

# SHRSS – Summary of Consultation Response

## Introduction

The Somerset Homelessness Reduction Board (HRB) began the review of the Somerset Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy (SHRSS) during early 2024. A consultation document was published in July 2024. The public and other interested parties (including representatives from organisations/working within the homelessness sector) were invited to comment between July 29<sup>th</sup> and September 23<sup>rd</sup>. This consultation was hosted on-line on Somerset Council’s consultation platform called Citizen Space.

In addition to this, the HRB also worked with providers to deliver additional feedback to inform the review of the SHRSS. Specific interviews were undertaken with the following:

- Lived Experience
- Outreach Services
- Supported Housing Providers

The document is structured as follows:

- Citizen Space Consultation Portal – responses to tick box / radio button questions (pages 3 – 60)
- Citizen Space Consultation Portal – summary of free text responses (pages 61-72)
- Lived Experience - summary of comments (pages 73-76)
- Outreach Services - summary of comments (page 77)
- Supported Housing providers - summary of comments (page 78)

## Consultation Portal - A quick guide to understanding prefixes

Question prefix “A” refers to questions asked of all respondents.

Question prefix “P” refers to questions asked of all respondents selecting “member of the public” as their response to question A1.

Question prefix “O” refers to questions asked of all respondents selecting “on behalf of an organization/working within the sector” as their response to question A1.

We start therefore with the section titled ‘Citizen Space Consultation Portal – responses to tick box / radio button questions’. This is a large section and so we have created a separate index below. The following questions have text fields for responses: P4, P7, P9, O1, O3, O5, O6. These are presented in the subsequent section ‘Citizen Space Consultation Portal – summary of free text responses’

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## Somerset Homelessness Strategy Consultation

<https://somersetcouncil.citizenspace.com/housing/somerset-homelessness-strategy-consultation>

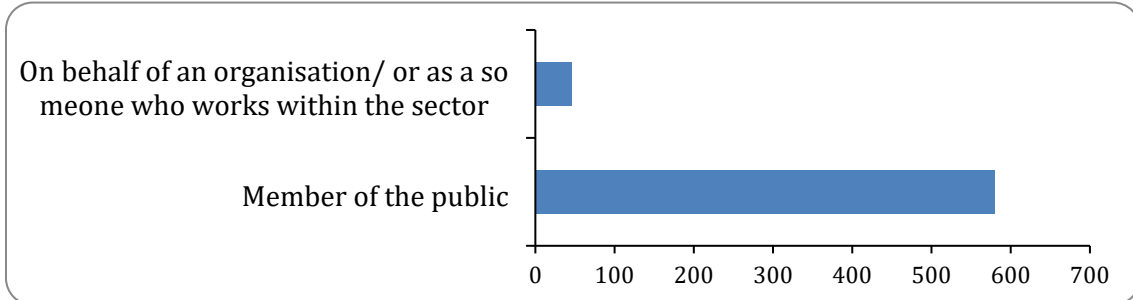
This report was created on Tuesday 24 September 2024 at 07:40

The activity ran from 29/07/2024 to 23/09/2024

Responses to this survey: **626**

**A1: Are you responding on behalf of an organisation or a member of the public?  
who**

There were 626 responses to this part of the question.

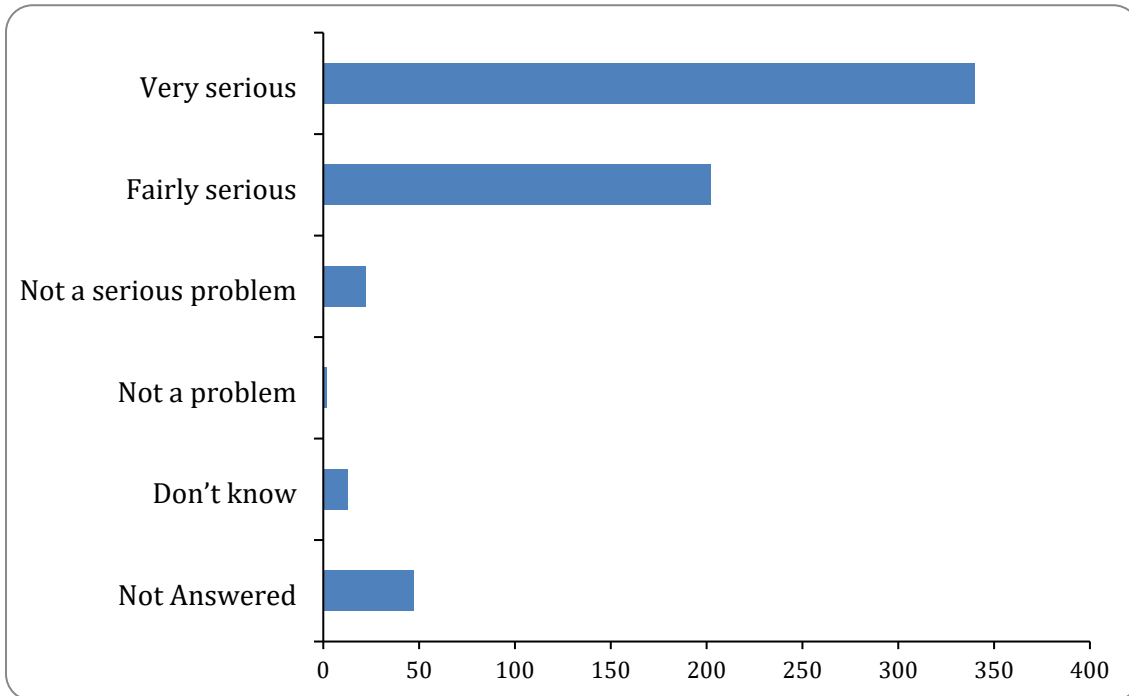


Option	Total	Percent
<b>On behalf of an organisation/ or as a someone who works within the sector</b>	46	7.35%
<b>Member of the public</b>	580	92.65%
<b>Not Answered</b>	0	0.00%

**P1: How serious a problem do you think homelessness/rough sleeping are in Somerset?**

**Serious problem**

There were 579 responses to this part of the question.

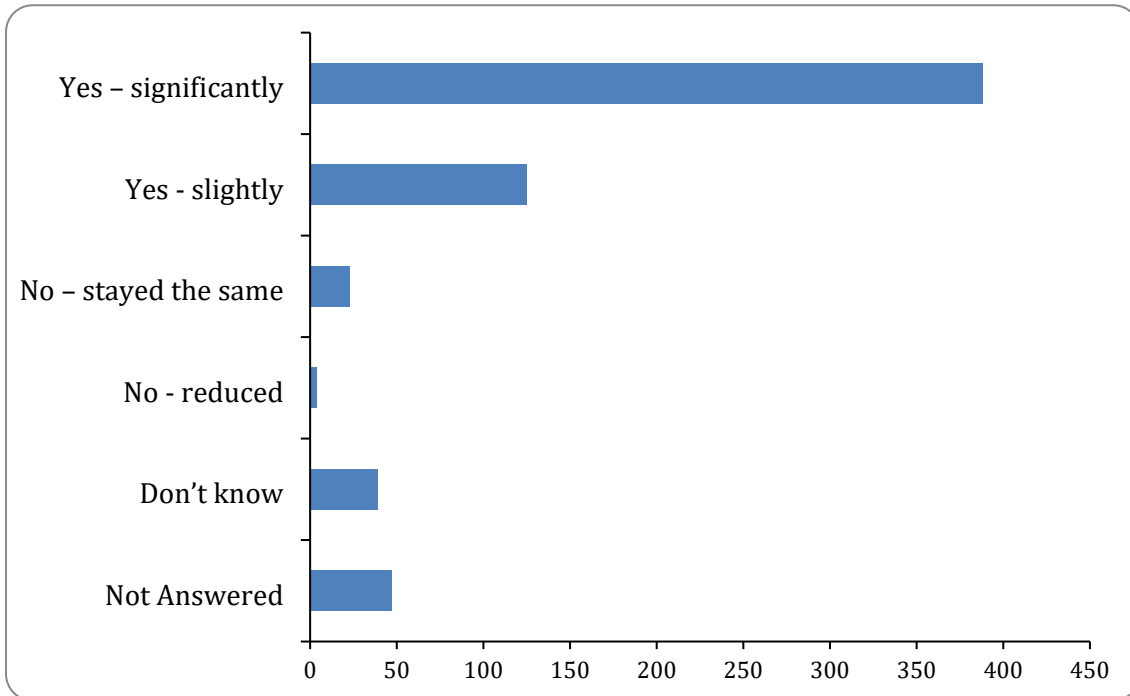


Option	Total	Percent
Very serious	340	54.31%
Fairly serious	202	32.27%
Not a serious problem	22	3.51%
Not a problem	2	0.32%
Don't know	13	2.08%
Not Answered	47	7.51%

**P2: Do you think homelessness and rough sleeping has increased in Somerset over the last 2 years?**

**Has it increased**

There were 579 responses to this part of the question.

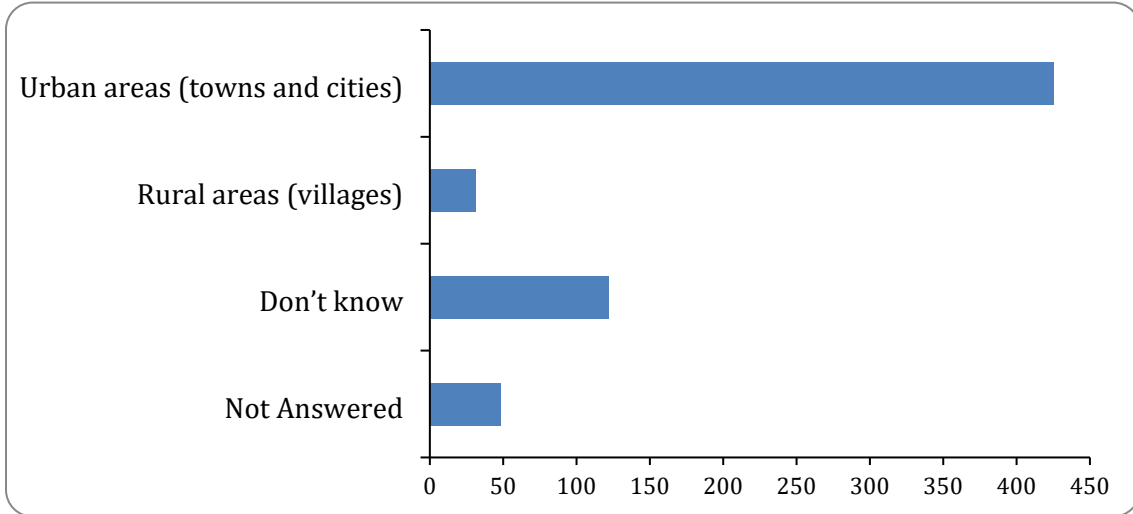


Option	Total	Percent
<b>Yes - significantly</b>	388	61.98%
<b>Yes - slightly</b>	125	19.97%
<b>No - stayed the same</b>	23	3.67%
<b>No - reduced</b>	4	0.64%
<b>Don't know</b>	39	6.23%
<b>Not Answered</b>	47	7.51%

### P3: Do you think there is more homelessness/rough sleeping in...

#### Where

There were 578 responses to this part of the question.

