

Dog Control PSPO

Consultation Report

Report Date: November 2020

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Overview

The London Borough of Hackney currently operates Dog Control Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPOs). The purpose of these PSPOs is to control a number of issues which arise as a result of people failing to exercise proper control of dogs in public places.

The current PSPOs were due to expire on 20 October 2020, and the Council was considering whether to renew the PSPO, for a further three years until 20 October 2023.

Background

They are not about stopping the responsible use of public spaces - but they do provide councils with a tool to tackle persistent issues that are damaging their communities.

The vast majority of dog owners act responsibly, keeping their dogs under control and clearing up their dog's waste. However, the council continues to receive complaints about dog-related negative behaviour and irresponsible dog owners.

In response to this, the Council is launching a consultation to ask residents their opinions about a variety of dog control related issues. The feedback from the consultation will help to shape and inform the dog control public space protection order (PSPO).

The prohibitions have been designed to be as simple as possible, giving clarity and outlining expectations. Well behaved dogs can be walked or exercised freely off lead in all large parks. This promotes healthy exercise for dogs and takes into consideration the needs of the borough's dog owners and the welfare of dogs.

Consultation Approach

- The consultation summary explaining the purpose of the consultation and online questionnaire was included on the Council's online consultation platform, citizen space: <https://consultation.hackney.gov.uk/>
 - This should included a [map](#) of the dog free areas and where dogs should be kept of leads
- Consultees were able to request paper copies of the consultation pack (summary, questionnaire by calling the switchboard and a member of the Enforcement team posted a copy of the consultation pack to them.
- The consultation pack was made available at public access points across the borough that were open to the public when the consultation was launched.

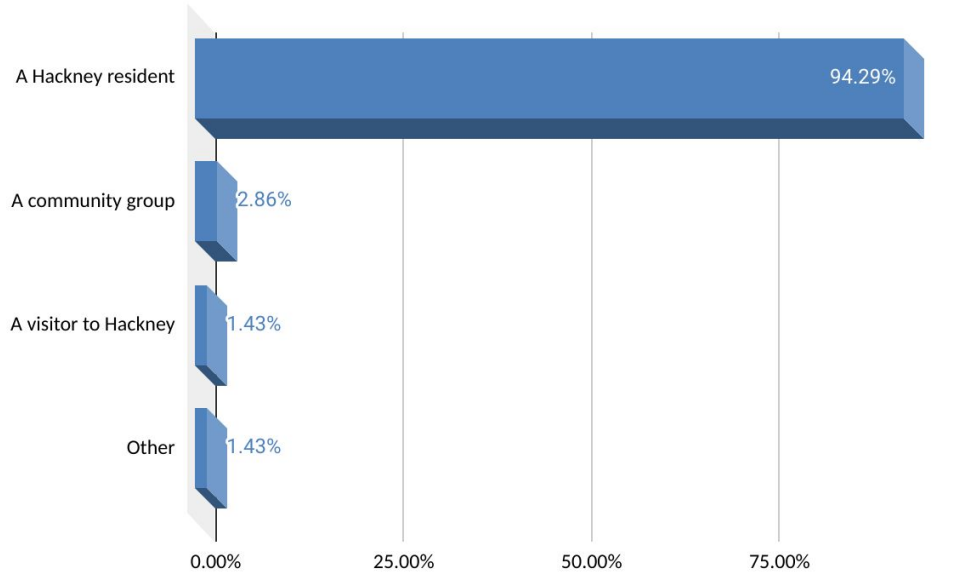
- The consultation was also promoted to park user groups via their e-newsletters. The consultation was also promoted via the Council's publications: Hackney Today and Hackney Life.

Response Rate

A total of 68 respondents took part.

