

Public Space ASB in Hackney

Consultation Report - FINAL

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Introduction and aim of the consultation

This report presents the findings of the consultation on public space anti-social behaviour (ASB) in Hackney.

The consultation sought to find out what residents, businesses and stakeholders think about the Council's approach to anti-social behaviour in the borough.

The results of the consultation will inform the development of the Public Space Enforcement Strategy. The Council would like to develop an ASB strategy reflects the views of local residents, partners and appropriate stakeholders.

Background

Anti-social behaviour (ASB) can include lots of different types of behaviour that occur in different circumstances, however the focus of the Council's consultation was on ASB where there may be a link to support needs, such as substance misuse or mental health issues. This can include begging, some kinds of anti-social street drinking, street urination and defecation and ASB associated with sex work, all of which the Council wants to resolve but can often prove challenging to address without causing unintended harm.

The Council's current approach is to offer support to help people access the help they need – with enforcement action taken as a last resort, where people have refused the Council's help and continue to cause anti-social behaviour.

As part of the development of the strategy, the Council will be reviewing its current approach to ASB – so as to:

- Understand whether the Council is dealing with ASB in the most effective way possible and making best use of the legislative powers available to tackle ASB.
- Hear from residents, visitors and stakeholders about their experience and perceptions of antisocial behaviour in Hackney
- Inform residents about the Dog Control Orders (DCO) and Designated Public Place Order (DPPO), which aren't being consulted upon, but will transition into Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs) in October 2017.

Consultation approach

The public consultation ran from 10 July to 24 September 2017.

The consultation featured on the home page of the Council's consultation and engagement platform, <https://consultation.hackney.gov.uk/> for a significant part of the consultation period. This included:

- A summary of the consultation proposals, including a consultation questionnaire
- An online version of the consultation questionnaire.

The consultation was publicised with an article in issue 411 (page 3) edition of Hackney Today, the Council's newspaper that is sent to all resident and business addresses in the borough.

A press release was also sent to local media and ethnic press.

The consultation was also promoted via the Council's social media channels and via the Council's newsletters such as the Hackney Matters newsletter sent to members of the council's online citizens' panel.

Key stakeholders representing the views of those likely to be impacted by the strategy were invited to workshops, these groups included:

- Registered Social Landlords in Hackney
- St Mungos, a homelessness charity
- Open Doors London,
- National Ugly Mugs
- Crisis, Homelessness charity
- DIGS, Housing campaign group
- Health Watch Hackney
- Thames Reach, London charity working with those suffering from homelessness

Response rate

The public consultation received 167 responses in total via the online and paper completion surveys. The majority of responses were received via online completions, with just a small proportion received via paper completions.

Included in these responses there were representations from:

- St John at Hackney
- XXXxx (Housing Association – check paper copy)

Analysis

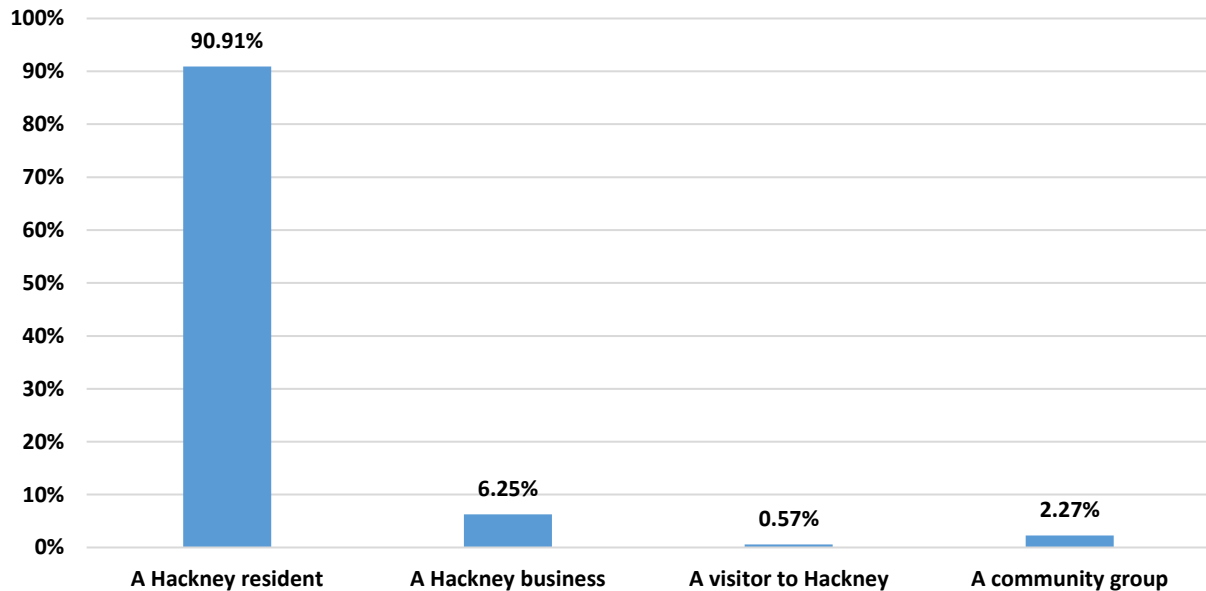
This report has been interpreted and analysed by the Research Analyst in the Consultation Team.

