

# Polling Districts Consultation

## *Summary Report*

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## **Introduction**

The aim of the consultation is to gather insight on the current arrangements for polling districts and stations.

We wanted to hear the views of our residents regarding their experiences with current polling stations. This includes opinions on convenience, accessibility, and suggestions for potential new locations.

The consultation would help ensure that future elections are held in venues that are convenient, accessible, and meet the needs of all voters.

## **Background**

A polling district is a geographical area set for the purposes of an election only. All voters who live in the same polling district go to the same polling place to vote, which should be located within the border where possible.

The review is necessary due to several key reasons:

- **Current Venue Evaluation:**
  - We are required to assess the suitability of existing polling stations every 5 years. This includes considering the size, location, and accessibility of each venue to ensure they meet the needs of all voters.
- **Accessibility:**
  - Ensuring that polling stations are fully accessible to all voters, including those with disabilities, is a top priority. We are reviewing current venues to identify and address any accessibility issues that may exist.
- **Venue Changes:**
  - Some previously used polling stations are no longer available, necessitating the identification of new, suitable locations. This may be due to changes in venue ownership, closures, or other factors that make them unavailable for future elections.

## **Consultation & Engagement Approach**

The consultation was created and published on the Council's survey platform Citizen Space, between 18 September and 31 October 2024.

## **Response rate**

A total of 38 respondents took part in the consultation.

## **Executive summary**

The polling district consultation aimed to gather resident feedback on current polling station arrangements. 38 respondents participated, with a third residing in the N1 4 and N1 5 postcode areas.

Most respondents rated their polling stations positively for location, size, and accessibility, with some exceptions noted in specific postcodes.

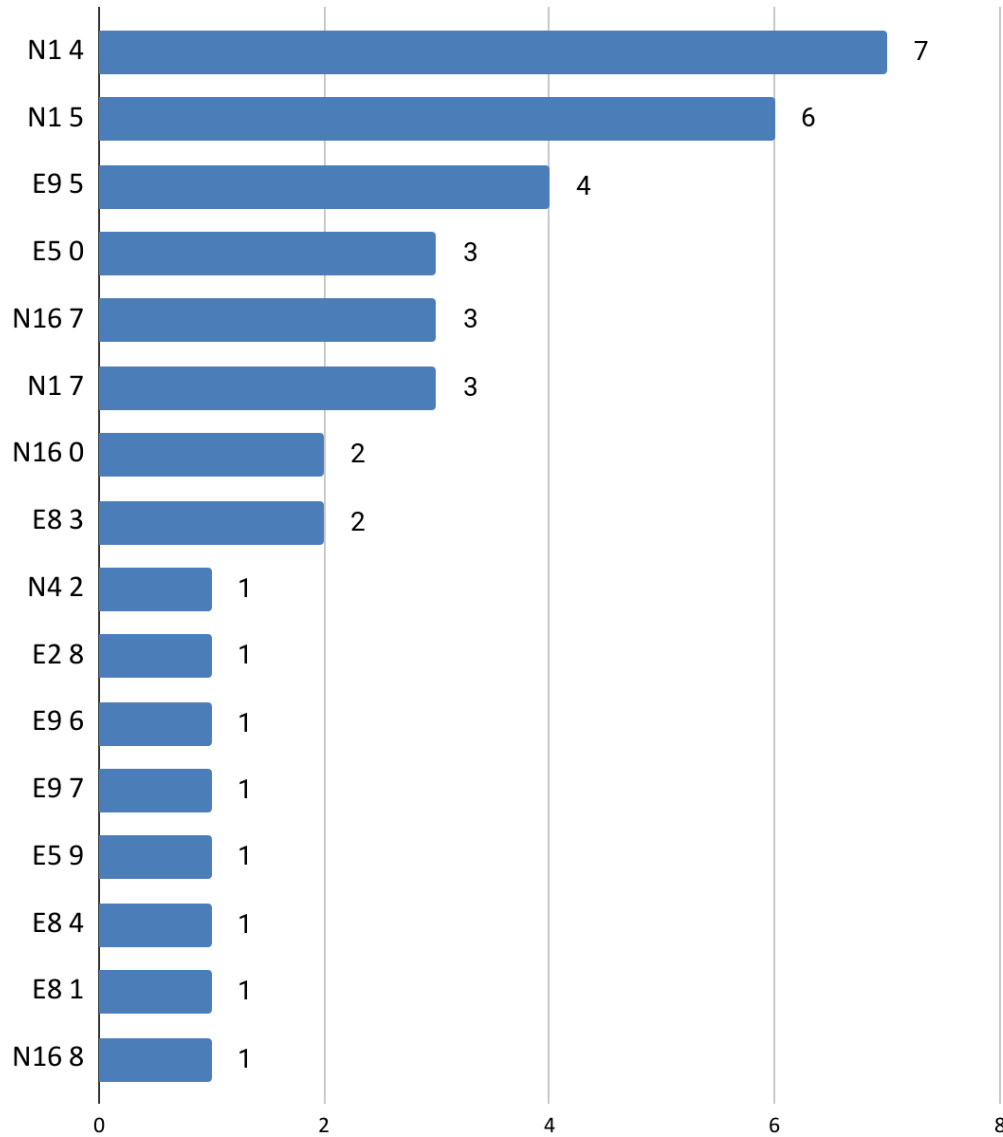
Issues with signage and lighting were reported by a few respondents. Accessibility was a concern for some, with barriers like stairs and lack of ramps mentioned.

Respondents suggested improvements like better signage, accessible voting options, and relocating certain polling stations.

Overall, the feedback emphasised the importance of convenient, accessible, and well-equipped polling stations for all voters.