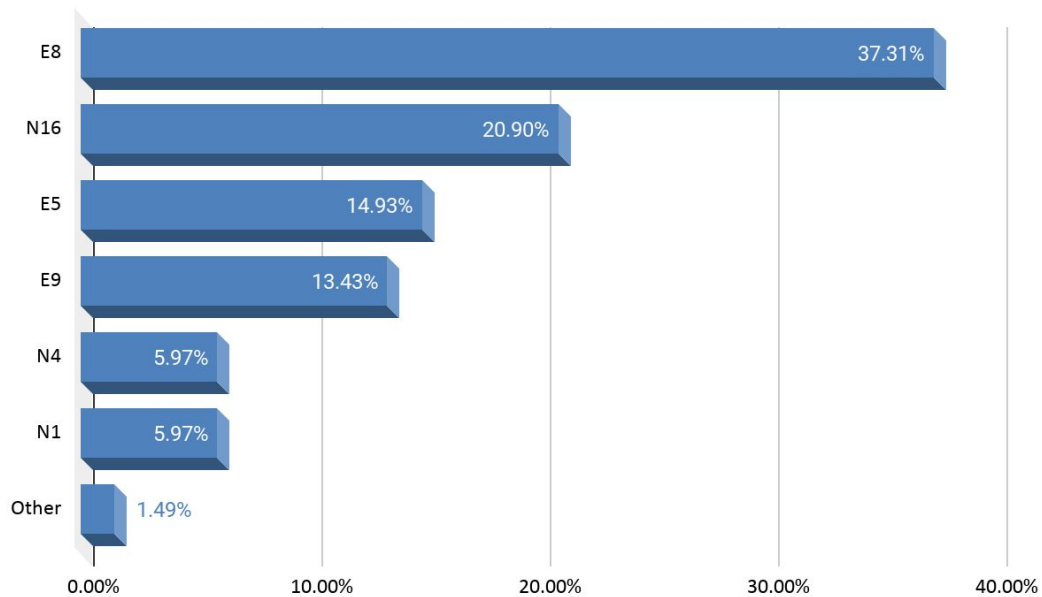
Overview of results

Are you: (Base 70 responses)



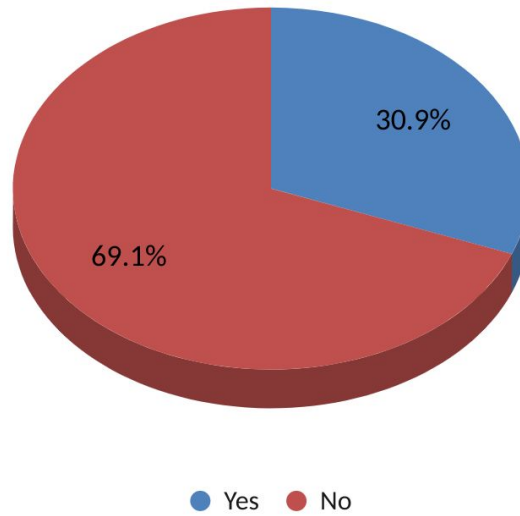
The majority of respondents stated that they were “a Hackney resident” (66). All others accounted for a very small proportion of respondents.

Where do you live or where is your business located? (this information will help us to better understand the views of Hackney residents and businesses) (Base 67)



The highest percentage of respondents were from the “E8” postcode area (25). This was followed by “N16” (14), “E5” (10), “E9” (9), “N4”, “N1” and “Other” (4 each). One respondent stated “N5” as “Other”.

Are you a dog owner? (Base 68)



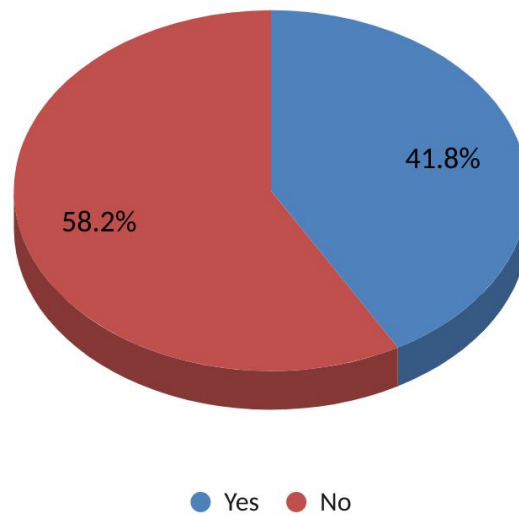
The majority of respondents, at just over two thirds, stated that they were not a dog owner (47). Just under a third stated they were (21).

Are you a professional dog walker? (Base 68)



All but one respondent stated that they were not a professional dog walker (67).