Percentages in a particular chart will not always add up to 100%. This may be due to rounding, or because each respondent is allowed to give more than one answer to the question. Differences between sub-groups will not always be statistically significant. We need to exercise appropriate caution where a small group of self-selecting respondents has been analysed.

The questionnaire consisted of 14 questions, inclusive of the equalities monitoring questions.

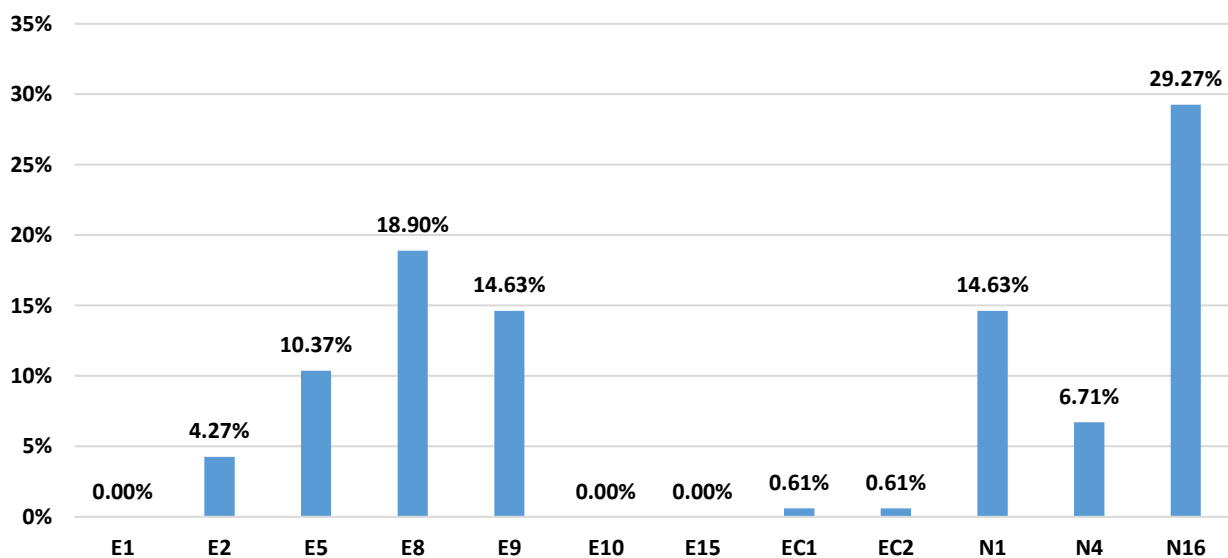
Overview of Results

Are you a.... (Base – 176)



The majority of respondents were Hackney residents (160), with a small percentage of Hackney business (11), community group (4) and a visitor to Hackney (1).

Where do you live or where is your business located? (Base – 164)



The highest percentage of respondents were from the N16 area (48). This was followed by E8 (31), E9 and N1 (24), E5 (17), N4 (11), E2 (7), EC1 and EC2 (1). 3 respondents did not answer this question.

Have you got any comments on the Council’s current approach for dealing with ASB associated with sex work? If you are able to provide evidence in support of this, please do so.