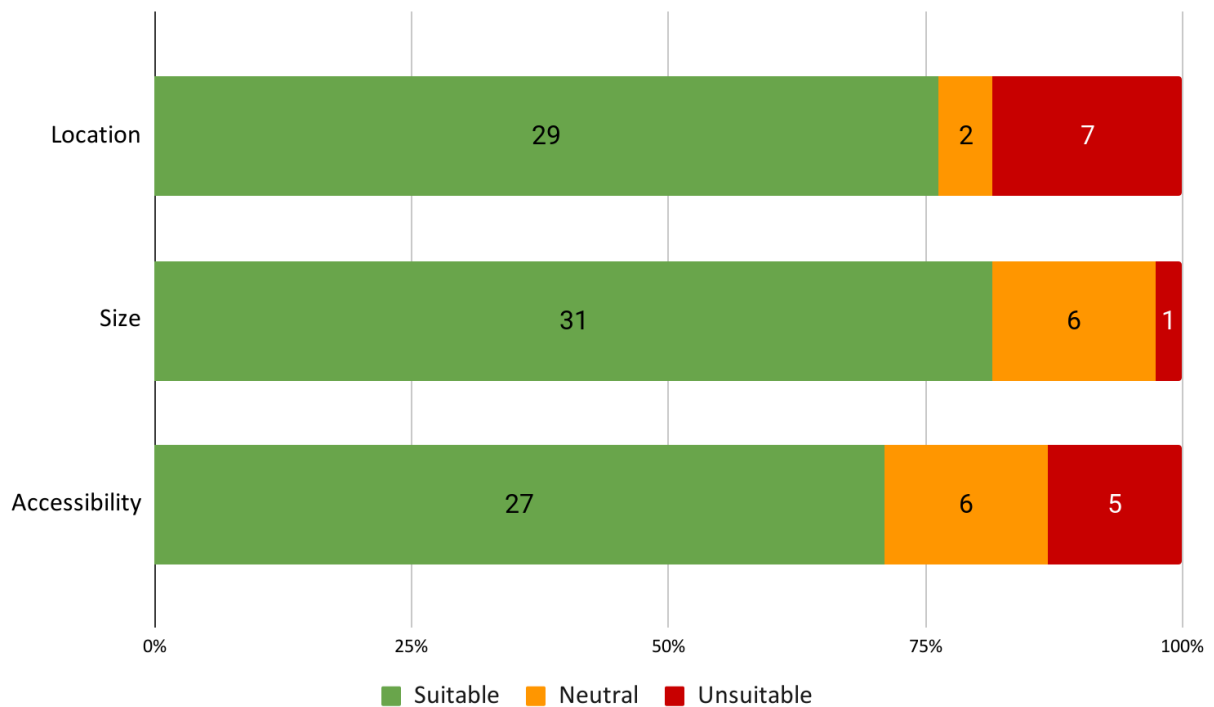
## Overview of results

**Please provide your full postcode: (This is for us to work out your closest polling station)**



The chart above represents the postcode areas where respondents stated they are from. The highest responses came from N1 4 and N1 5 areas accounting for a third of respondents.

**How would you rate the overall suitability of your current polling station in terms of: (Base 38)**

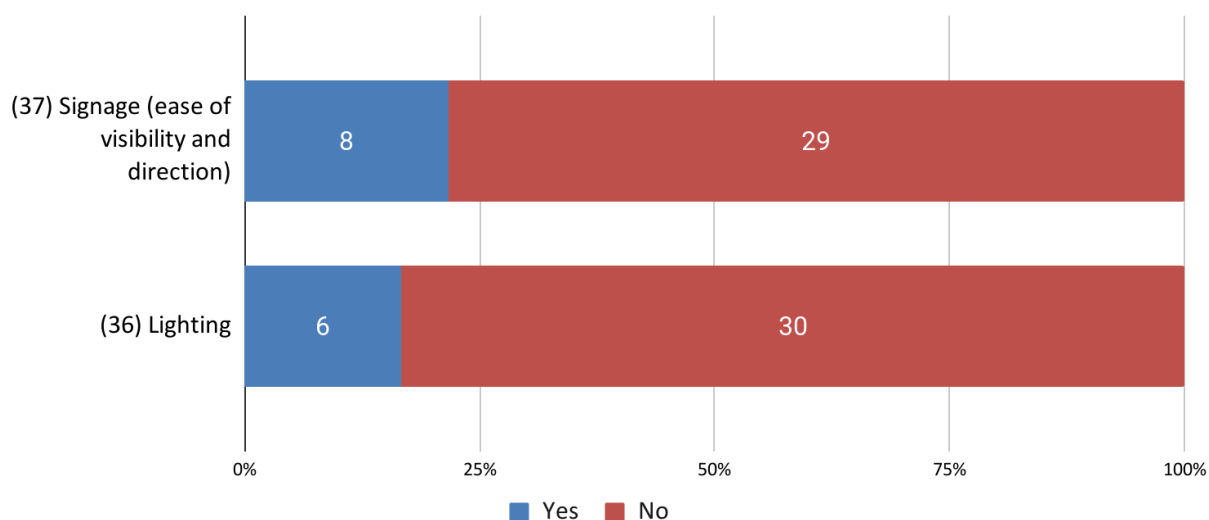


The majority of respondents gave a positive response to location, size and accessibility of their current polling station.

