in the reduction of income through job loss, retirement or illness both mental and physical and not as a result of someone refusing to pay. There were clear comments about the need to exclude those with anti social behaviour issues unless there was evidence to support a change in lifestyle or a problem free period examples given ranged 6 months to 3 years.

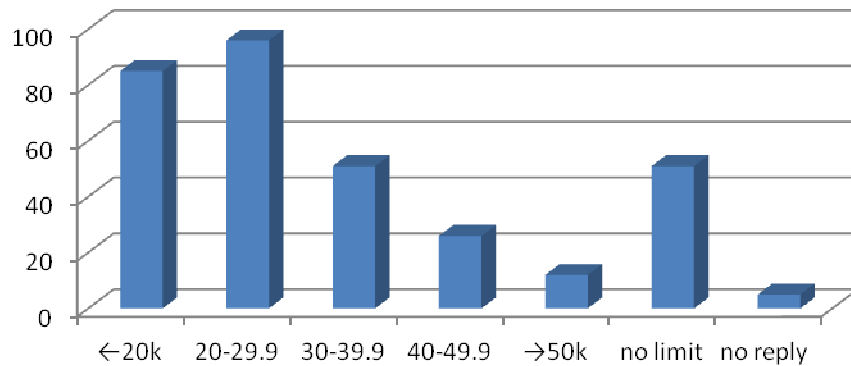
Currently those applicants with no housing need are placed in the bronze band. 53% responded that those with no housing need should not be allowed to join the register.



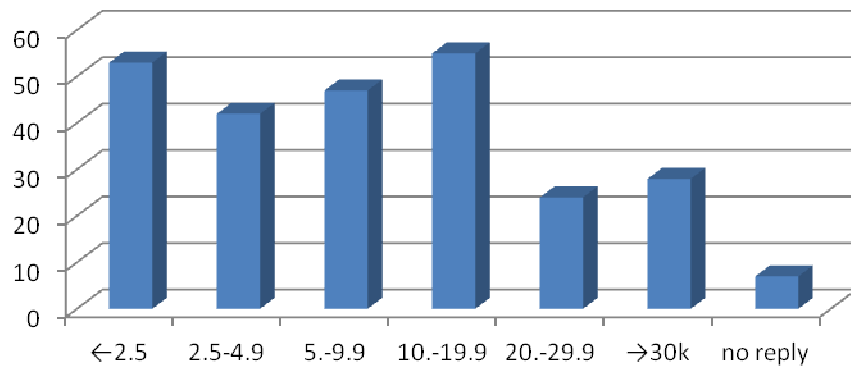
**Do you think older homeowners (aged 60 +)
should be allowed to join the housing register**



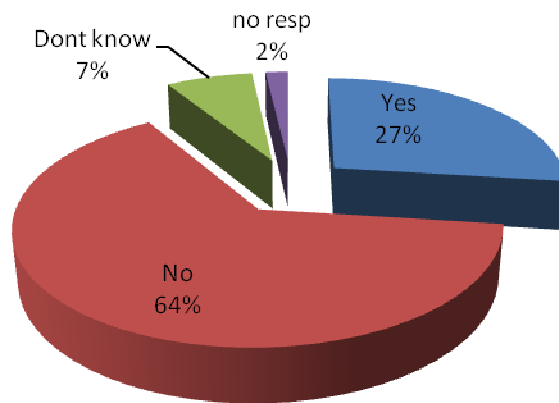
What do you consider is a reasonable threshold of annual gross household income for accepting applicants onto the housing register?



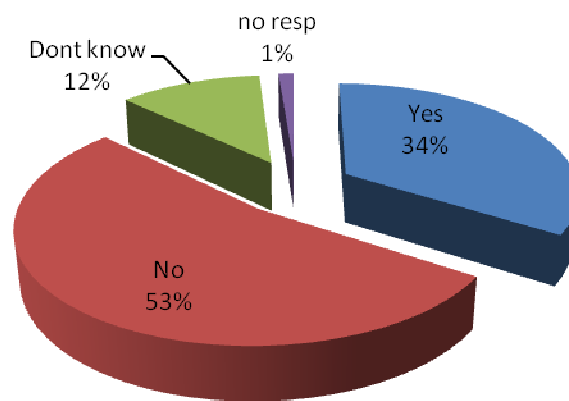
What do you consider to be a reasonable threshold for assets when accepting applicants onto the housing register?

