



Rough Sleeping Services Recommissioning Consultation

Stakeholder Feedback Report

Between 13th December 2019 and 31 January 2020 Bristol City Council held a formal consultation for recommissioning of Bristol's rough sleeping services. This report documents a snapshot of the key feedback received during the consultation period and shows the extent to which our stakeholders agree, or disagree, with our key proposals.

In our draft Commissioning Plan, we set out a number of recommendations for remodelling the way we will offer out contracts to our providers and proposed some changes to the services we provide. We feel that these proposals will have a positive impact on the way services are delivered to those who need it, and will ultimately reduce rough sleeping in the city.

We have asked to hear the views of service providers, clients, voluntary sector partners and the community about our key proposals. We also sought comments and ideas from as wide a range of people as possible about how we can ensure the services that we provide will have the most effective outcomes and lasting impact for our service users.

Stakeholder feedback has been collated in the following ways:

- Online survey on Bristol City Council's consultation hub
- Hard copy surveys completed by clients
- At staff and client events, focus groups and drop-ins
- Provider events and workshops
- Agenda item at key multi-agency meetings

THE CONSULTATION IN NUMBERS

Number completing the online survey	274
Number of hard copy surveys completed by clients	21
Number of clients attending focus groups	13
Number of stakeholders attending staff/provider events	90

It is worth noting that the feedback we have received through the online survey primarily came from providers, employees of Bristol City Council, external homelessness and related services and Bristol City residents. There were fewer clients and staff focussed sessions during this formal consultation period, and perhaps therefore less clients submitting feedback, due to the fact that we held a two week client and staff focussed pre-consultation in October. During this time we engaged with around 70 clients and 35 staff members to obtain feedback about our current services and what they felt worked well or needed to change. A copy of the report from this pre-consultation can be requested by emailing homelessness.contracts@bristol.gov.uk.



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WHAT WE TESTED THROUGH CONSULTATION

The Two Main Contracts

We are proposing to have two main Rough Sleeping Services contracts – one for prevention/new to the streets and one for those who have been rough sleeping longer term/or are returning to rough sleeping – and that the two different services delivered are by two different providers

- Overall, do people support this proposal?
- What are the perceived advantages and disadvantages of this proposal?

Specialist Support Services Framework

- What do people feel are the most important support services and/or specialist expertise for us to commission and imbed in our rough sleeping services?
- Do people feel that these are better purchased/delivered as one main contract or as smaller specialist contracts?

Access to Housing

- Do people agree with the council having a contract under which just *one* provider sources and develops all the accommodation options for our service users? Or should this be delivered by a framework of different organisations for different needs?
- How should this be delivered and coordinated?
- Any further comments or ideas on how we can source and deliver a wider range of accommodation options and to increase overall supply?

Peer Support

- What ideas do people have about how we can increase the number of peers in our services and opportunities for those who wish to become a peer?
- How can we make sure this service is run in a coordinated way which ensures consistency of quality provision for all our peers and service users?

Navigator Service

- What do people think is the best way to for this service to be implemented and run?
- How much client ownership and leadership should the Navigator role have?
- Where do people feel we should focus the Navigator resource?

Working Better Together

What ideas do people have on how we can ensure the proposed services, with different lead providers, will work together effectively always keeping the needs and wants of the client at the centre?



RESULTS OF THE CONSULTATION SURVEY

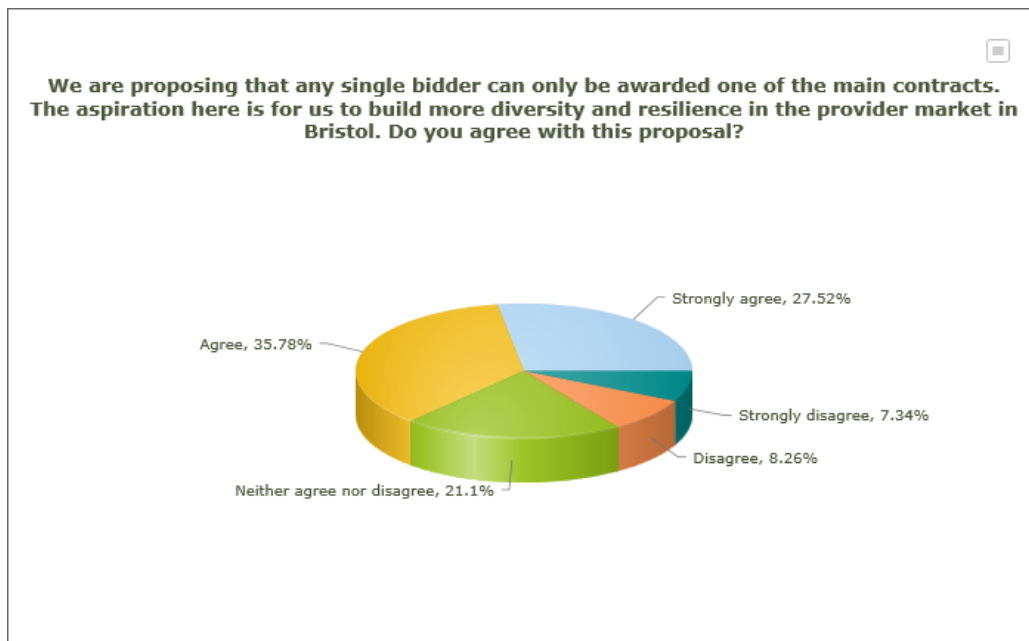
In total we received 207 responses to the online survey. In the main those completing the online survey represented a mixed gender White British population, aged between 35 and 74. 15% considered themselves to have a disability, 27% had experienced homelessness in the past and 11% had previous experience of rough sleeping.

As well as the online survey, hard copy 'easy read' versions were delivered into a number of services across Bristol including; Somewhere Safe to Stay, Homeless Health, Wild Goose, SIB, Recovery College and One25. Electronic versions were emailed out to all rough sleeping and homelessness services, asking those services to support and encourage client to take part.

We also carried out two provider events, a staff focus group with the two main current rough sleeping services, a Navigator services workshop, two client focus groups and a client drop in.

See Appendix 1 for graphs of the various demographics of those who completed the online survey and the demographics of clients who completed hard copy surveys.

The Two Main Contracts



Overall, people are supportive of the proposal to have two main contracts delivered by two different organisations.



