

Housing Advice Service

- Citizen Consultation Feedback Report

February 2016

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Document Version Control

Version	Date	Author	Change Description
0.1	11.02.2016	Andrew J Clarke	1 st draft
0.2	12.02.2016	Andrew J Clarke	Amended with comments from SJF
0.3	15.02.2016	Andrew J Clarke	Amendments from Jim Crawshaw review
0.4	15.02.2016	Andrew J Clarke	Track changes accepted and disabled
1.0			Baselined version

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1. Executive Summary:

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- 1.1. The consultation on proposals to restructure the Housing Advice Service, including the statutory homeless service, from its present 4 location delivery model (excluding the Youth Hub); to a single centre model based at Newtown Customer Service Centre opened on 04th December 2015 and ran for 7 weeks before closing on 21st January 2016.
- 1.2. Consultation involved three main tools, Consultation A; a paper based questionnaire that was handed out to Housing Advice Centre (HAC) users (between 07th December 2015 and 15th January 2016), Consultation B; An online consultation through the councils 'Be Heard' online consultation site and Consultation C; 4 face to face sessions across the city open to professionals and members of the public.

1.3. People consulted and means of consultation

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- 1.3.1. A total of 495 responses were received to the paper based questionnaire handed out within HAC's. These are all believed to be direct HAC customers.
- 1.3.2. A total of 125 responses were received to the online consultation. However over 50 of these were 'Abandoned transactions' with no information that could be used for analysis, these were removed from the consultation. 3 of the abandoned transactions did contain partially complete data and were included. After removals the number of responses that were included as part of this consultation report totalled 65.
- 1.3.3. The majority of responses to the Be Heard Consultation were 'Organisations or professionals delivering advice' (43%). Birmingham Residents who did not use the service but commented on the proposals were the second largest group (45%). Only a small number of service users (who had accessed Housing Advice Services in the last 12 months) responded (12% - equal to 8 people).
- 1.3.4. Responses were received from a wide variety of professionals however the significant majority (11 of 24) were received from staff within the Homeless and Pre-Tenancy service itself (46% of all responses). In total 63% of all professional responses came from within Birmingham City Council.
- 1.3.5. 4 public meetings were held and facilitated by an independent chair.
 - 1.3.5.1. The North Birmingham Consultation event was attended by only 3 people (excluding council staff supporting). Attendees included staff from the YMCA and Stoneham Housing.

- 1.3.5.2. The South Birmingham Consultation event was slightly better attended with 7 people in attendance. This included representatives from Northfield Community Partnership, Northfield Baptist Church, a local Methodist Church, the Northfield Town Centre Manager, Freshwinds, the Northfield Constituency's MP's office, and a local City Council Councillor.
 - 1.3.5.3. The West & Central Birmingham Consultation event was well attended by 11 people. This included staff and volunteers from Shelter, the Longhurst Group, Midland Heart, West Midlands Police, Catalysts Mutual CIC, Ashram Moseley and the Northfield Baptist Church.
 - 1.3.5.4. The East Birmingham Consultation Event had no attendees. It is notable that this was the only event taking place at a Housing Advice Centre (Sparkbrook). Members of the public who were queuing to access the Neighbourhood Advice Service were invited to join the event however none did so.
 - 1.3.5.5. While attendance from Housing Professionals and Partner Agencies was generally good, there was no attendance from members of the public despite advertisement of the event in Housing Advice Centres (as well as numerous other locations).
- 1.4. Given that the proposed reorganisation entails the removal of Housing Advice Centres from 3 Neighbourhood Offices, it is noted that users of these centres may be more impacted than those of the centre proposed to remain open due to potential additional travel requirements. Therefore consideration has been given to this in analysis of consultation responses and the responses of the three centres where withdrawal of Housing Advice Services is proposed have, on occasion, been separated from Newtown responses.
- 1.5. **Proposal for a single HAC based at Newtown:** [Back to Contents Page](#)
- 1.5.1. Broadly speaking this proposal is not widely supported by respondents to the consultation.
 - 1.5.2. When asked if they felt they would still be able to get to the centre in Newtown more than 50% of respondents in Consultation A agreed that they would. However it was noted that Newtown responses formed 36% of all respondents in Consultation A. Across the remaining 3 centres 48% either disagree or strongly disagreed that they would be able to make it to a Newtown based centre, the large majority strongly disagreeing ([Chart 12](#), Pg 33).

- 1.5.3. However, when this question was limited to only Homeless Households at the remaining 3 HAC's the split between those agreeing to (some extent) and those disagreeing (to some extent) that they could reach a centre in Newtown narrows considerably with only 40% disagreeing and 35% agreeing ([Chart 13](#), Pg 34).
- 1.5.4. In Consultation B (Online Consultation via Be Heard), customers and concerned citizens were asked if they agreed or disagreed with the proposals for a Centralised Homeless Centre at Newtown. A total of 34 responses were received to this question. 6 responses agreed with the proposal and 19 disagreed ([Chart 22](#), Pg 44).
- 1.5.5. Respondents in Consultation B were also asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed that they would still be able to reach a single centre in Newtown. 36 responses were provided showing a slight increase in the proportion of respondents disagreeing (to some extent) and a slight decrease in those agreeing (to some extent). However 'Strongly' disagreeing reduced (in percentage terms) from that in Consultation A responses, falling from 32% to 28% ([Chart 24](#), Pg 46).
- 1.5.6. Professionals were asked if they agreed or disagreed with the proposals to centralise the Housing Advice Service at Newtown. 27 responses were received to this question, all of whom disagreed with the proposal. In respect of this it should be noted that 46% of all responses from professionals came from staff within the Homelessness and Pre-Tenancy Service (1.3.4).
- 1.5.7. A Neighbourhood Advice & Information Service (NAIS) consultation also asked to what extent their customers agreed or disagreed with the proposals to centralise the Housing Advice Service at Newtown. 1141 responses were received to this question with the large majority (597 – 52%) strongly disagreeing. Only 29% (328) agreed (to any extent) with this proposal ([Chart 35](#), Pg 61).

1.6. Alternate proposals:

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- 1.6.1. Respondents in Consultation A were not directly asked to comment on alternate proposals that had been considered (for reasons outlined in 3.7). However in responding to questions about their concerns regarding a single HAC and in suggesting improvements to the service ([Chart 11](#), Pg 31 & [Chart 15](#), 36), numerous responses expressed a preference (in some way) to keep services local (retaining a 4 HAC model) or open additional HAC's to provide a more local service.

When members of the public were asked to comment on alternative proposals in Consultation B ([Chart 21](#), Pg 43), A two HAC model was identified as preferential (six favour this) with a city centre single HAC narrowly behind (five preferences). However few viable suggestions were made by persons favouring these options as to how the issues that caused their dismissal as original options could be overcome.

- 1.6.2. The Council House & it's Margaret Street extension, were suggested as alternatives however these have already been considered and deemed non-viable. One respondent alluded to BCC having *"many occupied and vacant buildings in the City Centre which I don't see why they could not have been used"* however no detail was given on these buildings to advise property services on a location that may have been overlooked. However extensive property searches had been undertaken by the corporate BCC property team and no suitable sized buildings had been identified.
- 1.6.3. A suggestion was made to utilise Housing Association offices for provision of HA Services in order to keep services local which may be worthy of further consideration moving forward however, does not address immediate concerns requiring the removal of HAC's from Neighbourhood Offices.
- 1.6.4. When professionals were asked to comment on the previously considered alternatives ([Chart 30](#), Pg 52), opposition to the Newtown proposal was high. A two HAC approach was favoured by most. Four respondents favoured a city centre location with one suggesting that desk space could be freed at Lancaster Circus or Woodcock Street However this option was explored and deemed non-viable.

1.7. Key Concerns:

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- 1.7.1. A number of key concerns were identified among both professionals and members of the public. These concerns reoccurred across a number of questions and responses and are outlined here.
- 1.7.2. The accessibility of the single centre to vulnerable individuals who rarely travel outside their own local area. In responding to this it should be considered whether sufficient mitigation exists (or is planned) in order to remove barriers to access for this service for such vulnerable persons. In considering this point the following information is also noted:
 - At present four HAC's serve 40 wards within Birmingham. The geographical size of Birmingham is 267.8SqKm meaning that each HAC could serve (approximately) 66.95sqkm if distributed evenly. Therefore many vulnerable persons will already have no local HAC to visit, therefore

the concern raised will apply more so to those living within the immediate vicinity or ward of an existing HAC only.

- With particular regard to Newtown, this centre does not currently provide a 'roofless on the day' service and homeless customers are seen by appointment only. Clients in this situation are required to travel to other HAC's on order to make these types of application.
- Data within Travel Analysis (7.26) shows the majority of respondents to consultation (meeting the criteria outlined at 7.2), did not live within the immediate locality of the HAC they visited (six respondents out of 98 lived within one mile of the HAC they visited, only five more lived within 1.5 miles of the HAC they visited).
- Birmingham is presently one of only two core cities that continues to deliver Homelessness services from multiple locations (with the second being Liverpool).

1.7.3. Accessibility of a single HAC at Newtown due to additional travel distance for clients of all types. It is a concern for respondents that many people will be unable to travel the additional distance to a HAC at Newtown. In responding to this it should be considered whether sufficient mitigation exists (or is planned) in order to remove barriers to access for people who, for any reason, may be unable to travel to Newtown. In considering this point the following information is also noted:

- The present four HAC system serves 40 Wards and it is therefore likely that a great number of clients will already be required to travel some distance to access their local HAC. Additionally approximately 12% of homeless applications made in Birmingham are from households whose previous address is outside of Birmingham..
- A general lack of knowledge of the Newtown area may contribute to fears about travelling to Newtown. A study of data detailed at 7.7-7.9 shows that many clients who already use cars or public transport will, when using the same means as that which they used when responding to consultation A, experience a shorter period of travel when accessing a centre at Newtown. Many others will experience only a short increase in journey time.
- Data detailed at 8.7-8.9 also shows that a large number of customers will experience a significant increase in journey time when accessing a centre based in Newtown.

Those people currently accessing a Housing Advice Centre on foot are potentially most impacted by increased travel distance. Consultation A shows Newtown has the highest proportion of people accessing the centre on foot, totalling 48% of all respondents accessing HAC's on foot and equal to totals of the remaining 3 centres combined ([Chart 3](#), Pg 23).

- 73% of all persons currently accessing Housing Advice centres do so by car, bus or rail. This figure is mirrored when this data is limited to Homeless Applicants only ([Chart 4](#), Pg 24).

1.7.4. Safeguarding victims of Domestic Abuse (DA) in a single centre approach. A number of concerns were raised relating to DA victims accessing Homelessness and Housing Advice through a single centre. These concerns related to potential, in a once centre approach, for perpetrators of DA to be able to locate their victims if homelessness is only delivered from one centre. In responding to this it should be considered whether sufficient mitigation exists (or is planned) in order to safeguard such victims in a single centre approach. In considering this point attention is drawn to the comments and observations below:

- Birmingham & Solihull Women's Aid (BSWAID) presently deliver advice services from a single centre.
- Is analysis of previous DA Homeless Applicants required to determine if they presently attend their local HAC in the first instance?

1.7.5. Accessibility of the centre for people who may be unable to attend the Newtown locality due to gang activity, affiliation or threats of gang violence. The concern primarily relates to those who may be unable to attend the area due to previous encounters with or activity in gangs based in the Newtown area. It is feared that, for such persons, entering areas where opposing or former gang associations claim 'territory' could pose a risk to these clients and therefore exclude them from seeking help. In responding to this it should be considered whether sufficient mitigation exists (or is planned) in order to safeguard such victims in a single centre approach. In considering this point the following information is also noted:

- This risk is considered as part of the Equality Impact Assessment (EA). At that time it was felt that the majority of the 'Gang Demographic' would be under 25 and thus required to attend the Youth Hub rather than the single HAC, which is currently in place.

It was considered that the remainder would be sufficiently small in number as to be covered within existing mitigation (visiting officers, Part VI online, interviews at alternate locations etc). Is this position still held?

- Telephone Interviews and pre-arranged call-backs (developed post EA) will improve accessibility for those unable to reach a single HAC in Newtown.

1.7.6. Travel to the new Single HAC for those with a disability preventing travel.

This concern primarily relates to the Single HAC being inaccessible to those with a disability due to distance of travel. In responding to this it should be considered whether sufficient mitigation exists (or is planned) in order to remove barriers to service that these groups may encounter within a single HAC model. In considering this point the following information is also noted:

- This risk was previously considered as part of the Equality Impact Assessment (EA). At that time it was felt that planned and existing mitigation was sufficient to ensure accessibility of the service for disabled persons who were unable to reach the Newtown site (visiting officers, Part VI online, interviews at alternate locations etc). Is this position still held?
- Telephone Interviews and pre-arranged call-backs (developed post EA) will improve accessibility for those unable to reach a single HAC in Newtown.

1.7.7. Increased travel cost for customers preventing accessibility. This concern related to the potential for increased travel costs for customers to reach a single centre in Newtown. In responding to this it should be considered whether sufficient mitigation exists (or is planned) in order to remove or mitigate against such costs in a single centre approach. In considering this point the following information is also noted:

- This risk was previously considered as part of the Equality Impact Assessment (EA). At that time it was felt that planned and existing mitigation was sufficient to ensure accessibility of the service for persons 'destitute' and having insufficient funds to reach single HAC at Newtown.
- Bus Tickets presently issued at Neighbourhood Offices and at The Council House to those with insufficient funds to travel to a HAC in an emergency will continue to be issued from these locations (subject to outcomes of the NAIS Consultation on future proposals).

There is also scope to increase the network of sites where these can be issued from to maximise accessibility. These increases may form part of the future development of Housing Advice.

- 73% of all persons currently accessing Housing Advice centres do so by car, bus, rail or other means of public transport. This figure is mirrored when this data is limited to Homeless Applicants only ([Chart 4](#)).
- Those currently accessing a Housing Advice Centre on foot are potentially most impacted by increased travel cost. Consultation A shows Newtown has the highest proportion of people accessing the centre on foot, totalling 48% of all respondents accessing HAC's on foot and equal to totals of the remaining 3 centres combined ([Chart 3](#)).
- Information detailed within the travel analysis (8.13-8.35) shows that the vast majority of those already utilising public transport (buses) to access a HAC will experience no increase in cost for travel to Newtown due to the fare structures. The small number who may experience a negative cost implication (Chart [TA5](#), Pg 75 & [TA7](#), Pg 77), will only do so under certain conditions which, for the most part will be avoidable, and all must be met simultaneously.
- There is potential for those accessing HAC's by car to experience a marginal cost implication due to additional fuel costs for additional travel distance.

1.7.8. Concerns that the single centre will be too busy. A number of concerns were raised by respondents that the proposed single centre option will be unable to cope with the high level of footfall expected and that this will result in longer waits, fewer available appointments and a general reduction in the quality of service provided. In responding to this it should be considered whether sufficient mitigation exists (or is planned) for the centre to cope with expected footfall while ensuring a sufficient level of quality service is provided. In considering this point the following information is also noted

- The maximisation of appointments is made possible within a single centre option. Additional back office staff can be ready to address overbookings planned to address the number of Do Not Attend cases for Part VII interviews.
- Floor Walkers form an integral part of the Future Operating Model (FOM) who will be able to 'Queue Bust' by signposting and answering general queries to achieve quicker turnaround on enquiries.

- Improved Homelessness Prevention through Housing Options Interviews and use of the Housing Options Toolkit is expected to increase the number of Homelessness Preventions in the long term.
- Alternate ways of dealing with enquiries such as web, phone (inc the possibility of undertaking Part VII interviews by phone) will reduce the pressures expected by footfall on the centre.

1.8. Conclusions:

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- 1.8.1. The proposed restructure of Housing Advice to a single centre based at Newtown is a contentious one, generally unpopular to customers and professionals who have raised numerous concerns regarding this.
- 1.8.2. Many of the concerns identified have already been identified as part of preparation work in advance of consultation and mitigations have been developed to address these concerns. The veracity of these mitigations however is unlikely to be effectively tested until any decision to proceed to a single HAC is implemented.
- 1.8.3. There does appear to be some resistance based on misunderstanding of the proposals. Analysis revealed several respondents misinterpreting the proposal as removal of front facing services in favour of a call centre. Others may not realise that Newtown HAC is actually closer and possibly more accessible than the centre they currently use because they do not know the area.
- 1.8.4. Extensive commentary has been provided on alternate options that were considered and deemed non-viable. A number of suggestions regarding these alternate options have been received (such as Lancaster Circus, Woodcock St or Margaret Street for a City Centre HAC), however for the most part, all have already been explored previously and deemed non-viable. Others do not provide the benefits that are expected from the proposed model (such as maximisation of interviews/appointments).
- 1.8.5. There are identified negative impacts on client groups due to additional travel distance and time as well as potential barriers for accessing the service. Whether planned and current mitigation is sufficient to negate these impacts is a decision to be taken in view of evidence contained within the consultation report, Equality Analysis, cabinet report and any other relevant documentation.

- 1.8.6. A decision to move to a single HAC is likely to cause upset to some parties therefore it is essential that effective communications are planned detailing how clients may access the housing advice they need in the event of any such decision. It is also essential that we work closely with other professionals and partner agencies to ensure that the best possible Housing & Homeless Advice continues to be delivered.
- 1.8.7. It is also important that, in the event of a decision to provide homelessness services from a central location, BCC works with interested partner agencies who deliver housing advice (as well as other groups) to develop capacity for provision of Housing Advice through such agencies/groups, locally where possible.

2. Introduction:

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- 2.1. On 30th November 2015 the Homelessness & Pre Tenancy Service received Cabinet Member approval to consult on the reorganisation of the Housing Advice Service¹.
- 2.2. Public Consultation of the proposed reorganisation of Housing Advice Centres (HAC's) commenced 04th December 2015 and ran until 21st January 2015 (7 weeks including the Christmas period).
- 2.3. During this time customers, citizens and professionals were offered the opportunity to provide feedback on the councils preferred option for service redesign, this being the removal of Housing Advice Centres from 3 of the current 4 neighbourhood offices they are based at (currently located in Northfield, Erdington & Sparkbrook) and the transfer of all staff, face to face Housing Advice functions and Homelessness Services to a newly commissioned Centre of Excellence located at the remaining HAC location situated in Newtown.
- 2.4. Customers, citizens and professionals were also invited to express their views on the alternate options considered by the Council but dismissed.
- 2.5. The aim of this consultation was to establish the views of the public on the proposed revisions to the Housing Advice service in order to establish the viability of the proposal, any barriers to its implementation and any additional mitigation required to ensure the service remains accessible to all (in the event that the proposal was approved to move forward).
- 2.6. Consultation was undertaken via three primary exercises which are detailed below:
 - A) Consultation A: A paper based 'Snapshot' Survey provided to all HAC customers accessing one of the 4 current centres.
 - B) Consultation B: An online survey utilising the 'Birmingham Be Heard' consultation tool, available to all customers, concerned citizens and professionals.
 - C) Consultation C: 4 facilitated face to face meetings across the city of Birmingham where members of the public and professionals were invited to attend and discuss/ask questions of the responsible officers. From these meeting reports were prepared detailing the findings.
- 2.7. This report contains analysis of the findings from this consultation.

¹ [Consulting on a Way Forward for Homelessness Services \(Ref 001113/2015\), Birmingham City Council](#)

3. Methodology

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- 3.1. It was recognised that any proposal to reduce the number of Housing Advice Centres was likely to be contentious however for this reason it was also decided that consultation must be as comprehensive and inclusive as reasonably practicable. It was for this reason that the 3 means of consultation outlined in 2.5 (A-C) were adopted.
- 3.2. Consultation A (The Snapshot Survey) was undertaken via a paper based questionnaire that was provided to all persons accessing Housing Advice Services at a Housing Advice Centre. This particular consultative channel was chosen for its ability to reach a large number of direct housing advice customers who may be affected by the proposed changes.
- 3.3. This piece of work was initially limited to 2 weeks due to the resource intensive nature of the work including explaining the purpose (if required) and answering any questions asked within an extremely busy office environment. The additional pressures on staff to collate and process these questionnaires was an additional consideration limiting the exercise to two weeks (Commencing 07th December 2016).
- 3.4. However this position was subsequently reviewed in view of initial low response rates and issues managing the issuing of questionnaires to customers. Following discussion with the relevant Cabinet Member this consultation was extended until 15th January 2016.
- 3.5. During this time all Housing Advice customers visiting a Customer Service Centre (identified through reception triage process to distinguish from Neighbourhood Advice Service customers) would be issued with 2 documents. The first of these documents was a consultation brief detailing the proposed changes to the service as well as the alternate options which were no longer under consideration. The second document was a short 2 page questionnaire asking for comment on these proposals as well as information about how they used the service currently and how they could be better assisted in the future (these documents can be found at Appendix 1A & 1B to this report).
- 3.6. In consultation A, although some free text responses were encouraged (rather than limiting responses to multiple choice) the questionnaire was limited in the scope of data it gathered due to its short length (Unlike Consultation B [3.8] it did not specifically ask for comment on alternate options and did not gather demographic data on users completing questionnaires).

- 3.7. The questionnaire was limited to two sides in order to encourage completion. A more comprehensive questionnaire, it was felt, would result in lower response rates. Although this is a somewhat simplistic view, research exists to support this². This was mitigated by information in the consultation brief which directed customers to the Birmingham Be Heard site (Consultation B) should customers wish to provide more comprehensive commentary on the proposed changes.
- 3.8. A copy of the Consultation Brief can be found at Appendix 1A of this report. A copy of the Consultation A questionnaire can be found at Appendix 1B.
- 3.9. Customers were asked to complete this questionnaire and return it to a member of staff. Following which a member of Housing Advice Staff would enter the written information (verbatim) into the SurveyMonkey online tool for storage and analysis.
- 3.10. Consultation B (the Birmingham Be Heard Survey) was a comprehensive online consultation that ran from 04th December 2015 to 21st January 2016 (7 weeks including a 1 week break over the Christmas period). A specific and searchable consultation was opened using the Birmingham Be Heard consultation website (www.birminghambeheard.org.uk). This webpage provided a brief of the proposed changes, the reasons for the proposals, what we hoped to achieve and also detailed information on the alternate proposals that had been considered and rejected.
- 3.11. A document was attached to this page showing the geographical spread of Homeless Applicants by ward to allow customers to better understand the decision to choose the Newtown Site as the preferred option.
- 3.12. Having read these details viewers were then invited to complete an online questionnaire detailing their views on the proposals.
- 3.13. The online questionnaire was designed to be more comprehensive and gather data in greater detail than that that could be provided in Consultation A. The SurveyMonkey tool supporting the online questionnaire uses question logic to tailor the type of questions to the respondent ensuring that customers, concerned citizens and professionals are asked appropriate questions to their experience.

² Bogen K, THE EFFECT OF QUESTIONNAIRE LENGTH ON RESPONSE RATES - A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE, U.S. Bureau of the Census

- 3.14. This questionnaire gathers both demographic data for respondents as well as asking for specific comment on alternate proposals that had been considered and rejected. Many of the questions asked within Consultation A (the 'Snapshot' survey) are repeated here to increase inclusivity but allow for more detail to be entered more easily within free text fields.
- 3.15. Birmingham Be Heard is Birmingham City Council's primary consultative tool. However it is also recognised that one consultation among many is unlikely to gain significant reach unless its presence is known and publicised. To that end the existence of the Housing Advice online consultation was communicated via numerous means reaching a large audience. This included (amongst others) the following:
- A) Birmingham City Council Facebook page (5,696 followers at 22/12/15) – Post 18/12/2015
 - B) Birmingham City Council Twitter account (49,900 followers at 22/12/2015) – Post 17/12/2015
 - C) Birmingham Voluntary Service Council (BVSC) E-Bulletin (Approx 3,000 subscribers)
 - D) Letters to MP's, Members, Partner Agencies
 - E) Article in 'Your Weekly News' bulletin 17/12/15 (9,000+ BCC staff)
 - F) Directorate for People Special Leadership Team Briefing article 16/12/2015
 - G) Link in Consultation A 'Consultation Brief' (Distributed to all HAC customers for 2 weeks).
 - H) Briefing to Housing Liaison Boards
 - I) Via email to Birmingham Social Housing Partnership (BSHP)
 - J) Via email to advice providers
- 3.16. Copies of the Be Heard Front Page, Associated documents and a paper based version of online the questionnaire³ can be found at Appendix 1C of this report.

³ The paper based version of this survey does not include the question logic that sits behind the electronic version. Please note that Respondents will be asked different questions from within this survey dependant on their answers to previous questions.

3.17. Consultation C (Public Face to Face Events) were held as a final means of customer engagement and consultation. Consultation C involved the arranging and holding of 4 face to face meetings across Birmingham, with sessions in North, South & East Birmingham with a further session covering the West & Central area.

3.18. These sessions were held in January 2016 and took place as follows:

East Birmingham Event:

Monday 11 January 2016 (1000-1230hrs) @ Room B, Sparkbrook Community Centre, 34 Grantham Road, Sparkbrook, Birmingham, B11 1LU

South Birmingham Event:

Monday 11 January 2016 (1400-1630hrs) @ Northfield Baptist Church, 789 Bristol Road South, Northfield B31 2NQ

North Birmingham Event:

Monday 18 January 2016 (1000-1230hrs) @ YMCA, The Coppice, 300 Reservoir Road, Erdington, Birmingham, B23 6DB

West & Central Birmingham Event:

Monday 18 January 2016 (1400-1630hrs) @ Community Hall, St Luke's Church Centre, Great Colmore Street, Lee Bank, Birmingham, B15 2AT

3.19. These sessions were advertised and promoted as widely as practicable with a view to maximising public and partnership attendance. To achieve this, a variety of promotional methods were engaged. These are listed below:

3.19.1. A press release was issued by the Birmingham City Council Press Office detailing the times, dates and locations of the proposed events.

3.19.2. Emails were sent to MP's, Local Councillors and Partner Agencies detailing times and dates of the events and encouraging attendance.

3.19.3. Posters for all four events were displayed prominently in Housing Advice Centres (and events were timed so many customers may have knowledge of the proposals as the paper based survey in HAC's had been taking place for some weeks).

3.19.4. Flyers were handed out at Housing Advice Centres

3.19.5. Posters were displayed by partner agencies including displays at Citizen's Advice Bureau's and Police Stations (including Steelhouse Lane as the only remaining 24hr station).

- 3.19.6. Details of the events were loaded onto the Housing Advice Service's 'Be Heard' online consultation page.
- 3.19.7. Posters were displayed In BCC Temporary 'Accommodation Centres' for Homeless Persons.
- 3.19.8. Details of the events were 'Tweeted' by Birmingham Newsroom and Cllr Stacey.
- 3.19.9. Details of the events were included in internal publications 'Weekly Staff News' and the fortnightly 'Leadership Bulletin'.

4. Assumptions & Constraints

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- 4.1. There are known discrepancies in the application of Consultation A. When this consultation channel went live two of the four HAC's experienced difficulties in implementing it. This resulted in a disproportionately low number of responses from these centres initially. As a result these centres were given additional time (8 days) to obtain additional responses. This was felt necessary as both of these were centres proposed for closure and thus these customer groups were most affected.
- 4.2. The Housing Advice consultation was launched simultaneously with the Neighbourhood Advice Service consultation as the two services are both co-located and both subject to service redesign. Both consultations follow the same model and Neighbourhood Advice also undertook an exercise identical to Consultation A & B. Thus the possibility exists that, during the triage process (outlined in 3.3), some Housing Advice customers may have been provided with the wrong survey. This is a 'known unknown' and thus the impact on overall results cannot be quantified.
- 4.3. No demographic information for the customer base consulted within Consultation A was gathered. This was an intentional act rather than an oversight and is rationalised at 3.5 as a means to maximising responses. The broad demographic of the HAC customer group is already known and it is felt that the impact of this on the results is minimal when considered against maximising responses.
- 4.4. Although this is consultation on a preferred option, respondents to all forms of consultation are made aware of the alternate options that were considered and Consultation B directly asks for feedback on these options that are no longer under consideration⁴.
- 4.5. The review of large volumes of free text data is required within this report. The interpretation of this data is a responsibility of the person preparing the report. Although review and interpretation is impartial this process is not infallible and therefore copies of all free text responses are available for review at Appendix 1D to this report.