Have you recently witnessed a dog acting aggressively, or felt threatened by a dog in Hackney? (Base 67)

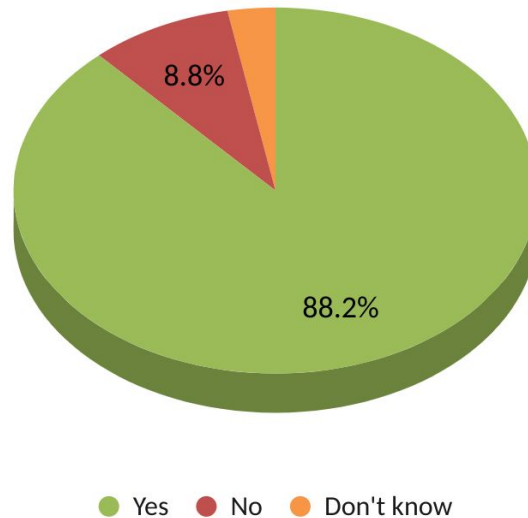


The majority of respondents, at just over 58%, stated that they have not recently witnessed a dog acting aggressively, or felt threatened by a dog in Hackney (39). Just under 42% stated that they have.

Those who stated that they have witness this were asked to tell us where this was, with the following locations given:

<u>Where?</u>	<u>Count</u>
London Fields	9
Clissold Park	3
Hackney Downs	3
Rhodes Estate	1
Abney Park	1
Shoreditch Park	1
Hackney Marshes	1
Millfields Park	1
Upper Clapton	1
Debenham Court	1
Lovell House	1
Shepherdess Walk Park	1
Dennington Close	1
Churchwell Path	1
Meynell Road	1
Well Street Common	1

Do you support the renewal of the Dog Control PSPO as outlined in the consultation document? (Base 68)



The majority of respondents support the renewal of the Dog Control PSPO (60). A small percentage of just under 9% stated that they do not (6), with just under 3% stating that they “don’t know” (2).

Are there any elements of the proposed PSPO which you feel should be removed? (Please also explain why).

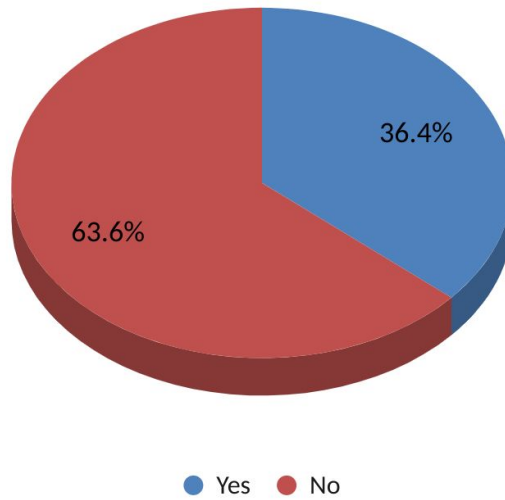
Respondents were asked to give details about any elements of the proposed PSPO that they feel should be removed. 10 comments were made, with the following key themes below:

<u>Key theme</u>	<u>Count</u>
Well behaved dogs being allowed off leads	4
Spaces under half a hectare should not have a dog lead restriction	2
Offer dog fenced exercise areas	2
Dogs allowed in the parks	1
Fines enforced for not cleaning up after your dog	1

The themes above are self-explanatory, and clearly are made by dog owners. “*The UK is infamous for dog friendliness*”, so these restrictions are said to be “*punitive*” and should not be reflected by letting “*a bunch of bored, miserable people change the best thing about this place*”.

One comment made stated “*Dogs on lead order shouldn't be applied to all public parks and gardens under half a hectare in size. If this is the case Hackney should offer dog fenced exercise areas. There are many local families with dogs and not kids and they are being marginalized.*”

Do you think there are any other locations which need to be covered by the PSPO?
(Base 55)



The majority of respondents, at just under two thirds, stated that they do not think there are other locations which need to be covered by the PSPO (20). Just over a third stated that they think there should be, and these are mentioned below:

<u>Locations</u>	<u>Count</u>
Green spaces/communal areas/gardens on estates	5
Hackney parks	5
Playgrounds	3
Street markets	2
Public footpaths	1
Private entrances	1
Private front gardens	1
Outside hospitals	1
Green spaces/communal areas/gardens on non-council housing	1

The main issues about why these locations should be covered is due to dog fouling, with owners not cleaning up after their dogs. Stricter measures and fines should be put in place to catch these dog owners. The other issue stated is about dogs not on leads and being able to run free without any control, which can cause a nuisance to other people.