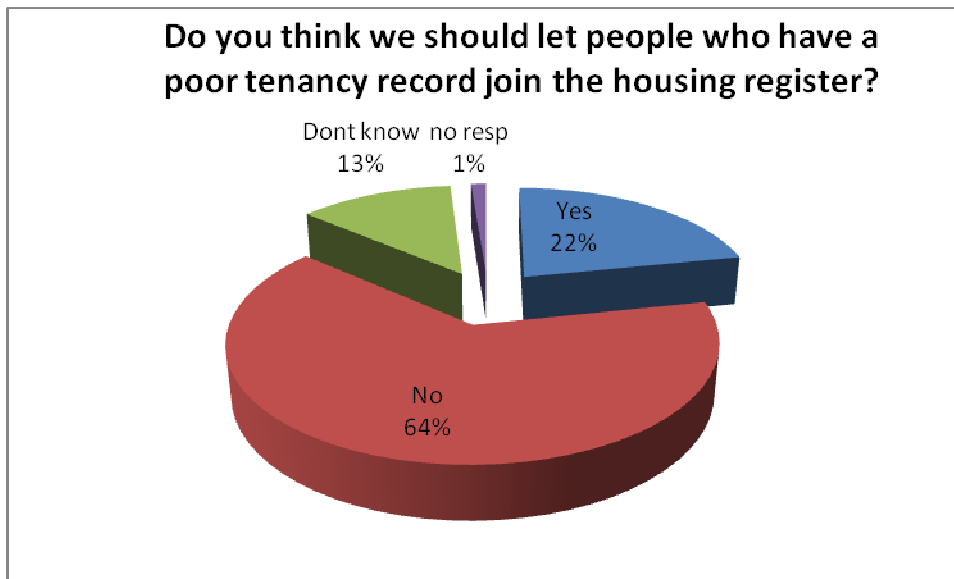


Should we let people from outside the NYHC area join the register



Should people with no recognised housing need be able to join the register





Theme B asked should extra preference be given to certain groups.

Questions 10, 11, 12 and 13 asked if additional preference should be given to applicants such as those in the armed forces, foster carers, those who make a contribution to the neighbourhood or those granted good neighbour standard. (Good neighbour standard is defined as those who have lived at there current property for 3 years, adhere to their tenancy agreement, have no neighbour issues, pay their rent on time and keep their property in good repair)

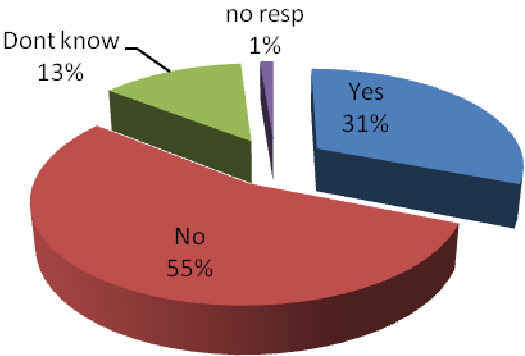
55% of those surveyed did not believe that the armed forces should be given additional priority above their housing needs. Comments suggested that military personnel should plan ahead and make provision for their future housing requirements in conjunction with their discharge date.

64% agreed foster carers should be considered for an extra bedroom although there were few comments. Those that did comment highlighted the concern over the “bedroom tax” in the event of no placement, that giving foster carer’s priority would discriminate against families wanting more room and foster carers need the extra room to enable them to foster.

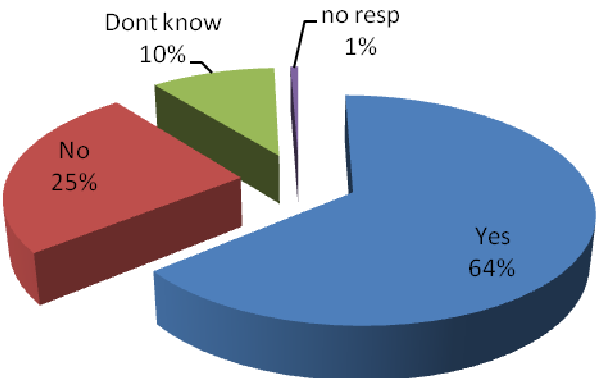
Many people made a comment that supported the good neighbour scheme believing we should reward those who look after their property although 41% did not think that there should be an additional preference.

