

Older People’s Housing Strategy engagement report

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1. Background

The Older People’s Housing Strategy is a 15-year plan to improve housing options for Haringey residents aged 50 and over.

The strategy will cover housing provided by Haringey Council, housing associations, specialist providers, the private rented sector, and the private market for owner occupiers. It will also consider the Council’s different functions, including as a social landlord, developer, planning authority, licensing body for the private rented sector, provider of Adult Social Care (ASC, including aids and adaptations), and commissioner of other services.

The Older People’s Housing Strategy was brought forward as a commitment in the Council’s broader Housing Strategy 2024-29. The Council recognises the pertinence of such a strategy given Haringey’s growing ageing population and housing crisis. The highest expected growth in the 2018-based population projections (to 2030) is in the 65+ groups, with the 65 to 84-year-old population increasing by 30% and the 85+ population growing by 18.5%.¹ The current housing stock does not meet the needs of many older residents and issues related to older people’s housing are both fed by and feed into Haringey’s wider housing crisis.

¹ Haringey Council, ‘Haringey at a glance: State of the Borough’, p.15
https://haringey.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2024-04/state_of_the_borough_final_master_version.pdf#page=15

2. Methodology

Between 29 October 2024 and 30 April 2025, the Council undertook borough-wide engagement. Our engagement took place in two stages: Phase 1 and Phase 2.

2.1 Phase 1

Phase 1 took place between 29 October 2024 and 31 March 2025. It was designed for the Council to engage widely with older Haringey residents and their service providers, aiming to capture the housing issues faced by older people in Haringey and understand how the strategy should respond to them.

During Phase 1, we attended numerous in-person and virtual meetings with a range of organisations with well-established links to Haringey communities – including resident groups, networks and forums; voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations; medical professionals; and other service providers. Below is the full list of groups that the Council met with:

- African Caribbean Network
- Carers First
- Disability Action Haringey
- GPs
- GRACE Organisation
- Haringey Age Well Board
- Haringey Council Carers Working Group
- Haringey Council Supported Housing Continuous Improvement Group
- Haringey LGBTQ+ Network
- Haringey Multifaith Forum
- Haringey Over 50s Forum
- Haringey Patient Participation Group (PPG) Network
- Haringey VCS Forum
- Hornsey Housing Trust
- Mind in Haringey (MIH)
- Old Alone
- Older People's Reference Group – as well as members of the Carers and Dementia Reference Groups
- Public Voice
- Reach & Connect – MIH and Public Voice Community Connectors
- Roma Support Group
- Tottenham Pensioners Action Group
- Turkish & Kurdish Community Network
- VCS Joint Partnership Board co-chairs

There were several groups—particularly those representing seldom-heard communities—that we had identified and sought to engage with but were unable to arrange a meeting with. In such cases, we encouraged them to complete one of our Commonplace surveys (see [section 2.1.2](#)).

We also met with several Council officers in areas such as ASC, Data, Strategy Comms & Collaboration, Resettlement, Placemaking, Public Health and Connected Communities.

2.1.1 Haringey Age Well Board

On 28 November 2024, we launched an informal survey via Microsoft Forms to hear from service providers and medical professionals who sit on the Haringey Age Well Board. The survey was designed to capture the housing-related issues that their older service users and patients face, the priorities for their housing and how the strategy should respond.

The survey closed on 13 December 2024 and received four responses from Board members representing the medical profession and advocacy groups.

2.1.2 Commonplace

On 20 January 2025, we launched a Commonplace engagement site with four surveys aimed at four different groups:

1. General survey – for people aged 45 and over
2. Carers aged under 45, who care for someone aged 45 or over
3. Carers aged 45 and over – regardless of the age of the person they care for
4. Service providers

The surveys were promoted through organisations that we had engaged, Haringey Learns, libraries across the borough, and through the Council’s social media and online newsletters.

The surveys closed on 31 March 2025, receiving a total of 168 contributions from 143 respondents. The table below shows the breakdown of respondents and contributions by survey.

Survey	Number of respondents	Number of contributions
General survey	123	144
Carers aged under 45	1	1
Carers aged 45+	5	8

Service providers	14	15
Grand Total	143	168

2.2 Phase 2

Phase 2 ran throughout April 2025 and involved the Council running a series of three working groups. Each working group met for 90 minutes and comprised six Haringey residents aged 50 and over, who acted as lived experience experts.

The purpose of the working groups was to co-design solutions to key housing issues faced by older people in Haringey by producing recommendations and commitments to be included in the draft strategy.

To ensure that the working groups were as reflective as possible of Haringey's diverse population, we created an official sign-up form to capture applicants' demographic data and areas of interest. The sign-up form launched on 23 January 2025 and closed on 9 March 2025. We received 45 applications in total.

Given the housing tenures of working group applicants (see [section 3.2.1](#)), we decided to split the three working groups into the following categories: (1) owner occupiers; (2) private renters; and (3) social tenants.

3. Demographics

We did not collect demographic and equalities monitoring data at engagement meetings that we attended. However, we made an effort to engage groups that represent an ethnically and socio-economically diverse range of Haringey residents. Nonetheless, we acknowledge that a more sustained approach was needed to successfully engage with certain seldom-heard communities.

We will be doing an Equalities Impact Assessment (EQIA) for the strategy to identify the likely positive and negative impacts that proposals in the strategy may have on certain protected groups and to estimate whether such impacts disproportionately affect such groups.

3.1 Commonplace

3.1.1 All respondents

Upon submitting a survey response on Commonplace, respondents were invited to answer a series of optional demographics and equalities monitoring questions. A total of 104 respondents answered at least one of those questions. The graphs below show the responses received.

93 respondents answered the question asking which term best describes their sex – 59 of them identified as female (63.4%), 28 identified as male (30.1%), 1 (1.1%) uses another term, and 5 (5.4%) preferred not to say.

None of the 91 respondents who answered the question: ‘Do you consider yourself to be trans?’ said yes – 85 (93.4%) said no, and 6 (6.6%) preferred not to say.

