

## Appendix 1 Changes to Allocations Scheme Consultation

Consultation has been carried out with the public and partners on the proposed changes to the allocations scheme. The consultation ran from 22 March 2021 to 12 May 2021 and there was a total of 684 responses received. The consultation was delivered electronically with a link being included in the all resident email that reaches approx. 95,000 residents, along with emails and text being sent to all Reading Borough Council tenants and applicants on the Housing Register. The link was also shared with stakeholders and Registered Providers.

### Overview of proposed changes

Reading Borough Council proposed the following changes to support improved delivery of the following 2 themes:

- Sustainable Communities
- Transparency and Fairness

#### Sustainable Communities

It is recognised that the creation of well balanced and sustainable communities improves outcomes for residents and reduces anti-social behaviour. Reading Borough Council want residents to be invested in their communities and to improve opportunities for those that wish to move elsewhere within the borough. These changes are:

- Improve tenant mobility
  - To support satisfaction and quality of life and give tenants a greater sense of fairness which will enable tenants to invest in their homes and communities
- Improve offer to key workers
  - To ensure that our key workers have access to affordable accommodation to enable retention of essential service providers within the borough
- Tenant behaviour sanctions
  - To enable the local authority to make decisions on rehousing those who have been evicted as a result of anti-social behaviour to ensure that any future behaviour does not impact our communities

#### Transparency and Fairness

We know that social housing is a very important resource to our communities and that the fairness of this process is a high priority for us and our customers. The current allocations scheme sets out how we prioritise households for social housing and how social housing is allocated. We have identified 2 changes that we believe would make the scheme all the more transparent: :

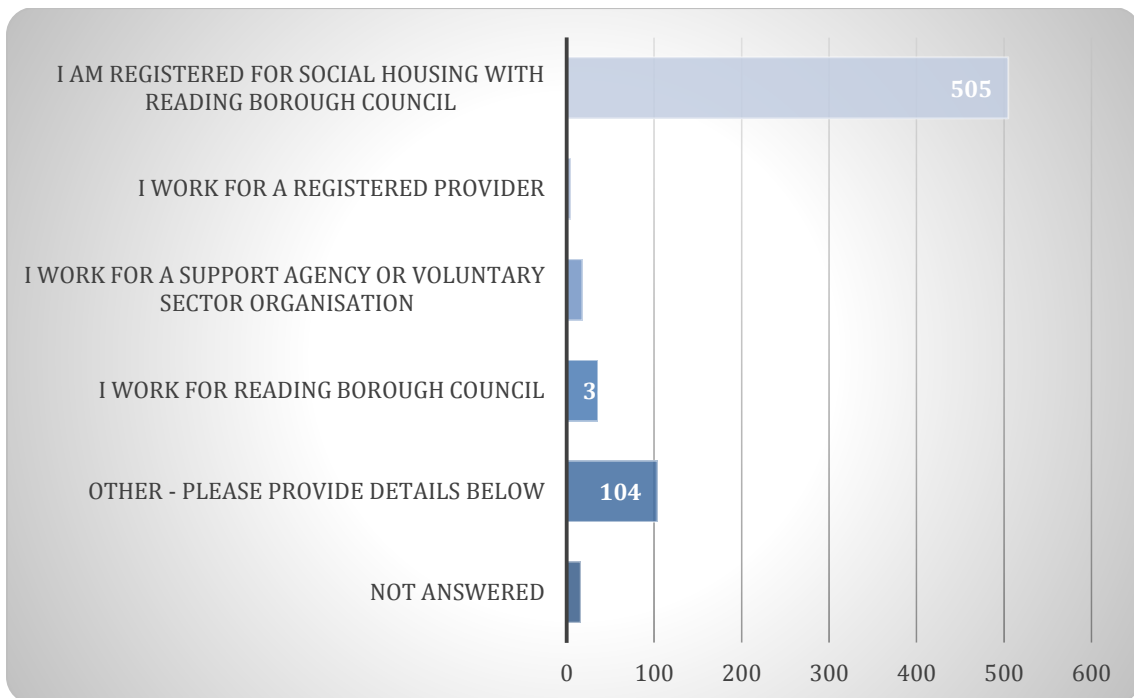
- Reducing the number of bands
  - Currently the scheme has 6 bands, reducing this will simplify the process for both applicants and staff and will set out more clearly the priority that an applicant’s situation attracts, making it more transparent
- To hold a separate register for those who require adapted homes
  - Currently those who require significant adaptations, and the properties that can accommodate those adaptations, are considered alongside everyone else. This change would make it easier for those requiring adapted accommodation to access them.

### Demographic of responses

This is an overview of the demographic of the responses received which is relevant to the consultation.

### Interest

There were 668 responses to this part of the question.



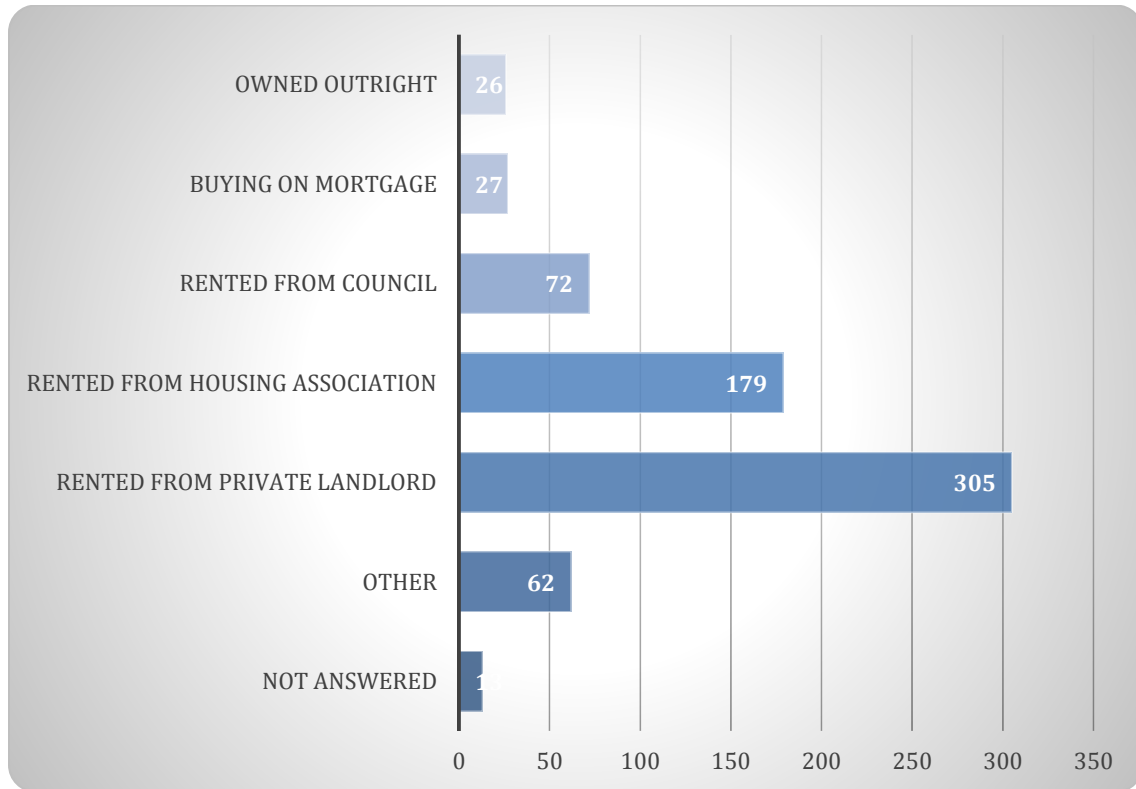
Option	Total	Percent
<b>I am registered for social housing with Reading Borough Council</b>	505	73.83%
<b>I work for a Registered Provider</b>	5	0.73%
<b>I work for a support agency or voluntary sector organisation</b>	18	2.63%
<b>I work for Reading Borough Council</b>	36	5.26%
<b>Other - please provide details below</b>	104	15.20%
<b>Not Answered</b>	16	2.34%