There was a total of 57 comments. The key themes are as follows:

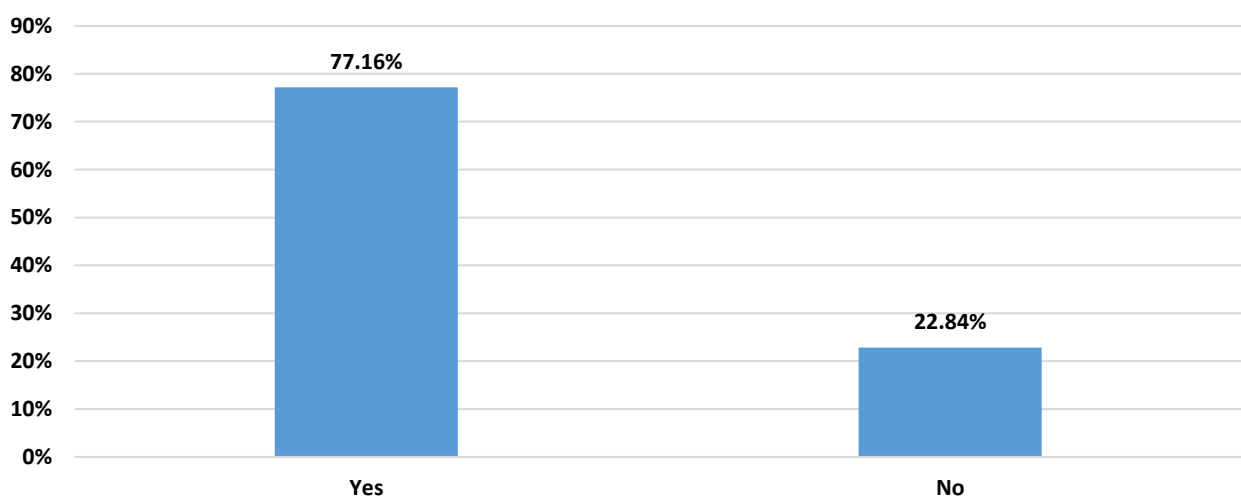
- Not aware of strategy (20)
- Sex workers to be supported (3)
- Increased Police presence (2)
- Tougher approach and taken more seriously (4)
- Enforcement (2)
- Council not doing enough (9)
- Legalising prostitution (3)

Have you got any comments on the Council's current approach for dealing with begging? If you are able to provide evidence in support of this please do so.

There was a total of 94 comments. The key themes are as follows:

- Beggars in the same areas (11)
- Beggars should be supported (9)
- Unaware of approach (16)
- Significant increase (6)
- Aggressive beggars (11)
- Little or no action taken (17)

Do you agree that an approach of support first, followed by warnings and enforcement accompanied by continuing offers of support is the correct way to deal with behaviour such as begging? (Base – 162)



The majority of respondents stated “Yes” (125) that they do agree with the approach suggested, with a smaller percentage stating “No” (37). 5 respondents did not answer this question.

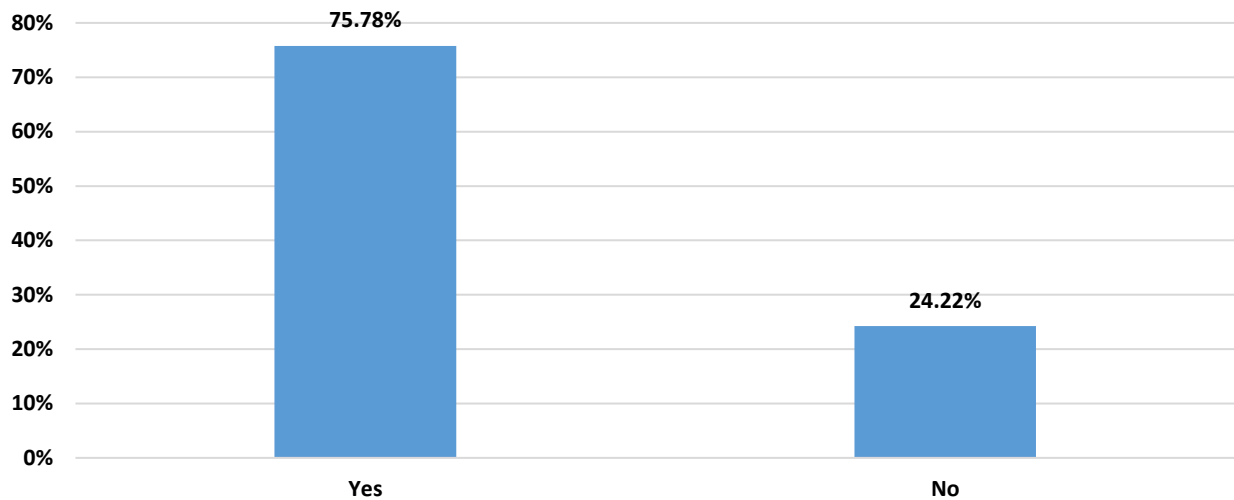
If not, why not?