92 respondents answered the question: ‘Are you disabled?’ – of which 21 (22.8%) said yes, 64 (69.6%) said no, and 7 (7.6%) preferred not to say. The following impairment groups applied. Please note that some people who did not identify as disabled also answered this question.

Impairment Group	Total
Hearing impairment	7
Long term health condition/ Neurodiverse / hidden impairment	13
Mental health/mental distress issues	11
Neurodiverse	3
Physical impairment	11
Other	3
Prefer not to say	4
Grand Total	52

86 respondents answered the question asking which option best describes their ethnic group.

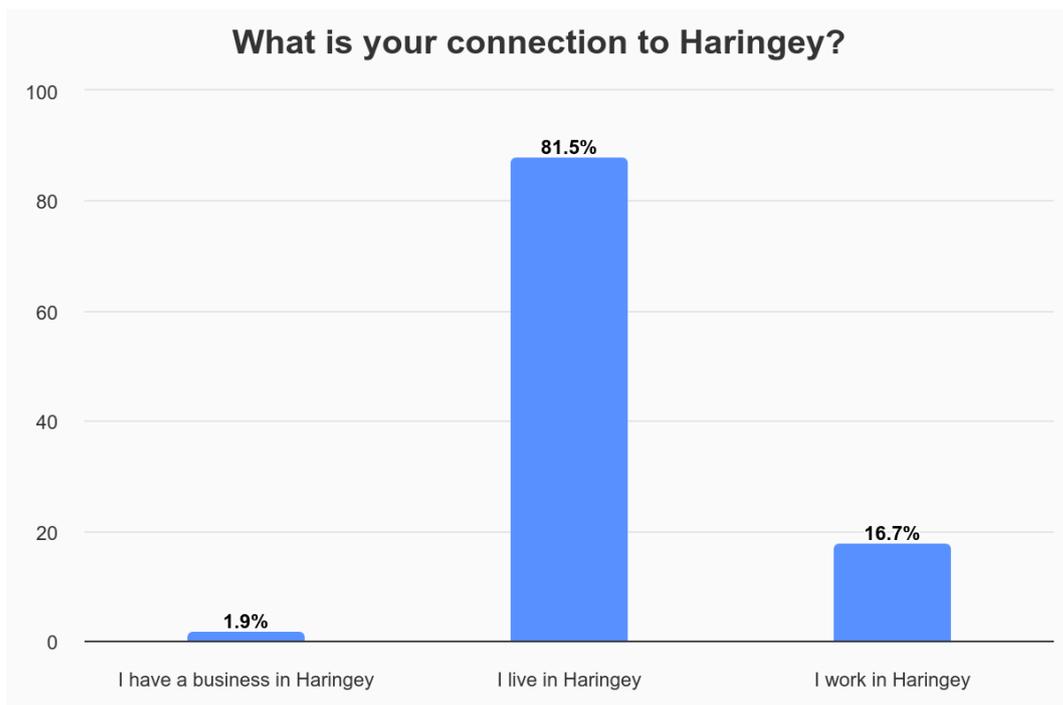
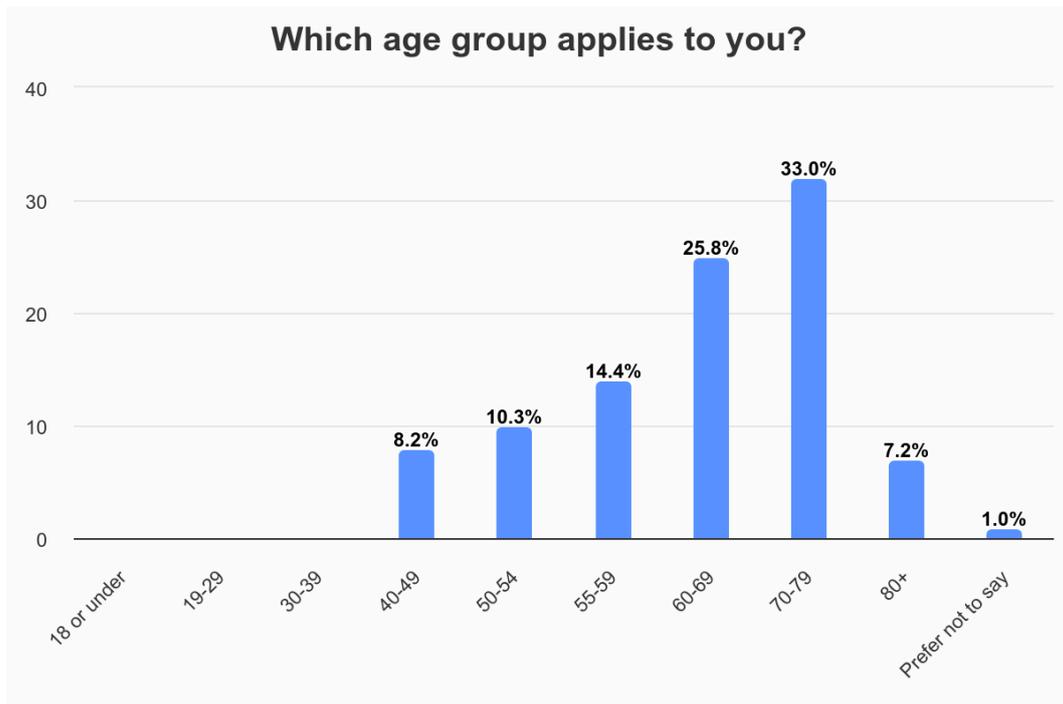
Ethnic Group	Total
Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi	1
Asian or Asian British - Chinese	1
Asian or Asian British - Indian	1
Any other Asian Background	2
Black, Black British - African	1
Black, Black British - Caribbean	7
Any other Black, Black British, Caribbean, or African background	2
Kurdish	1
Mixed or Multiple background - White and Black Caribbean	1

Any other Mixed or Multiple background	3
Turkish	1
White English/Welsh/Scottish/ Northern Irish/British	47
White Irish	1
Any other White Background	15
Any other ethnic group	2
Grand Total	86

83 respondents answered the question asking which option best describes their sexual orientation. 5 of those identified as 'Gay / Lesbian', 65 identified as 'Heterosexual / Straight', 1 selected 'I use another term', and 12 preferred not to say.