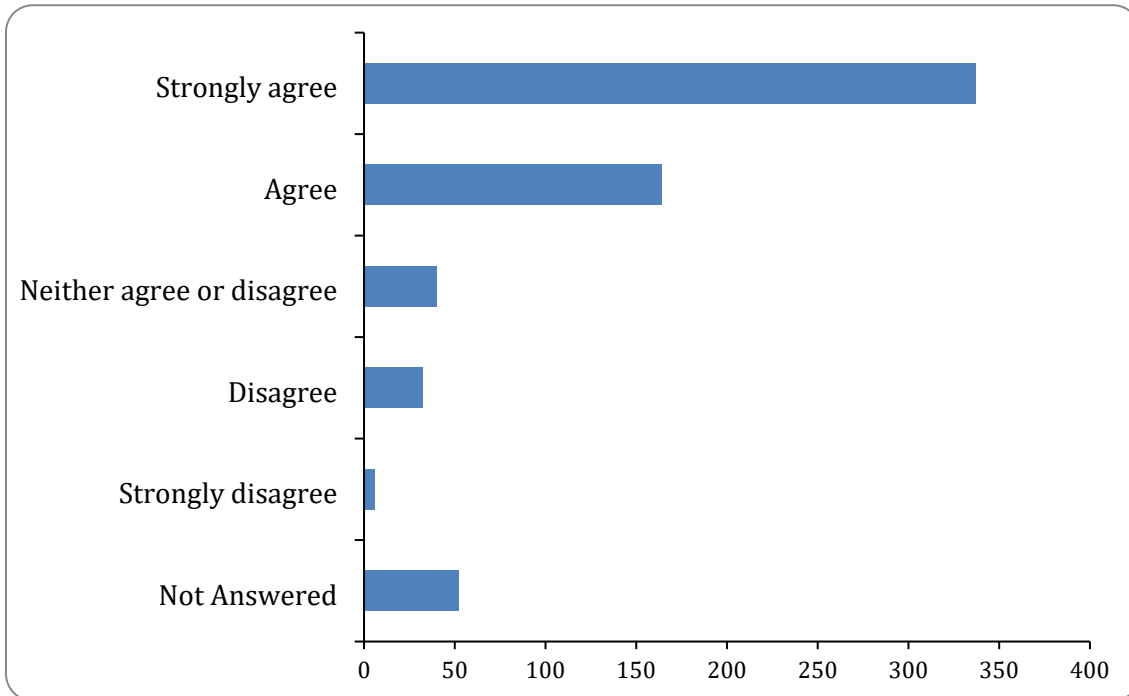


Option	Total	Percent
Urban areas (towns and cities)	425	67.89%
Rural areas (villages)	31	4.95%
Don't know	122	19.49%
Not Answered	48	7.67%

**P4: To what extent do you agree that these are the causes of homelessness and rough sleeping?**

**causes - Cost of living**

There were 574 responses to this part of the question.



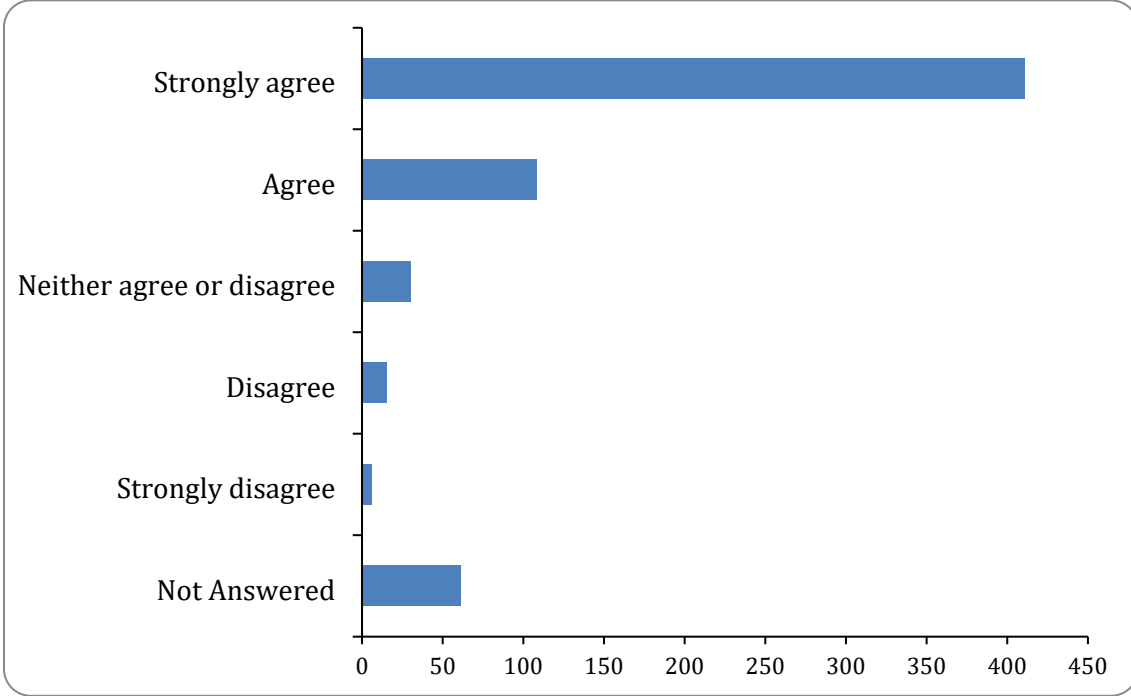
Option	Total	Percent
<b>Strongly agree</b>	337	53.83%
<b>Agree</b>	164	26.20%
<b>Neither agree or disagree</b>	40	6.39%
<b>Disagree</b>	32	5.11%
<b>Strongly disagree</b>	6	0.96%
<b>Not Answered</b>	52	8.31%



**P4**

**causes - Cost of housing/rents**

There were 565 responses to this part of the question.

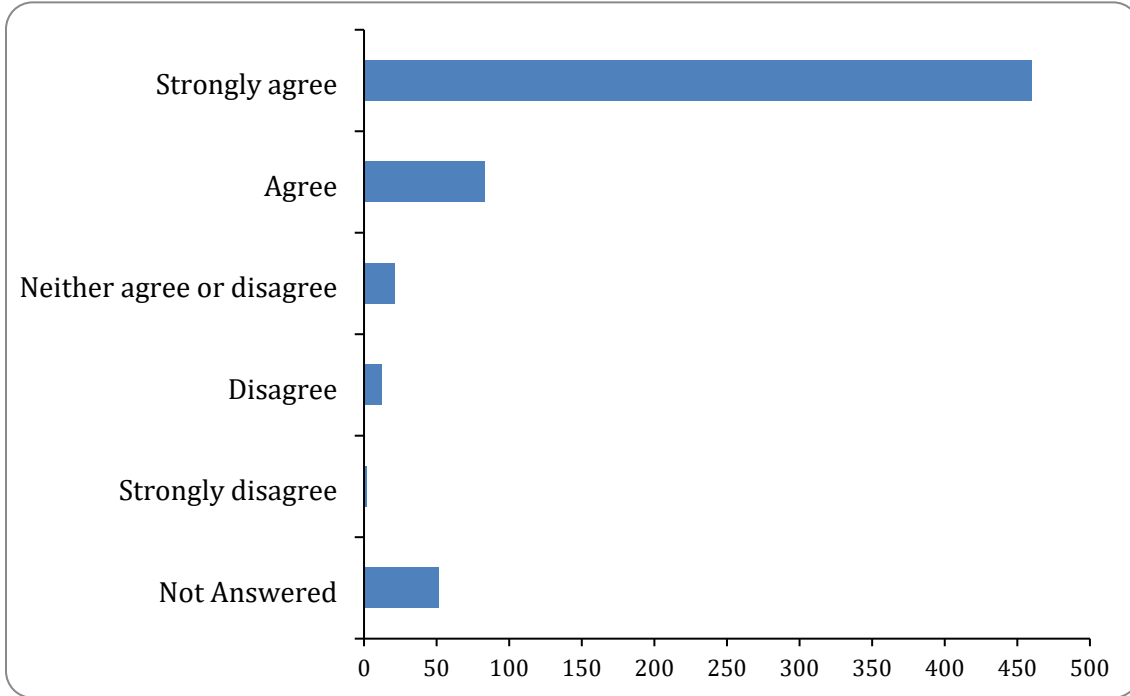


Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	411	65.65%
Agree	108	17.25%
Neither agree or disagree	30	4.79%
Disagree	15	2.40%
Strongly disagree	6	0.96%
Not Answered	61	9.74%

**P4**

**causes - Not enough affordable/social housing**

There were 575 responses to this part of the question.

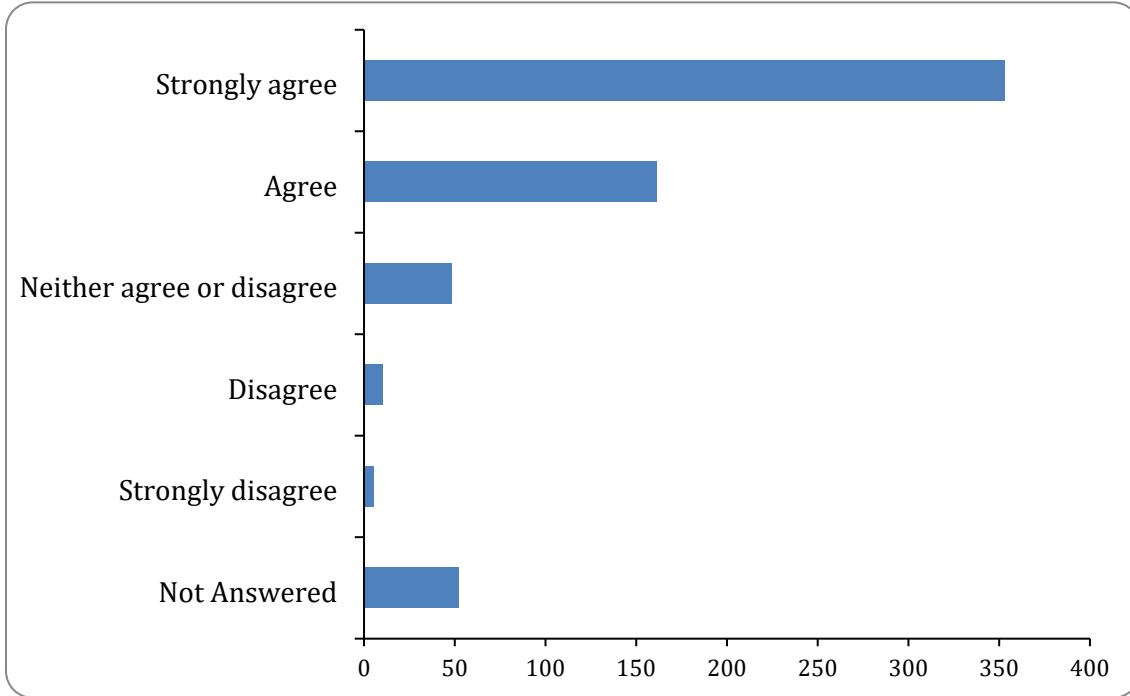


Option	Total	Percent
<b>Strongly agree</b>	460	73.48%
<b>Agree</b>	83	13.26%
<b>Neither agree or disagree</b>	21	3.35%
<b>Disagree</b>	12	1.92%
<b>Strongly disagree</b>	2	0.32%
<b>Not Answered</b>	51	8.15%

**P4**

**causes - People struggling with physical/mental health issues**

There were 574 responses to this part of the question.

