

# Cambridge City Council Tenant and Leaseholder Involvement Strategy (2026–2028)

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## Resident involvement

Cambridge City Council is committed to consulting with residents to ensure we reflect your views and experience in how we deliver your housing services. This strategy has been created in collaboration with our tenants and leaseholders. The following resident groups were involved with providing input on this strategy:

- Housing Advisory Board Tenant and Leaseholder Representatives
- Resident Focus-groups
- Resident 'Armchair Reviewers'
- Wider Resident Consultation



## Foreword

Foreword by Resident Reps/Exec member for Housing to be completed once adopted.

## Introduction

This strategy sets out how Cambridge City Council will involve tenants and leaseholders in shaping housing services. It explains how we will listen, act, and show the impact of resident views. It reflects feedback from residents, staff, and councillors, and aims to build a culture of trust, inclusion, and continuous improvement.

In this strategy the term ‘resident’ refers to anyone living in Cambridge City Council-owned properties, this includes tenants, leaseholders and shared owners.

We define resident involvement as: *“Tenants and leaseholders taking part in the decision-making process and influencing choices which affect the housing services, homes and communities in which they live”*.

The lived experience our residents offer is invaluable in shaping housing services and ensuring those services meet the needs of our residents, enabling our city to be ‘One Cambridge, Fair for All’.

## Regulatory and legislative requirements

This strategy has been developed to fulfil the updated regulatory requirements of social housing providers, and in accordance with the legislation below. It is also intended to complement any existing legal requirements for resident involvement.

It has been designed to align with best practice in the sector including the National Housing Federation’s “Together with Tenants” charter, as well as recommendations for resident involvement set out by the Chartered Institute of Housing and the Tenant Participation Advisory Service.

- Revised Consumer Standards (Effective April 2024)
- Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023
- Building Safety Act 2022 – Section 91
- Housing Act 1985 – Section 105
- Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 – Section 20

## How we shaped this strategy

To make sure this strategy reflects what really matters to residents, we held a series of workshops to co-develop the objectives and actions in this strategy, we also created a consultation to gather insights from our wider resident base on the draft content.

The aim of these workshops and consultation was to focus on creating a shared understanding of how we can improve involvement opportunities, and making sure that the residents can help shape the future of our housing services.

We engaged with over 50 residents about the refresh of our Tenant and Leaseholder Involvement Strategy. We would like to express a huge thank you to all residents who have been involved in bringing the new strategy to life. This feedback has been central to the strategy, and it will continue to guide how we work with residents going forward.

There is more detail about this in Appendix 1 'Overview of Engagement and Feedback'.

## Our vision

Cambridge City Council wants to make sure every resident feels heard, respected, and involved in shaping the housing services that matter to them. The development of this strategy is grounded in resident feedback, staff insight and sector best practice.

The Tenant and Leaseholder Involvement Strategy is about building stronger connections with our residents, so we can better understand diverse perspectives, and empower every voice within our communities.

It aims to create more meaningful opportunities to influence housing services, supporting residents to take part in ways that suit them, and making sure everyone can see the difference their input makes.

We are keen to promote resident involvement that improves community cohesion, environmental outcomes and resident wellbeing, as well as reducing the stigma associated with social housing.

To help us put residents at the centre of what we do, and address the issues raised through engagement, we have set four objectives with accompanying actions towards achieving them. The strategy will also have performance measures to assess impact, and an annual action plan, with timescales, responsibilities and ways to track progress.

## Objectives – what we are trying to achieve

### 1. Embed Resident Involvement Across Housing Services

Build a culture of trust, transparency and accountability by involving residents in the way the housing services operates.