The postcode areas where a negative response were given are:

| <u>Location</u> | <u>Size</u> | <u>Accessibility</u> |
|-----------------|-------------|----------------------|
| N4 2            | E8 4        | N16 0                |
| N16 0           |             | E8 4                 |
| E9 6            |             | E5 0                 |
| E8 4            |             | E8 1                 |
| E8 1            |             | N16 7                |
| N1 7            |             |                      |
| N16 7           |             |                      |

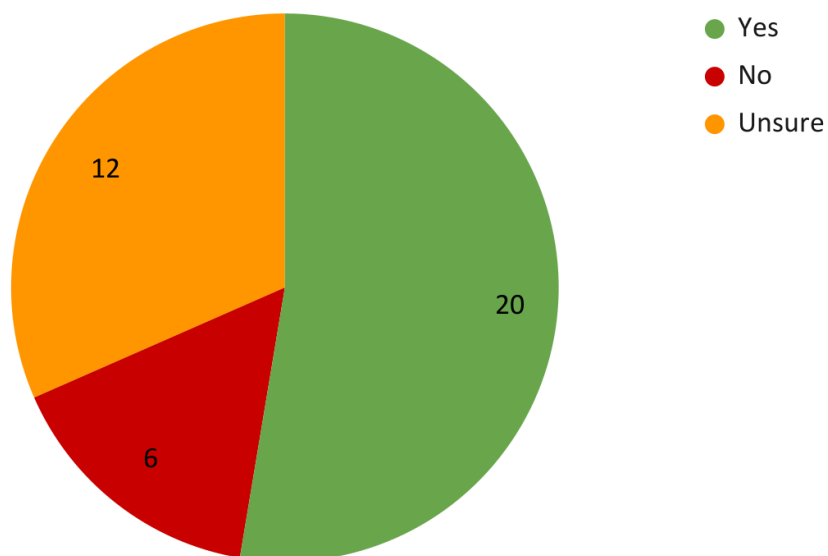
**When you last visited your polling station, did you experience any issues with the following:**



The majority of respondents did not experience any issue with signage or lighting at their polling station. Those who stated yes, are shown in the table below by postcode:

| <b><u>Signage (ease of visibility and direction)</u></b> | <b><u>Lighting</u></b> |
|--|------------------------|
| N1 5   | E9 5                   |
| N16 7  | E8 4                   |
| E5 0   | E5 0                   |
| E8 1   | E8 1                   |
| N16 7  | N1 5                   |
| N1 5   | N16 8                  |
| N1 4   |                        |
| N16 8  |                        |

**Was your polling station easily accessible for individuals with mobility issues or disabilities? (Base 38)**

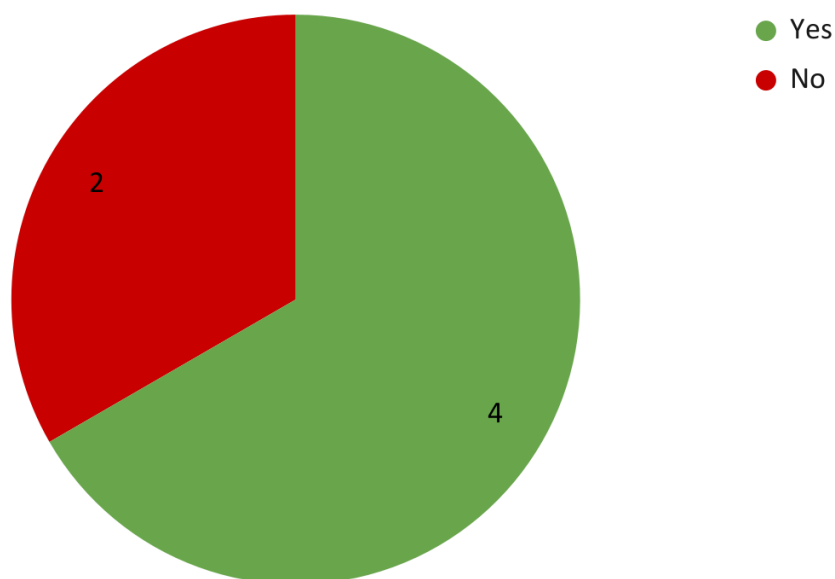


The majority of respondents stated that their polling station was easily accessible. Only 6 respondents stated no, and the postcodes are shown in the table below by:

| <u>Easily accessible</u> |
|--------------------------|
| N16 0                    |
| E8 4                     |
| E5 0                     |
| E8 1                     |
| N1 7                     |
| N16 8                    |



**Did you encounter any barriers to accessing your polling station (e.g. stairs, lack of ramps, etc.)? (Base 6)**



This question was only answered by those who stated there was an accessibility issue in the previous question. Of the 6 respondents, 4 of those did encounter barriers and they were asked to describe their issue which is shown below.

**If Yes, please describe the issue:**

Summary of comments to this question shows feedback on accessibility issues at polling stations. Respondents reported problems with mobility scooter access, broken lifts, lack of dropped curbs, inconvenient locations, and lack of ramps. These issues affected people with mobility scooters, wheelchairs, and those with limited mobility.

Comments

- E8 4
  - Mobility scooter user , access awful so turn around went home
- E5 0
  - Lift was broken. Unable for anyone with a buggy or a wheelchair to access. I complained to the council. This took place in London local and mayoral elections. Why not move the polling station downstairs?
- E8 1
  - No dropped curbs made access difficult for my father who's mobility is not great and requires a wheelchair for long distances. The lift is an unnecessary point of failure. Our previous polling station was much better for access as it is a single story building.
- N1 7

- The location is the problem. It is too far from the western end of Hoxton West. It was about a 10 minute walk and required me to cross over New North Road, which is a very busy road. It took me to an area I never normally go to and which was unfamiliar. I think the distance is too far for anyone with restricted mobility.
- N16 8
  - Lack of ramps

**What improvements, if any, would you suggest to make your polling station more accessible?**

Summary of comments to this question give suggestions which include: accessible voting for the visually impaired, better signage and wayfinding, more space for wheelchair users, consulting with mobility scooter users, ensuring lifts are operational, relocating polling stations for better access, improved ramp conditions, and avoiding high-crime areas. Some respondents reported no accessibility issues or were unsure.