Other, please give details

Many of the responses from others identified as key workers, or none of the above applied but they still had an interest in the development of the allocations scheme, either through residency in the borough, or past experiences of the allocations scheme.

### Current accommodation

There were 671 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
<b>Owned outright</b>	26	3.80%
<b>Buying on mortgage</b>	27	3.95%
<b>Rented from Council</b>	72	10.53%
<b>Rented from Housing Association</b>	179	26.17%
<b>Rented from private landlord</b>	305	44.59%
<b>Other</b>	62	9.06%
<b>Not Answered</b>	13	1.90%

### If other, please give details

The majority of those who responded as other are residing with friends and family, with some being in supported or hostel accommodation.

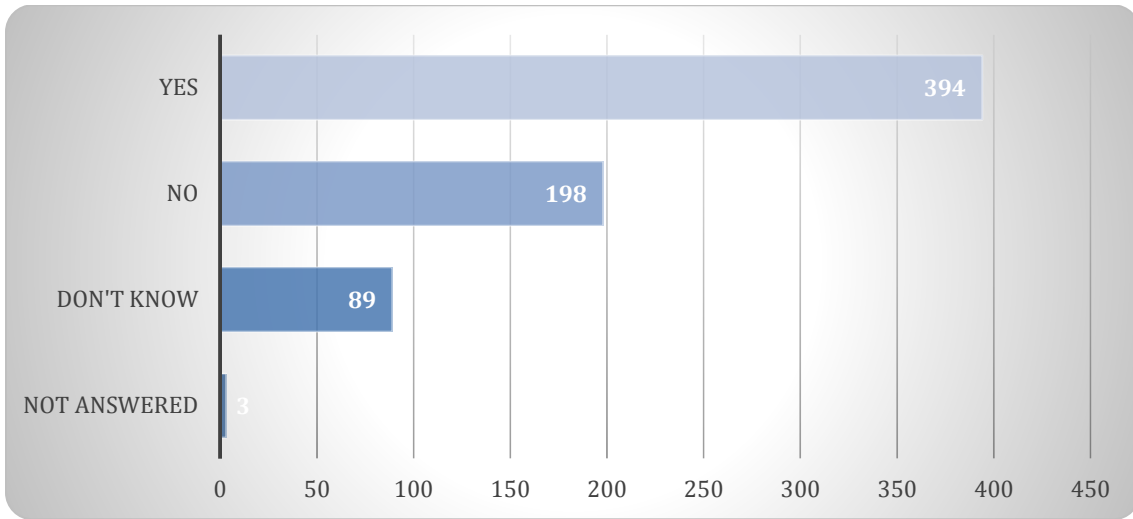
All other equality information is included in Appendix 1.

### Responses to Consultation Questions

#### Well balanced sustainable communities

**Award some priority to existing RBC tenants who wish to move regardless of need**

There were 681 responses to this part of the question.

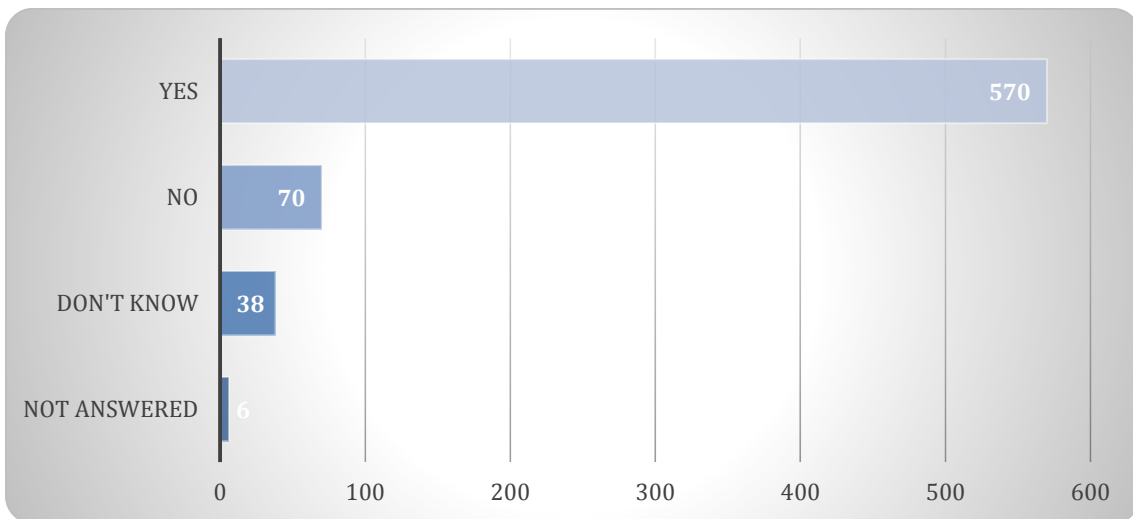


Option	Total	Percent
Yes	394	57.60%
No	198	28.95%
Don't know	89	13.01%
Not Answered	3	0.44%

Whilst it is expected that those who currently rent from the social housing would agree with this, and we saw approx. 70% in favour of this proposed change, it is of interest to note that 52% of those who responded from private rented sector tenancies also agreed with this change.

#### **Award further priority to severely overcrowded tenants**

There were 678 responses to this part of the question.