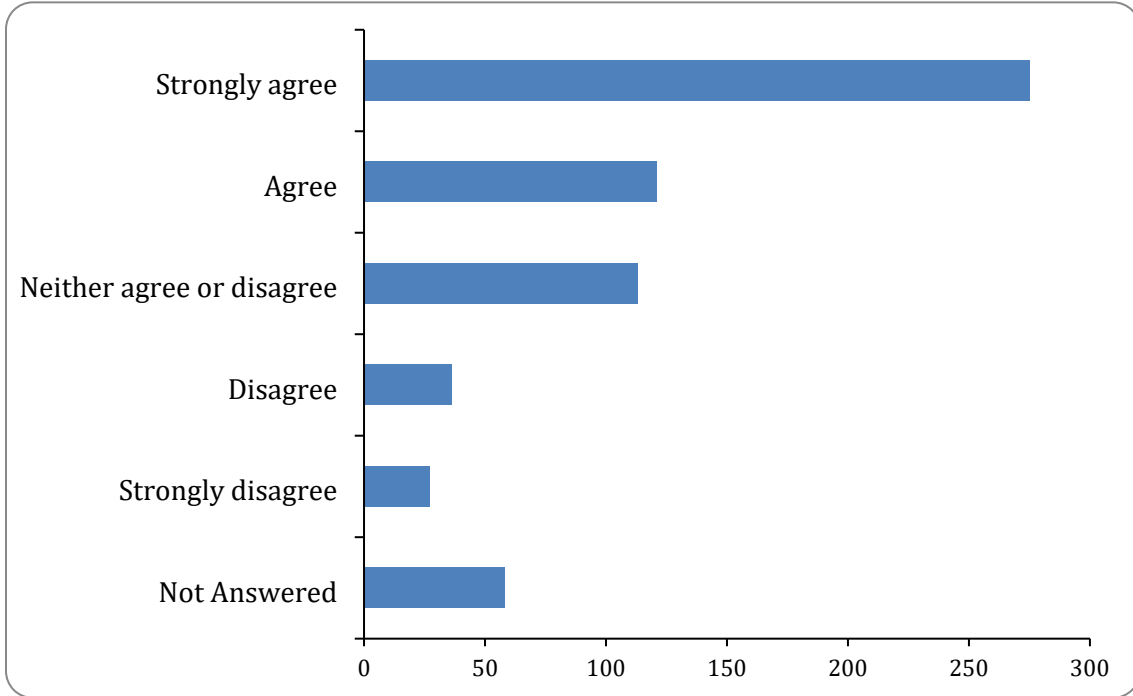


Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	353	56.39%
Agree	161	25.72%
Neither agree or disagree	48	7.67%
Disagree	10	1.60%
Strongly disagree	5	0.80%
Not Answered	52	8.31%

**P4**

**causes - Migration – e.g. retirement / asylum seekers and refugees**

There were 568 responses to this part of the question.

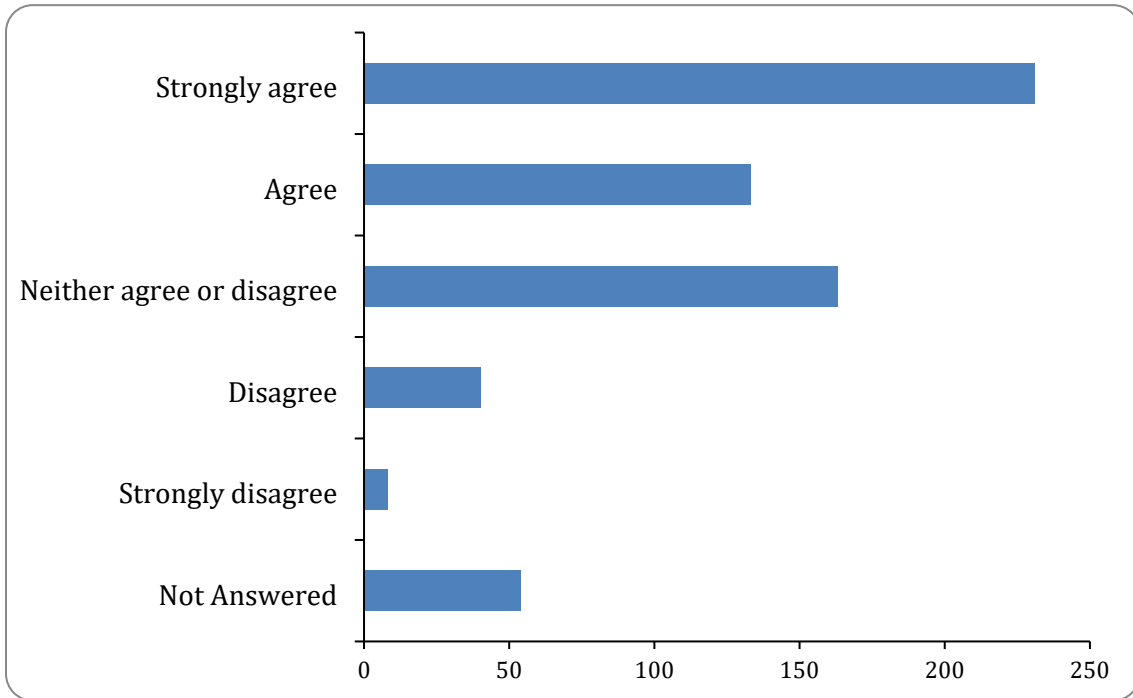


Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	275	43.93%
Agree	121	19.33%
Neither agree or disagree	113	18.05%
Disagree	36	5.75%
Strongly disagree	27	4.31%
Not Answered	58	9.27%

**P4**

**causes - Major projects e.g. Hinkley & Gravity etc - taking accommodation/causing rents to increase**

There were 572 responses to this part of the question.

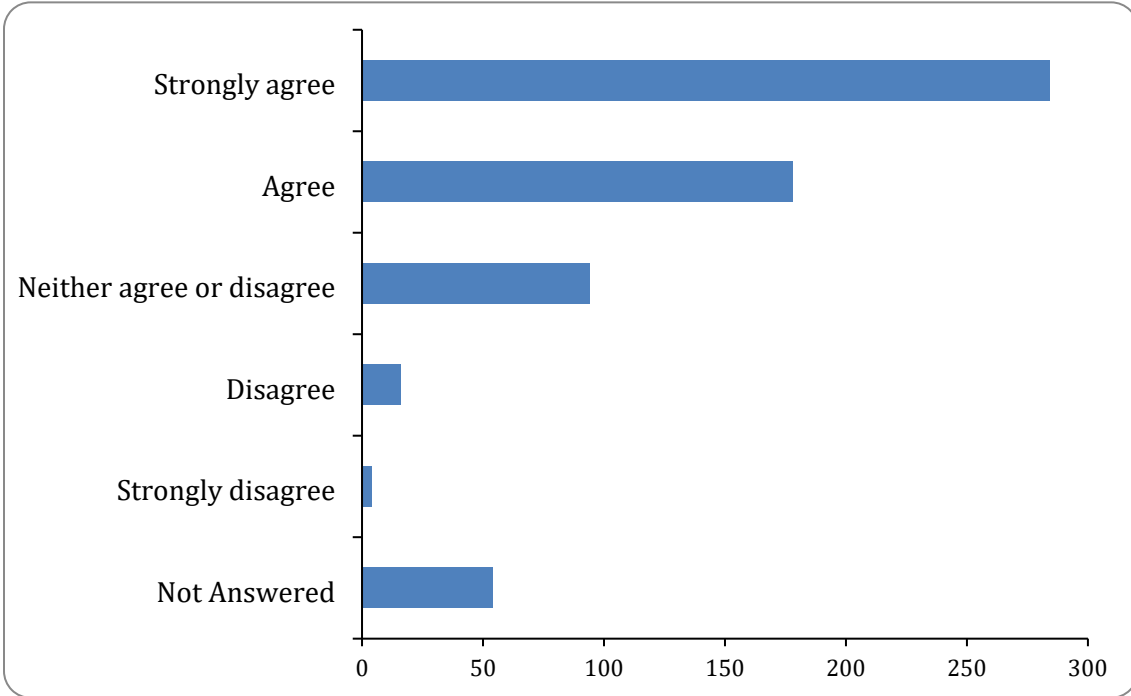


Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	231	36.90%
Agree	133	21.25%
Neither agree or disagree	163	26.04%
Disagree	40	6.39%
Strongly disagree	8	1.28%
Not Answered	54	8.63%

**P4**

**causes - People struggling with drug and alcohol issues**

There were 572 responses to this part of the question.

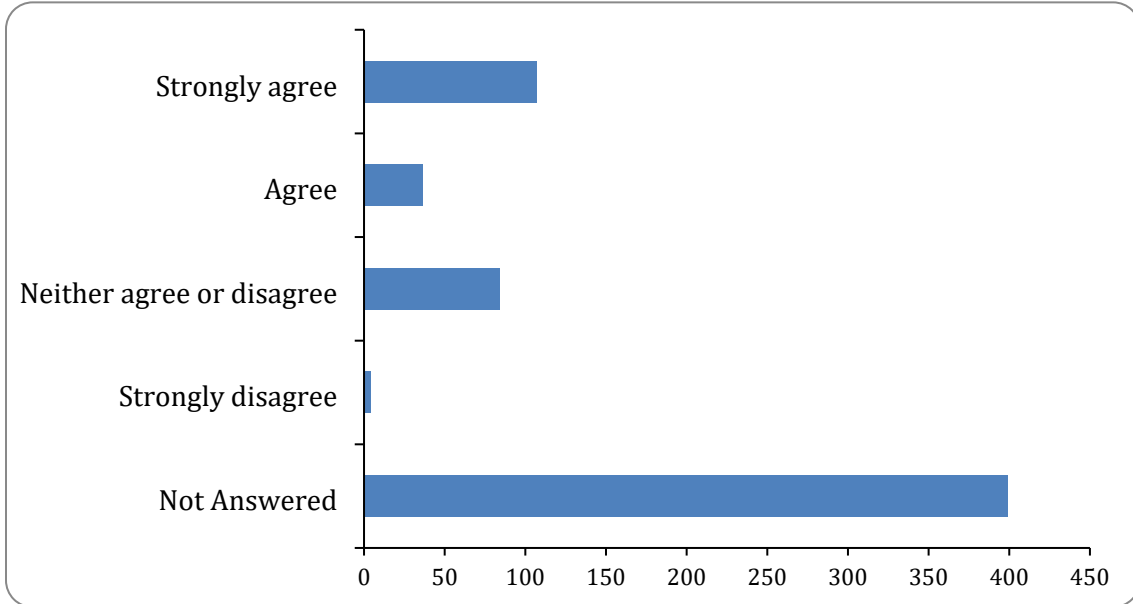


Option	Total	Percent
<b>Strongly agree</b>	284	45.37%
<b>Agree</b>	178	28.43%
<b>Neither agree or disagree</b>	94	15.02%
<b>Disagree</b>	16	2.56%
<b>Strongly disagree</b>	4	0.64%
<b>Not Answered</b>	54	8.63%

