Consultation on improving private rented housing in Hammersmith & Fulham

LB of Hammersmith & Fulham

Full Report

2nd November 2016

Contents Page

Project details and acknowledgements

Title	Consultation on improving private rented housing in Hammersmith & Fulham
Client	Hammersmith & Fulham Council
Project number	16001
Author	Karen Etheridge & Hayley D'Souza
Research Manager	Karen Etheridge

M·E·L Research would like to thank the council for their support with the consultation. We would also like to thank residents, tenants, landlords and agents in and around the borough and in neighbouring boroughs for taking part in the consultation. Thanks also go to the stakeholders that contributed their views on the proposed options for consideration.

M·E·L Research

2nd Floor, 1 Ashted Lock, Birmingham Science Park Aston, Birmingham. B7 4AZ

Email: **info@melresearch.co.uk**

Web: **www.melresearch.co.uk**

Tel: 0121 604 4664

MRS Evidence Matters™ Company Partner

Executive Summary

This summary provides the main findings from the Private Rented Sector consultation undertaken in the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham (LBHF) over a 12-week period (7th July 2016 to the 30th September 2016). The quantitative results shown are derived from three key methods of consultation – residents' survey (a face-to-face survey with a representative sample of 1,104 respondents across the borough), an online consultation (105 respondents) and an HMO consultation (face-to-face survey with 805 HMO tenants across the borough).

The findings in this report have also taken into account views of additional stakeholders, gathered from email correspondence, online forms, letters and semi-structure qualitative telephone interviews, including those from council officers from neighbouring boroughs, residents associations, associations representing landlords and managing agents, businesses and others interested in the private rented sector.

The results include support for and likely impact on respondents for five different options that the council is considering introducing to improve the private rented sector:

1. Implement an additional licensing scheme across the borough
2. Implement a selective licensing scheme in designated areas of the borough
3. Introduce a Hammersmith & Fulham Landlords Rental Charter
4. Introduce revised HMO standards documentation
5. Introduce a social letting agency.

The consultation also looked at views on the proposed licensing costs, experiences of neighbourhood issues in the borough, tenants experiences of living in the borough, landlords experiences of renting property in the borough and experiences of letting property in the borough to help inform ideas around the formation of a social lettings agency.

1. Overall levels of support for and impact of proposals

Option 1: Implement an additional licensing scheme across the borough

For the residents' survey, results showed that:

- Seven out of ten respondents (70%) support the proposal for additional licensing, whilst a fifth (19%) do not support the proposal. Over half (58%) feel it is likely to have a positive impact on them and only 14% feel it is likely to have a negative impact on them.
- Two thirds of privately renting tenants (67%) support additional licensing and a quarter (26%) do not support it. Over half (55%) feel it will have a positive impact on them and one in five (21%) feel it will be negative.

- Around four out of ten landlords (37%) support additional licensing.44% do not support the proposal. Around three out of ten (33%) feel it will have a positive impact on them and 33% feel it will have a negative impact. These results are based on a sample size of only 27 respondents, so results should be used with caution.

For the HMO consultation:

- Around two thirds of respondents (65%) support the proposal, although around three out of ten (29%) do not support it. Around four out of ten (42%) feel it would have a positive impact on them. Around a quarter feel it will have no impact (23%), and 25% feel it will have a negative impact. Almost all respondents were privately renting tenants.

For the online consultation:

- Around two third of respondents (65%) support additional licensing, whilst 30% do not support it. Around four out of ten (39%) feel it will have a positive impact on them and a quarter (25%) feel it will be negative.
- Around eight out of ten privately renting tenants (79%) support additional licensing. Three out of ten (30%) feel it will have a positive impact on them and one in five (14%) feel it will be negative. Results are based on a sample size of 43 respondents, so results should be used with caution.
- Almost four out of ten landlords (38%) support additional licensing, whilst 62% do not support the proposal. A quarter (24%) feel it will have a positive impact on them and 62% feel it will have a negative impact. These results are based on a sample size of only 29 respondents, so results should be used with caution.

Wider stakeholder views:

Stakeholders interviewed are mainly positive about the proposal to introduce additional licensing in LBHF. By contrast, the landlords' associations are not in support as they do not feel there is sufficient evidence that these types of proposals have worked elsewhere. They also believe that the council already has the powers it needs to tackle the issues it is looking to address. Other common themes that came through the stakeholder consultation were:

- Current government consultation may provide the council with the powers it needs to extend HMO licensing. These are due to be announced in due course, but no date has been provided.
- There are some mixed views around the impact of other schemes that have been introduced around the country, some saying they have been positive and others saying they have been negative.
- Having additional licensing makes licensing of HMO properties much clearer for all landlords as all will need to be licensed.
- Landlords associations feel that the council already has powers to tackle substandard housing and criminal landlords, but some feel that they do not use these powers.
- Most feel that additional licensing will have a positive impact in improving standards for tenants living in HMO properties.
- Many feel that additional licensing will discourage criminal landlords from continuing their practices, although others feel that the proposals will not achieve anything.
- A number of stakeholders are concerned about inspections and how these will actually happen; further information or consideration should be made by the council.

- Many feel that communication will be key for any scheme to be successful and the council needs to consider how they are going to promote the scheme and make sure all are aware of what it means (both landlords and tenants).
- Most stakeholders feel that the scheme is unlikely to achieve its objectives unless enforcement is a key part; the council needs to ensure the right resources are in place to make sure the scheme has 'teeth'.
- The landlords' associations suggest that landlords will simply pass on the costs of any scheme to tenants. Other stakeholders involved in the sector suggest that this has been negligible in other schemes they are aware of to date.
- A number of stakeholders feel that rubbish and litter are a big concern with HMO properties and that the council should have more effective waste strategies to deal with the amount and storage of waste generated by these properties.

Option 2: Implement a selective licensing scheme in designated areas of the borough

For the residents' survey:

- Around half of all respondents (53%) support selective licensing, whilst around a third (34%) do not support the proposal. Four out of ten (40%) feel it is likely to have a positive impact on them and only Around a quarter (27%) feel it is likely to have a negative impact on them.
- Similarly, around half of privately renting tenants (52%) support selective licensing, whilst four out of ten (39%) do not support it. Around four out of ten (43%) feel it will have a positive impact on them whilst a third (33%) feel it will be negative.
- Around half of landlords (48%) support selective licensing. Almost four out of ten (37%) do not support the proposal. 37% feel it will have a positive impact on them and 33% feel it will have a negative impact. These results are based on a sample size of only 27 respondents, so results should be used with caution.

For the HMO consultation:

- Around six out of ten respondents (58%) support the proposal, although around 36% do not support it. 36% feel it would have a positive impact on them, whilst 32% feel it will have a negative impact. Almost all respondents were privately renting tenants.

For the online consultation:

- Over two thirds of respondents (68%) support selective licensing, whilst over a quarter (28%) do not support it. Over four out of ten (44%) feel it will have a positive impact on them and a fifth (20%) feel it will be negative.
- Around eight out of ten privately renting tenants (79%) support selective licensing and only 14% do not support it. Around half (49%) feel it will have a positive impact on them and only 5% feel it will be negative. Results are based on a sample size of 43 respondents, so results should be used with caution.
- Over half (55%) of landlords support selective licensing, whilst 45% do not support the proposal. One third (31%) of landlords feel it will have a positive impact on them and 41% feel it will have a negative impact. These results are based on a sample size of only 29 respondents, so results should be used with caution.

Wider stakeholder views:

As with the additional licensing proposal, we see mixed views amongst stakeholders that took part in the consultation. However, fewer are in support of a selective licensing scheme in designated areas, as they are of a borough wide additional licensing scheme. Key themes are around:

- Evidence around the success of similar schemes elsewhere is disputed. The landlords associations feel there is no evidence of schemes having a positive impact, whilst others felt that problems in the PRS are not just amongst HMO properties and therefore it is important to address the whole industry.
- A number of stakeholders questioned the evidence of ASB and the direct link between private rented housing. Many felt that there is not enough information provided to show this link.
- Again, a number of stakeholders felt that the council already has powers to tackle with the problems in the industry and that these should be used rather than introducing selective licensing.
- A small number of stakeholders felt that council needs to put the right measures in place to track changes over time to demonstrate what impacts the scheme is having on ASB.
- Similarly, with additional licensing, a number of stakeholders felt that communication of any scheme and ensuing that it is properly enforced is crucial to the success of any scheme.

Option 3: Introduce a Hammersmith & Fulham Landlords Rental Charter

For the residents' survey, results showed that:

- Just over half of respondents (54%) support a landlords rental charter, whilst around three out of ten (29%) do not support the proposal. 37% feel it is likely to have a positive impact on them and 17% feel it is likely to have a negative impact on them
- Six out of ten privately renting tenants (60%) support a landlords rental charter, whilst over a quarter (28%) do not support it. Around four out of ten (42%) feel it will have a positive impact on them and one in five (20%) feel it will be negative.
- Four out of ten (41%) support a landlords rental charter, whilst 37% do not support the proposal. Around three out of ten (30%) feel it will have a positive impact on them whilst 33% feel it will have a negative impact. These results are based on a sample size of only 27 respondents, so results should be used with caution.

For the HMO consultation:

- Around two thirds of respondents (65%) support the proposal, although around a quarter (23%) do not support it. Around three out of ten (29%) feel it would have a positive impact on them, whilst only 14% feel it will have a negative impact. 40% feel it will have no impact at all. Almost all respondents were privately renting tenants.

For the online consultation:

- Around two third of respondents (68%) support a landlords rental charter, whilst a quarter (26%)do not support it. Four out of ten (40%) feel it will have a positive impact on them and only 11% feel it will be negative.
- Seven out of ten privately renting tenants (70%) support a landlords rental charter, whilst a quarter (26%) do not support it. Around four out of ten (38%) feel it will have a positive impact on them, whilst only 5% feel it will be negative. Results are based on a sample size of 43 respondents, so results should be used with caution.

- Six out of ten landlords (62%) support a landlords rental charter, whilst 34% do not support the proposal. Almost four out of ten (38%) feel it will have a positive impact on them and only 10% feel it will have a negative impact. These results are based on a sample size of only 29 respondents, so results should be used with caution.

Wider stakeholder views:

On the whole, stakeholders questioned whether this is likely to have any impact on the private rented sector, predominantly because it is a voluntary scheme and also because there are already similar schemes around that the council could promote:

- Many felt that as the scheme is voluntary, it will only attract good landlords who the council do not need to be tackling. Most felt it would generally not have any impact on poor landlords that the council needs to address.
- Many stakeholders referred to other schemes that are already in place, and also questioned how successful these have been in attracting landlords, therefore how likely is it that this scheme would be more successful.
- A number felt that the standards that the charter is asking landlords to uphold are generally requirements in law, so questioned why this is necessary.
- Many felt that it was not clear what landlords would get out of it and that this should be addressed if the council wants to encourage as many to sign up to it as possible.
- Similar to the licensing options, many felt that the council would need to come down hard on those who were found to have signed up to the scheme and then not lived up to those standards, as otherwise this would be merely a paper exercise with no teeth.

Option 4: Introduce revised minimum HMO standards

This proposal received the highest levels of support out of the five options.

For the residents' survey, results showed that:

- Seven out of ten respondents (70%) support revised minimum HMO standards, whilst 18% do not support the proposal. Around six out of ten (58%) feel it is likely to have a positive impact on them and 11% feel it is likely to have a negative impact on them
- Around seven out of ten privately renting tenants (69%) support revised minimum HMO standards, whilst only 14% do not support it. Around six out of ten (58%) feel it will have a positive impact on them and 17% feel it will be negative.
- Just 37% of landlords support revised minimum HMO standards, whilst another 37% do not support the proposal. One third (30%) feel it will have a positive impact on them whilst another third (30%) feel it will have a negative impact. These results are based on a sample size of only 27 respondents, so results should be used with caution.

For the HMO consultation:

- Around eight out of ten respondents (81%) support revised minimum HMO standards, and only 14% do not support it. Around two thirds (64%) feel it would have a positive impact on them, whilst only 12% feel it will have a negative impact. Almost all respondents were privately renting tenants.

For the online consultation:

- Three quarters (75%) support revised minimum HMO standards, whilst a fifth (21%) do not support it. Around half (51%) feel it will have a positive impact on them and 16% feel it will be negative.
- Around eight out of ten privately renting tenants (81%) support the proposal, whilst 14% do not support it. Over half (53%) feel it will have a positive impact on them, whilst only 9% feel it will be negative. Results are based on a sample size of 43 respondents, so results should be used with caution.
- Over half of landlords (55%) support the proposal, whilst four out of ten (41%) do not support the proposal. One third of them (31%) feel it will have a positive impact on them, whilst almost four out of ten (38%) feel it will have a negative impact. These results are based on a sample size of only 29 respondents, so results should be used with caution.

Wider stakeholder views:

This proposal seemed to be mainly positive amongst stakeholders. Key themes that emerged were:

- Many landlords are simply ignorant of their duties, therefore any guidance on what is required of them should be beneficial.
- A small number of stakeholders were not sure whether this was legal and whether the council is trying to introduce new minimum standards that are already in current legislation.
- A small number felt that these would not tackle the worst HMOs, as this cohort of landlords would choose to ignore them as they currently do.
- Again, we see many stakeholders keen for the council to ensure that inspection and enforcement are key parts of this and that this is not a paper exercise.

Option 5: Introduce a social letting agency

For the residents' survey, results showed that:

- Around six out of ten respondents (62%) support the proposal to introduce a social letting agency, whilst around a fifth (21%) do not support the proposal. Just under half (49%) feel it is likely to have a positive impact on them and a fifth (20%) feel it is likely to have a negative impact on them.
- Six out of ten privately renting tenants (60%) support a social letting agency, whilst 28% do not support it. Around half (49%) feel it will have a positive impact on them and a fifth (21%) feel it will be negative.
- Four out of ten landlords (41%) support a social letting agency, whilst another 41% do not support the proposal. Around a quarter (26%) feel it will have a positive impact on them, whilst 37% feel it will have a negative impact. These results are based on a sample size of only 27 respondents, so results should be used with caution.

For the HMO consultation:

- Around seven out of ten respondents (71%) support a social letting agency, and only 16% do not support it. Over four out of ten (44%) feel it would have a positive impact on them, whilst only 12% feel it will have a negative impact. Almost all respondents were privately renting tenants.

For the online consultation:

- Around two thirds (67%) support a social letting agency, whilst around a fifth (22%) do not support it. Around four out of ten (39%) feel it will have a positive impact on them and only 9% feel it will be negative.

- Around eight out of ten privately renting tenants (79%) support the proposal, whilst 14% do not support it. Four out of ten (40%) feel it will have a positive impact on them, whilst only 2% feel it will be negative. Results are based on a sample size of 43 respondents, so results should be used with caution.
- Over half of landlords (55%) support the proposal, whilst 28% do not support the proposal. One quarter (24%) feel it will have a positive impact on them, although only 7% feel it will have a negative impact. 55% feel it will have no impact on them. These results are based on a sample size of only 29 respondents, so results should be used with caution.

Wider stakeholder views:

There are mixed views amongst stakeholders about this option, with many feeling it be positive, but others feeling that it is a huge challenge given the industry and high rents in this part of London.

- Evidence of other schemes working elsewhere is mixed, with Haringey being quoted as one area where a huge amount of money has been spent, with little to no effect, whilst Carmarthenshire and Islington were quoted as having similar schemes that are working well.
- Many felt that although it would be positive to have a social letting agent competing in the market place, whilst others felt that they would not be able to compete on a social footing due to the high levels of rent that landlords can command, therefore whether an agency could sign up landlords to offer rents that would support tenants on lower/modest incomes.
- A number of stakeholders feel that the council needs to think and plan very carefully before committing to this and if they do commit, they need to try to attract as many landlords as possible immediately to get any momentum, otherwise it will struggle to take off.

2. Licensing costs

For the residents' survey, results showed that:

- Three out of five respondents (59%) to the residents' survey feel that the licensing costs proposed by the council are reasonable, whilst around a quarter (26%) feel they are unreasonable.
- A similar proportion of privately renting tenants (57%) feel they are reasonable, whilst 27% feel they are unreasonable.
- Almost one third of landlords (30%) feel the costs are reasonable, whilst a higher proportion (56%) feel they are unreasonable.

For the HMO consultation:

- Support is slightly higher for the HMO consultation, with around three quarters (74%) saying the costs are reasonable, and only 19% unreasonable.

For the online consultation:

- Similar to the residents' survey, three out of five respondents (59%) to the online consultation feel that the licensing costs are reasonable. However, over a third (36%) feel they are unreasonable.
- Two thirds (67%) of privately renting tenants feel they are reasonable, and only 14% feel they are unreasonable.
- Over four out of ten landlords (43%) feel the costs are reasonable, whilst 43% feel they are unreasonable.

3. Experiences in Hammersmith and Fulham

Anti-social behaviour issues

- Respondents were asked to rate a list of 6 common neighbourhood issues from 1 to 10 (where 1 is not a problem and 10 is a major problem). The top three neighbourhood issues for those responding to the residents' survey are **small-scale rubbish dumping** (mean score of 4.1), followed by **noise** (3.8) and **neglected/untidy properties** (3.1). For privately renting tenants, small sale rubbish dumping was top (3.5), followed by noise (3.4) and pest/vermin issues (2.9).
- For HMO consultation respondents, the most common problem is noise (3.3), followed by small scale rubbish dumping (3.0). Private tenants make up almost all of this group.
- Pest and vermin featured top of the list for those responding to the online consultation (mean score of 4.7), followed by noise (4.2) and neglected/untidy properties (4.0). For privately renting tenants, small scale rubbish dumping was top (5.7, followed by pest/vermin issues (4.8) and noise (4.2).

Feelings of safety

- The overwhelming majority of respondents to the residents' survey say they feel safe, with 97% feeling safe outside during the day, 95% safe when home alone at night and 84% feel safe outside after dark. Figures are very similar for privately renting tenants (98%, 97% and 88% respectively).
- Similarly, the overwhelming majority of respondents to the HMO consultation feel safe, with 98% safe outside during the day, 96% safe when home alone at night and 90% safe outside after dark.
- Results are again fairly similar for respondents to the online consultation, with 95% feeling safe outside during the day, 87% safe when home alone at night, although only 72% say they feel safe outside after dark (20% feel unsafe). Results are relatively similar for privately renting tenants (98%, 86% and 72% respectively).

Effectiveness of council in dealing with anti-social behaviour

- When asked how effective the council is at dealing with ASB (where 1 is not at all effective and 10 is totally effective), a mean score of 5.5 was calculated For the residents' survey. The same figure was calculated for privately renting tenants.
- A mean score of 4.3 was calculated for those who took part in the online consultation and 4.5 for those who are privately renting tenants.
- A mean score of 6.8 was calculated for those who took part in the HMO consultation.

Affected by or witness ASB

- When asked whether they have been affected by or witness ASB, 70% of respondents to the resident consultation say they hadn't been, whilst 13% had witnessed and 10% say they had been affected by ABS. Results are relatively similar for privately renting tenants.
- Around four out of ten (38%) of respondents to the online consultation say they have been affected by/witnessed ASB, with the same proportion saying they have not. 28% say they have witnessed ASB. Results are again similar for privately renting tenants.
- Around two thirds (68%) of HMO consultation respondents say they have not been affected by/witnessed ASB. 6% have been affected and 9% witnessed.

Views on private rented property standards

- When asked whether respondents felt that privately rented properties in their area are maintained to a good standard, around six out of ten (61%) respondents to the residents' survey say they are and a fifth

(21%) say they are not. Around three quarters of privately renting tenants (77%) say they are and 14% say they are not.

- Just under half (46%) of respondents to the online consultation say they are maintained to a good standard, whilst 30% say they are not. 77% of privately renting tenants also say they are, and 29% say they are not.
- Around three quarters (76%) of respondents to the HMO consultation say that properties are maintained to a good standard, whilst 12 say they are not.

Views on landlords and letting agents

- When asked whether respondents think that private landlords or agents act responsibly in letting, managing and maintaining their properties, around four out of ten (44%) respondents to the residents' survey say that most do, 4% say all do and 26% say some do. Only 5% say none do. Results are relatively similar for privately renting tenants .
- Results are fairly similar for the online consultation. Around four out of ten (43%) say that most do, 6% say all do and 37% say some do. 9% say none do. Results differ for privately renting tenants, with only 16% saying most. However, 47% say they don't know.
- Half of respondents to the HMO consultation (50%) say that most act responsibly, 5% say all do and 19% say some do. 3% say none do.

Actions to take to keep private rented properties tidy

- When asked what action should be taken to keep private rented properties tidy, around four out of ten (38%) of respondents to the residents' survey say that **landlords/agents should undertake routine external inspections**, followed by 33% who say that **new/existing tenants should be advised of their legal responsibility** and 32% who say they want a **contractor to be engaged to routinely clean/maintain external areas**.
- Around eight out of ten (79%) of respondents to the online consultation say that that **new/existing tenants should be advised of their legal responsibility**, followed by 64% who say that **landlords/ agents should inspect properties when a tenancy ends and clear/remove any small scale dumping.**
- Under half (46%) of respondents to the HMO consultation want **additional bins to be provided**, followed by 38% who want **external storage to be provided**.

4. Tenant experiences

Satisfaction with aspects of the home

- Around eight out of ten (82%) respondents to the resident consultation are satisfied with the **overall quality of their home** and 12% dissatisfied. Results are similar for the HMO consultation (87% satisfied but only 5% dissatisfied) and lower for the online consultation (69% satisfied and 17% dissatisfied).
- Around three quarters (73%) of respondents to the resident consultation are satisfied with the **overall repairs and maintenance of their home**, whilst 17% are dissatisfied. Results are slightly higher for HMO consultation respondents (82% satisfied and 9% dissatisfied) and lower for the online consultation (61% satisfied and 23% dissatisfied).
- Around three quarters (73%) of respondents to the resident consultation are satisfied with the **management of their home by their landlord/letting agent**, and13% dissatisfied. Results are slightly higher for HMO consultation respondents (83% satisfied and 7% dissatisfied) and lower for the online consultation (55% satisfied and 30% dissatisfied).

- Around two thirds (67%) of respondents to the resident consultation are satisfied with the **cleanliness of communal areas inside the property**, whilst 18% are dissatisfied. Results are slightly higher for HMO consultation respondents (85% satisfied and 7% dissatisfied) and lower for the online consultation (59% satisfied and 27% dissatisfied).
- Again, around two thirds (67%) of respondents to the resident consultation are satisfied with the **cleanliness of their shared kitchens, toilet or bathroom**, and only 9% are dissatisfied. Results are slightly higher for HMO consultation respondents (87% satisfied and 5% dissatisfied) and lower for the online consultation (57% satisfied but only 2% dissatisfied).
- Around seven out of ten (72%) respondents to the resident consultation are satisfied with the **maintenance of outside areas**, whilst 16% are dissatisfied. Results are relatively similar for HMO consultation respondents (70% satisfied and 11% dissatisfied) and lower for the online consultation (40% satisfied and 40% dissatisfied).
- Privately renting tenants are slightly more satisfied than the overall figures reported For the residents' survey and slightly less satisfied than the overall figures reported for the online consultation.

Issues affecting tenants

- Respondents were then asked to what extent a variety of issues have affected them in the last 12 months. The top response for those taking part in the residents' survey is **rubbish and litter** (42% as a problem), followed by **damp and mould** (39%) and **disrepair** (33%). These issues are the same for privately renting tenants, although damp and mould is the top issue (34%).
- **Rubbish and litter** is also the top problem for respondents to the online consultation, although a much higher proportion view it is a problem (72). However, this is followed by **noise or disturbance from another tenant/neighbour** (57%) and **poor management of properties** (54%). These issues are the same for privately renting tenants, although poor management (61%) and noise/disturbance (56%) feature as second and third respectively.
- For HMO respondents, the top response is **damp and mould** (38% as a problem), followed by **rubbish or litter** (34%) and **disrepair** (31%).

5. Landlord experiences

- 30 landlords responded to the online consultation and 27 to the residents' survey.

Membership of landlords associations

- Membership of landlords associations is relatively low, with only 30% (9 landlords) of online respondents members of the London Landlords Accreditation Scheme, 20% are members of the National Landlords Association (6), 13% are members of the Residential Landlords Association and 7% other. 47% say they are not members. Of resident consultation respondents, only 1 (4%) is a member of the London Landlords Accreditation Scheme, 1 is a member of the Residential Landlords Association (4%) and 1 of an 'other' body (4%).

Problems with properties

- 15% say that they had **problems with tenants causing anti-social behaviour** (such as noise, litter or putting rubbish out on the wrong day) and the same proportion stated **that problems in neighbouring properties affected their property/tenants**. 7% (2) say they have had problems with poor property conditions. 4% say that they had difficulty finding new tenants and 4% also say that they had difficulty obtaining new references for tenants.

- 50% of landlords (5) who responded to the online consultation had **problems in neighbouring properties that affected their property/tenants**. 40% (4) say that they **experienced tenants causing anti-social behaviour**. 30% of the same group (3) say that they had **difficulty finding new tenants**, with 20% (2) having problems evicting tenants and 10% (1) experiencing poor property conditions.

Problems affecting landlords in the borough

- The most common problem felt by landlords responding to the online consultation is the **supply of property to rent** (mean score of 4.2), followed by the **poor perception of private landlords or properties** (4.1) and **littering** (4.0).
- The most common problem felt by landlords responding to the residents' survey is **small scale rubbish dumping** (mean score of 3.1), followed by **littering** (2.6) and **noise** (2.4).

Other problems affecting landlords

- Around three quarters of landlords (74%) who respondent to the online consultation say they had issues with rent arrears, followed by **problems with rubbish** (53%) and not keeping the property in good condition (47%).
- Landlords were then asked what other problems they had encountered with tenants they had rented their properties to. For landlords who responded to the online consultation, the most common issue is **rent arrears** (74% - 14 respondents). Followed by **problems with rubbish** e.g. small scale rubbish dumping, not putting the rubbish out correctly or not storing rubbish properly (53% -10 respondents).
- The most common response for landlords who responded to the residents' survey is '**other**' (56% - 15 respondents). The next most common response is **not keeping the property in good condition** (19% - 5 respondents).

Demand for properties

- Landlords were also asked how much demand there is for their property. Over three quarters of landlords (78% - 21 respondents) who responded to the online consultation say that they **could let their property quickly but did not currently have a waiting list**. 19% (5 respondents) have a **waiting list for their property**.
- Over half of landlords (56% - 15 respondents) who took part in the residents' survey say that **they could let their property quickly, but do not currently have a waiting list**.
- 41% of landlords (11 respondents) who took part in the residents' survey say that **demand for their property has increased over the last two years**, whilst 56% (15 respondents) say it has stayed the same, and 4% (1 respondent) say it has decreased. In comparison, 19% of landlords (5) who responded to the online consultation say that demand for their property has increased over the last two years, compares to 67% (18) who say it has stayed the same, and 15% (4) who say it has decreased.

6. Social letting agency

- Respondents were asked where they search for a room, properties or tenants. The most popular response to the residents' survey was that they **use letting agents to search for a room/properties/tenants** (57%). The most popular response for HMO and online respondents is to **use websites to search for a room/properties/tenants** (71% and 74% respectively).
- Just under six out of ten (58%) of respondents to the resident consultation say they would like letting agents to **find properties to rent**. This was followed by around half (51%) who want them to **deal with complaints about their property/landlord**. 37% wanted help **finding a room(s) to rent.**

- Almost three-quarters (73%) of respondents to the HMO consultation say that they want **letting agencies to deal with complaints about their property/landlord**. Around six out of ten (62%) want them to provide a service of **finding a room(s) to rent**. 45% say they would like them to **find a property to rent.**
- The most common response for respondents to the online consultation is **finding properties to rent** (65%), followed by 58% who want letting agencies **to deal with complaints about the property/landlord**.
- Over half of respondents to the residents' survey (57%) would prefer to access letting agents **face to face**. This is followed by just under half (48%) who would prefer using a website. For those responding to the HMO consultation, the most preferred methods are via a **website** and by **telephone** (63% each). For respondents to the online consultation, the most popular choice is online (74%), followed by face-to-face (51%).
- Just under half (46%) of resident consultation respondents, say they would consider **letting/renting a property or room through the council**, compared to 58% of HMO respondents and 47% of online respondents.
- Around four out of ten respondents (39%) to the resident consultation say they would consider **buying or selling their home through the council,** compared to 36% for online consultation respondents and 28% of HMO consultation respondents.
- Around a third of respondents (34%) to the resident consultation say they are a prospective landlord or tenant, compared to 42% of HMO consultation respondents and 51% of online consultation respondents.