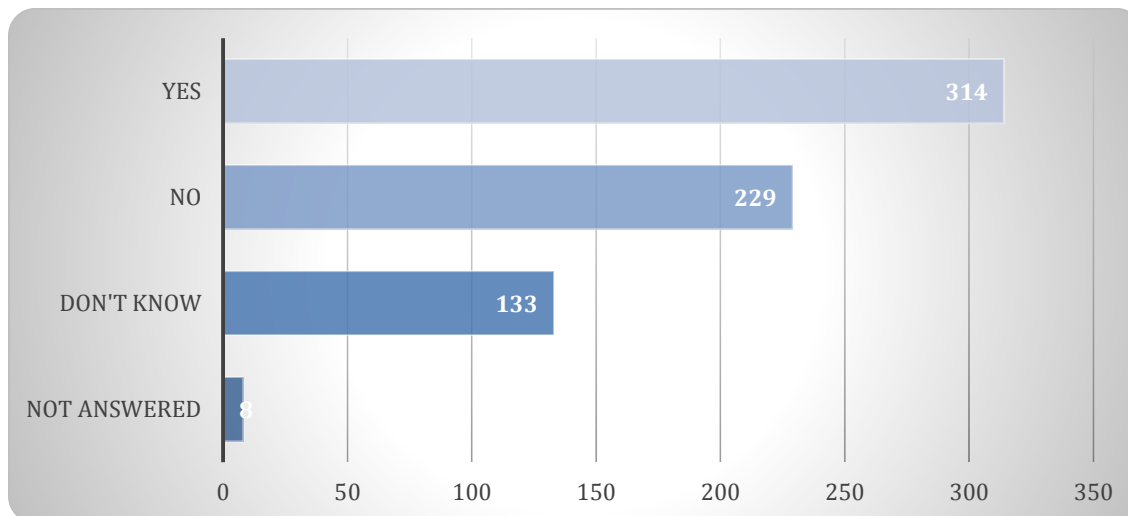
Option	Total	Percent
Yes	570	83.33%
No	70	10.23%
Don't know	38	5.56%

<b>Not Answered</b>	6	0.88%
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Of those who rent privately there is a very high response in favour of this proposed change and the 83% is very consistent across the tenure of those responses.

### **Remove the residency criteria for key workers**

There were 676 responses to this part of the question.

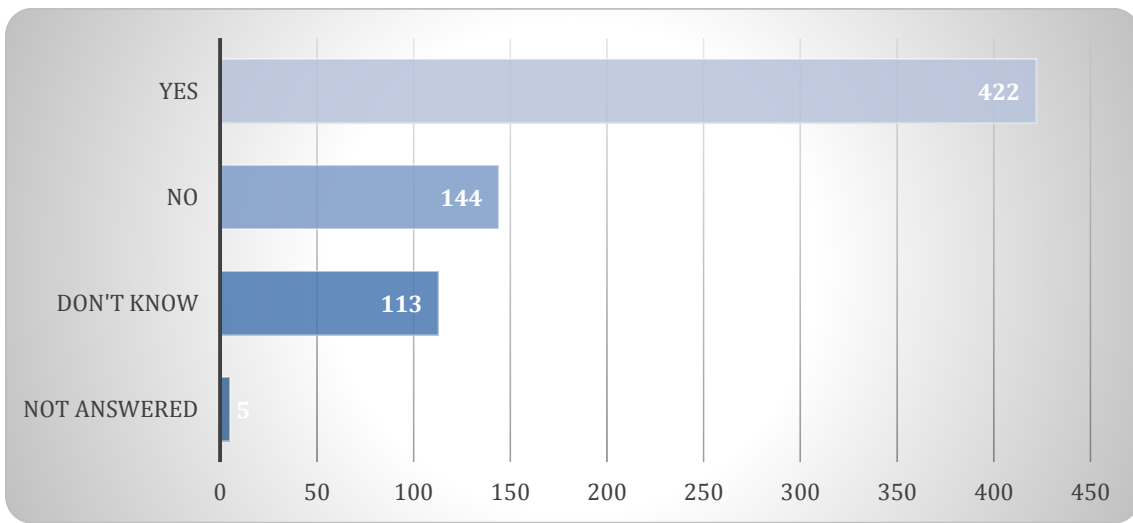


Option	Total	Percent
<b>Yes</b>	314	45.91%
<b>No</b>	229	33.48%
<b>Don't know</b>	133	19.44%
<b>Not Answered</b>	8	1.17%

46% of everyone who responded agreed with this proposed change. There was a high agreement from those who rent privately and from other housing associations, however there were a high percentage, 25% of council tenants who did not know if this change would help us to achieve our aim of balanced communities. 31% of council tenants agreed. In response to this question, whilst yes came out as an overall favour, the people who didn't know was high overall at 19% which was weighted as 25% from those who rent from the council.

### **Prioritise key workers by providing a “quota” of properties each year for this group**

There were 679 responses to this part of the question.

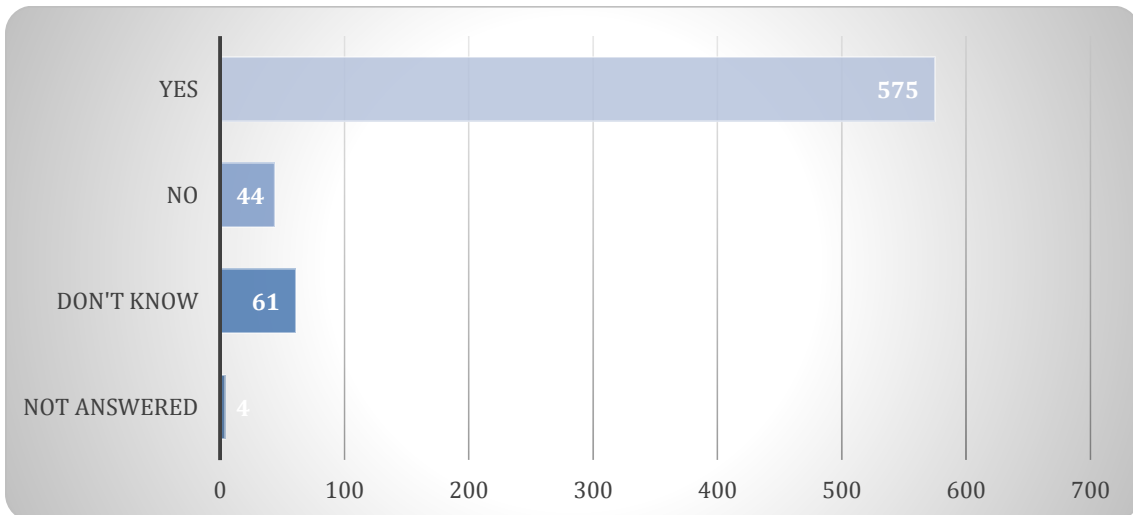


Option	Total	Percent
Yes	422	61.70%
No	144	21.05%
Don't know	113	16.52%
Not Answered	5	0.73%

The responses to this question are generally accepted as meeting the aims at 62%. 46% of the positive response were from those renting privately which equated to 63% of all response from those residing in private accommodation. 50% of those residing in council accommodation agreed to this change with 22% advising that they didn't know if this would help to achieve the aim of a balanced community.