⁴ Good practice when consulting on preferred options within *R (on the application of Moseley (in substitution of Stirling Deceased)) (AP) (Appellant) v London Borough of Haringey*, UKSC 2013/0116

5. Results and Analysis

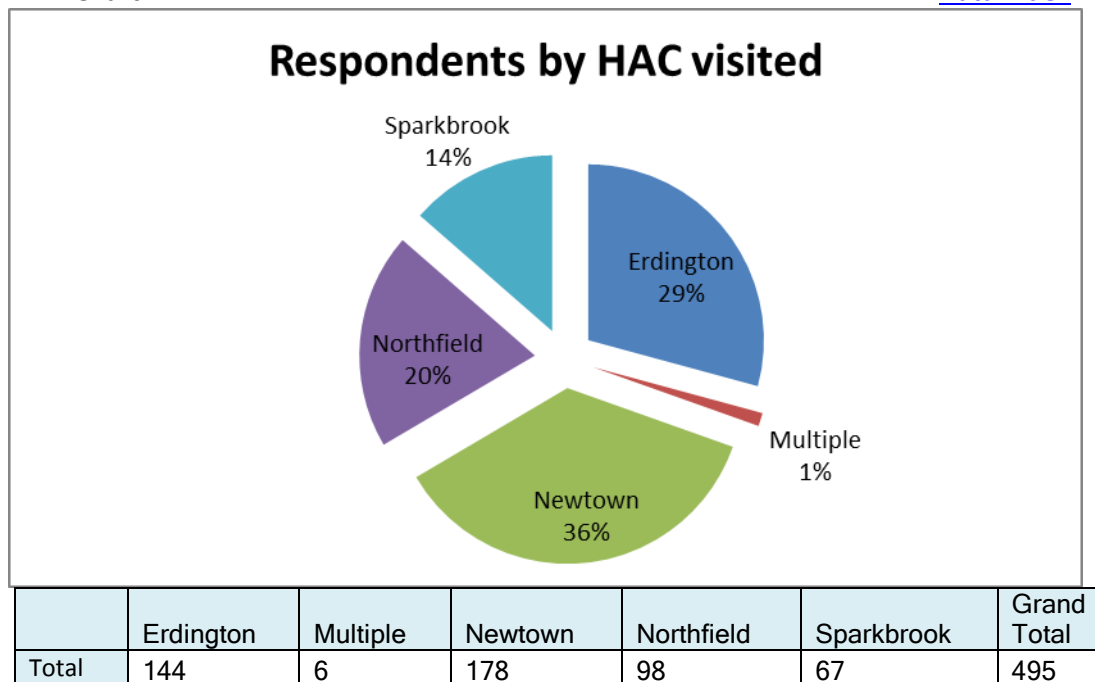
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5.1. Consultation A - All HAC's

5.1.1. The graph below (Chart 1) shows the respondents to the questionnaire by the centre they visited. From this data it shows that 3 of the 4 current HAC's were well represented with only Sparkbrook providing less than 20% of the responses (14% only). Newtown and Erdington were the best represented centres providing 36% and 29% of all responses respectively. Northfield was well represented with 20% of all responses being provided from there.

Chart 1:

[Data Index](#)



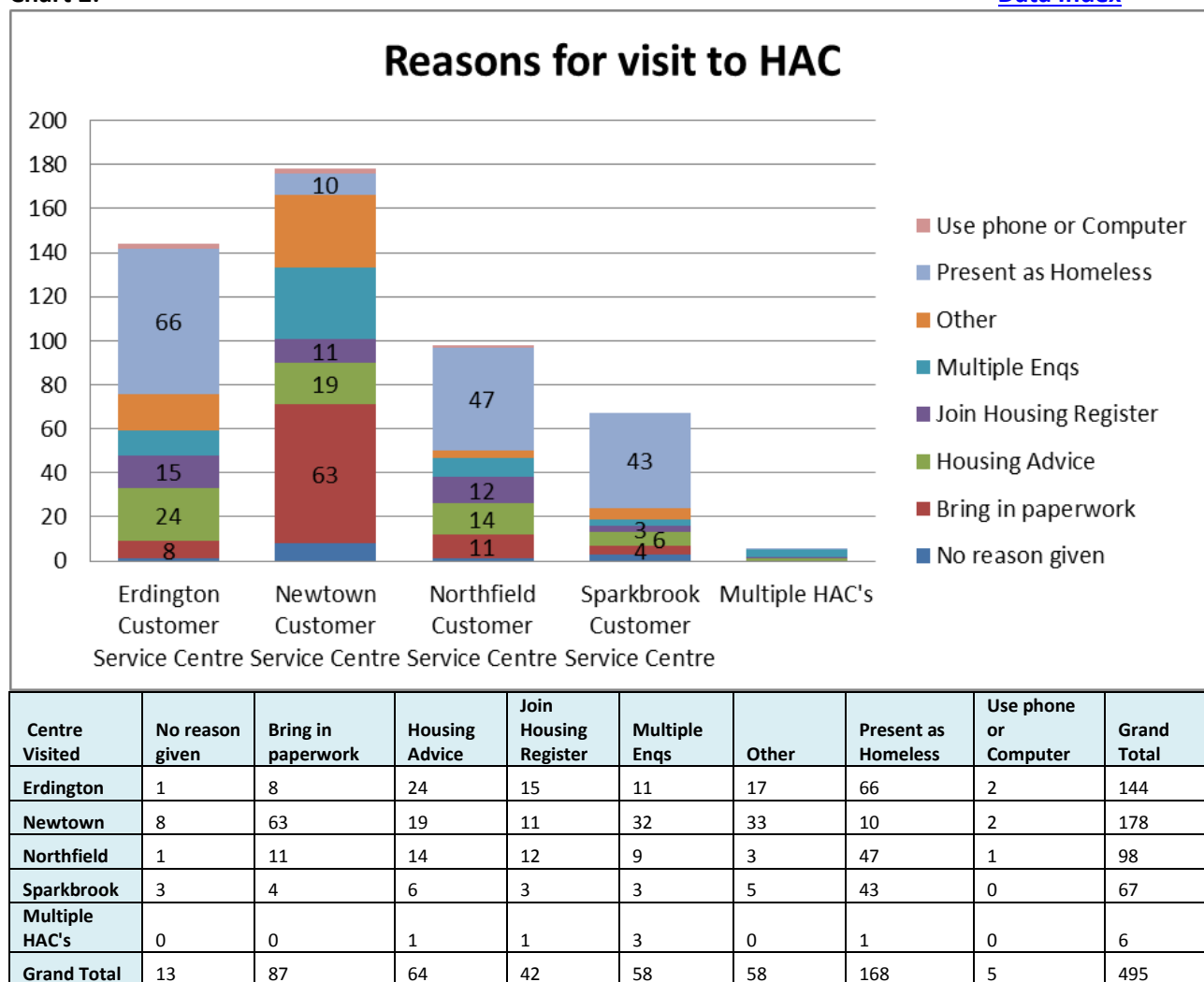
5.1.2. The graph below (Chart 2) shows the responses of customers asked their reason for attending the HAC on that particular occasion. The responses show that in 3 of the 4 centres 'Presenting as Homeless' was the most popular reason for visiting the centre.

5.1.3. Newtown was the notable exception to this pattern however this is explained as Newtown does not presently administer 'Roofless' (Homeless on the day) presentations, which account for more than 50% of all Homeless Applicants (from previous demand analysis). Newtown's customer base includes a much larger proportion of customers presenting with 'Multiple' Enquiries (55% of all 'Multiple Enquiries'). Further analysis of this shows that 53% of those attending Newtown with 'Multiple Enquiries' are seeking Housing Advice.

- 5.1.4. Chart 2 also shows that respondents from Newtown were primarily attending to 'Bring in Paperwork' (35% of respondents). Future plans to move to self-service and allow the acceptance of scanned or emailed documents and proofs should reduce this traffic and allow the centre to better accommodate additional customers.

Chart 2:

[Data Index](#)



- 5.1.5. The data below (Chart 3) shows the means of transport respondents have used to access the HAC's on the day of their visit. From this data Newtown has the highest proportion of people accessing the centre on foot (48% of all respondents accessing on foot and equal to totals of the remaining 3 centres combined).

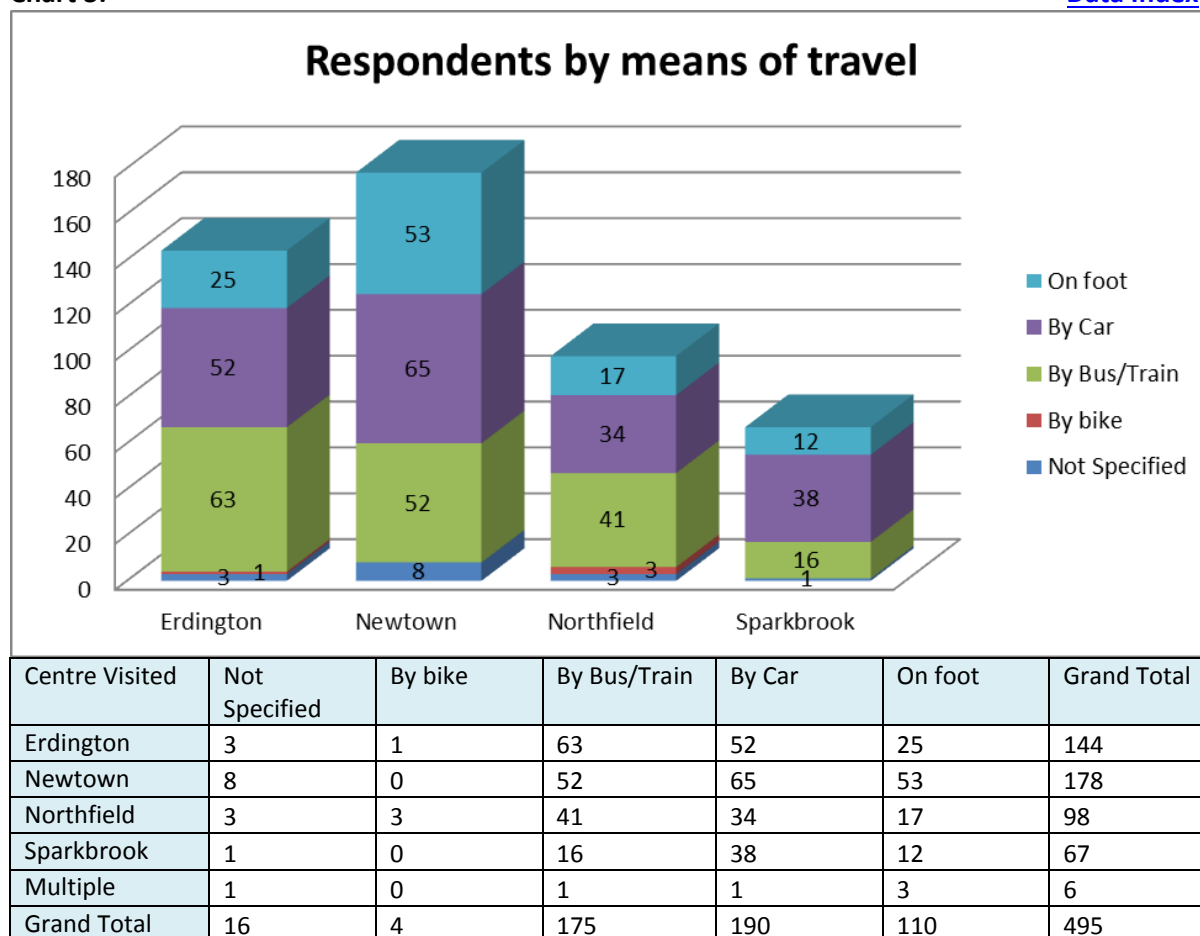
- 5.1.6. This data shows that presently 73% of respondents currently use some form of vehicular transport (bus/rail/car) to access a Housing Advice Centre. This percentage increases at the centres most affected by the proposed changes

with 81% of Erdington Customers, 79% of Northfield Customers and 81% of Sparkbrook Customers all presently using vehicular transport to visit these centres.

- 5.1.7. Notable was the higher than expected proportion of customers accessing a HAC by car. 35-36% of respondents at Newtown, Erdington & Northfield accessed HAC's by means of a car with this figure rising to 57% of respondents at Sparkbrook.

Chart 3:

[Data Index](#)



- 5.1.8. Homeless households are amongst the most vulnerable customers accessing the centre. Moving forward the service intends to focus on this client group specialising in Homelessness Prevention and dealing with Homeless applications. Chart 4 shows respondents who have cited presenting as homeless as the reason for their visit (including where homelessness is one of 'multiple' reasons for visiting) and analyses the means by which they accessed the HAC on the day they completed the questionnaire.

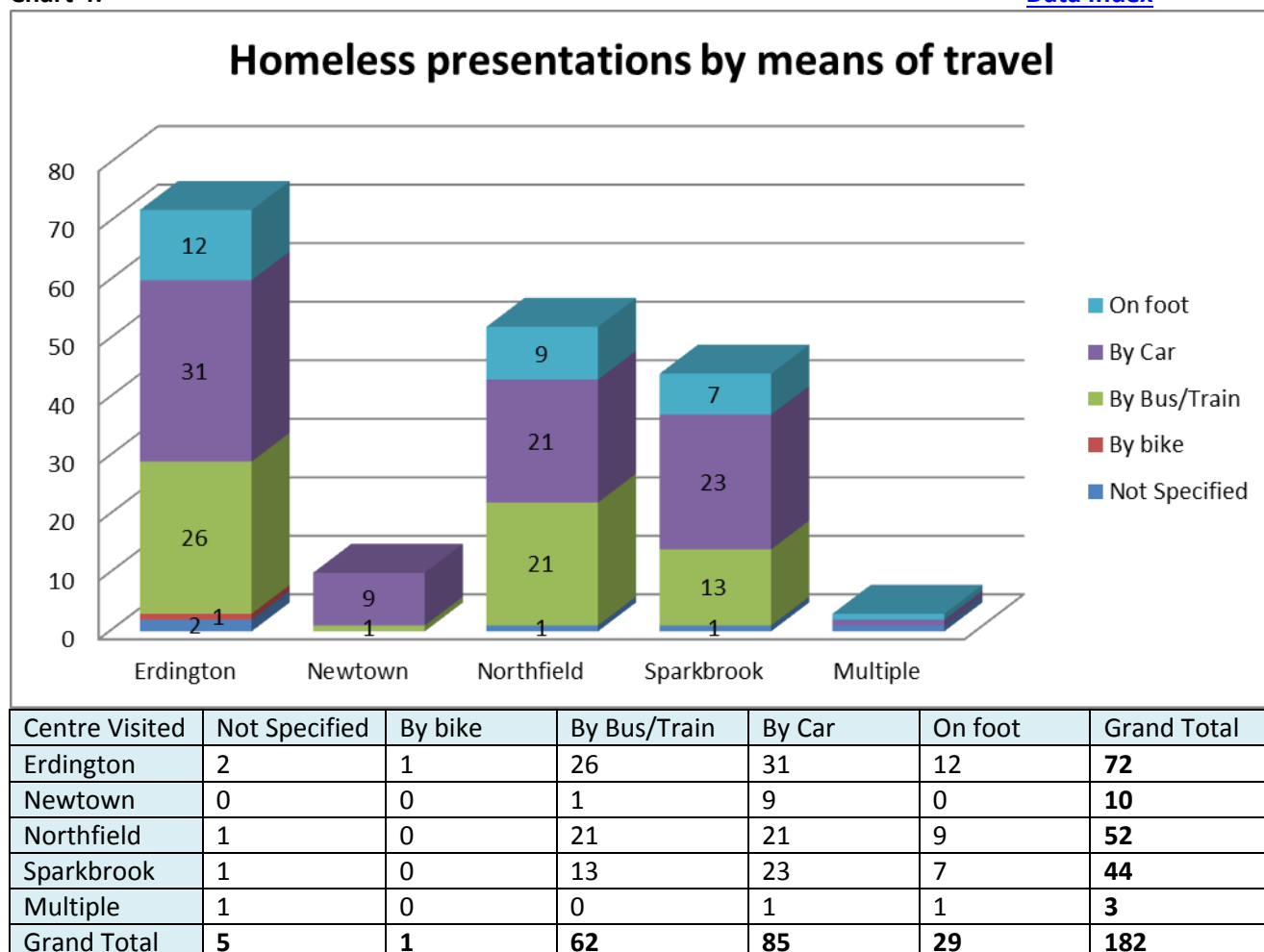
- 5.1.9. Chart 4 shows that only a small number of respondents presenting as homeless access a Housing Advice Centre on foot. Overall 81% of all respondents presenting as Homeless access a HAC by Car, Bus or Rail. This

overall figure is mirrored at the 3 most impacted centres. 79% of Erdington Homeless Respondents accessed the HAC by Car, Bus or Rail with 81% doing so at Northfield and 82% doing so at Sparkbrook.

5.1.10. Again notable was the higher than expected number of Homeless applicants who accessed the centre by car. At the most affected HAC's this figure was between 40-52% (40% at Erdington, 40% at Northfield and 52% at Sparkbrook).

Chart 4:

[Data Index](#)

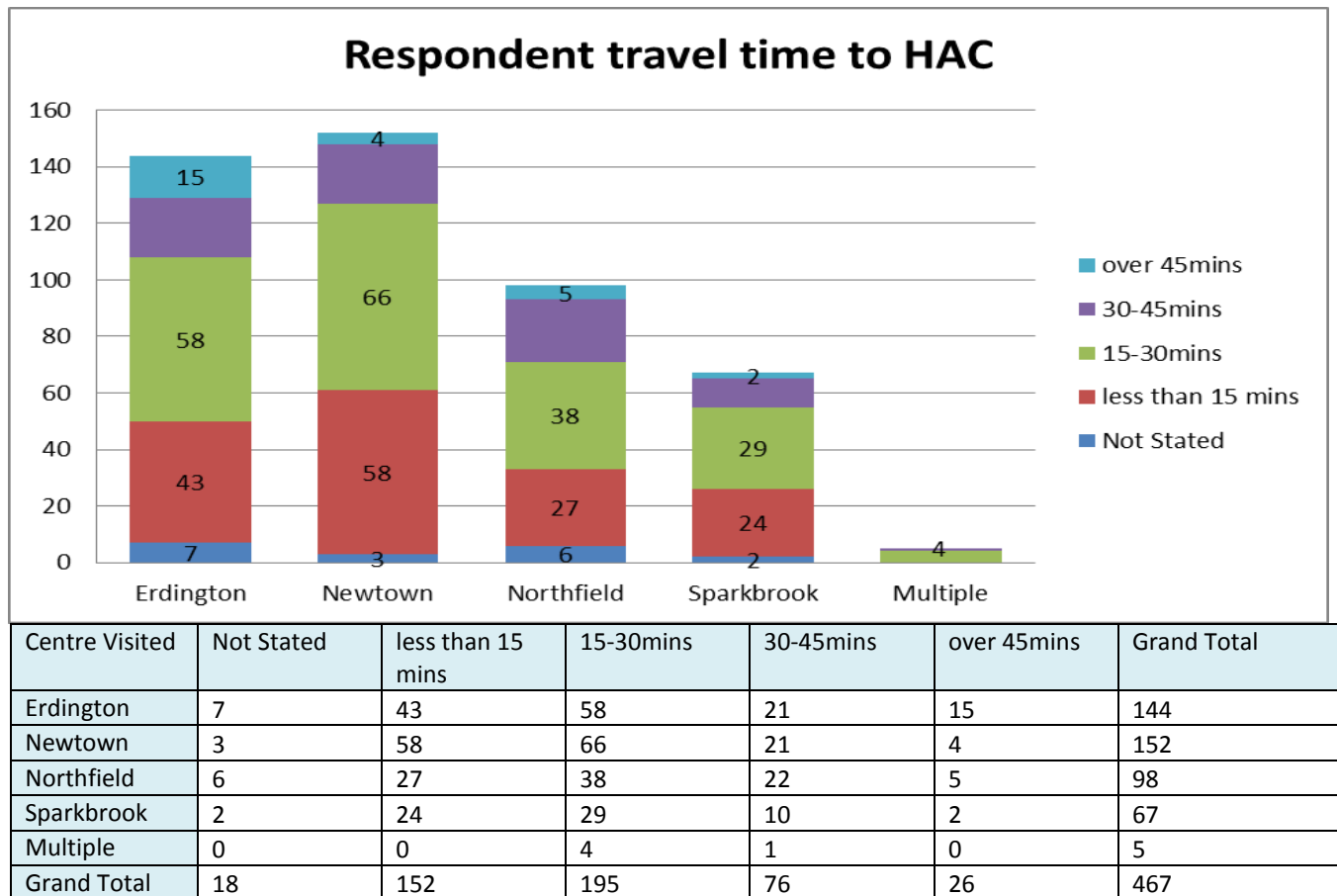


5.1.11. Respondents were asked to provide an estimate for the time it took them to reach the HAC on the day of their visit. The data gathered here is outlined in Chart 5.

5.1.12. Of the most affected HAC's 25% of Erdington Customers, 28% of Northfield Customers and 16% of Sparkbrook Customers presently travel 30+ mins to reach the centre.

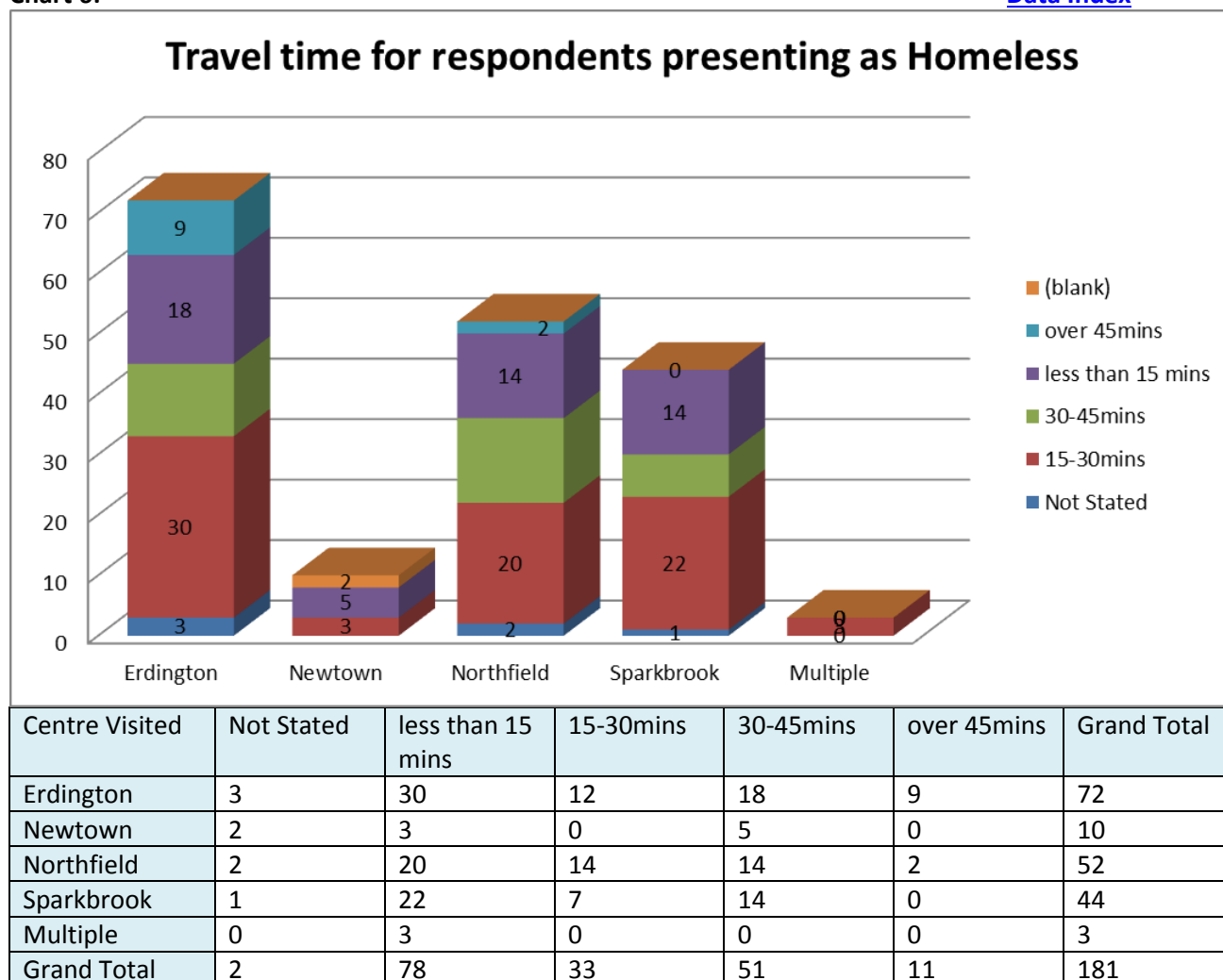
Chart 5:

[Data Index](#)



5.1.13. When travel time for respondents is limited to those presenting as Homeless this picture remains similar. 25% of respondents travel in excess of 30minutes to reach a HAC, 43% take 15-30 mins and 29% can access one in less than 15mins. This data is shown in Chart 6.

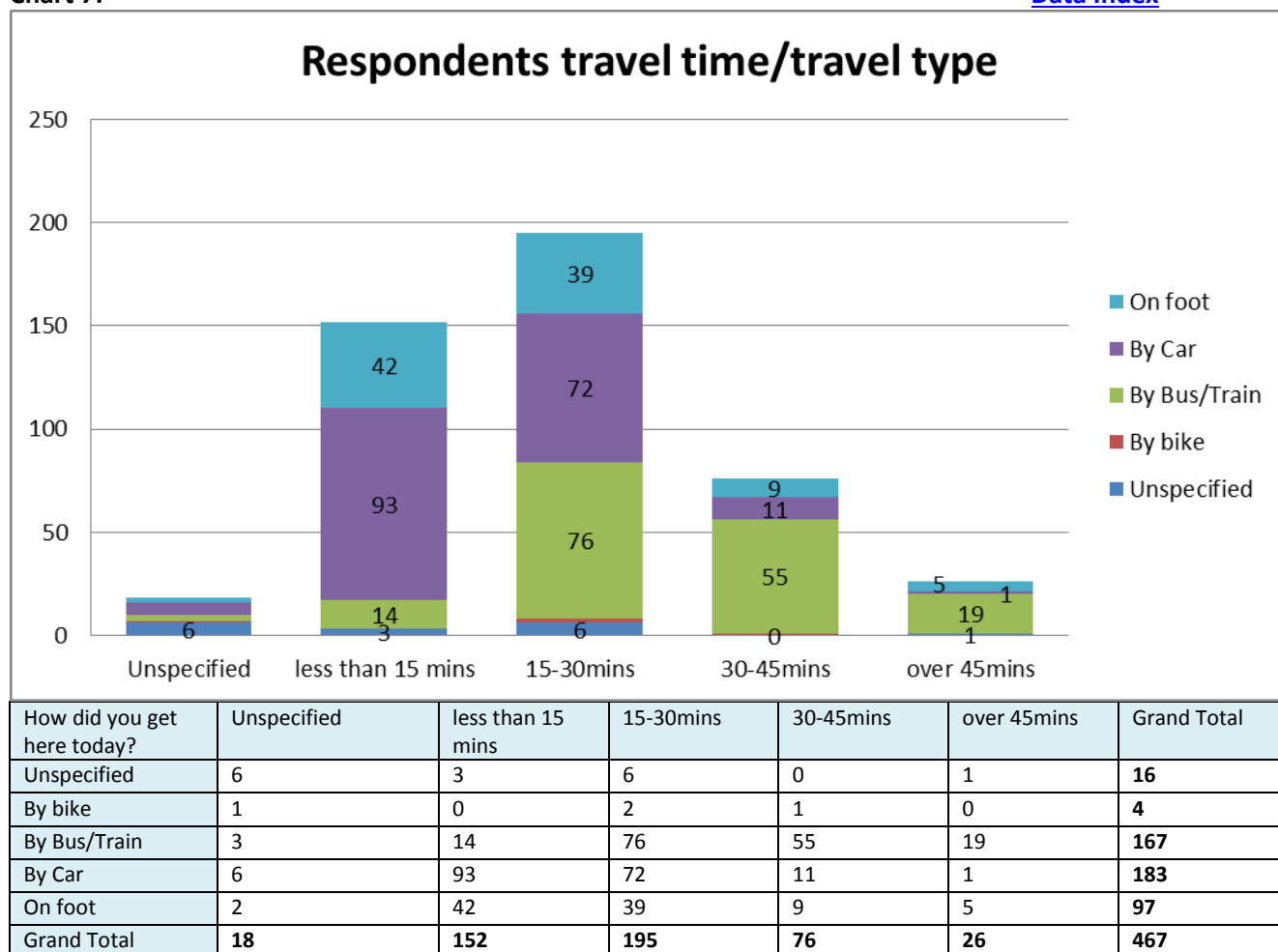
Chart 6:

[Data Index](#)

5.1.14. When Travel Time and method of Travel are analysed the responses appear within anticipations. The majority of journeys within 30 minutes are undertaken by Car or on foot. Only around 6% of all journeys are by car or foot exceeding 30 minutes. A small number (3%) accessed a HAC via Public Transport in less than 15 minutes.