There was a total of 53 comments. The key themes are as follows:

- Approach does not work (12)
- Agree with approach (6)
- Disagree with approach (5)
- No support being offered (2)
- Enforcement as first step (7)
- Support offered first (6)

Alternative Giving Scheme

Do you agree that the Council should consider this kind of scheme? (Base – 161)



The majority of respondents stated “Yes” (122) that they agree to the scheme, with a smaller percentage stating “No” (39). 6 respondents did not answer this question.

If not, do you have any comments?

There was a total of 53 comments. The key themes are as follows:

- Agree with scheme (14)
- Disagree with scheme (7)
- Maybe/Not sure about scheme (7)
- Will not stop begging (7)
- Use of Council Tax/Government funds (5)

Information Sharing

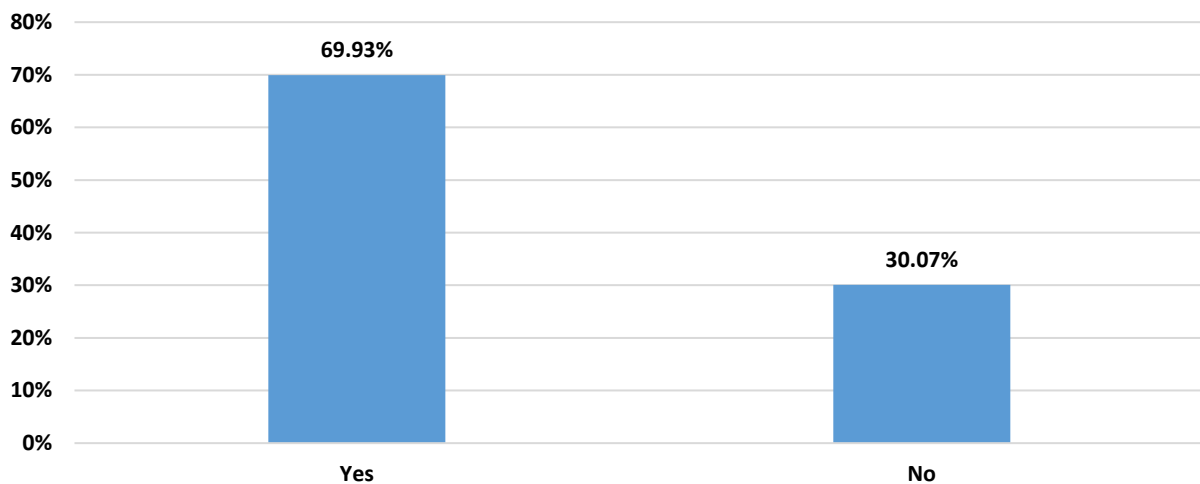
When dealing with vulnerable individuals who are perpetrating ASB, information sharing between partners is key. Do you have any suggestions for how this could be improved in practice?

There was a total of 88 comments. The key themes are as follows:

- Central database for access by all partners (8)
- Anonymous reporting of ASB (2)
- More communication between partners, teams and neighbouring councils (6)
- Which partners? Not sure what you mean (6)
- Use of social media (2)
- Use of digital methods (8)

Clear Communication

Do you agree that a system of escalated warning cards (e.g. a traffic light system), could be an effective way of doing this? (Base – 153)



The majority of respondents stated “Yes” (107) to agree that a system of warning cards could be effective, with a smaller percentage stating “No” (46). 14 respondents did not answer this question.

Do you have any other suggestions for improving communication?

There was a total of 74 comments. The key themes are as follows:

- Agree with system (11)
- Disagree with system (18)
- Not sure about system (6)
- Support offered (13)

Have you got any comments on the Council's current approach for dealing with ASB?

There was a total of 110 comments. The key themes are as follows:

- Not enough resources (4)
- More action needed (23)
- Not enough attention to noise issues (7)
- More police/wardens/enforcement officers on the streets needed (9)
- Not satisfied with how ASB is dealt with (25)
- Not aware of approach (12)

Key Stakeholder letter responses

Key stakeholder responses have been passed onto the relevant service areas.