Here is some of the feedback we have received about the advantages and disadvantages of this proposal:

Advantages	Disadvantages
Diversity of skills, knowledge, experience	Potentially adds complexity and confusion for services and clients
Guards against provider monopoly and complacency	More time spent on building effective partnerships and communication than service delivery
Promotes innovation and change	Risk of people falling through the gaps
Lowers risk and impact of provider fail	Possible higher cost to BCC
Drives up quality and standards of service delivery and provision	Harder for BCC to oversee, monitor & manage performance
Avoids overwhelm and too much responsibility on one organisation	Could exclude one provider from delivering the highest quality service for both contracts
Could lead to better partnership working between two organisations	Possible loss of expertise from already experienced providers
Better comparison of approach and quality or service delivery/performance	Organisations may not cooperate well with another - client impacted as a result
More ideas and opportunities created by BCC working closely with more than one main provider	Could reduce consistency of service for clients who move from one service to another

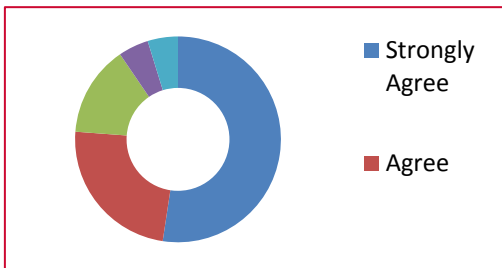
What else do our stakeholders say about the concept of two main contracts being run by two different providers?

- Best to develop a one single point of entry for people.
- Each service needs clear definitions for entry criteria.
- Two services enables distinct tailoring of each service for each client group.
- Willingness/expectation for criteria services to be flexible so no client falls through the gaps.
- Need clear, well thought through contract terms and delivery/performance expectations with regular review.
- Organisations should be held more accountable for non-delivery or poor quality service.
- People with all levels of support needs will enter either service. Staff across both services must be able (and adequately trained & supported) to meet the needs of all.
- BCC need to ensure they are able to effectively manage and monitor delivery – including spending regular time in services.
- Move focus away from length of time (i.e. new or long term) and more towards level of individual support need.
- Include current and former service users in design of service and in deciding the contractual expectations of the providers.
- Same and consistent standard of service delivery and quality of service expected from both services. Contractual obligation.
- Both services need to use the same client recording system and all information about all clients should be stored and shared only via this one database.
- More regular formal review (by BCC) needed with action plans for barriers, challenges, poor performance.



- Employ a person with lived-experience/experience of RS services to support contract management and delivery.
- Consider financial penalties for poor quality service and/or non-delivery of contractual obligations.
- Contractual ability for BCC to break contract and seek new provider (for non-delivery and/or poor quality service).

CLIENT VOICE



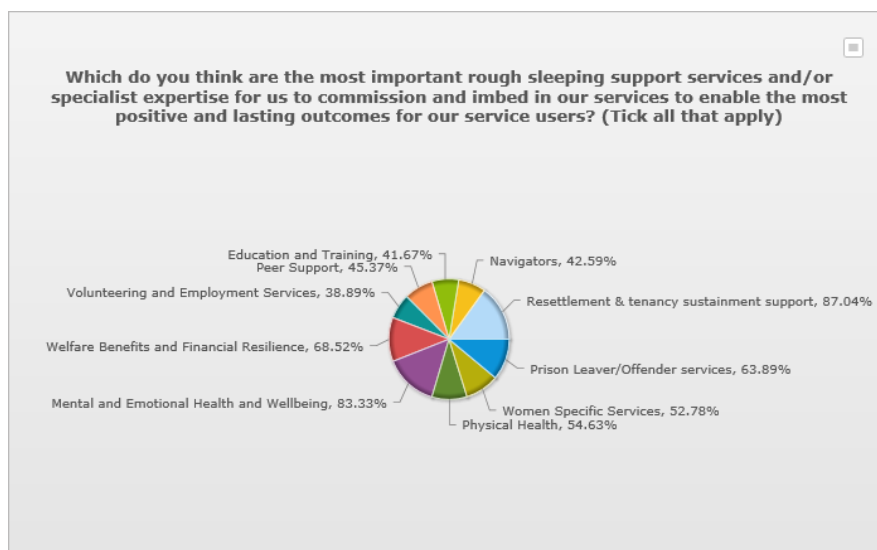
Clients who submitted feedback into the consultation overall strongly support the recommendation of having two different providers for the two main services.

“Two organisations would bring more help and more ideas. I don’t think there will be problems, it is helping homeless people and that should come first”

“Stops organisations becoming too powerful, or thinking they are, when they have all the services. Could cause issues with communication though and clients might suffer as a result”

SPECIALIST SUPPORT SERVICES

We asked people which specialist support services that they feel we should commission and imbed in our rough sleeping services.

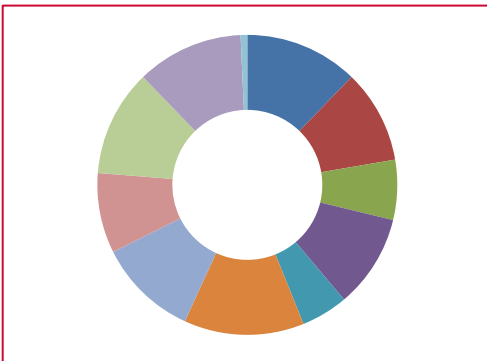




It is perhaps not surprising that most people felt that all of the specialist support services are almost equally as important as each other, particularly when we are working with individuals with a wide range of differing needs. If we are to be able to work in a truly person centred way with every person then we need to ensure, whether commissioned through Rough Sleeping Services or not, that there is easy and clear access for our service users into a range of different support services in the city. It was noted that we missed out drug and alcohol misuse as a specialist area of support.

There was a slight lead on Mental and Emotional Health and Wellbeing, Welfare Benefits and Financial Resilience and Resettlement and Tenancy Sustainment Support. Perhaps this could be driven by a belief that if a person has secure and solid foundations in these three areas then they are better able to take next steps into volunteering, training and employment?

CLIENT VOICE



Similarly to other stakeholders, clients feel that all support services are important depending on the needs and wants of the individual person.

There are areas which stand out as particularly important to clients: Physical Health (lilac), Resettlement and Tenancy Support (blue), Welfare Benefits and Money advice (light purple), Mental Health and Wellbeing (orange), services for prison leavers (light green) and Navigators (red).

LIVED EXPERIENCE AND PEER SUPPORT

We asked what people think we should do to make sure peer services and roles are run and managed in a coordinated way, one which ensures consistency and quality provision?