5.1.15. 39% of all journeys were undertaken via car with over half of these being short journeys of 15 mins or less. and 17% of respondents reached a HAC on foot, the majority of these journeys took less than 15 minutes however a significant number took between 15 and 30 mins. 34% of all respondent journeys to HAC's took place on Public Transport taking above 15 minutes. Of this total 48% of journeys took 15-30mins, 32% took 30-45 mins and 11% travelled in excess of 45 mins. Data relating to this can be found in Chart 7.

Chart 7:

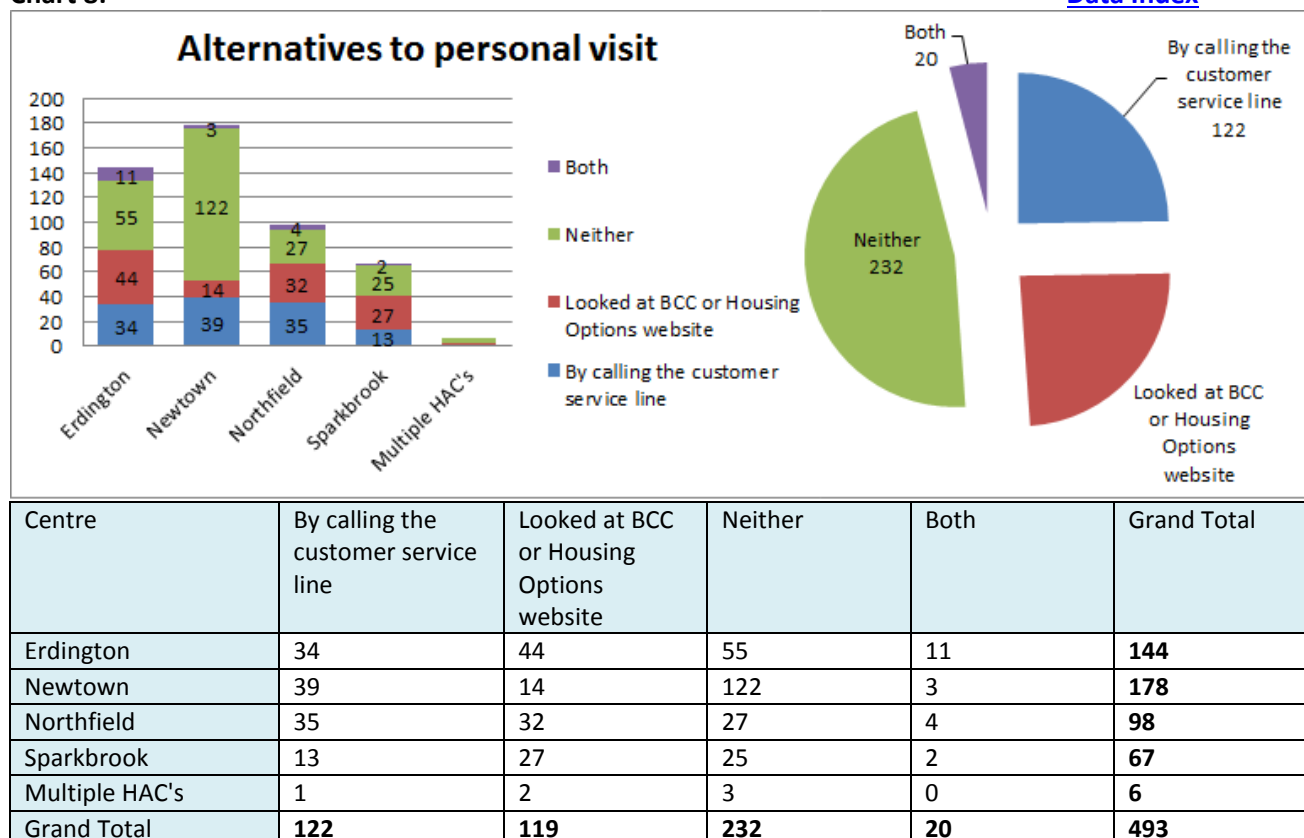
[Data Index](#)

5.1.16. Currently, those seeking Housing Advice can seek this via a personal visit to a Housing Advice Centre, by calling the customer service line, by visiting the corporate Birmingham.gov website or by visiting the Birmingham Housing Options website. Respondents in this survey were asked which of the alternatives they had tried before visiting a HAC.

5.1.17. Just over 50% of all respondents had sought assistance through the customer service line, website(s) or both before personally visiting a HAC. However this also means that nearly 50% of respondents had not sought assistance through other means before visiting a centre. 53% of all respondents who did not seek advice elsewhere first were visitors to Newtown

5.1.18. The data regarding alternatives to personal visit can be found in Chart 8.

Chart 8:

[Data Index](#)

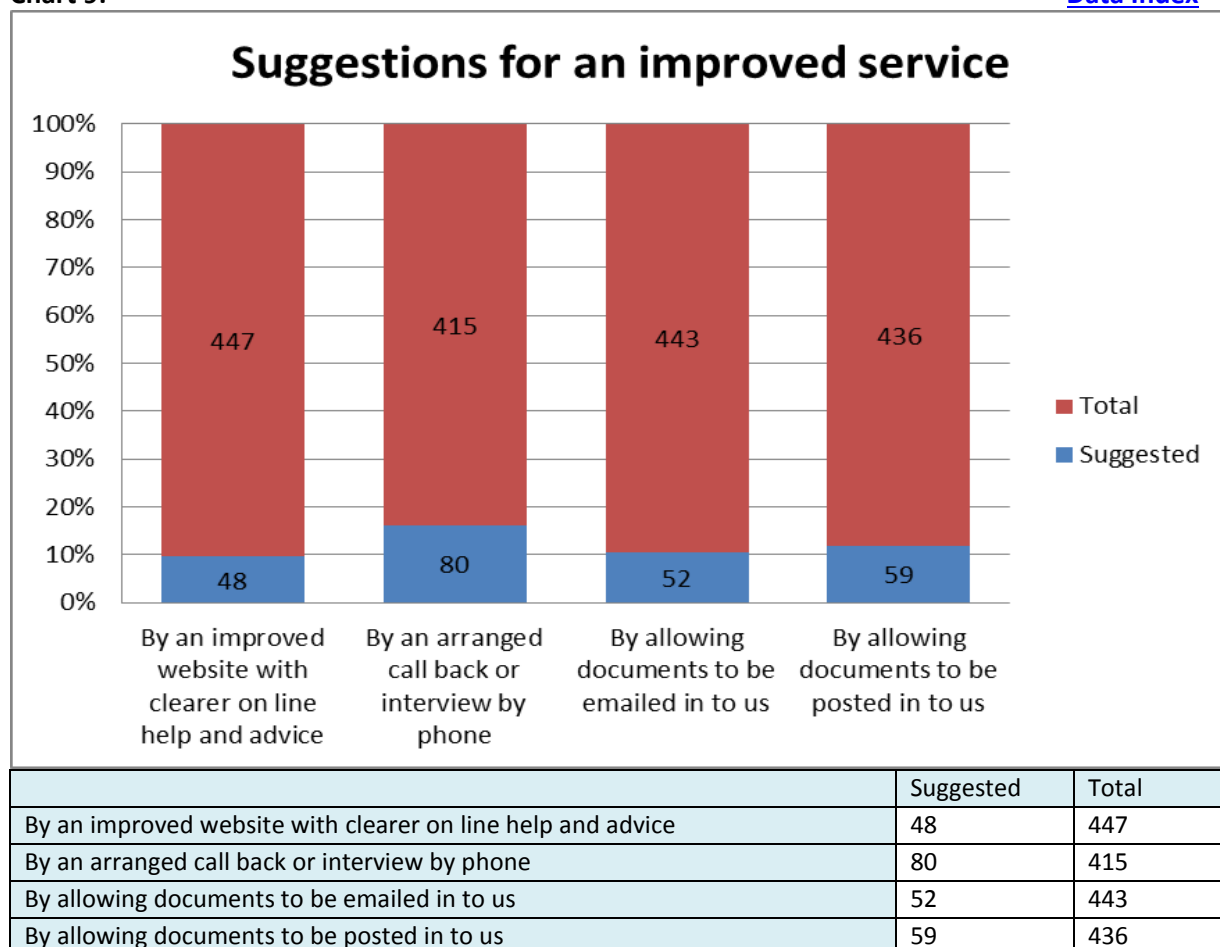
5.1.19. As part of consultation A respondents were asked “Thinking about what you came in for today could we have dealt with this in any other way” and were given 4 options which the service is considering to make improvements in.

5.1.20. Of these 4 suggested areas for improvement only the option for an arranged call back showed significantly more positive responses than the others with around 15% of respondents believing this could have resolved their requirement to personally visit. All three remaining options received around a 10% favourable response⁵.

5.1.21. It is therefore apparent that of all respondents, the large majority do not feel that their situation could have been resolved by other means than personal visit. However, in considering the small numbers that feel their issue could have been dealt with in an alternate way this could still impact significantly on HAC footfall. Those believing that their issue could have been resolved by an arranged call back or telephone interview represent 19% of all respondents. Dependant on how many respondents selected multiple alternate options this figure could reach 55% (from 239 alternate option selections) This information is displayed in Chart 9.

⁵ Respondents asked this question were allowed to select multiple suggestions for improvement.

Chart 9:

[Data Index](#)

5.1.22. Again in considering that Homeless Households are amongst the most vulnerable that will present to the service, analysis was undertaken to determine the number of visits each respondent undertook to a HAC in the last year. Of those presenting as Homeless 32% were visiting for the first time in 12 months. Of this same group a total of 69% had visited 1-3 times in total over the last 12 months.

5.1.23. The homeless group shows a downward trend in repeat visits indicating that Homeless households make fewer visits overall.

5.1.24. Among the most frequent reasons for multiple visits to a HAC were those with Multiple/Other Enquiries however 'Bringing in Paperwork' was the most common reason for persons advising that they had visited a HAC in excess of 6 times over the last 12 months⁶.

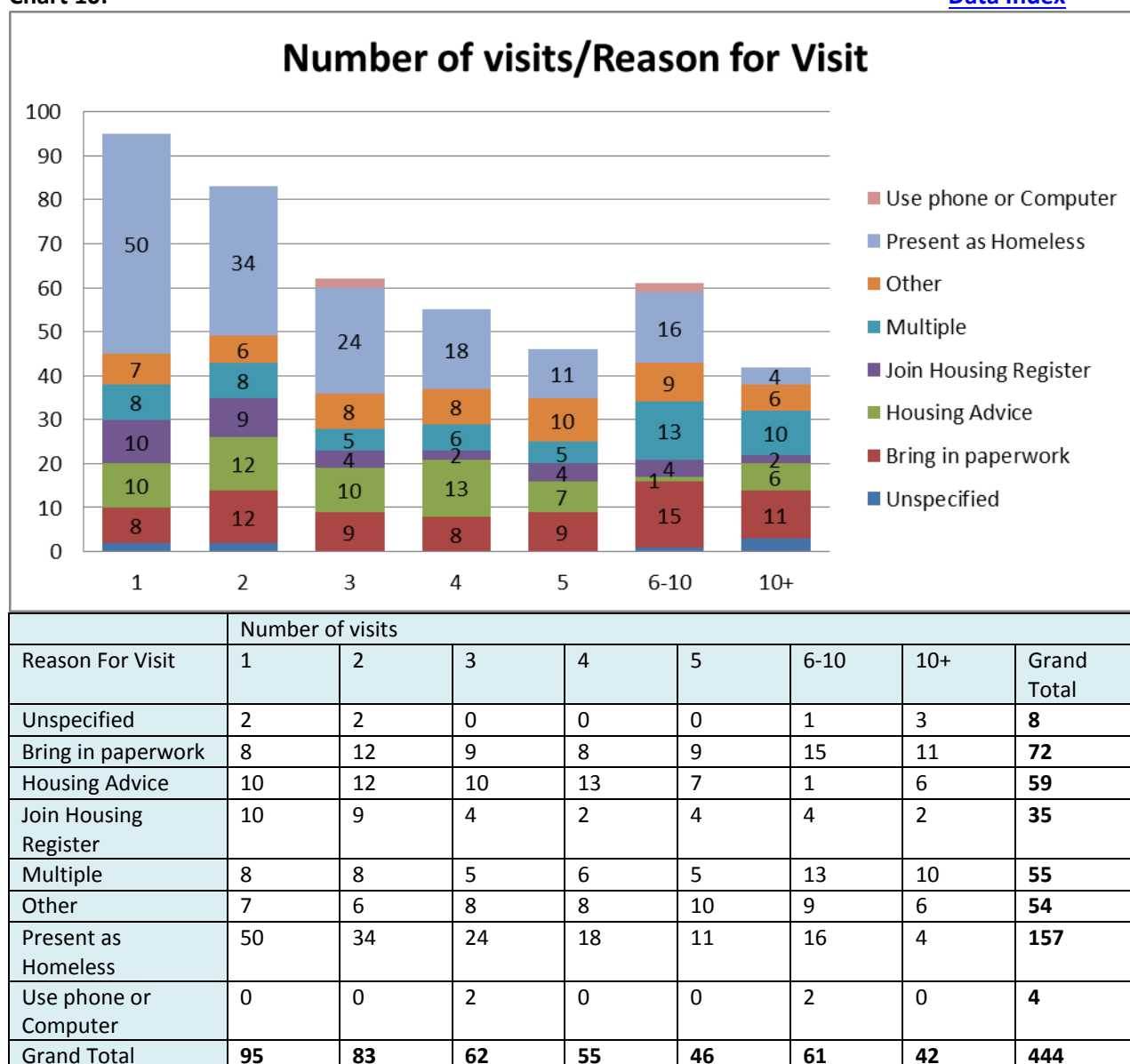
⁶ The data analysis in 6.1.23-6.1.25 is based on best interpretation of data however assumes a trend of repeat visits related to an original enquiry or issue. Data was not gathered on the reason for each of multiple visits and may vary.

5.1.25. It is important to note that, of the identified number of respondents who have visited HAC's 6 or more times in 12 months, these repeat visitors are likely to represent a large proportion of the overall HAC footfall. Targeting these repeat visitors by removing reasons for repeat visits (such as providing Online Part VI applications and allowing documentation to be emailed or scanned) may impact significantly on reducing the need for such repeat visits.

5.1.26. Chart 10 below shows a graphical representation of visits against the reason for the respondent's most recent visit.

Chart 10:

[Data Index](#)

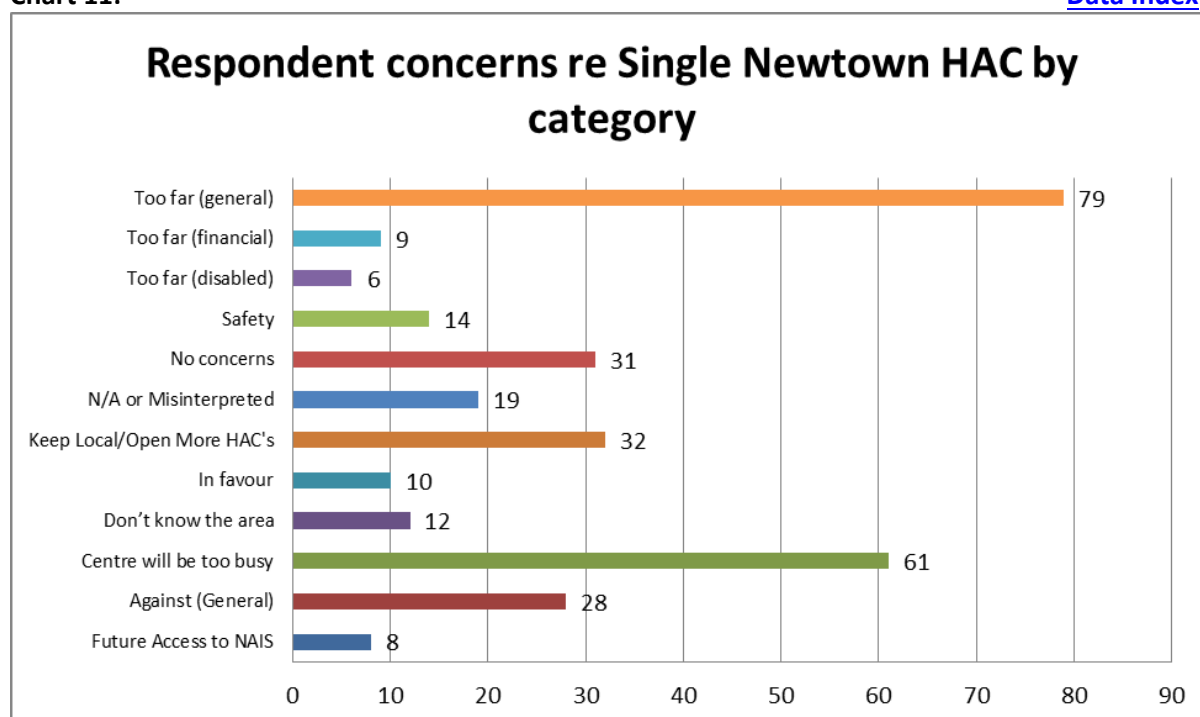


5.1.27. Customers were asked to outline any concerns they had regarding proposals for a single housing advice centre based at Newtown. Respondents were given the opportunity to provide free text responses to this question.

5.1.28. 266 responses were received to this question. A full list of these responses can be found at Appendix 1D of this report. For the purposes of analysis these 266 responses have been reviewed and categorised into 12 broad categories. Responses provided may, due to free text, fit into two or more categories and therefore the number of categorised responses (Chart 11) does not correlate directly with the 266 responses provided.

Chart 11:

[Data Index](#)



5.1.29. In addition to the data above a word-cloud analysis has been undertaken scanning the free text responses for keywords. The results can be found below with data confirming the number of occurrences.

Appointment Benefit Advice STAFF Office Open Children
Good Idea Difficult Disabled Newtown
Overcrowded Centre PHONE Far PLACE
Travel FACE to FACE Waiting Prefer
Access Not AGREE Think Not WORK Issues CAUSE
Housing Officer Long Queues Safety

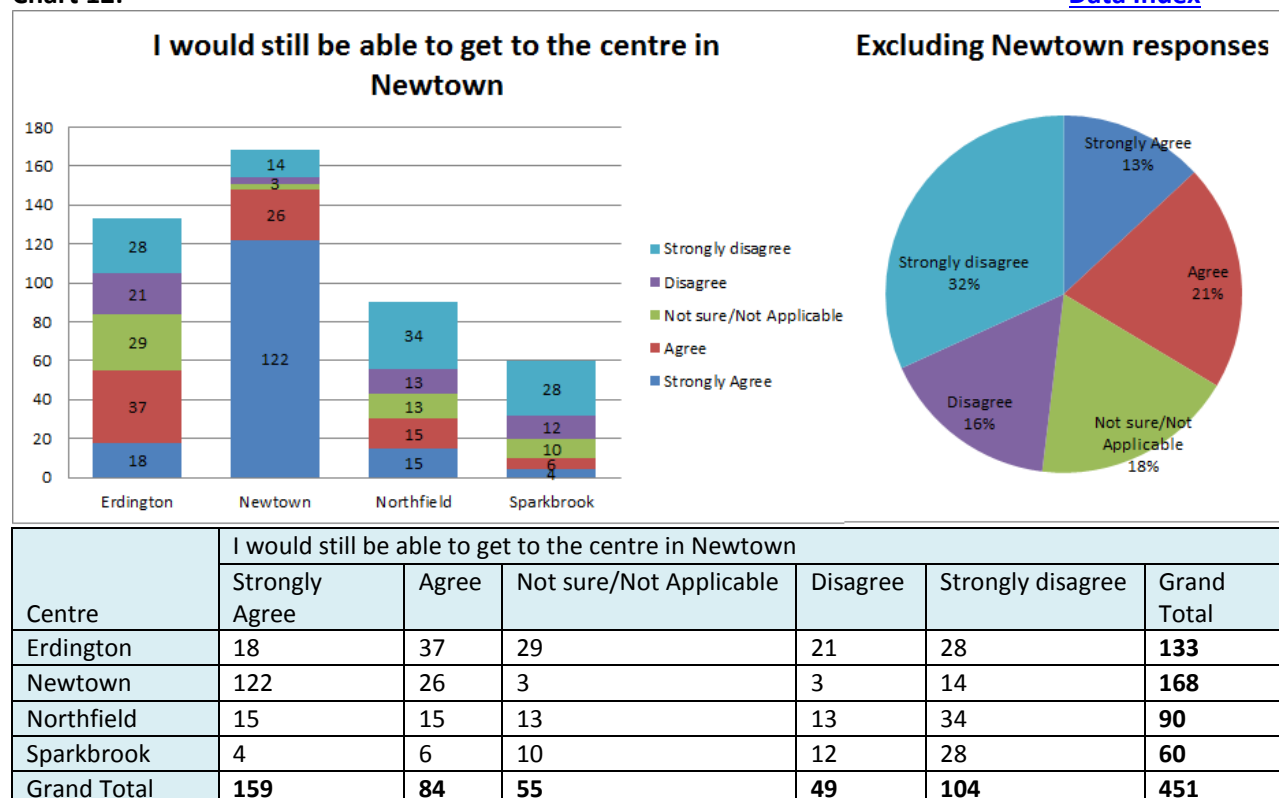
Travel	<div><div></div></div>	22.56%	60
Far	<div><div></div></div>	11.65%	31
Waiting	<div><div></div></div>	11.65%	31
Centre	<div><div></div></div>	9.02%	24
Access	<div><div></div></div>	5.26%	14
Newtown	<div><div></div></div>	5.26%	14
Think	<div><div></div></div>	5.26%	14
Difficult	<div><div></div></div>	4.51%	12
Issues	<div><div></div></div>	3.38%	9
Children	<div><div></div></div>	3.01%	8

5.1.30. Respondents were asked if they felt they would still be able to get to the centre in Newtown. Analysis of the results of this question shows that, overall more than 50% of respondents agreed that they would. However it is noted that respondents from Newtown form 36% of all respondents ([Chart 1](#)). Therefore further analysis was undertaken restricting responses to those centres where closure is proposed.

5.1.31. Upon this further analysis the trend changes. 48% either disagree or strongly disagree that they would be able to make it to a Newtown based centre (the large majority of these strongly disagreeing). 18% of respondents were unsure or felt it did not apply and 34% agreed (to some extent) that they would be able to reach the proposed new centre. This data can be found in Chart 12 .

Chart 12:

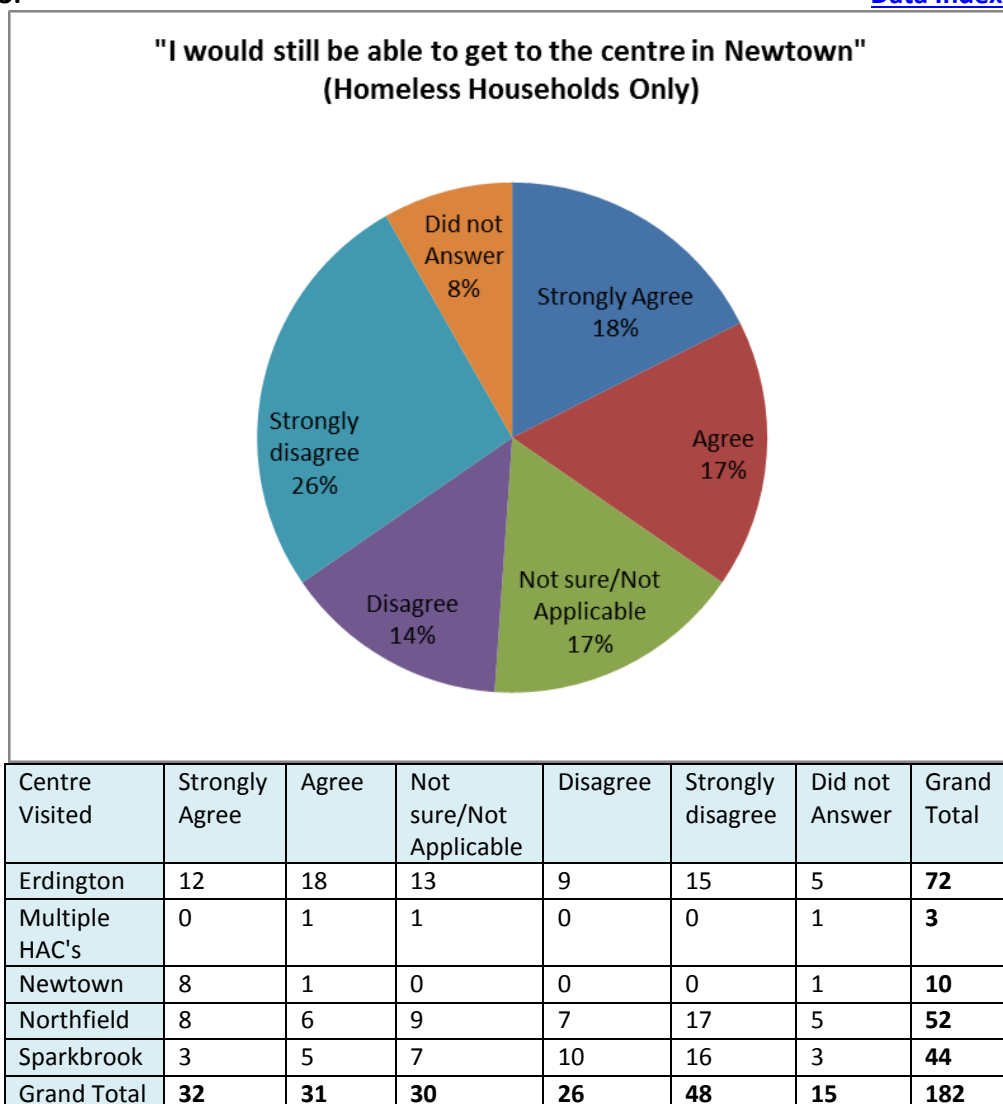
[Data Index](#)



5.1.32. Again considering the particular vulnerability of Homeless Households the data considered above was limited to Homeless Households only. When this filtered data was analysed 26% of homeless respondents strongly disagreed that they would be able to reach Newtown with a further 14% disagreeing. 18% of respondents strongly agreed that they could reach Newtown and a further 17% agreed.

5.1.33. No additional analysis of Homeless households exclusive of Newtown data is shown as, due to the low number of respondents presenting as Homeless from Newtown, this did not significantly impact on findings and the trend remained the same. A breakdown of responses by all homeless applicants can be found in Chart 13.

Chart 13:

[Data Index](#)

5.1.34. In considering potential mitigation for those who may be unable to access the service in its proposed future form, customers were asked to what degree they agreed or disagreed with 3 statement regarding alternate ways they could access the service or an alternate service.

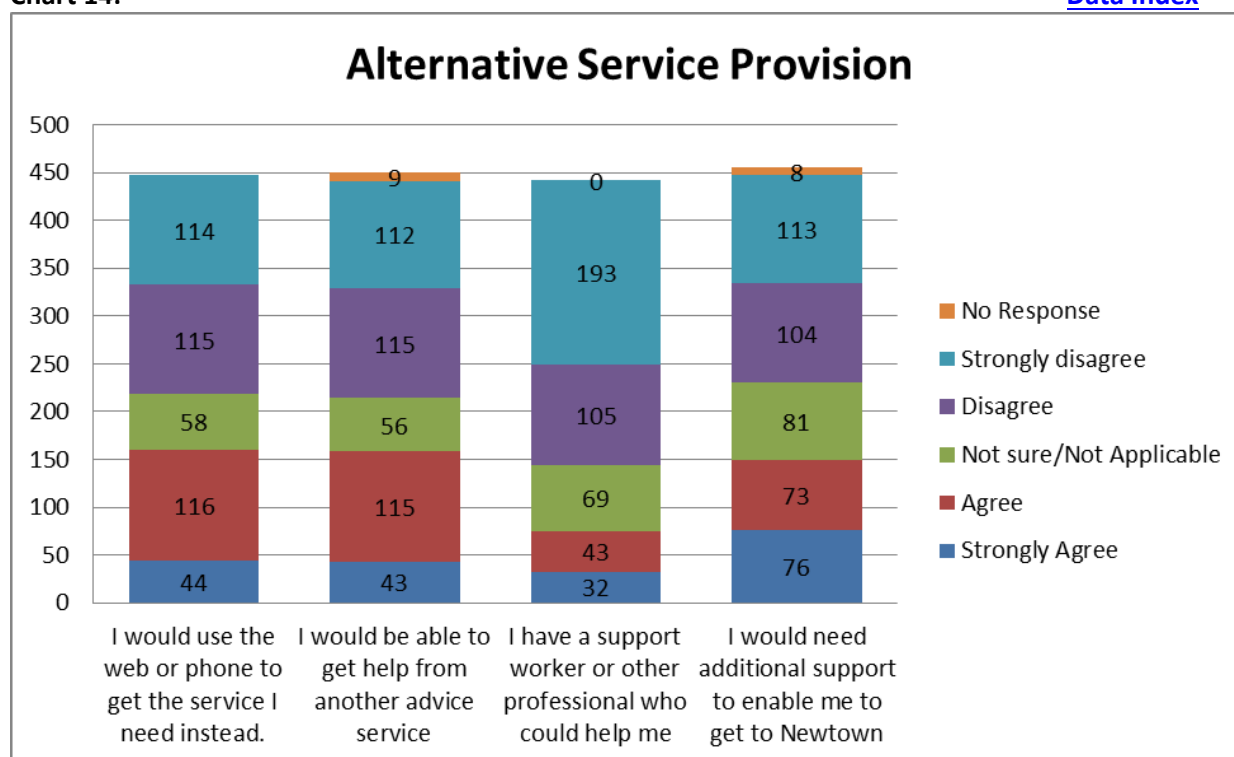
5.1.35. The results (shown in Chart 14) show, as anticipated, a large number of people do not feel that they could access the service in an alternate way or similar service. However there is still a significant number who would. 36% of respondents agreed (to some extent) that they would use the phone or web to get the assistance that they required. 35% of respondents felt that they could get advice from an alternate advice service and 17% agreed that they had a support worker or alternate professional that could help them.