A letter in response to the consultation, sent to Councillor Selman, addresses the following matters:

- The main area in question regarding ASB is St John at Hackney's Churchyard Gardens
- The Churchyard Gardens are made up of 5 zones
- The main problem area is Zone 1, which is the northern gardens to the front of the church
- The main types of ASB in this area are:
 - Drunken and rowdy behaviour
 - People congregating and being anti-social/threatening
 - Begging - occasionally
 - Public urination and defecation
 - Noise – often loud music
 - Drug taking
 - Sex acts – occasionally
 - Shouting and verbal abuse at the public
- There is a lack of surveillance in the area, and with the closure of the adjacent Police Station this is unlikely to have helped the problem
- Using St John's Church as a sanctuary to help those who are vulnerable, by offering care and support, night shelter, food, debt counselling as well as a drop-in centre for those who are homeless, hungry and in need of some shelter and befriending
- Suggestions on how to solve the problem include:
 - Partnership working, to better support those in need by working with relevant Council teams and the Police;
 - Direct radio communication to respond to ASB as it arises
 - Increasing surveillance in the area
 - Promoting a PSPO for the gardens.

ASB Stakeholder Workshop

A workshop was held on Thursday 17 August between 2pm and 4pm.

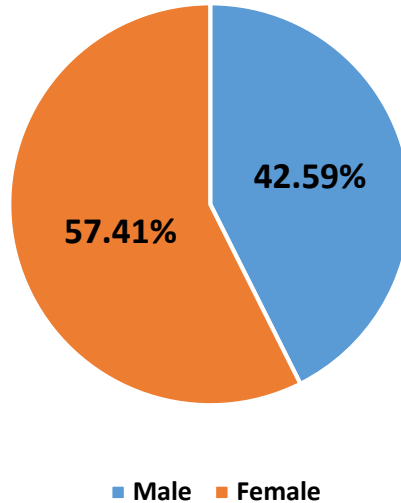
The following points came out of this workshop:

- There was general agreement that there should be more effective enforcement against kerb crawlers and drug dealers.
- Concerns were raised about the use of dispersal orders – especially if they were being used in a targeted way.
- General agreement about the need to first clarify what the overall strategic aim was e.g. to manage prostitution, to encourage people to exist prostitution etc.

- In practice we need structures in place to embed effective information sharing with an appropriate feedback loop for residents.
- The Street Users Outreach Meeting should be reviewed to check whether it was functioning as well as it could be. In particular, consideration should be given to whether it is appropriate for this to be chaired by Community Safety. There were some suggestions that the Lambeth Model could be looked at. It was noted that the focus should be on safeguarding prostitutes and looking holistically at helping them to exit prostitution.
- It is important to check that enforcement action isn't being taken at the wrong time/ place on the continuum.
- Residents are complaining about the drug dealing, but not hearing about what is being done to resolve the issue and would like to understand better what the relationship is between the drug market locally and prostitution.
- Suggestion that there should be a follow-up session workshop involving street based prostitutes to ensure their voices are being heard.
- Suggestion that we should use the term prostitution rather than sex work in this context.
- Should improve clarity around reporting mechanisms.