Introduction

Background

The private rented sector (PRS) in the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham (LBHF) has grown rapidly in the last 10 years and accounts for approximately 27,500 properties; a third of the borough's housing. It is likely that this trend is to continue and grow. The council feels that the increase in demand and competition from tenants to find accommodation that is in short supply means that there is little market driven incentive for poor landlords to maintain minimum safe housing standards.

LBHF believe that parts of the PRS are badly managed and the quality of some rented accommodation is poor and in a few cases unsafe. This is borne out by the Council's Housing Market Assessment published in 2010 which noted that private rented dwellings had the highest levels of 'unfitness'. The most common reasons for unfitness were disrepair (43%), food preparation (35%) and bath/shower (34%). According to tenure, the report revealed that private rented dwellings had the highest level of unfitness (8%). An estimated 44% of all unfit dwellings were privately rented.

The council aims to improve the standard, safety and conditions for residents in the private rented sector in the borough and address issues around anti-social behaviour, but do this in a way that benefits both tenants and landlords. The Council is therefore considering a number of different options to help improve housing and conditions within the private rented sector in the borough.

Public consultation

Public consultation was undertaken to determine the levels of support for the council's proposals. The consultation took place over 12 weeks from 7th July 2016 to the 30th September 2016. The council produced a detailed document (appendix 1) entitled 'Improving the private rented sector'. This provided:

- background to private sector housing in the borough;
- the Council's business case;
- how the plans support the Council's wider objectives;
- a summary of the proposals;
- what the benefits are to landlords and tenants;
- five proposed options;
- the licensing fees and how they have been calculated;
- the structure of the proposed licensing scheme;
- details of the public consultation and timeframes;
- how the results will be analysed and the decision making process.

Proposals

The consultation document gave detailed information on each of five proposals that the council wished to consult on:

Option 1 – Implement an additional licensing scheme

This option would involve implementing a borough-wide additional licensing scheme. This would require landlords who let a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) property to licence the property. The criteria would be any HMO, which is occupied by at least three people who do not make up a single household, who share one or more basic amenities such as kitchen, bathroom or toilet.

Option 2 – Implement a selective licensing scheme in designated areas

Selective licensing relates to private rented sector properties that are let to single families, couples and individuals. This proposal relates to those private rented sector properties that are not covered by the mandatory licensing scheme or the proposed additional licensing scheme. This option proposes the introduction of a scheme to designated areas with evidence of high levels of anti-social behaviour.

Option 3 – Introduce a Hammersmith & Fulham Landlords Rental Charter

This option proposes the introduction of a 'H&F Landlords Rental Charter' that commits landlords to best practice on rents, housing standards, charges, tenants' deposit protection and security of tenure. The proposal aims to be self-certified and the council would not verify that landlords are upholding the principles set out in the charter. However, landlords who have signed the charter but do not uphold the principles will have their chartered status removed, subject to review.

Option 4 – Introduce revised HMO standards documentation

This option would see the introduction of revised local HMO standards for the council to decide whether a property is reasonably suitable for occupation by a certain number of persons. By amending local standards, the council could ensure that licensed accommodation is maintained above minimal national standards that do not adequately reflect the built form, size, layout and type of HMO that is typically found in the borough. New local standards would provide information for landlords on what is required of them to comply with the law, including the management, safety, facilities, waste storage, collection, and living space for the occupiers.

Option 5 – Introduce a social letting agency

The council have started a project to look at the feasibility of establishing a social letting agency in the borough and identify a recommended model. The idea is to help residents on low or modest incomes to overcome the barrier to accessing homes in the private rented sector and to help landlords in this part of the market find suitable tenants.

Methodology

The consultation was undertaken using a range of methods including face-to-face interviews, online surveys and feedback forms, letters and email correspondence, a public event and semi-structured telephone interviews.

Residents' survey

To provide the council with robust data for the consultation, that is representative of the adult (18+) population, we undertook a doorstep face-to-face survey across the borough. A stratified random sample of 1,104 households were interviewed, representative by gender, age, ethnicity and wards using a computer assisted personal interview (CAPI) methodology. Interviewers used showcards that contained relevant background information on each proposal to allow respondents to make informed choices. Interviews were undertaken by experienced M·E·L Research interviewers, who are trained to Market Research Society standards.

HMO tenants consultation

An additional sample of 801 HMO tenants were interviewed using a doorstep face-to-face survey by experienced M·E·L Research interviewers. We used GIS mapping information to identify areas with higher concentrations of HMO properties, which was used by interviewers to approach tenants of HMO properties.

Online consultation

A wider publically available online survey was publicised to encourage responses from landlords, agents, tenants, residents and other interested parties. This was hosted on the Council's website, and was publicised on the main page of the website. This included a downloadable version of the consultation document. A dedicated consultation email address was set up to which interested parties could email directly should they have any additional comments or suggestions (**lbhfconsultation@m-e-l.co.uk**).

The council also printed c.18,000 flyers (see appendix 2) which were distributed to properties in the areas where selective licensing was being proposed (where there are also HMO properties), to promote the online consultation. It was also promoted via the council's Twitter account and advertised in the local press and the London Property Licensing website/twitter (see appendix 3 for coverage).

An e-shot with details about the consultation, along with a link to the consultation page was sent to all known landlords, letting agents and managing agents by the council. An email with the link to the consultation page was also sent by M·E·L Research to a range of community groups to gather views from these groups and support an Equality Impact Assessment.

Finally, the council ran a Landlords Forum on the 14th July 2016 and M·E·L Research were asked to present on the consultation. Landlords were given information on the consultation options and details on how they could take part in the online survey and have their say. In total, over 50 landlords attended the forum.

Online consultation for neighbouring boroughs

A separate online survey for interested parties in neighbouring boroughs was developed and hosted on the Council's website. It was also hosted on neighbouring borough council's websites or sent via mailshots and emails to local authorities including Brent, Richmond upon Thames, Kensington and Chelsea, Wandsworth and Hounslow. Mailshots to landlords in Richmond and Brent by their local council were also undertaken to promote the consultation.

Stakeholder consultation

Semi-structured telephone interviews were also undertaken with a range of stakeholders. These included neighbouring authorities, third sector organisations and charities working within the sector, landlords groups and alternative PRS schemes that are operating in England.

Report scope and purpose

This report provides the main findings from each of the different consultation methods listed above, as well as considering views of additional respondents gathered from email correspondence, online forms, letters, etc. It provides the findings of:

The overall level of support for the proposed schemes

- What are respondents overall views of the proposed scheme?
- What are their views on the five specific options and an option to keep things as they are (i.e. 'to do nothing')?

The likely impact of the proposed schemes

- The extent to which respondents feel the scheme will have an impact on them.

Licensing fees

- The degree to which respondents feel the proposed licensing fees are reasonable.

Views and experiences of anti-social behaviour (ASB) and the private rented sector (PRS) in the borough

- The extent to which respondents view there to be ASB problems in Hammersmith and Fulham, such as noise, crime, litter etc.
- The extent to which they have experienced or witnessed any anti-social behaviour.
- The extent to which they feel private rented sector properties are maintained to a good standard.

- The extent to which they feel landlords and agents act responsibly in letting, managing and maintaining their properties.

Additional Private Rented Property tenant views and experiences

- The extent to which PRS tenants have experienced any issues with their property or landlord in the last 12 months.

Additional Landlord (and agent) views and experiences

- Whether they are members of accreditation or associations.
- Whether they have experienced a range of difficulties with their properties.
- The extent to which they have experienced a range of problems in Hammersmith and Fulham.
- Their experiences of problems with tenants.
- The level of demand for their properties.

Reporting conventions

We have used the term 'landlord' in this report to collectively refer to both landlords and/or their managing agents.

Owing to the rounding of numbers, percentages displayed visually on graphs or charts in the report may not always add up to 100% and may differ slightly when compared with the text. The figures provided in the text should always be used. For some questions, respondents could give more than one response (multi choice). For these questions, the percentage for each response is calculated as a percentage of the total number of respondents and therefore percentages do not add up to 100%.

The consultation findings have been analysed by the different methods of consultation (primarily the Residents' survey, HMO consultation and online consultation) and by type of respondent (landlord/agent or tenant/resident).

Consultation methods and profile of respondents

There were five main methods that we used to gather responses for the consultation. These are detailed below, along with the responses rates that we received by survey method.

Residents' survey (face-to-face doorstep survey)

A door-to-door, face-to-face interview was undertaken with 1,104 residents from across the borough and results are broadly representative by ward, gender and ethnicity. Based on a total estimated population (Census 2011) of 182,493 in the borough, the results provide a confidence interval of +/-3% based on a 50% statistic at the 95% confidence level. This means that if 50% of the sample supported any proposal then the real figure, had the whole borough been interviewed, lies somewhere between 47% and 53%. A breakdown by age, gender and ethnicity is provided in the table below:

Table 1: Breakdown of respondents by ward, age, gender and ethnicity

WARD	AGE BANDS							GENDER		ETHNICITY						TOTAL
	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65 and over	Not known	Male	Female	White British	White Others	Mixed	Asian	Black	Any Other	
Addison	10	12	9	11	9	18	0	33	36	27	14	3	10	8	4	**69**
Askew	9	15	19	15	16	13	0	41	46	45	17	3	4	13	4	**87**
Avonmore and Brook Green	10	22	5	15	13	12	0	44	33	36	22	6	7	3	2	**77**
College Park and Old Oak	5	20	11	6	4	8	1	29	26	18	4	1	15	11	5	**55**
Fulham Broadway	4	13	13	15	11	14	1	30	41	35	9	1	7	17	1	**71**
Fulham Reach	6	16	16	8	9	13	4	31	41	36	9	1	8	9	3	**72**
Hammersmith Broadway	7	22	12	15	8	14	0	42	36	41	15	4	4	9	5	**78**
Munster	9	17	13	6	8	10	0	32	31	39	17	1	4	2	0	**63**
North End	9	14	14	14	8	17	1	35	42	37	11	2	8	13	5	**77**
Palace Riverside	6	4	8	9	3	13	0	22	21	29	6	0	3	2	1	**43**
Parsons Green and Walham	8	9	13	8	15	12	0	34	31	47	9	2	3	2	2	**65**
Ravenscourt Park	8	16	12	6	7	10	0	24	35	30	10	1	4	9	3	**59**
Sands End	12	15	22	18	8	4	0	38	41	44	21	0	5	8	1	**79**
Shepherd's Bush Green	13	26	13	10	8	3	0	43	30	31	20	1	11	8	2	**73**
Town	7	20	12	9	9	7	0	31	33	32	18	4	5	5	0	**64**
Wormholt and White City	6	16	9	5	16	20	0	37	35	58	5	1	3	3	2	**72**
TOTAL	129	257	201	170	152	188	7	546	558	585	207	31	101	122	40	1104
Percentage of total	12%	23%	18%	15%	14%	17%	1%	49%	51%	53%	19%	3%	9%	11%	4%	100%

Each respondent was asked whether they were a resident, and/or a landlord, and/or a managing agent and/or they classified themselves in some other way. A breakdown of responses by respondent type is provided in the table below:

Table 2: Respondent profile to the residents' survey

Respondent profile	Number	% of responses
A resident of Hammersmith & Fulham	1,090	99%
and/or a landlord with a property (or number of properties) in H&F	21	2%
and/or a landlord with properties in neighbouring boroughs.	5	*%
and or/ an agent managing properties in H&F	3	*%
and/or other	4	*%

* Less than 0.5% (multiple answers possible)

1. HMO tenant consultation (face-to-face doorstep survey)

A door-to-door survey of HMO properties was undertaken by M·E·L Research interviewers. In total, 801 surveys were completed.

Table 3: Respondent profile to the HMO survey

Respondent profile	Number	% of responses
A resident of Hammersmith & Fulham	799	100%
and/or landlord with a property (or number of properties) in H&F	4	0.5%

2. Online consultation

The online consultation was widely promoted by the council and encouraged landlords, agents, tenants, residents and other interested parties to participate. In total, 105 responses were received to the online consultation. A breakdown of responses by respondent type is provided in the table below:

Table 4: Respondent profile to the online survey

Respondent profile	Number	% of responses
A resident of Hammersmith & Fulham	81	77%
and/or a landlord with a property (or number of properties) in H&F	24	24%
and/or a landlord with properties in neighbouring boroughs.	3	3%
and or/ an agent managing properties in H&F	8	8%
and/or Other	4	4%

It should be noted that due to the relatively small number of respondents participating in the online survey and the fact that the survey was self-selection, the results are not necessarily representative of the borough as a whole.

3. Online consultation with neighbouring borough councils

An online consultation with neighbouring boroughs was promoted by neighbouring councils, encouraging local residents, landlords, tenants and other interested parties to participate. Mailshots to local landlords was undertaken by Richmond upon Thames and Brent council. In total, four responses were received. Due to there being such a small number, these have not been included within the main report. However, the results from this survey are provided in appendix 4.

In total, 2018 respondents participated in one of the four surveys identified above. The table below summarises the responses by respondent type for the four surveys when combined.

Table 5: Combined respondent profile to all four surveys

Respondent profile	Number	% of responses
A resident of Hammersmith & Fulham	1,972	98%
and/or a landlord with a property (or number of properties) in H&F	50	2%
and/or a landlord with properties in neighbouring boroughs.	9	*%
and or/ an agent managing properties in H&F	12	1%
and/or Other	9	*%

* Less than 0.5% (multiple answers possible)

4. Stakeholder consultation

Interviews with a number of stakeholders were undertaken as part of the consultation by M·E·L Research. The council provided a list of potential stakeholders and 16 interviews were completed in total (although a larger number were provided with the opportunity to participate). These were undertaken across a range of stakeholders, which included neighbouring councils and the GLA, third sector organisations working in the housing arena in the local area, residents associations, landlords associations and public health. Through the interviews, a number of alternative schemes that are being run by/in conjunction with other local authorities in England were also identified and contacted. In addition, the National Landlords Association (NLA) and Residential Landlords Association (RLA) wished to submit written responses to the consultation, which have been included in the Appendices.

Table 6: Stakeholder profile

Respondent profile	No of stakeholders spoken to
Local third sector providers	6
Other local government (neighbouring/London based)	3
Alternative schemes in England	3
Landlords associations/organisations	2
Residents associations	1
Public health	1

Results

This section of the report presents the results from the consultation by the different consultation methods. The face-to-face resident consultation gives us the most statistically robust figures, which are broadly representative of the borough population and accurate[1] to ±3.0% for the top line results. Results from the online neighbouring borough consultation are not included in this section due to there being such a small number of responses (just 4). These are provided in Appendix 4.

1. Support for and impact of proposals

Below is a summary of the support shown for each of the five proposed options by consultation methods. Respondents were provided with details of each proposal that the council is considering and were then asked a series of questions about the proposal. They were asked the extent to which they support each proposed scheme and what impact each of the proposals would have on them if they were introduced. Respondents were then given the opportunity to provide any further comments they wish to add. Support for each of the proposals is presented in the table below, showing the percentage who support and those who oppose each of the five proposals.

Table 7: Support and opposition for proposed options (by consultation methods)

Proposal option	Residents' survey		HMO Consultation		Online Consultation	
	% support	% oppose	% support	% oppose	% support	% oppose
1. Introduce additional licensing scheme to HMOs	70%	20%	65%	29%	65%	30%
2. Introduce selective licensing in designated areas	53%	34%	58%	36%	68%	28%
3. Introduce a H&F landlords rental charter	54%	29%	65%	23%	68%	26%
4. Revise minimum HMO standards	70%	18%	81%	14%	75%	21%
5. Introduce a social letting agency	62%	21%	71%	16%	67%	22%

We can see from the table above that, while there are differences in levels of support for each proposal by method of consultation, overall, there are more people in support of each of the options than there are opposed to the options. The highest level of support, across all three consultations, is for the council to **revise the minimum HMO standards**.

[1] The total sample of 1,104 interviews provide a confidence interval of ±3.0% for a 50% statistic at the 95% confidence level.

Table 8: Likely impact of proposal on individuals (by consultation methods)

Proposal option	Residents' survey		HMO Consultation		Online Consultation	
	% positive impact	% negative impact	% positive impact	% negative impact	% positive impact	% negative impact
1. Introduce additional licensing scheme to HMOs	57%	14%	42%	25%	39%	25%
2. Introduce selective licensing in designated areas	40%	27%	37%	32%	44%	20%
3. Introduce a H&F landlords rental charter	37%	17%	29%	14%	40%	11%
4. Revise minimum HMO standards	58%	11%	64%	12%	51%	16%
5. Introduce a social letting agency	49%	16%	44%	12%	39%	9%

The table above shows that for each of the proposed options, proportionally more respondents indicate that they will have a positive impact on them than a negative impact.

The following sections detail each proposal in turn and look at the support for and against each option, followed by the likely impact should they be introduced. The analysis is led by the residents' survey as this provides the most robust and representative data, followed by the HMO survey and then the online survey. Please note that there are only a relatively small number of landlord responses (27 to the residents' survey and 30 to the online consultation), so these results should be viewed as indicative only.

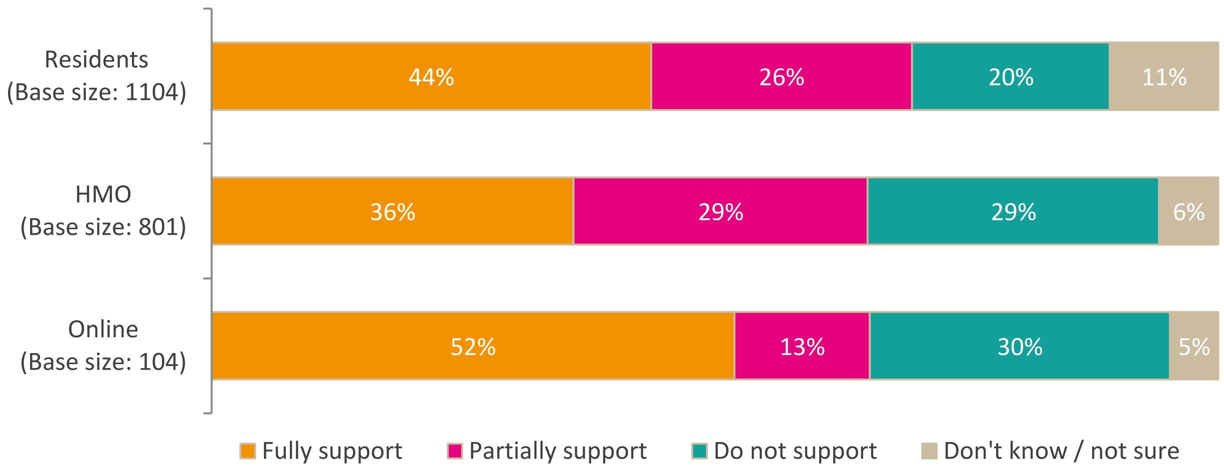
Option 1: Introduce additional licensing scheme for houses in multiple occupation

This proposal would see the introduction of additional licensing for HMOs across the entire borough, which would require landlords who let a HMO property to licence the property. The criteria would be any HMO that is occupied by at least three people who do not make up a single household, who share one or more basic amenities such as a kitchen, bathroom or toilet.

Introducing a borough-wide additional licensing scheme for HMO properties received strong support from respondents to the residents' survey, with seven out of ten (70%) in support. Over two-fifths (44%) say they fully support the proposal and 26% partially support the proposal. One in five (20%) say they do not support the proposal.

A similar proportion of respondents to the HMO consultation support the proposal (65%). Support for this proposal was also similar for those taking part in the online consultation (65%). A higher proportion of respondents to the HMO (29%) and online consultation (30%) were against the proposal.

Figure 1: Support for Proposal 1 (by consultation method)

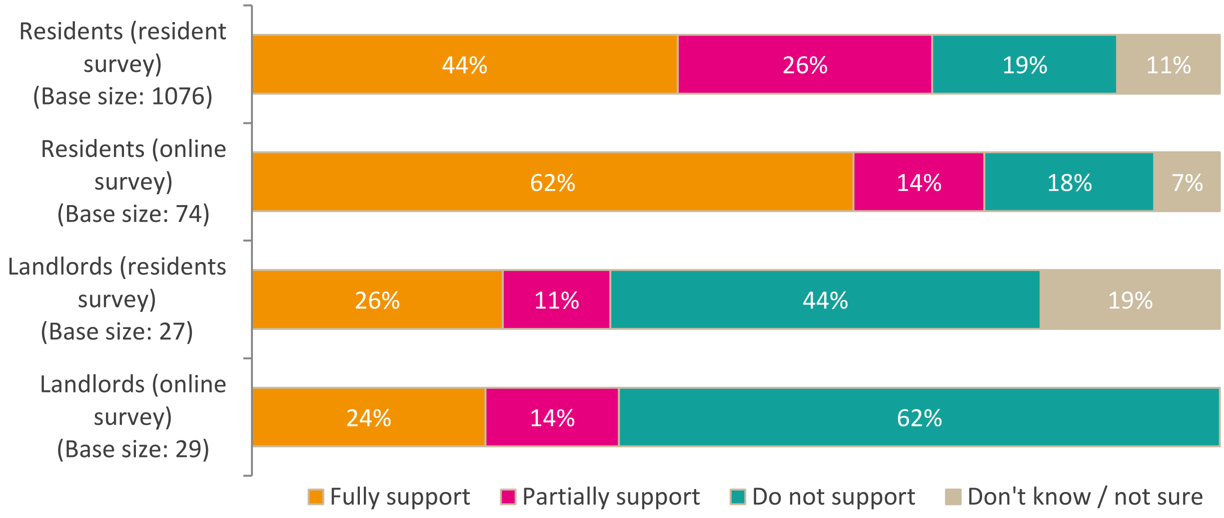


Results by resident and landlord

Results differ by type of respondent, which have been grouped to show landlords and agents responses (for simplicity referred to as landlords) and residents and private rented sector tenants responses (for simplicity referred to as residents). Residents are more in favour of the proposal than landlords. Seven out of ten (70%) residents who took part in the residents' survey are in support of additional licensing; when split out, around two thirds (67%) of private rented tenants are in support, whilst a quarter (26%) do not support the proposal.

Around three-quarters (76%) of residents responding to the online consultation are in support. Just 26% of landlords who took part in the residents' survey are in support, whilst 24% of those taking part in the online consultation are in support; 44% and 62% respectively do not support the proposal.

Figure 2: Support for proposed option 1 (by resident and landlord responses)

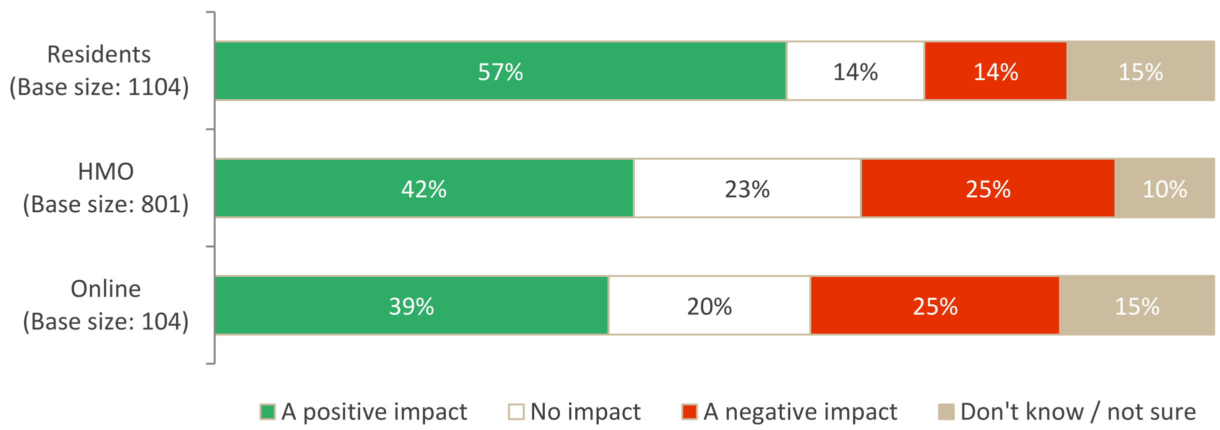


Likely impact on respondents

Respondents were then asked what impact, if any, introducing additional licensing would have on them. Over half (57%) of respondents to the residents' survey say it will have a positive impact, 14% say it will have a negative impact and a further 14% say it will have no impact at all. 15% say that they do not know what impact it is likely to have on them.

Around four out of ten (42%) respondents to the HMO consultation feel that this will have a positive impact on them, whilst a quarter (25%) feel it will have a negative impact. Respondents to the online consultation are slightly less positive, with around four out of ten (39%) saying they feel it will have a positive impact on them and a quarter (25%) saying it will have a negative impact on them.

Figure 3: Likely impact of Proposal 1 (by consultation method)

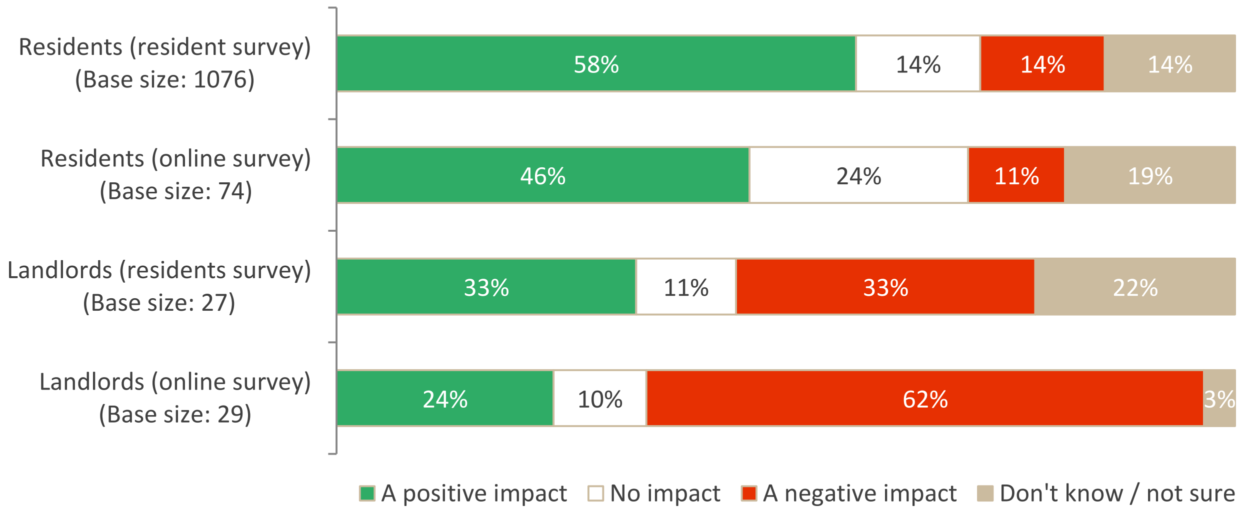


Results by resident and landlord

Results differ between type of respondent. Again, we see more positive results for residents than landlords, with around six out of ten residents (58%) who took part in the residents' survey feeling it is likely to have a positive impact on them and only one third of landlords (33%) feeling the same. When split out, over half (55%) of private rented tenants feel it will be positive, whilst 21% feel it will be negative.

46% of residents via the online consultation feel it will have a positive impact while only 24% of landlords via online consultation could say the same. Conversely, 33% of residents and 62% of landlords feel it will have a negative impact on them.