5.1.36. The majority did not indicate that they would need additional support to reach Newtown (49%). 32% agreed (to some extent) that they would require such assistance and a remaining 18% were unsure if they would require any additional assistance.

5.1.37. The smaller proportion of respondents identifying that they would need additional assistance to reach Newtown diverts from the established trend (In [chart 12](#)) where 48% disagreed (to some extent) that they would be able to reach the proposed Newtown Centre while only 32% believe that they would require assistance to do so.

Chart 14:

[Data Index](#)



5.1.38. A further free text response was invited in response to the question “How do you think we could make it easier for you to get the housing and homelessness support you might need?”

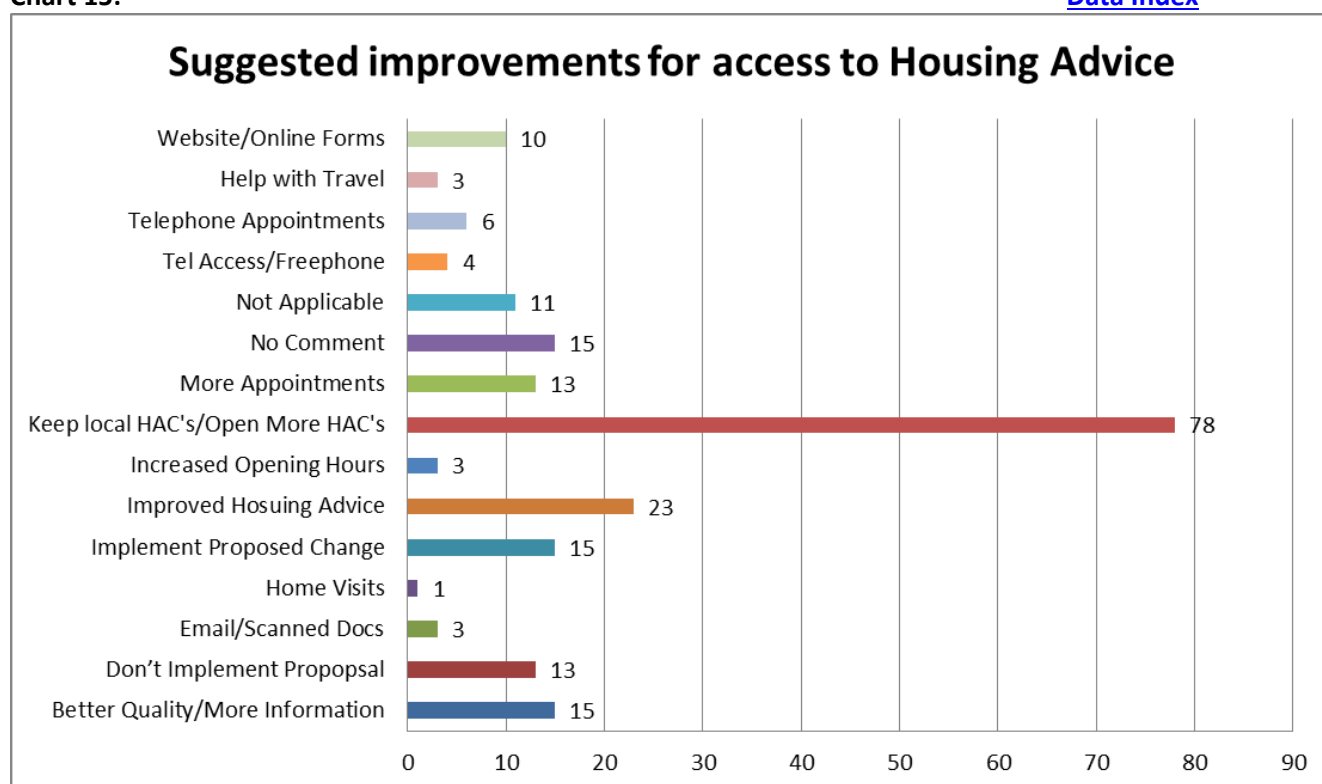
5.1.39. A total of 188 responses were provided to this question. Analysis of this data allowed these responses to be grouped broadly into 14 categories (as with 5.1.28) with responses potentially fitting into multiple categories dependant on content. It was notable that keeping the current number of (or opening additional) HAC’s featured very prominently again, having previously appeared as a prominent category in analysis of responses at 5.1.28.

5.1.40. Although keeping existing or opening additional HAC's was by far the most frequently categorised response (41%), other frequent responses were noted as being similar to improvements already being worked on as part of the Homelessness Transformation Programme in general and the proposed Newtown centre in particular. This includes Better Quality Information (8%), Improved Housing Advice (12%), More appointments (7%), Telephone Appointments (3%) and an improved website/online forms (5%).

5.1.41. The data gathered from this question can be found demonstrated graphically, in Chart 15. A full copy of free text responses can be found at Appendix 1D of this report.

Chart 15:

[Data Index](#)



5.1.42. A Wordcloud analysis was also undertaken showing the most commonly used words within these free test responses. This can be found overleaf along with data showing the frequency of use of the top 10 words.

Advice WORSE ABLE PAY Centre Open Issues
 Newtown Contact Access LIVE
 Sparkbrook Interview Service Calling
 Office Open Bus Housing ALLOW
 Local Clear Support Northfield Open Homeless
 THINK STAFF Disagree Appointments Phone

Office Open	<div><div></div></div>	18.62%	35
Service	<div><div></div></div>	7.98%	15
Housing	<div><div></div></div>	7.98%	15
Sparkbrook	<div><div></div></div>	7.98%	15
Local	<div><div></div></div>	7.45%	14
Access	<div><div></div></div>	5.85%	11
Support	<div><div></div></div>	5.32%	10
Newtown	<div><div></div></div>	5.32%	10
Homeless	<div><div></div></div>	4.79%	9
Centre Open	<div><div></div></div>	4.26%	8

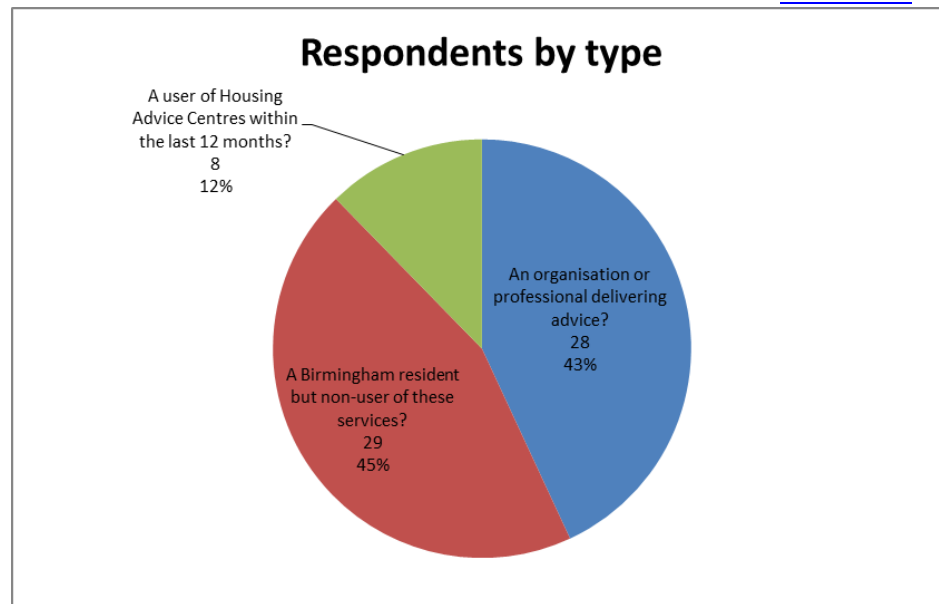
5.2. Consultation B

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- 5.2.1. Of the total responses to Consultation B (the online Be Heard Consultation) 63 were only 'Partially Complete', these responses were individually reviewed. Of the 63 Partially complete responses 4 only detailed the respondents answer to question 1 (In what capacity they were responding) and questions 24 and/or 25 (age and sex). These responses provide no real data or opinion on the proposals and as such they were discounted from the results.
- 5.2.2. Of the remaining partially completed responses 3 did provide data of use and as such these were included. The remaining 56 'Partially Complete' responses only provided an answer to Q1 (in what capacity they were responding). It appears that these were 'Abandoned' responses and as such no useful information could be obtained from this data. This data was therefore also excluded from the final analysis.
- 5.2.3. This results in a total of 65 responses for analysis in relation to Consultation B. The majority of these were 'Organisations or professionals delivering advice' (43%) or 'Birmingham Residents but non users of HAC Services' (45%). Only a small number of respondents were persons who had accessed Housing Advice Services in the last 12 months (12% - equal to 8 people). This data is summarised in Chart 16.

Chart 16:

[Data Index](#)



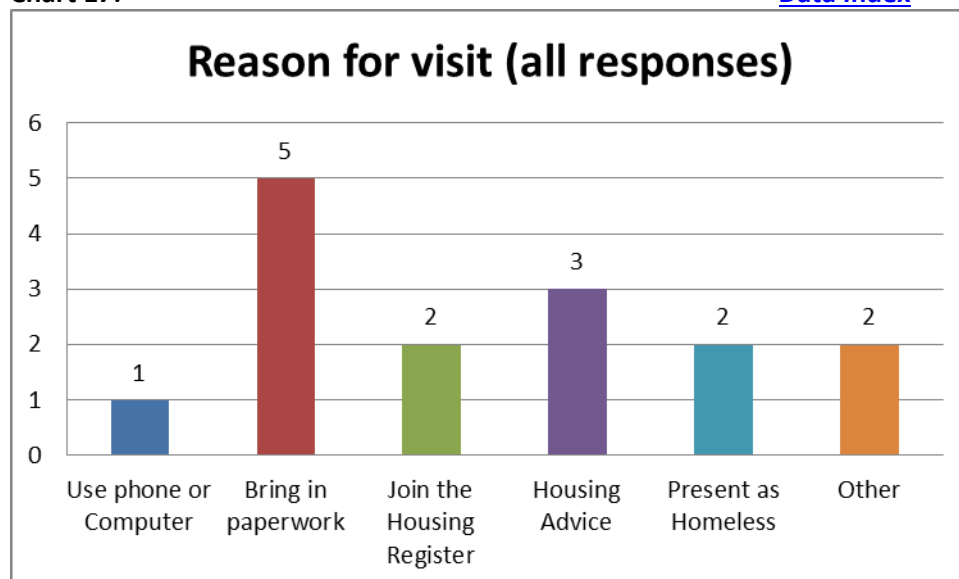
- 5.2.4. Of respondents who had accessed Housing Advice services in the past 12 months they were asked to describe the reasons for their visit and allowed to select multiple reasons. The options provided were the same as those offered in Consultation A.

Of these responses only 2 respondents had visited a HAC to present as Homeless. The majority (5) had visited a HAC to bring in Paperwork.

- 5.2.5. The data is summarised in Chart 17 (below), and presents as contrary to the findings of the same question in Consultation A ([Chart 2](#)) however due to the small sample accurate trends should not be inferred from this data.

Chart 17:

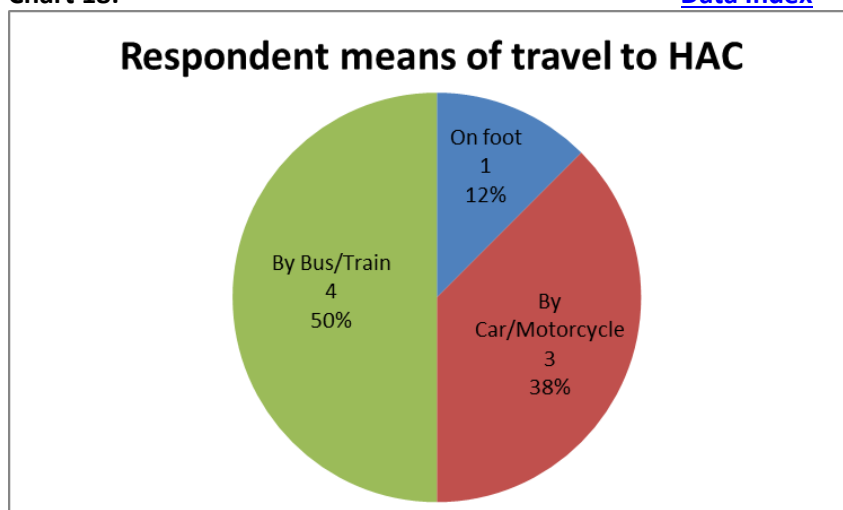
[Data Index](#)



- 5.2.6. Respondents were asked to describe how they had accessed a Housing Advice Centre (means of travel) on previous visits. The options provided were the same as those offered in Consultation A ([Chart 3](#)).
- 5.2.7. Although the small sample here does preclude the drawing of reliable assumptions or inferences as to trends, it is worthy of note that this data does match the trends identified in its Consultation A counterpart. The majority of respondents accessing a HAC via a car or some means of public transport. Respondent data can be found below in Chart 18.

Chart 18:

[Data Index](#)

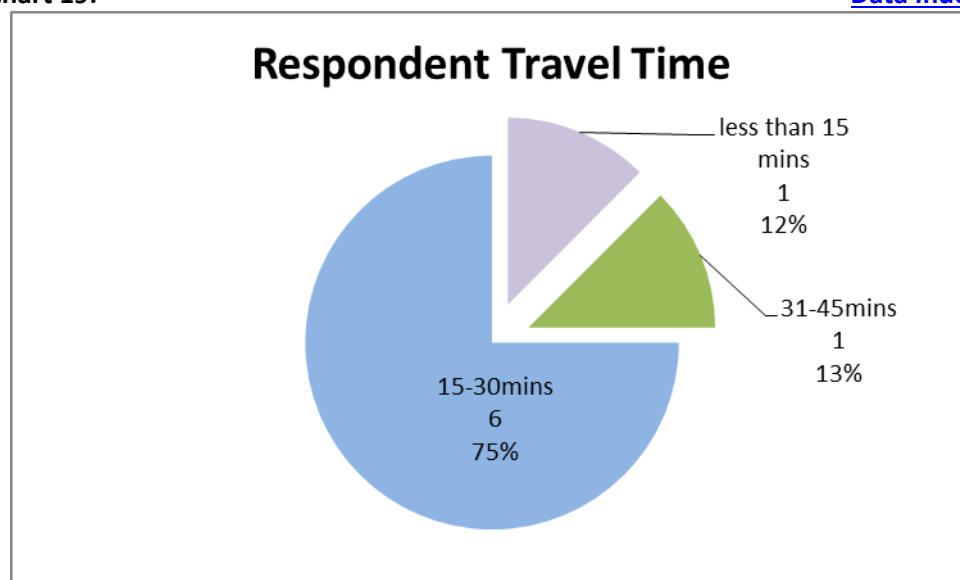


5.2.8. As with Consultation A, respondents accessing services were asked to detail how long their journey took when they last visited a Housing Advice centre. Again the small sample precludes the drawing of reliable conclusions or inferences however the responses do follow the same pattern as their counterparts in Consultation A ([Chart 5](#)).

5.2.9. Again the large majority of respondents accessed a HAC within 15-30 minutes with small numbers taking less than 15 mins and 31-45mins. The respondent data is shown in Chart 19.

Chart 19:

[Data Index](#)



5.2.10. Respondents in consultation B were asked what alternatives they had attempted before visiting a HAC. Of 8 responses, 5 had both called a BCC Contact Centre and consulted BCC Websites for advice.

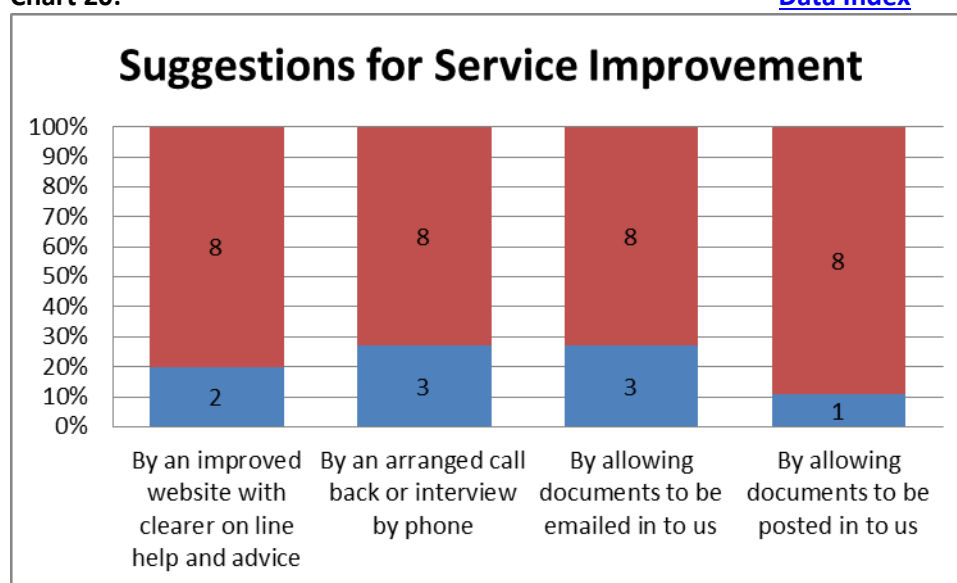
A further respondent had only called a contact centre and 2 respondents had not attempted either option.

5.2.11. These responses show more respondents exploring alternative options than their Consultation A counterparts ([Chart 8](#)) however the small sample group again prevents reliance on this data in the drawing of conclusions.

5.2.12. Respondents were also asked to select from a range of options for an improved service (mirroring [Chart 9](#)). 8 responses were received with 2 respondents selecting none of the suggested improvements. An arranged call back or telephone interview proved to be the (joint) most popular suggestion (mirroring Consultation A). Graphical data is found at Chart 20:

Chart 20:

[Data Index](#)



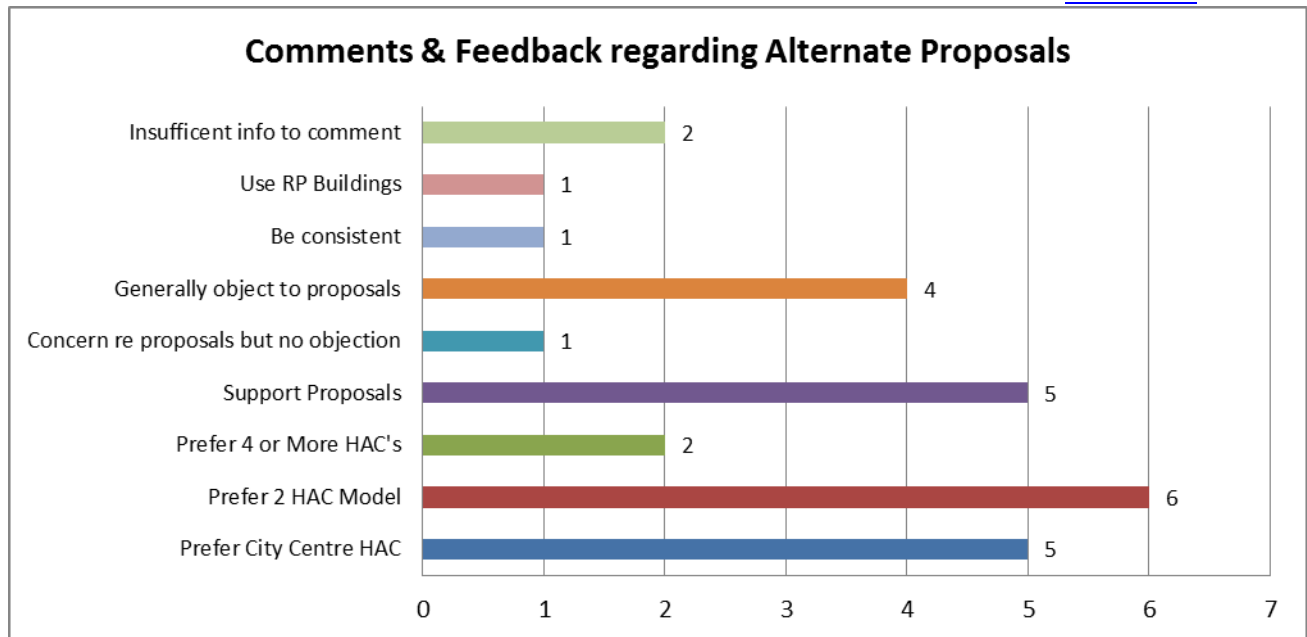
5.2.13. As in Consultation A ([Chart 10](#)), Consultation B also requested information about repeat visitors to HAC's. 7 out of a potential 8 respondents answered this question. 2 had visited a HAC for the first time, 2 had visited twice within the last 12 months. 1 respondent had visited four times, 1 had visited five times and a final respondent had visited between 6-10 times in 12 months.

5.2.14. Both HAC customers and concerned citizens were given the opportunity to consider and provide responses to the alternate proposals that had been considered. Free text comment responses were invited on these.

5.2.15. 25 out of a possible 40 respondents provided comments regarding the alternative proposals. Analysis of this data has taken place and these comments can broadly be separated into 11 categories.

- 5.2.16. Analysis of the free text responses shows that a 2 HAC model is the preferred option amongst respondents (6 favour this). However consideration should be given as to the viability of the suggestions that were made by persons favouring this option and how the issues that caused it's dismissal as an original option could be overcome.
- 5.2.17. Those preferring a City Centre option and those supporting the proposed Newtown Option are joint second in terms of numbers citing this as a preference (5 respondents each). One respondent preferring the city centre option suggested The Council House (with Margaret Street) being considered as an option.
- 5.2.18. The suggestion of The Council House & Margaret Street, while sensible and a good alternative in principle were already reviewed and deemed non-viable as there was insufficient office space, customer waiting areas and customer contact points to accommodate a single HAC option at the location.
- 5.2.19. Another proponent of the city centre option stated *"BCC has many occupied and vacant buildings in the City Centre which I don't see why they could not have been used despite any initial cost outlay"*. However this respondent did not specify any specific locations.
- 5.2.20. The Housing Advice Service reviewed all vacant or available city centre locations within the BCC Property portfolio when seeking a city centre location and none could be found meeting the space and front facing requirements of a Single HAC option.
- 5.2.21. One respondent to this question suggested that *"Perhaps Housing Associations could use there office base and have dual links if Neighbourhood Offices are reduced, this would reduce/spread costs"*. This suggestion would seem to suggest a potential for outposted services and may be worthy of consideration if any local Housing Advice service is to be retained. However this does not overcome the resource requirements that categorised 'Stay as we are' (the 4 centre model) as not being viable in the first instance.
- 5.2.22. A copy of all free text responses relating to Consultation B can be found at Appendix 1D of this report. Chart 21 shows the free text responses by category.

Chart 21:

[Data Index](#)

5.2.23. A wordcloud analysis of the free text responses was also undertaken identifying frequently used words in responses. This can be found below, with data identifying the frequency of word use (top 10):

Housing Advice Delivery Newtown Additional
Access Considered Travel Alternative Costs
Ensuring Consistency Centre Model

Travel	<div><div></div></div>	28.00%	7
Access	<div><div></div></div>	28.00%	7
Costs	<div><div></div></div>	20%	5
Newtown	<div><div></div></div>	20%	5
Consistency	<div><div></div></div>	16%	4
Housing Advice	<div><div></div></div>	8%	2
Centre Model	<div><div></div></div>	8%	2
Considered	<div><div></div></div>	8%	2
Additional	<div><div></div></div>	8%	2
Alternative	<div><div></div></div>	8%	2

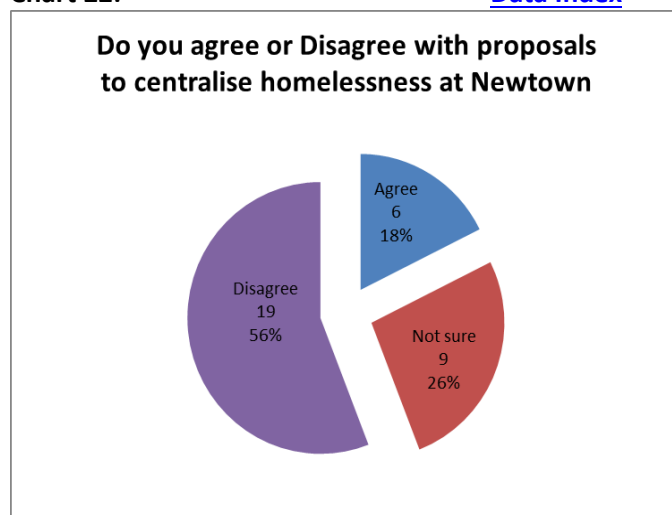
5.2.24. Both HAC customers and concerned citizens were asked to indicate if they agreed or disagreed with the proposals to centralise Homelessness at Newtown. This question was not mirrored in Consultation A for reasons already outlined (3.6).

5.2.25. A total of 34 responses were received out of 37 possible respondents. Here a clear majority disagreed with the proposals. Again the small sample size should be noted when considering the reliability of drawing accurate trends and patterns. In this case responses do match the general theme of the resistance to this option found throughout Consultation A.

5.2.26. The responses can be found represented graphically at Chart 22, Full text can be found at Appendix 1D.

Chart 22:

[Data Index](#)



5.2.27. Both Customers and concerned members of the public were asked to provide free text responses as to any concerns that they would have about moving to a single HAC at Newtown.

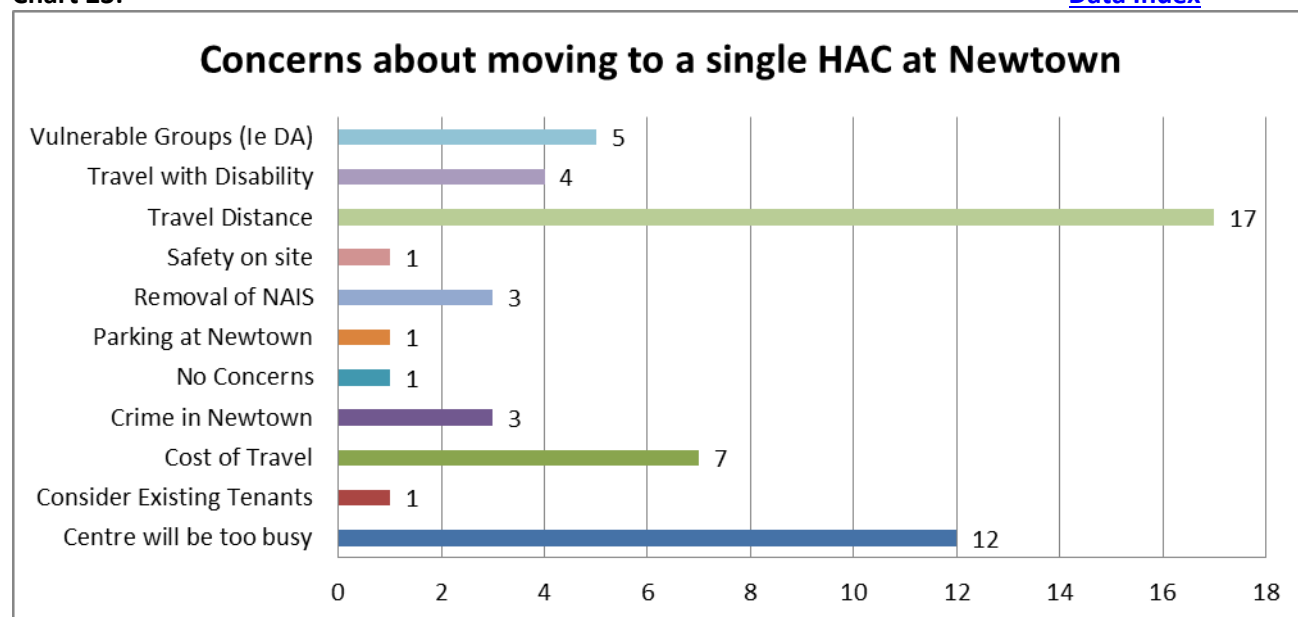
5.2.28. Analysis of these responses allowed them to be grouped into 13 broad categories. As with Consultation A, where the same question was asked ([Chart 11](#)), the same concerns were prevalent, particularly Travel Distance (17 occurrences) and concerns that the centre will be too busy (12 occurrences).