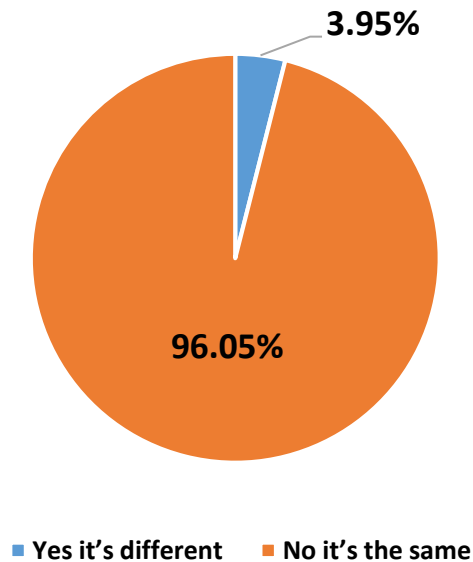
About You

Gender



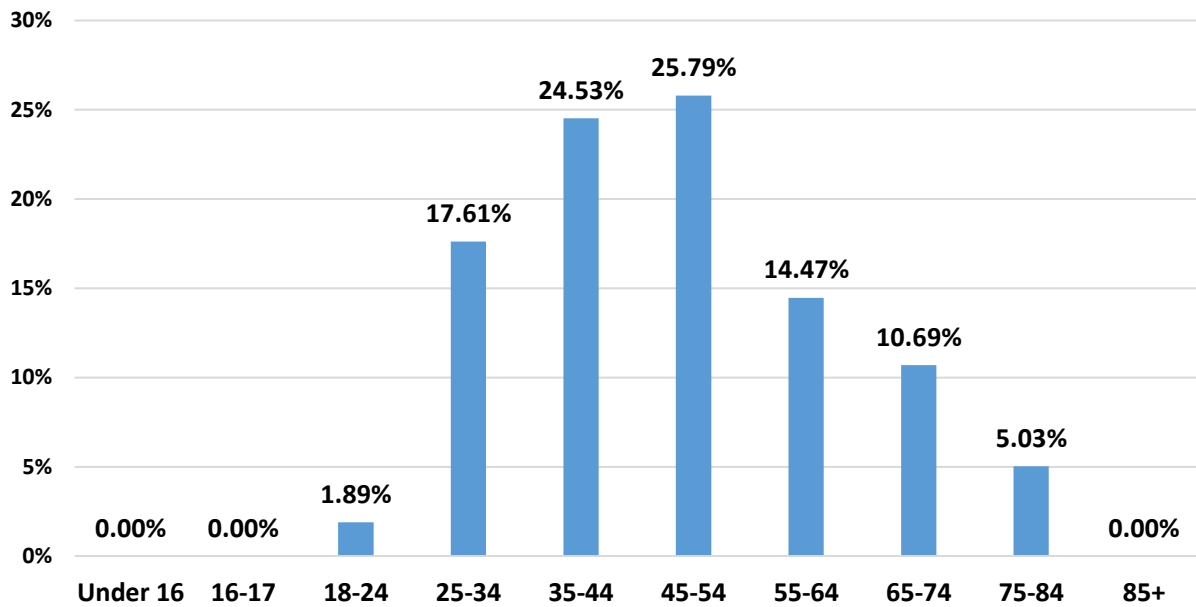
The highest percentage of respondents were female (93), with a smaller percentage of male respondents (69).

Gender: Is your gender identity different to the sex you were assumed to be at birth?



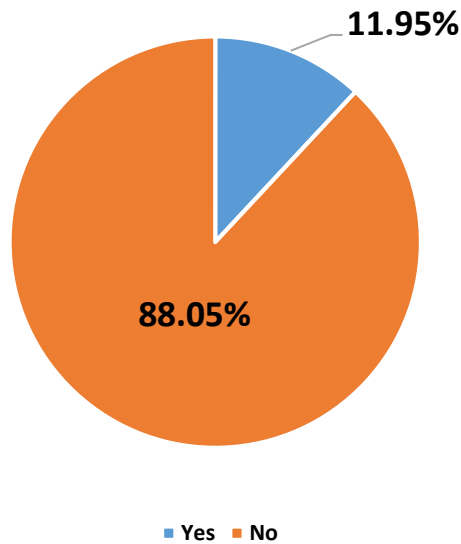
The majority of respondents stated that their gender identity was the same as at birth (146). Only a very small percentage stated that it is different (6).

Age Group



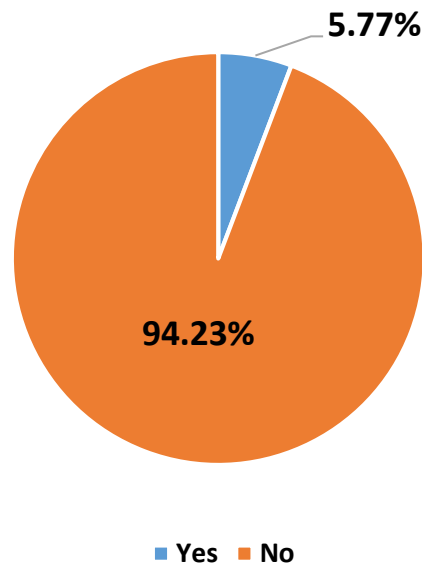
The highest percentage of responders were in the 45-54 (41) age group. This was followed by 35-44 (39), 25-34 (28), 55-64 (23), 65-74 (17), 75-84 (8) and 18-24 (3).