Here are some of the ideas and thoughts that our stakeholders have fed back to us:

- Key to define what a Peer actually is and what they are expected to do in their role/s.
- Employ a Peer Coordinator or Peer Coordination team to develop a robust peer programme, lead on recruitment and awareness and monitor quality and consistency across organisations.
- Let our clients and former clients tell us what they want and need in a peer service.
- Develop a steering group which includes existing Peers and people with lived-experience.
- Give a contract to one organisation to coordinate a sector wide peer programme, rather than lots of different organisations doing it piecemeal, with differing approaches and quality of provision.



- Make sure commissioned contracts are funded adequately enough to allow for the additional costs and resource that is needed to effectively recruit, train and retain Peers.
- Agree and imbed city wide expectations and standards for recruiting and retaining peer roles. Standard set of basic values, behaviours and competencies that organisations recruit in line with.
- Develop a robust training and a recognised qualification programme.
- Clear sector wide objectives and measures of success.
- Ensure consistency in the way services are being run and quality of provision - our Peers are learning from those they are working with and being managed by.
- Ongoing regular peer partnership group, led by Peers and attended by Peer champions from a range of services. Bring experience and knowledge into one room for best practice sharing and collaboration.
- Seek advice and learning from already established peer services in and outside of Bristol.
- Develop and shape existing Bristol peer service/s rather than starting from new.

How can we increase the number of Peers in our services and opportunities for those wanting to become a Peer?

Invest in leadership and coordination. Employ Peer Coordinator or Peer contract to one organisation	Fund/create more social enterprises run by current/former service users	Develop structured pathway for service users
Contractual commitment from all commissioned services to have at least one staff member with lived experience	Provide paid opportunities not just volunteering. Wider range of roles	Regular peer awareness/ recruitment days
Invest time in learning from success peer models (other sectors and other local authorities)	Engage community centres and voluntary services to promote & support recruitment	Develop a recognised peer related qualification and/or create other opportunities for peer to gain a qualification

Many people also feel it is crucial for at least one current or former service user to be a member of and/or attendee of all strategic homelessness and rough sleeping related groups, forums and meetings. For example, this could be The Rough Sleeping Partnership Group, Support Providers Agencies Meeting (SPAM), or strategic meetings about our Supported Housing Pathways.



CLIENT VOICE

A selection of the thoughts and feelings clients of our current rough sleeping services have about Peer Support, and how we can recruit more peers in our services.

“Homeless people need to know never to give up hope of being housed. They need to hear this from people that has been homeless in the past”.

“Unless you have been through it yourself you don’t know what it is like. It’s rougher and harder being homeless now”

“All the peers I have met are doing a fantastic job”

“You have listeners to talk to and listen to so you can share experience and knowledge”

“Have photos and details about peers on pinboards in many organisations; who they seen to get advice, where they are now, which way they are heading”

DEVELOPING OUR NAVIGATOR SERVICE

In our October pre-consultation, service users told us that it makes a positive difference to them if they have a consistent person as a source of support, to help them navigate through our services. We currently have two Rough Sleeping Navigators, employed through MHCLG Rapid Rehousing Pathway funding, as well as other commissioned services that take a Navigator style approach (e.g. SIB, Housing First, and Move on Navigators). We have seen a range of successful outcomes in most of these services including housing and tenancy sustainment outcomes. There has also been a noticeable increase in positive engagement of some clients who have historically been the hardest to reach and to engage.



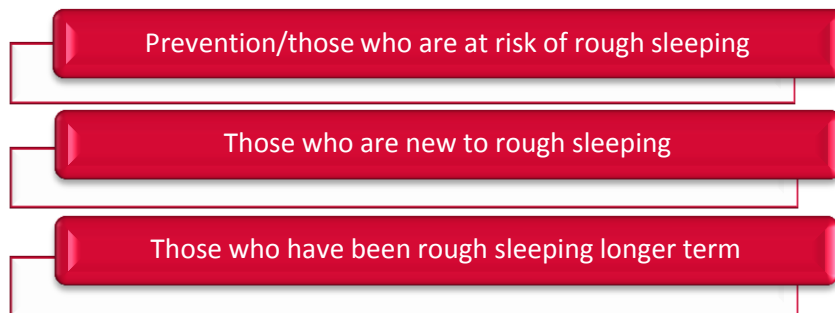
We are looking at the possibility of developing the navigator service which could include:

- Increasing provision by employing more Navigators
- Having one Navigator team rather than separate Navigators in different organisations
- Specialist Navigators (e.g. drug and alcohol, women with overlapping needs, young people)
- Opening up new referrals routes, making Navigators available to a wider range of services

Through consultation we asked for people's views on how they think we should develop the navigator service going forward and how it should be run and managed.

We have done this through the online survey, obtaining service user feedback, through provider events and client focus groups. We also held a specific workshop with those people who are working in existing navigator teams.

Most people who completed the survey, so far feel that we should split navigator resource evenly across three different areas:



However, additional comments received in this area of the consultation overall (i.e. including at provider events and the navigator workshop) evidenced a general feeling that the navigator team's work should focus on those people that are currently rough sleeping, those who are most vulnerable and/or who have dual or more overlapping needs, and those who have been using our rough sleeping and homelessness services the longest.

There is recognition that a person who is technically 'new' to rough sleeping will not necessarily always have what we would term "low needs". Indeed a significant number of people with medium to high support needs enter the current Somewhere Safe to Stay service.

Some feedback suggested that there should be an increased focus on young people, including better links into colleges the universities who might be able to identify young people at risk earlier.

Stakeholders think that we should build a navigator service around the following principles:

- One Navigator team, managed by one organisation.
- Robust and strategic BCC oversight/management.
- Available to a range services and client groups – but target the most vulnerable.
- Specialisms – young people, prison leavers, drug and alcohol, women.
- Secondments, bringing in expertise in from specialist organisations.



- Multi-Agency case ownership – keep it collaborative.
- Empower clients to lead their own cases.
- Clear decision pathway/appeals process.
- Keep caseloads small – less is more.
- Resourced enough to allow for plenty building partner agency links and relationships.
- Not an entry level role, pay for the right people & experience.
- Co-located working with services, particularly rough sleeping services.
- Consider Senior or lead Navigator role – leads on strategic development of the team. and proactively supports team to overcome challenges or barriers.
- Regular multi agency case review meetings (led by Navigator team).
- Clear remit and split of responsibilities for Navigator team and services.
- Easier access to client support funds.
- Lived experience imbedded in team and/or involved in service development.
- Ability to advocate directly to BCC/accommodation services for vacancies.
- Keep in touch service - clear and efficient way for Navigators to check in with former clients and vice versa, prevention returning to rough sleeping.
- Ongoing learning from Navigator Services in other local authorities.