There were concerns that it would be difficult to define and monitor what a substantial contribution to the community was. How would it be monitored? Why would helping the community give someone a priority? Some would like to be able to make a contribution but due to a disability or in full time work may not be able to contribute. 50% said no to giving additional priority.

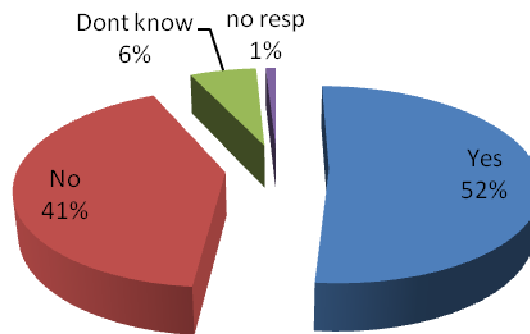
Do you think additional preference should be granted to military service personnel, over and above their housing need?



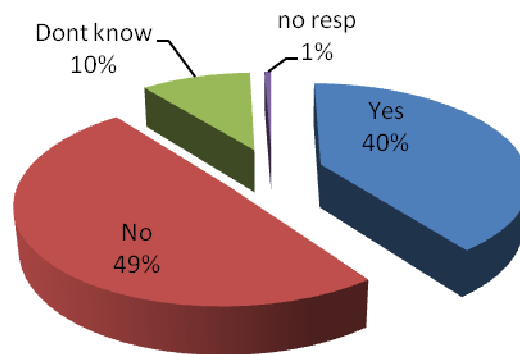
Should registered foster carers be considered for properties with extra bedrooms to foster



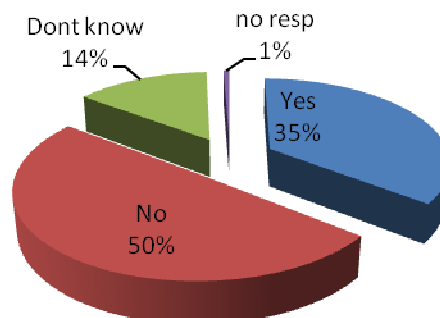
Do you agree that 'Good Tenants' should be given additional preference over and above their housing need?



Do you think households in work should be given additional preference over and above their housing need?



Do you think households who make a substantial contribution to the community be given additional preference over and above their housing need?

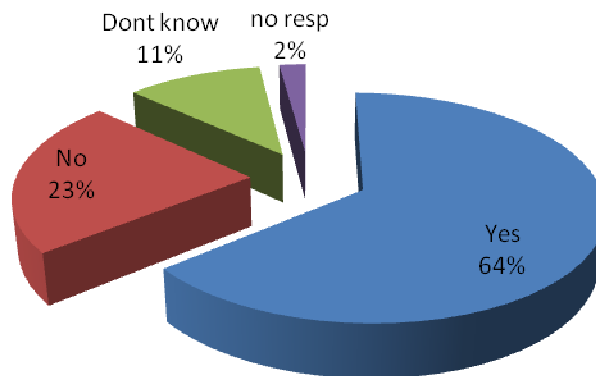


Theme C of the survey considered the allocation of property from matching room to assessed need, statutory homeless and declining a property after a successful bid.

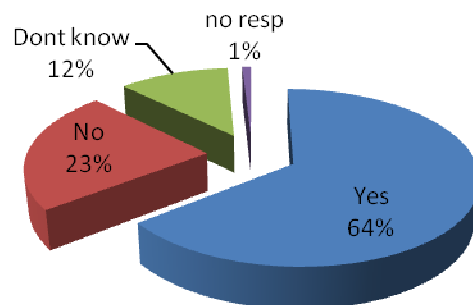
Question 15 asked if applicants should be allocated a property based on housing need and under what circumstances if any should be taken into account. 64% voted that NYHC should allocate property size to assessed housing need. However a high percentage of comments supported the need to look at those with health and wellbeing grounds, especially for carers. Surprisingly there were a higher number of comments in favour of foster carers than in response to Q11. The need to consider parents with joint custody, the age of children sharing a bedroom and the difference in room sizes also came into circumstances for consideration.