Figure 4: Likely impact of option 1 by resident and landlord responsess



Respondent comments on option 1

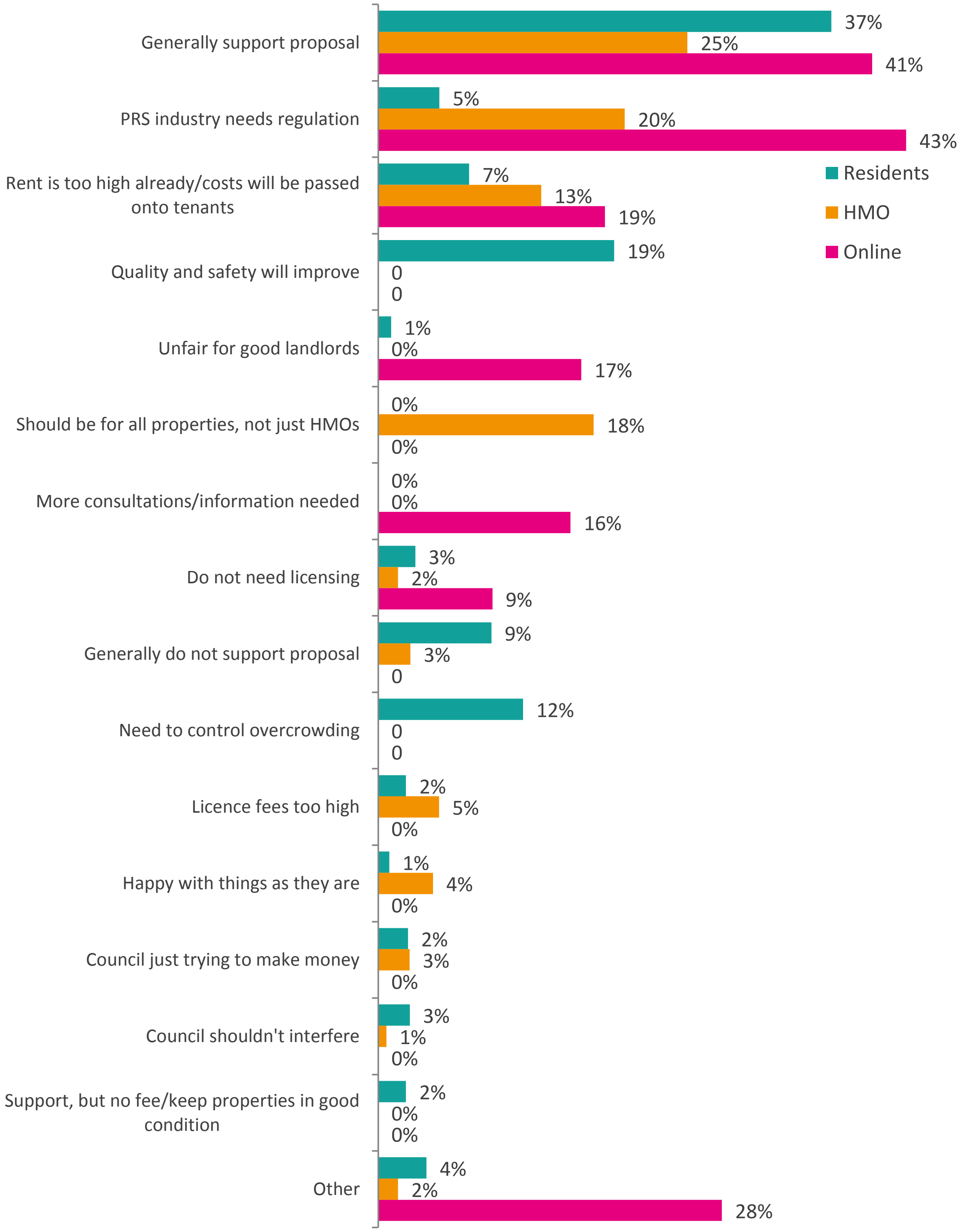
Respondents were invited to add any further comments about the option. These results have been grouped into themes and then analysed.

The most common comment from respondents to the residents' survey were that they were generally in support of the proposal (37% of respondents commented about this). 19% of comments were around the quality and safety of housing will be likely to improve as a result of additional licensing. This is followed by 12% of respondents commenting on the need for better regulation and enforcement of the private rented sector.

For respondents to the HMO consultation, the most common response is that they were generally in support of the proposal (25%). This is followed by 20% of respondents commenting on the need for better regulation and enforcement of the private rented sector. 18% commented on the need for licensing to apply to other property types (also not just the PRS).

The most common responses to the online consultation were around the need for better regulation/enforcement of the PRS sector (43%). This is followed by 41% who generally in support of the proposal. 28% of respondents commented on a range of 'other' issues, which included individual reasons or comments for their support/non -support of the proposal.

Figure 5.Additional comments on option 1



Stakeholder views

There is generally a divide in support for the proposal. Landlords Associations such as the NLA and RLA do not support additional licensing scheme, whilst almost all other stakeholders interviewed feel that additional licensing schemes are a positive step and can have a positive impact on improving the private rented sector in the borough. Some of the key themes from the semi-structured stakeholder interviews are detailed below.

Current government consultation on licensing in progress

A few stakeholders referenced the forthcoming government announcement on the recent consultation around changes to HMO licensing. The government is shortly due to announce the findings of the consultation (although no date is yet known) and some believe that the implications of this may have an impact on the council's proposals, particularly those around additional licensing.

> **"We believe it would be better for the council to await the outcome of this review, as its recommendations may well address concerns without the need for an expensive local licensing scheme. It may also introduce new standards for mandatory HMOs that satisfy the council."** (Residential Landlords Association)

Evidence on impact of additional licensing schemes

There is mixed views around the evidence available on what impact existing additional licensing schemes have had. The landlords associations state that there is no evidence that they work.

> **"All it will mean is that there will be less property to house those in shared housing and that means costs will increase. This has been evidenced across the whole of England."** (National Landlords Association)

A third sector organisation say that they had seen an increase in homelessness in Brent when this borough had introduced licensing, as "criminal landlords try to get around licensing by throwing tenants out" or others leave the market, particularly where there may only be a small number of tenants.

> **"The worst landlords tend to think they can get around being prosecuted by throwing tenants out. I'm sure Hammersmith & Fulham has least as big a challenge with homelessness as we do. The way licensing has been brought in here (Brent), we see it with our own eyes that it has led to an increase in homelessness... Tenants don't have any information, they are often migrants or refugees and they don't know what their rights are and if landlords tell them to go, they don't know they have a right to remain."** (Third sector stakeholder)

However, most stakeholders say they feel it is a positive step for the council to take; they did not reference any evidence they had seen as to whether schemes had or had not worked elsewhere.

Licensing of HMOs is clearer

A number of stakeholders suggest that landlords are often confused about mandatory licensing and what constitutes an HMO under mandatory licensing. By introducing additional licensing, this will remove any ambiguity around HMO licensing, as all HMOs will need to be licensed.

> **"It is at least significantly easier if the only criteria is whether it is or not an HMO…It makes it a lot simpler for landlords and tenants."** (Third sector stakeholder)

> **"…it is just going to be a fairer and consistent way of applying the legislation."** (Public sector stakeholder)

Identifying HMO properties

A number of stakeholders feel that it is difficult for the council to identify HMO properties in the first place and therefore are unsure whether the council are going to be able to licence the properties intended to be licenced through the scheme.

> **"Unless local authorities have the data on where these properties are, who owns them and who lives in them, it's hard to enforce against the worst landlords."** (Third sector stakeholder)

Existing powers already in place to tackle substandard housing

The landlords associations feel that the council already has the powers that it needs to tackle the issues that are being cited for introducing additional licensing. They say that the council has sufficient legal powers to tackle landlords who have substandard properties that are unsafe and put tenants at risk and therefore feel that licensing schemes are unnecessary.

> **"All these powers exist in the council's … 'armoury'. If they want to, they could use criminal behaviour orders, they could use crime prevention injunctions, interim management orders, environmental protection act for waste issues, use the noise nuisance act. So they have all these powers already by statute."** (National Landlords Association)

Improving standards for tenants

A number of stakeholders feel that introducing additional licensing will be beneficial for tenants because HMOs are often found to be the properties in the worst condition and often house the most vulnerable in society. By tackling sub-standard housing and landlords who do not fulfil their duties, it was felt that this could improve the health of these tenants and their general wellbeing.

> **"This is where you see some of the worst landlords operate, some of the worst conditions and some of the worst exploitation of tenants"** (Third sector stakeholder)

> **"As property prices become increasingly unaffordable and home ownership unattainable we recognise the importance of regulating the rented sector, especially for the most vulnerable and those residing in the worst conditions. Houses in multiple occupation (HMO's) historically have always suffered disproportionately from disrepair and general neglect."** (Public sector stakeholder)

Tackling criminal landlords

Most stakeholders feel that licensing will discourage criminal landlords from continuing their practices, although a small number feel that they will continue to flout the laws and will simply not apply for a licence.

> **"Where we have seen licensing before, we have seen landlords driven out of areas, but mainly because they've been prosecuted and they've either had to up the standards or leave."** (Third sector stakeholder)

> **"If people don't sign up they can't be detected, and if there are no resources in detection then you just produce paper and all you do is put a tax on people that you don't want to be dealing with."** (Residential Landlords Association)

> **"The evidence suggests that rogue landlords can't be identified by licensing alone. It gives you more effective powers to prosecute or deal with them when you do find them. It's helpful as a tool to support, identify and enforce."** (Third sector stakeholder)

Others feel that some landlords are victims themselves and tenants are actually breaking the laws, such as sub-letting the property they rent, which could result in landlords breaking the law without knowing about it:

> **"The proposal does not take into account rent to rent, or those that exploit people (tenants and landlords), as criminals will always play the system. There is no provision for those landlords who have legally rented out a property, which is then illegally sublet. The Council is not allocating resources to tackle the problems that criminals will cause; landlords are often victims just as much as tenants."** (National Landlords Association)

However, most stakeholders feel that licensing will tackle rogue landlords:

"The responsibility will now shift... This is asking landlords to have a look at their property, understand the condition that your property is in, understand the licence conditions and bring your property up to scratch. Hopefully it will bring rogue landlords into line or free up enforcement time to deal with them..." (Public sector stakeholder)

Inspection considerations

A number of stakeholders, although in support of the scheme, feel that further clarification is needed around how the scheme will be implemented. One stakeholder feels that prior inspections should be a key part of any agreement to licence a property. Inspections should therefore not be done after a licence has been granted, as this could have serious implications if something happened to a tenant in a house that should not have been licensed. Others feel that the inspections should happen within a very short period of time following granting of a licence, or that the most vulnerable tenants are prioritised to make sure that the scheme has as great an impact as possible from the start.

"I would suggest they think carefully about inspections. If they have a policy that allows them to recruit and to allow them to inspect before [they issue the licence]. That they cost that into the licence fees. Thinking about it afterwards makes it more difficult." (Third sector stakeholder)

"Surely we could target those households where there are vulnerable people. We know this from our doctors lists, we know that through our adult social care team... we could ensure that any known vulnerable families were seen... These are the least likely to complain but are the most likely to have their health compromised by poor housing conditions." (Public health stakeholder)

Communication

Many of those in favour of the proposals say that communication between the council and landlords (and tenants) is key and needs to be done effectively. The reasons why the council is doing this needs to be clear to gain buy in from landlords, along with what is expected of them and the consequences of non-compliance.

"The messaging around it needs to work. To encourage landlords who are not that au fait with the terminology; that needs to be clear and how actually to encourage them to licence needs to be clear." (Public sector stakeholder)

"We think it would be really important for the local authority to be really clear about what it is and why they are doing it [additional licensing]. For other stakeholders involved, if they know that this is happening and they know that the local authority is taking steps in the

right direction, it would also reassure people in the PRS that they are doing something about it.” (Third sector stakeholder)

Others feel that tenants need to know about licensing and what their rights are.

> **“All communication is between the local authority and the landlords and none is with the tenant. We have suggested to Brent that they employ tenant liaison officers, so when the surveyor does go in to inspect… the tenant liaison officer is talking to the tenant, explaining what licensing is about, specifically that they can’t be evicted, making sure they know who they can go to if they need advice…”** (Third sector provider)

Enforcement not just licensing

A number of stakeholders feel that a licensing scheme without the proper resources to inspect and enforce is just a paper exercise and will not help improve the sector. The council needs to ensure it has the right resources and skills in place to make sure enforcement can happen and are able to ‘hit the ground running’.

> **“It [the impact] all depends on the time and effort that the council is going to spend on enforcing the scheme”.** (Public sector stakeholder)

> **“It will not work without heavy enforcement”.** (Public sector stakeholder)

Increases in rent for tenants

Again, we see mixed views here, with some stakeholders saying that tenants are likely to suffer more because landlords will simply pass on the cost of licences to tenants through rental increases. However, other stakeholders say that they have not seen any evidence of this taking place in other schemes.

> **“One of the dangers of the proposed Additional and Selective Licensing scheme is that the costs will be passed on to tenants, thus increasing the costs for those who rent in Hammersmith, along with increasing the Council’s costs. The increasing costs to Hammersmith residents would particularly hit hard the most vulnerable and least able to tolerate a marginal increase in their cost of living. Also, the Council has failed to explain that, as well as the Council’s costs for the licence, the landlords costs will likely be covered by a rise in rents.”** (National Landlords Association)

> **“We have not actually seen evidence that these [licensing schemes] necessarily do drive up rent, because landlords are more or less charging in their local area what the market will bear so they need to incorporate it into their running costs and we see this as a legitimate business cost, in the same way that shops and restaurants or clubs have to deal with licensing as part of their business costs.”** (Third sector stakeholder)

“From experience, I would say it is negligible [rent increases]. People say that rents go up, but I've not seen landlords put their fees up.” (Public sector stakeholder)

Need for more effective waste strategies

The landlords associations feel that rubbish and litter is often a key issue when ASB is mentioned, particularly around HMO properties. This is sometimes down to tenants’ ignorance, but more often than not it is due to inadequate storage or a lack of volume of storage needed to deal with HMO properties. In addition, in areas where there are such high proportions of rented properties, the level of waste is high, particularly when short-term tenancies are more common than longer-term arrangements. A waste strategy, on how to deal more effectively with issues around HMOs, is therefore say to be needed.

“It’s a subject that’s of current interest due to the amount of rubbish that is being generated by HMOs that just ends up in black bags on the street.” (Residents association stakeholder)

“Often when tenants near the end of their contract/tenancy and they are in the process of moving out, they will dispose of excess waste by a variety of methods, which often includes putting it out on the street for the Council to collect. A waste strategy for the collection of excess waste at the end of tenancies needs to be considered by local authorities with a large number of private rented sector properties in areas.” (National Landlords Association)

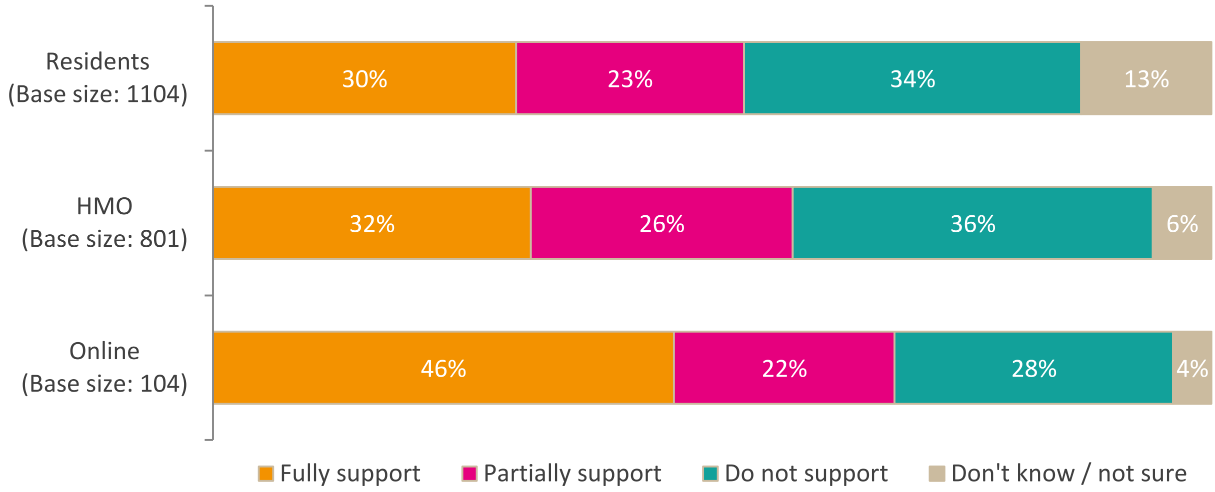
Option 2: Introduce a selective licensing scheme in designated areas

This proposal would see the introduction of a selective licensing scheme to designated areas of the borough with evidence of high levels of anti-social behaviour. The majority of this accommodation is in streets with a mixed commercial/ residential make up i.e. predominantly along major roads and nearby streets.

Introducing a selective licensing scheme receives a positive amount of support, with over half of respondents (53%) to the residents' survey in favour of the proposal; three out of ten (30%) say that they fully support the proposal, and around a quarter (23%) partially support the proposal. Around a third (34%) say they do not support the proposal, whilst 13% are unsure.

Almost six in ten (58%) of those who took part in the HMO consultation support this option. Support for this option is more positive amongst those taking part in the online consultation, with 68% in support.

Figure 6: Support for Proposal 2 (by consultation method)

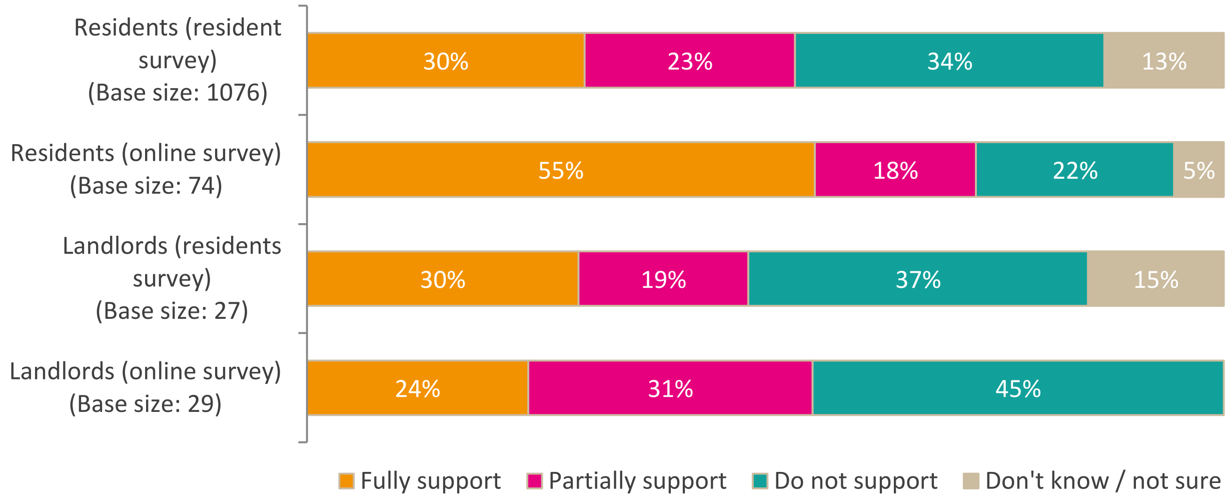


Results by resident and landlord

Results are similar between residents and landlords who took part in the resident survey, with 53% and 49% respectively in favour of the proposal; 34% and 37% respectively do not support the proposal. When split out, around half (52%) of private renting tenants, responding to the residents' survey, support the proposal, whilst 39% do not support it.

Results differ slightly for those taking part in the online consultation, with around three quarters of residents (73%) in support compared to 55% of landlords. 22% and 45% respectively are against the proposal. Around eight out of ten (79%) private renting tenants support the proposal, whilst only 14% do not support it.

Figure 7: Support for proposed option 2 by resident and landlord responses

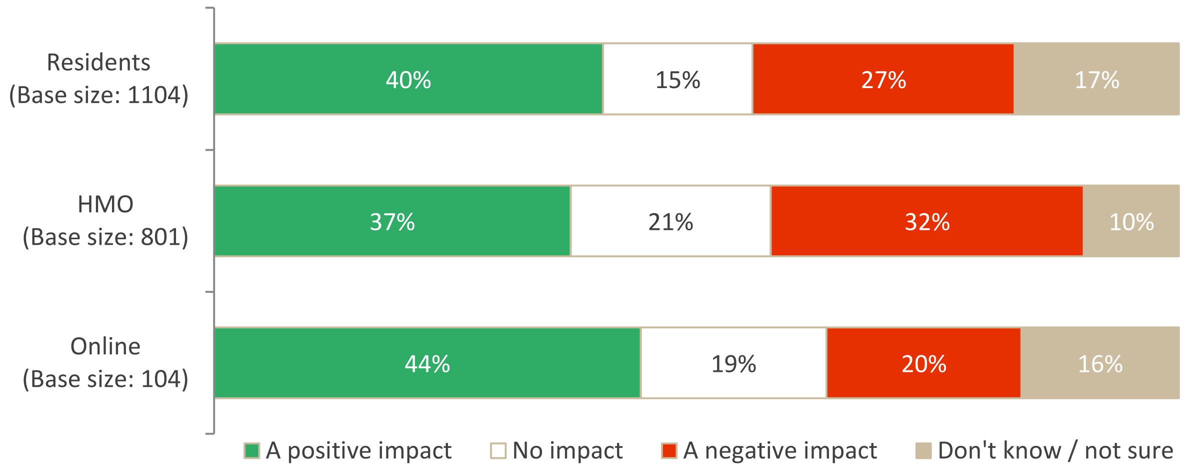


Likely impact on respondents

Respondents were then asked what impact, if any, introducing a selective licensing scheme would have on them. Four out of ten respondents (40%) to the residents' survey say it will have a positive impact and 15% say it will have no impact at all. Around a quarter (27%) say it will have a negative impact. 17% say that they do not know what impact it is likely to have on them.

Again, we see similar results for the online consultation, with 44% of respondents feeling it will have a positive impact on them. One in five (20%) feel that it will have a negative impact on them. Respondents to the HMO consultation are slightly less positive, with 37% feeling it is likely to have a positive impact and 32% feeling it is likely to have a negative impact.

Figure 8: Likely impact of Proposal 2 (by consultation method)

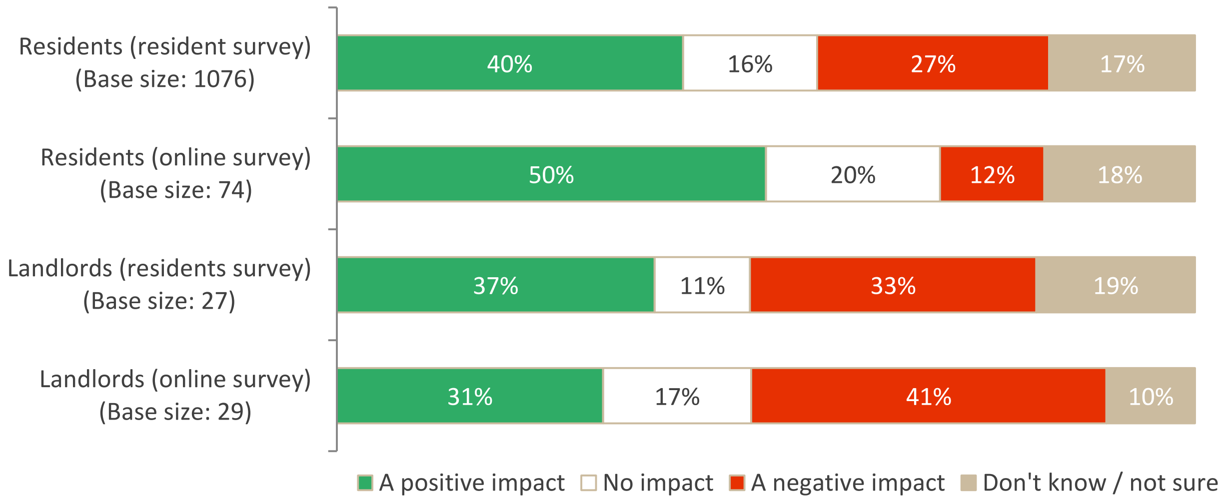


Results by resident and landlord

Results differ by type of respondent, with residents slightly more positive than landlords who responded to the resident consultation. 40% of residents feel it will have positive impact, compared to 37% of landlords. 27% and 33% respectively feel that it will have a negative impact on them. When split out, 43% of privately renting tenants feel it will have a positive impact, whilst a third (33%) feel it will have a negative impact.

In terms of the online consultation, half of residents (50%) and a third of landlords (31%) feel it will be positive, whilst four out of ten landlords (41%) and only 12% of residents feel it will have a negative impact on them. Similarly, when split out, around half (49%) of privately renting tenants feel it will have a positive impact, whilst 5% feel it will have a negative impact.

Figure 9: Likely impact of option 2 by resident and landlord responsess



Respondent comments on option 2

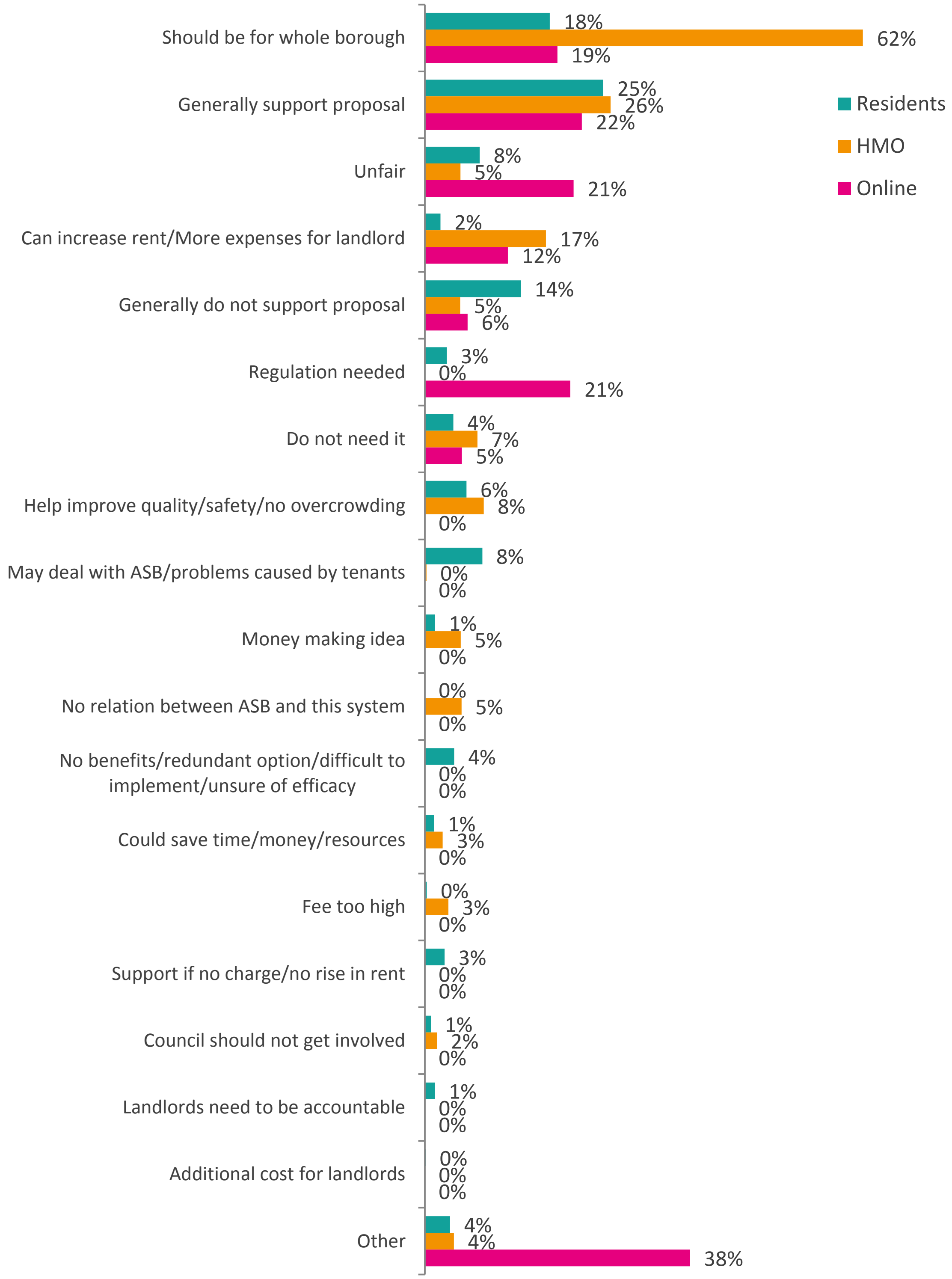
Respondents were invited to add any further comments they may wish to about the option. These results have been grouped into themes, then analysed.