**Assess each individuals' behaviours on a case by case basis instead of a set period for everyone**

There were 680 responses to this part of the question.



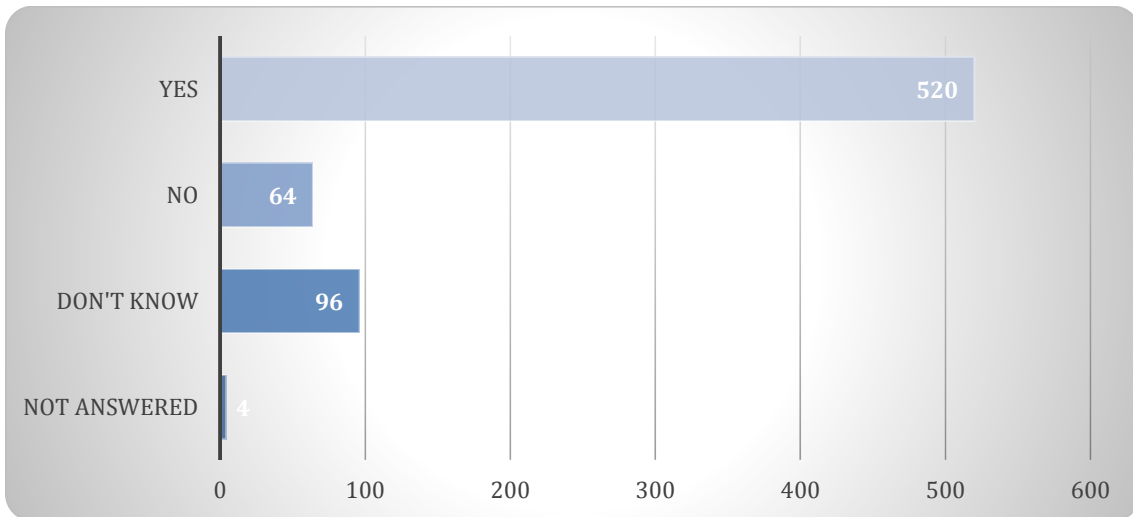
Option	Total	Percent
Yes	575	84.06%
No	44	6.43%

<b>Don't know</b>	61	8.92%
<b>Not Answered</b>	4	0.58%

There is a high overall percentage of those who agree that each case should be considered on an individual basis with 84% in agreement across the tenure types. Only 5% of social housing tenants and 7% of those living in the private sector did not agree that this would help achieve the aim. 9% across both tenures didn't know.

### **Increase the sanction for those who have been previously evicted for anti-social behaviour to 5-10 years**

There were 680 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
<b>Yes</b>	520	76.02%
<b>No</b>	64	9.36%
<b>Don't know</b>	96	14.04%
<b>Not Answered</b>	4	0.58%

The response in favour of this change was overall high across the different tenure types at 76%. Only 7% of those currently living in social housing did not agree with this change, and 13% didn't know if this would help the achieve the aim. The percentages were consistent across the tenure type for those who did not agree or didn't know.

### **Please detail here any alternatives that you think would help us to achieve this aim**

There were 200 responses to this part of the question.

Overview of recurrent alternatives:

- Priority to be given based on time waiting
- Priority to key workers
- Priority for those who are overcrowded

- Priority for single parents
- To assist those who are in private rented prior to existing tenants
- To give priority to those who are working and on a low income
- Priority for social housing should be given as a result of the high rents in the private sector

**Please provide any comments on these proposed changes**

There were 167 responses to this part of the question.

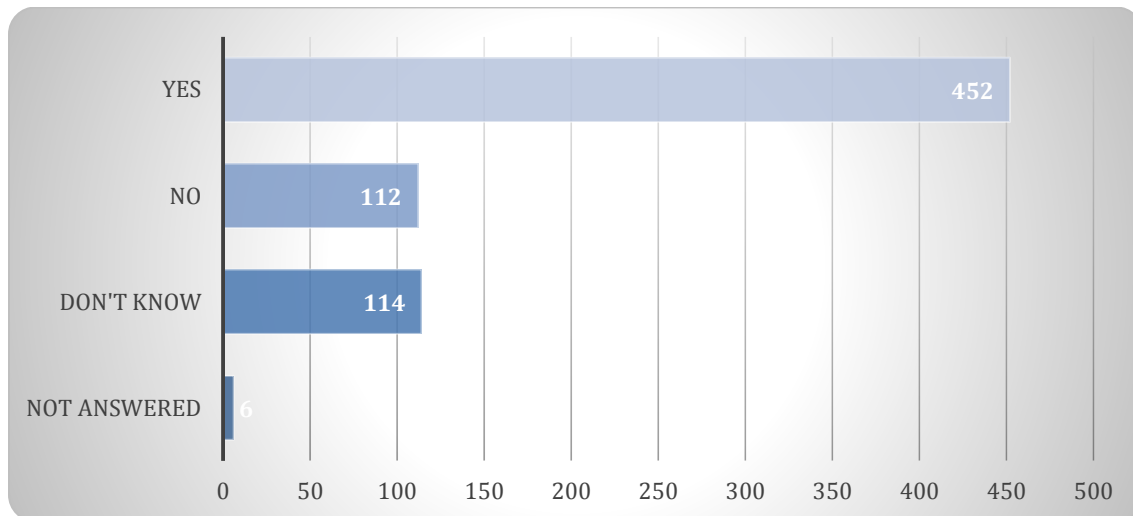
Overview of recurrent comments on the proposed changes. Many of the comments in this section duplicated the responses in the question above.

- Confusion over the definition of key workers, especially as those who were classified as key workers during the pandemic are not listed
- Sanctions for ASB should be considered on a case by case basis and those who are committed to change should have recognition for this
- Social housing supply needs to be increased

**Clear and fair allocations scheme**

**Reduce the number of priority bands**

There were 678 responses to this part of the question.