Has the current Dog Control PSPO had a negative impact on you in any way? If so, how?

A total of 9 comments were made to this question, with the following key themes:

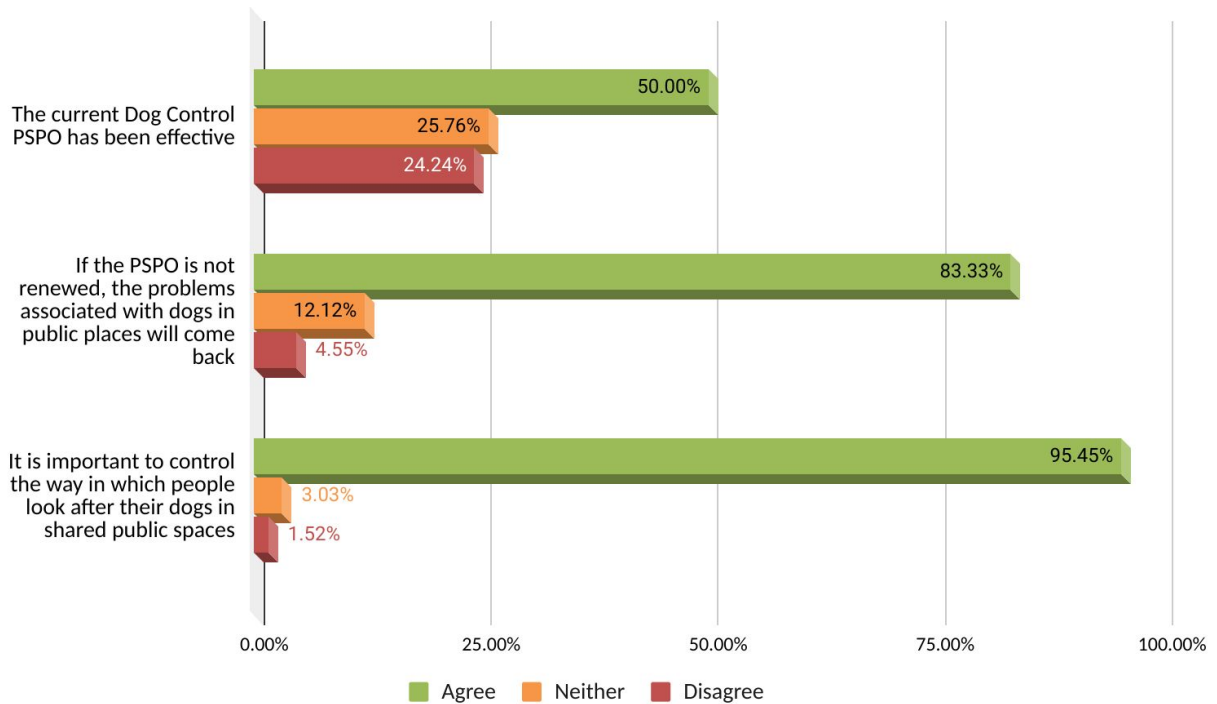
<u>Key theme</u>	<u>Count</u>
Dogs off leads not being controlled	5
No negative impact	2
No dogs in playground area with own child	1
Aggressive dog owners	1

As stated through the consultation results, the lack of dog control from not being kept on leads is one of the biggest issues. Two respondents felt that there was no negative impact at all.