Comments

- N16 0
  - Accessible voting for visually impaired people.
- E9 6
  - Many of us have dogs but can't take them into a children's centre or library. Otherwise the gate is large and locks, which is hard for those with buggies or wheelchairs. But it is flat and wide access.
- N1 5
  - I think because there are a number of trees and foliage, it's easy to miss the entrance unless you check carefully as also, at least in my case, I'm minding the wet or slippery floor rather than checking out for obvious signs. Also, it's a busy road for cyclist.
  - A sign in each corner would be really helpful.
- E5 9
  - More space as it is very small inside with little room to move a wheelchair.
- E84
  - Asked mobility scooter users what we need for access, spend time with users to see issues . As no one does .
- E9 5
  - Luckily I don't have accessibility problems but I can't remember noticing any problems.
- E8 3
  - It seems a really good venue to me

- N16 7
  - I don't have accessibility needs so not sure. Maybe place the actual voting stalls a bit further away from the polling station workers' table as it can get a bit crowded.
- E5 0
  - Either move the polling station downstairs or ensure the lift is in good working order
- E8 1
  - Move it back to our previous polling station which was far more accessible.
- N1 5
  - The ramp inside the church crypt could be a bit less slippery when wet
- N1 7
  - It should be located on the western side of New North Road, within no more than 5 minutes walk from home for voters in Hoxton West (at the Islington end).
- N16 7
  - don't put it in a high crime dangerous place
- N1 5
  - While I haven't checked accessibility personally (it isn't something I need), I think it is fully accessible
- N1 4
  - To be honest, I can't remember whether it was wheelchair accessible or not. I know there are a few stairs to go up to enter it but I can't remember if there is a ramp as well.
- N16 8
  - A drop kerb or a mobile or permanent ramps

**Do you have any suggestions for alternative locations that could serve as polling stations in your area?**

Summary of the comments to this question, show feedback on issues like narrow doorways, lack of seating, poor lighting, and the need for ramps and accessible toilets. Some suggested specific improvements like automatic doors, better signage, and improved layouts. Several people highlighted positive experiences with helpful staff. Overall, the comments emphasise the importance of ensuring polling stations are accessible to all voters.

Comments

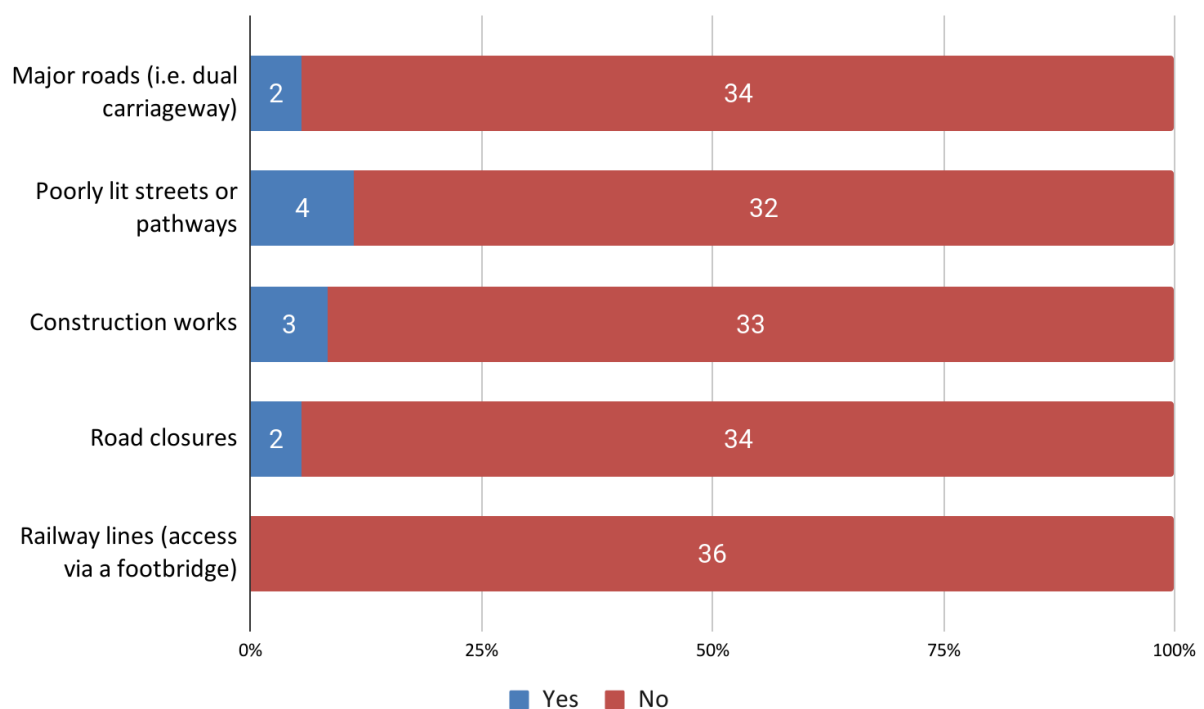
- E9 5
  - Current location is perfect
- N42

- My polling station is not in my ward, I'm in N4, the station is in N16
- N16 0
  - We have voted at Grazebrook school for the past few years - 0.6miles away. There are several polling stations which are much closer to us. Can our road be swapped to vote at a polling station which is closer please?
- E9 6
  - Yes: We are by Homerton Library, yet have to go to Daubeney Children's Centre. We live next to Chats Palace which is a polling place. Priory court should have access to Chats Palace as a location surely.
- N1 5
  - I'd suggest a venue near or on the main road, so that it's on the way to going or coming back from work, i.e. the church next to St Leonards
- N16 0
  - I don't understand why when there is a polling station in Queen Elizabeths Walk less than a hundred yards from where I live that I was assigned to one in the community centre which was much further away.
- E5 0
  - Current location works well
- N1 7
  - Thomas Fairchild School - or Neighbourhood Hall in Napier Grove.
- N16 7
  - There are so many so close by already used as polling stations. I actually have 2, at each end of my street!
- E5 0
  - Pedro Club, Rushmore Road and Catholic Church on Blurton Road
- N1 4
  - I live a lot closer to St Peter's Church, De Beauvoir and that would be a lot easier to use and years back that was our polling station but our side of Northchurch Rd was moved to Kingsgate Community Hall (and before that to Our Lady Primary School). For some older people the added distance might make a bit of a difference.
- E8 1
  - Where it used to be at Wilton Estate, before it was moved to Morland Estate.
- N1 5
  - The new Asian centre on englefield rd
- N1 7L
  - It used to be in a small building in Provost Street which was very suitable and conveniently located. I'm not sure why that building isn't used any more. There is another community building on Shepherdess Walk, about halfway down on the right hand side as you walk north. It's on an estate but it's very close to Shepherdess Walk so would be a good

location for everyone who lives in Shepherdess Walk and surrounding streets. I think it's called Napier Grove Community Centre.