Disability



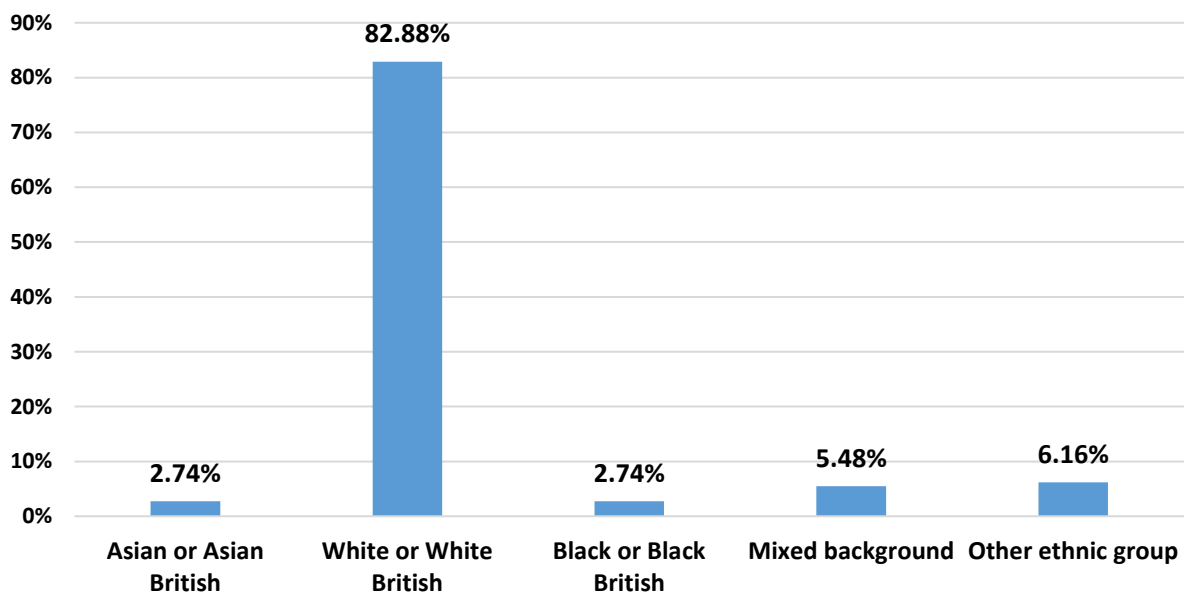
The majority of respondents stated that they did not have a disability (140). Only a small percentage stated that they did (19).

Caring responsibilities



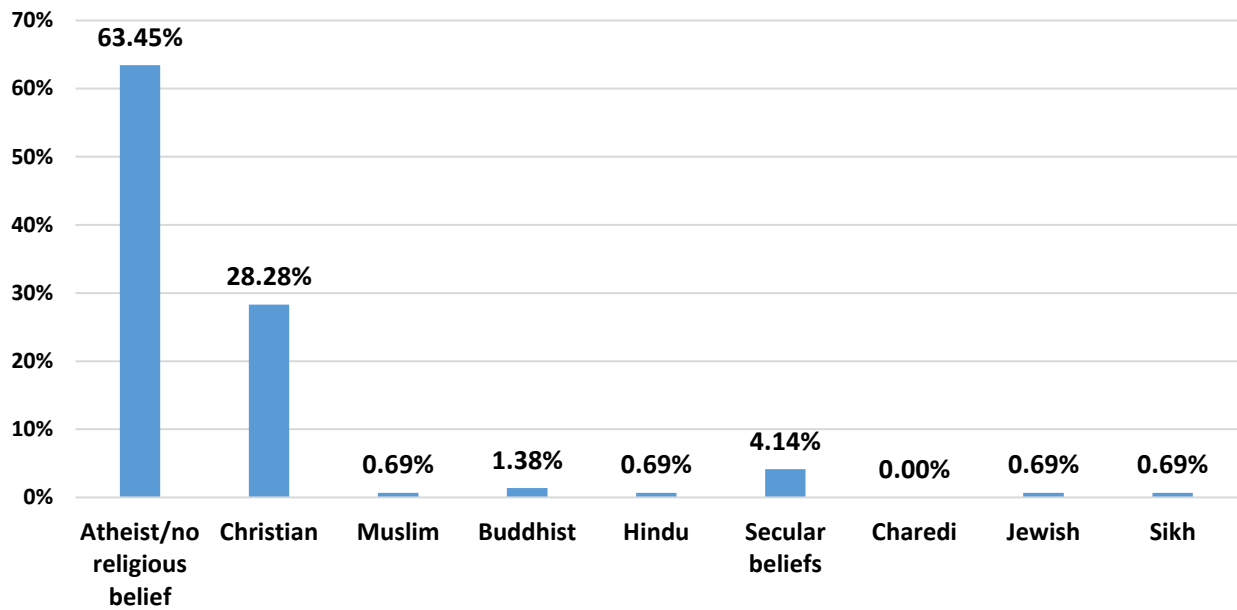
The majority of respondents stated “No” (147) to having caring responsibilities. A small percentage stated “Yes” (9).