One respondent said *“Not being able to enter a playground with my kid and dog at the same time. Which makes it so difficult as I need to take care of both.”*

Another respondent said about aggressive dog owners, with an incident specifying London Fields, *“there is one dog owner who persistently breaches the PSPO and refuses to keep his dog on lead despite numerous incidents of attack. This person is also aggressive to other dog owners in London Fields. My dog has been attacked and injured by this man's dog, and required vet treatment (which I was not reimbursed for by said owner). This dog owner as a result continues to abuse and shout at me as he recognises my dog as being a victim of his - yet refuses to put his own dangerous dog on lead in these situations, expecting other dog owners with well behaved dogs to put theirs on lead in his presence. This is not tolerable and needs to be resolved as people (including children) and dogs in the park are at risk.”*

Please tell us to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements:
(Base 66)



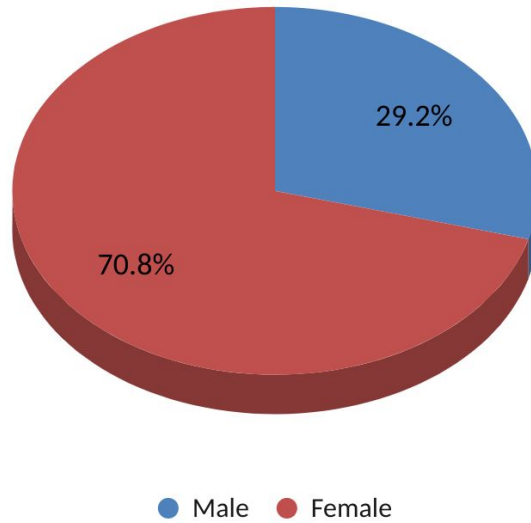
50% of respondents agree that the current Dog Control PSPO has been effective (33).

Over 80% of respondents agree that if the PSPO is not renewed then the problems with dogs in public spaces will return (55).

Over 95% of respondents agree that it is important to control the way in which people look after their dogs in shared public spaces (63).

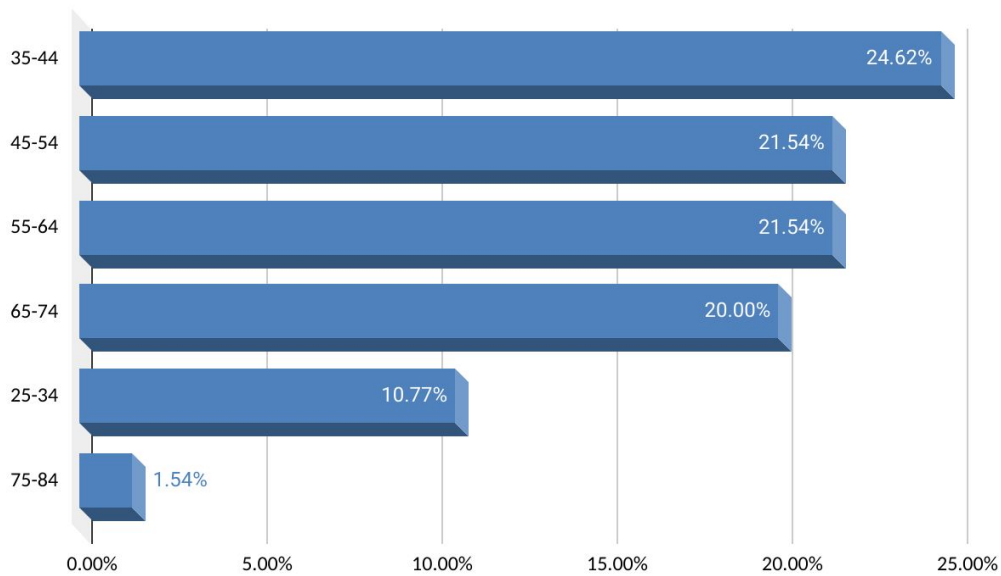
About you

Gender



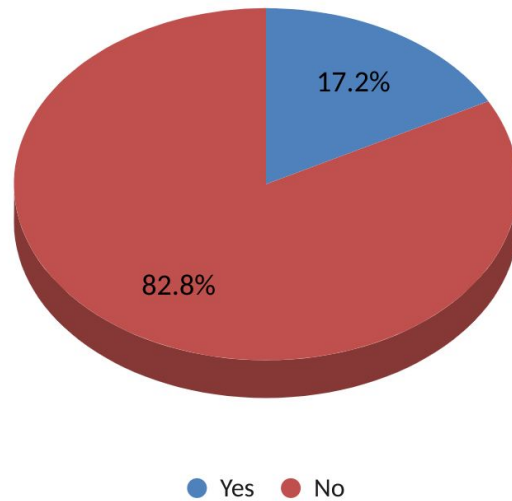
The majority of respondents, at just over 70% were female (46), with just under 30% male (19).