### 2. Ensure Resident Involvement is Accessible and Inclusive

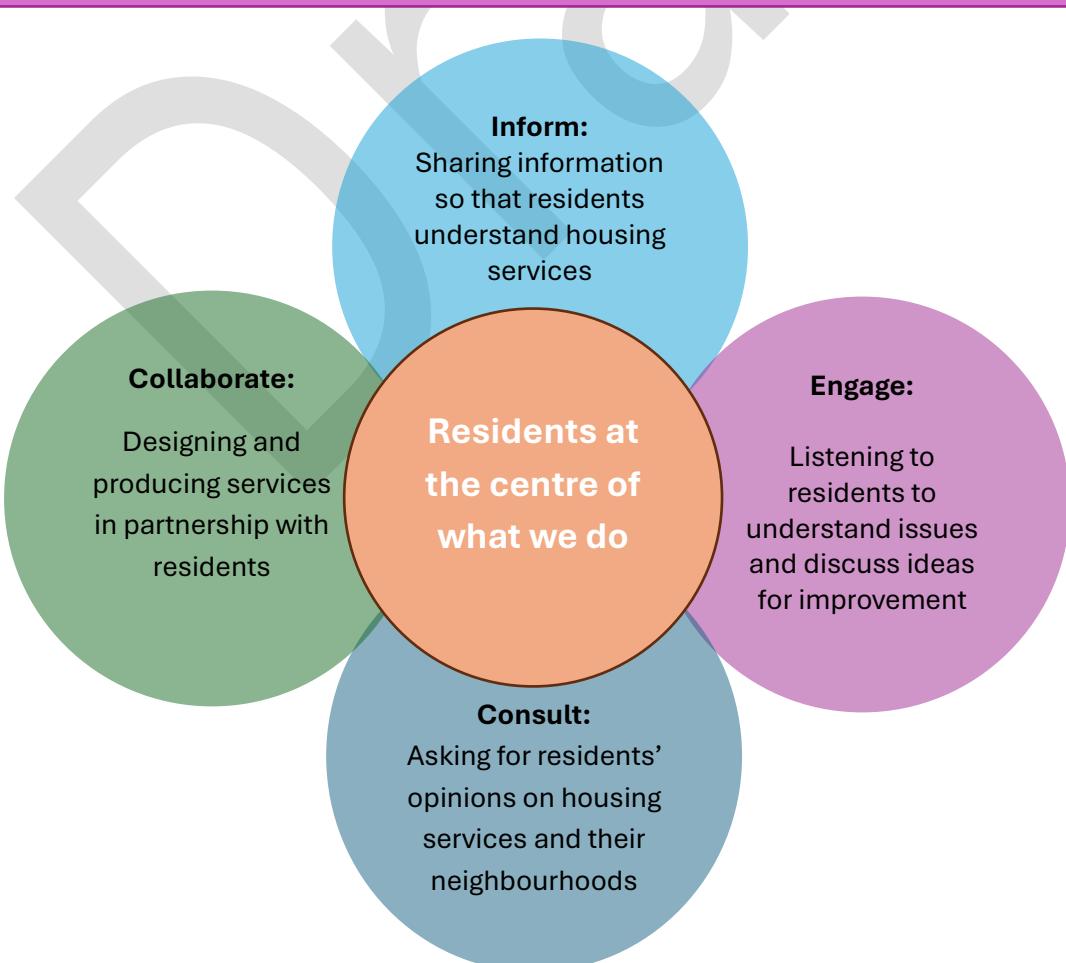
Give all residents opportunities to engage meaningfully, regardless of background or circumstance.

### 3. Enable an Empowered Resident Voice through Involvement

Strengthen the role of residents in shaping decisions and influencing outcomes.

### 4. Listen, Learn and Improve

Demonstrate how we use feedback and data to ensure residents are heard, and that we are improving services and meeting standards.



## Actions – what we will do

These actions set out to continue the work that we already do with resident involvement, as well as committing to improving through the new actions developed by residents.

### 1. Embed Resident Involvement Across Housing Services

Build a culture of trust, transparency and accountability by involving residents in the way the housing services operates.

#### Continued Practice:

- Include ‘resident involvement’ in relevant staff inductions and the development of new roles, so they can identify and promote resident involvement opportunities.
- Maintain the involvement of residents in recruitment panels for relevant senior housing staff, and on the evaluation panels for procurement of significant contracts.
- Ensure that resident priorities are recognised when developing involvement opportunities or improving housing services.

#### New Actions:

- Establish a “Resident Voice in All Policies” principle: to ensure resident input is considered and built into the development and review of housing policy.

### 2. Ensure Resident Involvement is Accessible and Inclusive

Give all residents opportunities to engage meaningfully, regardless of background or circumstance.