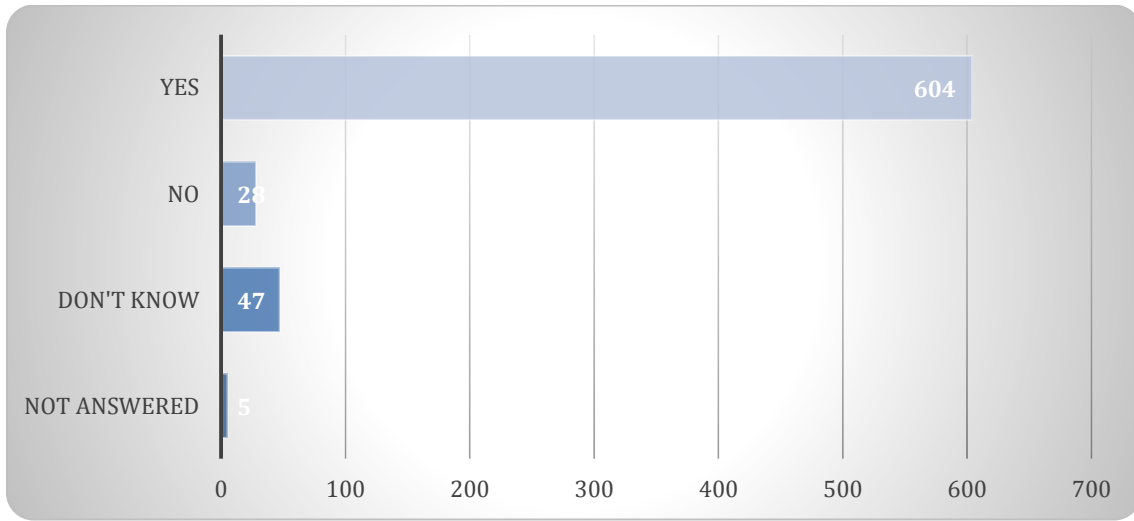
Option	Total	Percent
Yes	452	66.08%
No	112	16.37%
Don't know	114	16.67%
Not Answered	6	0.88%

The overall outcome of this question was in favour of this change at 66%. The percentage of those who did not agree or who did not know if this would help to achieve the aim is consistent across all tenure types at approx. 16%.



### Put in place a separate register for those who require significant adaptations

There were 679 responses to this part of the question.

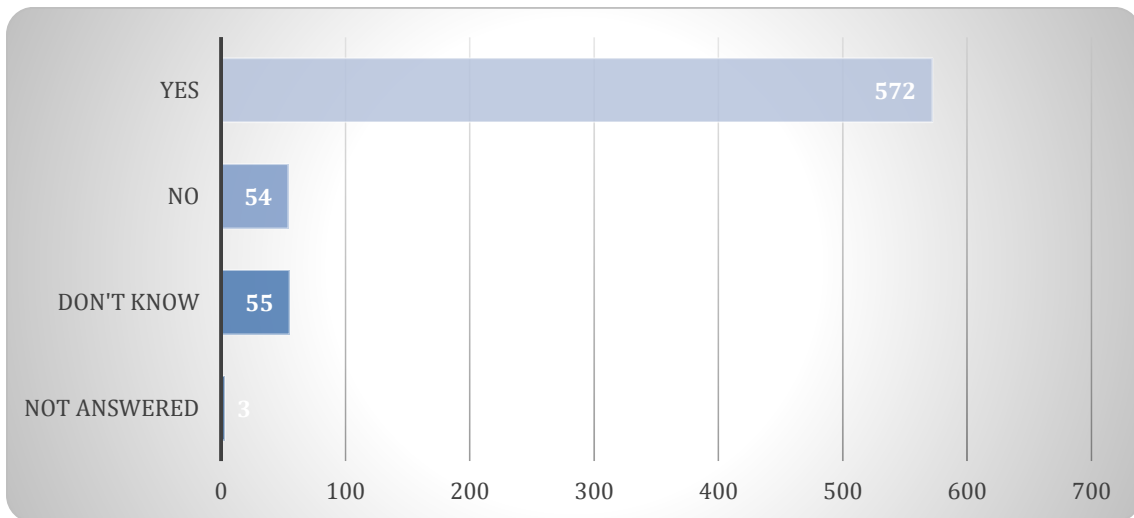


Option	Total	Percent
Yes	604	88.30%
No	28	4.09%
Don't know	47	6.87%
Not Answered	5	0.73%

The overall outcome of the response to this question, across all tenure types was positive and consistent at 88%.

### Make adapted or adaptable properties only available to those that need them

There were 681 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Yes	572	83.63%

<b>No</b>	54	7.89%
<b>Don't know</b>	55	8.04%
<b>Not Answered</b>	3	0.44%

The overall outcome of the response to this question, across all tenure types was positive and consistent at 83%.

**Please detail here any alternatives that you think would help us to achieve this aim**

There were 88 responses to this part of the question.

Overview of recurrent alternatives:

- Separate register for over 55's

**Please provide any comments on these proposed changes**

There were 79 responses to this part of the question.

Overview of recurrent comments:

- Frustration over lack of understanding of banding, and false hope for those who have been assessed as No Priority for Housing

Many of the comment across the 4 free text questions have been duplicated and therefore the comments as a whole across these 4 questions is a fair reflection of the feedback.

**Outcome**

The feedback supports the proposed changes to the allocations scheme.

The following changes will be made as a result of the responses to the consultation:

- The number of priority bands will be reduced from 6 to 5 which will include a band to reflect those who do not have any priority for housing. There will be additional priority awarded for council tenants who wish to register for a move and for those council tenants who are considered to be severely overcrowded.
- There will be a separate register for those who require adaptations to their home and adapted, or homes that lend themselves to adaptations, will only be advertised for this group.
- The residency criteria will be removed for those who are defined as a key worker and who have permanent employment in Reading and a number of properties will be set aside each year for this group by way of a "quota".
- The sanction for those evicted for Anti-Social Behaviour will be increased from 3 to 5-10 years, however each sanction will be assessed on a case by case basis.

**Other changes that were not included in the consultation**

Additional changes detailed in the report that went to Housing, Neighbourhood and Leisure Committee which we have not included in the consultation are as follows:

- Technical amendments to the scheme including bringing the allocations scheme up to date with recent legislative changes, such as the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017
- Awarding flexible tenancies for key worker accommodation
- The definition of a key worker
- Review and define the Local Lettings Policies
- Include Pre-Tenancy Training in the allocations scheme

Throughout the feedback on the consultation, considering that the majority of responses were from those in private rented accommodation who are registered on Homechoice at Reading, there seemed to be a lot of frustration about people's situations and unfairness of others situations. Many of the comments made were in relation to situations already considered in the current allocations scheme and demonstrated a lack of understanding on how the scheme is applied. Although the consultation supports the proposed changes, as a result of the feedback, it would be important to make sure that there is a robust overview document, which clearly sets out how the allocation scheme operates to share with applicants.

### Timescales for implementation

The following sets out the timescales for the adoption of the new allocations scheme and implementation.