Age group



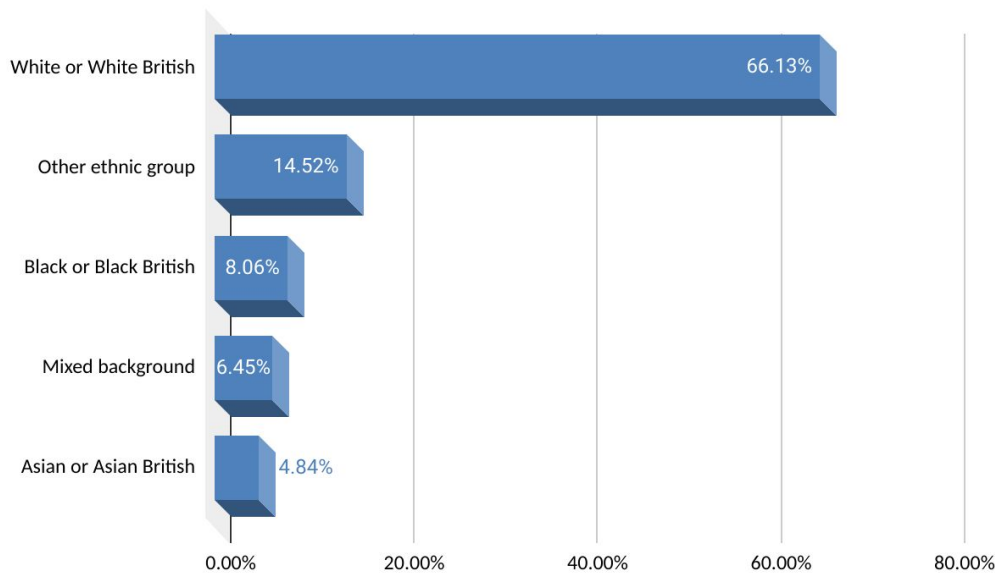
The highest percentage of respondents were in the 35-44 age group (16). This was closely followed by 45-54 and 55-64 (14 each), then 65-74 (13). 25-34 accounted for a smaller percentage (7), and 75-84 accounted for just one respondent.

Disability



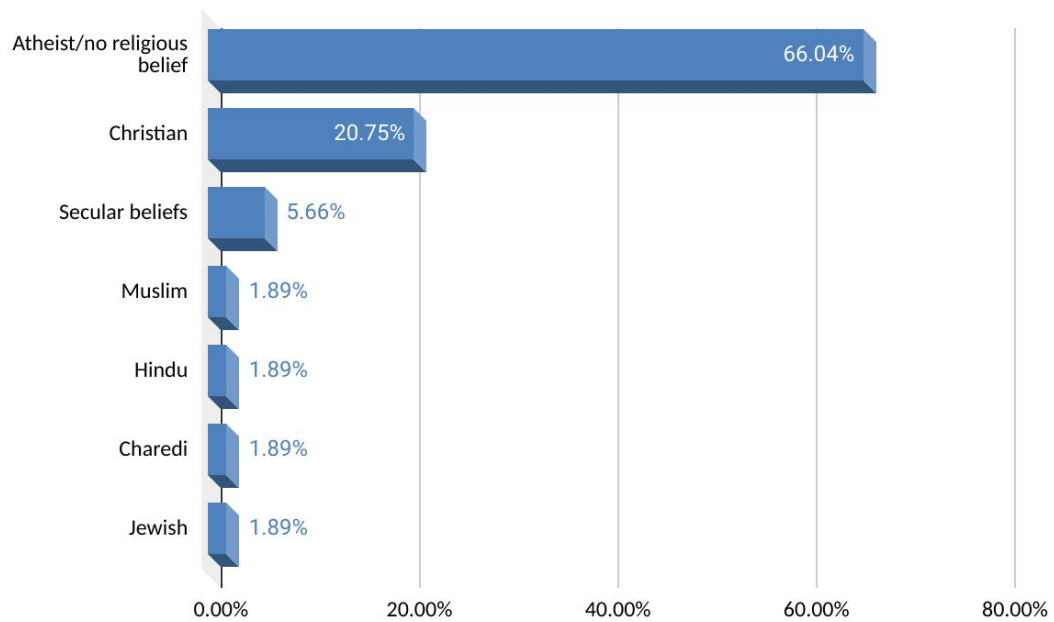
The majority of respondents stated that they did not have a disability (53), with a smaller percentage stating that they did (11).