#### Continued Practice:

- Build upon our offer of varied involvement options, both online and in-person, in areas and at times that suit resident needs.
- Further identify and remove barriers to participation (e.g. digital access, time constraints).

#### New Actions:

- Develop an annual engagement plan including digital content, printed materials, and community outreach.

- Work towards a broad and representative group of involved residents to reflect the diversity of our communities.

### 3. Enable an Empowered Resident Voice through Involvement

Strengthen the role of residents in shaping decisions and influencing outcomes.

#### Continued Practice:

- Support the elected tenant and leaseholder representatives to hold the council to account through resident-led challenge and make recommendations for improvements.
- Extend the support on offer to build residents' confidence and skills in getting involved so they can be effective in their roles.

#### New Actions:

- Promote an 'Impact Tracker' showing how different resident input has shaped decisions.
- Introduce 'task and finish' groups for residents to play a role in understanding and improving key service/performance areas – e.g. repairs, complaints.

### 4. Listen, Learn and Improve

Demonstrate how we use feedback and data to ensure residents are heard, and that we are improving services and meeting standards.

#### Continued Practice:

- Widen our use of surveys, forums, and estate walkabouts to gather resident input on local priorities.
- Enhance our "You Said, We Did" communication loop to show how feedback leads to action.

#### New Actions:

- Publish an 'Annual Tenant and Leaseholder Report' combining performance data and engagement outcomes.

## Resident Involvement Activities

We want residents to get involved in a way that works best for them, based on time commitments, circumstances and practical needs, such as childcare, travel, or internet access. Residents can choose how and when to get involved, with flexible options to suit different lifestyles and needs.

We will continue our current offering and build upon this to include the following:

Our offer	Activities you can get involved in	Time commitment
<b>Keeping you informed</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading the Open Door magazine delivered to you</li> <li>• Reading the Annual Tenant and Leaseholder Report</li> <li>• Checking updates on our website</li> <li>• Following our social media posts</li> <li>• Signing up to receive email newsletters and involvement opportunities</li> </ul>	Low Low Low Low Low
<b>Consulting with you</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completing surveys and statutory consultations</li> <li>• Contributing your views on priorities in neighbourhoods and where regeneration is planned</li> <li>• Making suggestions about housing services or ideas for improvement</li> </ul>	Low Low Low
<b>Engaging with you in the community</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joining community days in your neighbourhood</li> <li>• Joining estate walkabouts</li> <li>• Participating in the tenant and leaseholder garden competition</li> <li>• Joining neighbourhood volunteering activities</li> </ul>	Medium Medium Medium Medium
<b>Collaborating with you</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attending an online resident forum (e.g. Repairs and Maintenance)</li> <li>• Joining our Open Door Editorial Panel</li> <li>• Reviewing housing policy through becoming an 'Armchair Reviewer'</li> <li>• Joining a 'task and finish' group focussed on key service/performance areas</li> <li>• Becoming an elected Tenant and Leaseholder Representatives on Housing Advisory Board</li> <li>• Joining a procurement panel to assess relevant contracts</li> </ul>	Medium Medium Medium Medium High High

## What are the advantages of getting involved?

Through engaging in any of the activities above we want to ensure that residents can:

- meet new people
- give something back to their community and improve their housing service
- develop as an individual and get a reference for a job
- get free training in developing skills and knowledge in IT and housing
- get their travel and care expenses met
- learn how the council works
- enjoy the benefits of 'thank you' events, or incentives like being entered into a prize draw for shopping vouchers
- get access to [membership of TPAS](#)
- get help with digital access, e.g. Tenant Representatives having a laptop loan

### Get involved!

Getting involved is how you, as a Cambridge city Council tenant or leaseholder, can influence the housing services you receive from us. You are the best people to tell us what works well and where we can do better, and your involvement makes a real difference. Throughout the year we run a number of surveys, online meetings and in-person events so you can express your views.

If any of the resident involvement activities interest you - drop us an email on [resident-involvement@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:resident-involvement@cambridge.gov.uk) or telephone **01223 458323**.