5.2.29. It is worthy to note that further analysis of these free text responses (specifically reviewing terminology and language used) indicates that a number of professionals may have answered as a member of the public rather than as a professional or member of staff.

5.2.30. These categories are graphically represented in Chart 23.

Chart 23:

[Data Index](#)



5.2.31. A Wordcloud analysis of the free text responses was also undertaken identifying frequently used words in responses. This can be found below, with data identifying the frequency of word use (top 10).

Birmingham Seeking Concerns Difficult Service
Issues Travel Amount Newtown Location

Travel	<div><div></div></div>	48.48%	16
Service	<div><div></div></div>	33.33%	11
Newtown	<div><div></div></div>	27.27%	9
Concerns	<div><div></div></div>	24.24%	8
Location	<div><div></div></div>	21.21%	7
Birmingham	<div><div></div></div>	15.15%	5
Issues	<div><div></div></div>	12.12%	4
Difficult	<div><div></div></div>	9.09%	3
Amount	<div><div></div></div>	6.06%	2
Seeking	<div><div></div></div>	6.06%	2

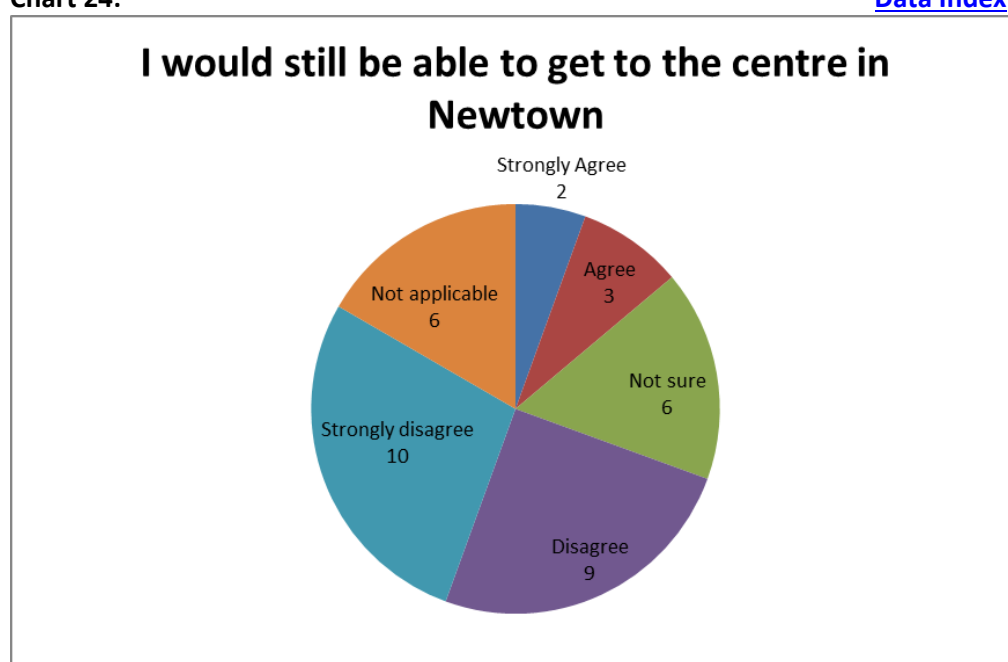
5.2.32. As with Consultation A ([Chart 12](#)), respondents in B were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed that they would still be able to reach a single centre in Newtown.

5.2.33. 36 out of a possible 37 responses were provided and, although the relatively small sample size should again be noted when considering reliable conclusions, the results are comparable to the same question in Consultation A. Attention is drawn to the slight increase in the proportion of respondents disagreeing (to some extent) and a slight decrease in those agreeing (to some extent).

5.2.34. However it is also noteworthy that the number of people 'Strongly' disagreeing also reduced overall (in percentage terms) within Consultation B responses (falling from 32% to 28%). The data from this question can be found below within Chart 24.

Chart 24:

[Data Index](#)

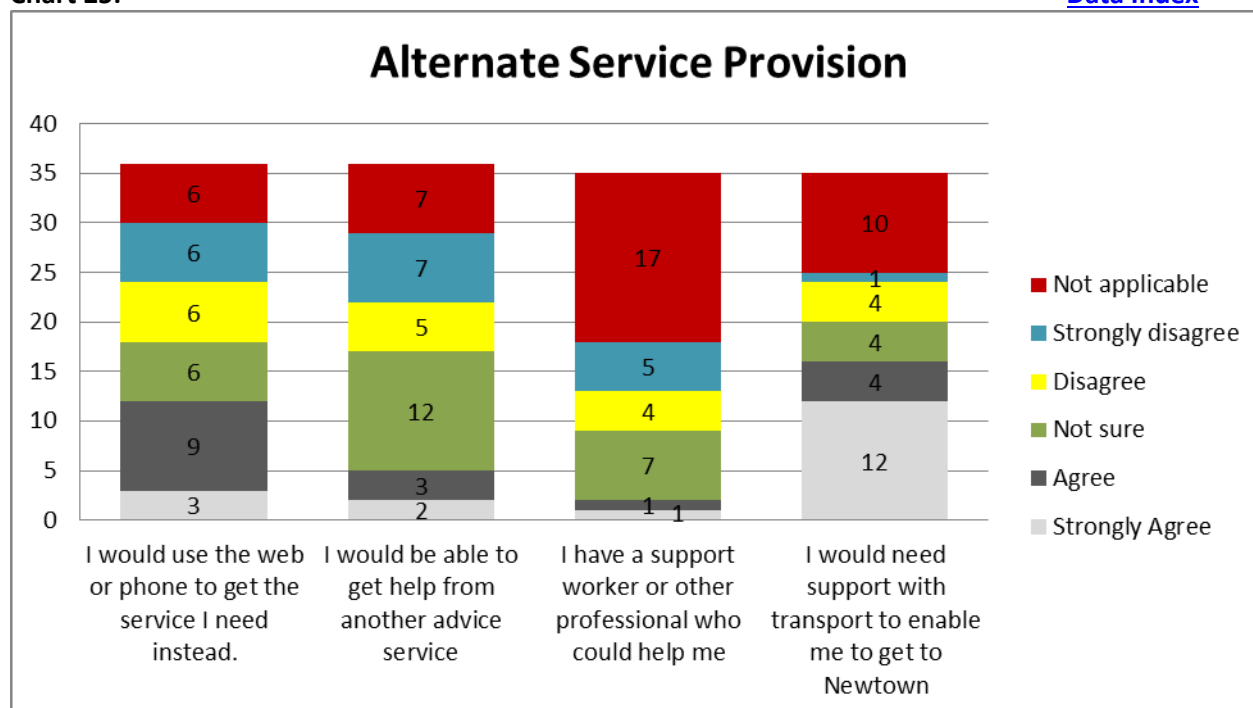


5.2.35. Duplicating Consultation A's [Chart 14](#) respondents were asked how else they may be able to access the service in future.

5.2.36. One third of the 36 total respondents agreed that they would use the phone or the web to get the service that they need. Only 14% felt that they could get advice from another service. Only 6% had a support worker to assist them and 44% stated that they would need additional assistance to reach Newtown.

5.2.37. The results from this question can be found at Chart 25.

Chart 25:

[Data Index](#)

5.2.38. Respondents were asked to provide suggestions for how we might better allow them to access the homelessness and housing support they may need. In the same manner as in Consultation A ([Chart 15](#)), these were free text responses.

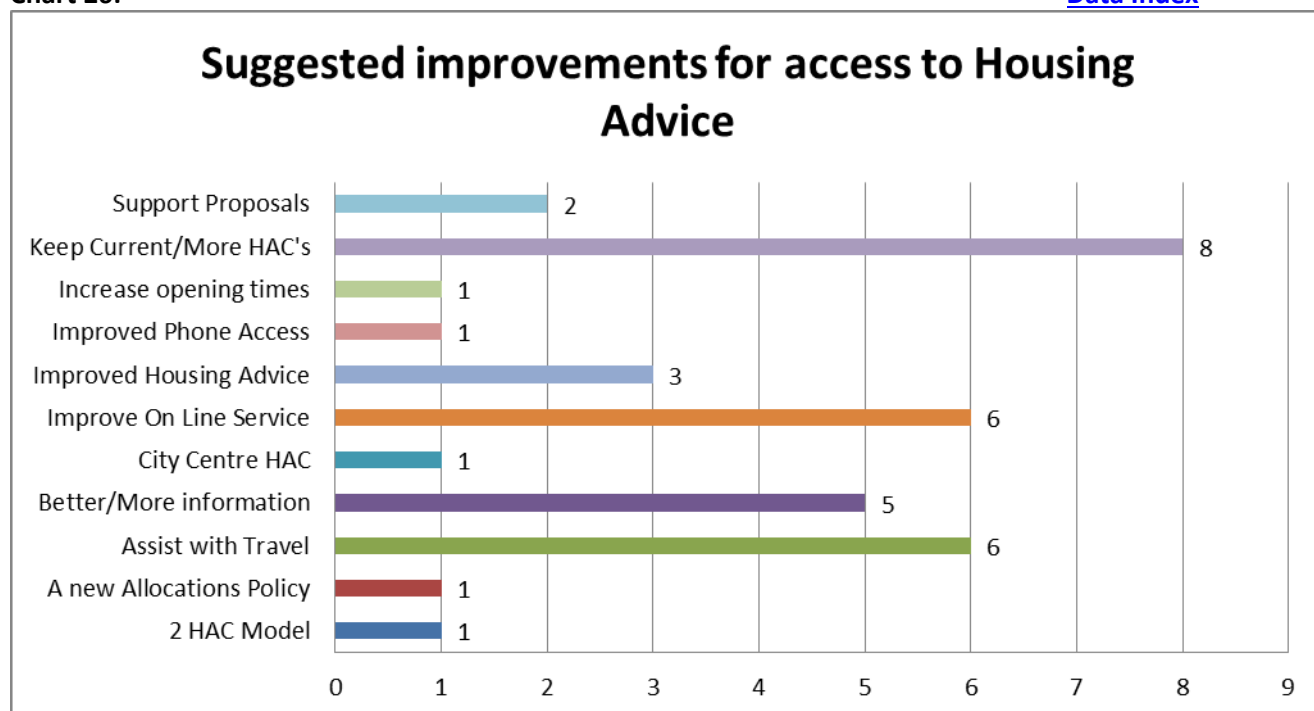
5.2.39. A total of 30 responses were received. Analysis of these responses allowed them to be grouped into 11 broad categories (responses may fit into more than one category).

5.2.40. Despite the small sample group a comparison can be drawn with the consultation A comparator question in the large number of respondents indicating that they felt keeping the current number of HAC's (or opening additional HAC's) would improve access to the service.

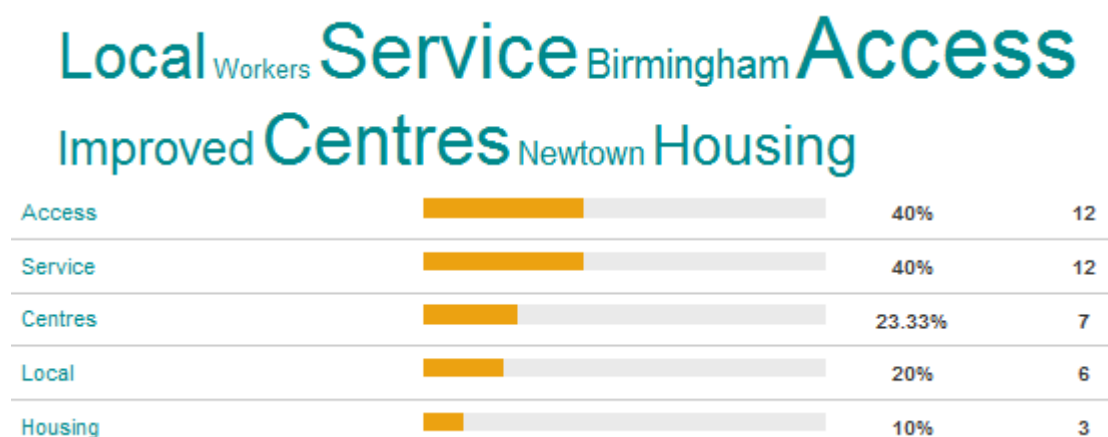
5.2.41. Providing assistance with travel and improving online access were also categories in which a large number of respondents indicated that this would improve accessibility.

5.2.42. A full breakdown of responses to this question can be found in Chart 26.

Chart 26:

[Data Index](#)

5.2.43. A Wordcloud analysis of the free text responses was also undertaken identifying frequently used words in responses. This can be found below, with data identifying the frequency of word use (top 5).



5.2.44. The final question for customers and concerned citizens was for them to provide any closing comments on our proposals or what benefits they may bring.

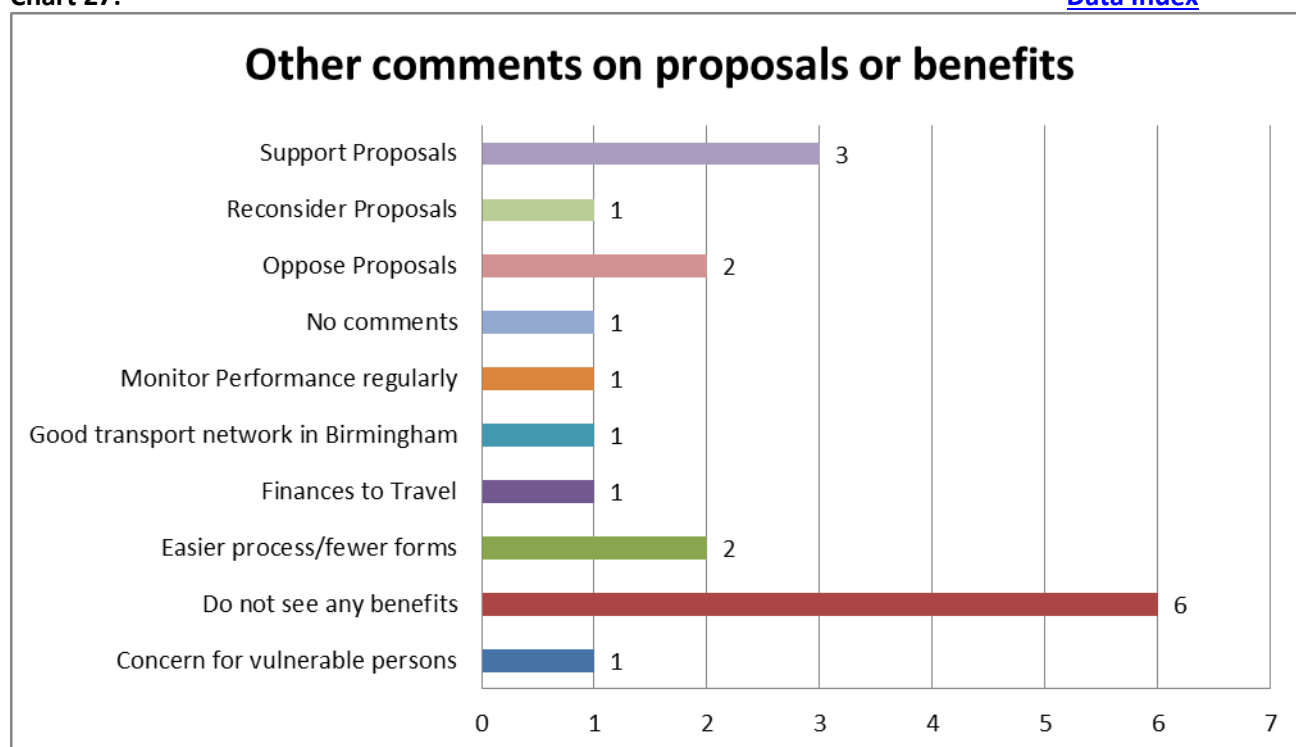
5.2.45. In response to this question 17 responses were provided. Analysis of these responses allowed them to be grouped into 11 broad categories (responses may fit into more than one category).

5.2.46. While the small sample provides limited reliable data, a significant majority of those responding stated that they could not see any benefit in the proposals (6). However, it was also worthy of note that persons expressing direct support for the proposal (3) exceeded those expressing direct opposition to the proposal (2).

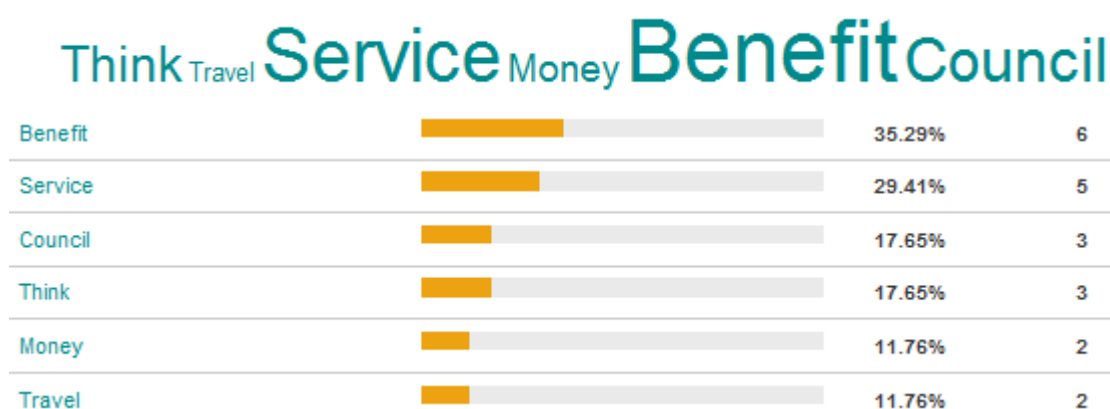
5.2.47. Responses from this question can be found represented in Chart 27 (below).

Chart 27:

[Data Index](#)



5.2.48. A Wordcloud analysis of the free text responses was also undertaken identifying frequently used words in responses. This can be found below, with data identifying the frequency of word use (top 6).

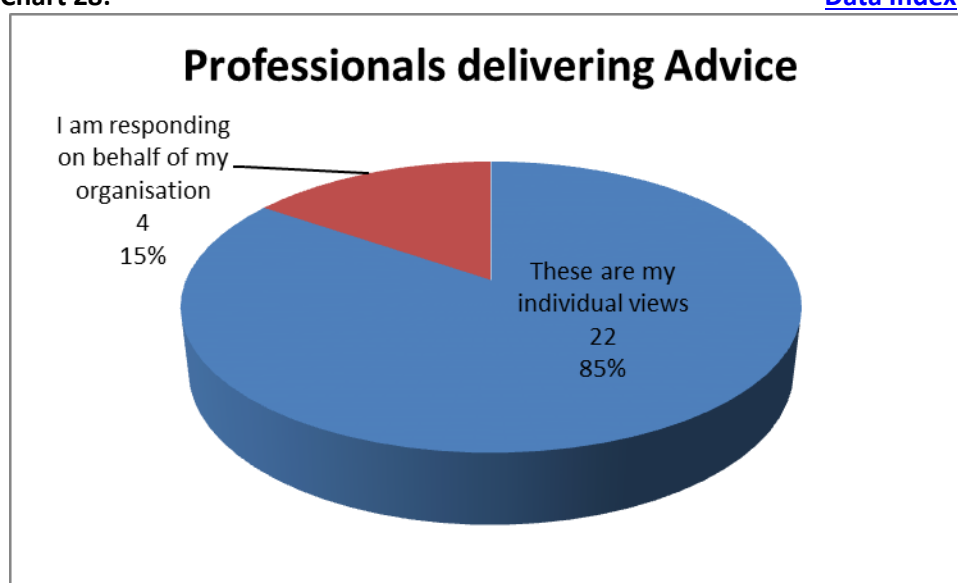


5.2.49. The remainder of Consultation B drew responses from 'Organisations and Professionals delivering advice'. This group was initially asked to confirm if they were responding on behalf of their organisation or providing their individual views on the proposals. 26 responses were received to this question.

5.2.50. The vast majority (85%) provided their own personal views however 4 responses (15%) responded on behalf of their organisation. This is demonstrated in Chart 28 (below).

Chart 28:

[Data Index](#)



5.2.51. Respondents were asked to provide some detail about their organisation and the type of advice it provides.

5.2.52. Responses were received from a wide variety of services however the significant majority (11 of 24) were received from staff within the homeless and pre tenancy service itself (46% of all responses). A further 4 were received from employees from other areas of BCC outside the homeless & pre tenancy service. In total 63% of all responses came from within Birmingham City Council.

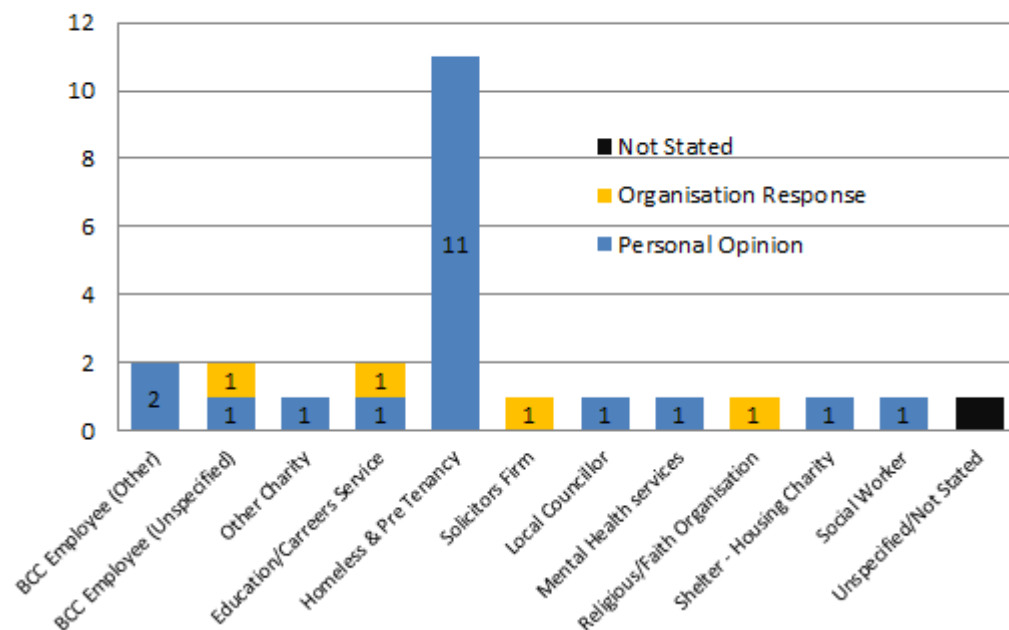
5.2.53. All of these save for one expressed personal opinion however the one response on behalf of an organisation (within BCC) did not state the area of BCC for which the response was provided.

5.2.54. Details of the organisations responding and the type of response (personal or organisational) can be found below in chart 29.

Chart 29

[Data Index](#)

Respondent organisation and views provided



5.2.55. Organisations and professionals responding were given the opportunity to provide contact details in the event of any further feedback being provided. 18 responses were providing giving contact details (phone or email).

5.2.56. As in [Chart 11](#) and [Chart 23](#)), professionals were posed the same question and invited to provide details of any concerns they had regarding the proposal to move to a single HAC based in Newtown. This was an open (free text) question and 27 responses were provided.

5.2.57. Analysis of the responses allowed for these responses to be categorised into 8 broad categories. Responses, dependent on content may fall into more than one of these categories.

5.2.58. Opposition to the proposed centre in Newtown was strong with 16 responses falling into this category to some degree. A large number (13) stated preference for the former 2 centre option.

5.2.59. 4 respondents favoured a city centre location with one suggesting that desk space could be freed at Lancaster Circus or Woodcock Street to provide this if other teams gave up un-needed or un-used desk space. However this option was explored previously and both Woodcock Street and Lancaster Circus currently lack the capacity to deal with the large number of public visitors that a single HAC at these locations would require. As such both would require significant work to develop a customer facing service.

5.2.60. 10 responses indicated concerns that a single centre would be too busy, 8 expressed concerns about the distance to travel & transport arrangements and 5 expressed specific concerns about vulnerable people accessing the service in its proposed form.

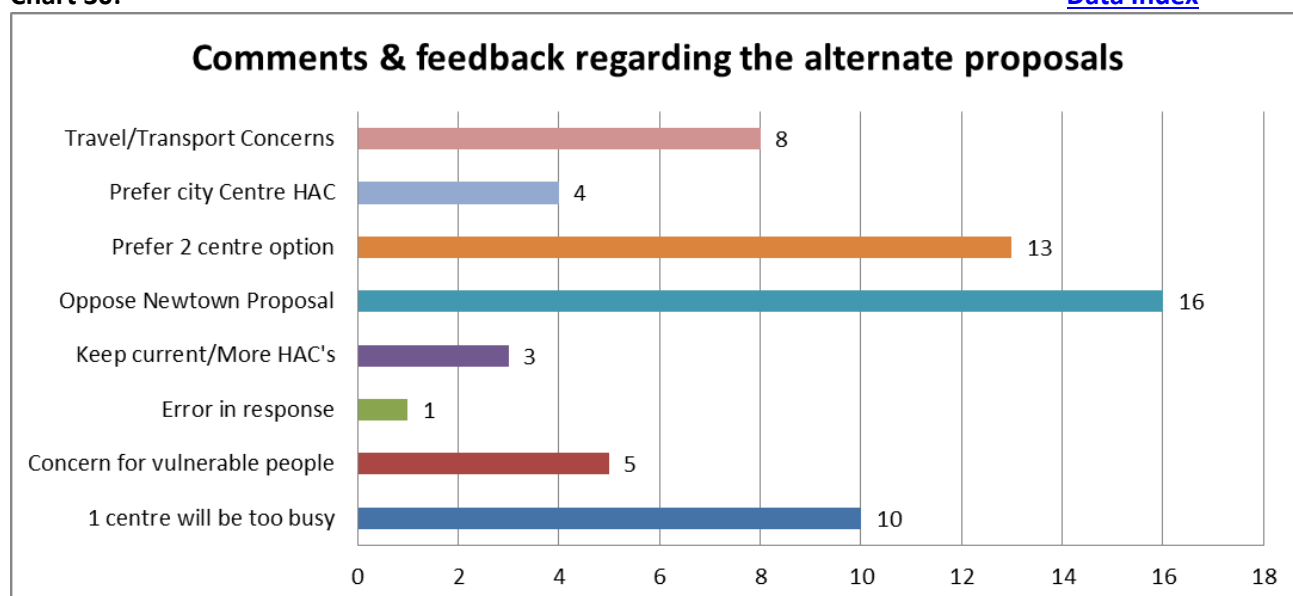
5.2.61. It is worthy of note that 7 of the free text responses are identical in wording and content. Further analysis of these responses show that these 7 respondents show that the respondents work within the Homeless and Pre-Tenancy Service within a Housing Advice Centre and all work at the same location.

5.2.62. These 7 identical responses, while still remaining valid, account for 44% of those responses classified as objecting to the Newtown proposal, 54% of those preferring the 2 HAC option and of 70% responses classified as raising concerns about 1 centre being too busy. These responses should be considered as with all others. However consideration and weighting should be given to the fact that these responses reflect 7 individual members of staff within the same organisation and location.

5.2.63. The categorised responses to this question can be viewed graphically in Chart 30 (below).





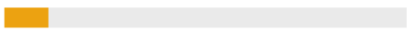
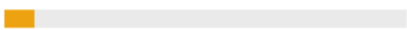
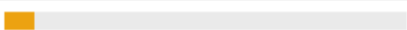
Chart 30:

[Data Index](#)



5.2.64. A Wordcloud analysis of the free text responses was also undertaken identifying frequently used words in responses. This can be found overleaf, with data identifying the frequency of word use (top 7).