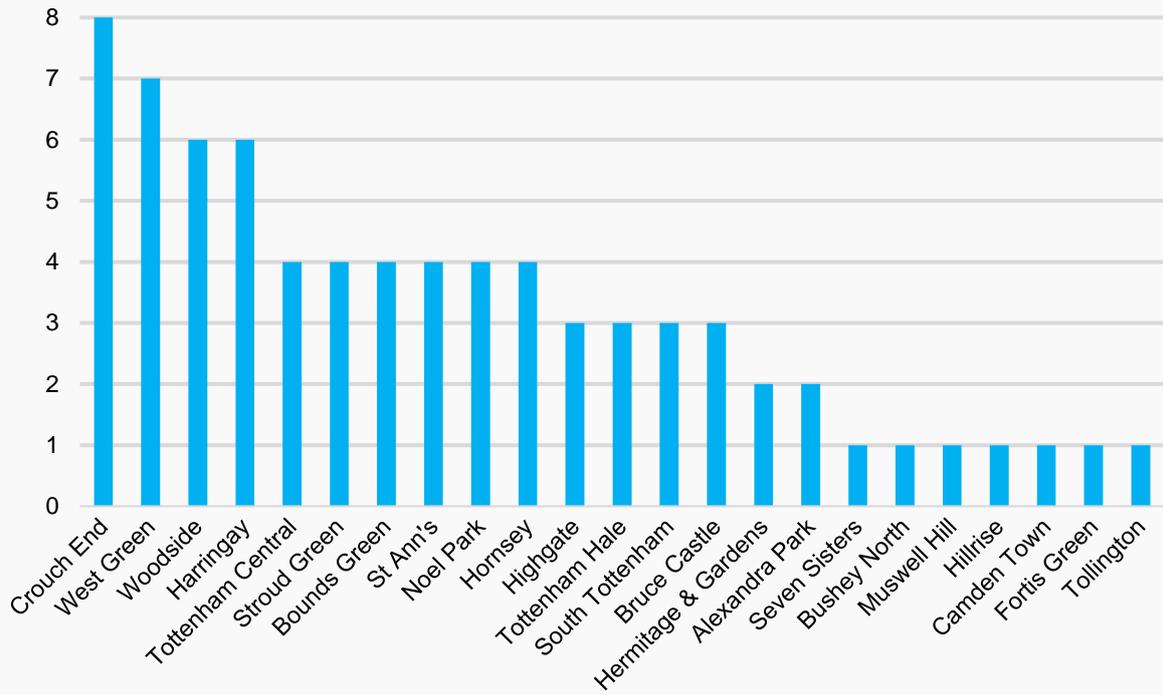
82 respondents answered the question: 'How would you describe your religion or belief?'

Religion or belief	Total
Atheist	24
Buddhist	3
Christian	21
Jewish	1
Muslim	3
No Religion	17
Prefer not to say	9
Prefer to self-describe	4
Grand Total	82