The most common comment from respondents to the residents' survey is that they are generally in support of the proposal (25% of respondents commented about this). 18% of comments are around whether the scheme should be borough-wide, rather than in certain areas. This is followed by 14% of respondents who generally do not support the proposal.

For respondents to the HMO consultation, the most common response is whether the scheme should be borough-wide, rather than in certain areas. (62%). This is followed by 26% of respondents who are generally in support of the proposal. 17% of comments relate to whether costs will be passed onto tenants and rents increased as a result.

The most common responses to the online consultation are that they are a range of 'other' issues that lead them to choose to support or not support the proposal. 22% are generally in support of the proposal, while 21% feel the scheme is generally unfair on landlords and a further 21% feel that regulation of the industry is needed.

Figure 10. Additional comments on option 2



Stakeholder views

As with the additional licensing scheme option, there is generally a divide in views between the landlords associations and other stakeholders, although fewer stakeholders are as supportive of selective licensing as they are of additional licensing. Some of the key themes are detailed below.

Existing evidence on impact of selective licensing schemes

There are mixed views around the evidence on what impact selective licensing in designated areas has had elsewhere in the country, where it has been introduced. The landlords associations feel that there is no evidence that these have had any impact elsewhere. However, a number of other stakeholders feel that the problems with housing in the private rented sector is not just down to HMOs therefore selective licensing allows the council to tackle the industry more fully.

> **"I think it will definitely have an impact. I'm sure your evidence shows that it's not just HMOs but the whole sector… If we look at the evidence coming from Newham, it definitely does have an impact."** (Public sector stakeholder)

> **"I think there is very good evidence that it targets them [rogue landlords], as it makes it nice and clear that if they live in an area they need a licence."** (Public sector stakeholder)

However, there are a number of stakeholders who although are in support the scheme, feel that available evidence suggests that borough-wide schemes are more effective than those introduced in designated areas.

> **"Licensing has worked well only in the boroughs that have borough-wide licensing. Waltham Forest etc… For people like ourselves who have partial licensing, it hasn't worked well. In most cases, if you rent, you need a licence, regardless of what licence you have, you have them in [the system] and you can clean it up afterwards."** (Public sector stakeholder)

> **"It probably needs to be everywhere not just in certain areas. ASB changes a lot and I don't think we've seen the benefits in those areas. It needs to apply to everyone."** (Third sector stakeholder)

Anti-social behaviour evidence to support the proposal

A number of stakeholders feel that there is not enough evidence provided within the proposal to demonstrate that there is a direct link between the private rented sector and ASB and that the council should be clearer about the link.

> **"It's not clear at all what the data sources are. Has the data been credibly looked at and a causal link between ASB and the PRS been established? It needs to be much more robust**

than I can see in the document. It looks like main roads, shopping areas etc., where ASB may be as a result of this rather than PRS. It may be that it just happens to overlap with the PRS. Flats over shops generally have poor provisions for rubbish. At the bottom end of the market, it is not ASB in particular but they are just on main roads, shopping areas and it tends to concentrate in these areas.” (Third sector stakeholder)

“They haven't provided information about whether the ASB is housing related. They are not providing any information on what the evidence base is on why they are introducing it.” (National Landlords Association)

“I'm just not sure about the linkage there. You could have the ASB being linked to a pub or a betting shop or a pawn shop, and it’s not clear whether that can that be put down to housing.” (Public health stakeholder)

“I don’t know the way they have identified this and whether it’s over a year. I don't know whether it’s the same people or whether its different people coming in.” (Third sector stakeholder)

Legal powers

As with additional licensing, the landlords associations feel that the council already has the legal powers that they need to tackle the issues that they are looking to tackle via additional licensing. Another stakeholder suggested that if the council already has powers it is not using, a licensing scheme is unlikely to change this.

“I don't think there are any London authorities who use interim management orders… even when they have a statutory duty they still don't. They worry they don't have things in place to manage these properties. They are very nervous about it.” (Third sector stakeholder)

Communication

A number of stakeholders feel that communication is crucially important where there are so many different parts of the borough affected as it is likely to cause confusion amongst landlords and potentially that the council could receive a great number of incorrect applications.

“The size of the area will be confusing. If you go by postcode, landlords and agents don't know what postcode it is. One of the things that will come out of this will be incorrect applications…There needs to be a policy on refunds built in at an early stage.” (Third sector stakeholder)

Measuring impacts on ASB

Several stakeholders feel that the council needs to put in place measures to establish what the current levels of ASB are that are caused by private rented sector housing, and track these if a scheme is introduced, to identify whether licensing is having an impact.

> **"How we measure that and over what time we measure that is important, so we need to know what we've got before we start. Then what is success, what are the measures we put in place and certainly what resources to make sure that is working."** (Public sector stakeholder)

> **"It would be really important for Hammersmith & Fulham to monitor the levels of ASB and the impact of the selective licensing once it is in place."** (Third sector stakeholder)

Enforcement not just licensing

As with additional licensing, a number of stakeholders feel that without the proper resources to inspect and enforce, this would merely be a paper exercise and will not help improve the sector. They also feel that the council needs to ensure it has the right resources and skills in place to effectively deliver the scheme from day one.

> **"There are a significant number of landlords that don't take any notice of legislation or requirements, so it's how you would enforce it that's the difficulty."** (Residents Association)

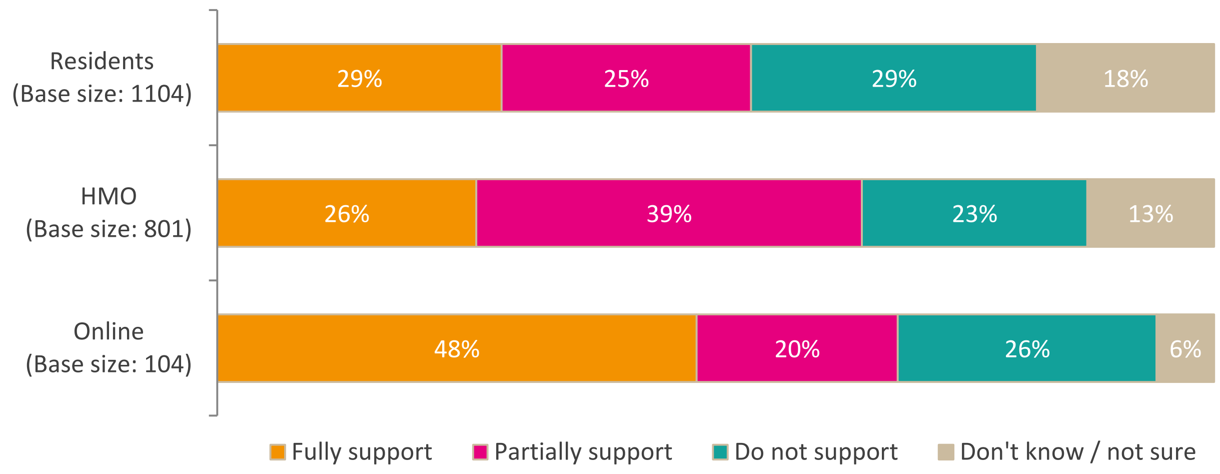
Option 3: Introduce a Hammersmith & Fulham landlords rental charter

This proposal would see the introduction of a Hammersmith & Fulham Landlords Rental Charter that commits landlords to best practice on rents, housing standards, charges, tenants' deposit protection and security of tenure. The proposal aims to be self-certified and the council would not verify that landlords are upholding the principles set out in the charter.

Just over half of all respondents to the residents' survey (54%) support the proposal to introduce a Hammersmith & Fulham landlords rental charter. Around three out of ten (29%) fully support the proposal, and a quarter (25%) partially support the proposal. Around three out of ten (29%) do not support the proposal.

Support for this proposal is more positive for those taking part in the HMO consultation (65%) and for the online consultation (68% in support). Around a quarter of respondents to these consultations (23% to the HMO consultation and 26% to the online consultation), do not support the proposal.

Figure 11: Support for Proposal 3 (by consultation method)

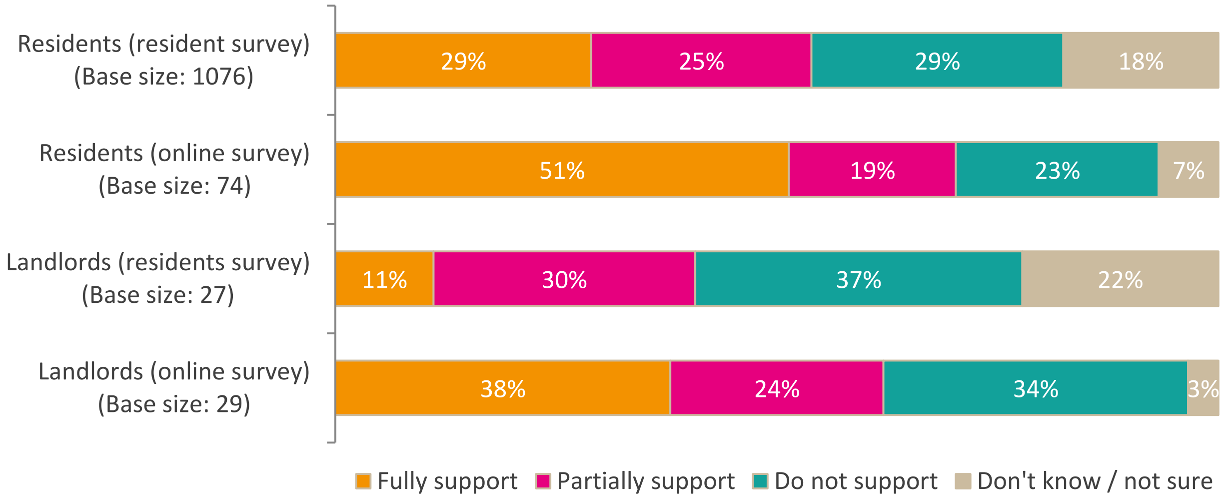


Results by resident and landlord

Results differ by type of respondent, with residents more positive than landlords who responded to the resident consultation. Over half of residents (54%) support of the proposal, compared to 41% of landlords. 29% and 37% respectively do not support the proposal. Six out of ten (60%) privately renting tenants are in support, whilst 28% do not support the proposal.

In terms of the online consultation, seven out of ten residents (70%) and six out of ten landlords (62%) are in support, whilst 34% of landlords and 23% of residents do not support the proposal. Seven out of ten (70%) privately renting tenants are in support, whilst around a quarter (26%) do not support the proposal.

Figure 12: Support for proposed option 3 by resident and landlord responses

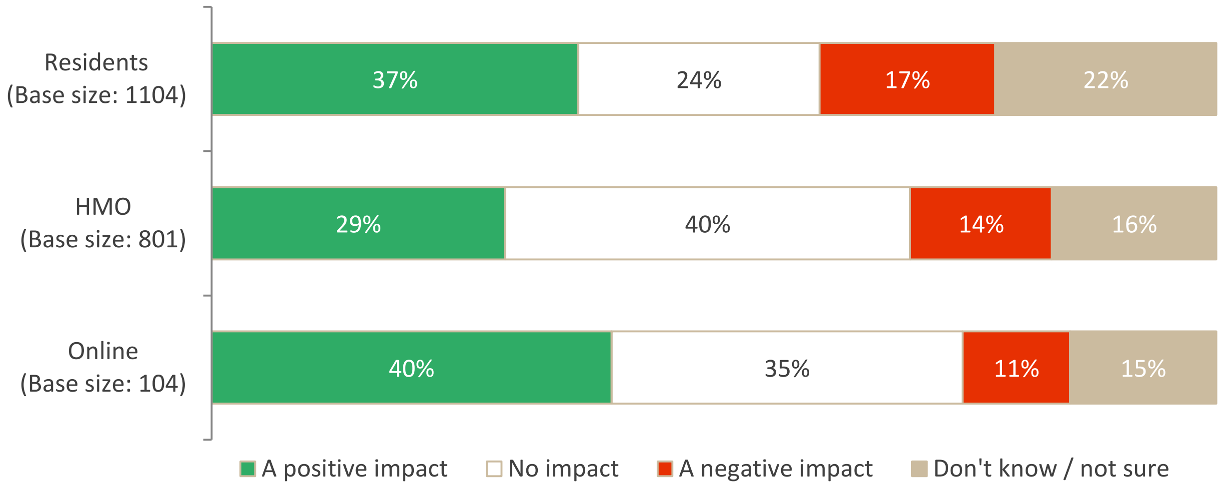


Likely impact on respondents

Respondents were then asked what impact, if any, introducing an H&F landlords rental charter would have on them. 37% of respondents to the residents' survey feel it will have a positive impact, whilst 17% feel it will have a negative impact. Around a quarter (24%) feel it will have no impact at all. Around one in five (22%) do not know what impact it is likely to have on them.

Again, we see similar results from respondents of the online consultation with four out of ten (40%) saying they feel it will have a positive impact on them. Only one in ten (11%) feel that it will have a negative impact on them. Around three out of ten HMO consultation respondents (29%) feel it is likely to have a positive impact and 14% a negative impact.

Figure 13: Likely impact of Proposal 3 (by consultation method)

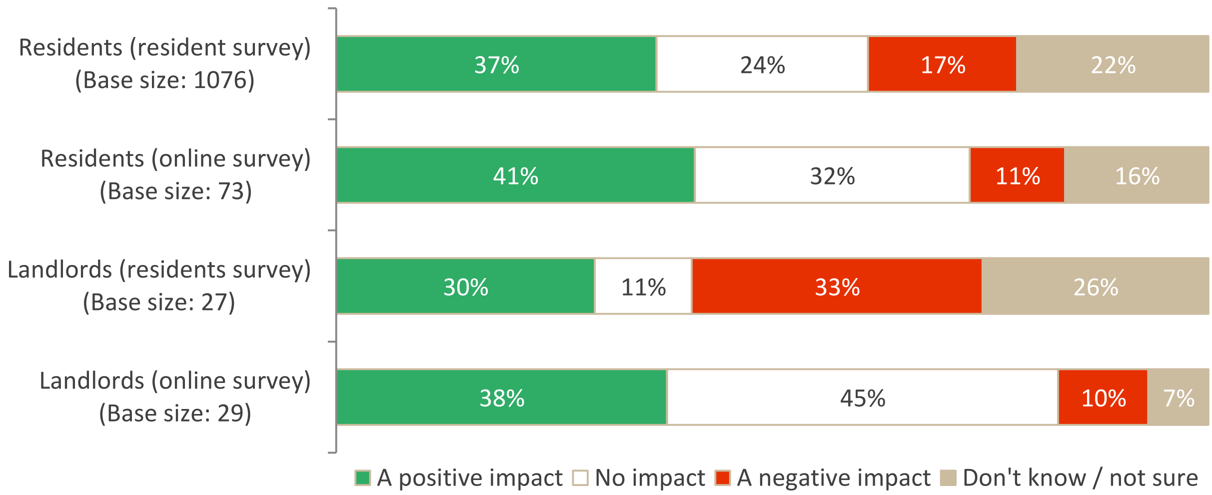


Results by resident and landlord

Results are relatively similar by type of respondent, with residents slightly more positive than landlords who responded to the resident consultation. 37% of residents feel it will have positive impact, compared 30% of landlords. 17% and 33% respectively feel it will have a negative impact on them. Around four out of ten (42%) privately renting tenants feel it will have a positive impact, compared to 20% who feel it will be negative.

In terms of the online consultation, 41% of residents and 38% of landlords feel it will be positive, whilst only 11% and 10% respectively feel it will have a negative impact on them. Around four out of ten (38%) privately renting tenants feel it will have a positive impact, compared to only 5% who feel it will be negative.

Figure 14: Likely impact of option 3 (by resident and landlord responses)



Respondent comments on option 3

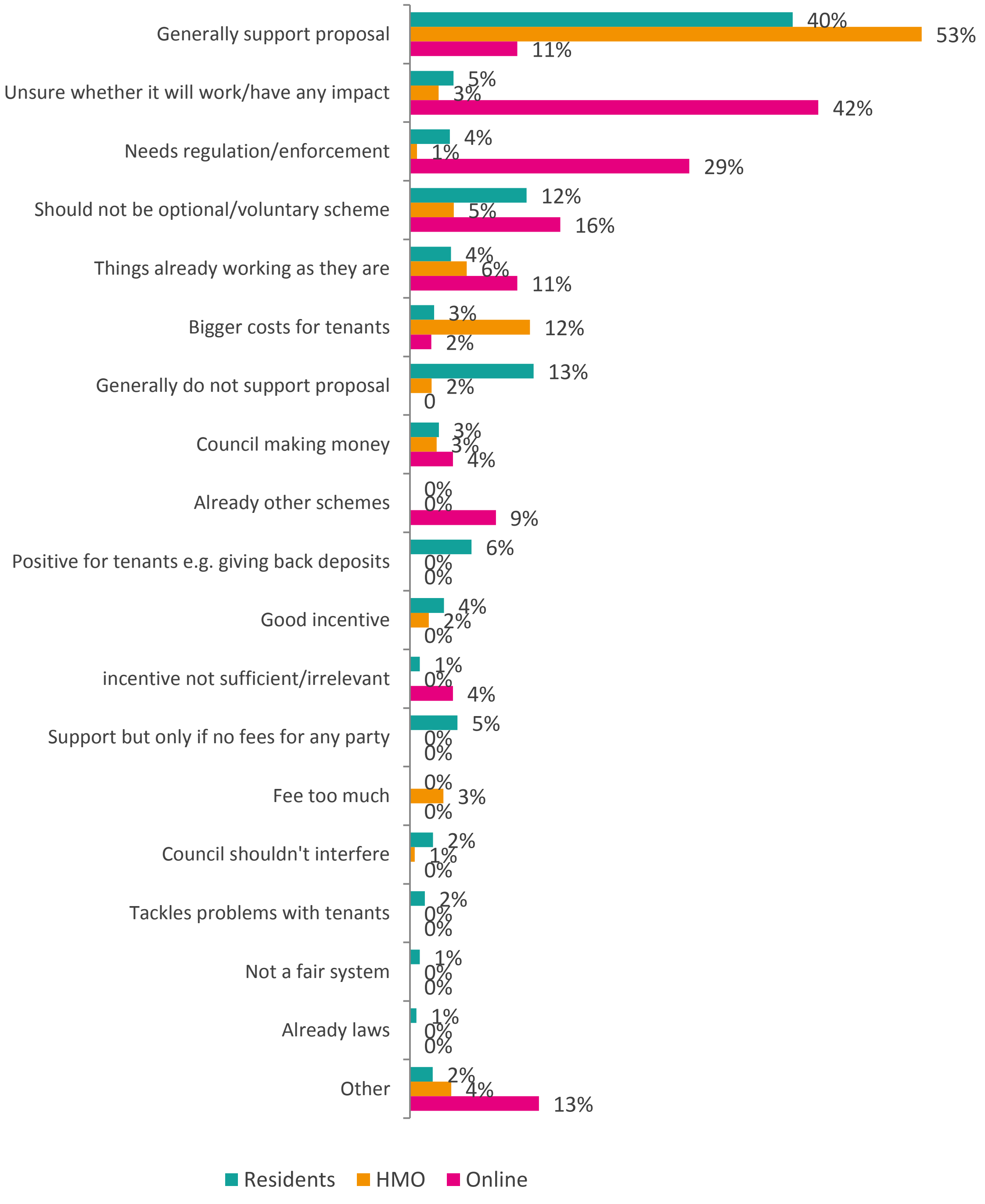
Respondents were invited to add any further comments they may wish to about the option. These results have been grouped into themes, then analysed.

The most common comment from respondents to the residents' survey were that they were generally in support of the proposal (40% of respondents commented about this). 13% were from respondents saying that the generally do not support the proposal. 12% commented on whether the option should be voluntary and why should it not mandatory for landlords to sign up to.

For respondents to the HMO consultation, the most common response is that they were generally in support of the proposal (53%). This is followed by 12% of respondents concerned about the costs being passed on to tenants/rents would generally increase as a result. 6% feel that things are working okay as they are currently.

The most common responses to the online consultation were queries around whether the proposal is likely to work or have any impact (42%). This is followed by 29% who feel that there is a need for regulation and enforcement if this is put in place. 16% commented on whether the option should be voluntary and why should it not mandatory for landlords to sign up to.

Figure 15.Additional comments on option 3



Stakeholder views

There are mixed views amongst stakeholders as to whether a landlords charter is likely to have any impact on improving the private rented sector. Many feel it is a good idea in principle, but are unsure what impact it will have. Some of the key themes are detailed below.

Voluntary scheme will only attract good landlords

Most stakeholders feel that as the scheme is voluntary, it is likely to only get 'good' landlords to sign up to it because they already adhere to the standards that the charter sets out. Most feel that landlords who the council will wish to tackle to improve housing standards, are unlikely to sign up to the scheme.

> **"We are generally quite sceptical about voluntary schemes. They generally get very small coverage - only around 2-5% sign up to that. So what does that do to the majority of the sector?"** (Third sector stakeholder)

> **"By their nature, voluntary schemes only attract those that do comply… it has no impact whatsoever on anyone else."** (Advice4Renters)

> **"The reputable landlords would certainly sign up to that. The difficulty rises from those that aren't and even if they did sign up, they would just fail to comply with it"** (Residents Association)

Although in general disagreement with introducing it, one stakeholder feels that there will still be a group of landlords outside of any licensing scheme that could be targeted, but this is the only group that will benefit from a voluntary scheme:

> **"The charter may work for those outside of the HMO and selective licensing."** (Public sector stakeholder)

Standards are already requirements for landlords to adhere to

A small number of stakeholders comment that the items on the charter are generally things that landlords are already required to do by law and therefore question the need for it.

> **"In theory, the tenant's charter is a good idea. However, there is already legislation in place protecting tenant's interests regarding deposits, security of tenure and protection from illegal evictions."** (Public sector stakeholder)

"All they are talking about within it is what's in the law…what they are proposing is the law. Therefore what they are talking about is enforcing the current law, so why aren't they doing that today…" (National Landlords Association)

Landlord schemes already available

A number of stakeholders suggest that there are other schemes and accreditations already in existence (such as the London Rental Standards or London Landlords Accreditation Scheme) which landlords are able to sign up to, so they question why a landlord is likely to want to sign up to yet another scheme.

"This seems to be another form of accreditation, and there is already the London Landlord Accreditation Scheme (LLAS) which could be promoted instead. The LLAS also has the advantage of being autonomous and independent from any individual borough." (Public sector stakeholder)

"… They won't sign up. These codes exist already. There is the private rented sector code…which is pretty much this. It already exists. But you also have the London Landlords accreditation scheme which applies to all of London and had less than 1,000 people sign up across the whole of London." (Residential Landlords Association)

"Why are you bothering with that when you have the London ones" (Third sector stakeholder)

"You've got the London Rental standards and take up has been very poor. You've got the London accreditation scheme, the NLA and RLA have tried." (Public sector stakeholder)

"I'm not sure how receptive landlords are going to be to signing up to yet another scheme." (Public sector stakeholder)

Benefits to landlords to encourage uptake

A number of stakeholders feel that there needs to be a clear benefit to landlords to encourage them to sign up to a charter.

"This is what we feel is needed. It's not easy for them to understand all the things they need, but it needs to be made attractive to them." (Third sector stakeholder)

"I think there would need to be some form of carrot to encourage them to sign up to them." (Third sector stakeholder)

"If you were a landlord, what is the point, why would you sign up? You would be better signing up to a landlords body that has a code of conduct and can get something in return." (National Landlords Association)

Paper exercise if not enforced

As with the other proposals, most stakeholders feel that those who join the scheme but who are subsequently found to not live up to the charter need to be brought to task, otherwise the scheme has no 'teeth' at all and is just a piece of paper. However, the fact that it is voluntary may not enable the council to really enforce it.

"Some may just lie and they are on the register claiming to meet standards that they don't... There should be some threat if they sign up and then are found not to meet them. Something like a check or a stiff penalty if they lie. I like that this is a strong carrot and that it's voluntary... But it needs to have some kind of stick that if you claim to be a good landlord and they are not, that there is a penalty that goes alongside that." (Public health stakeholder)

"If landlords don't uphold what they have signed, what happens then? Maybe an element where the council could revoke it? What value does the charter have if potentially there is no enforcement?" (Third sector stakeholder)

Option 4: Introduce revised minimum HMO standards

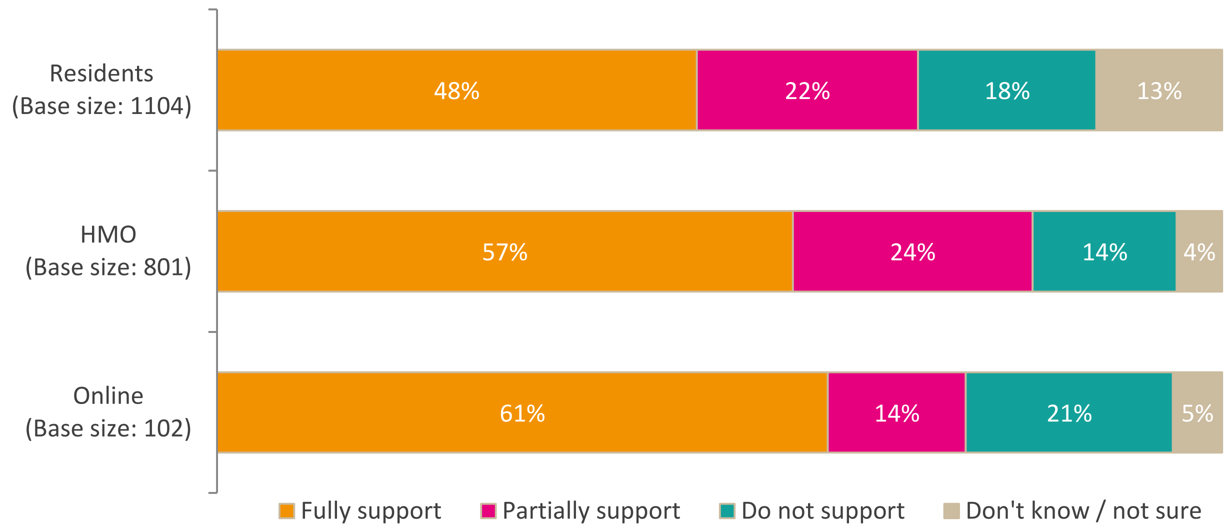
This proposal would see the revision of the local HMO standards that the council use to decide whether a property is reasonably suitable for occupation by a certain number of persons. By amending local standards, the council could ensure that licensed accommodation is maintained above minimal national standards that do not adequately reflect the built form, size, layout and type of HMO that is typically found in the borough. New local standards would provide information for landlords on what is required of them to comply with the law, which would include the management, safety, facilities, waste storage and collection and living space for the occupiers.

Support for proposed option

This proposal attracted the highest levels of support from the residents' survey, with seven out of ten (70%) supportive of the council revising their minimum HMO standards. Just under half (48%) say that they fully support the proposal and around one in five (22%) say they partially support the proposal. 18% say they do not support the option.

Those taking part in the HMO consultation feel more strongly about this proposal, with 81% in support and only 14% opposing it. Similarly, this proposal attracted the highest levels of support in the online consultation, with three quarters (75%) in support.