**P4**

**causes - Other**

There were 227 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	107	17.09%
Agree	36	5.75%
Neither agree or disagree	84	13.42%
Disagree	0	0.00%
Strongly disagree	4	0.64%
Not Answered	399	63.74%

**If you selected other, please tell us more**

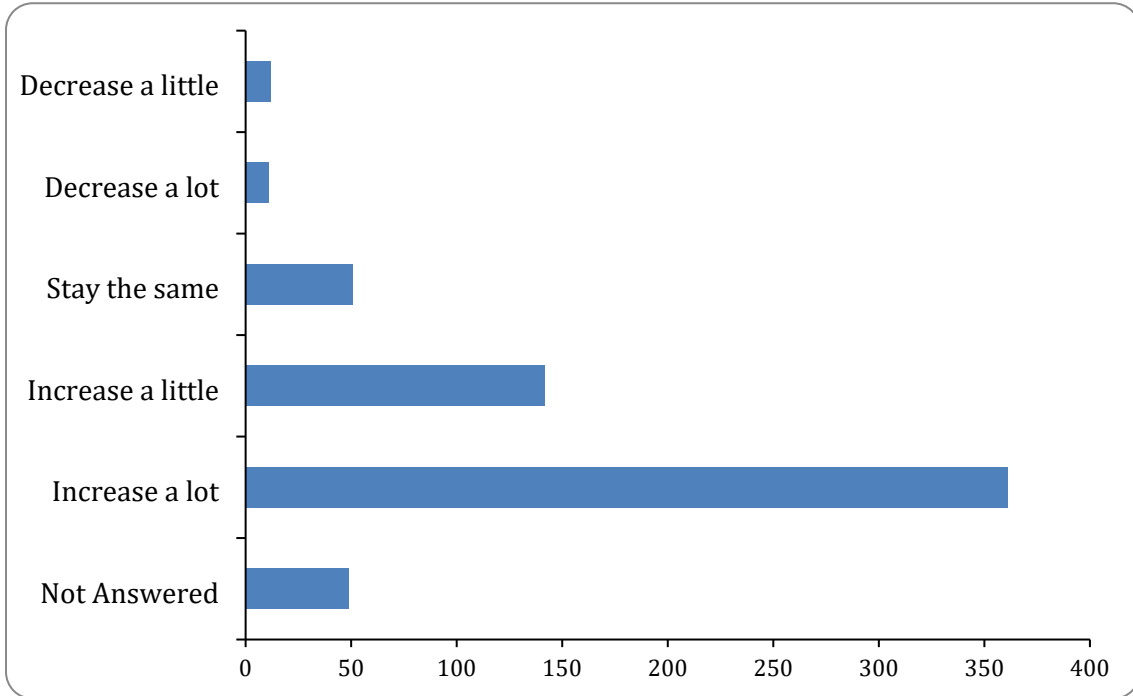
There were 116 responses to this part of the question.

See text responses, separately.

**P5: Do you think homelessness will increase or decrease over the next three to five years?**

**Increase or decrease**

There were 577 responses to this part of the question.



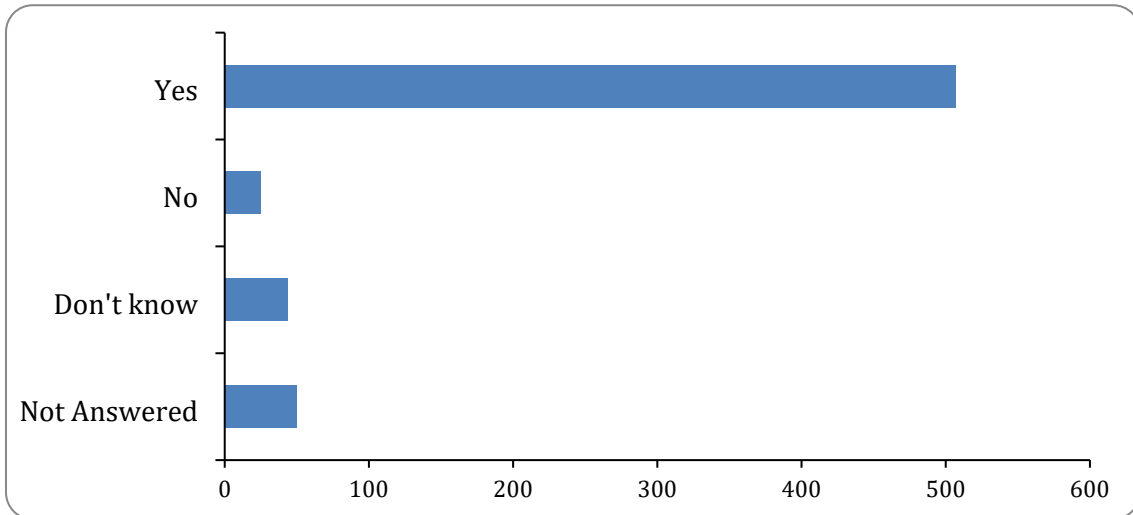
Option	Total	Percent
Decrease a little	12	1.92%
Decrease a lot	11	1.76%
Stay the same	51	8.15%
Increase a little	142	22.68%
Increase a lot	361	57.67%
Not Answered	49	7.83%



**P6: Do you think central government should increase funding to prevent and support homelessness and rough sleeping to meet local need?**

**Govt funding**

There were 576 responses to this part of the question.

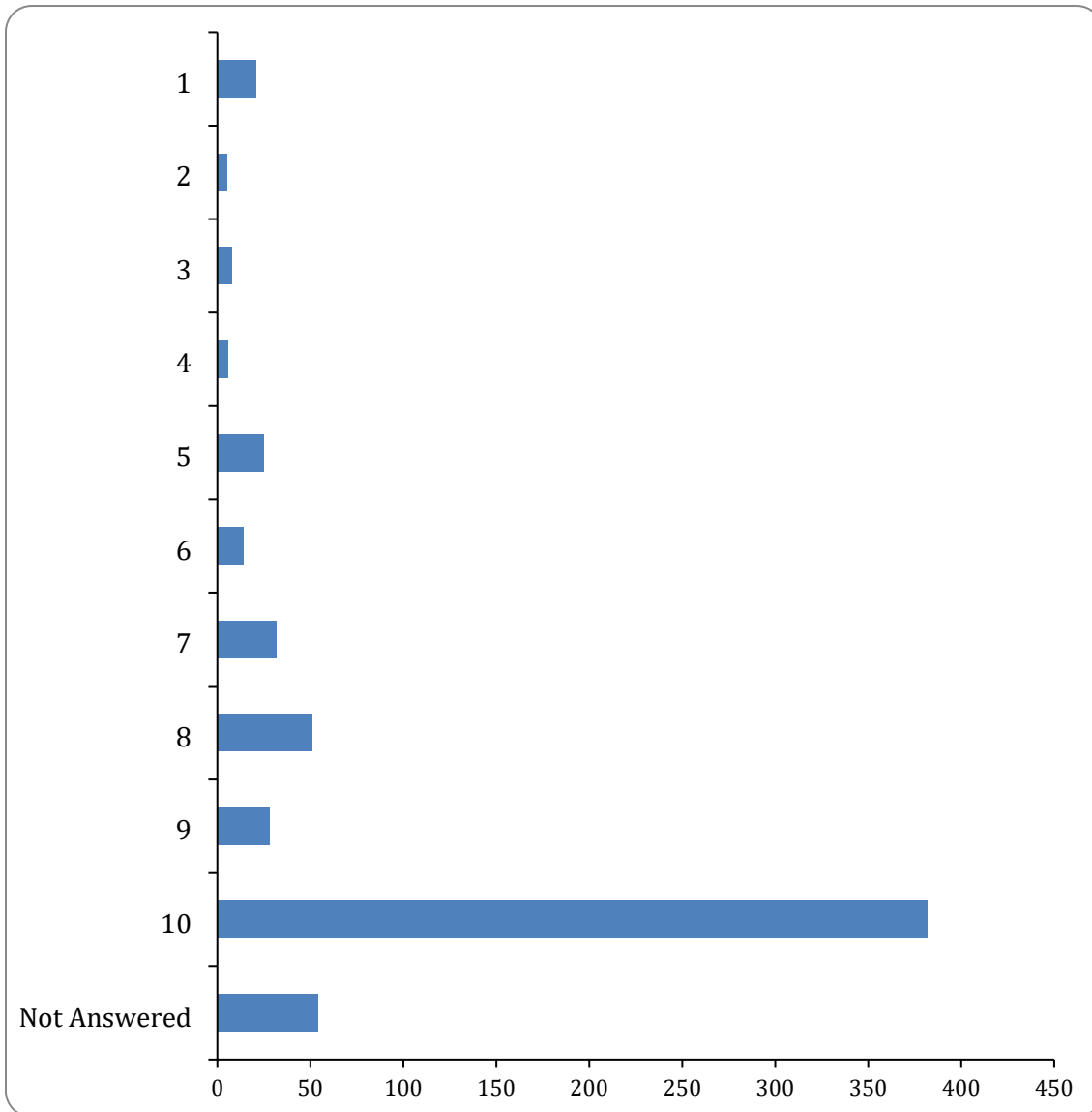


Option	Total	Percent
Yes	507	80.99%
No	25	3.99%
Don't know	44	7.03%
Not Answered	50	7.99%

**P7: What do you think should be prioritised to reduce homelessness and rough sleeping?**

**Prioritised - Take every opportunity to work with our planning colleagues and housing developers to deliver more social and affordable homes**

There were 572 responses to this part of the question.