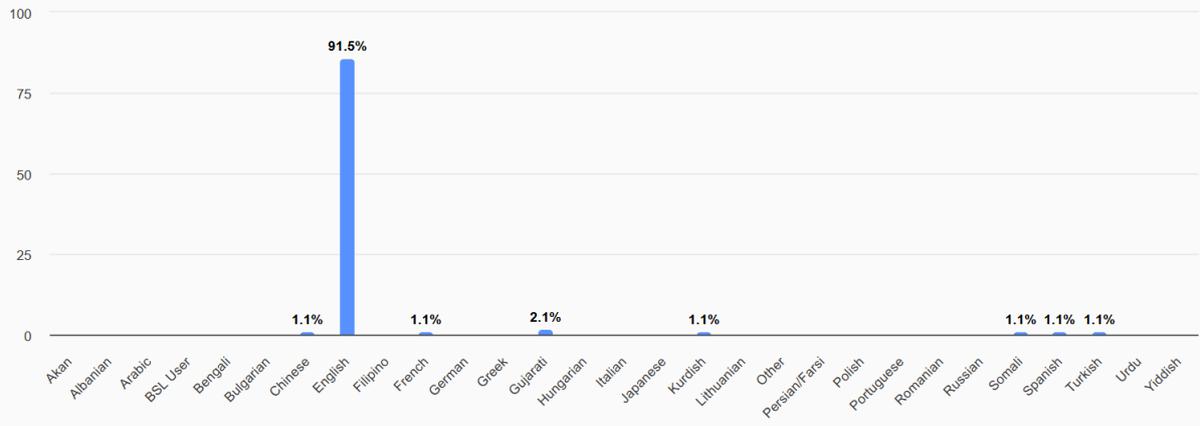


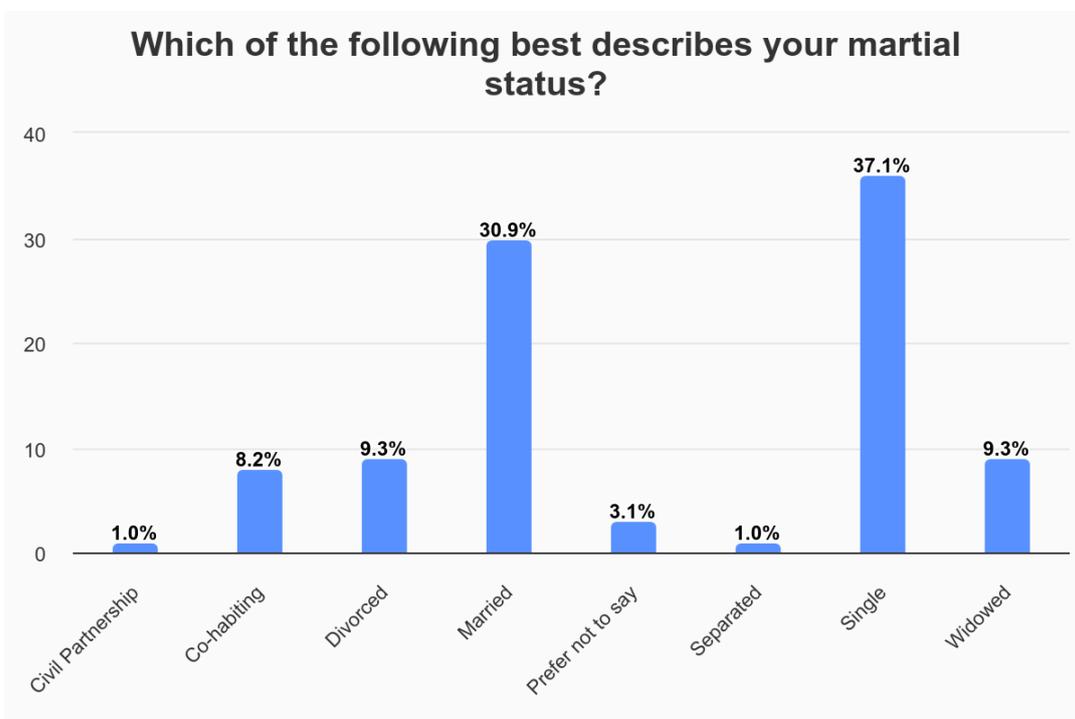
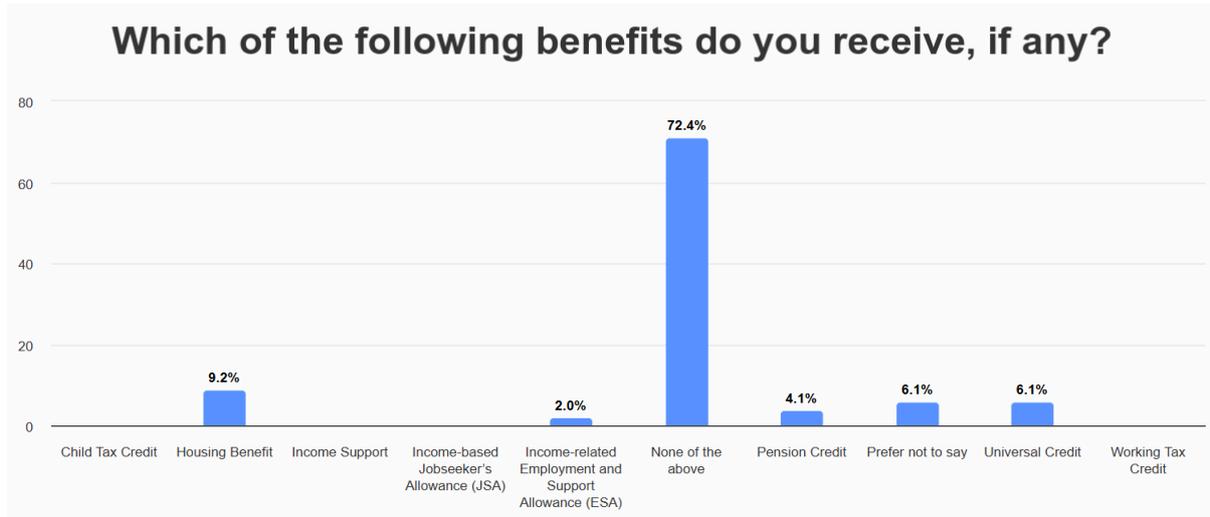
74 respondents shared their home postcode. The most frequent wards amongst those respondents were Crouch End (8 respondents), West Green (7), and Woodside and Harringay (both 6).

What is your home postcode? (by ward)