The majority of comments were in respect of successful bidding and subsequent property refusal. and why would someone bid if they did not want the property. 69% believed that being able to refuse 5 properties was too many and favoured it being reduced to 3. If there was a valid reason to decline and a couple of examples were offered as to change of work/school/bereavement this would be acceptable. Interestingly comments queried if there was sufficient information on the property details. Would it be possible to see internal layouts/pictures? 70% agreed that applicants should be suspended from the register for continually refusing properties but there was no clear result as to how long for.

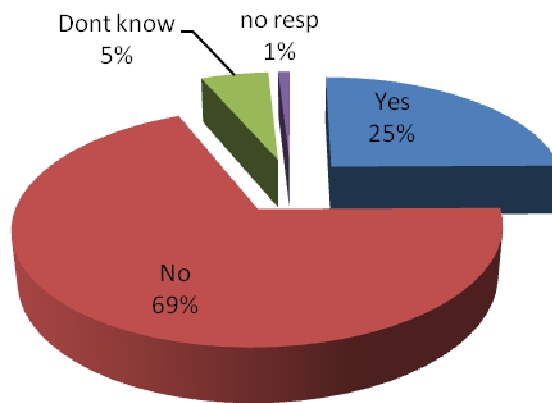
Do you agree that NYHC allocate property size based on assessed housing need only?



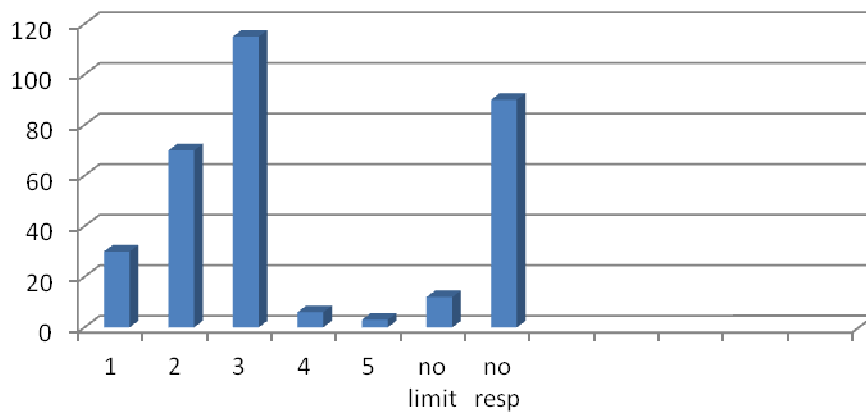
Do you think that accepted homeless applicants should be given one direct offer of a suitable property within the local authority area, who accepted a duty to house?



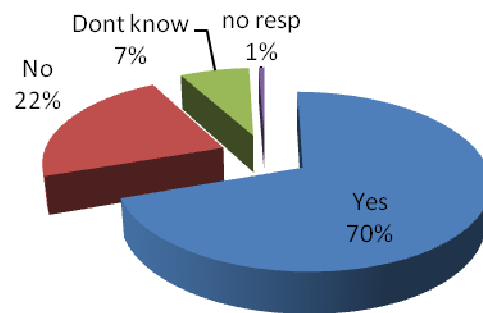
Do you agree that applicants should be able to refuse 5 properties after sucessfully bidding ?



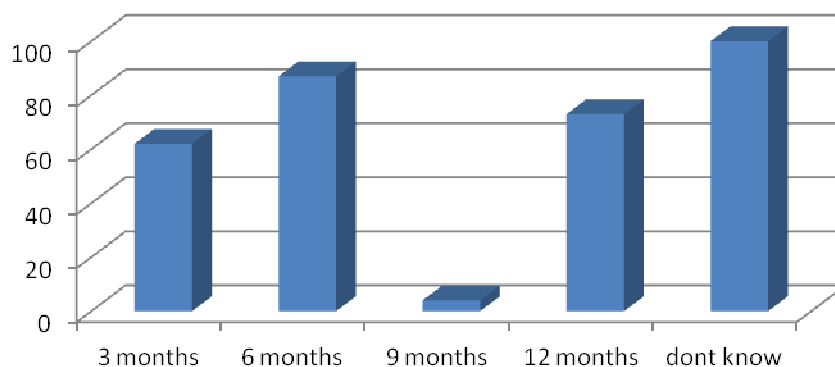
Those who answered no were asked how many refusals would they consider to be acceptable?