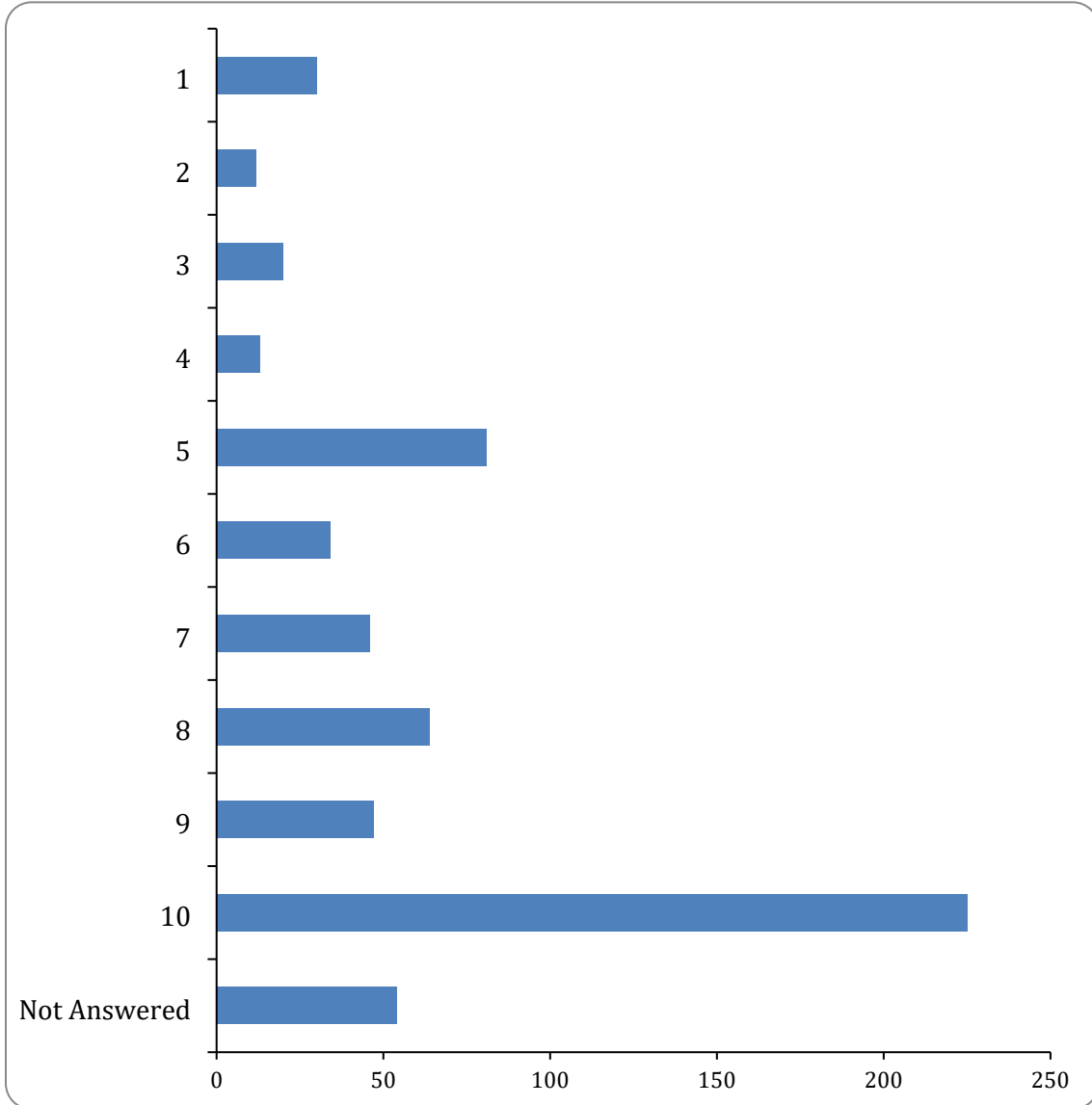
Option	Total	Percent
1	21	3.35%
2	5	0.80%
3	8	1.28%
4	6	0.96%
5	25	3.99%

<b>6</b>	14	2.24%
<b>7</b>	32	5.11%
<b>8</b>	51	8.15%
<b>9</b>	28	4.47%
<b>10</b>	382	61.02%
<b>Not Answered</b>	54	8.63%

**P7**

**Prioritised - Creation of more temporary accommodation**

There were 572 responses to this part of the question.



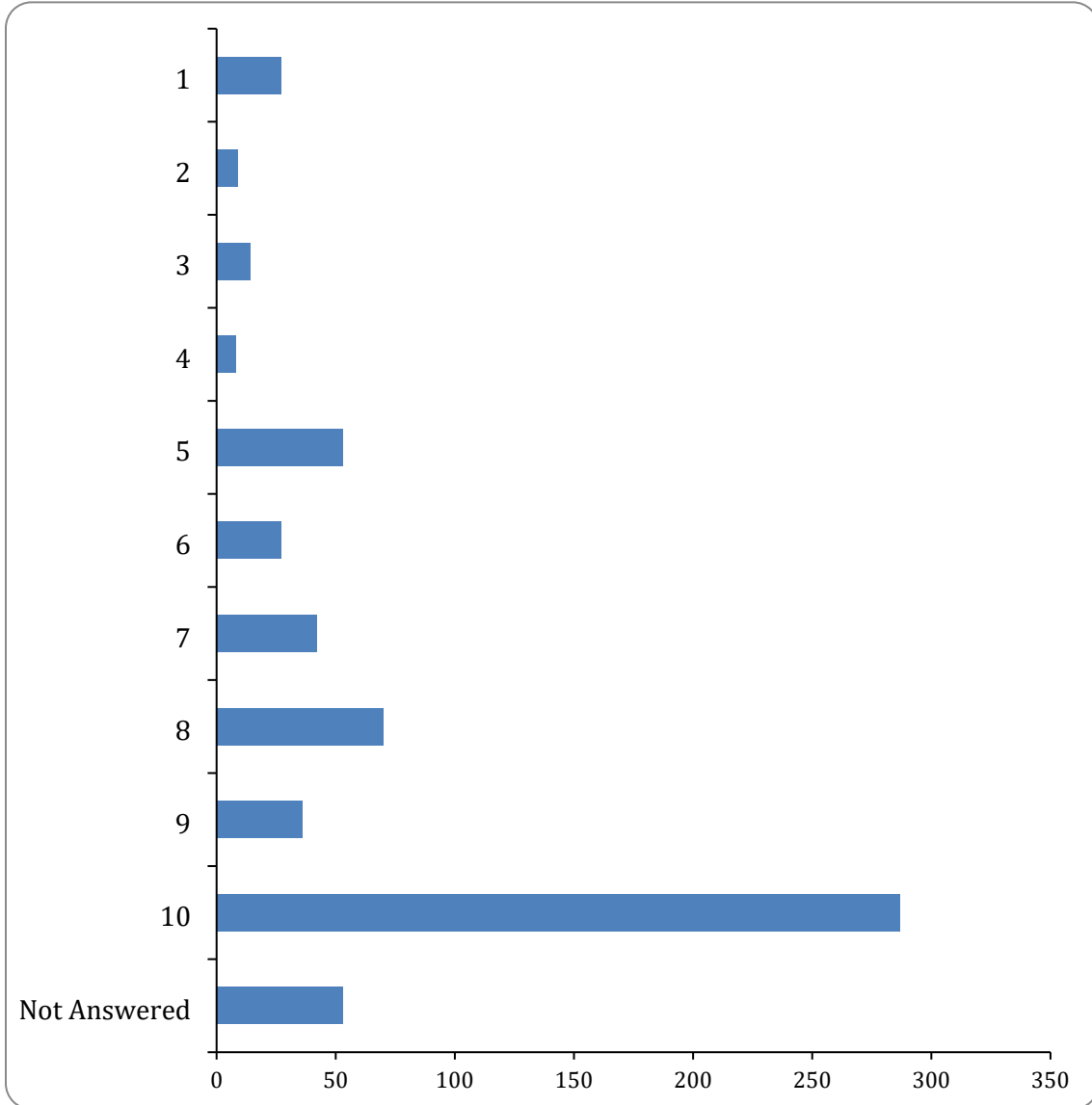
Option	Total	Percent
1	30	4.79%
2	12	1.92%
3	20	3.19%
4	13	2.08%
5	81	12.94%
6	34	5.43%
7	46	7.35%

<b>8</b>	64	10.22%
<b>9</b>	47	7.51%
<b>10</b>	225	35.94%
<b>Not Answered</b>	54	8.63%

**P7**

**Prioritised - Work with private sector landlords to reduce evictions**

There were 573 responses to this part of the question.



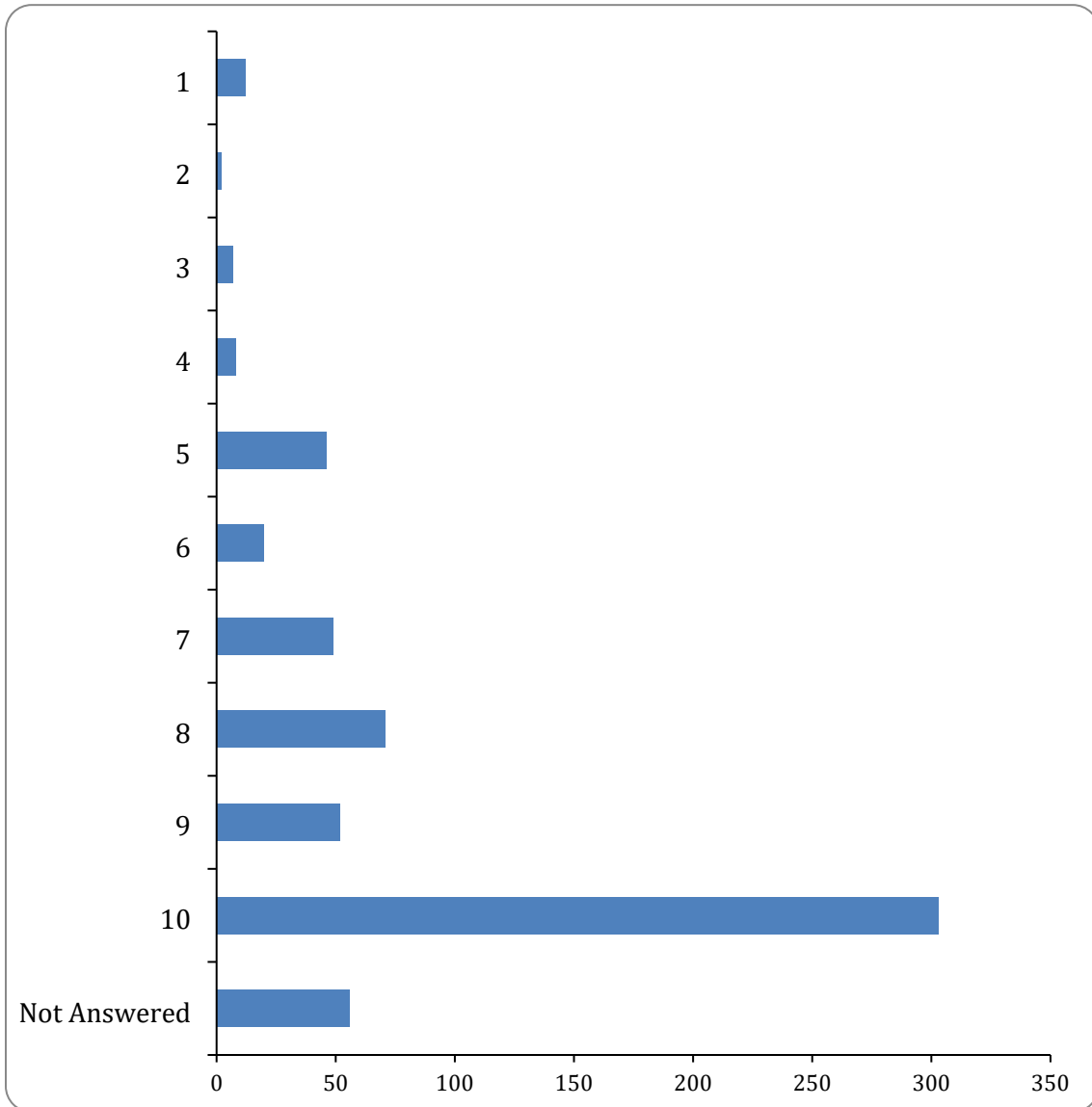
Option	Total	Percent
1	27	4.31%
2	9	1.44%
3	14	2.24%
4	8	1.28%
5	53	8.47%
6	27	4.31%
7	42	6.71%

<b>8</b>	70	11.18%
<b>9</b>	36	5.75%
<b>10</b>	287	45.85%
<b>Not Answered</b>	53	8.47%