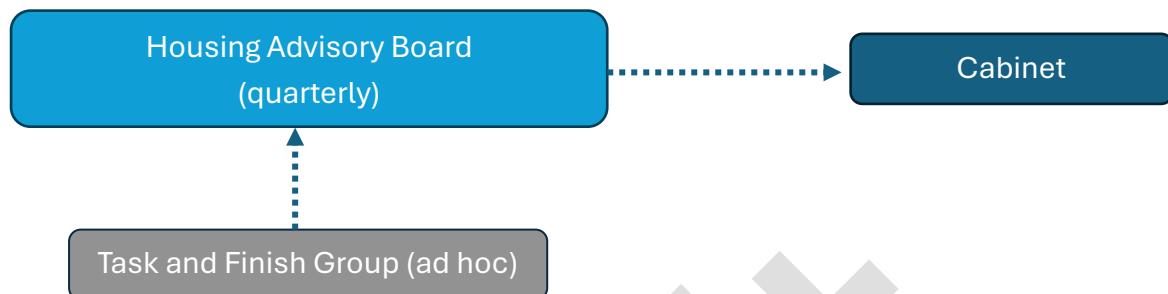
If you want to find out more you can also visit our [resident involvement](#) webpage.

## Elected tenant and leaseholder representatives

At Cambridge City Council we have six resident representatives, five tenants and one residential leaseholder, that sit on the **Housing Advisory Board** alongside councillors.

Housing Advisory Board provides advice and recommendations to Cabinet, and feedback to help us improve our housing service. It supports the decision-making process and monitors our performance as a landlord.

The Housing Advisory Board can create task and finish groups to carry out deep-dive projects on housing service areas and feed into the decision-making process through recommendations. Task and finish group membership could include members of the Board as well as wider residents or external advisors.



Resident representatives are elected every four years (via an independent electoral service), through a ballot sent to all tenants and leaseholders addresses. These representatives help influence how we run our housing service. Their contribution ensures that resident views and experience are at the forefront of housing decisions.

Tenant and leaseholder representatives are entitled to a remuneration of up to £1,400 a year depending on how much time they give to the role and are expected to meet the criteria set within the terms of reference for the Board, as well as the Code of Conduct for all tenant and leaseholder representatives.

A few examples of previous work resident representatives have been involved in:

- Assessing bids for the Estate Cleaning Contract and the Internal Planned Maintenance Contract.
- Proposed and ensured funding for a new Education and Engagement Officer to help deliver the Fire Safety in Communal Areas Policy.
- Part of the Council's New Build Consultation Group, looking at the detail of consultations and decent issues arising from the Council's next 1000 council homes strategy.

To contact the representatives directly you can email - [hsc.residents@gmail.com](mailto:hsc.residents@gmail.com)

## Impact – how we will measure success

This strategy will be delivered over the next two years, from 2026 to 2028. We have developed performance measures to demonstrate progress in resident involvement.

Each year, we'll also create a clear action plan that sets out what we're aiming to improve, who's responsible for making it happen and when residents can expect to see progress.

Targets will be set in the accompanying action plan to this strategy, we will monitor progress through:

### **Primary Measures (directly linked to RI activities):**

- Number of resident involvement activities offered throughout the year (e.g. forums, estate walkabouts, surveys).
- Number of residents engaged in involvement activities.
- Number of new residents participating for the first time.
- Diversity of residents participating in involvement activities.
- Number of housing services influenced through resident involvement.
- Resident satisfaction with involvement opportunities.

### **Secondary Measures (linked to wider housing outcomes):**

- % satisfaction that the landlord listens to tenant views and acts upon them (TSM).
- % satisfaction that the landlord keeps tenants informed (TSM).
- % agreement that the landlord treats tenants with fairness and respect (TSM).

### **Reporting and Accountability:**

- Create an accompanying action plan to ensure we achieve our objectives.
- Elected Tenant and Leaseholder Representatives involved in shaping the action plan and reviewing progress.
- Annual updates to the Housing Advisory Board.
- Annual Tenant and Leaseholder Report shared with all tenants and leaseholders.

## Appendix 1: Overview of Engagement and Feedback

### Focus Groups and Consultation

Before writing the draft strategy we organised an in-person focus group in August 2025 with our elected resident representatives, and other involved residents. Seven residents attended this, and the aim was to gather thoughts and ideas on their priorities and to co-develop the objectives and actions of the strategy.