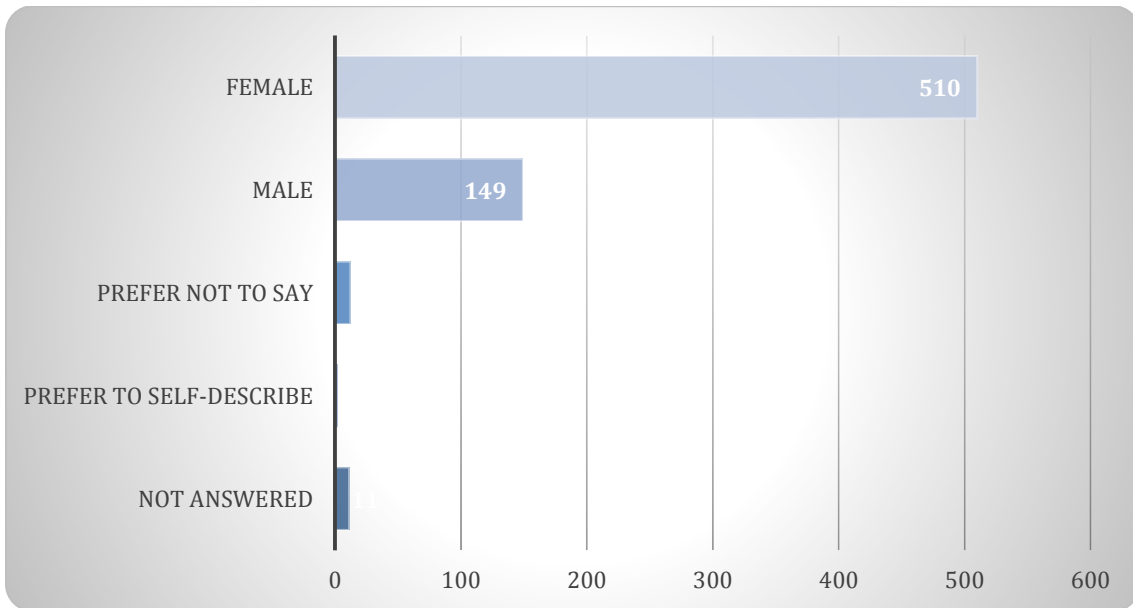
	<b>Date</b>
Draft to internal housing partners for comment	1 <sup>st</sup> – 31 <sup>st</sup> July
Draft to Legal for Comment	1 <sup>st</sup> – 31 <sup>st</sup> August
Final amendments completed	15 <sup>th</sup> September
CMT / LCB / AB Reports	October 2021
Housing, Neighbourhood and Leisure Committee approval	10 <sup>th</sup> November 2021
Implementation	March / April 2022

The new allocations scheme will be implemented in line with the new IT system, with the completion set for April 2022.

## Appendix 1

### Gender

There were 673 responses to this part of the question.



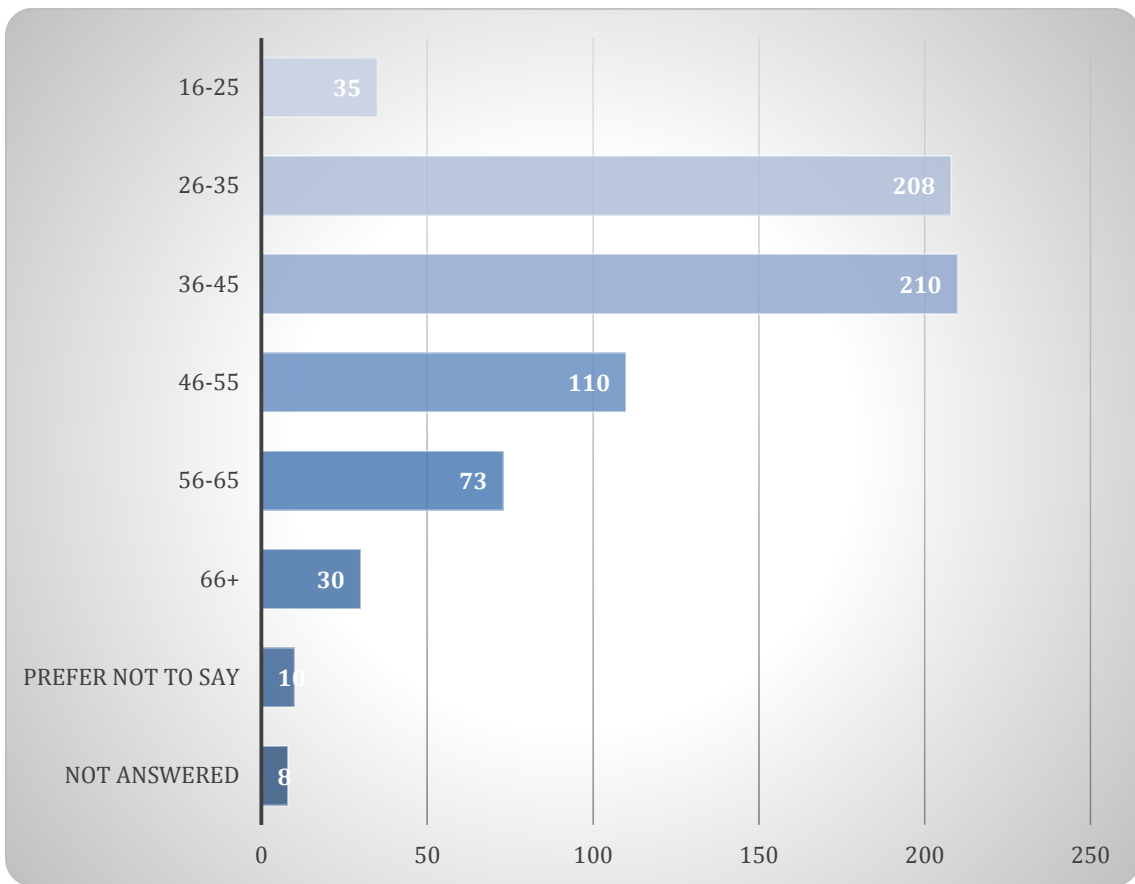
Option	Total	Percent
Female	510	74.56%
Male	149	21.78%
Prefer not to say	12	1.75%
Prefer to self-describe	2	0.29%
Not Answered	11	1.61%

### If you prefer to self-describe, please say here

There were 10 responses to this part of the question.

### Age Group

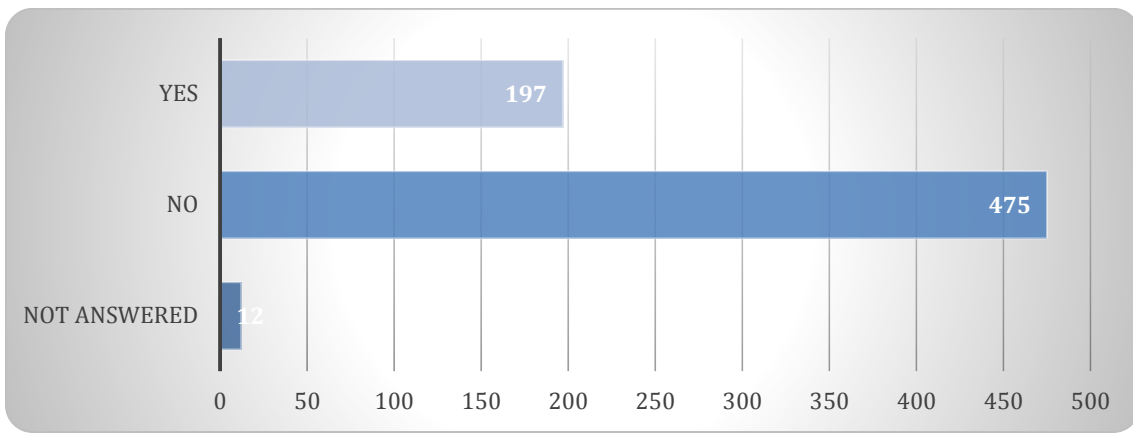
There were 676 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
<b>Under 16</b>	0	0.00%
<b>16-25</b>	35	5.12%
<b>26-35</b>	208	30.41%
<b>36-45</b>	210	30.70%
<b>46-55</b>	110	16.08%
<b>56-65</b>	73	10.67%
<b>66+</b>	30	4.39%
<b>Prefer not to say</b>	10	1.46%
<b>Not Answered</b>	8	1.17%