**P7**

**Prioritised - Enhanced partnership working between health, care, housing and other agencies**

There were 570 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
1	12	1.92%
2	2	0.32%
3	7	1.12%
4	8	1.28%
5	46	7.35%
6	20	3.19%

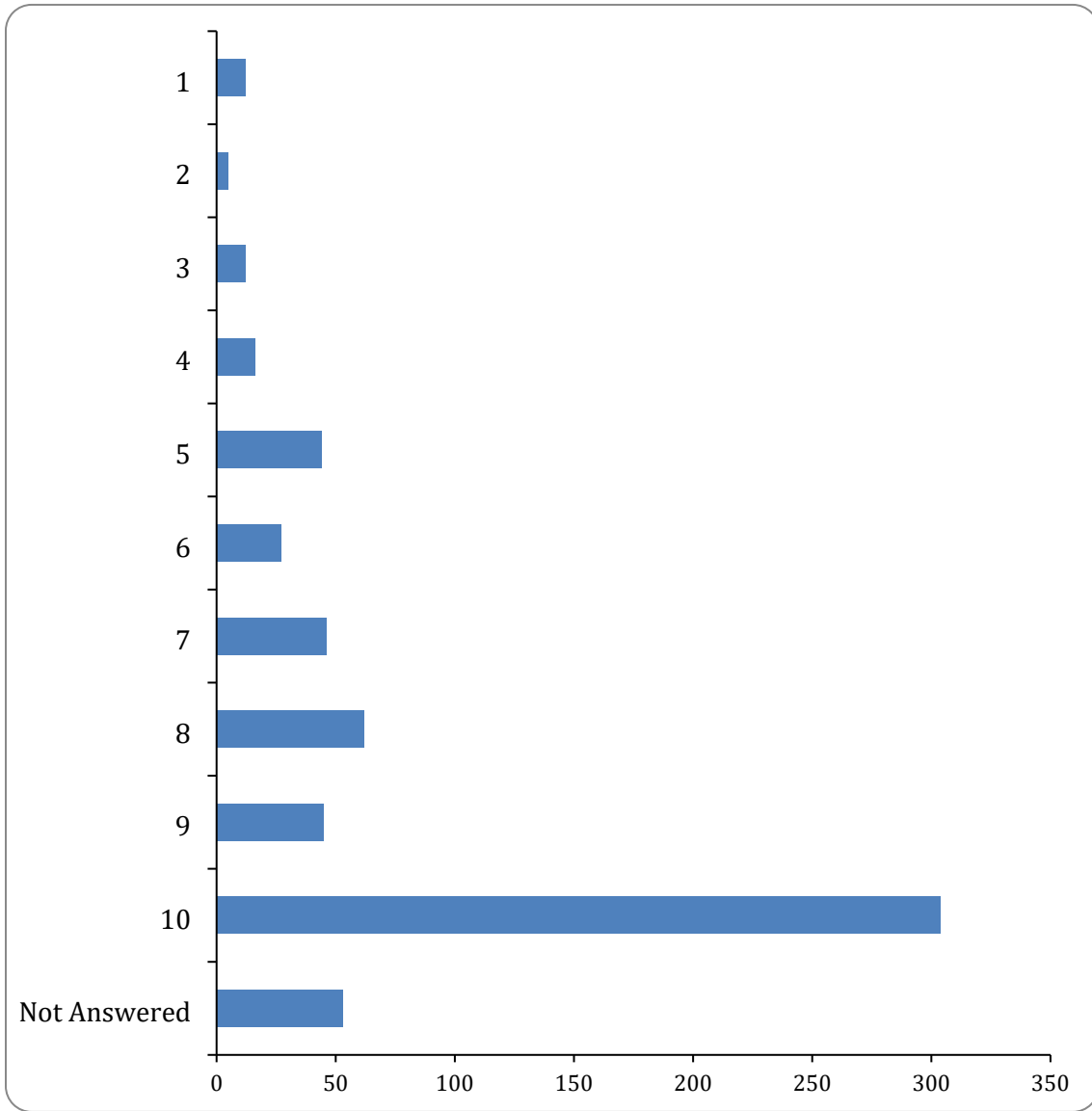


<b>7</b>	49	7.83%
<b>8</b>	71	11.34%
<b>9</b>	52	8.31%
<b>10</b>	303	48.40%
<b>Not Answered</b>	56	8.95%

**P7**

**Prioritised - Supporting people with learning disability, neurodiversity (e.g. ADHD/Autism), physical disabilities, mental health and drug and alcohol conditions**

There were 573 responses to this part of the question.



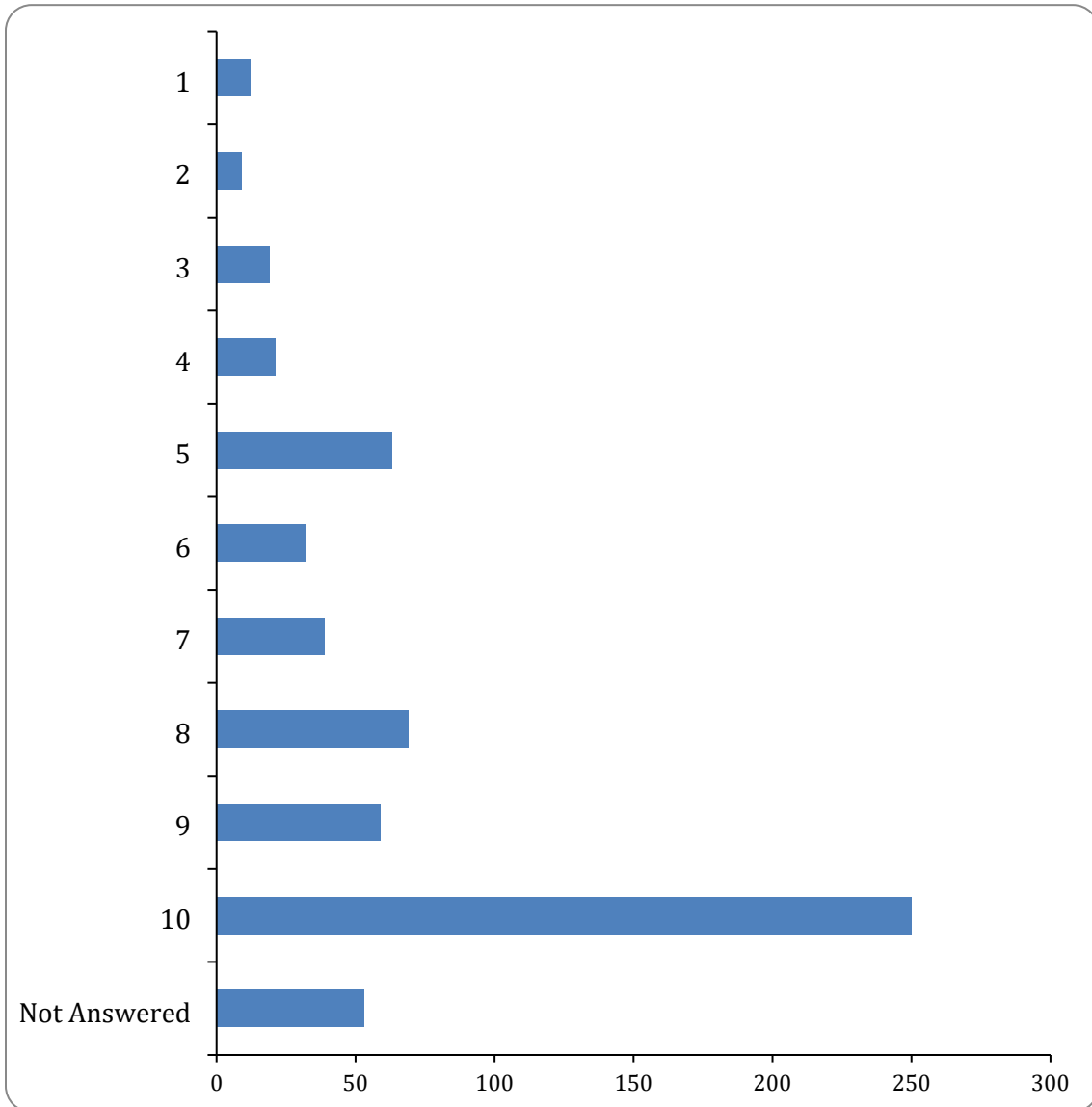
Option	Total	Percent
1	12	1.92%
2	5	0.80%
3	12	1.92%
4	16	2.56%
5	44	7.03%

<b>6</b>	27	4.31%
<b>7</b>	46	7.35%
<b>8</b>	62	9.90%
<b>9</b>	45	7.19%
<b>10</b>	304	48.56%
<b>Not Answered</b>	53	8.47%

**P7**

**Prioritised - Supporting people leaving institutions such as hospitals, care settings and prison etc**

There were 573 responses to this part of the question.



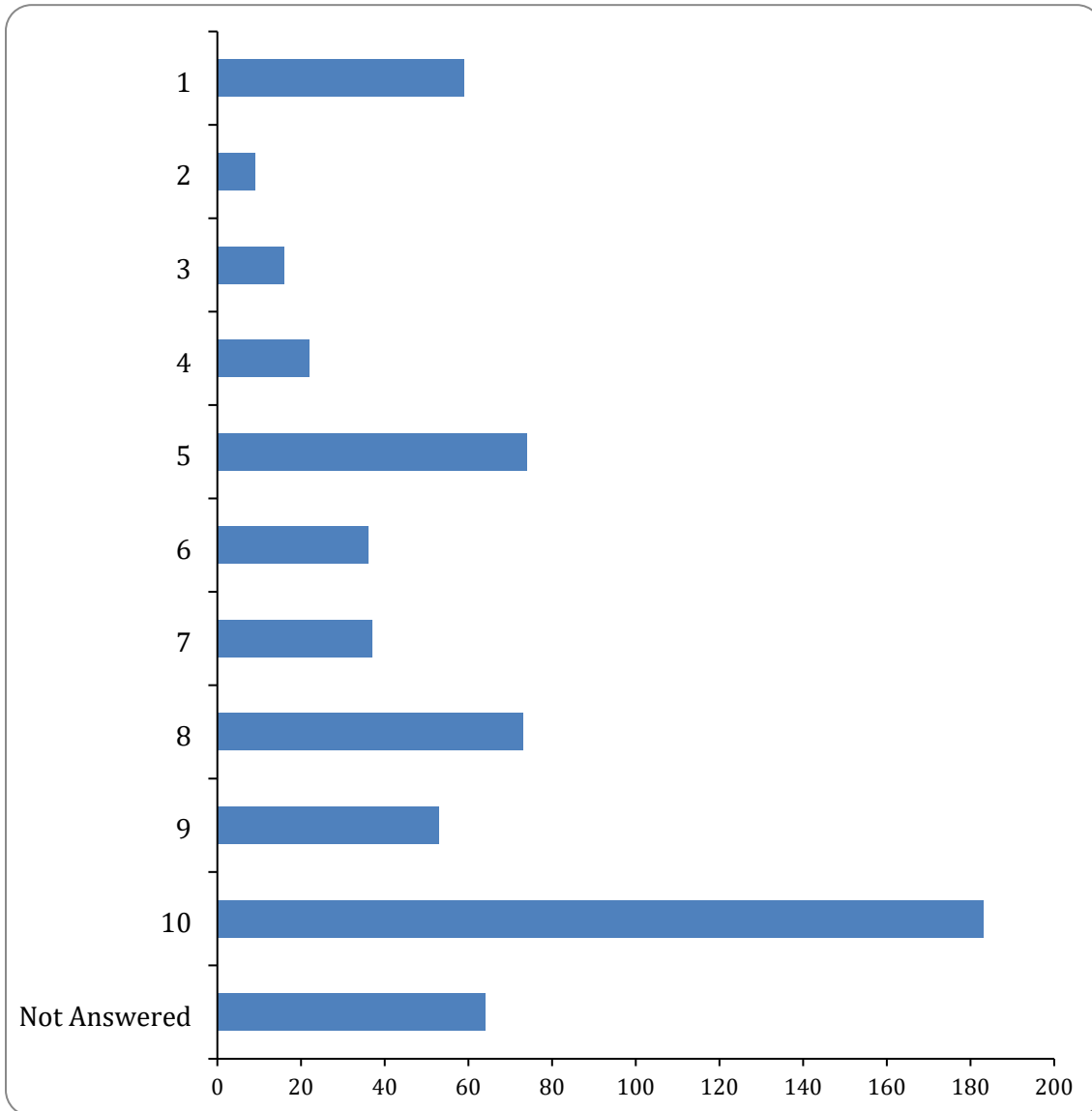
Option	Total	Percent
1	12	1.92%
2	9	1.44%
3	19	3.04%
4	21	3.35%
5	63	10.06%
6	32	5.11%