Figure 16: Support for Proposal 4 (by consultation method)

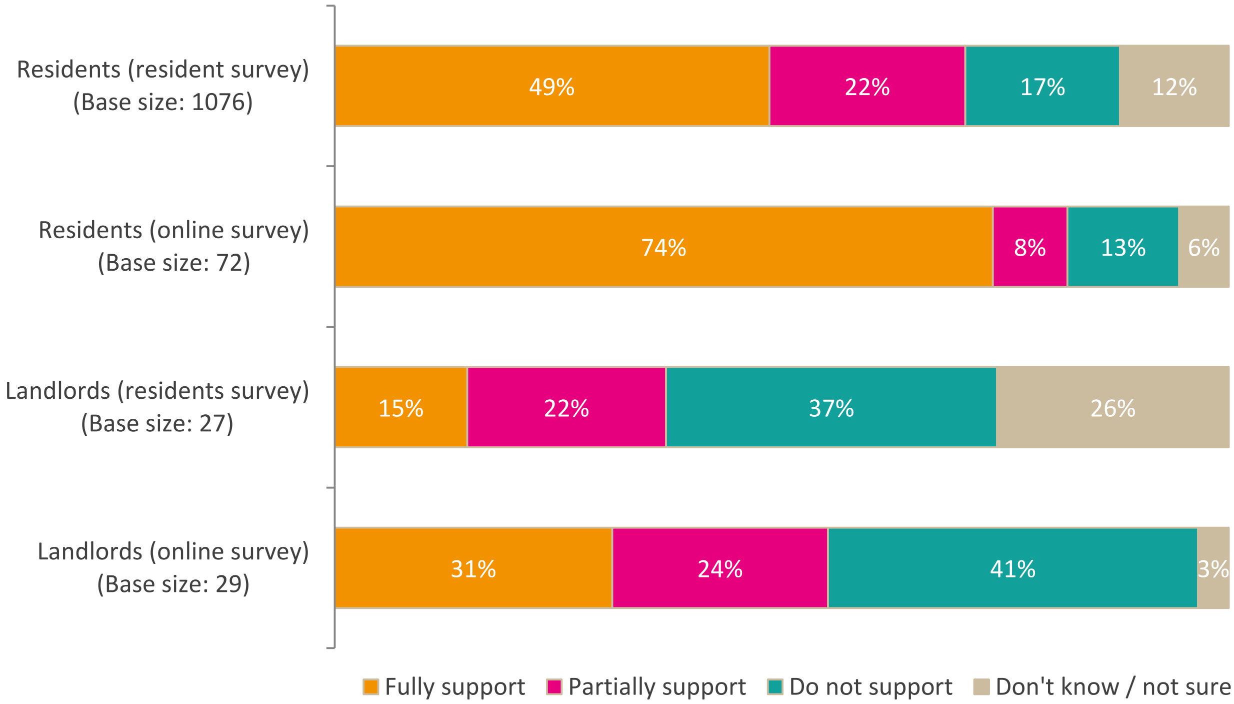


Results by resident and landlord

Results differ by type of respondent, with seven out of ten residents (71%) who responded to the resident consultation in support of the proposal, compared to 37% of landlords. The proportion of those who do not support the proposal differ considerably; 17% of residents and 37% of landlords. When split out, around seven out of ten (69%) privately renting tenants are in support, whilst 22% do not support the proposal.

In terms of the online consultation, around eight out of ten residents (82%) and just over half of landlords (55%) are in support, whilst four out of ten landlords (41%) and some one in ten (13%) residents do not support the proposal. When split out, around eight out of ten (81%) privately renting tenants are in support, whilst 14% do not support the proposal.

Figure 17: Support for proposed option 4 (by resident and landlord responses)

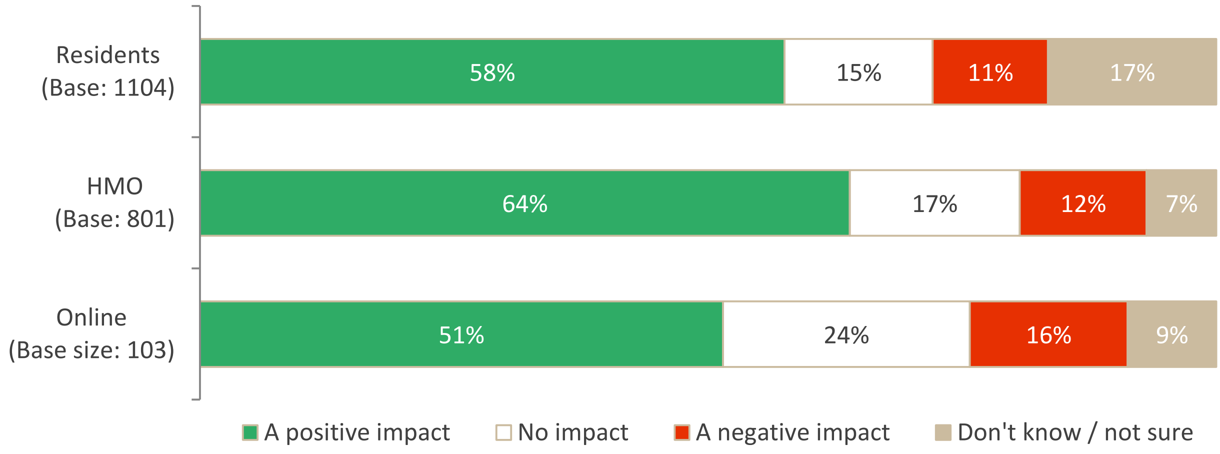


Likely impact on respondents

Respondents were asked what impact, if any, introducing revised minimum HMO standards will have on them. From the residents' survey, around six out of ten (58%) feel it will have a positive impact, 11% feel it will have a negative impact and 17% say it will have no impact at all. One in five (20%) do not know what impact it is likely to have on them.

As we found in terms of support for this proposal, a higher proportion of respondents taking part in the HMO consultation feel that this will have a positive impact on them (64%). A majority of respondents to the online consultation also agreed, with around half (51%) feeling it will have a positive impact on them.

Figure 18: Likely impact of Proposal 4

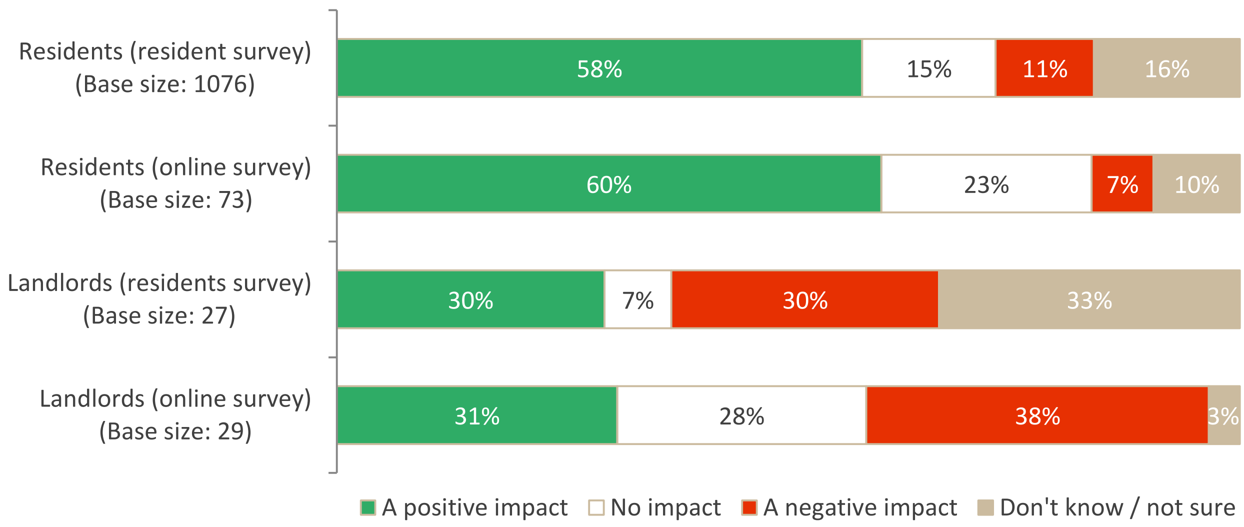


Results by resident and landlord

Results differ by type of respondent, with residents more positive than landlords who responded to the resident consultation; 58% of residents feel it will have positive impact, compared to 30% of landlords. The proportions of those who feel it will have a negative impact also differ considerably; 11% of residents and 30% of landlords. When split out, some three fifths (58%) of privately renting tenants feel it will have a positive impact, whilst 17% feel it will have a negative impact.

In terms of the online consultation, six out of ten residents (60%) and three out of ten landlords (31%) feel it will positive impact them, whilst 38% of landlords feel it will negative impact them (compared to only 7% of residents). When split out, just over half (53%) of privately renting tenants feel it will have a positive impact, whilst 9% feel it will have a negative impact.

Figure 19: Likely impact of option 4 (by resident and landlord responses)



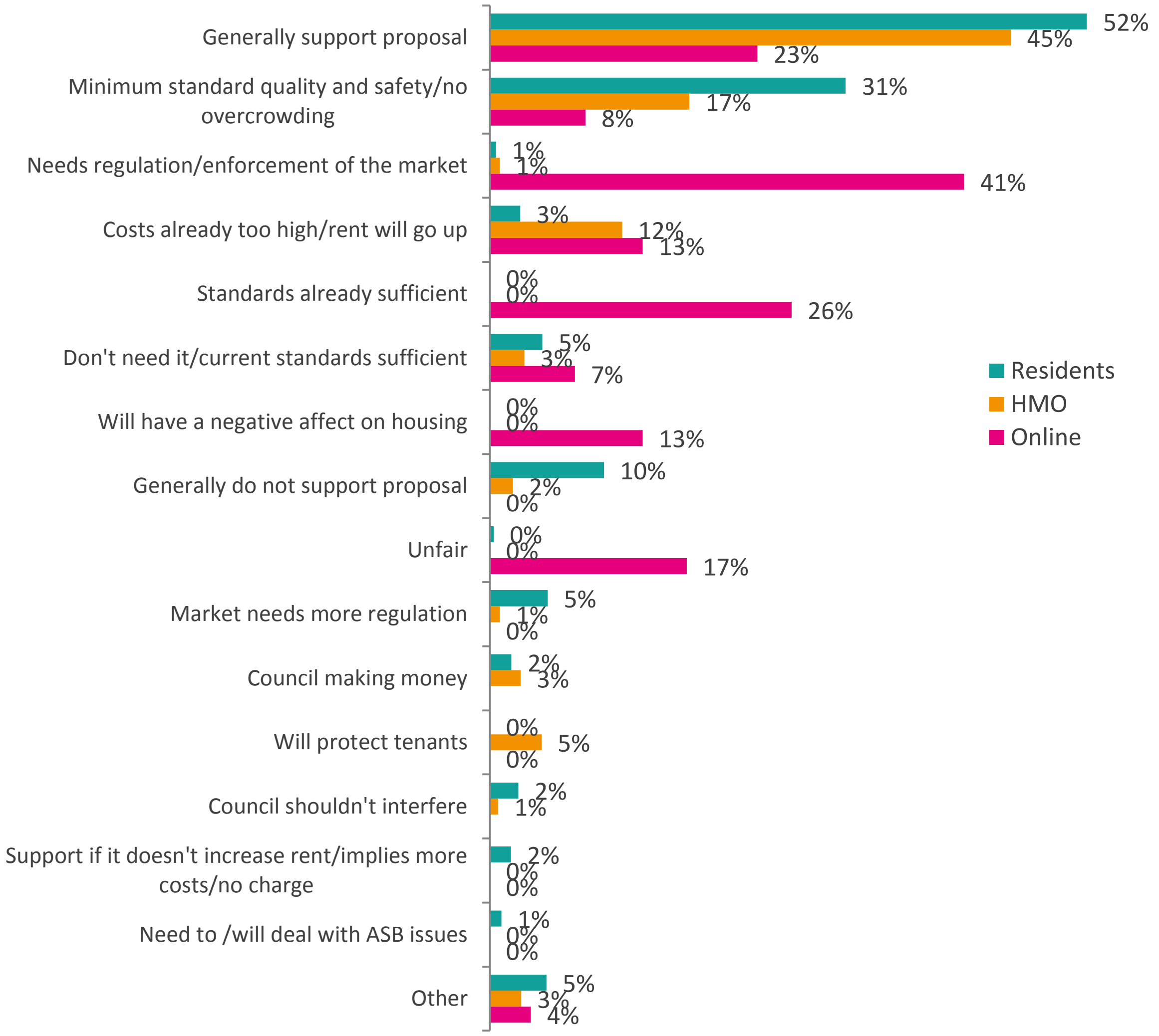
Respondent comments on option 4

Respondents were invited to add any further comments they may wish to about the option. These results have been grouped into themes, then analysed. The most common comment from respondents to the residents' survey were that they were generally in support of the proposal (52% of respondents commented about this). 31% of comments were around the proposal raising the minimum quality standards and safety and improve issues of overcrowding. This is followed by 10% of respondents saying that in general they did not support the proposal.

For respondents to the HMO consultation, the most common response is that they were generally in support of the proposal (45%). This is followed by 17% of comments around the proposal raising the minimum quality standards and safety and improve issues of overcrowding. This is followed by 12% of respondents who feel that it will result in bigger costs/higher rents for tenants.

The most common responses to the online consultation were that the market needs regulation and enforcement (41%). This is followed by 26% saying that the current standards are already sufficient (26%). This is followed by 23% who are generally in support of the proposal.

Figure 20. Additional comments on option 4



Stakeholder views

All stakeholders other than the landlords associations were in support of the proposal to update the minimum HMO standards. Some of the key themes are detailed below.

Provides landlords with guidance on their duties

Many feel that landlords sometimes are ignorant of their duties rather than wilfully flouting the law, therefore any information and guidance to help them should be beneficial. A small number of stakeholders suggested that training and briefing landlords on the documentation will help take it a step further and bring the guidance to life for landlords. It will also give them the opportunity to clarify any areas of confusion for them with the council.

> **"There are currently over 100 pieces of legislation that a landlord has to comply with. The laws that the private rented sector has to comply with can be easily misunderstood… The NLA agrees that some landlords, most often due to ignorance rather than criminal intent, do not use their powers to manage their properties effectively. A more appropriate response therefore would be to identify issues and to assist landlords."** (National Landlords Association)

> **"It makes it more explicit about what they [the minimum standards] are. Some [landlords] genuinely don't know. It's not through a lack of wanting to know, it's just hard to find out."** (Third sector organisation)

> **"We know shared accommodation is incredibly popular due to rising rents and the element of affordability. Having a focus on HMO standards is really, really positive. Sometimes it can get really jargony, it would be really useful for Hammersmith & Fulham to do workshops or sharing sessions so if landlords have any questions. Reading is one thing, but actually having a meeting where it isn't intimidating and landlords could really understand your ideas, would be really useful."** (Third sector organisation)

> **"It would give landlords the understanding they need to have HMOs. It will give them a framework. For some landlords where they have no idea… we know that potentially they don't understand the framework… so maybe this could be a leg up in this instance."** (Third sector organisation)

Revising 'minimum' legal standards questioned

There were a number of questions raised around whether the council are trying to 'raise' the minimum standards or are updating the set of standards that they have in line with current legislation. The landlords associations feel that the council is acting unlawfully as HMO standards are based on legal standards set by government and the council does not have the powers to raise those standards. The RLA feel that the council should consider lobbying government to raise standards.

> **"From a legal point of view, we have prescribed standards in the legislation. I don't see how we can change that. We can play about with the space, but the others are prescribed. We can't ask for anything more rigorous than the national standards."** (Public sector stakeholder)

> **"Hammersmith & Fulham can't do that. It's completely unlawful and they can't do that. HMO standards are set nationally. There is no power for local authorities to set minimum standards. They can set guidance as to what they consider acceptable. They have to apply that holistically…Hammersmith & Fulham should also consider whether they should be lobbying the government. Standards are set by the government and if they want higher standards, which I don't disagree with, they should push the government to set higher standards."** (Residential Landlords Association)

Enforcement and inspection

Many feel that a document will have no effect on improving HMO standards unless properties are inspected and enforced. As with all options, the council needs to make sure this is not simply a paper exercise and that inspections take place and any necessary enforcement action is taken.

> **"HMOs are notorious and I'd have through a better ability to oversee their management along with the opportunity to extend the licensing to bring others under the banner, it can only be a good thing."** (Public health stakeholder)

> **"Who will access it is the question. You would hope this would be a way of getting those properties and restating those principles. It needs to become a commitment to enforcement and understanding that this goes hand in hand with any legislation and it can't work without it."** (Third sector stakeholder)

> **"It could have an impact provided it is backed up by inspection. From what I can see, I am not sure that the council does enough to inspect houses for compliance."** (Residents Association stakeholder)

Tackling worst HMOs

A small number of stakeholders feel that the standards will not tackle the criminal landlords where HMO conditions are likely to be the worst for residents, as they will continue to operate outside of the law and will not follow whatever guidelines are introduced and only enforcement will be truly effective

> **"It will tackle bad landlords to the extent that it is enforced against."** (Third sector stakeholder)

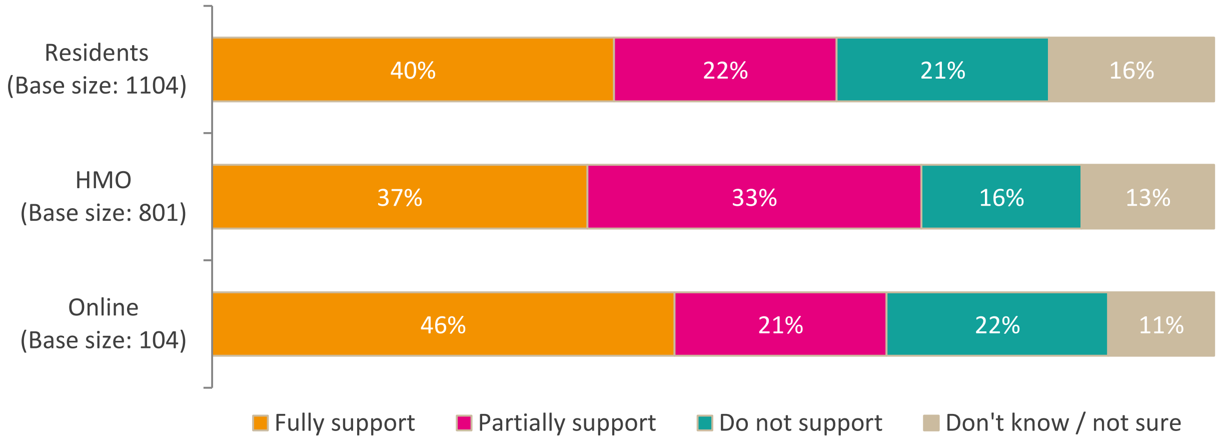
Option 5: Introduce a Social Letting Agency

This proposal would see the introduction of a social letting agency in the borough. The idea is to help residents on low or modest incomes to overcome the barrier to accessing homes in the private rented sector and to help landlords in this part of the market find suitable tenants. It is expected that the proposed model to be advantageous to both tenant and landlord. Through the agency, the council could aim to let properties or rooms in the private rented sector through provision of tenant sourcing and letting services at competitive fees and rates.

Around six out of ten respondents (62%) to the residents' survey are in support of the proposal to introduce a social letting agency. Four out of ten (40%) fully support the proposal, whilst 22% partially support the proposal. Around one in five (21%) do not support the proposal.

Overall, support for this proposal is strongest for HMO respondents, with around seven out of ten (71%) in support (fully or partially) and 16% who oppose the proposal. Results are also relatively strong for those taking part in the online consultation, with around two thirds (67%) saying they are in support.

Figure 21: Support for Proposal 5 (by consultation method)

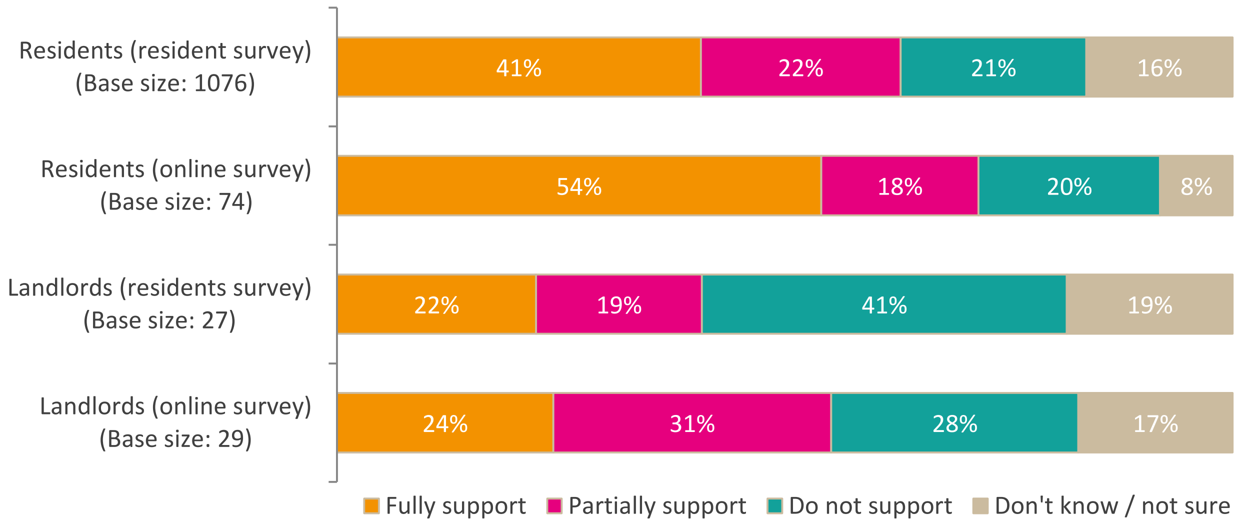


Results by resident and landlord

Results differ by type of respondent, with around six out of ten residents (63%) who responded to the resident consultation in support of the proposal, compared to four out of ten landlords (41%). A higher proportion of landlords do not support the proposal, compared to residents (41% and 21% respectively). When split out, six out of ten (60%) privately renting tenants are in support of the proposal, whilst 28% are not.

In terms of the online consultation, seven out of ten residents (72%) and just over half of landlords (55%) are in support, whilst 28% of landlords and 20% of residents do not support the proposal. When split out, around eight out of ten (79%) privately renting tenants are in support of the proposal, whilst 14% are not.

Figure 22: Support for proposed option 4 (by resident and landlord responses)

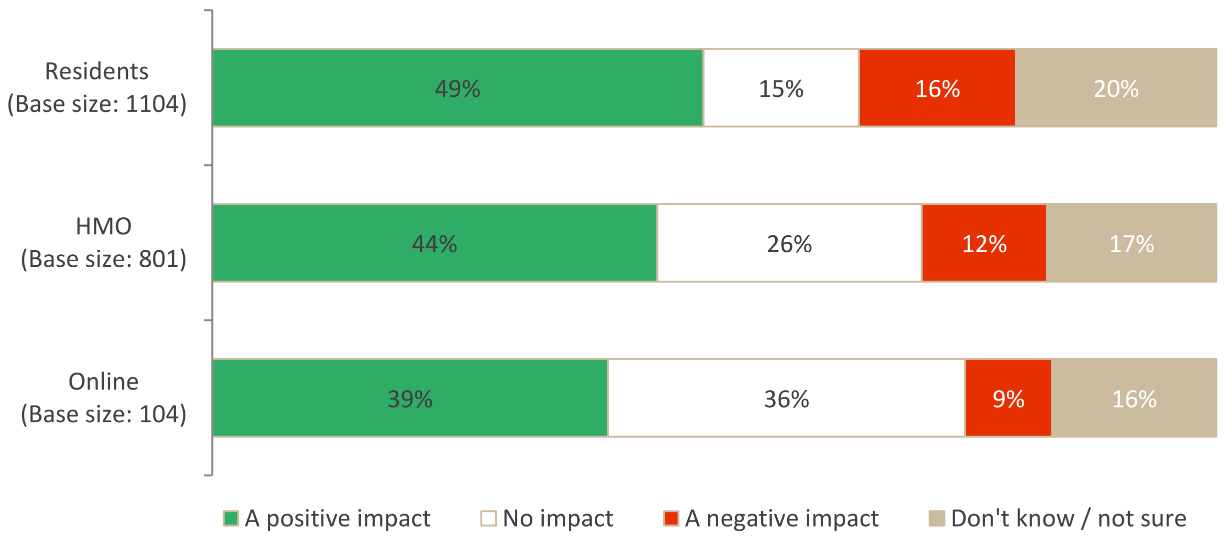


Likely impact on respondents

Respondents were asked what impact, if any, introducing a Social Letting Agency would have on them. Around half of respondents to the residents' survey (49%) feel it will have a positive impact, 16% feel it will have a negative impact and a further 15% feel it will have no impact at all. On in five (20%) do not know what impact it is likely to have on them.

HMO respondents were also positive, with just over four out of ten (44%) feeling this will have a positive impact on them. Around four out of ten respondents (39%) to the online consultation feel it will have a positive impact on them; only around one in ten (9%) feel that it will have a negative impact on them.

Figure 23: Likely impact of Proposal 5 (by consultation method)

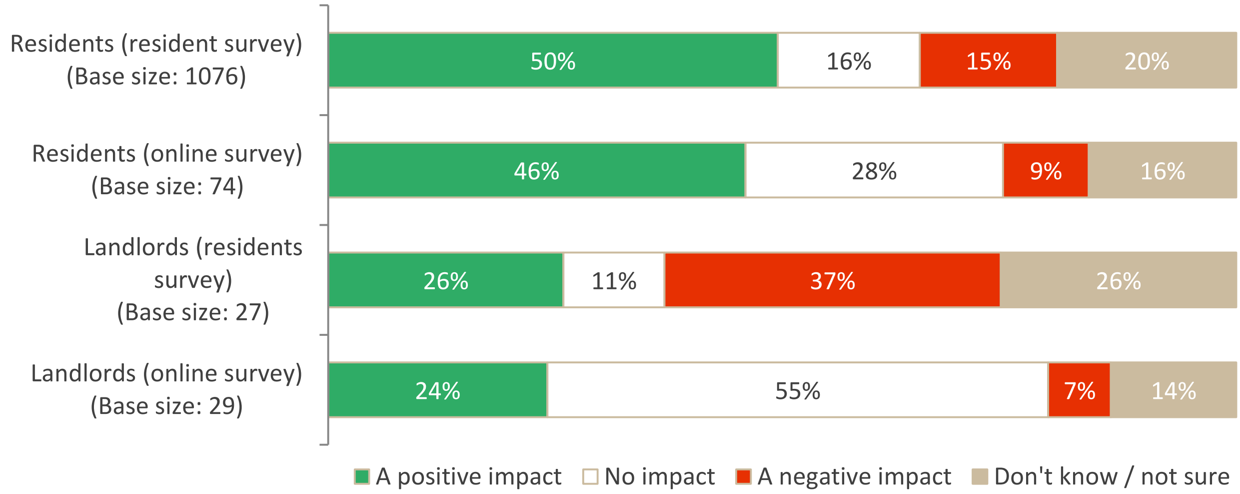


Results by resident and landlord

Results differ by type of respondent, with residents more positive than landlords who responded to the resident consultation. Half of residents (50%) feel it will have positive impact, compared to around a quarter of landlords (26%). The proportion of those who feel it will have a negative impact also differ, with 15% of residents and 37% of landlords feeling it will have a negative impact. When split out, around half (49%) of privately renting tenants feel it will be positive, whilst 21% feel it will be negative.

In terms of the online consultation, just under half of residents (46%) and only 24% of landlords feel it will be positive, however 9% of residents and 7% of landlords feel it will have a negative impact. When split out, four out of ten (40%) of privately renting tenants feel it will be positive, whilst only 2% feel it will be negative.