### Disability

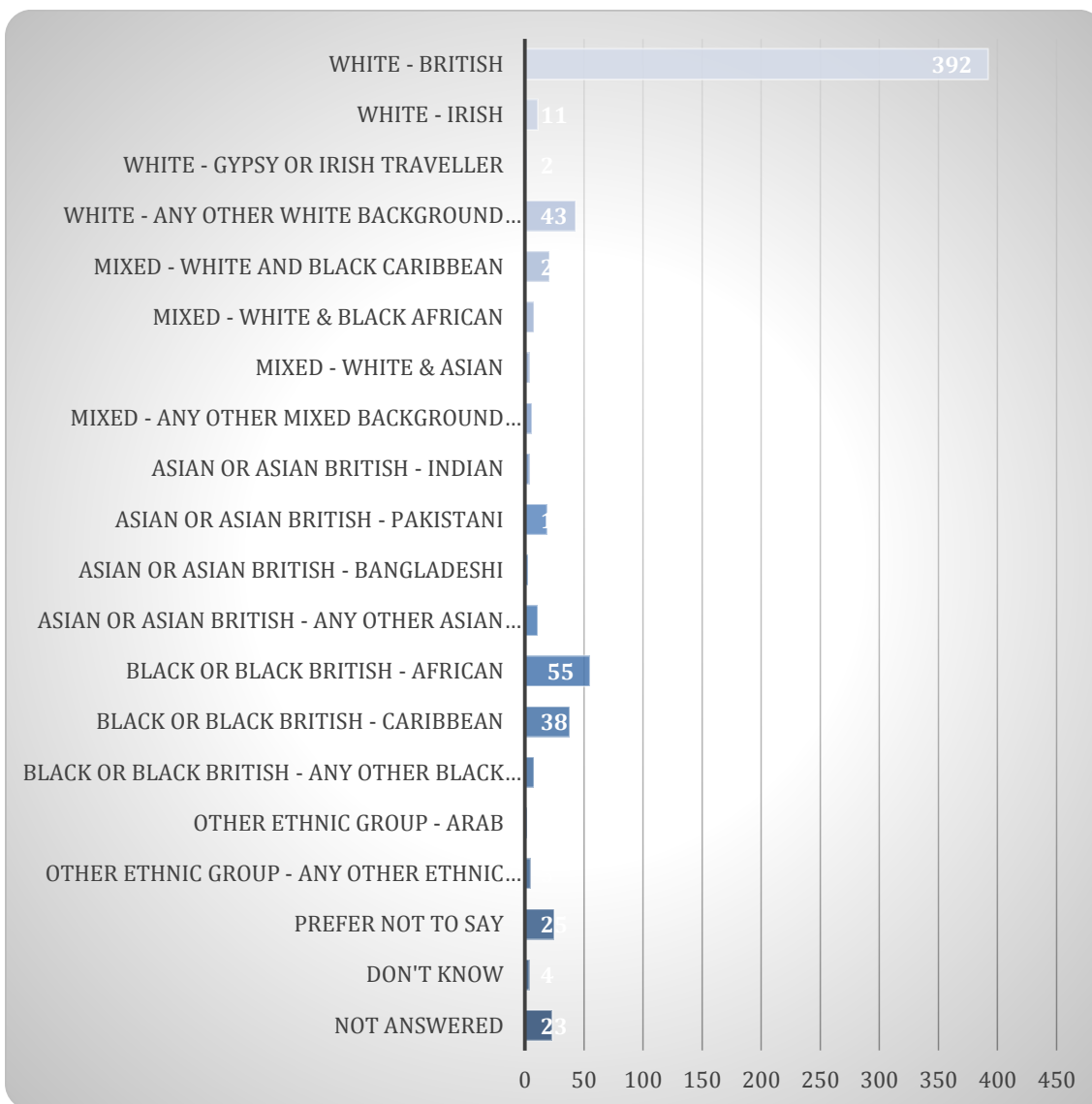
There were 672 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Yes	197	28.80%
No	475	69.44%
Not Answered	12	1.75%

### Ethnic group

There were 661 responses to this part of the question.