Option West of the City Access Appropriate Quality Decisions Staff Housing Central Point

Quality Decisions Staff		33.33%	9
Access		18.52%	5
Housing		18.52%	5
Option		14.81%	4
Appropriate		11.11%	3
West of the City		7.41%	2
Central Point		7.41%	2

5.2.65. Professionals were asked if they agreed or disagreed with the proposals to centralise the Housing Advice Service at Newtown. 27 responses were received to this question, all of whom disagreed with the proposal.

5.2.66. As with Charts 11 & 23, professionals were invited to express any concerns they had in relation to the proposed single HAC option, these were free text responses. 27 responses were received.

5.2.67. These 27 responses were categorised into 11 categories broadly encompassing the details within. From these responses 17 expressed concern regarding the distance that clients will have to travel, 16 expressed specific concerns for vulnerable clients attempting to access the service (predominantly due to distance), 12 were concerned that the centre would be too busy and 12 thought that the cost of travel would reduce accessibility.

5.2.68. Notable was a concern expressed by 11 respondents that Domestic Abuse victims would be unable to access the centre as, with a single location, the perpetrator of the abuse would be able to locate them more easily. The same 11 respondents also identified that clients may be unable to enter Newtown due to gang affiliations or threats.

5.2.69. As in 6.2.61, It is again worthy of note that 7 of the free text responses are identical in wording and content. Analysis shows that these 7 respondents are the same 7 previously identified working within the Homeless and Pre-Tenancy Service at a specific Housing Advice Centre.

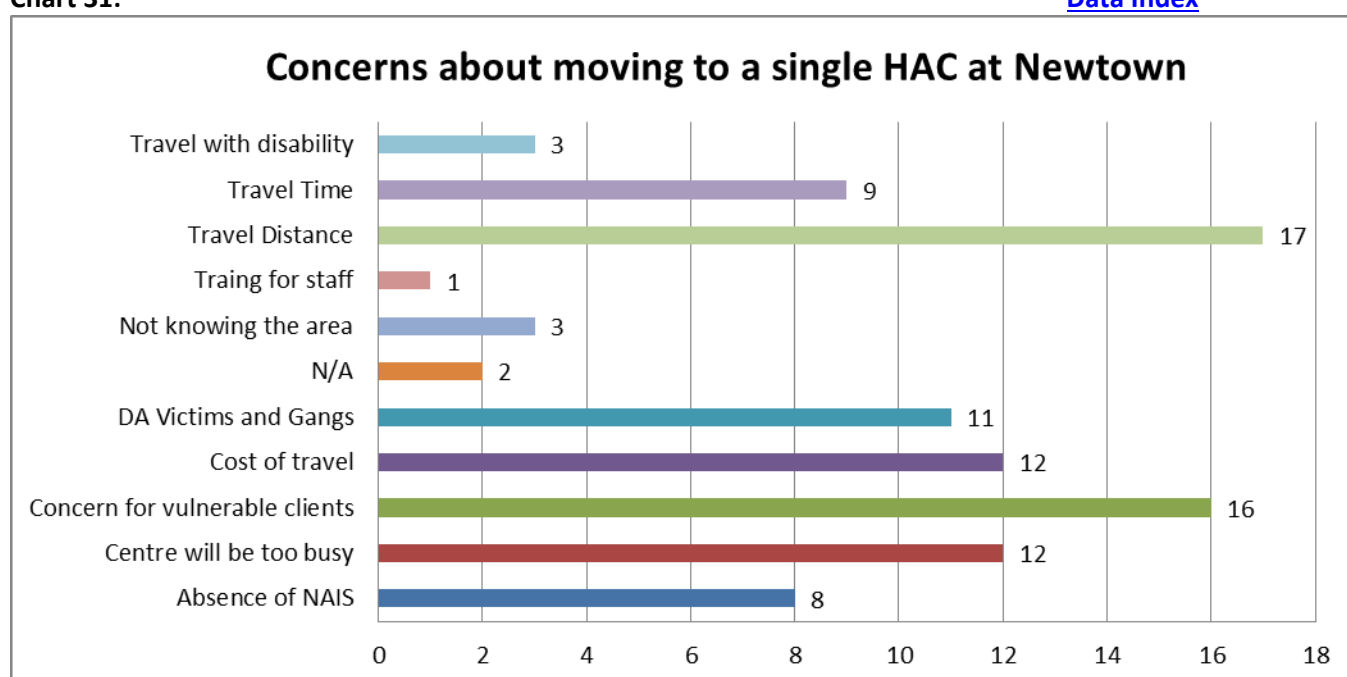
5.2.70. These 7 responses account for 41% of those identifying Travel Distance as an issue, 44% of those identifying concerns for vulnerable clients, 58% of concerns regarding the cost of travel, of concerns regarding Gangs and Domestic Abuse victims and of concerns regarding travel times.

5.2.71. Again the validity of these responses is not questioned. However weighting and consideration should be given by the reader that these 7 responses represent a single HAC location which is the subject of closure within the proposed model.

5.2.72. The concerns identified by respondents can be found graphically detailed in Chart 31 (below).

Chart 31:

[Data Index](#)



5.2.73. Respondents were asked to provide commentary on how the proposed changes could impact upon the clients they work with. 28 responses were received to this question; these were grouped into 14 categories.

5.2.74. Travel distance was again the largest concern for professionals (16 responses), stating that many clients that they deal with may be unable to travel across the city to Newtown.

5.2.75. A large number (11) stated that the proposed centre would be inaccessible to disadvantaged groups.

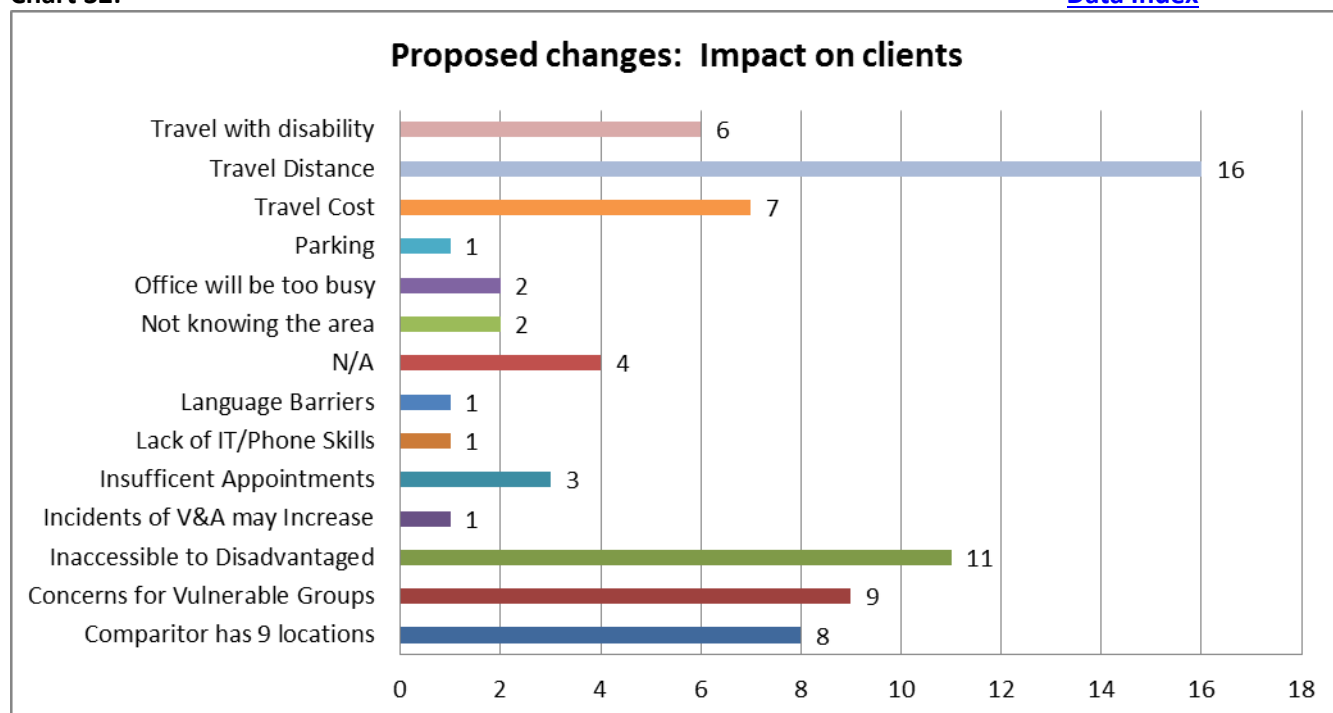
5.2.76. 8 responses detailed a comparator city, this being Liverpool, having 9 locations where clients could present as homeless despite being half the size of Birmingham.

This point is worthy of note as benchmarking already undertaken included examination of other cities accessibility to Homelessness (including Liverpool).

- 5.2.77. It is correct that Liverpool offers numerous locations despite being around half the size of Birmingham and also suffering from considerable disadvantage, poverty and social exclusion. However it was also noted during benchmarking that, in 2014/2015, Liverpool took significantly fewer Homeless Applications (297) when compared with Birmingham (in excess of 5,200)⁷. Inference can be drawn from this that there is no clear link between the number of sites available and the accessibility of the service.
- 5.2.78. This inference is strengthened when considering Sheffield & Leeds, cities geographically larger than Birmingham and also suffering social exclusion, disadvantage and poverty. These cities offer only a single location and took significantly more Homeless Applications than Liverpool.
- 5.2.79. It is also worthy of note that existing research in relation to this issue raised indicates that all other core cities, excepting Liverpool, offer a Single Point of Access for Homelessness Services.
- 5.2.80. Responses to this question also again identified potential issues of travel cost and travel for those with a disability (7 & 6 responses respectively).
- 5.2.81. Again it was noted that responses were received with identical wording, This time 8 responses were noted to use the exact same wording and analysis again showed a group within the Homeless & Pre Tenancy Service operating from a HAC proposed for closure under the new proposals.
- 5.2.82. It is reiterated that this does not invalidate the responses in any way however it is once again noteworthy that 100% of responses referring to the Liverpool model of Homelessness are attributed to this group of staff.
- 5.2.83. 73% of all responses raising concerns about accessibility for vulnerable persons are attributable to this group, as are 50% of responses raising concerns about the distance people will have to travel.
- 5.2.84. Responses to this question are categorised in full in Chart 32.

⁷ Homeless Statistics (2014/15), DCLG

Chart 32:

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5.2.85. As with customers and concerned citizens ([Chart 27](#)), professional respondents were asked what benefits they could see within the new proposed model. 27 free text responses were received to this question. These were categorised into 11 broad categories and again responses could identify with more than one category.

5.2.86. The majority of respondents (16) could see no benefits in the proposals.

5.2.87. 8 specifically stated that the proposed increase in consistency would not arise specifically from moving to a one centre model but could be achieved while retaining the current 4 HAC model.

5.2.88. 5 believed cost savings would arise from a move to the proposed single centre model however 2 of those stated that financial impacts (such as a perceived increase in TA costs) would exceed the cost savings from the proposal.

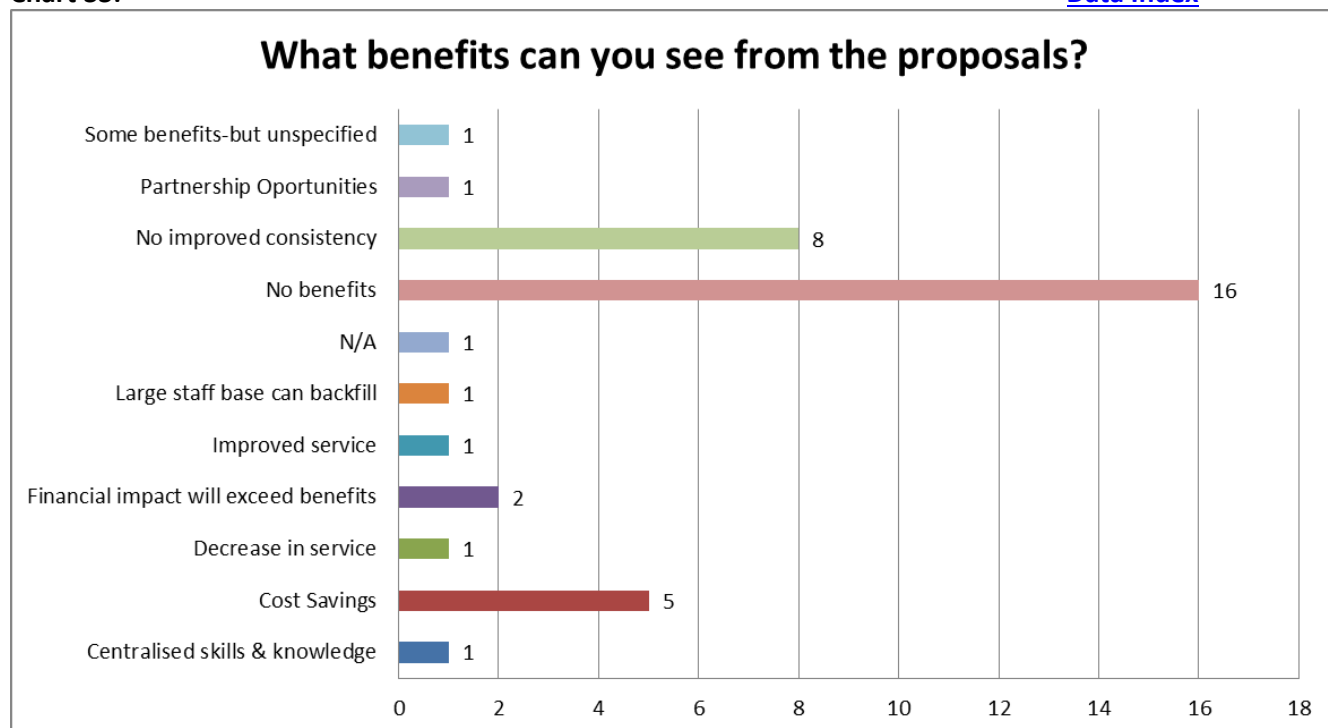
5.2.89. 1 cited that centralising staff would produce a centralised skills and knowledge base that could assist them when signposting clients and discussing cases. Another stated that the service would improve overall and 1 more respondent stated that the move would increase opportunities for partnership working with other agencies that also provide advice.

5.2.90. Again it is noted that 8 identical responses were provided by the group previously identified. These account for 50% of all respondents who see no benefits and 100% of respondents who state that the service will be no more consistent as a result.

5.2.91. These categorised benefits can be found below in Chart 33.

Chart 33:

[Data Index](#)



5.2.92. The final question asked of professionals was, 'Given the current resource restrictions, do you have any further comments which could improve the service?' 25 responses were received to this question. These responses were grouped into 15 categories (responses may fit more than one category).

5.2.93. 4 categories identified significant number of responses; these being suggestions to (1) open more HAC's or (2) provide 2 HAC's (with Erdington being one of these), (3) Keeping Erdington open and (4) a point that there has been no evidence provided to show that more HAC's cost more than the single HAC option. These 4 categories attracted 7 responses each.

5.2.94. It is noted that the categories above were again identical responses identified as being from the group based within an affected HAC.

5.2.95. An additional 2 respondents identified that a 2 HAC option would be preferable however did not expressly specify Erdington as a desired option.

5.2.96. 3 Respondents identified a joined up partnership approach as an improvement. Suggestions in this area included working closer with Benefit Services, Landlord Services, Social Services, Registered Providers and third sector partners to deliver joined up Housing Advice and Homelessness Prevention.

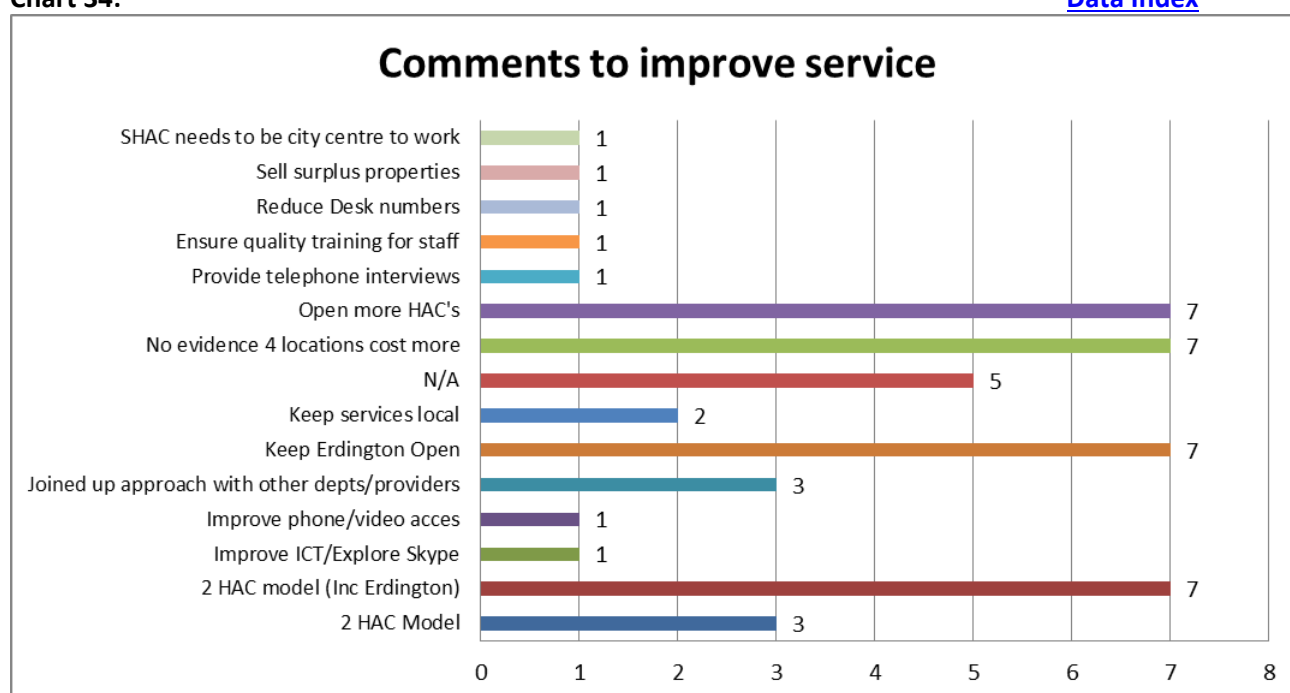
5.2.97. 1 respondent identified potential to sell surplus buildings to generate income. Louisa Ryland House was cited as an example however at the time of preparation of this report it is confirmed that this particular building has recently been sold.

5.2.98. A further respondent identified with the single centre approach however stated that it would only work with a location provide in the city centre.

5.2.99. The condensed (categorised) results of this question are shown below in Chart 34.

Chart 34:

[Data Index](#)



5.3. Consultation C

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- 5.3.1. Consultation C was undertaken via face to face events at 4 locations across the city. To ensure fairness and transparency an impartial party was commissioned and instructed to facilitate these sessions and to provide reports back in relation to the findings.
- 5.3.2. The reports were prepared impartially for the purposes of review and as such further analysis has not taken place here. All 4 public events have an associated report and also contained is a final summary report which also details FAQ's that were identified as a result of these events and the responses that were provided. These reports can be found at Appendix 1E to this report.

5.4. Written Representations

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- 5.4.1. Although there was no specific call for written representations, Members, M.P's and partners were written to regarding the consultation thus tacitly inviting written responses. As such various concerned parties have chosen to provide their views this way. Therefore these representations have been included to ensure fairness and transparency.
- 5.4.2. In total 8 written representations were received. These were from a variety of parties. This group of respondents consisted of 3 councillors, 2 M.P's, a Trade Union representative, a local community group and a solicitors firm. These representations are here and can be found at Appendix 1F to this report.
- 5.4.3. One written representation does contain an alternate service proposal with a view to retaining a Homelessness Service within the Northfield district.
- 5.4.4. The response from the Community Law Partnership opposes proposals to centralise Homelessness at Newtown & makes 6 recommendations.
- 5.4.5. A local councillor response broadly opposes the proposal to centralise Homelessness Services at Newtown and requests that the service remains at the four present locations.
- 5.4.6. A second local councillor recognises that benefit in delivery from multiple locations but agrees with the proposal as "the best use of the available resources that we have".
- 5.4.7. A third local councillor notes that they do not see a single centre approach as being appropriate however, should it proceed recommends a city centre location. The use of Midlands Heart facilities is suggested in alternative to the Newtown Location⁸.
- 5.4.8. The trade union contribution disputes the fact that a preferred option is being consulted on without offering a choice of the alternate options and opposes the progression of Consultation A.
- 5.4.9. An MP response broadly opposes the proposal to centralise Homelessness Services at Newtown and cites difficulties in travelling by vulnerable persons, cost of travel and distance of travel for constituents in South Birmingham as the primary reasons for opposition.

⁸ The use of Midlands Heart accommodation at three sites including The Foyer was explored and all were deemed non-viable. A response to this member detailing reasons was provided and is included at Appendix 1F.

5.4.10. An MP response broadly opposes the proposal to centralise Homelessness Services at Newtown cities agreement with concerns raised by his fellow MP (difficulties in travelling by vulnerable persons, cost of travel and distance of travel for constituents in South Birmingham) as well as a need to make decisions regarding provision of local services in partnership with other local providers rather than following consultation with them.

5.5. NAIS Consultation

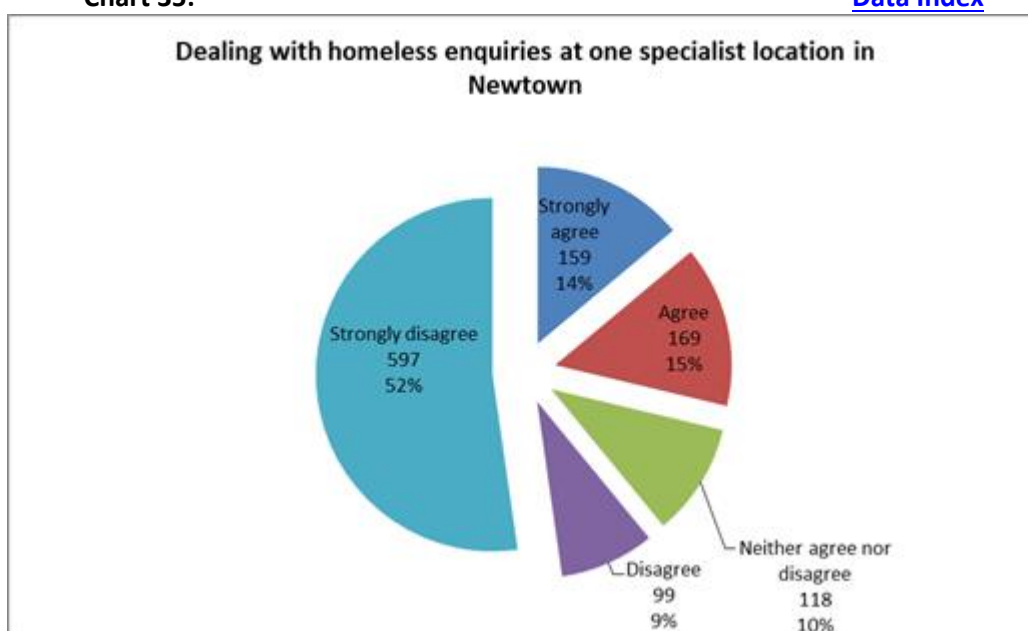
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5.5.1. Ongoing at the same time as the consultation on a revised Housing Advice Service, was a linked consultation on proposals to redesign the Neighbourhood Advice & Information Service (who operate the first point of contact for Neighbourhood Offices where HAC's are based). It was, in part, proposals to redesign NAIS that precipitated the proposal to redesign Housing Advice.

5.5.2. NAIS undertook a similar paper based survey to their customers as that undertaken in Consultation A. As part of this NAIS customers were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with proposals to deal with Homeless Enquiries at one specialist location in Newtown. 1141 responses were received to this question with the large majority (597 – 55%) strongly disagreeing. Only 29% (328) agreed (to any extent) with this proposal.

Chart 35:

[Data Index](#)



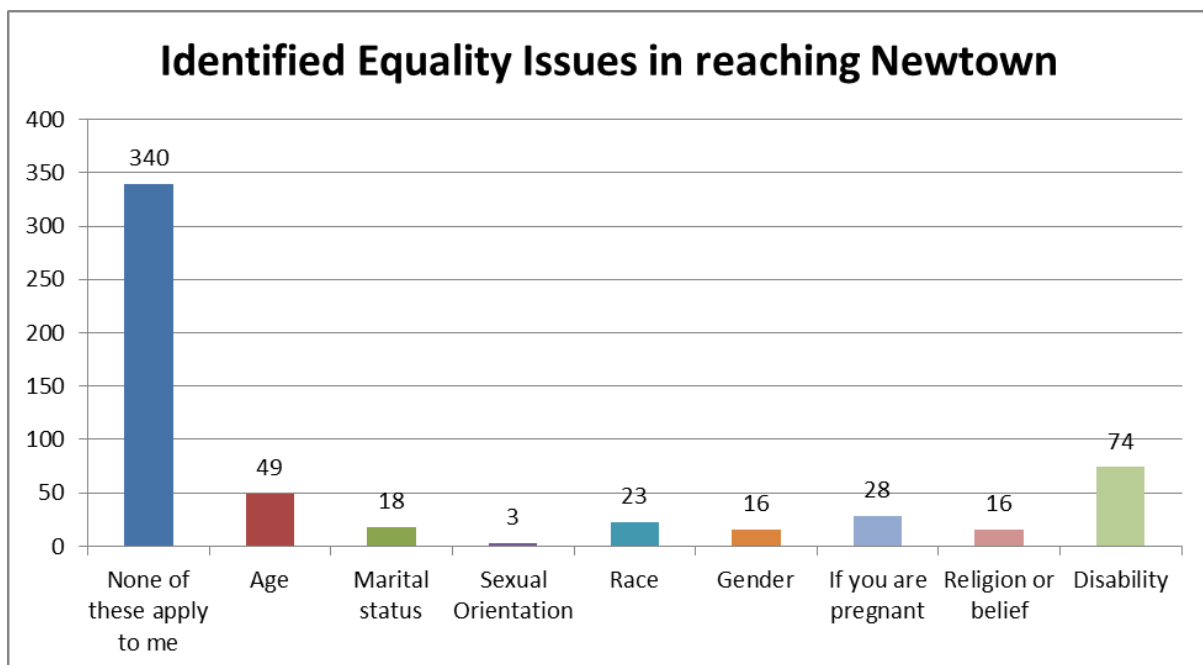
6. Demographic Information & Equality Issues

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6.1. Consultation A

6.2. In consultation A detailed Demographic information was not requested for reasons already detailed (3.4-3.5). However respondents were asked to detail any protected⁹ characteristic which they felt might impact upon their ability to travel to Newtown.

6.3. The top 4 responses mirror the 4 potentially disadvantaged groups identified in the Equality Analysis previously prepared and submitted to the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Management & Homes in 2015 (when seeking permission to consult on the preferred Newtown option¹⁰). These being Age, Disability, Pregnancy/Maternity and Race. This data can be found demonstrated graphically below.



6.4. The data above should be considered carefully in view of the fact that respondents were allowed to select multiple issues (save for those where no issue applies) and therefore the numbers of identified equality issues above will significantly exceed the number of individual respondents who have identified such an issue. 156 respondents identified an issue with a protected characteristic, however 49 respondents identified 'Multiple Issues' resulting in a total 227 equality issues from 156 respondents.

⁹ [Protected Characteristics](#) identified in the [Equality Act 2010](#) which Local authorities must consider with regard to impact when fulfilling the [Public Sector Equality Duty](#).

¹⁰ [Consulting on a Way Forward for Homelessness Services \(Ref 001113/2015\), Birmingham City Council](#)

6.5. Analysis of those identifying with 'Multiple' protected characteristics shows some patterns and trends.

- Nearly half of those identifying pregnancy as an equality issue also identify with 'Disability' as an equality issue with accessing Newtown (12 of 26).
- Nearly half of those identifying Gender as an equality issue also identify with 'Pregnancy' as an equality issue with accessing Newtown (7 out of 14).
- Nearly half of those identifying Race as an equality issue also identify with 'Disability' as an equality issue with accessing Newtown (10 out of 23).
- Over half of those identifying Marital Status as an equality issue identify this as one of 'multiple' issues. Of this group 7 out of 18 also identify with 3 or more protected characteristics in total.
- Over half of those with 'Multiple issues' who identify 'Age' as an equality issue also identify with 'Disability' as an equality issue with accessing Newtown (9 out of 16). A quarter of these 16 respondents also identify with Pregnancy and a third of these respondents identify with 3 or more protected characteristics as an equality issue.