Figure 24: Likely impact of Proposal 5 (by resident and landlord responses)



Respondent comments on option 5

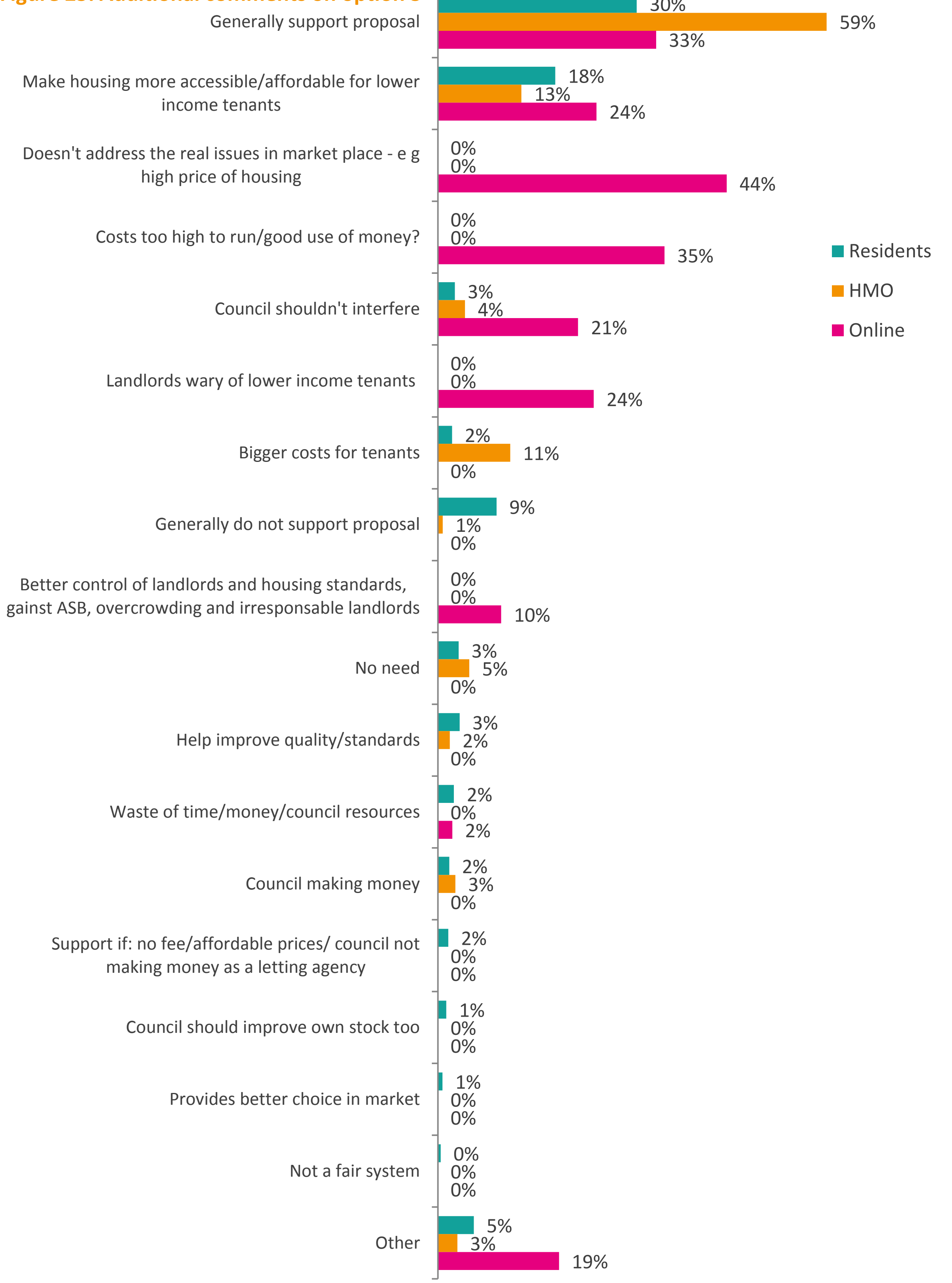
Respondents were invited to add any further comments they may wish to about the option. These results have been grouped into themes, then analysed.

The most common comment from respondents to the residents' survey were that they were generally in support of the proposal (30% of respondents commented about this). 18% of comments were around the proposal being positive in that it will make housing more accessible/affordable for lower income tenants. This is followed by 9% of respondents saying that in general they did not support the proposal.

For respondents to the HMO consultation, the most common response is that they were generally in support of the proposal (59%). This is followed by 13% of comments around the proposal making housing more accessible/affordable for lower income tenants. This is followed by 11% of respondents who feel that it will result in bigger costs/higher rents for tenants.

The most common responses to the online consultation were that the scheme cannot address the real issues which are mainly around the lack of demand for/high cost of renting in the borough (44%). This is followed by 35% of respondents commenting that it will be costly for the council to run and whether this is a good use of money. This is followed by 33% who are generally in support of the proposal.

Figure 25. Additional comments on option 5



Stakeholder views

There are mixed views amongst stakeholders about the strength and validity of the council setting up a social letting agency. Some of the key themes are detailed below.

Evidence around impact of existing schemes

A number of stakeholders referenced existing agencies that had been set up by other local authorities, with Haringey being referred to as one where a scheme has been set up and has had very little take up.

> **"Haringey spent £1.5 million pounds and they had 3 properties on their books"** (National Landlords Association)

> **"I'm not sure if anyone has studied the evidence, but it seems to be working in other boroughs."** (Third sector stakeholder)

Others referred to Carmarthenshire and Islington as areas where this has worked well.

> **"Carmarthenshire have done well from it and got really good buy in from landlords."** (Third sector stakeholder)

> **"Islington have Islington Lets. They were one of the stakeholders that worked with us on the guide [social letting guide]"** (Third sector stakeholder)

Competition with existing agents

Again, we see mixed views amongst stakeholders about a social letting agency competing with other letting agents, with many feeling it could only be a positive thing to have a social letting agency competing with agents who charge high fees and do not deal with tenants who are receiving benefits to pay for their housing, therefore it gives this group who cannot access social housing but cannot access many forms of private rented sector housing, to gain access to a greater number of properties.

> **"The social letting agency we feel is a good initiative. There is plenty of expertise in house to provide many services and of course it would be ethical. However, the difficulty lies in acquiring suitable/affordable properties in expensive parts of London."** (Public sector stakeholder)

> **"Any agency that you are going to set up to assist vulnerable people has to be supported. I think it's a good idea that the council are wanting to help their tenants in this way, so yes this is something very positive, provided that it's going to be managed correctly."** (Public sector stakeholder)

"I find in the work we do, people find it very difficult to access private rented accommodation… You've got the working people who can afford it… and then you've got people who can access social housing and then you've got this lump of people in between. I think it's a good idea to help that section of the community." (Third sector stakeholder)

"It's important to really understand the market and see what other letting agents charge and decide what you are going to offer. Are you going to have a tenants service, are you going to have a management service etc…?" (Third sector stakeholder)

"The letting agents market is extremely competitive… it's hard for local authorities to provide a better offer for landlords. By and large it's not a model that works very well in London… because demand is so high, landlords can pick and choose tenants." (Public sector stakeholder)

Resourcing and attracting large numbers of landlords

Many who support the idea feel that the council needs to throw resources and time into drumming up a large number of landlords in a very short period for the scheme to have any chance of success. If other landlords see it being successful, they are more likely to join the agency. If tenants have a decent amount of choice, then they are more likely to be encouraged to use the agency.

"There are so many letting agents in London, it can be quite difficult to get the numbers to make it worthwhile." (Third sector stakeholder)

"How are you going to get landlords to go through that agency if tenants are going to be paying lower rents? What is the advantage to them and how do you make that work for them?" (Third sector stakeholder)

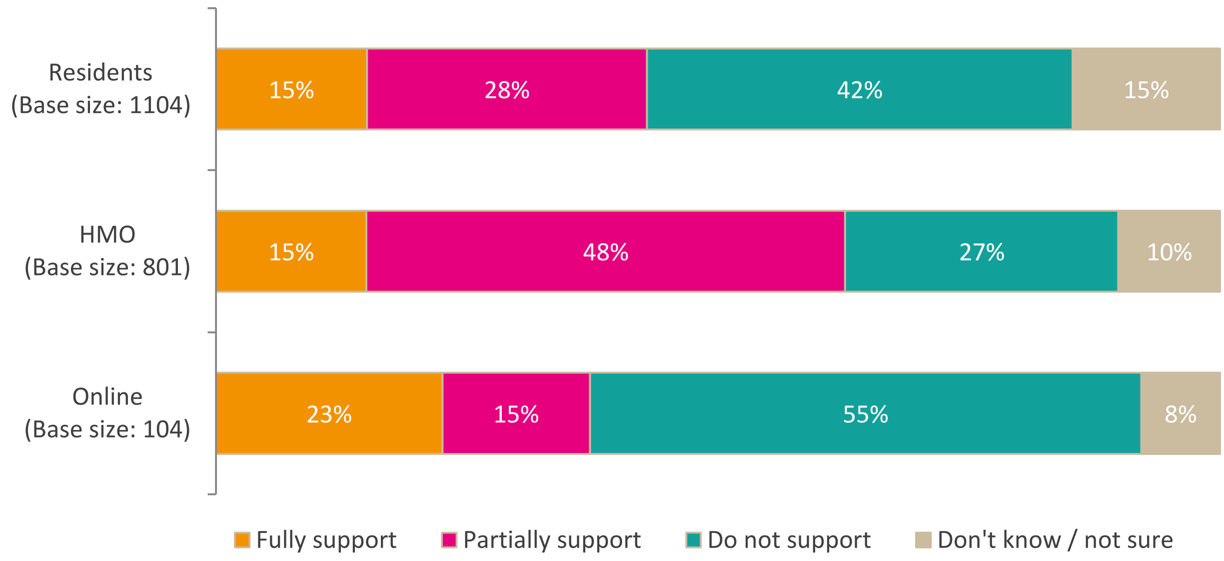
Keep things as they are

The consultation also provided respondents with the option of 'keeping things as they are', i.e. for the council to not make any changes to the way they currently operate. The same questions were asked as with the other options – to what extent respondents support the option for the council to keep things as they are, and what impact if any, will keeping things as they are have on them. This question was not asked to stakeholders.

Views are mixed for those participating in the residents'' survey; around four out of ten respondents (43%) say they support the council keeping things as they are, with 15% fully supporting this and 28% partially supporting this, while a similar proportion (42%) say they do not support this option. 15% say they don't know.

Support is higher for those who took part in the HMO consultation, with over six out of ten (63%) in support of keeping things as they are and around a quarter (27%) in opposition. Support is less positive for those taking part in the online consultation, with 37% in support and 55% opposing the option.

Figure 26: Support for keeping things as they are

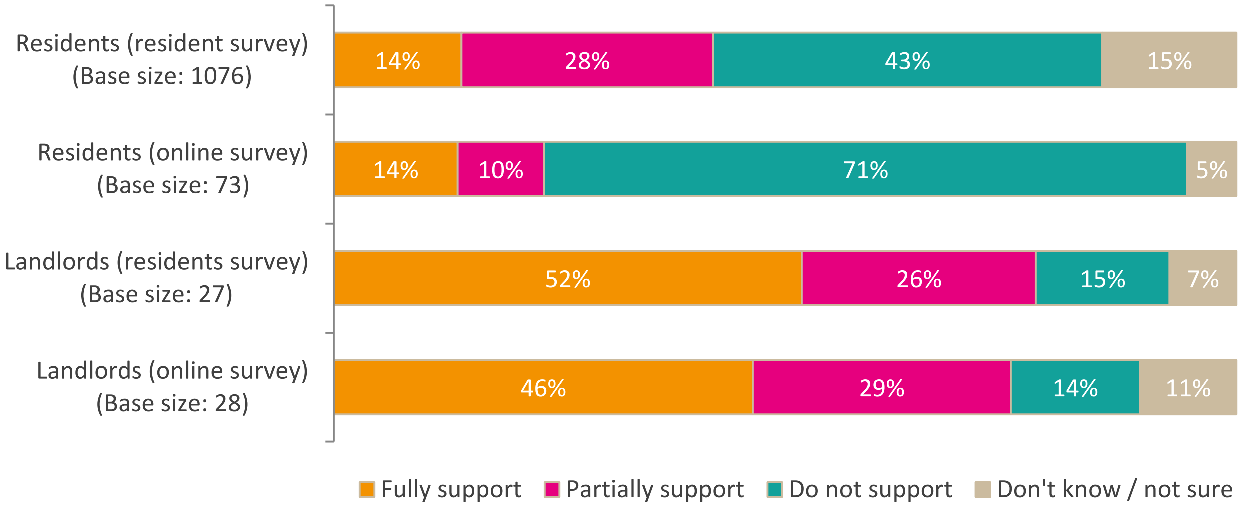


Results by resident and landlord

Results differ between the types of respondent, with around eight out of ten landlords (78%) who responded to the resident consultation in support of keeping things as they are, compared to 42% of residents. A higher proportion of residents are not in support of things remaining the same, compared to landlords (43% and 15% respectively). When split out, around half (51%) of privately renting tenants are in support, whilst 41% do not support keeping things as they are.

In terms of the online consultation, three quarters of landlords (75%) are in favour of things being kept as they are, compared to around only a quarter (24%) of residents. Seven out of ten residents (71%) are not in support of things being kept as they are, compared to 14% of landlords. Only a quarter (26%) of privately renting tenants are in support, whilst 67% do not support keeping things as they are.

Figure 27: Support for keeping things as they are (by resident and landlord)

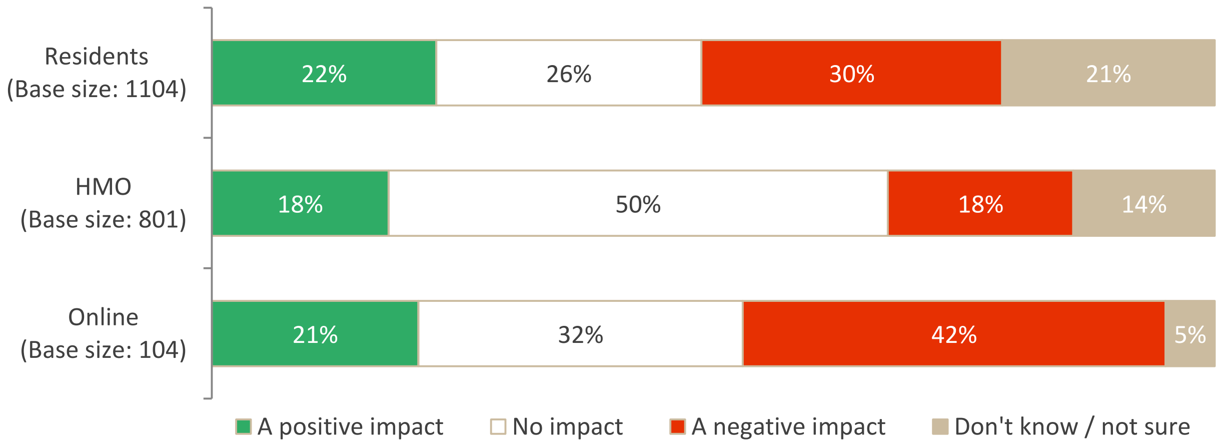


Likely impact on respondents

Respondents were asked what impact, if any, keeping things as they are will have on them. Around one in five respondents (22%) to the resident consultation feel it will have a positive impact on them and around a quarter (26%) say it will have no impact at all. Three out of ten (30%) feel it will have a negative impact, and around one in five (21%) don't know what impact it is likely to have on them.

Again, we see similar results for both the HMO consultation and the online consultation, with around one in five (18% and 21% respectively) saying they feel it will have a positive impact on them. Around four out of ten of online respondents (42%) feel it will have a negative impact on them, compared to only 18% HMO respondents.

Figure 28: Likely impact of keeping things as they are

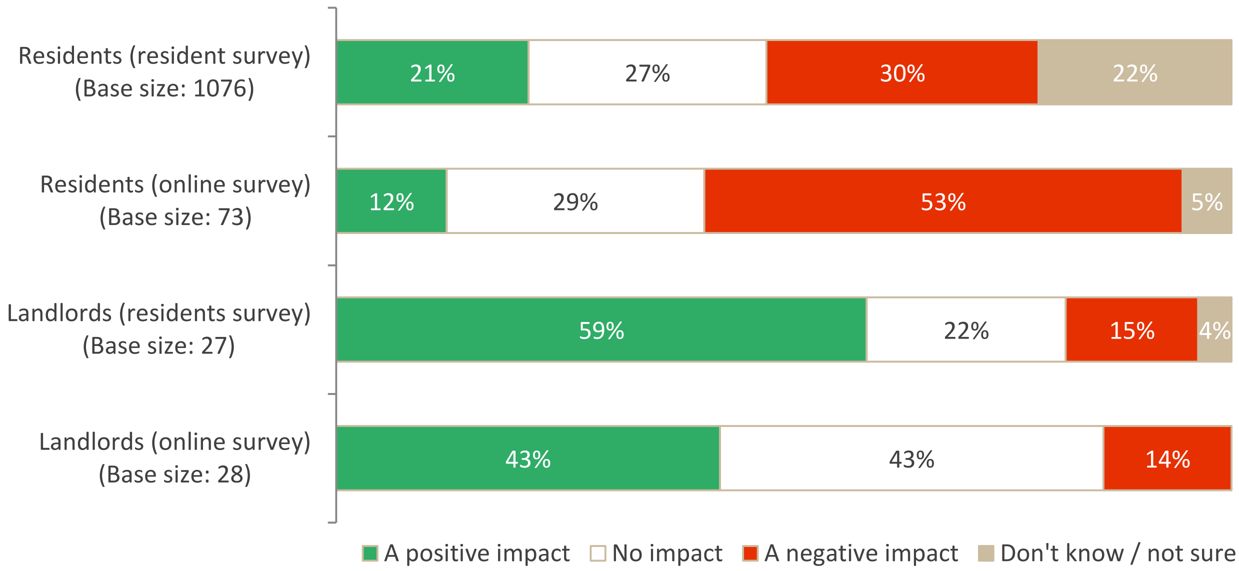


Results by resident and landlord

Results differ by type of respondent, with landlords more positive than residents who responded to the resident consultation. Around six out of ten landlords (59%) feel it will have positive impact, compared to 21% of residents. The proportions of those who feel it will have a negative impact also differ, with 30% of residents and 15% of landlords. 28% of privately renting tenants feel it will have a positive impact on them, whilst 31% feel it will have a negative impact.

In terms of the online consultation, 43% of landlords and only 12% of residents feel it will be positive, whilst 14% of landlords and 53% of residents feel it will have a negative impact. Only 9% of privately renting tenants feel it will have a positive impact on them, whilst 53% feel it will have a negative impact.

Figure 29: Likely impact of keeping things as they are (by resident and landlord)



Respondent comments on keeping things as they are

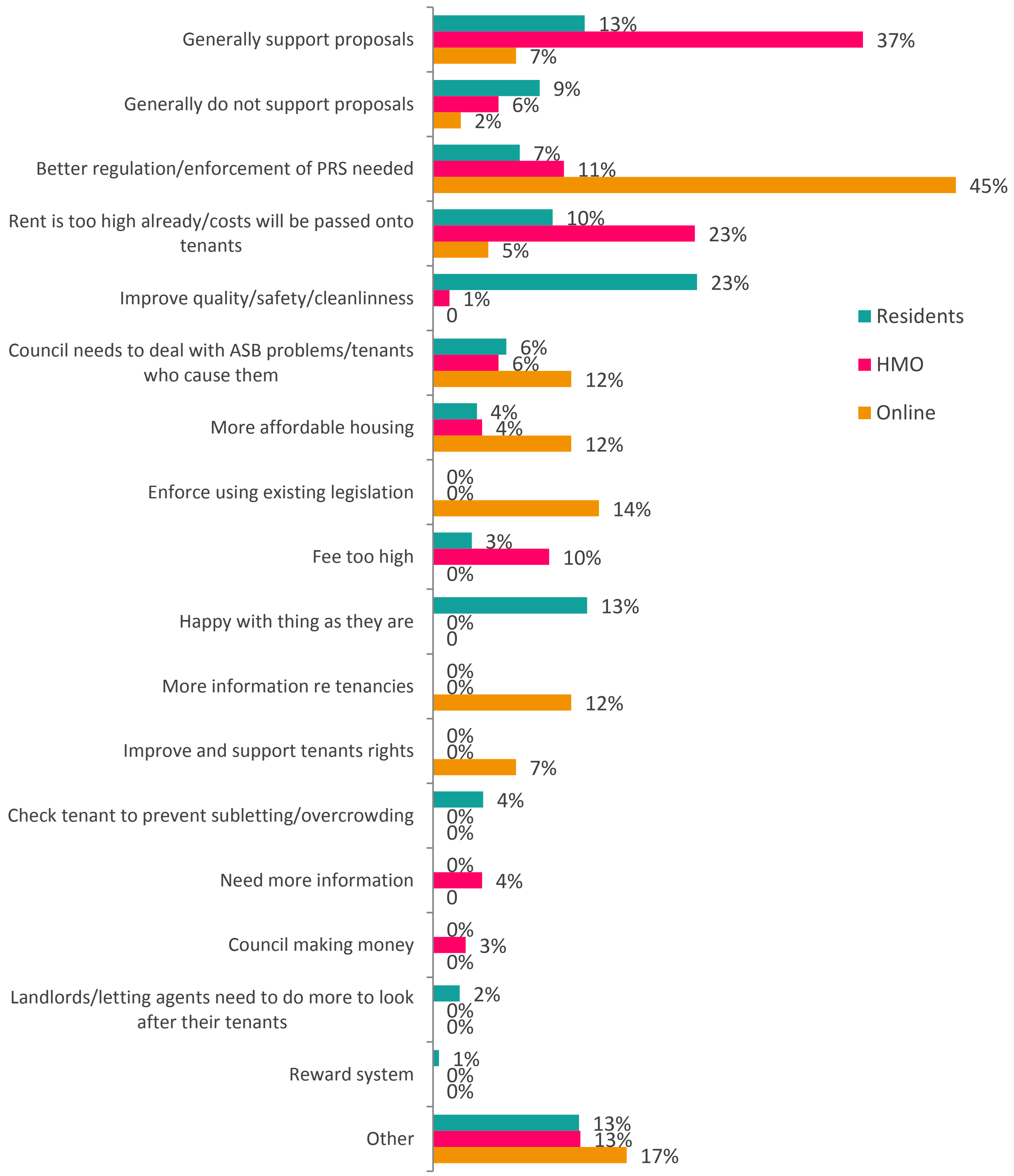
Respondents were invited to add any further comments they may wish to about the consultation and any ideas that respondents may have to address any issues experienced with private rented properties. These results have been grouped into themes, then analysed.

The most common comment from respondents to the residents' survey were around the need for improvements to be made around safety and quality of housing (23% of respondents commented about this). 13% of comments were around respondents being happy with things as they currently are, followed by a similar proportion who say that in general they support the proposals (13%).

For respondents to the HMO consultation, the most common responses is that they were generally in support of the proposals (37%). This is followed by comments around concerns that rent is already very high and that any scheme may result in increases of rent passed onto tenants (23%).This is followed by 13% who cited their being a need for better regulation/enforcement of the PRS sector.

The most common responses to the online consultation were around the need for better regulation/enforcement of the PRS sector (45%). This is followed by 14% who are happy with things as they are but would like more enforcement using existing powers. 12% of responses were then around the council needing to deal with ASB problems or tenants that cause them, 12% around the need for affordable housing in the borough and 12% around the need for more information when a tenant becomes a tenant of a property.

Figure 30. Additional comments/issues experienced



2. Licensing costs

As part of the consultation document, the proposed fees for the options, primarily the licensing fees were provided along with how they had been calculated. Respondents to the consultations were asked whether they feel the fees are reasonable.

Around three out of five (59%) respondents to the residents' survey feel that the costs are reasonable, with broadly an even split between those feeling they are totally reasonable (30%) and those who feel they are fairly reasonable (29%). Around a quarter (26%) feel they are unreasonable, with 12% who say they are fairly unreasonable and 14% very unreasonable. 15% say they are not sure.

Results for the online consultation are fairly similar, with 59% saying that the costs are reasonable. However, 36% feel they are unreasonable. Only 5% say they are not sure. Support is higher amongst those who took part in the HMO consultation, with around three quarters (74%) saying the costs are reasonable and only 19% unreasonable.

Figure 31: How reasonable is he proposed licensing fee (by consultation method)?

Results by resident and landlord

Results differ by type of respondent, with a higher proportion of residents feeling that the licensing costs proposed are reasonable, than landlords. Around six out of ten residents (59%) who responded to the residents' survey feel the costs are reasonable, compared to three out of ten landlords (30%). 56% of landlords feel they are unreasonable, compared to 13% of residents. 57% of privately renting tenants feel the costs are reasonable, compared to around a quarter (27%) feel they are unreasonable.

In terms of the online consultation, 65% of residents feel costs are reasonable compared to 43% of landlords. 16% of residents feel they are unreasonable, compared to around four out of ten landlords (43%). Two thirds (67%) of privately renting tenants feel the costs are reasonable, compared to only 14% who feel they are unreasonable.

Figure 32: How reasonable is the proposed licensing fee (by respondent type)?

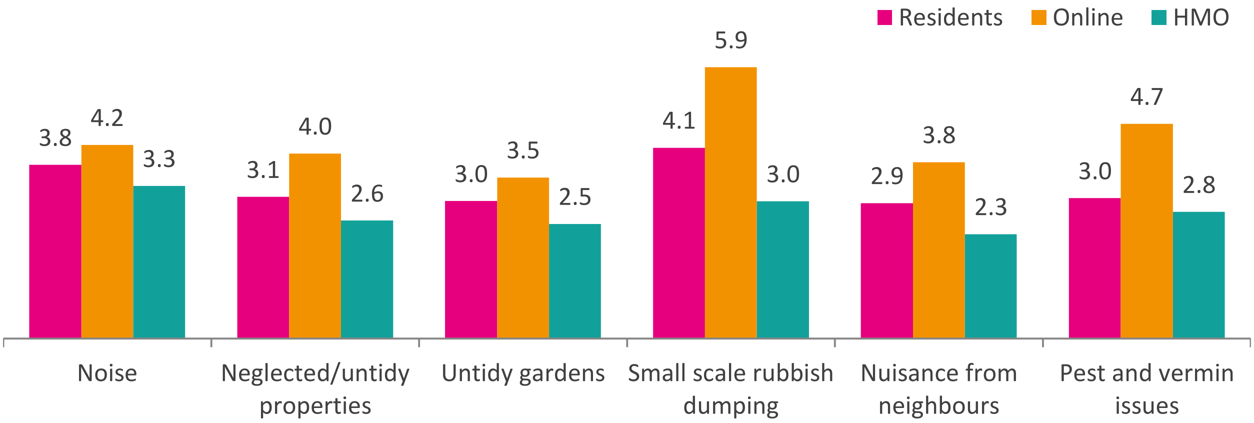
3. Experiences in Hammersmith & Fulham

As part of the consultation, respondents were asked a series of questions about their views and experiences of living in Hammersmith & Fulham, focusing on their experiences of anti-social behaviour (such as noise, crime, litter etc.), their views of the private rented sector and issues they may have experienced as a tenant.

Experience of anti-social behaviour issues in the borough

Respondents were firstly asked to rate to what extent they had experienced a range of issues in the borough on a scale of 1 to 10 (where 1 is not a problem at all and 10 is a major problem). The results have been compiled and the mean score calculated for each issue (i.e. the average of the number - a calculated "central" value out of the full set of numbers).

Figure 34: Experience of anti social behaviour (by consultation method)



The most common problem for those who responded to the residents' survey is small-scale rubbish dumping e.g. not putting the rubbish out on the right day or not storing rubbish correctly, with a mean score of 4.1. This is followed by noise, with a mean score of 3.8. The next most common problem is neglected/ untidy properties, with a mean score of 3.1. For private rented tenants, the most common problem is small-scale rubbish dumping, with a mean score of 3.5. This is followed by noise (3.4) and pest and vermin issues (2.9).

For respondents to the online consultation, the most common problem is small-scale rubbish dumping (5.9). This is followed by pest and vermin issues with a mean score of 4.7. This is followed by noise with a mean score of 4.2. For private rented tenants, the most common problem is small-scale rubbish dumping, with a mean score of 5.7. This is followed by pest and vermin issues (4.8), and noise issues (4.2).

For respondents to the HMO consultation, the most common problem is noise, with a mean score of 3.3, followed by small-scale rubbish dumping, with a mean score of 3.0. As private rented tenants make up the vast majority of this group, the results are the same as the overall HMO consultation figures quoted.

The table below shows results for private rented tenants, by consultation method.