CLIENT VOICE



Clients feel that the Navigators should either be one team managed by an external team or individual Navigators employed by specialist organisations and managed by one lead organisation. It should be noted that there was a mistake in the way this question was worded in the client survey. The option for Navigators employed by different providers and managed by one organisation implied that that one organisation would be one of the main contract holders. This is not our suggestion, though it is interesting to see that this would be a preferred option for many of our service users and it is important feedback for us to take on board as we seek to further develop the Navigator service.

RESETTLEMENT AND TENANCY SUPPORT

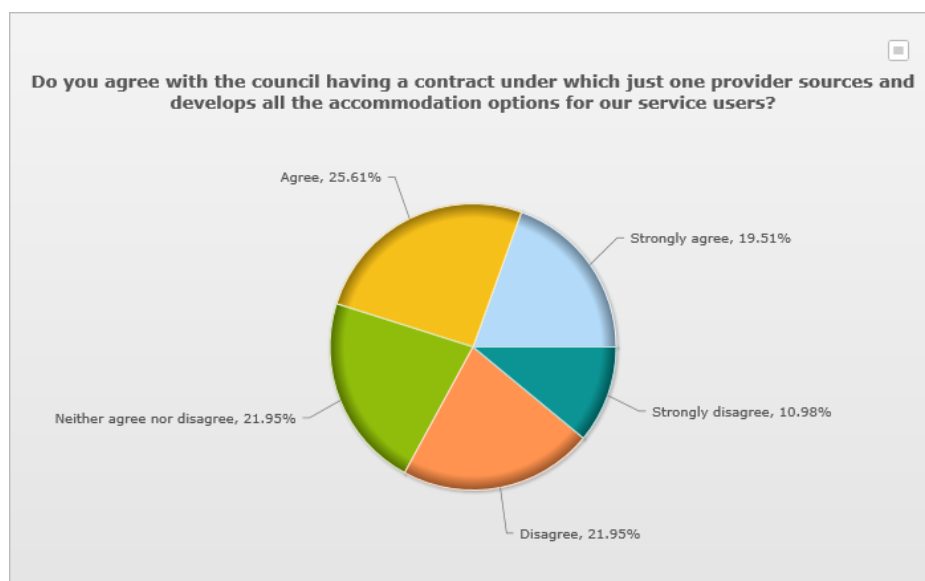
Service user feedback that we obtained in early stages of the recommissioning process (October pre-consultation) presented us with a very clear picture that most users of our services feel that having ongoing, effective and person-centred support, after they are housed, is key to their chances of success in sustaining tenancies and avoiding returning to homelessness and rough sleeping. Many felt that this support needs to be available/in place for longer periods of time and for there to be easy access back into support should they start to struggle at any point.



Although there were no specific questions in the formal consultation regarding review and possible expansion and development of our commissioned resettlement services for former rough sleepers coming through the Prevention/New to the Streets Service (e.g. Supported Lettings) this is something that we have under serious consideration – particularly with a view to how we can imbed specialist knowledge and experience in the team to enable them to work with a wider remit of people (i.e. support needs).

INCREASING HOUSING AND ACCOMMODATION SUPPLY

Although we didn't intend to imply through the consultation questions that we would consider bringing all housing and accommodation sourcing and procurement in house, the feedback we got back through this question indicates that most people feel that this should be a joint effort between Bristol City Council and external organisations – but one which needs better, more hands on, strategic coordination by BCC. People are also divided on whether it would be a good idea (which again, is not our intention) to give one overall main contract for housing and accommodation supply or for this to be delivered through a number of smaller contracts.



Overall, people felt that it would be too much responsibility for just one organisation to hold a contract and that this would limit opportunities, innovation and creativity. It was fed back that it could cause a monopoly situation, which directly goes against part of our rationale behind another of our recommendations (i.e. having the main service contracts run by different organisation in a bid to diversify the provider market and reduce associated risks of only having one main provider).



The idea of Bristol City Council developing a housing & accommodation supply provider framework is very much supported.

Some of the key ideas people have for how we can increase supply of accommodation and housing:

Development of an attractive payment by results model	Make it more of a city responsibility. Engage residents, churches, community & businesses	Better promotion and publication of success stories and more "calls to action"
More resource and focus on bringing empty homes & buildings back into use. Empty shops/office tax?	Use of empty shops for temporary dormitory style shelter and washing spaces	Regular steering group – keep it on the agenda and in focus
Learn from/adopt what works in other local authorities and countries	Institutions with empty properties (RP's, Charities, MOD, university etc)	Hold developers more to account to provide a % of new build at LHA rate – planning requirement

Standards of Accommodation

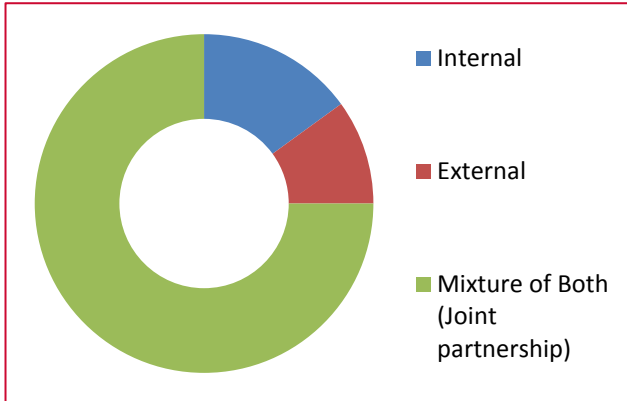
In addition to considering how we increase access into and supply of accommodation and housing, people feel we need to focus resource on ensuring and maintaining a consistent standard of accommodation across the board. This is made more difficult with several organisations or providers procuring and managing accommodation.

The following suggestions have been made:

- BCC to employ a housing and accommodation supply coordinator
- BCC to develop set of clear standards for all types of accommodation and housing
- More regular inspection of commissioned accommodation/housing
- Financial or contractual penalties for poor repair, H&S and accommodation standards
- BCC to have the ability to 'take over' or reassign management of accommodation where a provider or housing/building management company is not keeping it to the expected standards



CLIENT VOICE



Clients agreed with our other stakeholders that we should not offer out one contract to one provider for all of our accommodation needs. They also feel that the best approach is one of joint partnership between Bristol City Council and external organisations, especially charities.