We then held a further focus group online with 12 residents in November 2025 to capture additional views of on the objectives and actions that had been co-developed, so that we could further refine these.

In December 2025 we consulted with our wider resident base on the draft strategy so far. We created a survey that was publicised in the Autumn/Winter edition of Open Door magazine with the option to complete online, via phone or post. In total we received 30 responses (18 tenants and 12 leaseholders) that captured structured feedback on the draft strategy content as well as allowing more general feedback about resident involvement.

While we believe our approach to co-developing this strategy captured as many resident views as we could in the time we had, there are some demographics that were not represented in the process. It is anticipated that as the new strategy takes shape, we will address the barriers that some groups experience in getting involved so that we can improve this in future.

### Summary of Feedback from Focus-groups and Consultation

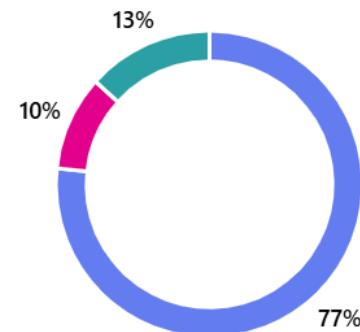
As a result of the feedback we received, we made changes to this draft strategy. This includes:

- removed repetition of topics
- adjusted some of the language to make it less technical
- a desire for stronger links between involvement and day-to-day service delivery, particularly repairs and maintenance.
- the need for embedding multiple communication channels, recognising that digital access and preferences vary.
- ensuring that involvement opportunities clearly lead to residents being able to see impact and outcomes communicated.

A summary of the feedback we received from our focus groups and consultation is below.

Overall do you think that the content is easy to read and understand?

● Yes	23
● No	3
● Not sure	4



## Main themes

1. **Embed Resident Involvement across Housing Services:** build a culture of trust, transparency and accountability by involving residents in the way that the council operates.
  - **Challenges:**
    - Concern about siloed communication between tenant and leaseholder teams. Separate channels reduced shared understanding and collaboration.
  - **Suggestions:**
    - Improve cross-team collaboration and ensure joint forums where relevant.
    - Focus on day to day service quality, especially repairs & maintenance. Several respondents felt involvement should be tightly linked to improving the basics and holding contractors to account - *“Concentrate more on the day to day issues, such as repairs & maintenance... Getting the small stuff right would be a start.”*
    - Communicate service changes before they happen (e.g., keys, storage, estate changes) and give residents practical routes to resolve issues - *“I experienced bike storage... key lockers being changed while I was out of the country... I did not receive any communication about this.”*
2. **Ensure Inclusivity:** give all residents opportunities to engage meaningfully, regardless of background or circumstance.
  - **Challenges:**
    - Digital-only communication excludes many older residents and those with limited digital access or confidence.
    - Many residents have different preferences on how they'd like to be involved, there has to be a range of options available.
  - **Suggestions:**

- Recognise literacy barriers and language needs.
- Traditional methods (letters, leaflets, door-knocking) are really valued by many residents - *“Face to face and spoken word is still the best way to communicate and engage.”*
- Important to use traditional methods alongside digital, maintain options for online meetings and surveys for flexibility.
- Offer multiple channels—not digital-only and not face-to-face-only. People want email and online options, but some (especially older or disabled residents) rely on telephone and value in-person contact - *“Telephone contact. We oldies find digital contact increasingly difficult to keep up with.”*
- Schedule meetings outside standard working hours as many can't attend during the working day.
- Provide advance notice and clear scheduling for things like estate walkabouts and community events.
- **Communication preferences** (what people asked for most often):
  - Count from comments: Email Updates (7), Online/Virtual Meetings (6), Face-to-face Events (5), Telephone Contact (4), Printed Material (1)
- **Barriers to participation** (most cited):
  - Time/work commitments (6); Lack of information/awareness (4); Distance/travel (1); Caring responsibilities (1); Digital access/usability (1).

### 3. **Enable an Empowered Resident Voice:** Strengthen the role of residents in shaping decisions and influencing outcomes.