6.6. Results from equality questions show that, overall, 32% of respondents identify with a protected characteristic that may impact upon their ability to travel to Newtown. However it should be noted that this identified impact does not necessarily mean that they will automatically require or be eligible for support in reaching the centre.

6.7. Furthermore, protected characteristics such as gender, religious belief, sexual orientation and marital status are ambiguous as to how they would affect an individual's ability to travel to the centre. Analysis (7.4) has identified that 78% of individuals identifying with one or more of these characteristics identify with 3 or more protected characteristics in total.

6.8. Given the contentious nature of the proposed reorganisation and the absence of supporting data from respondents to show how these characteristics would be impacted, care should be taken when considering the responses and heed should be paid to the possibility that some responses may be exaggerated or misinterpreted, a position evidenced by one respondent identified as being impacted by every single protected characteristic.

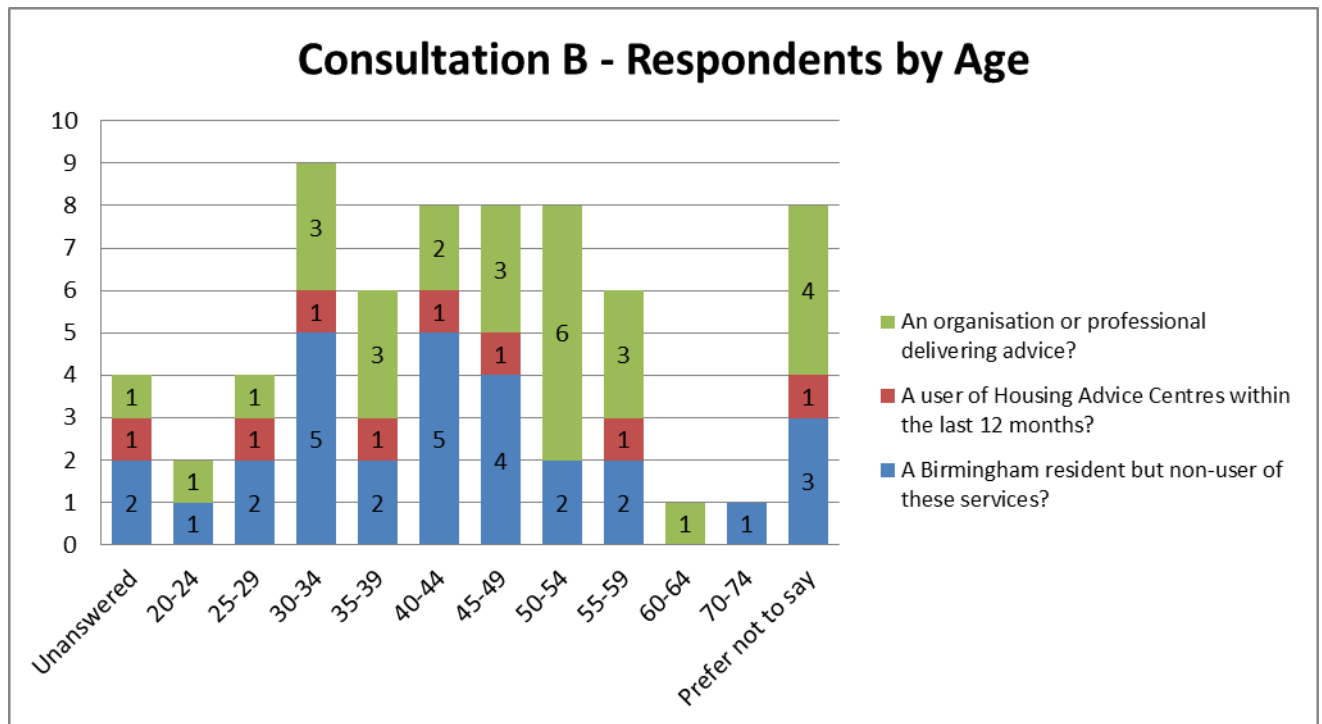
6.9. Consultation B

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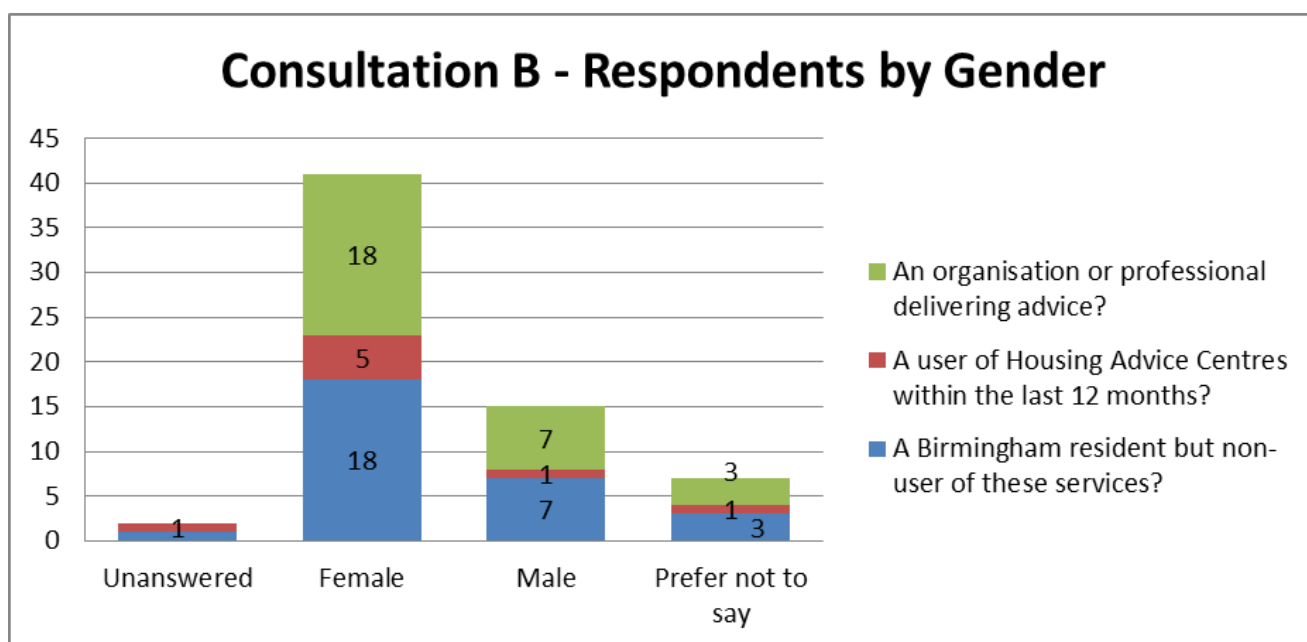
6.10. In consultation B respondents were asked more detailed questions regarding their demographic and protected characteristic data. Although the sample is relatively low in view of the small number of respondents in Consultation B, this data is presented below for consideration.

6.11. In view of the small sample detailed analysis and comparison to the Birmingham City population demographic has not taken place. It is considered that the small number of respondents (combined with numerous respondents being potentially out of area professionals), would likely produce unreliable comparison data when measured against such a demographic.

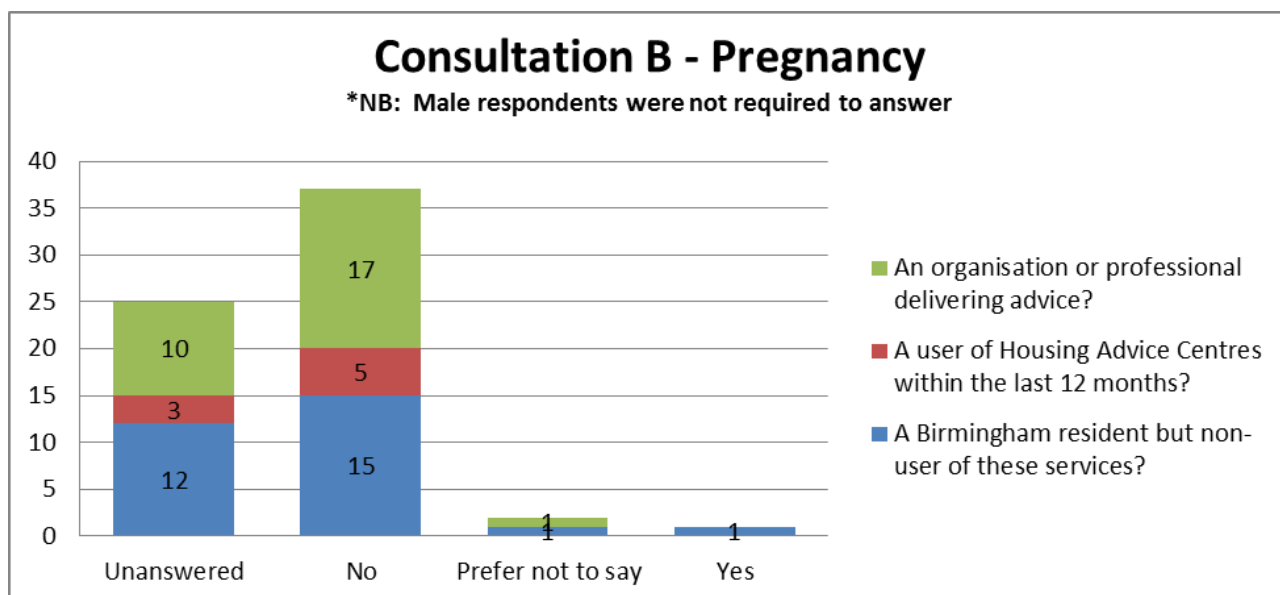
6.11.1. Consultation B: Age



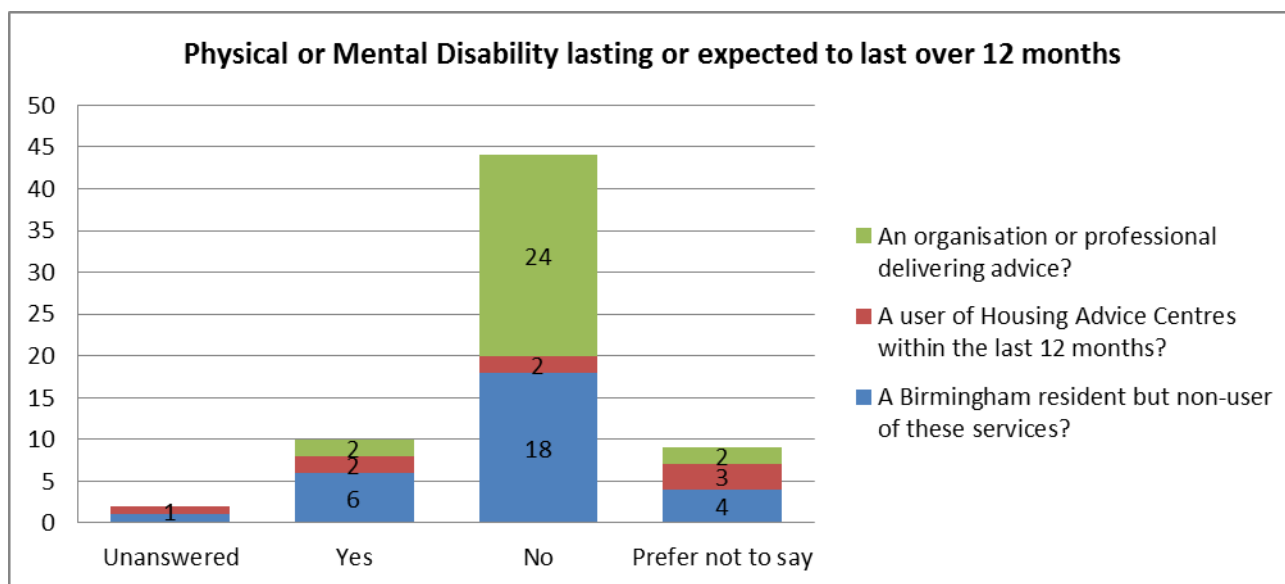
6.11.2. Consultation B: Gender



6.11.3. Consultation B: Pregnancy

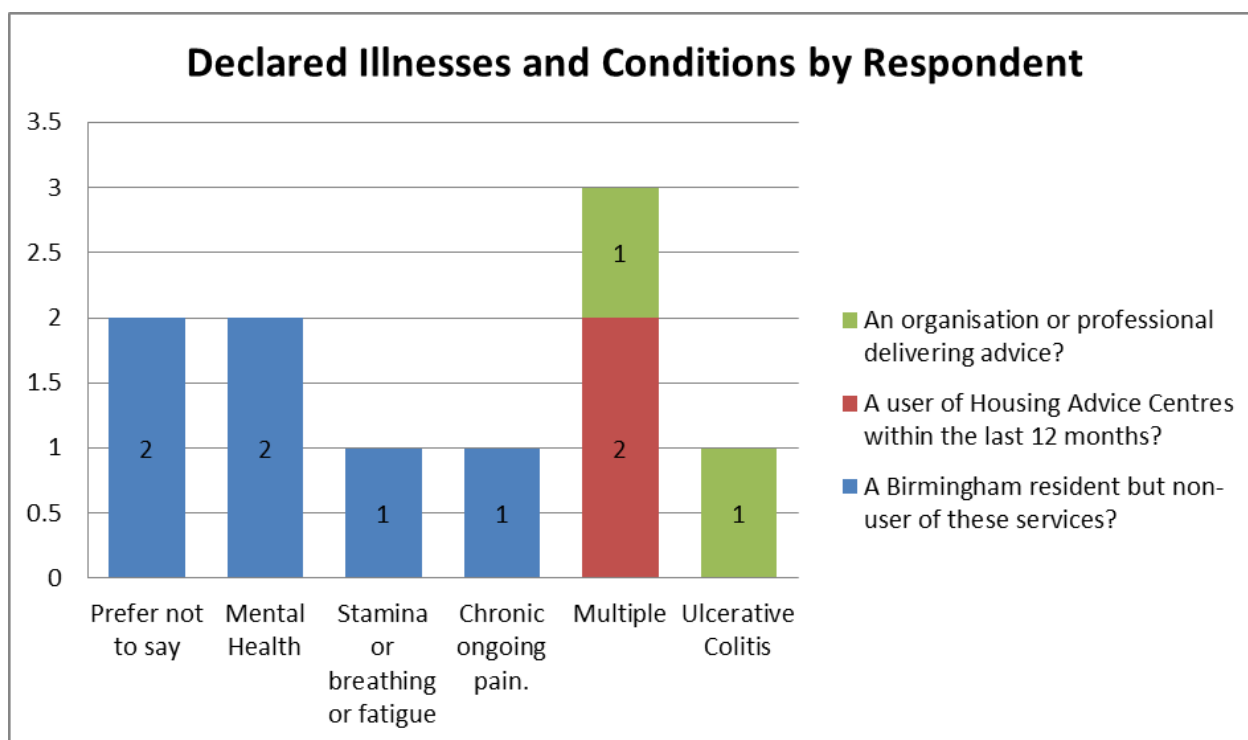


6.11.4. Consultation B: Respondents with a physical or mental condition or disability lasting or expected to last over 12 months.

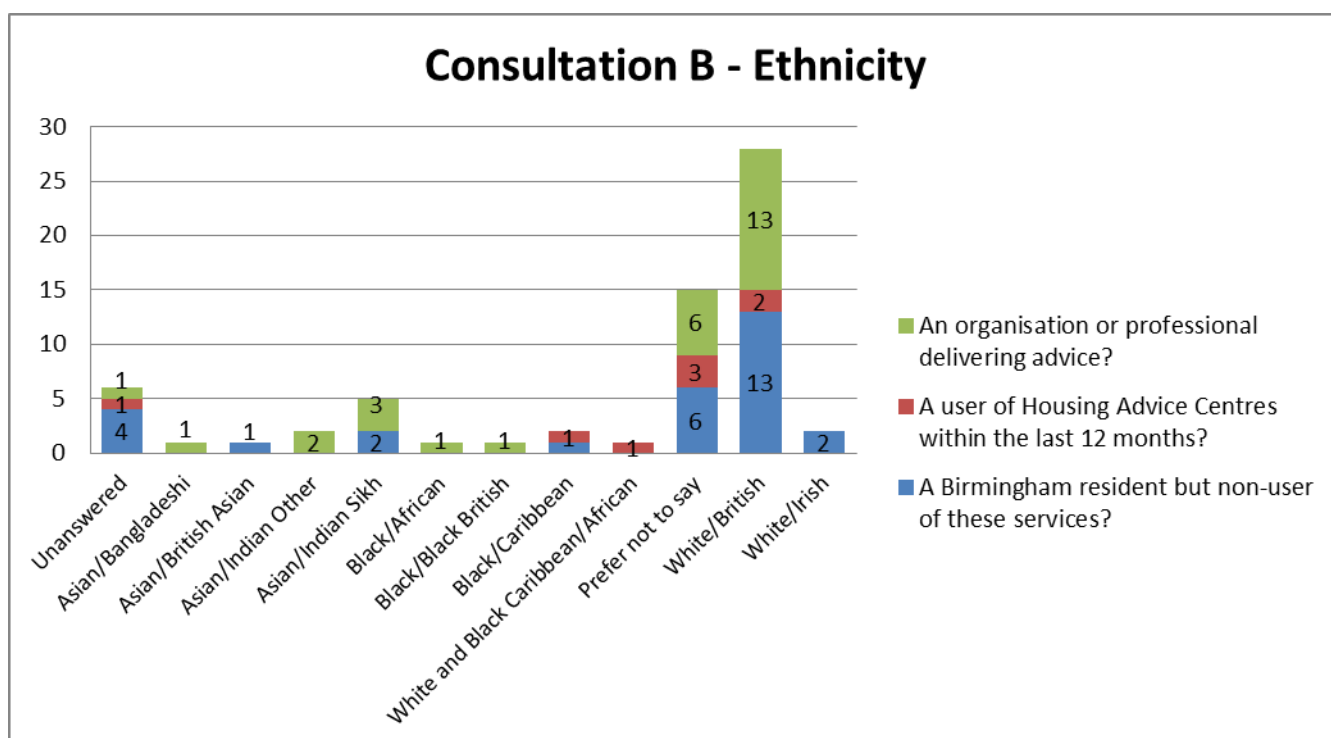


6.11.5. Conditions and illnesses declared by respondents (from 7.9.4).

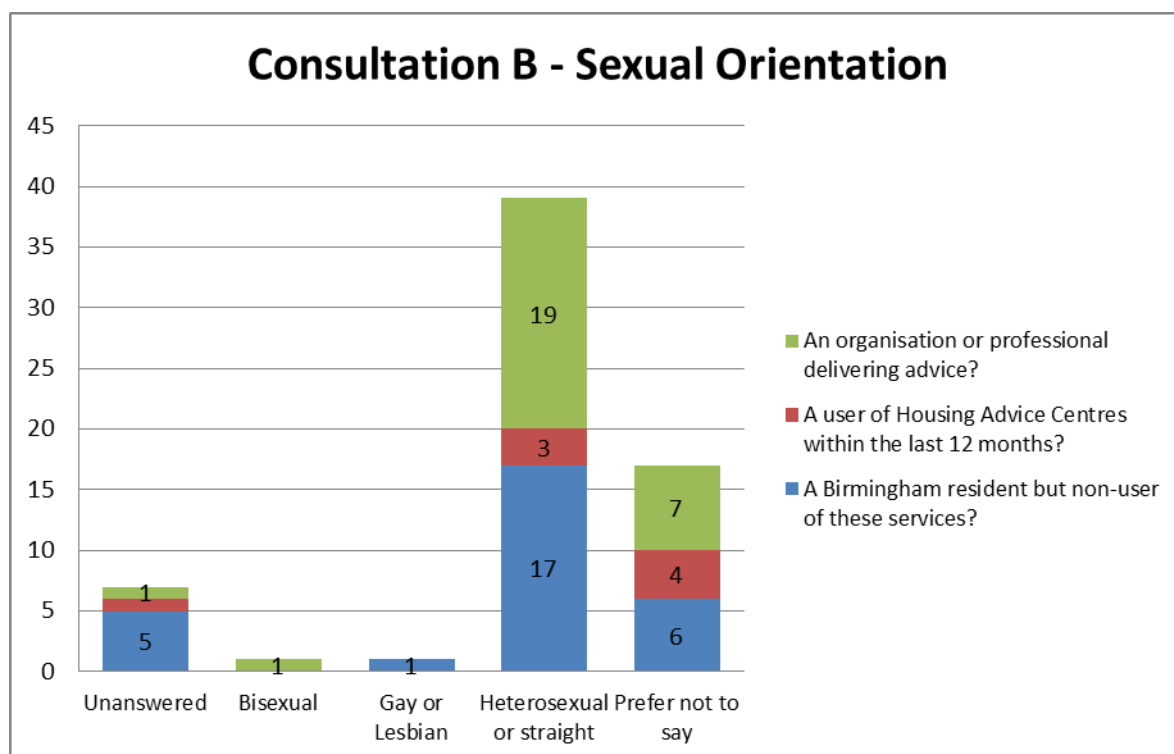
*NB: Persons answering 'no' or 'Prefer not to say' in 7.9.4 were not asked this question.



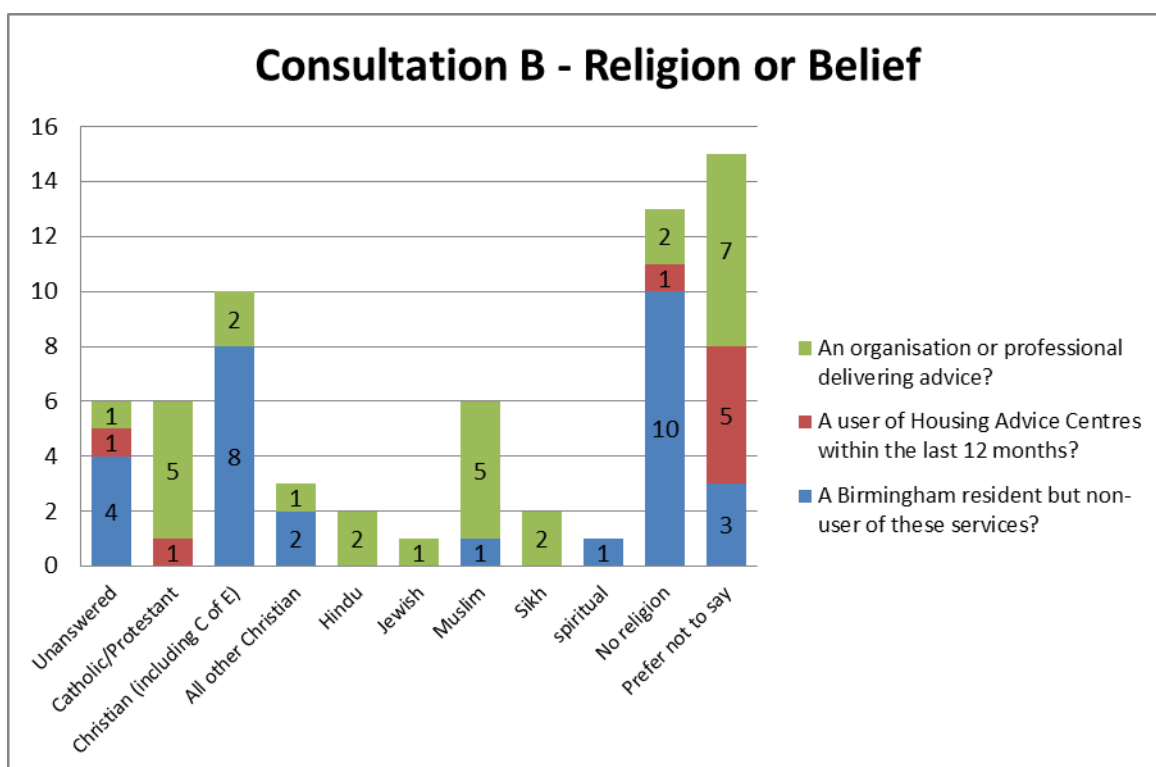
6.11.6. Consultation B: Ethnicity



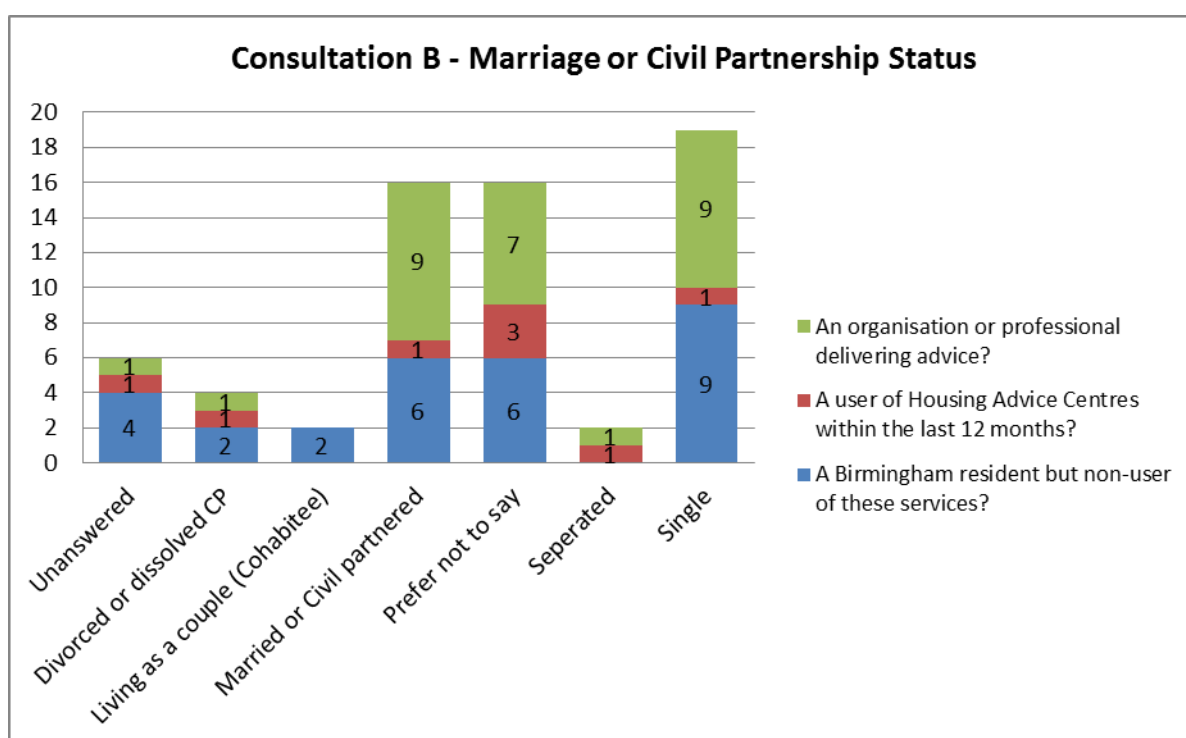
6.11.7. Consultation B: Sexual orientation