- N16 7
  - Benthall Primary School and church at junction of Evering/Rectory Rds
- N1 5
  - I think the current polling station (St Peter's) is the best location
- N1 5
  - No. St Peter's is perfect as it is accessible and well-known.
- N1 4
  - No, very happy with current station.
- N1 4
  - No. This is a very convenient location for me
- N16 8
  - No, just an improvement

**Thinking about your last visit, did you encounter any of the following obstacles on your journey to the polling station: (Base 36)**



The majority of respondents did not encounter any of the following obstacles on their journey to the polling station. Poorly lit streets or pathways had the most responses with 4, followed by construction works with 3, and major roads and road closures with 2 each.

## **Do you have any additional comments or suggestions regarding the polling stations in your area?**

Summary of comments from this question show that some respondents want polling stations in more convenient or familiar locations, while others are happy with the current ones. Specific feedback includes:

- **Relocation requests:**
  - Moving polling stations closer to residents (N16 0, N1 7), to the west side of New North Road (N1 7), or away from "hostile" council estates (N16 7).
- **Polling station preference:**
  - Voting in Hackney Central Ward instead of a joint polling station with London Fields Ward (E8 1).
- **Positive feedback:**
  - Enjoyable experience and welcoming people (E5 0), convenience and proximity of polling stations (N16 7), and satisfaction with the current polling station (N1 4).
- **Suggestions:**
  - Having a polling station in N4 (N4 2).

Overall, the responses highlight the importance of polling station accessibility and location for voters.

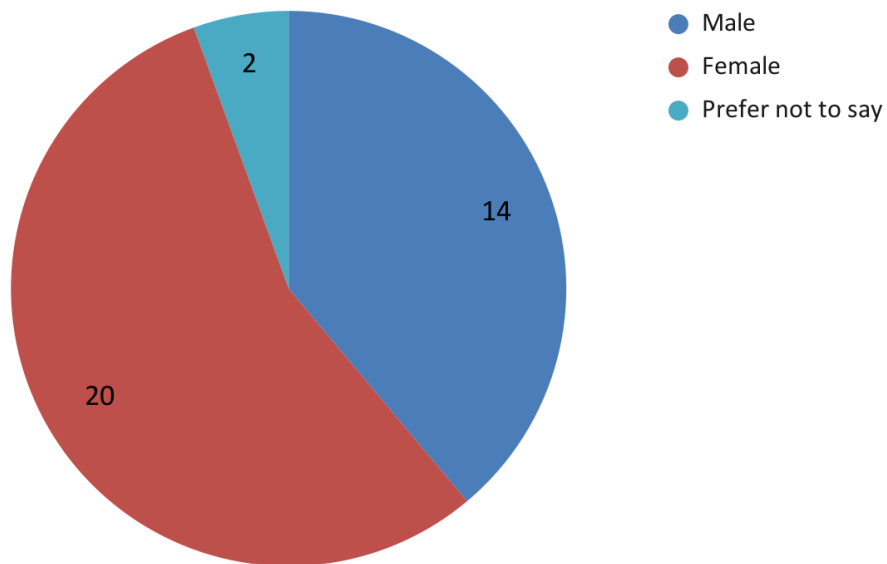
### Comments

- N4 2
  - have the polling station in N4
- N16 7
  - We should completely rethink how we are using signage for polling stations. Having one or two signs right outside is not helpful when the polling station itself is down a smaller side road where residents are less likely to always walk by to then remember.
  - We should have polling signage on all connecting roads within maybe 200m of the station to make it super clear and act as a reminder on polling day"
- E5 9
  - Our polling station does not allow dogs inside, which is highly inconvenient and differs from other local polling stations
- E8 4
  - Find better access building that can cope with disabled mobility scooter users. Try driving one yourself to see issues from what we see . Even broken glass on pavement can cause users to STOP voting .
- N16 0

- Just the one I mentioned earlier about being assigned to one much further away from where I live when there was one about 100 yds away.
- E5 0
  - Enjoy visiting. People welcoming
- N16 7
  - I think they are extremely convenient, very close and seem to be lots of them
- E5 0
  - The accessibility issues aren't great
- N1 4
  - Already mentioned that St Peter's Church, De Beauvoir is closer and easier to get to.
- E8 1
  - I vote in Hackney Central Ward and much preferred voting in my ward rather than in a joint polling station with the newly created London Fields Ward as it is less accessible for mobility impaired residents and gives the perception that residents in the new ward have priority over those of us residing in Hackney Central.
- N1 5
  - I love my polling station! St Peter's is a great community hub
- N1 7L
  - The one we had to go to last time (St John's Church) is too far away from this part of Hoxton West. 10 minutes walk is too far for many people and it's off-putting for busy people. You can't drive. Walking is the only option. It's unreasonable to expect old and disabled people to walk 10 minutes. I can do it (but there have been times when I've been injured and it would have been difficult) but the area was unfamiliar and I had to use Google Maps to find my way there. The Polling Station should be in a familiar area to encourage people to go. It needs to be on the west side of New North Road, for people who live on the west side of New North Rd.
- N16 7
  - Don't site them deep inside hostile council estates
- N1 5
  - I don't think any changes are needed
- N1 4
  - Very happy with current polling station.
- N16 8
  - It would be good to look for a different location for the Manor Road area polling station currently at Lordship Community Centre or relocate back to Grazebrook School