Please select the option that best describes your preferred language





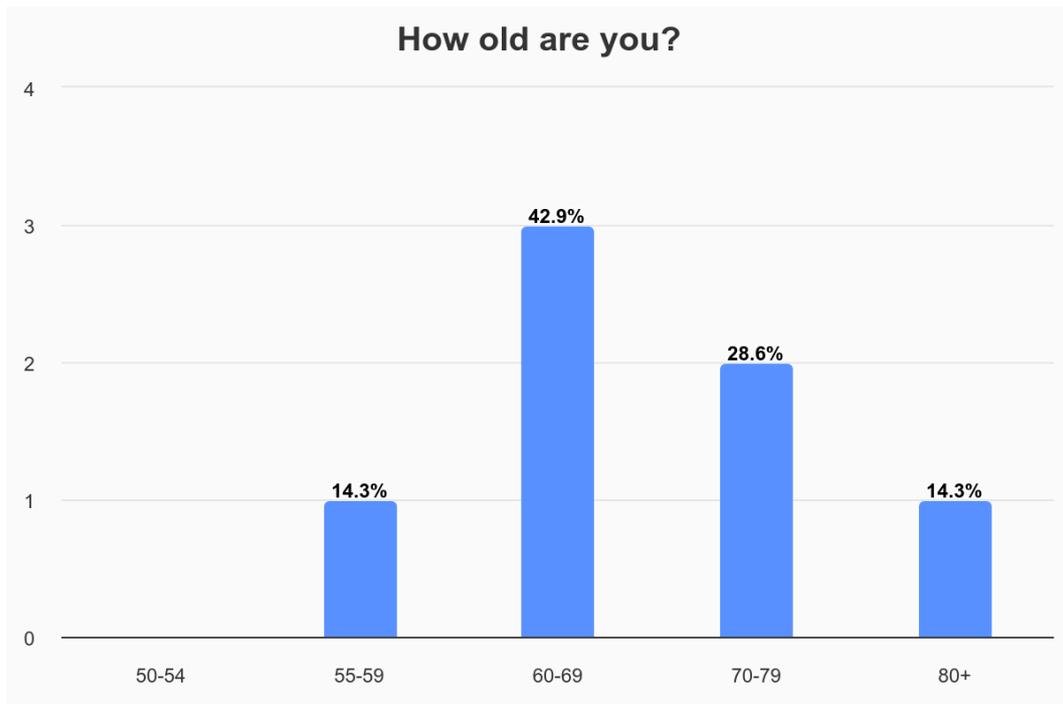
3.1.2 Carers

Carers aged under 45

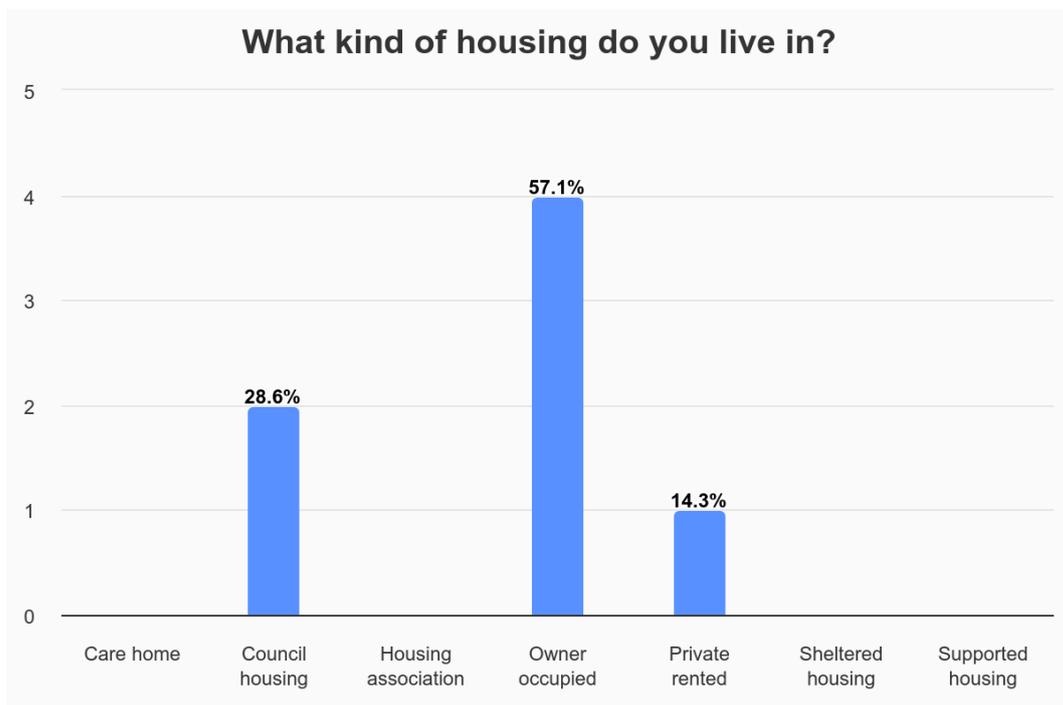
One carer aged under 45 responded to the survey for this specific group. They care for their mother aged 70 to 79, who does not live with them and is a council tenant.

Carers aged 45 and over

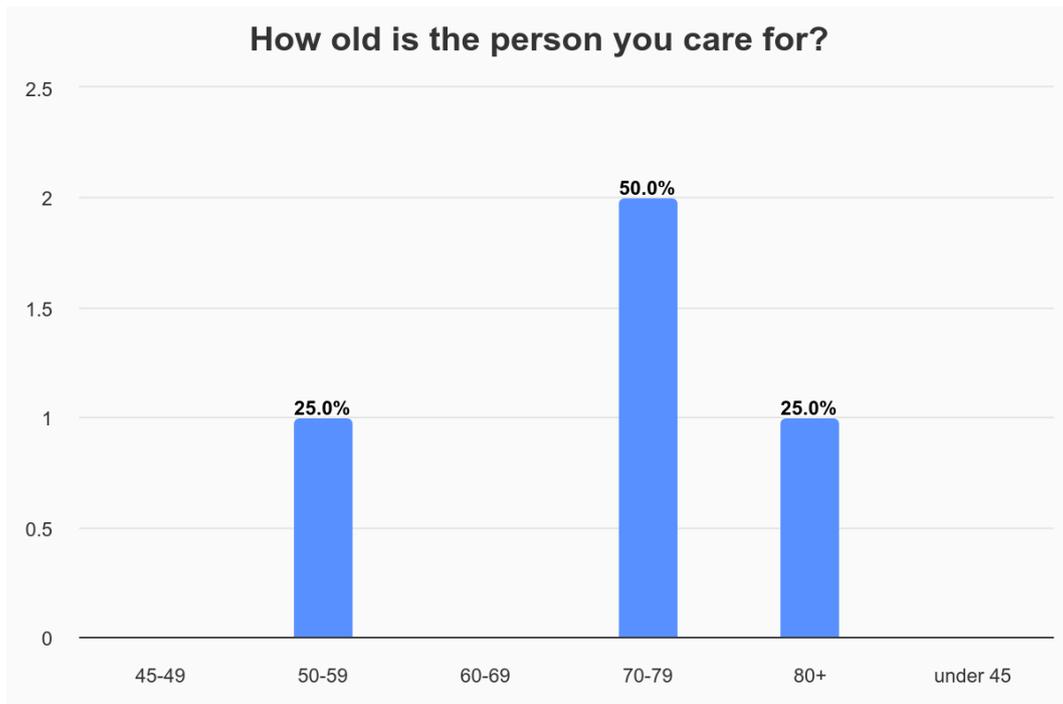
There were 8 contributions in total to the survey for this specific group.



100% of respondents who answered (4) lived with the person they care for.