- **Challenges:**
  - Residents often feel their input “goes into a black hole” with no visible outcomes. Showing that input leads to action, impact is key.
  - Ensure there are opportunities for residents to get involved at a strategic level.
- **Suggestions:**
  - Strong desire to close the feedback loop and show impact. Residents' welcome tools like an Impact Tracker, provided it is transparent (who it reports to, how it leads to change) - *“I can see the value of an impact tracker... “How is the Impact Tracker going to work... who is responsible for its assessment?”*
  - Early engagement is important to residents, not after decisions are made - *“Be open and tell about plans BEFORE they have been finalised so there is a feeling of inclusion.”*
  - Transparent communication on high-impact topics (e.g., cladding for leaseholders) - *“There has been a lot of uncertainty around external*

*cladding... Proactive communication outlining the options would help trust.”*

4. **Listen, Learn and Improve:** Use feedback and data to ensure residents are heard, and that we are improving services and meeting standards.

- **Challenges:**

- Residents not always aware of the opportunities available for getting involved.
- Negative experiences with tone of communication from some council teams.
- Feedback is collected but communication of outcomes takes too long.

- **Suggestions:**

- Tie involvement activities to visible service improvements (repairs, communal areas, parking, anti-social behaviour) Setting up dedicated groups that focus on specific issues, like repairs.
- Customer service and culture. Residents want a service-oriented approach, with calls answered and emails returned - *“You phone and rarely get to speak to anyone... Email someone and... you rarely get a reply.”*
- Make ‘human contact’ easy. There’s a strong preference for being able to reach a person (not just self-serve or FAQs) and to get timely replies - *“Make it easier for residents to speak to a human being.”*
- Suggestions for better communicating outcomes included combining high-level stats with personal stories in Open Door magazine.

- **What works well with current resident involvement opportunities?**

- Resident experience that when getting involved voices are valued and a feeling that involvement is democratic
- In-person events like estate walkabouts are viewed as one of the best ways to engage with residents
- Online surveys are seen as easy, quick ways to contribute—especially for people short on time - *“Surveys like this are really easy to engage with.”*

- **What barriers to participation have you experienced?**

- Lack of awareness of existing initiatives (e.g., Armchair Review for policy feedback)
- Time, and sometimes the scheduling of events being during the working day.

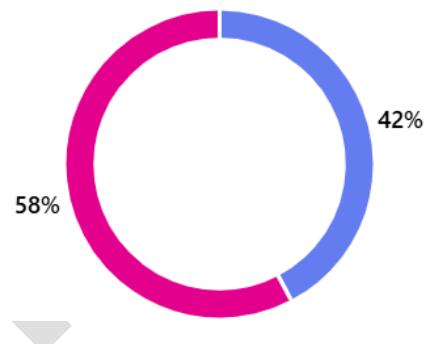
- **What incentives could demonstrate that residents time is valued?**

- Seeing the impact of resident input is enough in itself for some residents, rather than other rewards
- Suggestions included vouchers, social events, recognition schemes, and exploring gamified engagement or alternative initiatives to replace time credits.

### Demographic information from Consultation Responses

How do you identify?

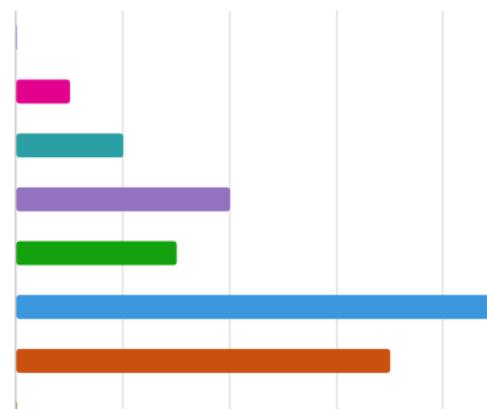
Male	11
Female	15
Prefer not to say	0
Other	0



Which age group do you belong to?

