Digital Connectivity

Group Discussions: Summary

Hackney

Residents' experiences and views on connectivity

- Digital connectivity was very important to participants. Virtually all participants used the internet everyday for a wide range of activities, and for most it was indispensable.
- Participants valued both having a home internet connection and mobile connectivity wherever they went. They relied heavily on smartphones.
- Many participants had only limited knowledge and understanding of digital connectivity and the services they received (in terms of both the market and the technology).
- Participants were fairly satisfied with mobile connectivity in Hackney, but had mixed experiences of fixed broadband.
- Few participants mentioned using or needing public wifi - suggesting this may not be a priority in a world with good mobile broadband connectivity
- Participants had an expectation that libraries should support digital skills and digital inclusion.

Hackney

What do residents think about the digital connectivity vision?

- Participants were in favour of improving digital connectivity, but some were uncertain about what better connectivity would feel like, and if it was necessary.
- Participants were also interested in benefits other than improved connectivity for its own sake: digital inclusion and affordability.
- Trust was a key issue: participants did not always trust the Council's ability to deliver, get a good deal, or safeguard residents' interests.
- Participants were in favour of having full fibre broadband installed. They found it easy to understand the idea of internet as a utility, approved of having more choice, and were pleased there would be no cost to either residents or the Council.
- Overall, participants approved of the digital connectivity vision, with some caveats.

Hackney

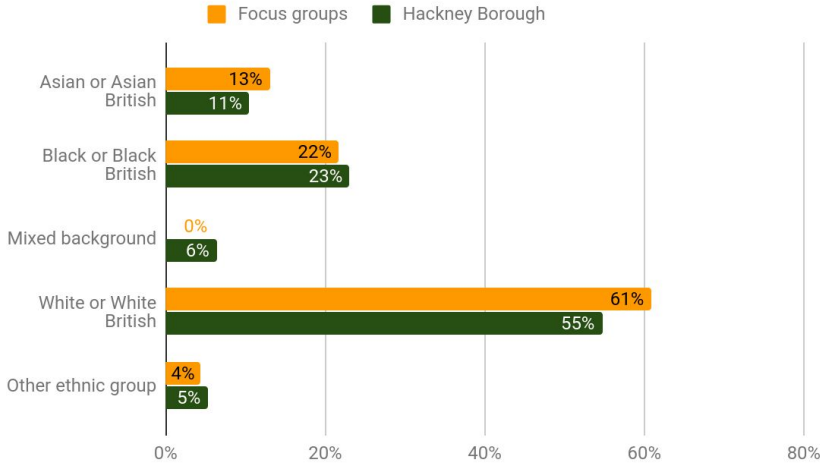
Concerns participants had...

- Wanted more detail on specific proposals
- Questioned nature of relationship between Council and connectivity providers, and how the the Council would work with providers and hold them to account
- Affordability
- Forced channel shift - having no choice but to use online services, and not having the option of telephone or face-to-face contact with Council officers.
- Privacy and data protection, especially in relation to Internet of Things and the ‘smart city’ agenda
- Disruption from street works
- Cautious about 5G technology and radio waves

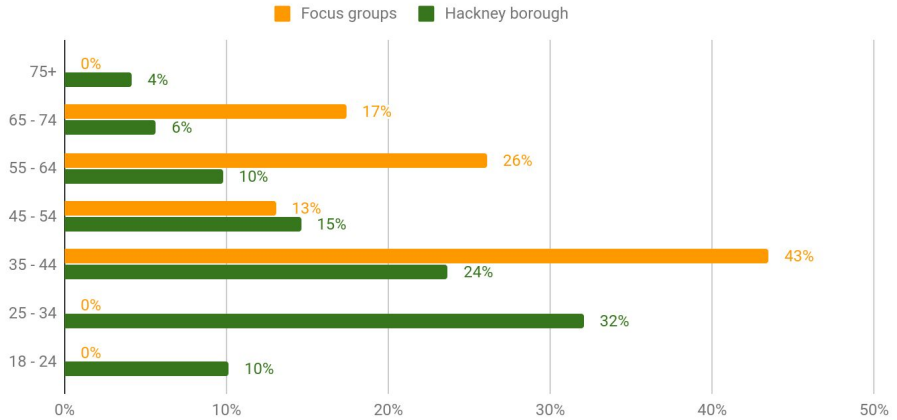
Hackney

Who took part?

Ethnicity



Age of focus group participants versus Hackney borough residents (total adult population)



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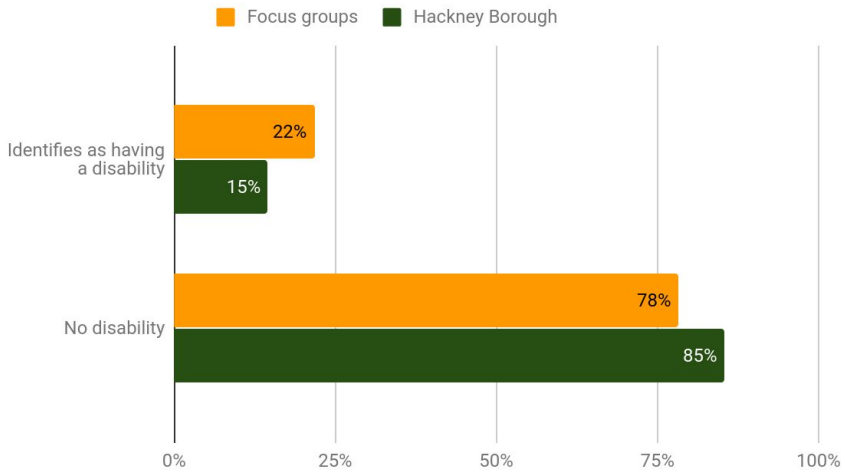
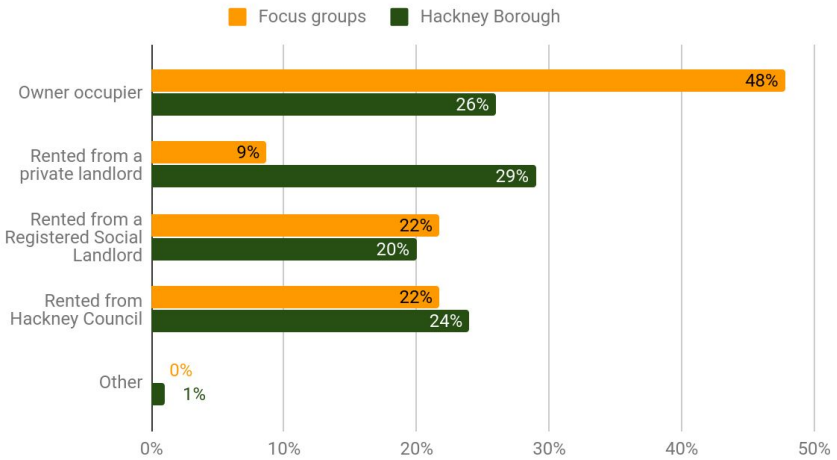
Who took part?

Disability



Tenure type



23 residents took part. Sample is broadly representative of the Hackney population. There are some differences in relation to age and tenure: the sample is skewed towards older people and owner occupiers; younger people and people renting from private landlords are underrepresented.

Hackney