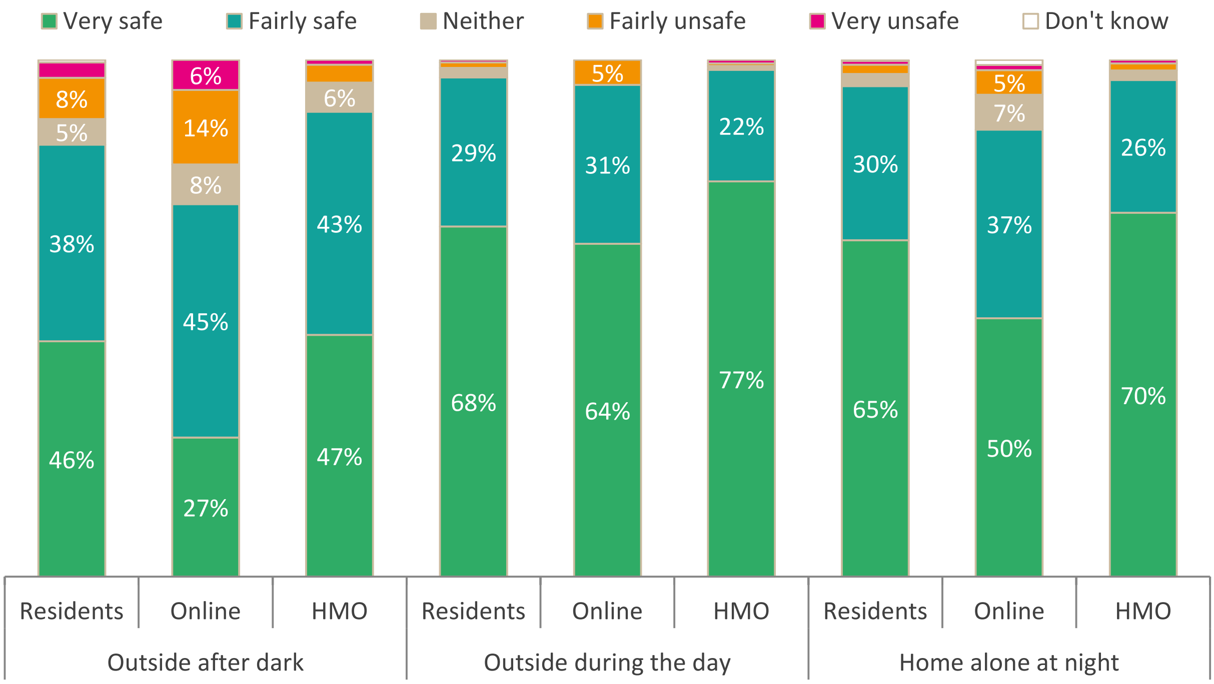
Table 8. Neighbourhood issues for private rented tenants (by consultation method)

Issues (major and minor combined)	Residents' survey	Online Consultation	HMO Consultation
Noise	3.4	4.2	3.3
Neglected/untidy properties	2.7	3.7	2.6
Untidy gardens	2.7	3.3	2.5
Small scale rubbish dumping	3.5	5.7	3.0
Nuisance from neighbours	2.6	3.9	2.3
Pest and vermin issues	2.9	4.8	2.8

Feelings of safety

Respondents were asked how safe or unsafe they feel at various times of the day. For respondents to the residents' survey, the overwhelming majority of respondents (97%) say that they feel safe outside during the day. A similar proportion (95%) say that they feel safe whilst home alone at night. 84% of the same group say that they feel safe outside after dark, whilst 11% say they feel unsafe at this time. For private rented tenants, almost all (98%) say they feel safe outside during the day, 97% feel safe at home at night and 88% outside after dark.

Figure 35: How safe or unsafe respondents feel



For respondents to the online consultation, the majority (95%) also feel safest outside during the day. Only 5% feel unsafe during this time. 87% say they feel safe whilst home alone at night, with only 6% unsafe. The lowest levels of safety were reported for 'outside after dark', with a fifth saying they feel unsafe (20%).

However, around seven out of ten (72%) feel safe during this time. For private rented tenants, almost all (98%) say they feel safe outside during the day, 86% feel safe at home at night and 72% outside after dark. 16% say they feel unsafe outside after dark.

For respondents to the HMO consultation, the majority (98%) also feel safest outside during the day. 96% say they feel safe when home alone at night. Nine out of ten respondents (90%) say they feel safe when outside after dark, with only 4% feeling unsafe during this time. For private rented tenants, almost all (98%) say they feel safe outside during the day, 96% feel safe at home at night and 90% outside after dark.

Table 9. Feelings of safety for private rented tenants (by consultation method)

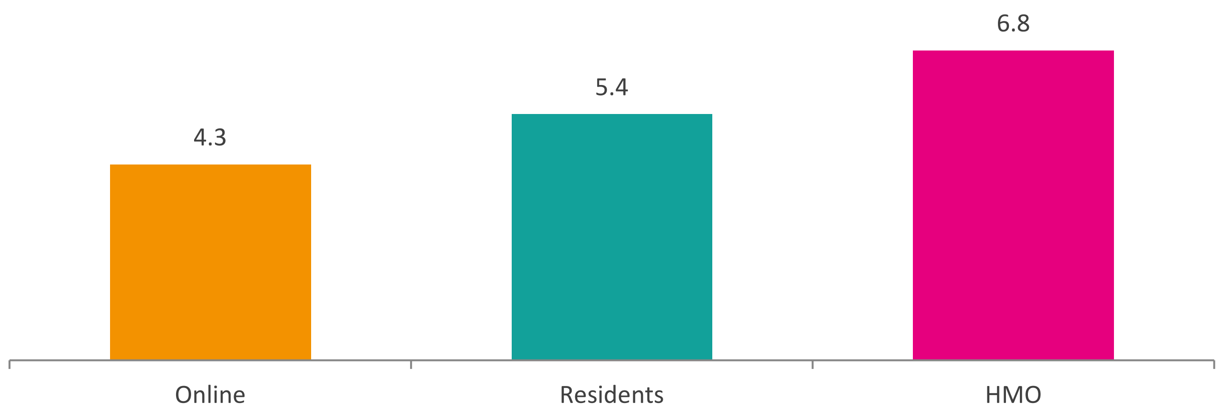
Issues	Residents' survey		Online Consultation		HMO Consultation	
	Safe	Unsafe	Safe	Unsafe	Safe	Unsafe
Outside after dark	88%	7%	90%	5%	72%	16%
Outside during the day	98%	1%	98%	1%	98%	2%
Home alone at night	97%	2%	96%	2%	86%	7%

Effectiveness of the council in dealing with anti-social behaviour

Respondents were asked how effective they think Hammersmith & Fulham Council is in dealing with anti-social behaviour (e.g. noise, crime, litter etc.) on a scale of 1 to 10 (where 1 is not at all effective and 10 is totally effective). A mean score has been calculated for each consultation group. For respondents to the residents' survey, a mean score of 5.4 is given. A mean score of 5.5 has been calculated for private rented tenants.

A mean score of 4.3 is given for those who took part in the online consultation, while a mean score of 4.5 has been calculated for private rented tenants in this survey. Respondents to the HMO consultation are the most positive, with a mean score of 6.8; a score of 6.8 has also been calculated for private rented tenants in this survey.

Figure 36: How effective is H&F council at dealing with anti social behaviour?



Have respondents been affected by or witnessed anti-social behaviour?

When asked to think about privately rented properties in the area, seven out of ten (70%) respondents to the resident consultation say that they have not been affected by or witnessed anti-social behaviour. One in ten (10%) say that they had been affected by anti-social behaviour, whilst a slightly higher proportion (13%) had witnessed ASB. 6% say that they 'don't know' and 4% were unaware of private rented properties in their area. Figures are relatively similar for private rented tenants, which are shown in the table below.

For respondents to the online consultation, almost two-fifths (38%) have not been affected by or witnessed anti-social behaviour. The same proportion (38%) say that they have been affected by this whilst almost one out of three respondents (28%) say that they have witnessed this behaviour. 5% say that they 'don't know' and 3% are unaware of private rented properties in their area. Results are again relatively similar for private rented tenants.

For respondents to the HMO consultation, almost seven out of ten (68%) have not been affected by or witnessed anti-social behaviour. 6% have been affected by this, whilst 9% have witnessed this issue. 5% say that they 'don't know' whilst 12% are unaware of private rented properties in their area. Results are almost identical for private rented tenants.

Table 10. % of private rented tenants who have been affected by/witnessed ASB (by consultation method)

Issues	Residents' survey	Online Consultation	HMO Consultation
Yes, affected by	9%	40%	6%
Yes, witnessed	13%	37%	9%
No	76%	33%	69%
Don't know	4%	5%	5%
Unaware of private rented properties in my area	1%	5%	12%

Views on private rented property standards

Respondents were asked if the privately rented properties they know of in their area are maintained to a good standard. For respondents to the residents' survey, around six out of ten (61%) say yes, with around a fifth (21%) answering no. Around a fifth (19%) say that they don't know. Around three quarters (77%) of private rented tenants say yes, whilst only 14% say no. 9% say they don't know.

46% of respondents to the online consultation say that private rented properties are maintained to a good standard. Three out of ten (30%) of the same group say no, whilst 23% say that they don't know. Around three quarters (77%) of private rented tenants say yes, whilst only 14% say no. Around half (49%) of private rented tenants say yes, whilst 29% say no. However, 22% say they don't know.

Over three-quarters (76%) of respondents to the HMO consultation say that privately rented properties in their area are maintained to a good standard. 12% that they are not, and the same proportion (12%) say they 'don't know'. Three quarters (75%) of private rented tenants say yes, whilst only 13% say no. 12% say they don't know.

Views on landlords and letting agents standards in managing and maintaining properties

Respondents were asked whether they think private landlords or their agents act responsibly in letting, managing and maintaining their properties. For respondents to the residents' survey, 4% say that all private landlords or their agents that they know of in their area act responsibly. 44% say that most act responsibly. Around a quarter (26%) say that some act responsibly, whereas 5% say none or very few act responsibly. Results are fairly similar for private rented tenants; these are presented in the table below.

For the online consultation, results were similar with 6% saying that all act responsibly and 43% saying most. 37% say that some private landlords or their agents act responsibly in letting, managing and maintaining their properties. This compares to 9% who say that none or very few act like this. Results differ when we look at private rented tenants, with only 16% saying most. However, 47% say they don't know.

For respondents to the HMO consultation, 5% say that all private landlords or their agents that they are aware of in their area act responsibly. Half (50%) say that most act responsibly whilst around a fifth (19%) say that some act responsibly. Only 3% stated that none, very few private landlords, or their agents act responsibly. Results are almost identical for private rented tenants.

Figure 37: To what extent private landlords or their agents act responsibly

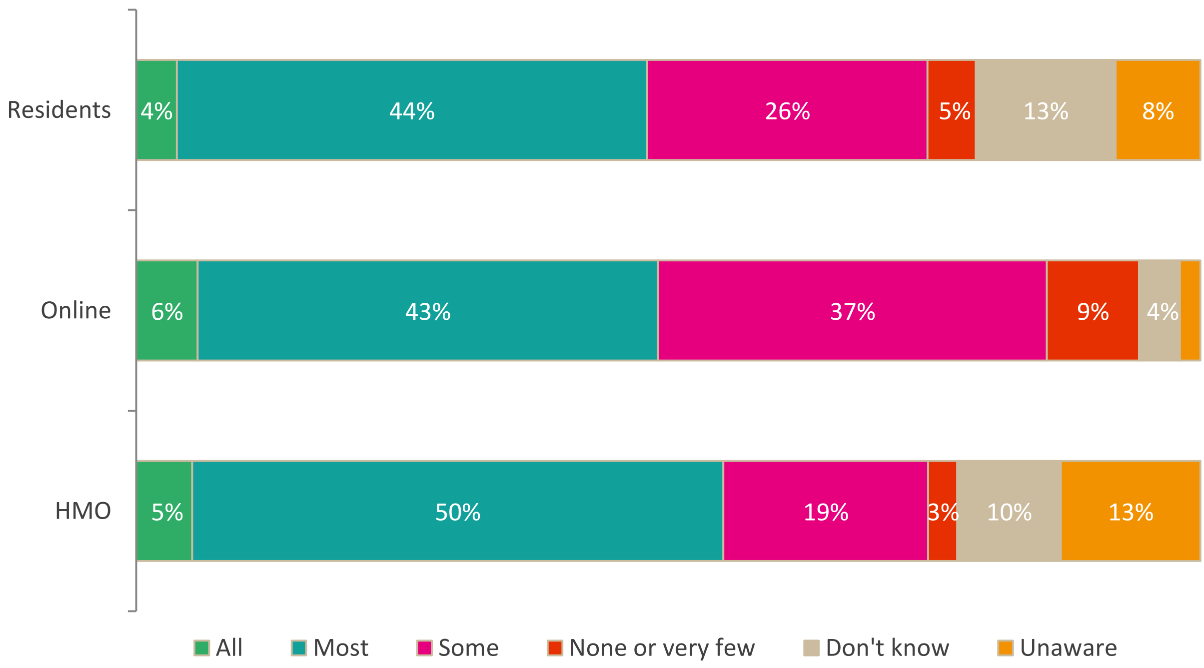


Table 11. Extent to which private rented tenants feel private landlords/their agents act responsibly (by consultation method)

Issues	Residents' survey	Online Consultation	HMO Consultation
All	6%	0%	5%
Most	57%	16%	50%
Some	27%	37%	20%
None or very few	3%	20%	3%
Don't know	6%	47%	9%
Unaware	2%	6%	12%

Actions to take to keep private rented properties tidy

Respondents were asked what action should be taken to keep private rented properties tidy, prevent small scale dumping and ensure that refuse is put out on the correct day for collection. Results for private rented tenants are provided in the table below.

Just under four out of ten respondents (38%) who took part in the residents' survey say that they want landlords or their agents to undertake routine external inspections. A third (33%) say that new and existing tenants should be advised of their legal responsibility. Around a third (32%) say that they want a contractor to be engaged to routinely clean/maintain external areas.

For the online consultation, around eight out of ten (79%) say that new and existing tenants should be advised of their legal responsibilities. Almost two-thirds (64%) say that landlords or their agents should inspect properties when a tenancy ends and clear and remove any small scale dumping. Around six out of ten (61%) respondents of the same group say that they want landlords to place signage in properties to remind tenants of waste collection days/rules.

For respondents to the HMO consultation, under half (46%) say they wanted additional bins to be provided. Around four out of ten (38%) say that they want external storage to be provided. Three out of ten (30%) say that additional routine rubbish collection should be paid for and that a pest control contractor should be engaged to routinely monitor private rented properties.

Figure 38: How to keep private rented properties tidy, prevent small scale dumping and ensure that refuse is put out on the correct day for collection

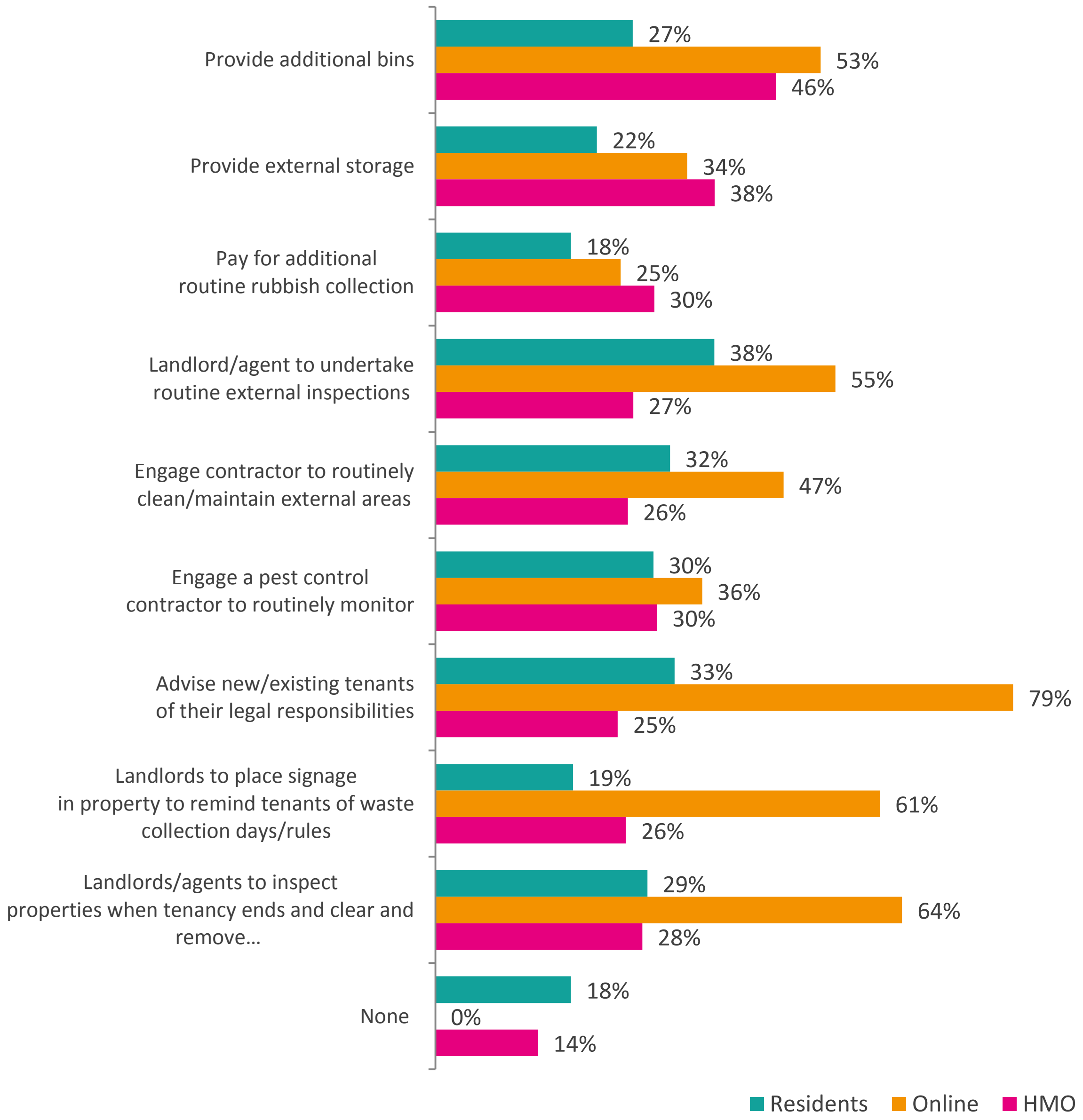


Table 12. Private rented tenants views on how to keep private rented properties tidy, prevent small scale dumping and ensure that refuse is put out on the correct day for collection (by consultation method)

Issues	Residents' survey	Online Consultation	HMO Consultation
Provide additional bins	28%	62%	47%
Provide external storage	23%	36%	39%
Pay for additional routine rubbish collection	16%	24%	30%
Landlord/agent to undertake routine external inspections	35%	50%	27%
Engage contractor to routinely clean/maintain external areas	31%	48%	27%
Engage a pest control contractor to routinely monitor	33%	43%	30%
Advise new/existing tenants of their legal responsibilities	35%	62%	25%
Landlords to place signage in property to remind tenants of waste collection days/rules	16%	62%	26%
Landlords/agents to inspect properties when tenancy ends and clear and remove any small scale dumping	31%	57%	28%
None	12%	62%	13%

4. Tenant experiences

As part of the consultation, respondents who say they were tenants in the borough were asked a series of questions around their experiences.

Satisfaction with aspects of the home

Respondents were asked how satisfied or dissatisfied they are with various aspects of their home in the last 12 months. 82% of respondents to the residents' survey, say that they are satisfied with the overall quality of their home, whilst 12% were dissatisfied. Around seven out of ten respondents (69%) to the online consultation say they are satisfied, whilst 17% say they are dissatisfied. 87% of respondents to the HMO consultation are satisfied with the overall quality of their home, whilst 5% are dissatisfied. When we look at private rented tenants, we can see that levels of satisfaction are slightly higher for those who took part in the residents' survey, whilst they are lower for those who took part in the online consultation. Dissatisfaction levels are also higher for this group. HMO responses are identical, as privately renting tenants made up the vast majority of this group.

Regarding the overall repairs and maintenance of their home, almost three-quarters (73%) of resident consultation respondents are satisfied, whilst 17% are dissatisfied. Over six out of ten (61%) online respondents are satisfied and almost one-quarter (23%) are dissatisfied. Over eight out of ten respondents (82%) to the HMO consultation are satisfied in this area, whilst 9% are dissatisfied. When we look at private rented tenants, we can see that levels of satisfaction are again slightly higher for those who took part in the residents' survey, whilst they are lower for those who took part in the online consultation. Dissatisfaction levels amongst those who took part in the online consultation are again higher. HMO responses are again identical.

When asked how satisfied they are with the management of their home by their landlord or letting agent, almost three-quarters (73%) of resident respondents are satisfied whilst 13% are dissatisfied. 55% of online respondents are satisfied with this, whilst three out of ten (30%) are dissatisfied. HMO respondents are the most satisfied in this area with 83% satisfied and 7% dissatisfied. When we look at private rented tenants, we can see that levels of satisfaction are again slightly higher for those who took part in the residents' survey. Results are very similar for those taking part in the online consultation and the HMO consultation.

For the next two options, all those who say that it is not applicable to them have been removed, to allow for comparison across the consultation surveys.

Regarding the cleanliness of communal areas inside the property, two thirds (67%) of respondents to the resident consultation are satisfied, whilst 18% are dissatisfied. Around six out of ten (59%) of respondents to the online consultation are satisfied whilst around a quarter (27%) are dissatisfied. Again, respondents to the

HMO consultation are the most satisfied in this area with 85% satisfied and 7% dissatisfied. When we look at private rented tenants, we can see that levels of satisfaction are higher for those who took part in the residents' survey (79%). Results are similar for those taking part in the online consultation and the HMO consultation.

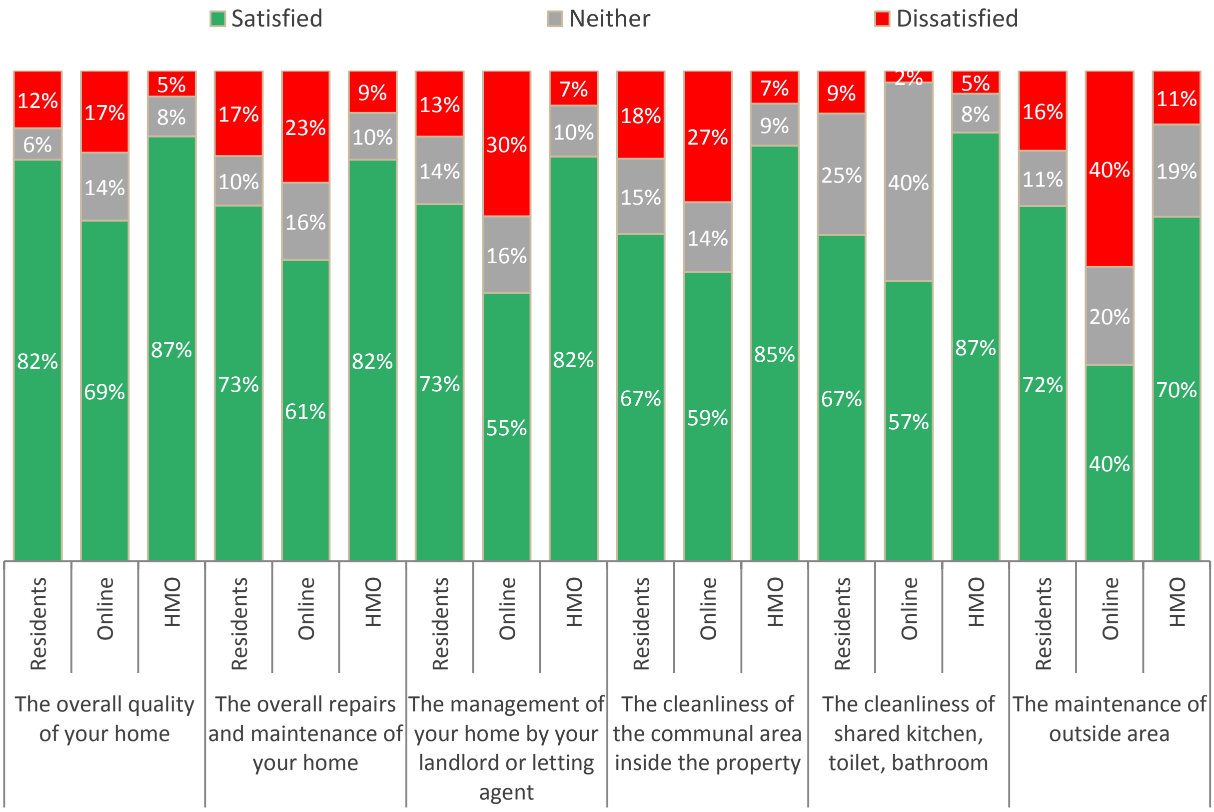
Around two thirds (67%) of respondents to the residents' survey are satisfied with the cleanliness of their shared kitchens, toilet or bathrooms whilst 9% are unsatisfied. 57% of respondents to the online consultation are satisfied with this aspect of their home and 2% are dissatisfied. Again, respondents to the HMO consultation are the most satisfied with this area, with 87% satisfied and 5% dissatisfied. When we look at private rented tenants, we can see that levels of satisfaction are again slightly higher for those who took part in the residents' survey. Results are very similar for those taking part in the online consultation and identical for those taking part in the HMO consultation.

For the maintenance of outside areas, 72% of respondents to the resident consultation are satisfied and 16% are dissatisfied. For respondents to the online consultation, equal proportions of respondents are satisfied and dissatisfied (both 40%). 70% of HMO respondents are satisfied and 11% are dissatisfied. When we look at private rented tenants, we can see that levels of satisfaction are again slightly higher for those who took part in the residents' survey. Satisfaction levels are similar for those taking part in the online consultation, but dissatisfaction levels are higher (51%). Results are identical for HMO respondents.

Table 13. Satisfaction with aspects of home for private rented tenants (by consultation method)

Issues	Residents' survey		Online Consultation		HMO Consultation	
	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied
The overall quality of your home	87%	9%	63%	28%	87%	5%
The overall repairs and maintenance of your home	80%	11%	53%	33%	82%	9%
The management of your home by your landlord or letting agent	80%	9%	55%	33%	82%	7%
The cleanliness of the communal area inside the property	79%	9%	56%	32%	85%	7%
The cleanliness of shared kitchen, toilet, bathroom	77%	7%	63%	0%	87%	5%
The maintenance of outside area	81%	10%	41%	51%	70%	11%

Figure 39: Satisfaction with aspects of home (by consultation method)



Issues affecting tenants

Respondents were asked to what extent a variety of issues had affected them as a tenant in the last 12 months. We have removed any 'not applicable' responses to allow for comparison .Results for private rented tenants are provided in the table below by consultation method.

For those who took part in the residents' survey, the top issue is rubbish and litter, with 42% finding it to be a problem, with 30% feeling it is a major issue. This is followed by damp and mould, with 39% feeling this to be a problem. This is followed by disrepair, with a third (33%) finding this to be a problem. The top three issues are the same for private rented tenants, although damp and mould features as the top issue (34% feel it is an issue).