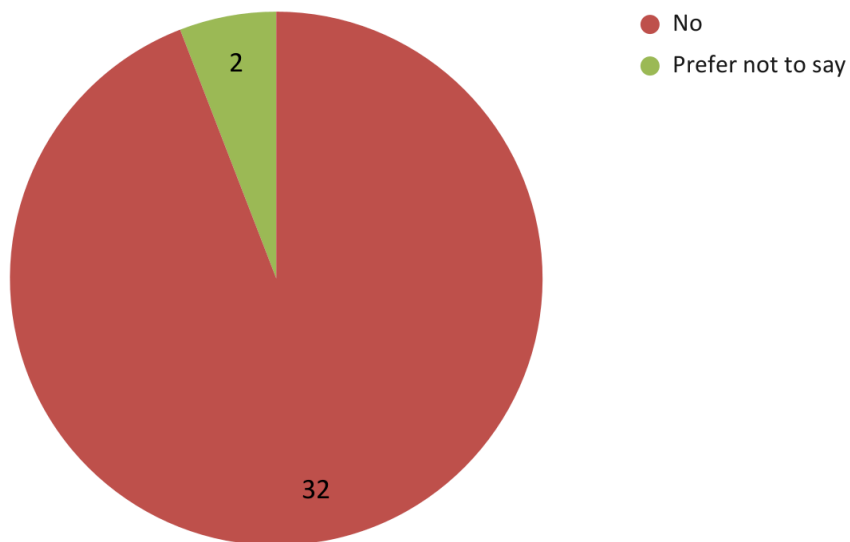
## About you

**Gender: Are you... (Base 36)**



The majority of respondents stated that they were female (20), with 14 respondents stating they are male, and 2 respondents saying they prefer not to say.

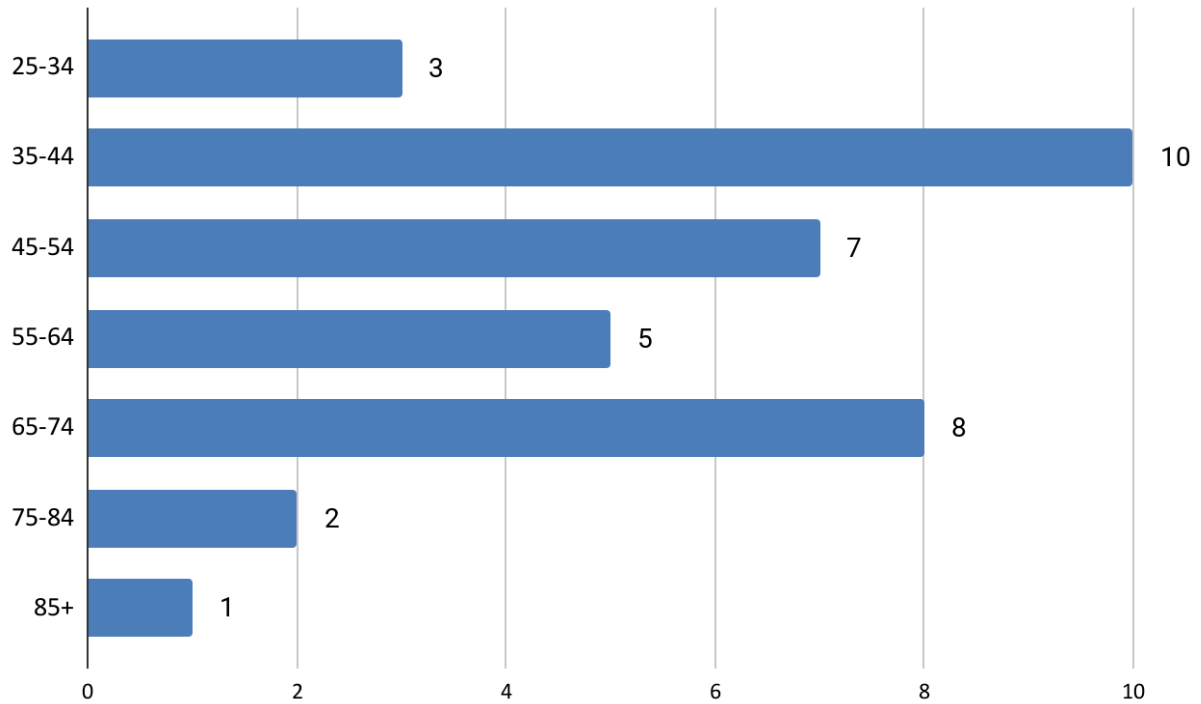
**Are you transgender or do you have a history of being transgender? (Base 34)**



The majority of respondents stated that they are not transgender or have a history of being transgender.