Here are some of our clients thoughts and ideas about how we can source and provide more accommodation:

- Task many organisations
- Make housing benefit easily available for people to spend nights in hostels, if no other accommodation is available (such as Rock and Bowl or backpackers). Agreed a number of rooms for this and the hostel can claim back from the council or HB
- Fines for landlords with properties empty 6 months or make compulsory for them to let via Local Authority from 6 months empty
- Do up empty houses
- Use empty shops and buildings
- More container type accommodation
- Build more new housing

WORKING BETTER TOGETHER

Feedback regarding how we can work better together broadly falls into three categories: Culture change, Effective leadership and Contractual obligation

Culture Change - all organisations to imbed a set of common values and behaviours which supports effective communication, collaboration and partnership working

Effective Leadership - For the leaders in the Local Authority and organisations providing services to drive forward this culture change

Contractual - The suggestion that BCC embed and monitor contractual obligations around effective and proactive partnership working within its commissioned contracts



Many of the specific suggestions for working better together are things that we already do well as a city and a sector such as multi agency meetings, engaging with the Voluntary Sector and case review panels.

Some new ideas include:

- Finding a way to make this a contractual and service delivery obligation that a provider can be reviewed and measured against.
- Employing a Partnerships Coordinator.
- Regular networking events and newsletters which keep everyone up to date with what different providers and organisations are doing.
- System change away from contractual targets and KPIs that can compete against each other, and more towards a truly person-centred approach to measuring outcomes. One which allow for partners to work together in a more cohesive way and that is right for the service user rather than being outcomes and targets focussed.

There is a lot of support for a “one system” approach whereby all agencies are working with and using the same assessment model and client recording system.

CLIENT VOICE

Here are some of the ways our clients feel we can work better together, along with a few other ideas and comments:

- Multi agency meetings for clients monthly. Get decisions made and identify problems quickly.
- People not wearing a suit and tie. They are more approachable.
- A day centre for homeless people, open 7 days a week that gives people correct and up to date information to ensure they know what to do and where to go.
- Talking to someone who has been through it. Involve ideas from rough sleepers.
- They need to all be in the same building as homeless people may not have money to travel and it's much easier to access.
- Support worker avoids me and doesn't do enough. The staff need to be good.
- If I have a complaint I don't know where to go
- Keep funding charities with ultimate goal of being housed and awareness of the human and his wants and needs.
- Tailored support. One size doesn't fit all.
- Used noticeboards in GP's communities centres and other places homeless people go to tell them about what services are out there for them and how to find or contact them
- Recognising the real problems e.g. drugs, money and mental health.
- I want to tell my story once.



FINAL THOUGHTS

Throughout the commissioning process we have identified a '*golden thread*' – a greater focus on the needs of the individual - running throughout the process and influencing the final commissioned services. Our current rough sleeping and homelessness services already work in a person-centred way but we want even more focus on this as we recommissioning services. We want the client to stay at the heart of things at every step, wherever possible to lead their own journeys and for the client voice to be heard more often and in more ways.

During the consultation period we heard a range of different thoughts and ideas about how our services can be more person-centred and how we, as commissioners of services, could monitor this through contract delivery.

At our closing provider event, we had some table discussions on this and we have collated ideas and comments from stakeholders at the event, with a view to holding another focus group in due course. We will of course also be involving clients themselves, to find out what "person-centred" means to them and how they feel we can make sure our services are keeping them – their wants, needs and individual aspirations - as the primary focus.

Trauma-Informed Services

It is now widely recognised that a significant number of people who end up sleeping rough in Bristol will have experienced significant trauma in their early lives as a result of adverse childhood experiences. Research has highlighted neurodevelopmental damage caused by ACEs, the connection with attachment theory (and resilience), the impact on physical and mental health and the risk behaviours in later life.

We have not yet directly consulted on how we can ensure our services and staff are supported and sufficiently trained to deliver a Trauma-informed service to our clients, or how we can monitor this. However, this sits as a priority on our agenda, will be a focus area of work in the coming months and will be firmly imbedded in the contracts issued for our services in the future.

WITH THANKS....

Bristol City Council Homelessness Contracts and Commissioning team would like to thank anyone who has taken the time to attend consultation meetings and events, has fed into the consultation survey and supported us with obtaining feedback from people with lived experience.

Copies of the following documents can be requested from the Homelessness Commissioning Team at the following email address: homelessness.contracts@bristol.gov.uk :

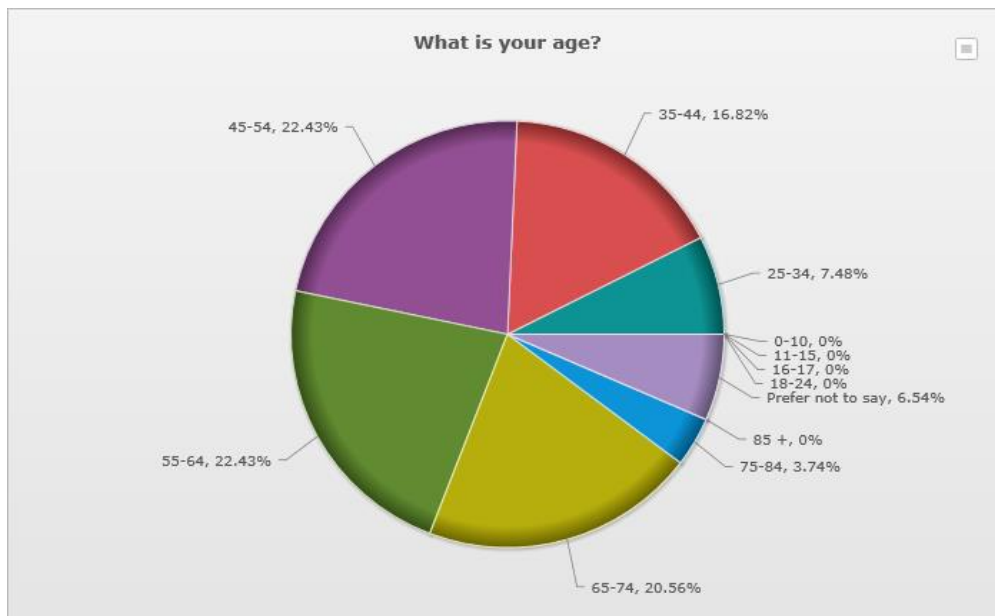
- Needs Analysis and Options Appraisal
- October Pre-Consultation feedback report
- Draft Commissioning Plan