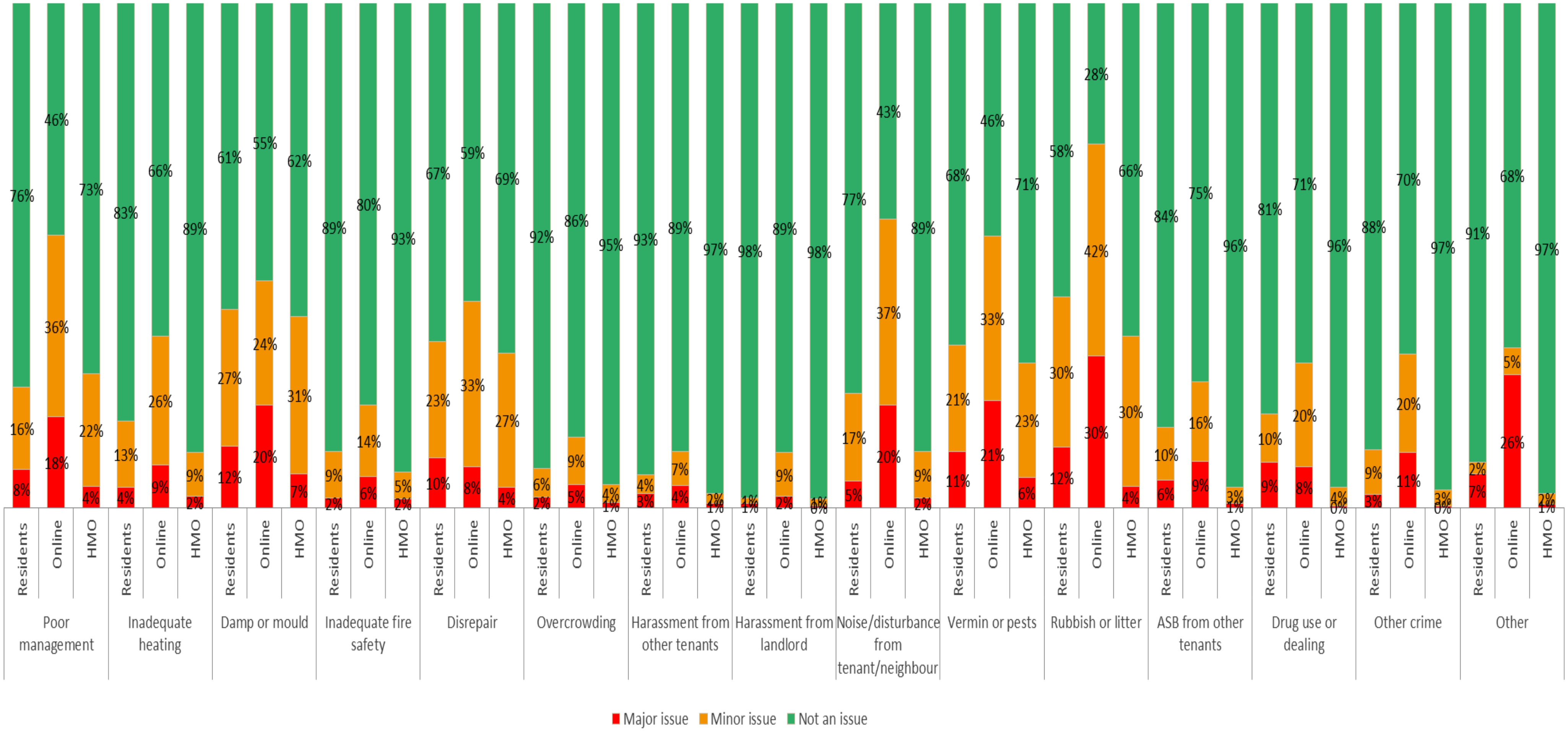
For respondents to the online consultation, the top three problems differ from the other two groups. The biggest issue is rubbish and litter (72%), with 30% feeling it to be a major issue. This is followed by noise or disturbance from another tenant/neighbour (57%), with 20% feeling it to be a major issue, and poor management of properties (54%). The top three issues are the same for private rented tenants, although poor management of properties (61%) and noise/disturbance from tenants/neighbours (56%) feature as the second and third issues.

For respondents to the HMO consultation, the top three issues are the same as above, although the biggest problems they have experienced differ. The biggest issue is felt to be damp and mould (38%), with 20% feeling it to be a major issue. This is followed by rubbish and litter (34%) and disrepair (31%). As the HMO respondents were almost wholly private rented tenants, results are identical.

Table 14. Issues experienced by private rented tenants in the last 12 months (by consultation method)

Issues	Residents' survey	Online Consultation	HMO Consultation
Poor management of properties	20%	61%	27%
Inadequate heating system	13%	43%	11%
Damp or mould	34%	46%	38%
Inadequate fire safety	8%	27%	7%
Disrepair	28%	46%	31%
Overcrowding	6%	13%	5%
Harassment from other tenants	4%	9%	3%
Harassment from landlord	2%	11%	2%
Noise or disturbance from another tenant/ neighbour	19%	56%	11%
Vermin or pests	26%	55%	29%
Rubbish or litter	33%	67%	34%
ASB from other tenants	10%	16%	4%
Drug use or dealing	12%	17%	4%
Other crime	8%	21%	3%
Other	5%	23%	3%

Figure 40: Issues experienced by tenants in last 12 months



5. Landlord experiences

As part of the consultation, landlords who took part were asked a series of questions about their views and experiences of being a landlord/agent in Hammersmith and Fulham.

Recognised landlord body

30 landlords responded to the online consultation and 27 to the residents' survey. Membership of landlords associations is relatively low, with only 30% (9 landlords) of online respondents members of the London Landlords Accreditation Scheme, 20% are members of the National Landlords Association (6), 13% are members of the Residential Landlords Association and 7% other. 47% say they are not members. Of resident consultation respondents, only 1 (4%) is a member of the London Landlords Accreditation Scheme, 1 is a member of the Residential Landlords Association (4%) and 1 of an 'other' body (4%).

Manage properties in other local authority areas

15% of landlord respondents to the residents' survey indicated that they manage property in other local authority areas. This compares to 67% of online respondents.

Subject to licensing in other local authority areas

Landlord respondents were asked if they had property that is subject to selective or additional licensing in other local authority areas. 20% of online landlord respondents (6 respondents) answered 'yes' to having properties that are subject to selective licensing in other local authority areas. This compares to 13% (4 respondents) of the same group who have properties that are subject to additional licensing in other local authority areas. For landlord respondents to the residents' survey, 1 respondent (4%) say that he/she had property that is subject to selective licensing in other local authority areas. In addition, 2 respondents (7%) say that they had property that is subject to additional licensing in other local authority areas.

Problems with property

Landlords were then asked if they had encountered any problems with their property. To allow for comparison between the online and residents' surveys, all 'no problem' responses have been removed. 15% of landlords say that they had problems with tenants causing anti-social behaviour (such as noise, litter or putting rubbish out on the wrong day) and the same proportion stated that problems in neighbouring properties affected their property/tenants. 7% say they have had problems with poor property conditions. 4% say that they had difficulty finding new tenants and 4% also say that they had difficulty obtaining new references for tenants.

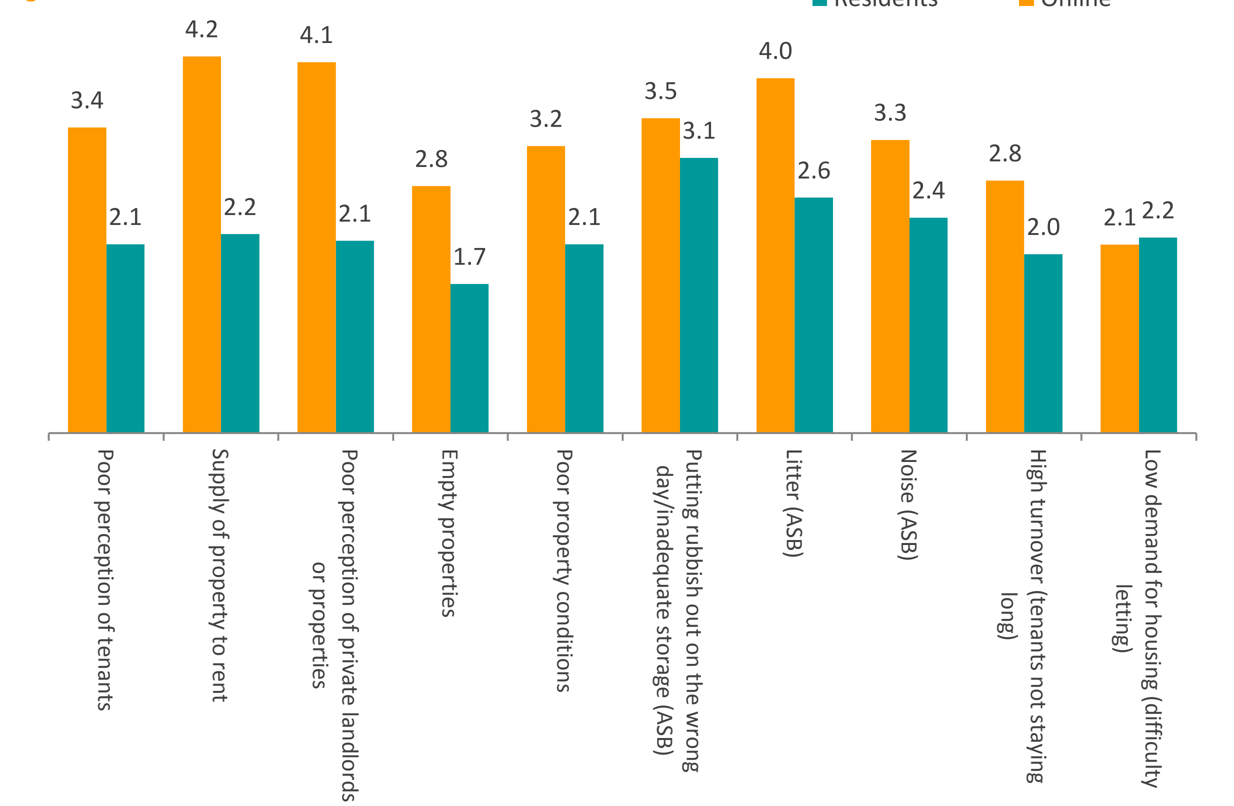
50% of landlords (5) who responded to the online consultation say they had problems in neighbouring properties that affected their property/tenants. 40% (4 respondents) say that they experienced tenants causing anti-social behaviour. 30% of the same group (3 respondents) say that they had difficulty finding new tenants, with 20% (2 respondents) having problems evicting tenants and 10% (1 respondent) experiencing poor property conditions.

Problems affecting them in the borough

Landlords were then asked to rate to what extent a list of problems affected them in Hammersmith and Fulham on a scale of 1 to 10 (where 1 is not a problem at all and 10 indicates that they have experienced major problems). A mean score for each option has been calculated. Results are presented in the chart below. The most common problem felt by landlords who responded to the residents' survey, is small-scale rubbish dumping, with a mean score of 3.1. This is closely followed by littering (anti-social behaviour) with a mean score of 2.6. The third most common issue in this category is noise, with a mean score of 2.4.

For landlords who responded to the online consultation, the most common problem is the supply of property to rent, with a mean score of 4.2. This is closely followed by the poor perception of private landlords or properties, with a mean score of 4.1. The next most common issue is littering, with a mean score of 4.0.

Figure 41: Problems for landlords in H&F

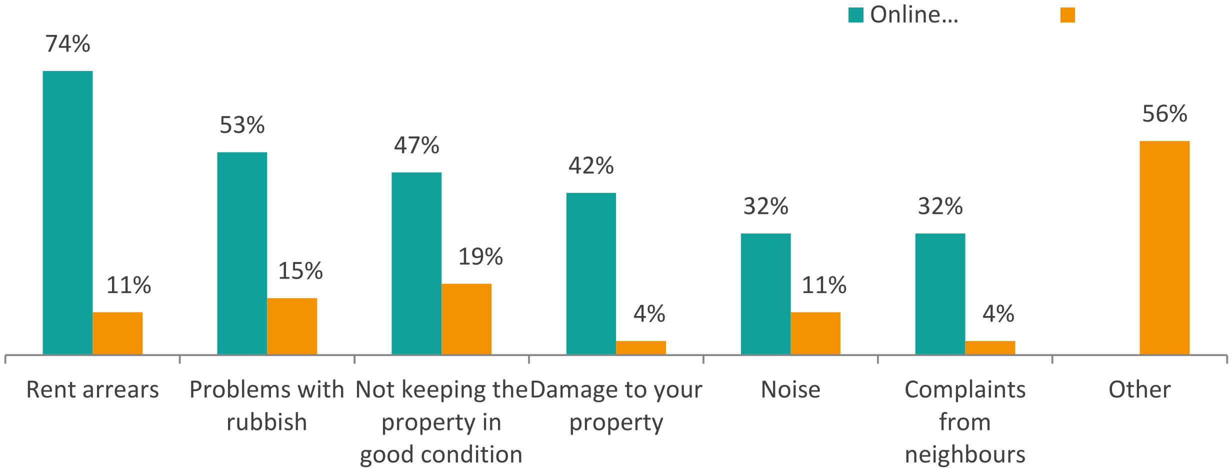


Other problems affecting landlords

Landlords were then asked what other problems they had encountered with tenants they had rented their properties to. For landlords who responded to the online consultation, the most common issue is with rent arrears (74% - 14 respondents). The next most common issues are problems with rubbish (e.g. small scale rubbish dumping, not putting the rubbish out correctly or not storing rubbish properly), with 53% (10) choosing this option, followed by 47% (9) who feel not keeping the property in good condition is a problem.

In comparison, the most common response for landlords who responded to the residents' survey is 'other' (56% - 15 respondents). The next most common response is not keeping the property in good condition (19% - 5 respondents). The third most common response is problems with rubbish at 15% (4 respondents).

Figure 42: Problems experienced with tenants

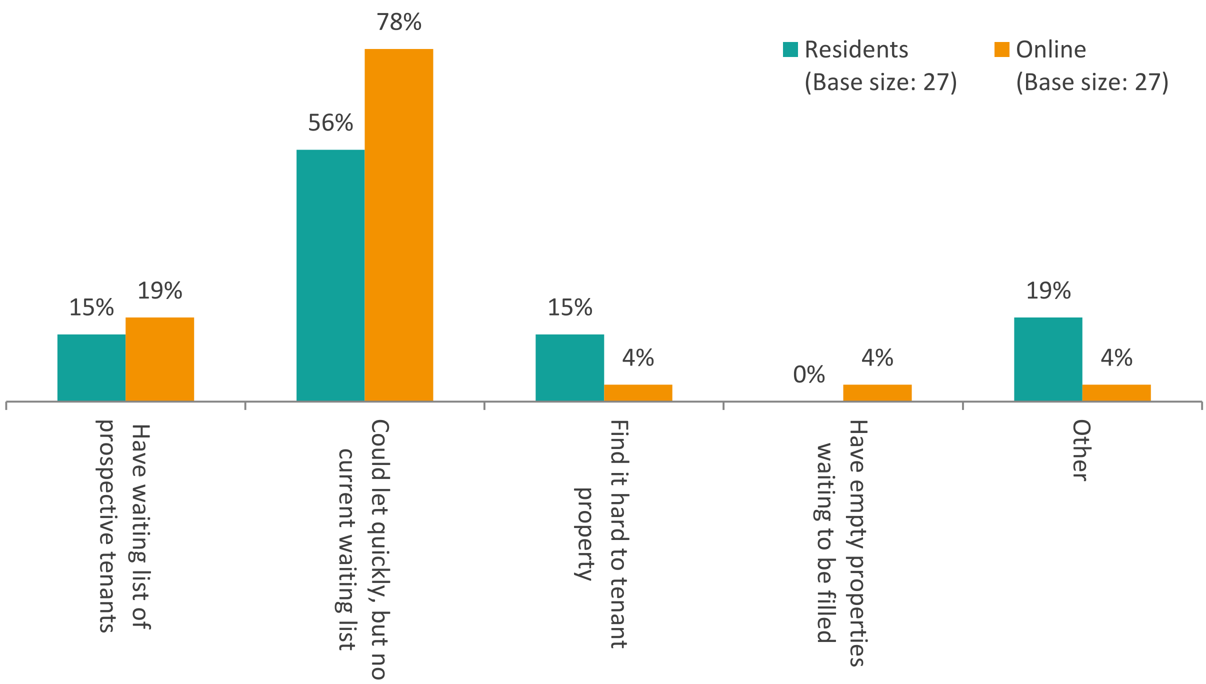


Demand for properties

Landlords were also asked how much demand there is for their property. Over three quarters of landlords (78%) who responded to the online consultation say that they could let their property quickly but did not currently have a waiting list. Around a fifth (19%) say that they have a waiting list for their property. There are an equal proportion of respondents who say that they find it hard to tenant their property and have empty properties waiting to be filled (both 4%).

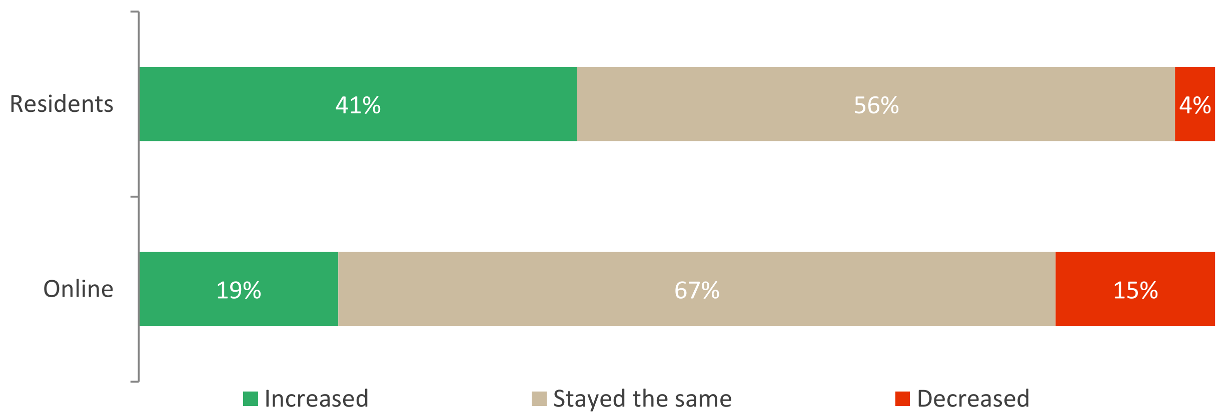
Over half of landlords who took part in the residents' survey say that they could let their property quickly, but do not currently have a waiting list (56% - 15 respondents). 15% (4 respondents) say that they have a waiting list of prospective tenants. On the other hand, the same proportion (15% - 4 respondents) say that they find it hard to tenant their property.

Figure 43: Demand for property



41% of landlords (11 respondents) who took part in the residents' survey say that demand for their property has increased over the last two years, whilst 56% (15 respondents) say it has stayed the same, and 4% (1 respondent) say it has decreased. In comparison, 19% of landlords (5) who responded to the online consultation say that demand for their property has increased over the last two years, compares to 67% (18) who say it has stayed the same, and 15% (4) who say it has decreased.

Figure 44: Changes in property demand over last two years



Licensing conditions

Landlords were also asked if they had read the licensing conditions as shown in the Consultation document. Around a fifth (19% - 5 respondents) of landlords who responded to the residents' survey had read this licence. This compares to 89% of landlords (25) who responded to the online consultation.

6. Social Letting agency

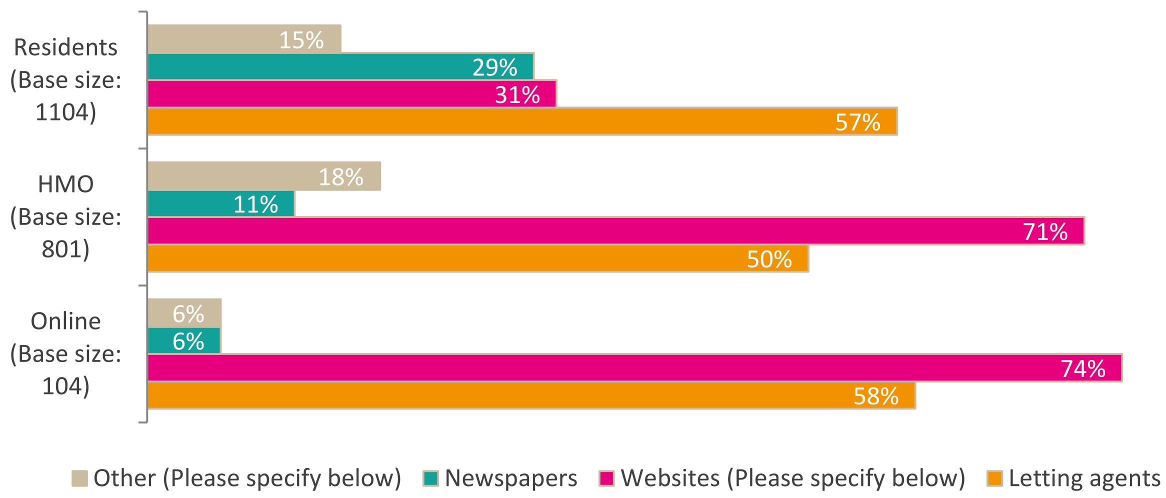
Respondents were asked a number of questions around letting and their experiences to provide further information for the council to consider what a social letting agency may deliver.

Just over a third of respondents to the resident consultation (35%) say that they have obtained housing through the Council before. This compares to 4% of both online (4 respondents) and HMO respondents (30 respondents).

In contrast, 42% of respondents to the resident consultation (469 respondents) say that they have previously rented through a letting agency. This compares to 69% of online and 81% of HMO respondents.

Respondents were asked where they search for a room, properties or tenants. As this was multiple choice, respondents were able to select as many options as they needed, therefore figures do not add to 100%. The most popular response amongst respondents to the residents' survey is that say that they use letting agents to search for a room/properties/tenants (57%). This compares to HMO and online respondents of which the highest proportion say that they use websites to search for a room/properties/tenants (71% and 74% respectively).

Figure 45: Where respondents search for a room / properties / tenants

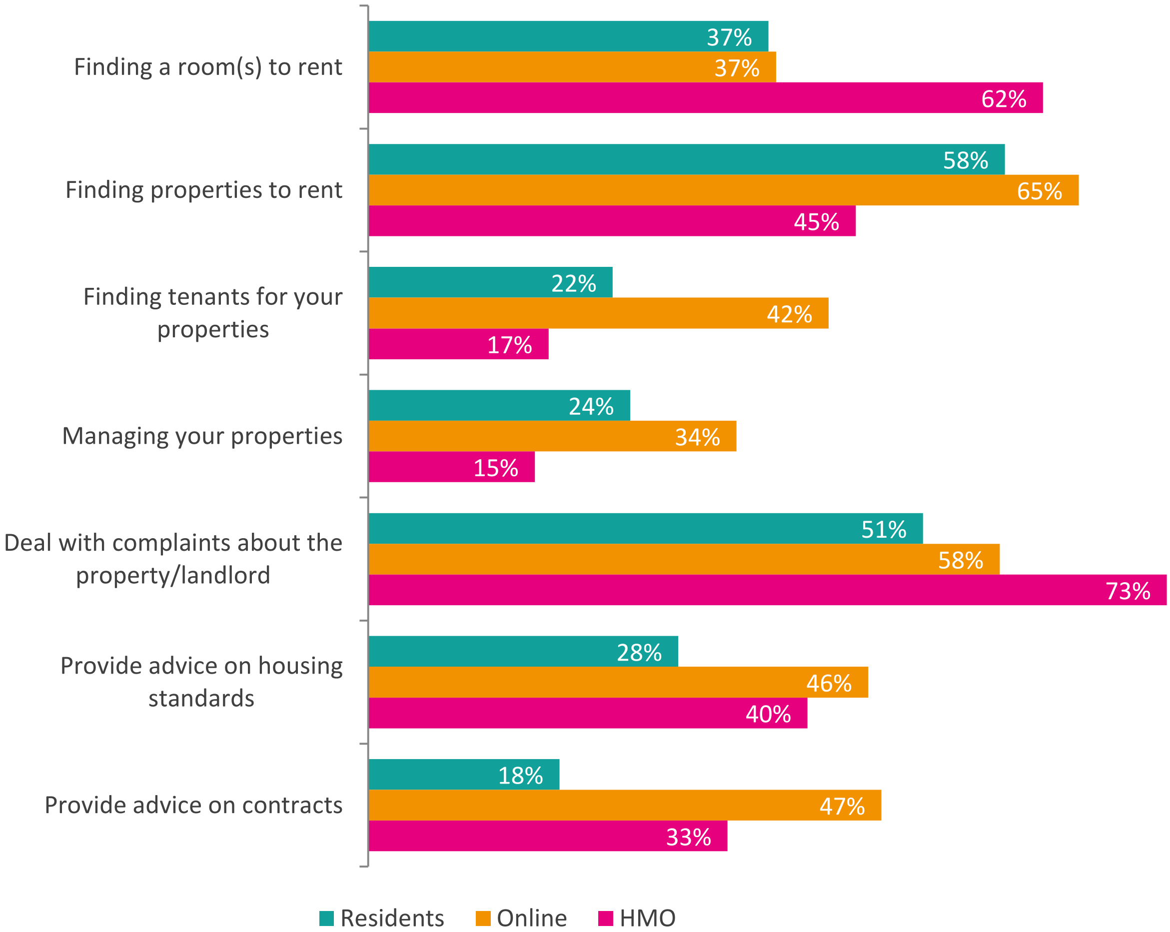


When asked what services respondents will like to receive from letting agents, 58% of respondents to the resident consultation say finding properties to rent. This is followed by around half (51%) who want letting agencies to deal with complaints about their property/landlord. 37% wanted help finding a room(s) to rent.

Almost three-quarters (73%) of respondents to the HMO consultation say that they want letting agencies to deal with complaints about their property/landlord. Around six out of ten (62%) want letting agencies to provide a service of finding a room(s) to rent. 45% of the same group chose finding a property to rent.

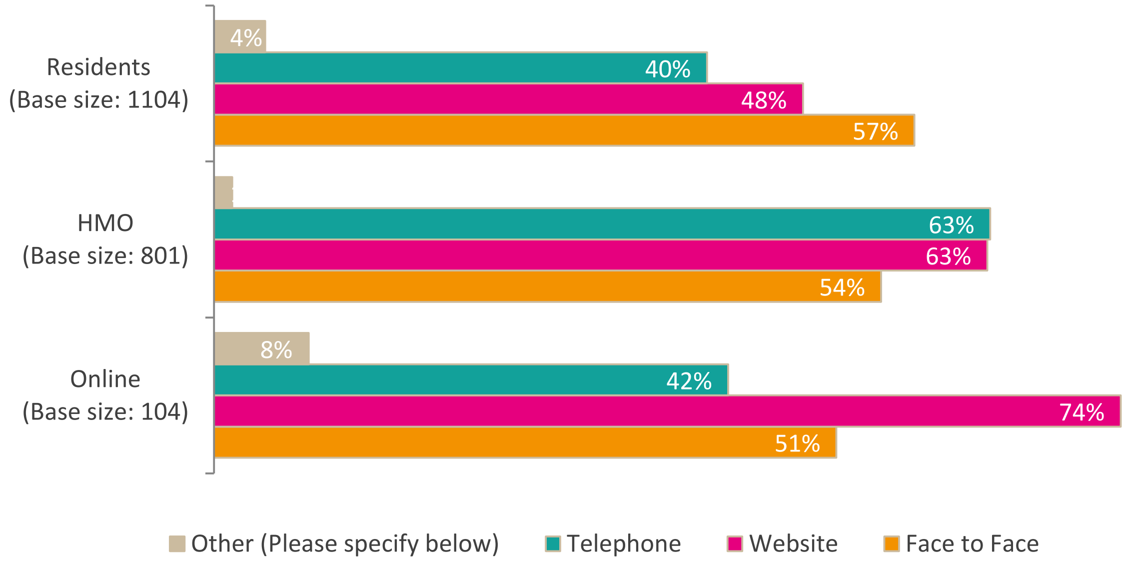
The most common response for respondents to the online consultation is finding properties to rent (65%). This is followed by 58% who want letting agencies to deal with complaints about the property/landlord. Almost half of online respondents want letting agencies to provide advice on contracts (47%) and housing standards (46%).

Figure 46.Services respondents would like to receive from letting agents



The chart below shows the preferred access channels for all respondent types. This was a multiple-choice question, so respondents could choose more than one option, therefore figures do not add to 100%. Over half of respondents to the residents' survey (57%) will prefer to access letting agents face to face. This is followed by just under half (48%) who will prefer using a website. For those responding to the HMO consultation, the most preferred methods are via a website and by telephone (63% each). For respondents to the online consultation, the most popular choice is online (74%), followed by face-to-face (51%).

Figure 47: Preferred access channels



Respondents were asked whether they would consider letting or renting a property or room through the council. 46% of those who took part in the resident consultation, say they would consider letting/renting a property or room through the council, compared to 58% of HMO respondents and 47% of online respondents.

Respondents were asked if they would consider buying or selling their home through the council. 39% of those who took part in the resident consultation say they would, compared to 36% for online consultation respondents and 28% of HMO consultation respondents.

Finally, respondents were asked if they are a prospective landlord or tenant. Around a third of respondents (34%) to the resident consultation say they are, compared to 42% of HMO consultation respondents and 51% of online consultation respondents.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Consultation document

Appendix 2: Consultation flyer

Appendix 3: Coverage of consultation

Appendix 4: Neighbouring borough results

Appendix 5: Residential Landlords Association response

Appendix 6: National Landlords Association response

Appendix 7: Equality impact assessment