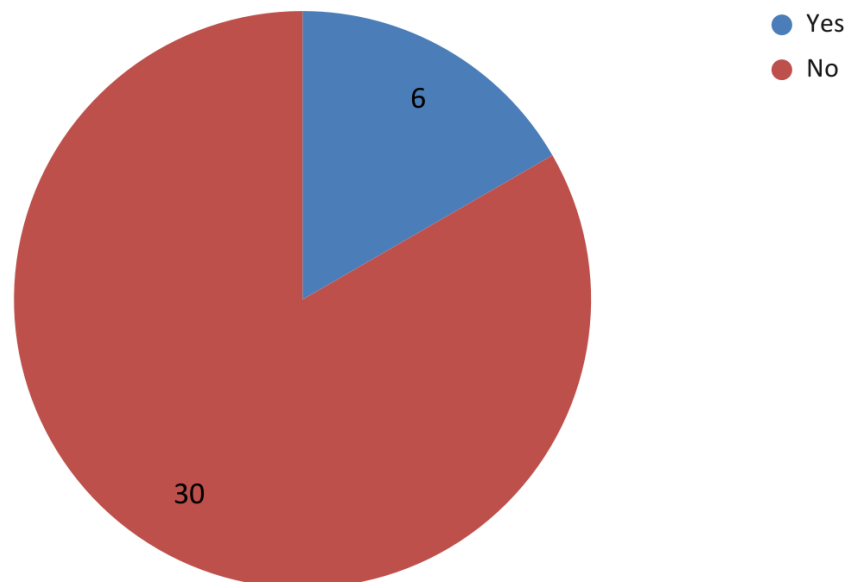


### Age: what is your age group? (Base 36)



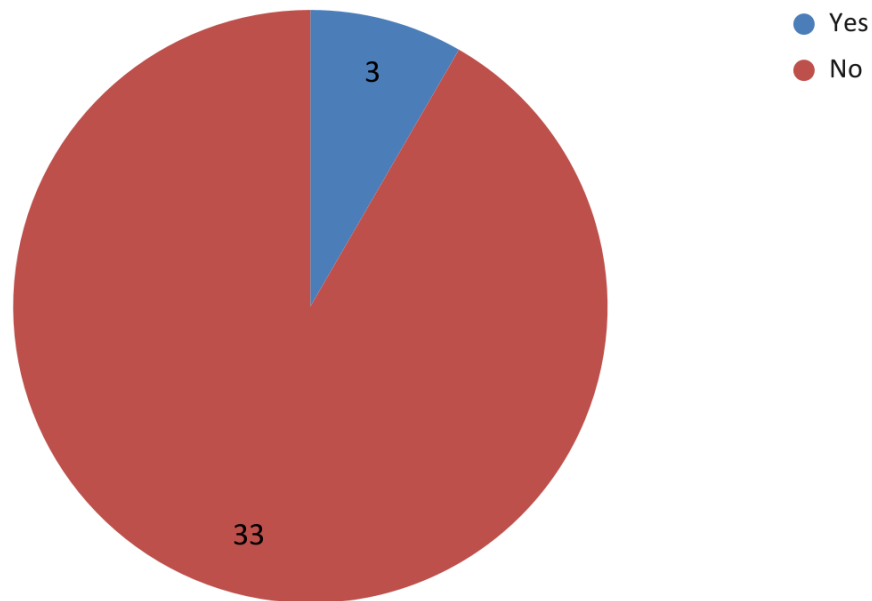
The highest number of respondents stated that they were in the 35-44 age group (10). This is followed by 65-74 (8), 45-54 (7), 55-64 (5), 25-34 (3), 75-84 (2) and 85+ (1).

### Do you consider yourself to be disabled? (Base 36)



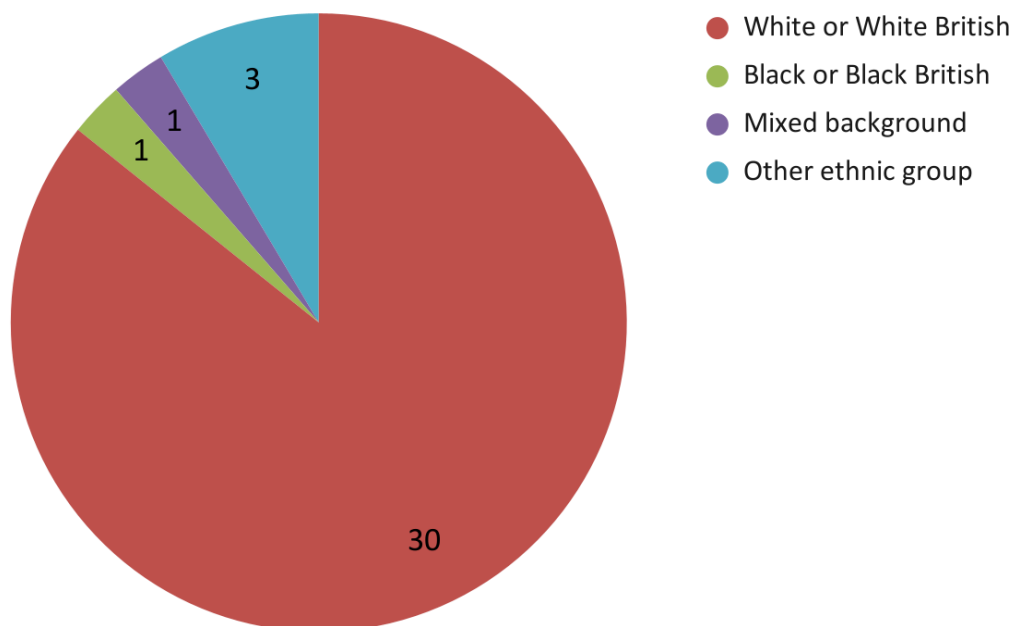
The majority of respondents stated that they do not consider themselves to be disabled (30). Only 6 respondents stated that they do.

**Do you regularly provide unpaid support caring for someone? (Base 36)**



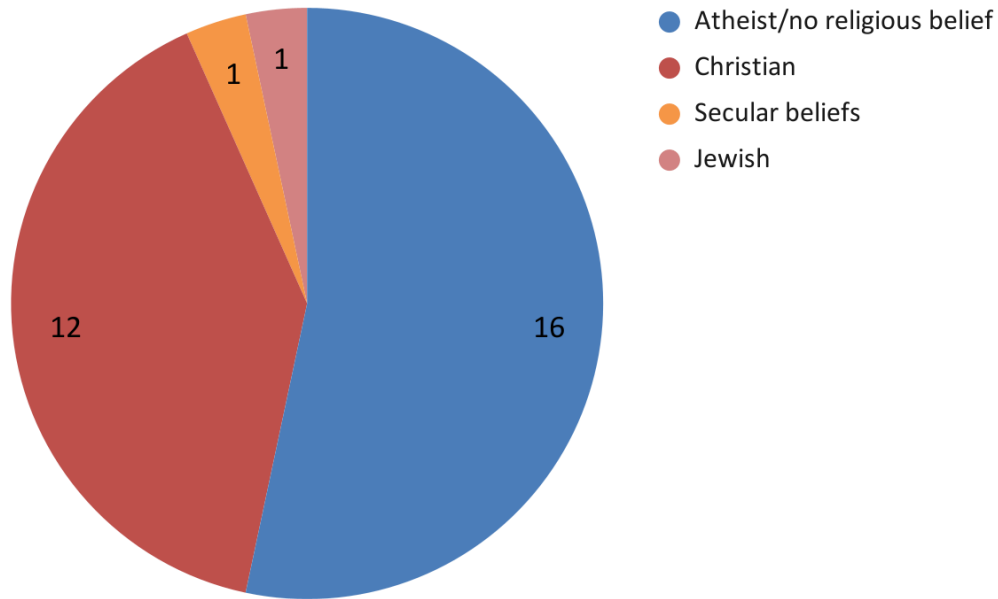
The majority of respondents stated that they do not have caring responsibilities (30). Only 3 respondents stated that they do.