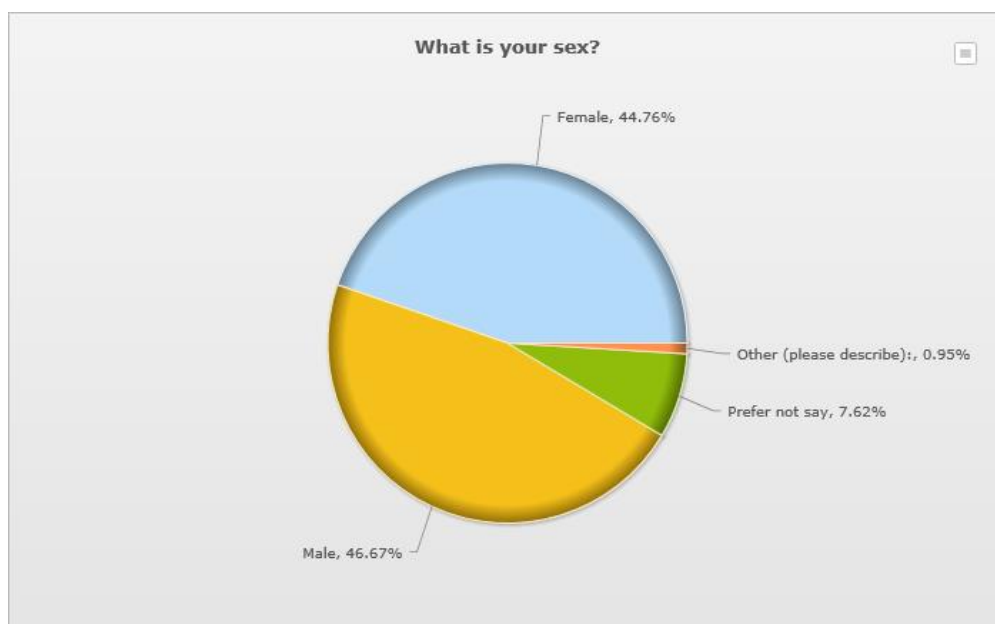
Appendix 1

Demographics of those completing the online consultation survey.

Age



Sex

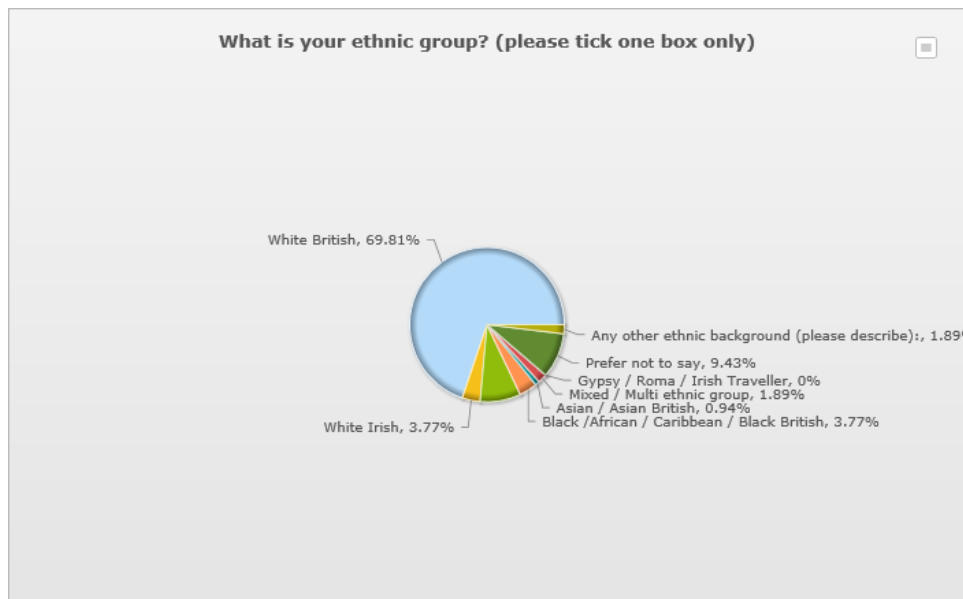




Appendix 1

Demographics of those completing the online consultation survey.