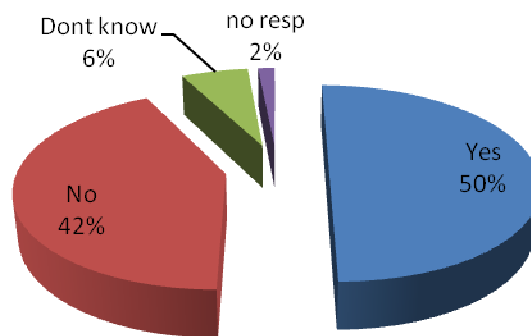
Do you think that applicants who refuse the maximum number of properties should be removed from the register for a specified period?



Those who answered yes were asked how long should the applicant be removed from the housing register?

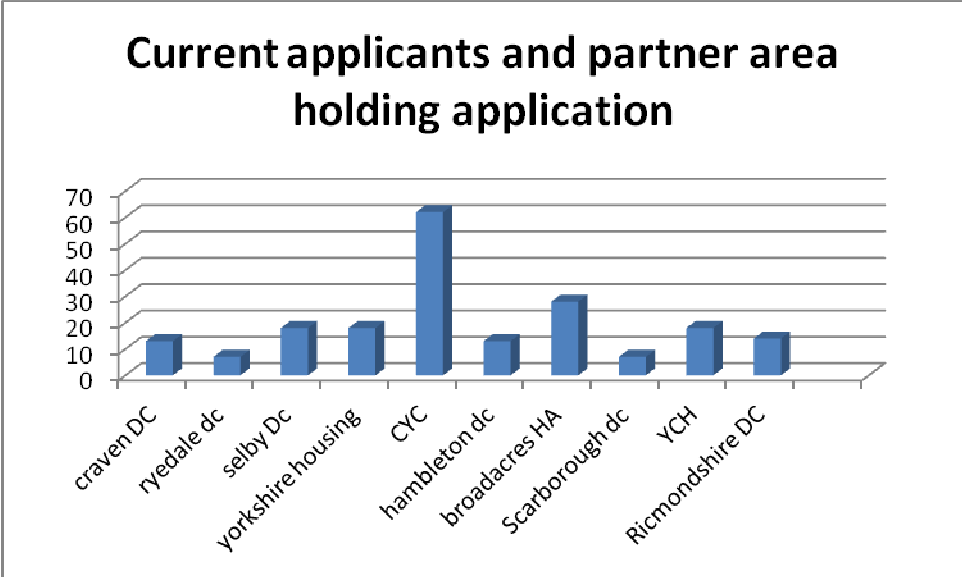
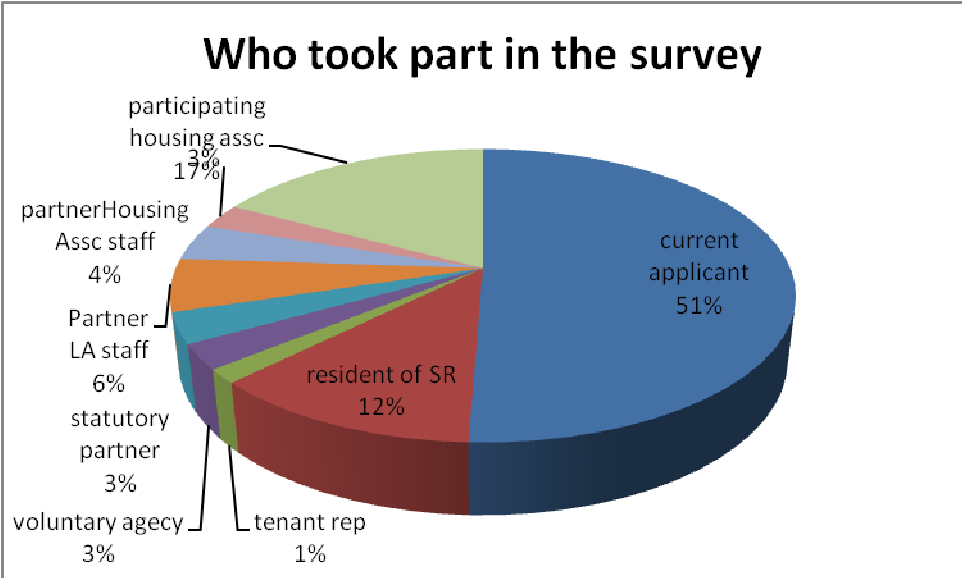