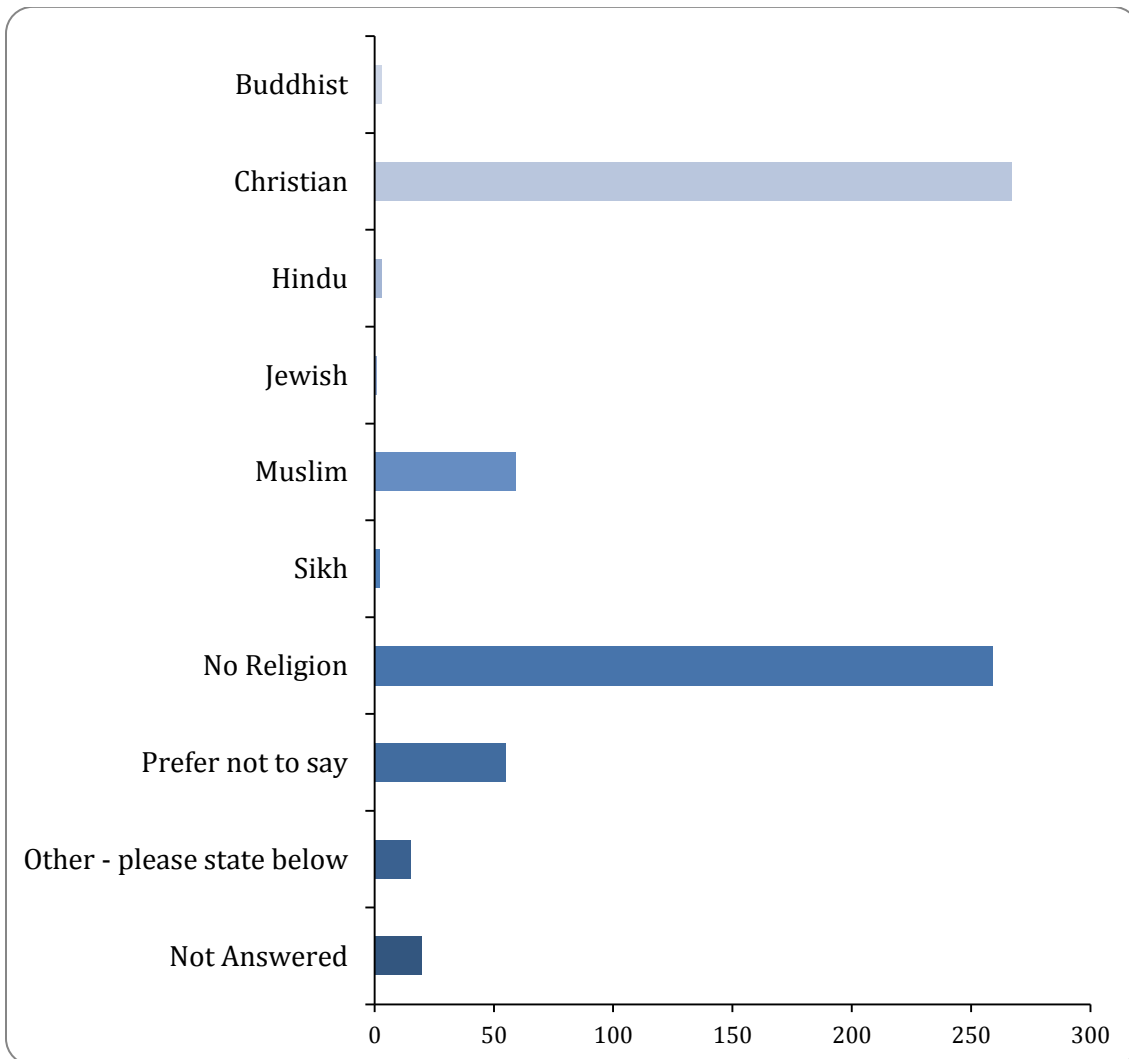


Option	Total	Percent
<b>White - British</b>	392	57.31%
<b>White - Irish</b>	11	1.61%
<b>White - Gypsy or Irish Traveller</b>	2	0.29%
<b>White - Any other White background (Please specify below)</b>	43	6.29%
<b>Mixed - White and Black Caribbean</b>	21	3.07%
<b>Mixed - White &amp; Black African</b>	8	1.17%
<b>Mixed - White &amp; Asian</b>	4	0.58%
<b>Mixed - Any other Mixed background (Please specify below)</b>	6	0.88%
<b>Asian or Asian British - Indian</b>	4	0.58%
<b>Asian or Asian British - Pakistani</b>	19	2.78%
<b>Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi</b>	3	0.44%
<b>Asian or Asian British - Chinese</b>	0	0.00%
<b>Asian or Asian British - Any other Asian background (Please specify below)</b>	11	1.61%

<b>Black or Black British - African</b>	55	8.04%
<b>Black or Black British - Caribbean</b>	38	5.56%
<b>Black or Black British - Any other black background (Please specify below)</b>	8	1.17%
<b>Other ethnic group - Arab</b>	2	0.29%
<b>Other ethnic group - Any other ethnic group (Please specify below)</b>	5	0.73%
<b>Prefer not to say</b>	25	3.65%
<b>Don't know</b>	4	0.58%
<b>Not Answered</b>	23	3.36%

## Religion

There were 664 responses to this part of the question.



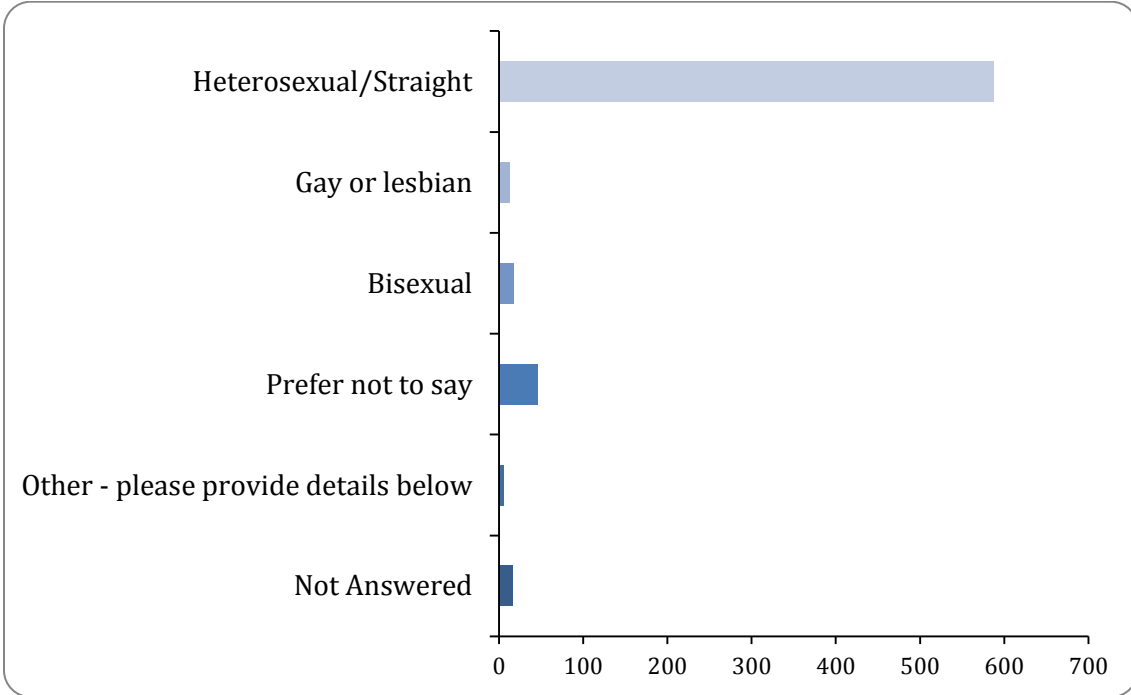
Option	Total	Percent
<b>Buddhist</b>	3	0.44%
<b>Christian</b>	267	39.04%
<b>Hindu</b>	3	0.44%



<b>Jewish</b>	1	0.15%
<b>Muslim</b>	59	8.63%
<b>Sikh</b>	2	0.29%
<b>No Religion</b>	259	37.87%
<b>Prefer not to say</b>	55	8.04%
<b>Other - please state below</b>	15	2.19%
<b>Not Answered</b>	20	2.92%

### Sexual Orientation

There were 668 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
<b>Heterosexual/Straight</b>	587	85.82%
<b>Gay or lesbian</b>	13	1.90%
<b>Bisexual</b>	17	2.49%
<b>Prefer not to say</b>	46	6.73%
<b>Other - please provide details below</b>	5	0.73%
<b>Not Answered</b>	16	2.34%