<b>7</b>	39	6.23%
<b>8</b>	69	11.02%
<b>9</b>	59	9.42%
<b>10</b>	250	39.94%
<b>Not Answered</b>	53	8.47%

**P7**

**Prioritised - Supporting asylum seekers/refugees, victims of domestic abuse, and armed forces veterans**

There were 562 responses to this part of the question.



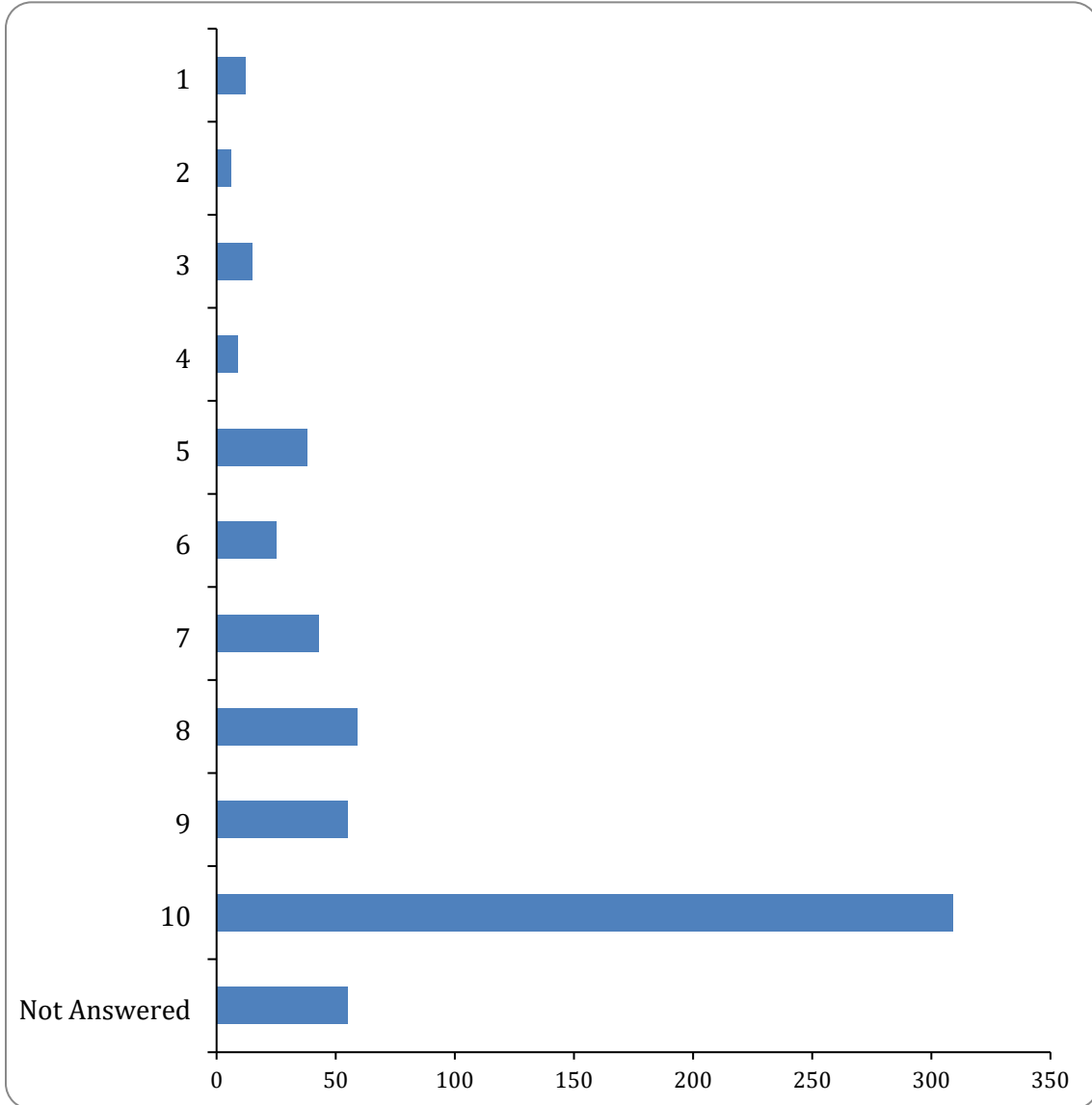
Option	Total	Percent
1	59	9.42%
2	9	1.44%
3	16	2.56%
4	22	3.51%
5	74	11.82%
6	36	5.75%

<b>7</b>	37	5.91%
<b>8</b>	73	11.66%
<b>9</b>	53	8.47%
<b>10</b>	183	29.23%
<b>Not Answered</b>	64	10.22%

**P7**

**Prioritised - Supporting the elderly to access stable accommodation and support**

There were 571 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
1	12	1.92%
2	6	0.96%
3	15	2.40%
4	9	1.44%
5	38	6.07%
6	25	3.99%
7	43	6.87%

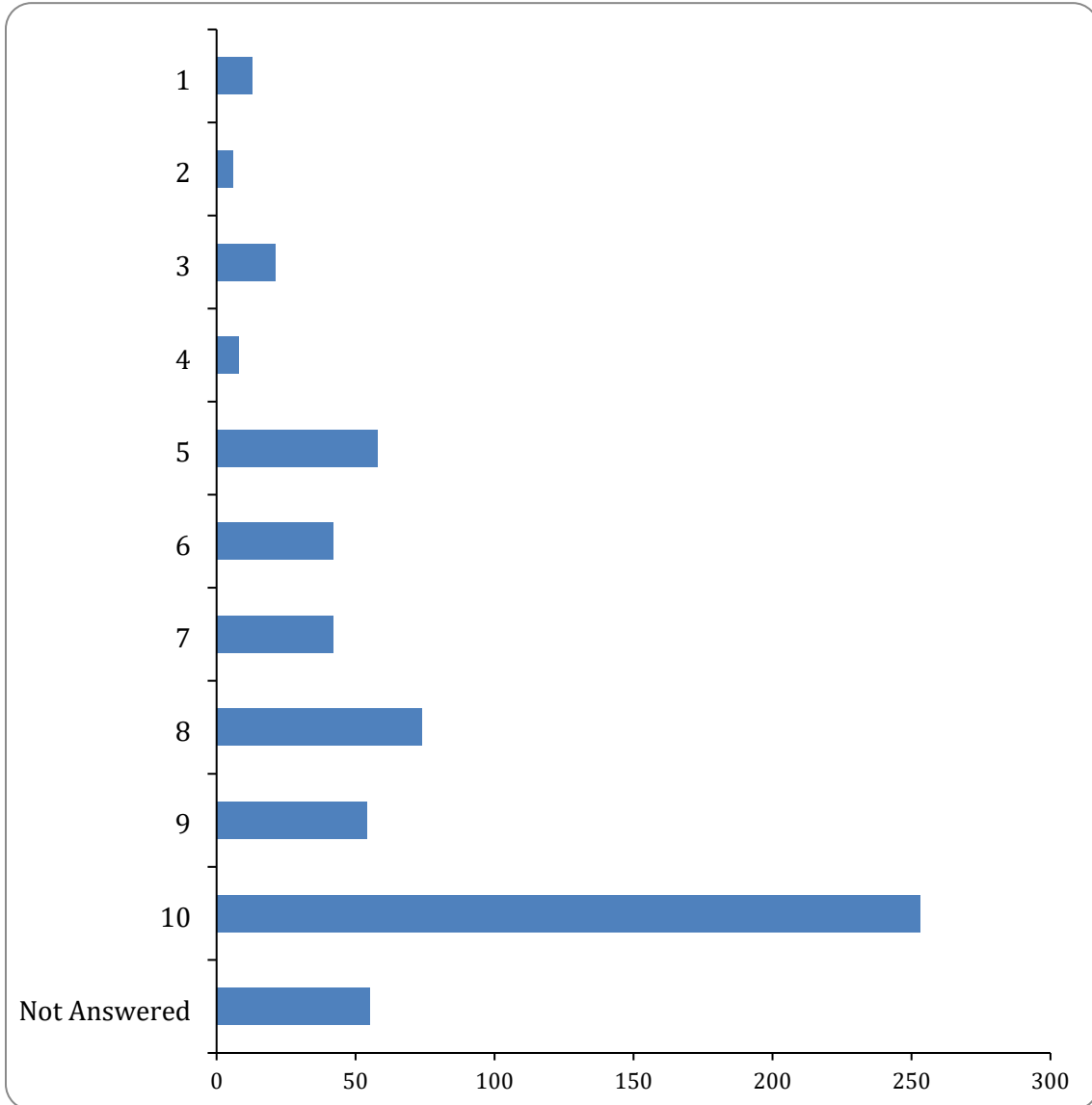


<b>8</b>	59	9.42%
<b>9</b>	55	8.79%
<b>10</b>	309	49.36%
<b>Not Answered</b>	55	8.79%

**P7**

**Prioritised - Supporting young people to access stable accommodation and support**

There were 571 responses to this part of the question.