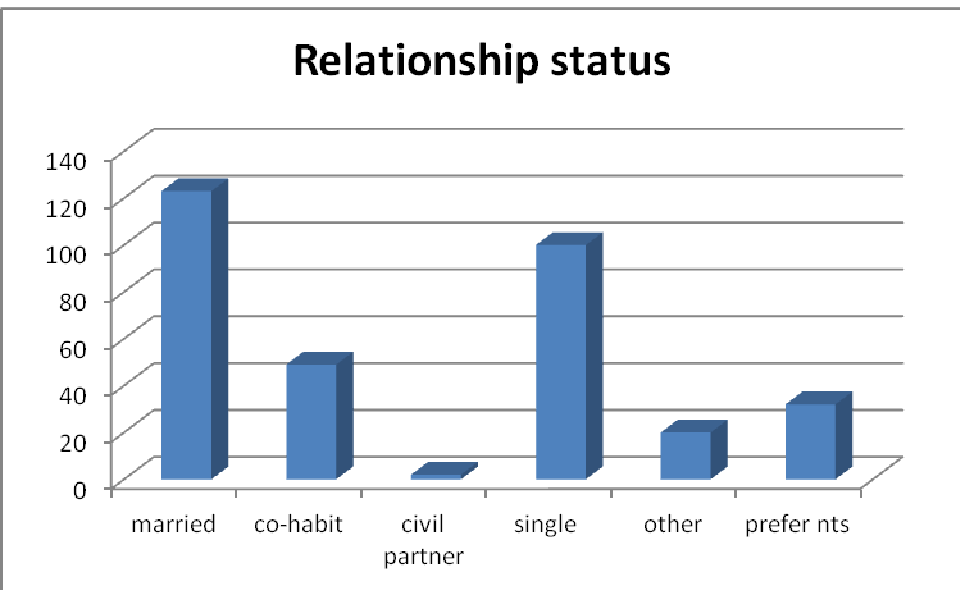
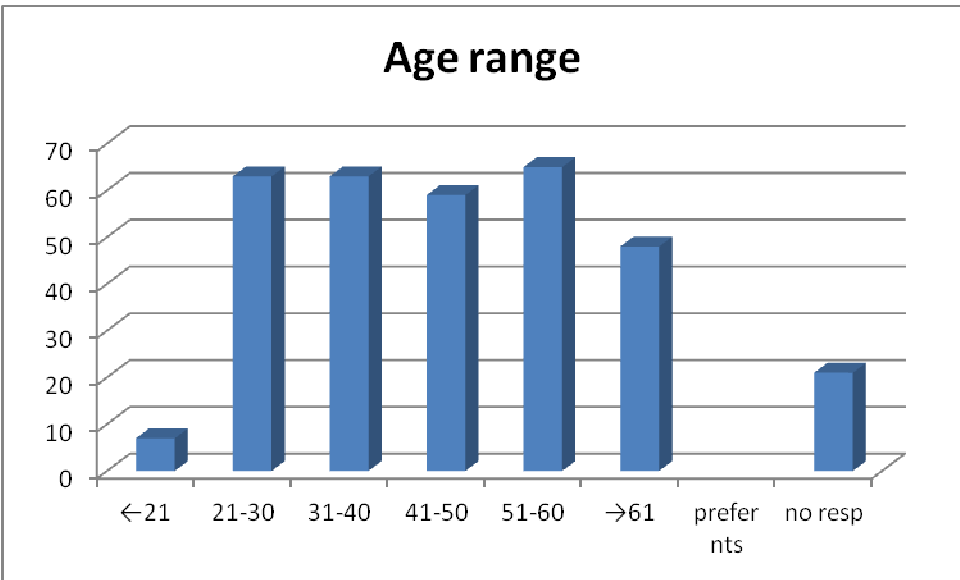
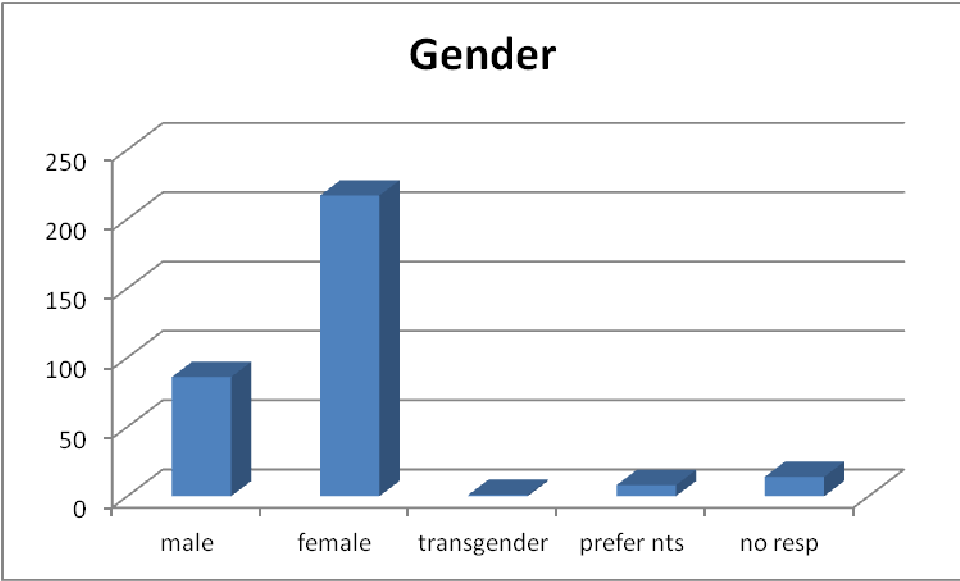
Do you think that applicants who have not made an active bid during a 12 month period be automatically removed from the housing register