Ethnic Group



Stakeholder Type

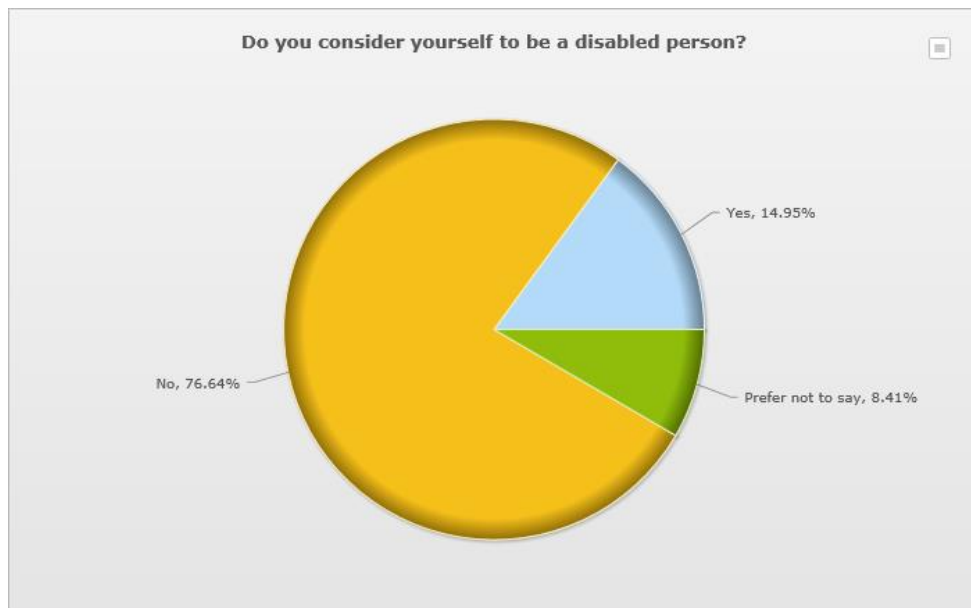




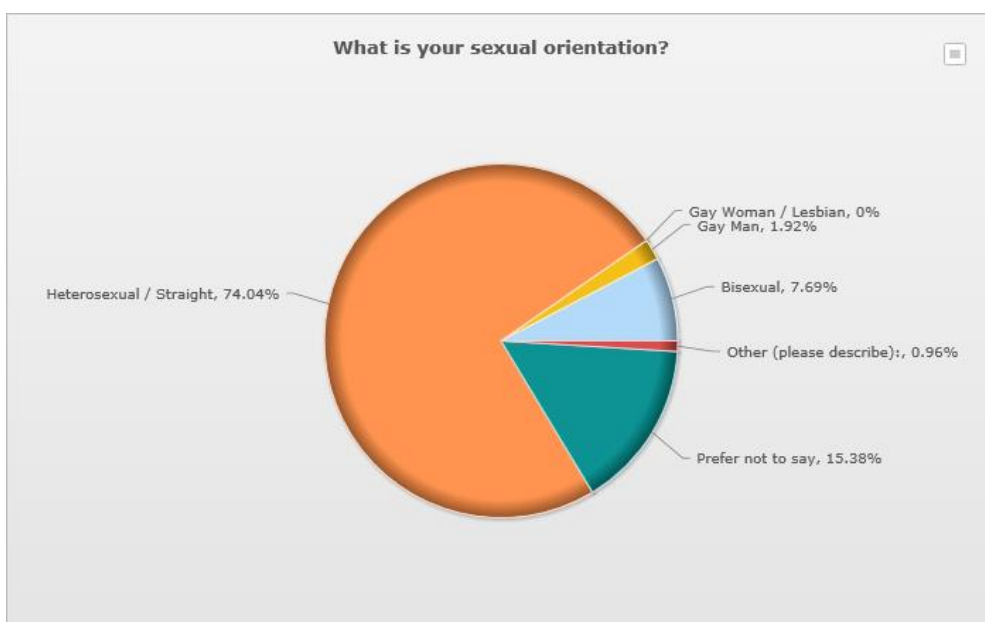
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Disability



Sexual Orientation

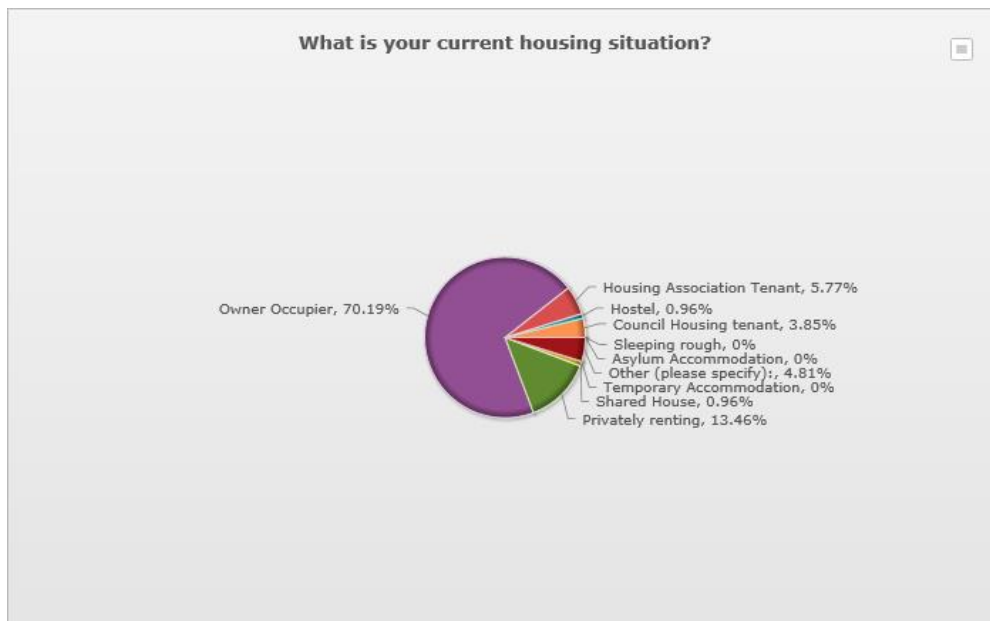




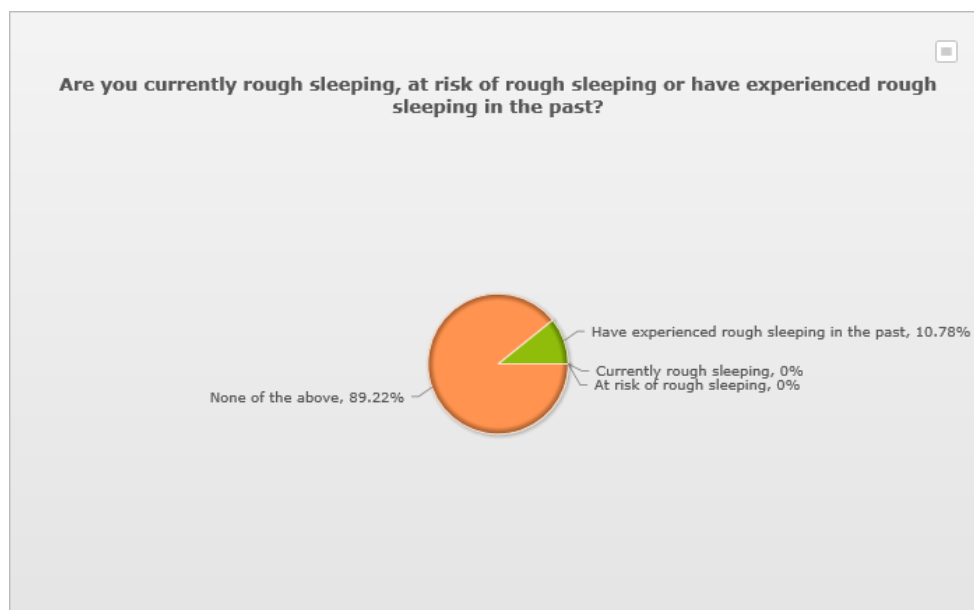
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Current Housing Situation