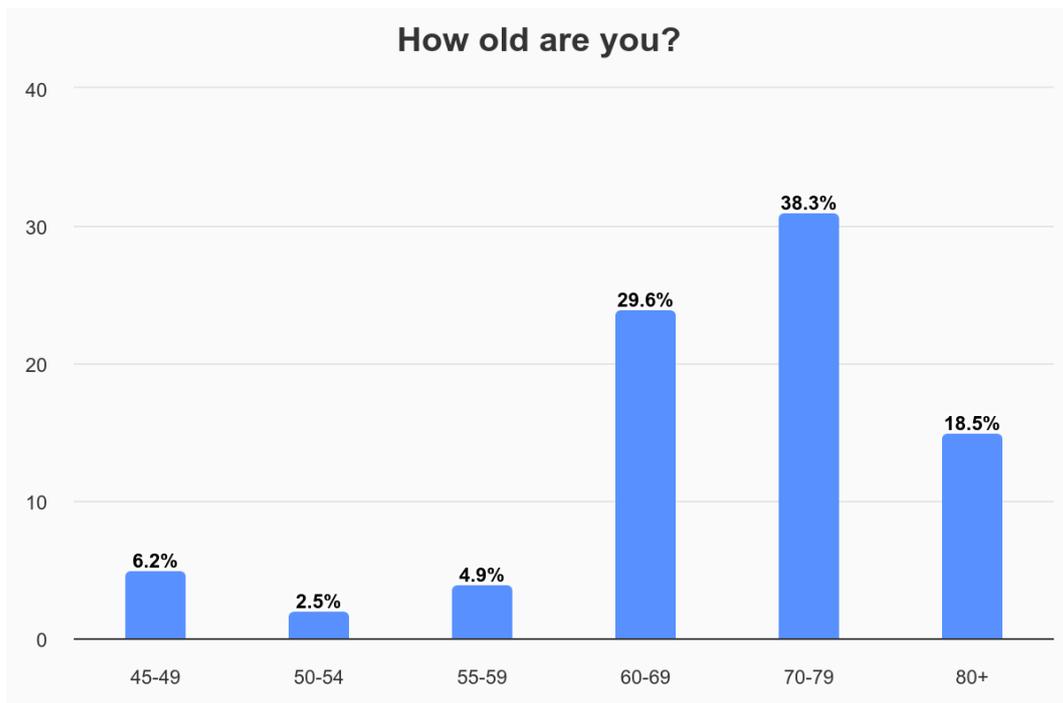


75% of respondents who answered (3) cared for a spouse and 25% (1) cared for a parent.



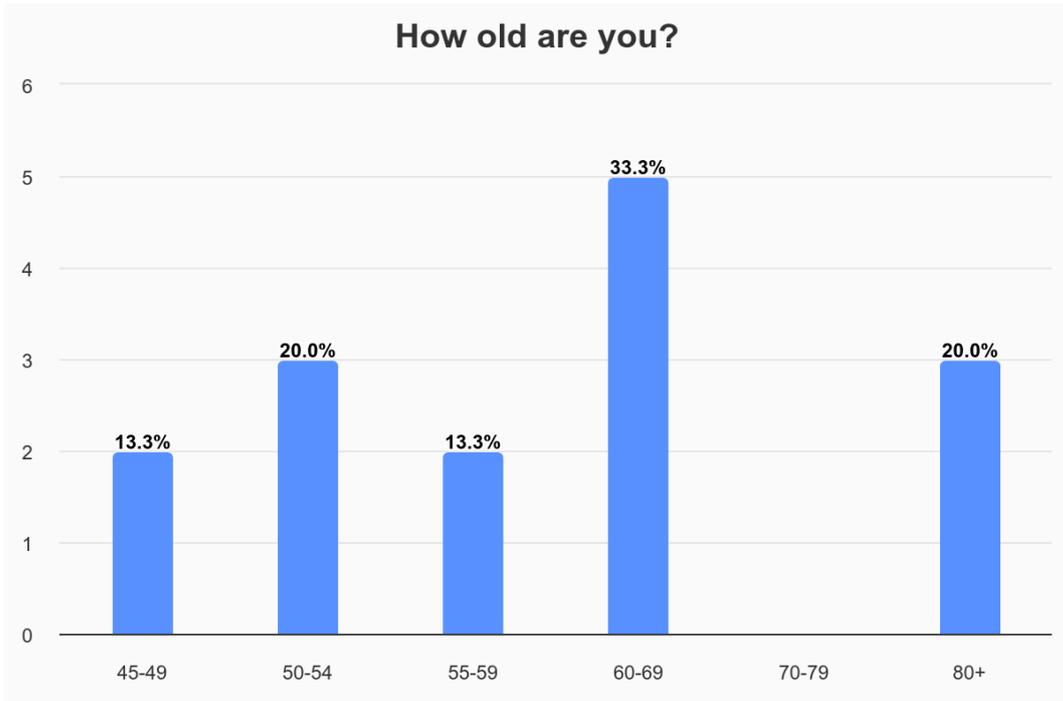
3.1.3 Owner occupiers

81 contributions to the general survey (64.8%) were from owner occupiers.



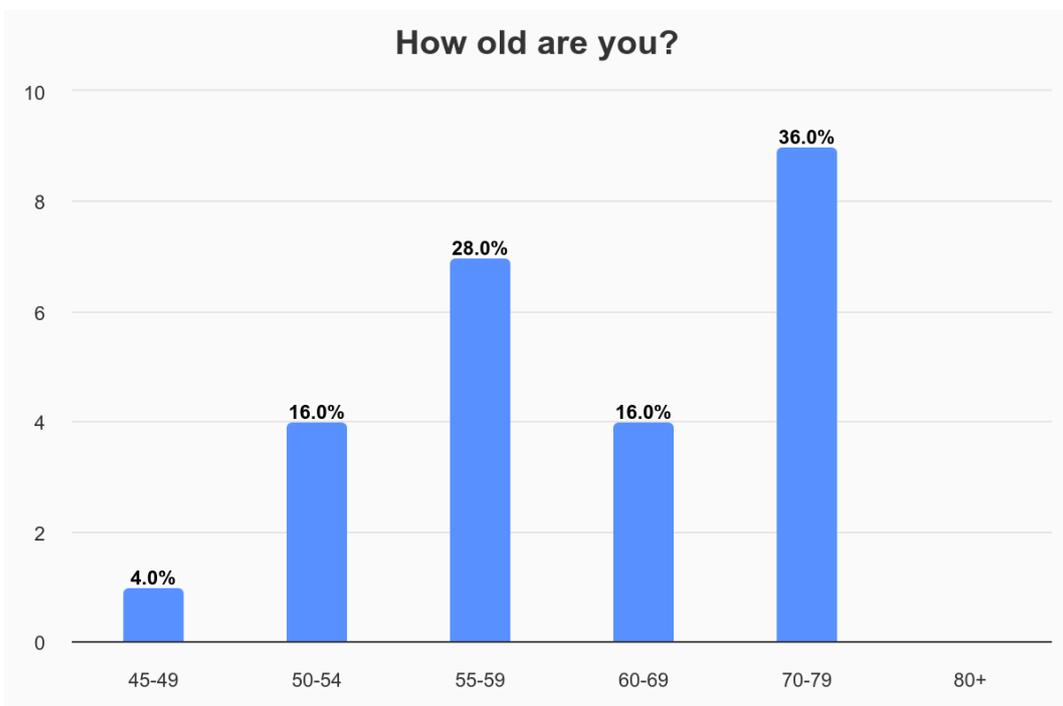
3.1.4 Private renters

15 contributions to the general survey (12.0%) were from private renters.