**Ethnicity: Are you... (Base 35)**



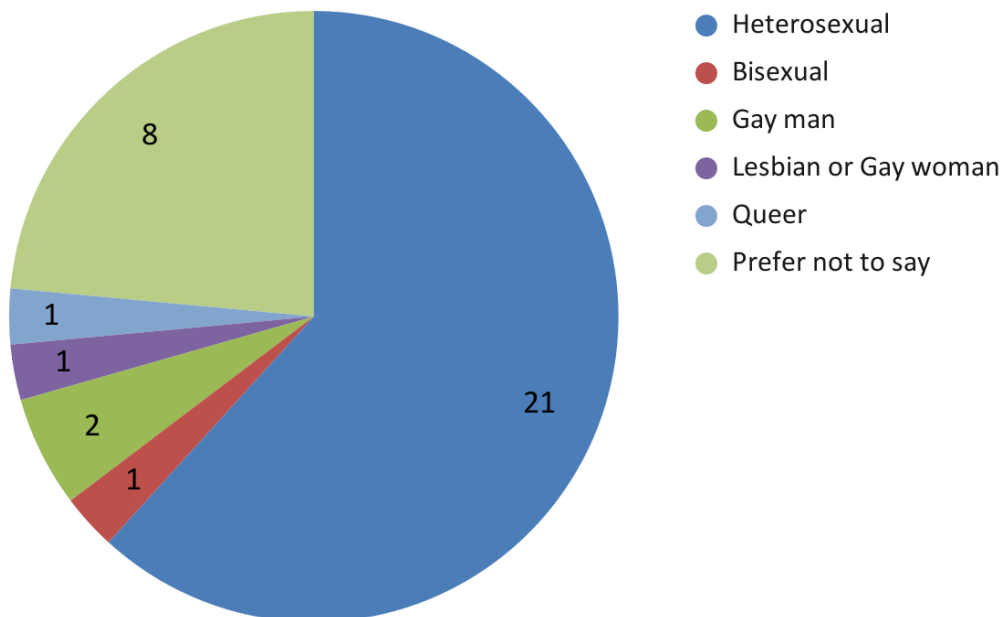
The majority of respondents stated that they were White or White British, with all others accounting for a much smaller percentage.

### Religion or belief: Are you or do you have... (Base 30)



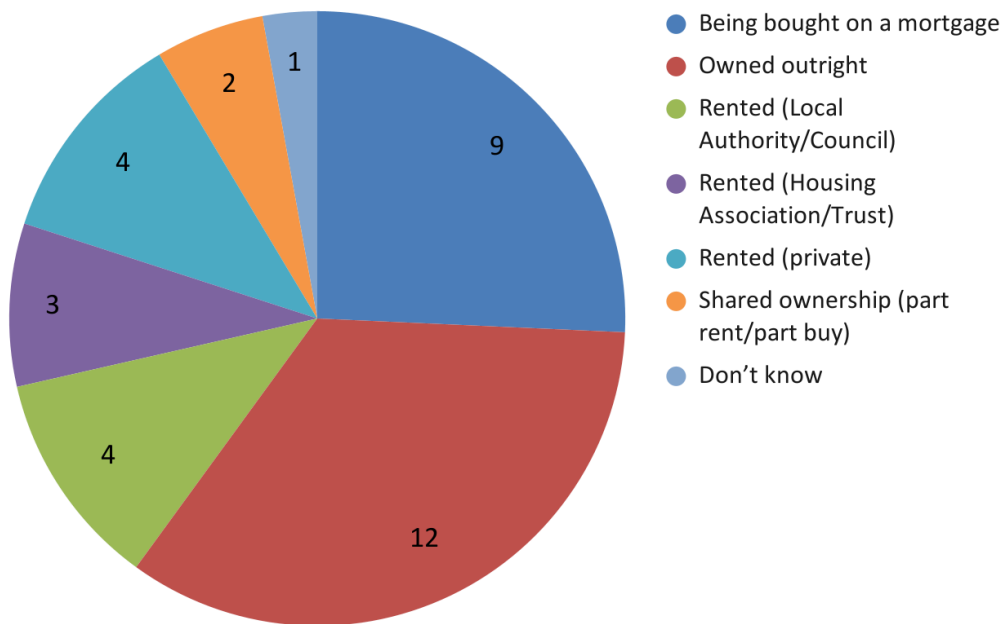
The majority of respondents stated that they are Atheist/no religious belief (16), with a slightly smaller number stating they are Christian (12). All others account for only 2 respondents combined.

### Sexual orientation: Are you... (Base 34)



The majority of respondents stated that they are heterosexual (21), followed by prefer not to say (8). All other account for a much smaller number.

**Housing Tenure: Which of the following best describes the ownership of your home? (Base 35)**



There is a broad mix of housing tenures across respondents, with the highest responses being from those who own their property whether outright (12) or on a mortgage (9).