Past experience of Rough Sleeping

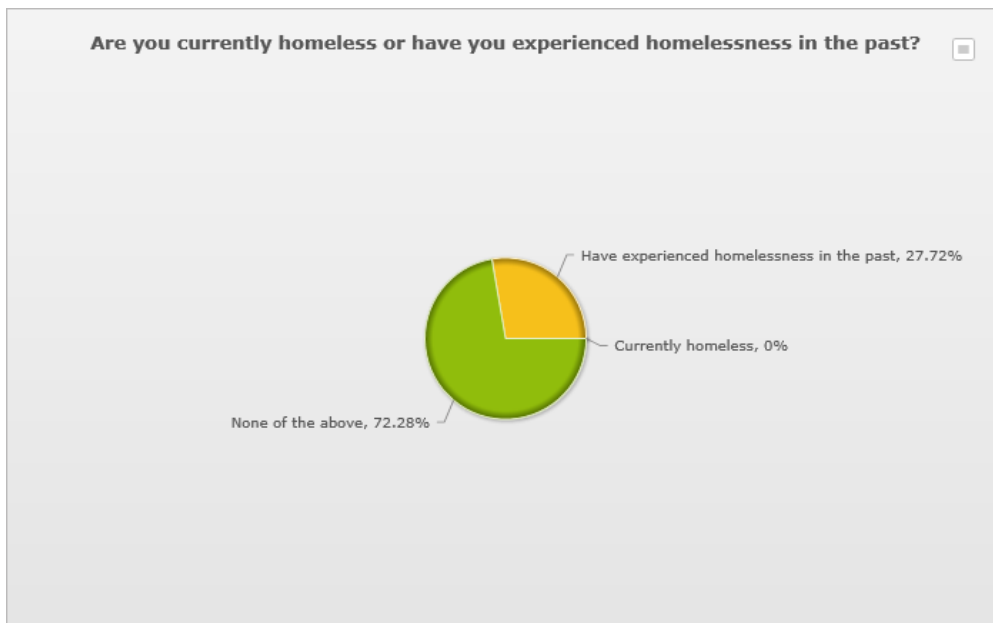




Appendix 1

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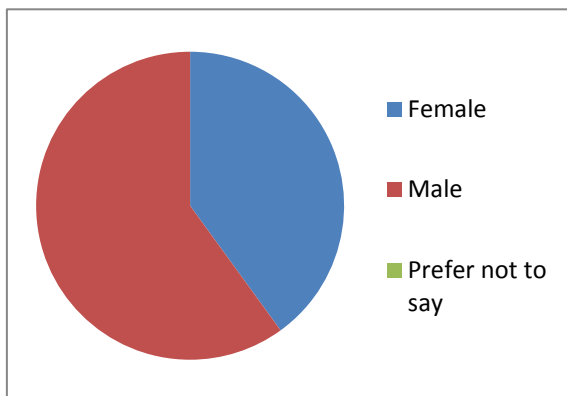
Past experience of Homelessness



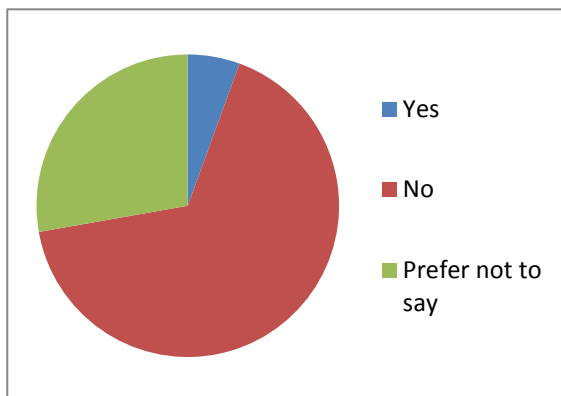
CLIENT VOICE

Demographics of the service users who completed our consultation survey

Sex



Disability

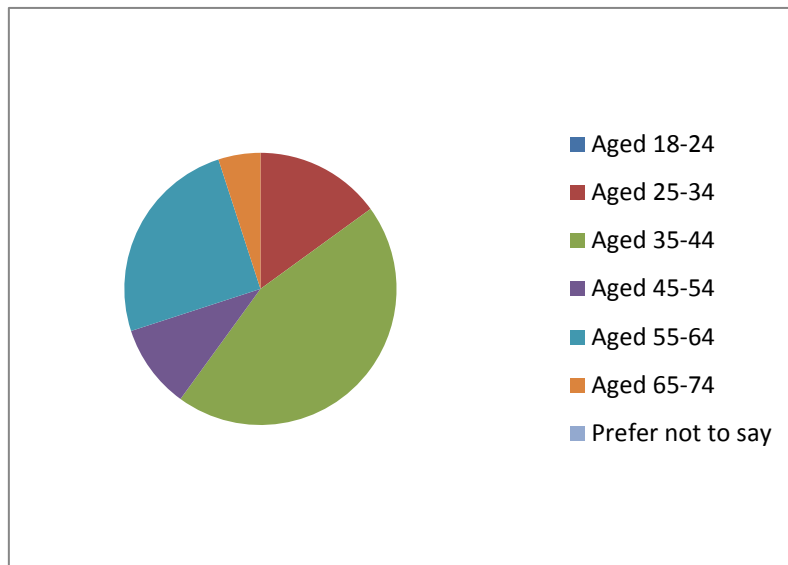




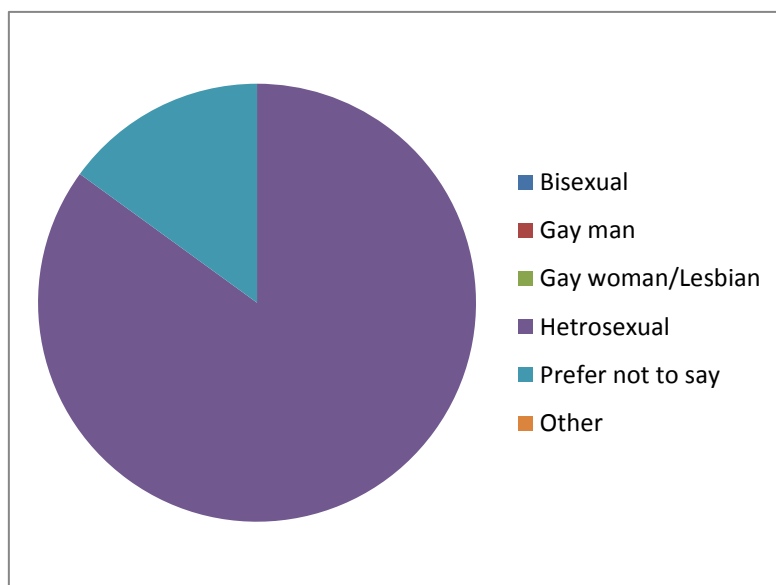
CLIENT VOICE

Demographics of the service users who completed our consultation survey

Age



Sexual Orientation



CLIENT VOICE

Demographics of the service users who completed our consultation survey

Ethnicity