3.1.5 Social tenants – general needs

25 contributions to the general survey (20.0%) were from general needs social tenants.



3.1.6 Social tenants – sheltered and supported housing

2 contributions to the general survey (1.6%) were from sheltered and supported housing tenants. Both respondents were aged 55 to 59.

3.1.7 Insecure housing

2 contributions to the general survey (1.6%) were from people in insecure housing. One respondent was aged 45 to 49 and the other was aged 55 to 59.

3.2 Working groups

3.2.1 Applicants

45 Haringey residents aged 50 and over applied to join a working group for the strategy.

The table below shows the breakdown of applicants by their age.

Age	Number of applicants
50 – 54	2
55 – 59	6
60 – 69	14
70 – 79	19
80+	4
Grand Total	45

The table below shows the breakdown of applicants by their housing tenure.

Housing Tenure	Number of applicants
Owner occupied	22
Private rented	9
Social rented – general needs	8
Social rented – supported housing	6
Grand Total	45

The table below shows the breakdown of applicants by their home postcode.

Postcode	Number of applicants
N4	3

N6	2
N8	11
N10	4
N15	7
N17	11
N22	7
Grand Total	45

When asked about their gender identity, 26 identified as female, 17 as male, 1 as non-binary, and 1 preferred not to say. None of the applicants identified as trans.

11 applicants identified as disabled. The table below shows the breakdown of impairment groups. Please note that applicants could select multiple impairment groups.

Impairment Group	Total
Hearing impairment	4
Long-term health condition /hidden impairment	7
Mental health/mental distress issues	4
Neurodiverse	1
Physical impairment	9

The table below shows the breakdown of applicants by their ethnic group.

Ethnic Group	Total
Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi	1
Asian or Asian British - Indian	4
Black, Black British - African	4
Black, Black British - Caribbean	3
European Gypsy	1
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups - White and Black African	1
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups - White and Black Caribbean	2
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups - White and Gypsy	1

White English/Welsh/Scottish/ Northern Irish/British	23
White European	1
White French	1
White Irish	1
Prefer not to say	2
Grand Total	45

3.2.2 Participants

Owner occupiers

The working group for owner occupiers was held on 17 April 2025. 6 participants attended.

1 participant was male and 5 were female. 2 participants were aged 60 to 69; 3 were aged 70 to 79; and one was aged 80 or over. 2 participants were disabled. 1 participant identified as Asian or Asian British (Indian) and 5 identified as White English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British. 5 participants identified as Heterosexual/Straight and 1 identified as Gay/Lesbian. Participants lived in the following postcodes: N8 (2 participants), N4, N15, N17 and N22.

Private renters

The working group for private renters was held on 24 April 2025. 4 participants attended.

1 participant was male and 3 were female. 2 participants were aged 60 to 69; and 2 were aged 70 to 79. No participants were disabled. 1 participant identified as Asian or Asian British (Indian), 1 identified as Black or Black British (African), and 2 identified as White English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British. All participants identified as Heterosexual/Straight. 2 participants lived in the N10 postcode and 2 lived in the N15 postcode.

Social tenants

The working group for social tenants was held on 25 April 2025. 4 participants attended.

Although both general needs and sheltered/supported housing tenants signed up, only sheltered/supported housing tenants had availability on that date. 3 of the tenants lived in sheltered/supported housing managed by the Council and 1 lived in sheltered housing managed by a housing association.

2 participants were male and 2 were female. 2 participants were aged 55 to 59; 1 was aged 60 to 69; and 1 was aged 80 or over. 2 participants were disabled. 1

participant identified as Black or Black British (African), 2 identified as Black or Black British (Caribbean) and 1 identified as White English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British. 3 participants identified as Heterosexual/Straight and 1 preferred not to say. Participants lived in the following postcodes: N17 (2 participants), N8 and N15.

4. Themes

4.1 Key principles

- Independence
- Intergenerational opportunities
- Advice, info and support
- Affordability
- Cultural sensitivity and considerations
- Accessibility

4.2 Themes that emerged from the engagement

Information, Advice and Support

Perhaps the theme that emerged most strongly was a call from older people – especially those who are homeowners or renting privately – for the council to provide or facilitate better housing-related advice and services for older people. Older people and carers need better access to:

- Information on rights and housing options.
- Support for moving to more accessible housing.
- Services and grants for energy efficiency improvements.
- Trusted contractors and handyperson services to respond to the lack of trusted, affordable tradespeople.
- Occupational therapy assessments.
- Help with garden maintenance and minor repairs.
- Help and support for hoarding

Accessibility

Accessibility was a recurring theme across tenures, with calls to:

- Speed up delivery of small adaptations (e.g. handrails, ramps).
- Increase availability of Occupational Therapists
- Encourage private landlords and housing associations to adapt properties.

- Adopt accessible design standards from the outset of new developments.
- Provide extra care options that allow carers and cared-for individuals to live together.
- Ensure buildings accommodate wheelchair users and include contingency features like multiple lifts and adequate storage for mobility aids

Communication

Residents frequently cited poor communication from the council:

- Difficulty reaching customer services and lack of follow-up.
- Misinformation about available advice services.
- Desire for more direct engagement through estate surgeries and hubs.
- Need for transparency and feedback loops showing how resident input influences decisions.

Energy Efficiency and Heating

Residents highlighted the need for heating systems that are both energy-efficient and easy to use. Specific concerns included:

- The impracticality of heat pumps in flats due to space constraints.
- The high cost of electric heating, which many older people cannot afford.
- The importance of insulation and access to renewable energy solutions.