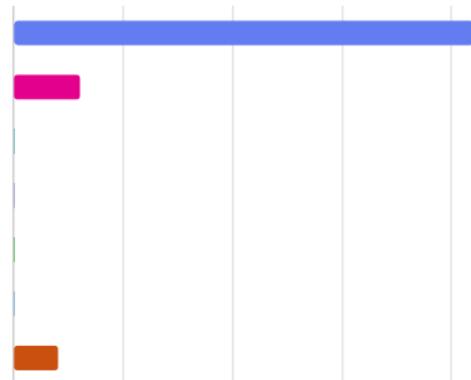
Under 18	0
18-24	1
25-34	2
35-44	4
45-54	3
55-64	9
65+	7
Prefer not to say	0

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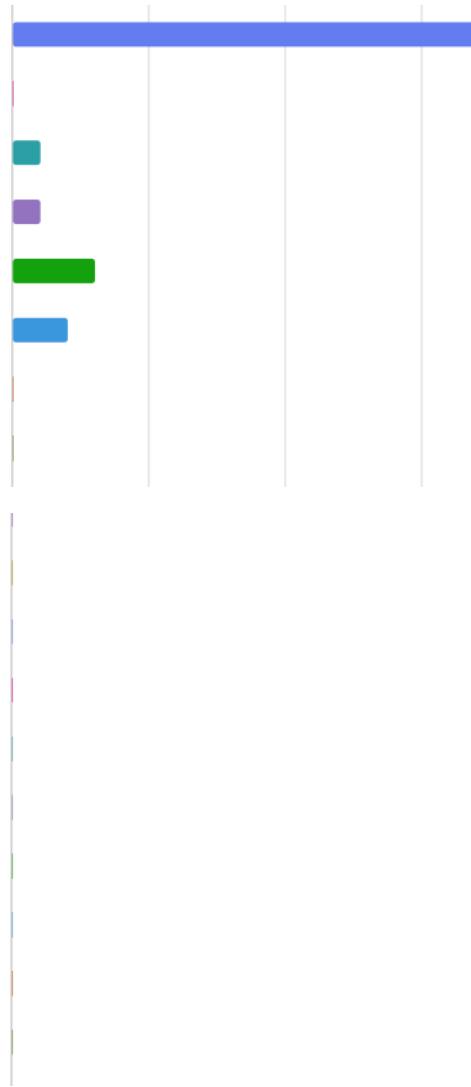
What is your main language?

English	21
Polish	3
Bengali	0
Arabic	0
Afghan Farsi	0
Turkish	0
Other	2



Which of these groups do you consider yourself to belong to?

White - English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British	17
White - Irish	0
White - Gypsy or Irish Traveller	1
White - Roma	1
Any other White background	3
Mixed - White and Black Caribbean	2
Mixed - White and Black African	0
Mixed - White and Asian	0
Any other Mixed or Multiple background	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0
Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi	0
Asian or Asian British - Chinese	0
Any other Asian background	0
Black or Black British - Caribbean background	0
Black or Black British - African background	0
Any other Black or Black British background	0
Arab	0
Prefer not to say	1
Other	1

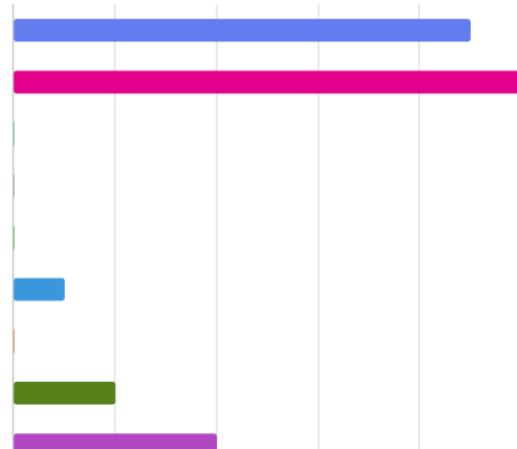


Do you have a long term illness, health issue or disability that limits your daily activities or the work you can do?



Which of these best describes your religious belief/faith?

No religion or belief	9
Christian (including all Church of England, Catholic, Protestant and all other Christian...	10
Buddhist	0
Hindu	0
Jewish	0
Muslim	1
Sikh	0
Prefer not to say	2
Other	4



Which of these best describes your sexual orientation?

Heterosexual/Straight	20
Gay or lesbian	1
Bisexual	0
Prefer not to say	4
Other	1