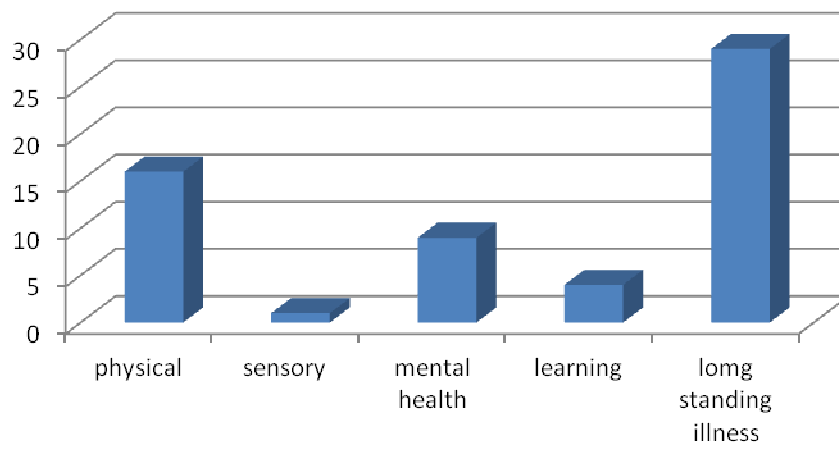
For a full list of customer responses please refer to appendix 1

EQUALITY & DIVERSITY MONITORING

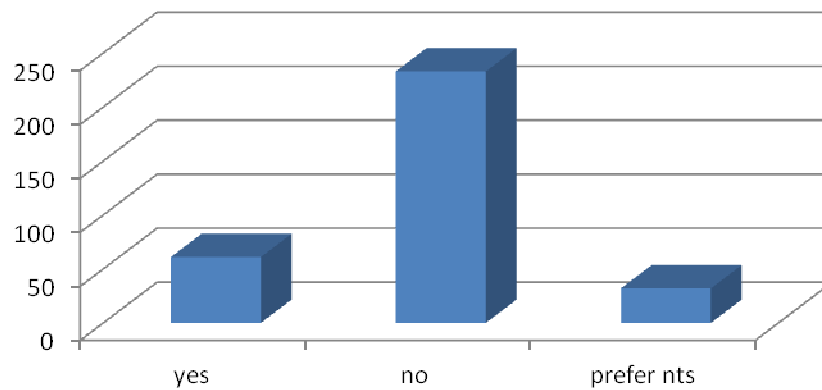




Type of disability



Do you consider yourself to have a disability



Ethnic group