Independent Living Models

There was strong interest in alternative living arrangements that support independence and community, such as:

- Intergenerational housing projects.
- Co-living and co-operative housing models (e.g. OWCH in Barnet).
- Schemes that enable residents to support one another as they age.

Support for Carers

Carers reported particular issues for themselves and for the people they cared for:

- significant delays in receiving responses from the council regarding succession of council tenancies
- Long waits for timely and appropriate adaptations causing very substantial harm.
- Long waits for repairs.
- Lack of staff training and understanding of service users' needs.

Residential Care

Many were clear that there is a pressing need for affordable residential care options. Residents urged the council to discourage providers from converting care homes into general housing.

Dementia-Friendly Design

Design considerations for people with memory and cognitive issues included:

- Clear signage and cognitive stimulation.
- Community-based activities and conversational engagement.
- Avoiding disorienting environments, such as tall blocks of flats.

Design and Technology

Residents advocated for:

- Co-design approaches.
- Integration of assistive technology in new builds.
- Futureproofing existing stock for digital systems.
- Features like wide doors, multiple lifts, and smart home devices.

Hospital Discharge

Delays in moving people into appropriate housing following hospital discharge were noted as a concern.

Placemaking and Public Realm

Accessibility in public spaces was seen as vital to independence. Issues included:

- Lack of dropped curbs and blocked pathways.
- Poor pavement conditions.
- Inadequate public transport access and infrastructure.
- Importance of proximity to amenities and green spaces.
- Need for brighter street lighting to improve safety.

Barriers to Housing

Intersectional barriers were identified, including:

- Racial discrimination by landlords.
- Language barriers leading to isolation.
- Need for ESL classes and community integration initiatives.

Specialist Sheltered Housing for Rough Sleepers

Supportive, community-focused environments were seen as essential for sustaining tenancies and wellbeing among those with a history of rough sleeping.

End-of-Life Care

Older residents expressed a strong preference for being supported to remain at home during end-of-life care. They emphasised the importance of enabling individuals to be cared for in their preferred place, rather than in hospital settings.

Community and Belonging

Many older people we spoke to were afraid of becoming lonely or losing community connection. For some, this was already their experience.

Very many residents expressed a strong desire to remain in their local communities and avoid relocation.

Housing Affordability affects everyone

Many older homeowners and private renters are being forced to leave the borough due to rising housing costs. But the crisis in housing affordability affects all older people whatever their tenure with families, friends and carers having to move away to find somewhere to live. Concerns included:

- Inability to afford home ownership or rent on pension income.
- Risk of isolation from community due to relocation.

Older people living in different tenures had specific issues

PRIVATE RENTERS

Private Renters

Older private renters were clear about the particular challenges they face, including:

- Unaffordable and insecure housing.
- Accessibility issues, especially for disabled renters negotiating with landlords.
- Difficulty completing forms and managing bills.
- A real fear about becoming homeless as they get older – for people in their 50s and early 60s, this was related to retirement

HOMEOWNERS

Tenure Options

A significant number of older homeowners expressed interest in transferring across tenures, including by selling or leasing their homes to the council in return for tenancies in sheltered or appropriate general needs housing in order to remain in London in homes that supported independence and social connection.

Many older homeowners were reluctant to move, even when their existing homes were inappropriate for their needs, because they wanted to keep their gardens.

SOCIAL RENTERS

Sheltered and Supported Housing

Residents called for a rebalancing and redevelopment of sheltered housing stock. Key concerns included:

- Limited extra care provision (only four schemes, all at capacity).
- A need for specialist provision for those with histories of rough sleeping or substance abuse.
- Services in sheltered schemes not matching residents' needs.
- Loss of wardens and communal activities.
- Serious safety and security concerns, including anti-social behaviour.
- Desire for schemes to be based on support needs rather than age alone.
- Importance of homely, welcoming environments with sufficient space for mobility aids.

Repairs and Maintenance in sheltered and social housing

Concerns included:

- Long waits for repairs.
- Damp and mould issues.
- Poor landlord responsiveness.
- Need for regular estate inspections.

Safety and Security

Some older residents living in sheltered and general needs social housing reported feeling unsafe due to:

- Unauthorised individuals entering buildings.
- Anti-social behaviour.
- Lack of safeguarding training for staff.

Allocations of sheltered and social housing

There was a preference for allocating older people to ground or first-floor units where possible. A number of people expressed their preference for living in a bungalow against a flat because of their level access, garden, and quietness.

Housing Workforce

Concerns were raised about the sensitivity and appropriateness of language used by housing staff, including wardens and housing officers. There was a clear call for improved training to ensure staff communicate respectfully and understand the needs of older people.

There were calls for training for council staff that promotes:

- Respectful, sensitive communication.
- Recognition of lived experience of disability.
- Trust in disabled people's knowledge of accessibility needs.

4.3 Private renters

I will surely not be able to afford renting once I'm forced to stop working/retire. I don't have family in the UK. I don't want to think about what the future holds. It feels grim, lonely. I hope I somehow don't end up homeless after working all my life.

– Private renter, aged 45-49

It's extremely expensive to rent in London, even as someone with a good full-time job. I really worry about my future. I won't be able to afford renting a flat once I'm forced to retire/stop being able to work full time.

– Private renter, aged 45-49

5. Recommendations for the strategy

5.1 Key principles

- Support, advice and information
 - Raising awareness of existing services – e.g. Connected Communities
 - Better communication between the Council/Customer Services and advice services
 - Simple and accessible language – easy read
- Handyman scheme
- Intergenerational opportunities

5.2 Owner occupiers

5.2.1 Council initiatives to support owner occupiers to move to a smaller, more accessible home including through arrangements to buy or lease existing homes in return for a social housing tenancy

5.3 Private renters

5.3.1 Provision of advice, information and support specifically for private renters

5.4 Sheltered and social housing tenants

5.4.1 Safety and security

- Video intercom – accessible to D/deaf and hard-of-hearing
- Stronger enforcement on ASB

5.4.2 Better Staff training

5.4.3 Communication

5.4.4 Design

Design standards

5.4.5 Technology

To aid safety and security

To aid accessibility