Ethnicity



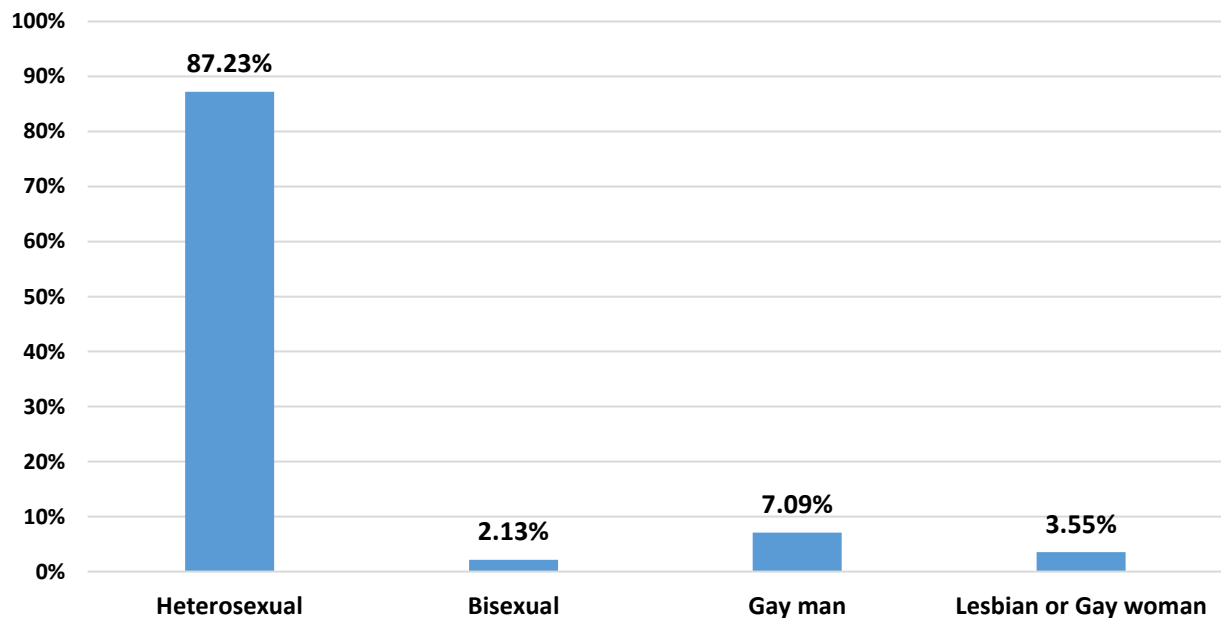
The majority of respondents stated that they were “White or White British” (121). All other ethnicities accounted for a much smaller percentage of respondents.

Religion or belief



The majority of respondents stated that they are “Atheist/no religious belief” (92). The second highest was “Christian” (41), with all other religions or beliefs accounting for a smaller percentage each.

Sexual Orientation



The majority of respondents stated that they were “heterosexual” (123). All other sexual orientations accounted for a very small percentage.

Conclusion

The vast majority of respondents were Hackney residents who took part in this consultation.

There was a clear message among all respondents who made comments in each of the open ended questions. It was felt that ASB are not doing enough to enforce or action upon ASB requests made, and not dealing with the requests as quick as they should. Noise issues remains one of the biggest concerns among respondents.

The views on sex work for respondents was that they were more in favour of sex workers being supported rather than prosecuted for what they do, which is in line with the police national guidance and best practice.

There was a very different view for begging, that ASB are not doing enough to stop beggars from loitering in the same places, where they are not being moved on. Some can become quite aggressive towards the public, but very little action is taken upon them.

The majority of respondents were in favour of an approach of support towards beggars before any warnings or enforcement, but some respondents felt that this method would not work, and that ASB should take a harder line towards begging.

They were also in favour of the 'Alternative Giving Scheme' with the majority stating yes, but it is still felt that this will not address the underlying causes of begging, and may in fact encourage more beggars. An idea would be to have a publicity campaign to encourage the public not to give money to beggars, even though some believe it is entirely their choice whether they do or do not and they shouldn't be told otherwise.

Information sharing is a key factor, but it is felt that this is not being done enough between partners. More teams should be involved with ASB, to improve liaison between services and improve the aspect of dealing with ASB.

The majority of respondents agreed to a warning card system, but it was still felt that it may not make a difference to those committing ASB, nor will it help perpetrators be dealt with straight away thus causing the public to suffer until all three warnings have been handed to them. A pilot of this should be carried out to see how it may work before any decision of it being enforced permanently.