Ethnicity



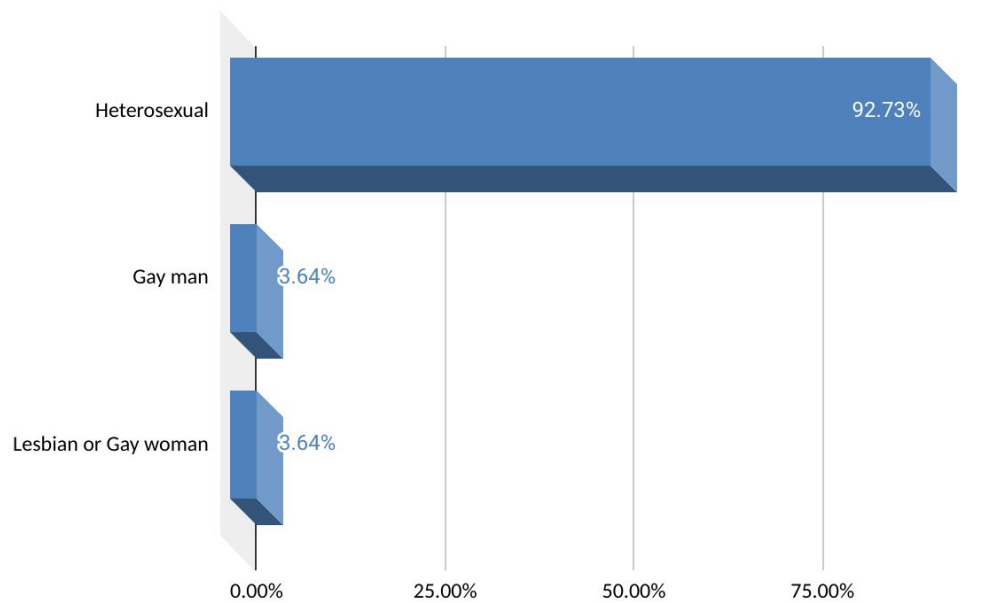
The majority of respondents stated that they were of “White or White British” ethnicity (41). All others accounted for a much smaller percentage.

Religion



The majority of respondents stated that they were “Atheist/no religious belief” (41). The next highest was “Christian” (11) with all others accounting for a much smaller percentage.

Sexual orientation



The majority of respondents stated that they were “heterosexual” (51). All others accounted for a much smaller percentage.

Conclusion

A total of 68 respondents took part in this consultation, with the vast majority being Hackney residents.

The majority of respondents stated that they were not dog owners, but there was a fairly mixed view in terms of them witnessing a dog acting aggressively, or feeling threatened by a dog. 42% of respondents stated that they have witnessed this, but with the total number of respondents to the consultation being very low, this would not truly reflect the total population of Hackney.

However, the majority of respondents did support the proposal of renewing the Dog Control PSPO which includes the majority of those who are dog owners.

By reviewing the comments made it is clear that most dog owners, who have control of their dogs and that are not aggressive or threatening towards other people and animals, feel that they are being penalised by not being able to let their dog off the lead to run around freely. Those who are not dog owners feel that dogs that are not on leads can sometimes be a nuisance. Suggestions for dog fenced areas of unused green spaces could be an option to allow dogs to have the space to exercise, and not disturb other park users.

Cleaning up after their dogs is an issue, and this should lead to stricter measures and fines for those dog owners who are responsible.

The data suggests that the renewal of the PSPO should be imposed, as this will help the issues in which dog owners look after their dogs, as well as the problems which are associated with dogs in public spaces.