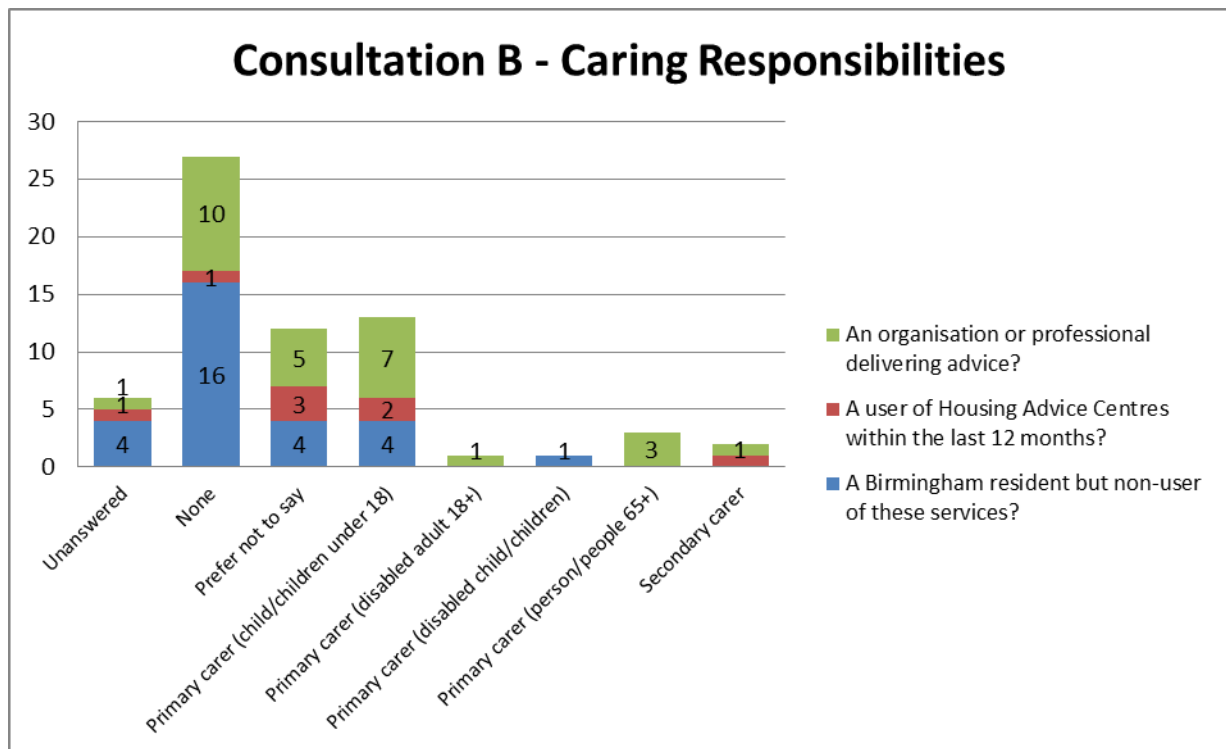
6.11.8. Consultation B: Religion



6.11.9. Consultation B: Marriage or Civil Partnership Status



6.11.10. Consultation B: Carers Responsibilities



7. Travel Analysis

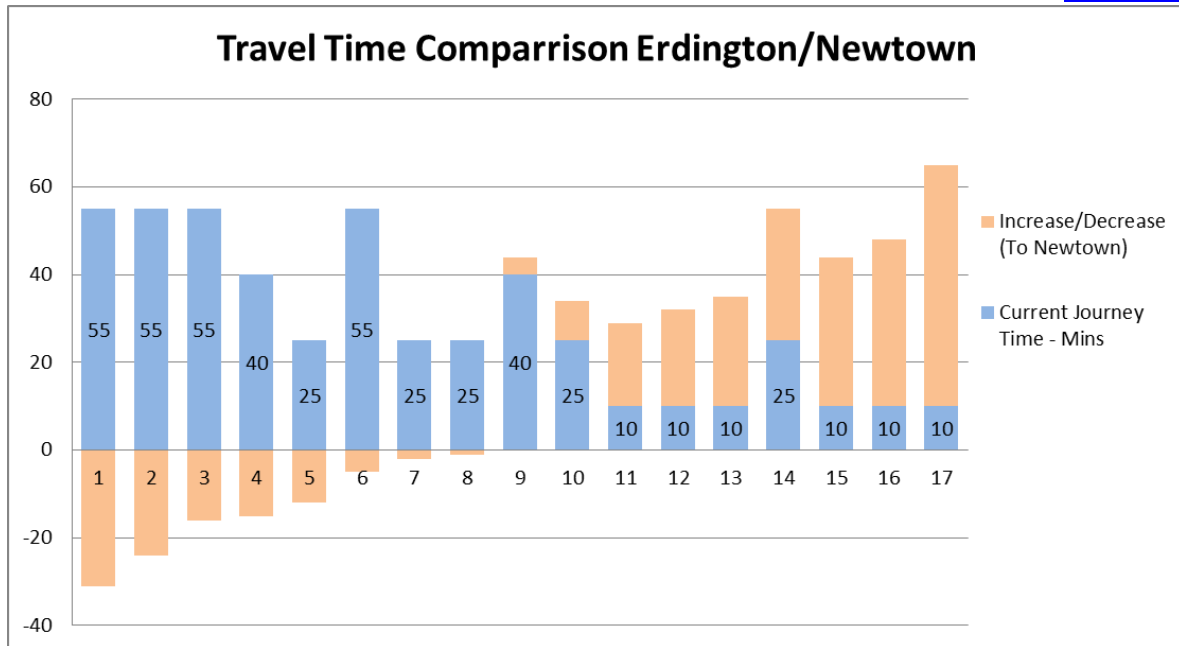
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- 7.1. In view of the large number of respondents asserting that they would be unable to reach the proposed centre in Newtown (6.1.30), particularly the large number citing distance as the reason (6.1.27), analysis was undertaken to determine the potential accessibility of the site for respondents who felt it was inaccessible.
- 7.2. This analysis was undertaken against respondents meeting the following criteria:
 - a) Respondents from Consultation A who either 'disagreed' or 'strongly' disagreed that they would be able to reach the proposed centre in Newtown, detailed in (Chart 12) who also...
 - a. Completed their questionnaire at either Northfield, Erdington or Sparkbrook (centres proposed for closure).
 - b. Provided details of their means of transport on the day of completing the original questionnaire, as well as...
 - c. Providing details of their journey time to the HAC on the day of completing the original questionnaire. And...
 - d. Provided a full and valid Birmingham Postcode (Invalid postcodes and those from out of the city were not included).
- 7.3. A total of 98 responses met these criteria for further study. These 98 responses were separated by Centre attended and their means of travel on the date of completing the original questionnaire was recorded. Their travel time was logged*¹¹ and their postcode was also recorded.
- 7.4. A corresponding trip to Newtown Customer Service Centre was then logged, using the same means of transport the respondent utilised when completing the initial questionnaire. For car users Travel time was calculated Postcode to Postcode by car using Google Maps.
- 7.5. For Foot, Bus, Bike or Train respondents a Public Transport route was planned using Network West Midlands Journey Planner and the 'best' route was selected balancing bus changes, walking distance and travel time.
- 7.6. The two journeys were then compared to determine increase or decrease in travel time. These results were broken down by HAC and are displayed below per respondent (Charts [TA1](#), [TA2](#) & [TA3](#)).

¹¹ Travel Time in consultation A was recorded in 'Approximate' blocks. In order to produce a comparable figure for analysis the 'mid-point' of each block was taken and rounded up to the nearest 5 mins. ie 15-30mins becomes 25mins.

Chart: TA1

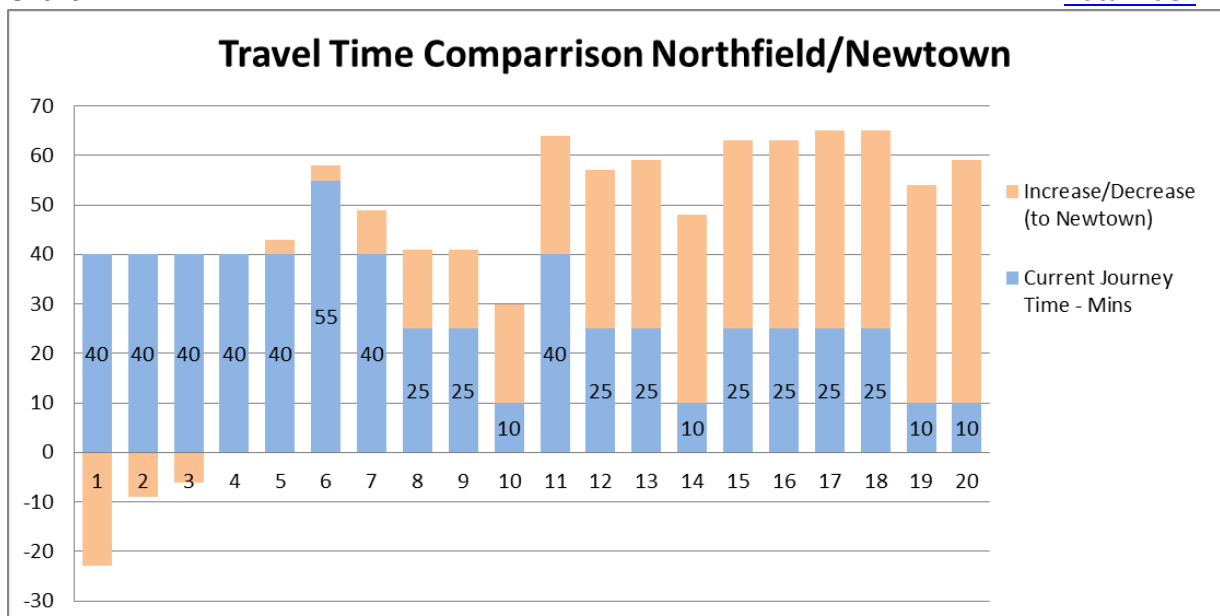
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- 7.7. From this data, nearly 50% of Erdington Customers (8 of 17) will experience a reduction in travel time when accessing Newtown. However due to larger increases for some the (mean) average travel time will increase by 8 mins from 28 to 36 minutes.

Chart TA2:

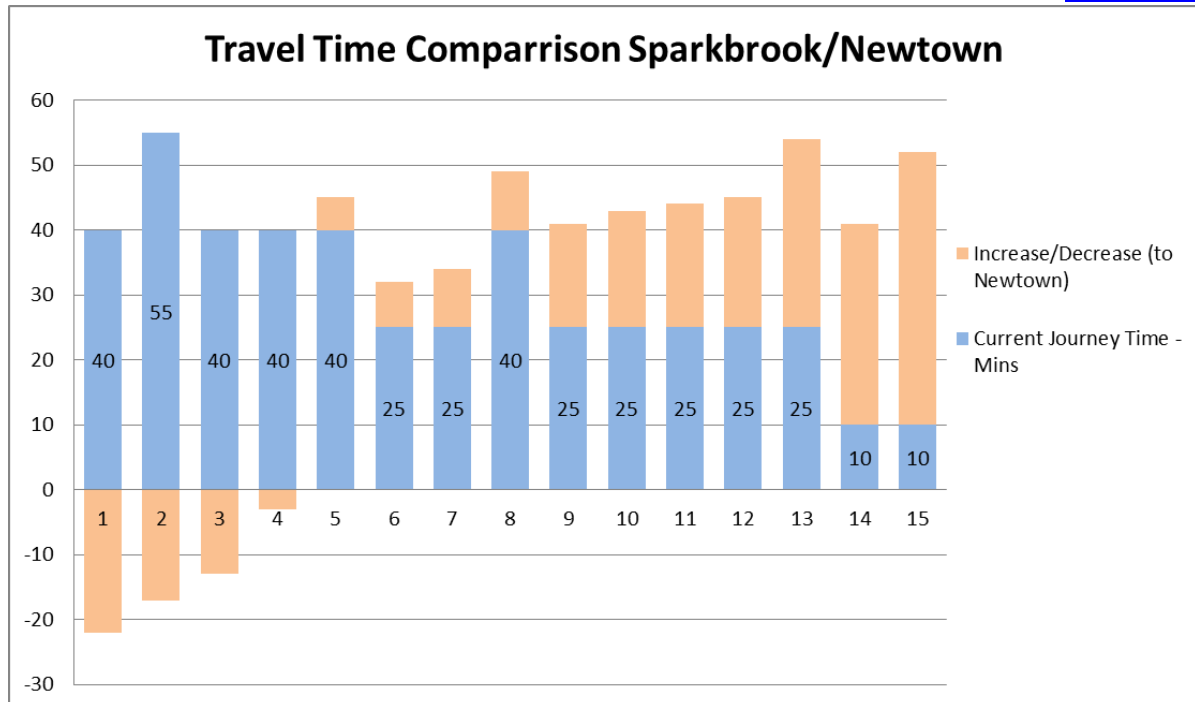
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- 7.8. Analysis of results from Northfield show a significant increase in journey time for the majority of respondents. Only 3 respondents will reduce their journey time as a result of travelling to Newtown and (mean) average journey time will increase by 20 minutes from 29 minutes to 49 minutes in the new model.

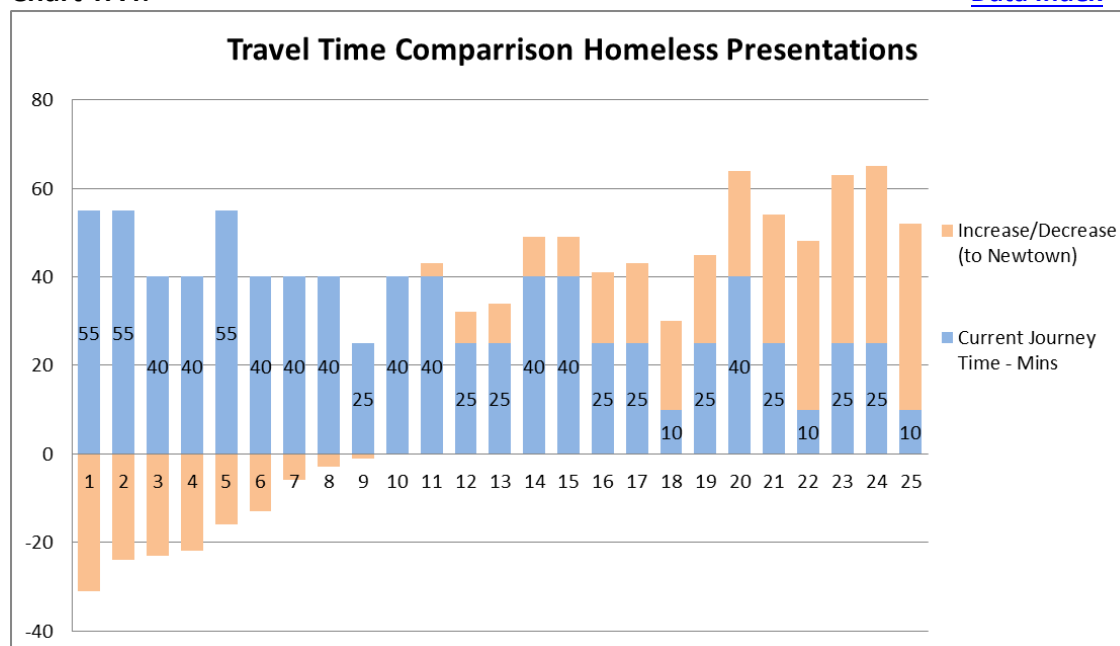
Chart TA3:

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- 7.9. Analysis of results from Sparkbrook show that a small number of respondents will experience reduced journey times if travelling to Newtown however the majority will experience a moderate or significant increase (of between 5 and 42 minutes with around 15 minutes being the average increase). The average journey time will increase by 10 minutes from 30 to 40 minutes.
- 7.10. As before, the data from this work has been limited to Homeless Applicants and analysed separately in view of their particular vulnerability. This information is shown overleaf.

Chart TA4:

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- 7.11. Over one third of homeless applicants in this study would experience a reduction in journey time from home when traveling to Newtown in substitution to the centre where they completed the questionnaire. Around another third would experience broadly similar journey times with small to moderate increases of between 2 and 15 minutes. The final third would experience significantly increased travel times of between 20 and 40 minutes. It is notable that these larger increases are noted in households with the shortest travel times in the first instance.
- 7.12. In view of the above information, as the majority of homeless households originally presented having travelled 40+ minutes, as a result the overall (mean) average travel time increases only slightly by 7 minutes from 33 to 40 minutes.
- 7.13. In reviewing feedback from respondents during consultation it was noted that numerous respondents noted the potential increase in cost for clients attempting to reach a single HAC in Newtown. Therefore an analysis of Public Transport costs was undertaken as part of the travel analysis.
- 7.14. For the purposes of this only National Express buses were studied (as these are the only buses covered by the current arrangements where bus tickets can be issued) however fares across providers are comparable with little difference between carriers.
- 7.15. Both Off Peak and On Peak fares were examined however it should be noted that the 'Off Peak' applies to those travelling after 0930hrs daily.

- 7.16. National Express West Midlands currently operates a fee structure as shown below:

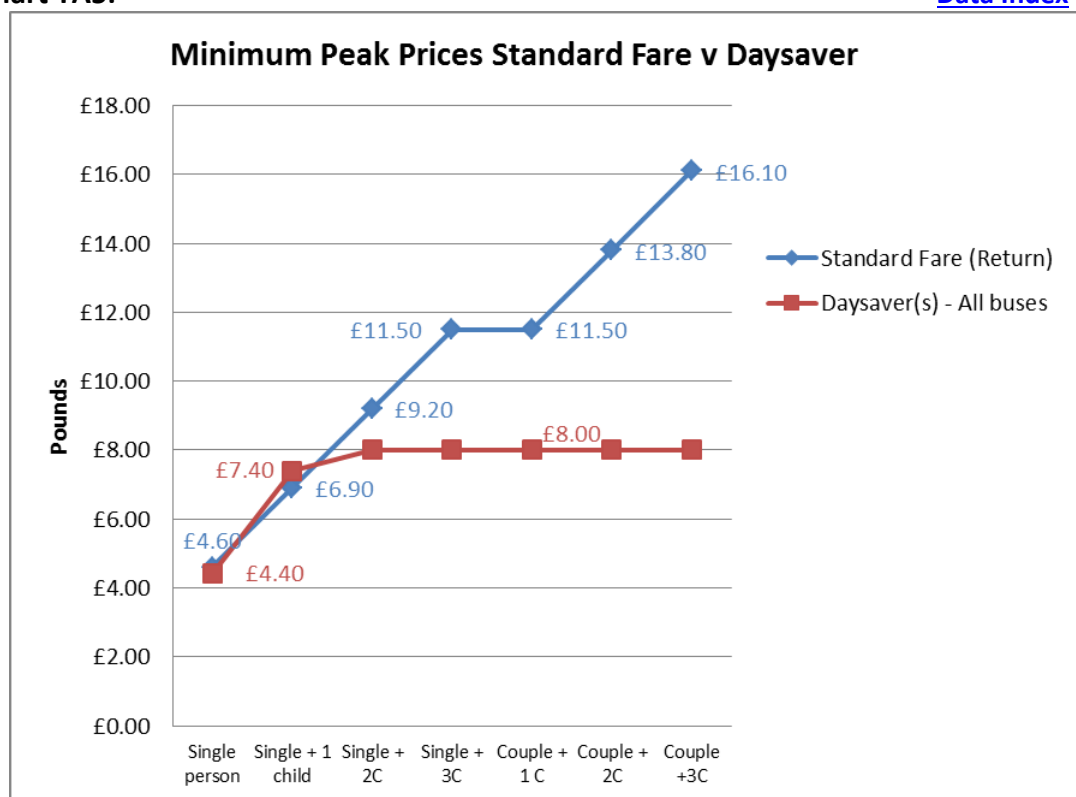
	Journey Type	Adults	Children
Option 1	Single 'Short Hop' (within B'Ham city centre only)	£0.90p	N/A
Option 2	Off-peak 'short hop' (about a mile)	£1.90p	£1.15p
Option 3	Maximum single fare (Any journey over 1 mile)	£2.30p	£1.15p
Option 4	Daysaver (all NX buses, all day)	£4.40p	£3.00p
Option 5	Off-peak Daysaver (All NX buses after 9.30 am)	£4.00p	£1 per child* *Purchased with adult Daysaver
Option 6	Family Daysaver (1 or 2 adults + up to 4 kids)	£8.00p	N/A

- 7.17. An assumption must be drawn that those accessing a HAC by Public Transport, save for those entering TA subsequently, will also utilise public transport to return home.
- 7.18. Any customer accessing a HAC by Public Transport travelling over 1 (by road mileage and not line of sight) mile will be required to pay the Option 3 fare of £2.30p (on or off peak) per journey (minimally £4.60p for a return trip).
- 7.19. A daysaver covering all NX Buses for the entire day can be purchased for £4.40p On Peak and £4.00p off peak. As this is cheaper than option1 for a single person travelling over 1 mile; the cost differential in terms of fare is nil, regardless of how many buses the customer is required to take. In rare cases of respondents living on a route not covered by NX Buses and requiring an alternate provider, an NBus One Day Daysaver can be purchased for £4.60 (adult) and £3.10 (child) which covers 28 alternate providers (including NX buses) for the same cost as an Option 3 return trip. In these cases the cost differential remains Nil.
- 7.20. Any customer accessing a HAC with a child from over 1 mile away will be required to pay £2.30p + £1.15p per child (Children aged 5-15). This can total minimally £6.90 for a return trip (Single person with 1 child) up to £18.40 for a couple with 4 children.
- 7.21. A single person with one child travelling from over 1 mile away who is required to travel before 0930hrs can purchase a Daysaver for £4.40 and a child Daysaver for £3.00 resulting in a cost differential of +£0.50p to access as many buses as required all day. This cost differential will only apply to single persons travelling with 1 child before 0930hrs.

- 7.22. If the same household makes the same journey after 0930hrs an Off Peak Daysaver can be purchased for £3.80p with a Child add on for £1.00p (total cost £4.80p) resulting in a total cost differential of -£2.10 for access to all buses on the NX Network all day.
- 7.23. For single persons with more than 1 child or a couple with 1 child or more (travelling more than 1 mile) the minimal cost of standard fares will always exceed £8 for a return journey and thus the purchase of an £8.00p family Daysaver will be a cheaper option. Therefore the cost differential will always be negative for access to all NX buses all day regardless of peak or off peak fare structures.

Chart TA5:

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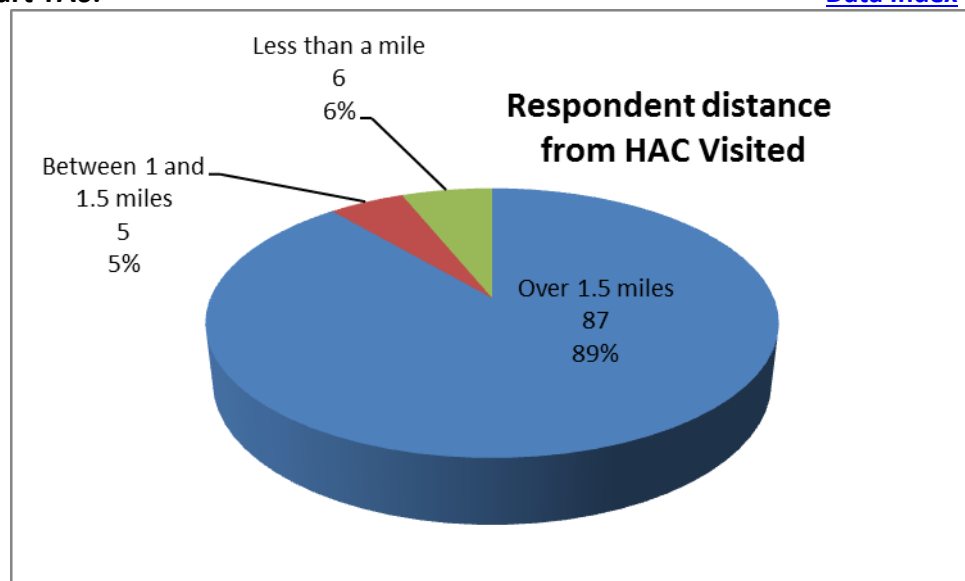


- 7.24. The 'Short Hop' Fare within Birmingham City Centre (Option 1 in the fares and pricing table at 8.16) is not considered here as there is No HAC within the 1 mile zone designated by Option 1. However it is noted that the closest HAC to this 1 mile zone is Newtown HAC. It therefore follows that any person utilising this option would already be travelling to the site of the proposed Single HAC site and would thus be unaffected by the proposals.
- 7.25. In considering (Option 1 in the fares and pricing table at 8.16) it is recognised that there may be customers utilising this option to reach an existing HAC that may be required to travel further in future to reach a HAC outside of this mile radius.

- 7.26. In considering this the data/criteria outlined at 8.2 was utilised to review the distance from clients home postcodes to the HAC's they visited when providing responses. Only 6 respondents lived within 1 mile of the HAC they visited. When reviewed further only 5 lived within 1.5 miles of the HAC they visited on the day of responding
- 7.27. It should be noted that this data is not limited to respondents who already use public transport but also includes those who walked on the day of their visit when a response was completed.

Chart TA6:

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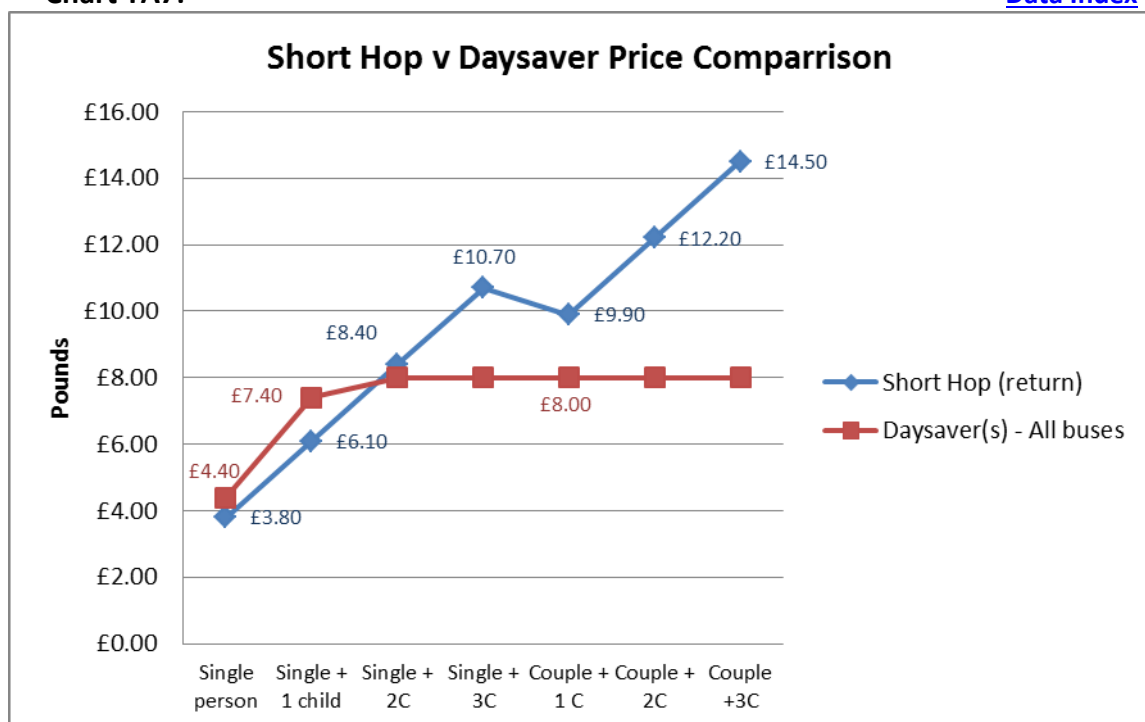


- 7.28. Additional analysis has been undertaken regarding bus journeys in order to establish a reliable view as to how many customers utilising public transport could access a HAC via a 'Short Hop'.
- 7.29. A 'Short Hop' is defined as 'About a Mile' within National Express pricing structures. To determine how long a mile journey takes 10 bus routes were studied. These included 6 key routes from the 3 existing HAC's to the Newtown site as well as 4 others (chosen from a bus route map). Care was taken to ensure that trips through the city centre were included in these routes as well as '9' prefix 'Limited Stop' routes. This was to ensure that city traffic as well as time saver routes were factored into the calculation.
- 7.30. The routes examined totalled 36.5 miles of travel with an estimated travel time of 168 minutes. From this the average speed of a bus is calculated at 14.7mph (0.245 miles per minute).
- 7.31. From this it can be concluded that any passenger travelling for 4 minutes or more on a bus is likely to exceed the 1 mile radius for a 'short hop' journey.

- 7.32. From [Chart 7](#), 91% of all respondents utilising public transport travelled in excess of 15 minutes to reach their local HAC. It is reasonable to conclude that the vast majority of these would have likely exceeded the 1 mile radius for a 'Short Hop', a conclusion given additional weight by the data detailed at 8.26.
- 7.33. The additional travel distance does provide an additional cost implication for some who may otherwise live within the distance of a 'short hop'. This cost implication varies from £0.60p for a single person to £1.30 for a single person with one child; all other household types remain cheaper with a daysaver.
- 7.34. The potential additional cost implications are outlined below in chart TA7:

Chart TA7:

[Data Index](#)



- 7.35. When considering this potential additional cost implication, the following points should be noted:
- The data already reviewed indicates that the number of people attending a HAC from within the radius of a 'Short Hop' is very small, reducing the number impacted.
 - This additional cost implication will only apply to that small group when travelling after 0930hrs daily, further reducing the number that may be impacted.
 - This additional cost only applies to two specific household types (Single Persons and Single Persons with 1 child), reducing the number even further.

- d) Of the small group identified within (a-c), it is also noted that it should not be assumed that persons in this group are automatically unable to meet the small additional cost. Many within this group may well be able to meet the additional cost of between £0.60p and £1.30 for occasional infrequent trips, they may be able to access advice via the internet, phone or another agency. They can also travel at off peak times where this cost is removed. Those that are unable to exercise this any of these options are likely to be a smaller subsection of the group outlined in a-c.
- e) When considering that (a-d) are conditions which must all be met simultaneously, is concluded that the group potentially adversely affected by this particular additional travel cost is likely to be very small and consideration should be given as to if current planned mitigation (such as the issue of bus tickets) can manage this effectively.

Report Ends

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