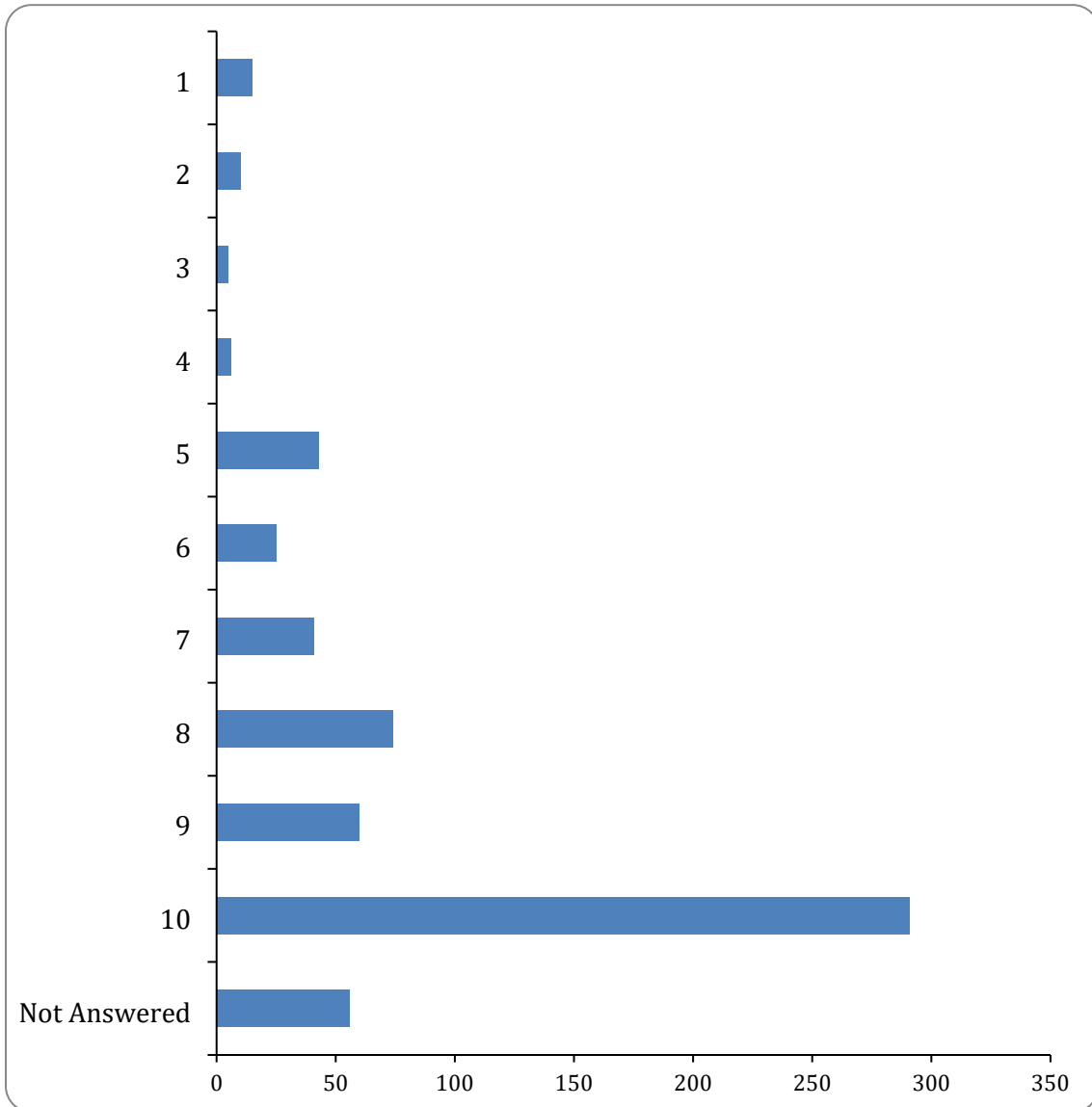
Option	Total	Percent
1	13	2.08%
2	6	0.96%
3	21	3.35%
4	8	1.28%
5	58	9.27%
6	42	6.71%

<b>7</b>	42	6.71%
<b>8</b>	74	11.82%
<b>9</b>	54	8.63%
<b>10</b>	253	40.42%
<b>Not Answered</b>	55	8.79%

**P7**

**Prioritised - Supporting rough sleepers to access services, stable accommodation and support**

There were 570 responses to this part of the question.



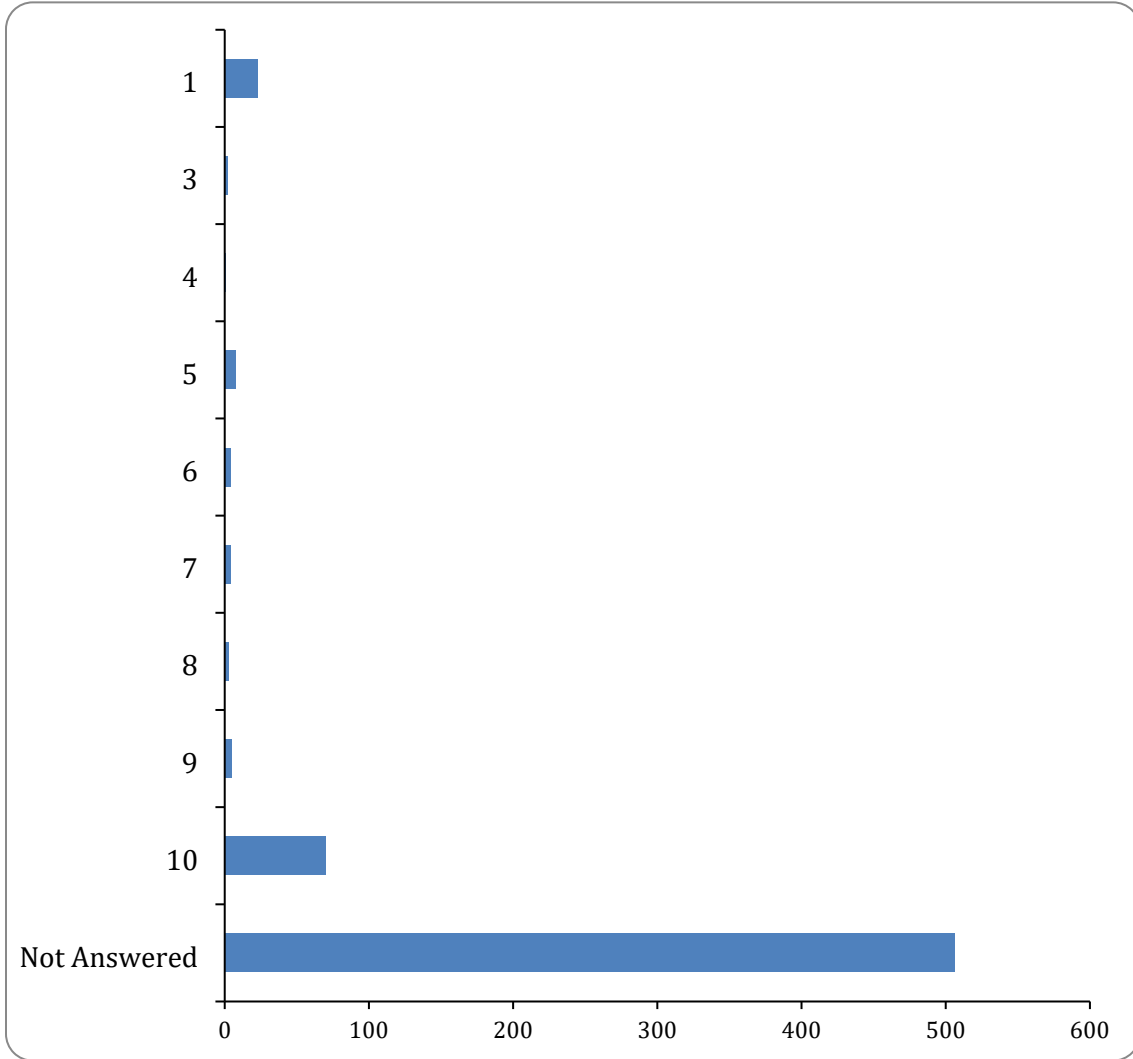
Option	Total	Percent
1	15	2.40%
2	10	1.60%
3	5	0.80%
4	6	0.96%
5	43	6.87%
6	25	3.99%

<b>7</b>	41	6.55%
<b>8</b>	74	11.82%
<b>9</b>	60	9.58%
<b>10</b>	291	46.49%
<b>Not Answered</b>	56	8.95%

**P7**

**Prioritised - Other**

There were 120 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
1	23	3.67%
2	0	0.00%
3	2	0.32%
4	1	0.16%
5	8	1.28%
6	4	0.64%
7	4	0.64%
8	3	0.48%
9	5	0.80%

<b>10</b>	70	11.18%
<b>Not Answered</b>	506	80.83%

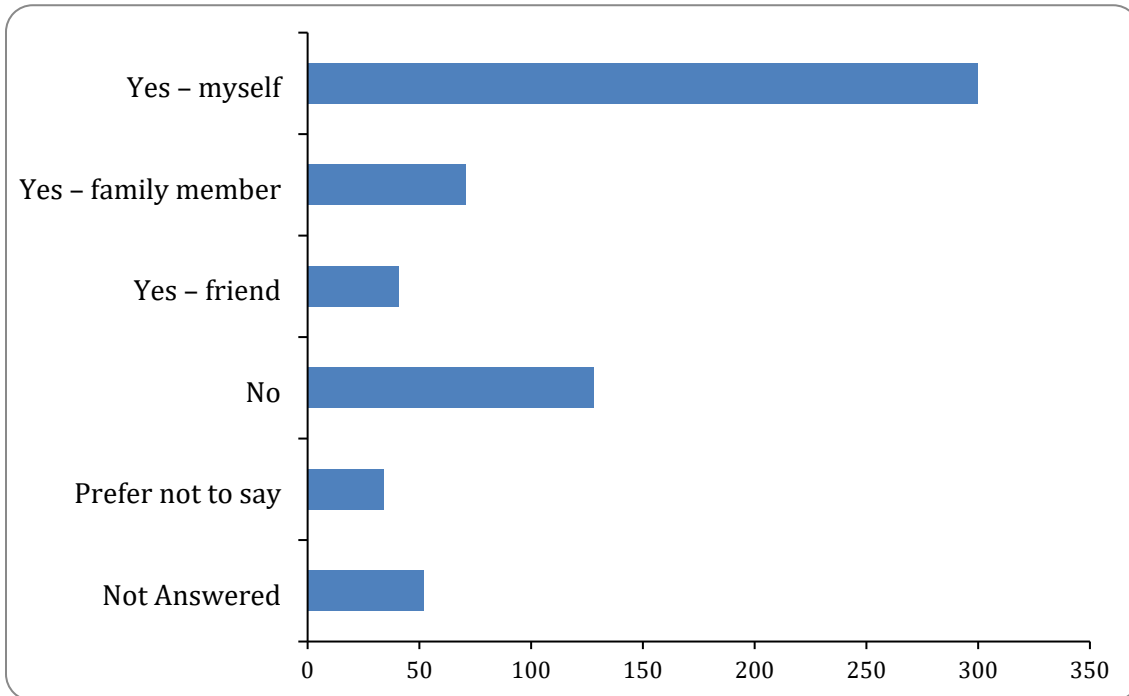
**If you selected other, please tell us more**

There were 75 responses to this part of the question.

See text responses, separately.

**P8: Have you personally, or someone close to you such as a family member, ever experienced homelessness or the threat of homelessness?  
experienced homelessness**

There were 574 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Yes - myself	300	47.92%
Yes - family member	71	11.34%
Yes - friend	41	6.55%
No	128	20.45%
Prefer not to say	34	5.43%
Not Answered	52	8.31%



**P9: Do you have any other comments or suggestions?**

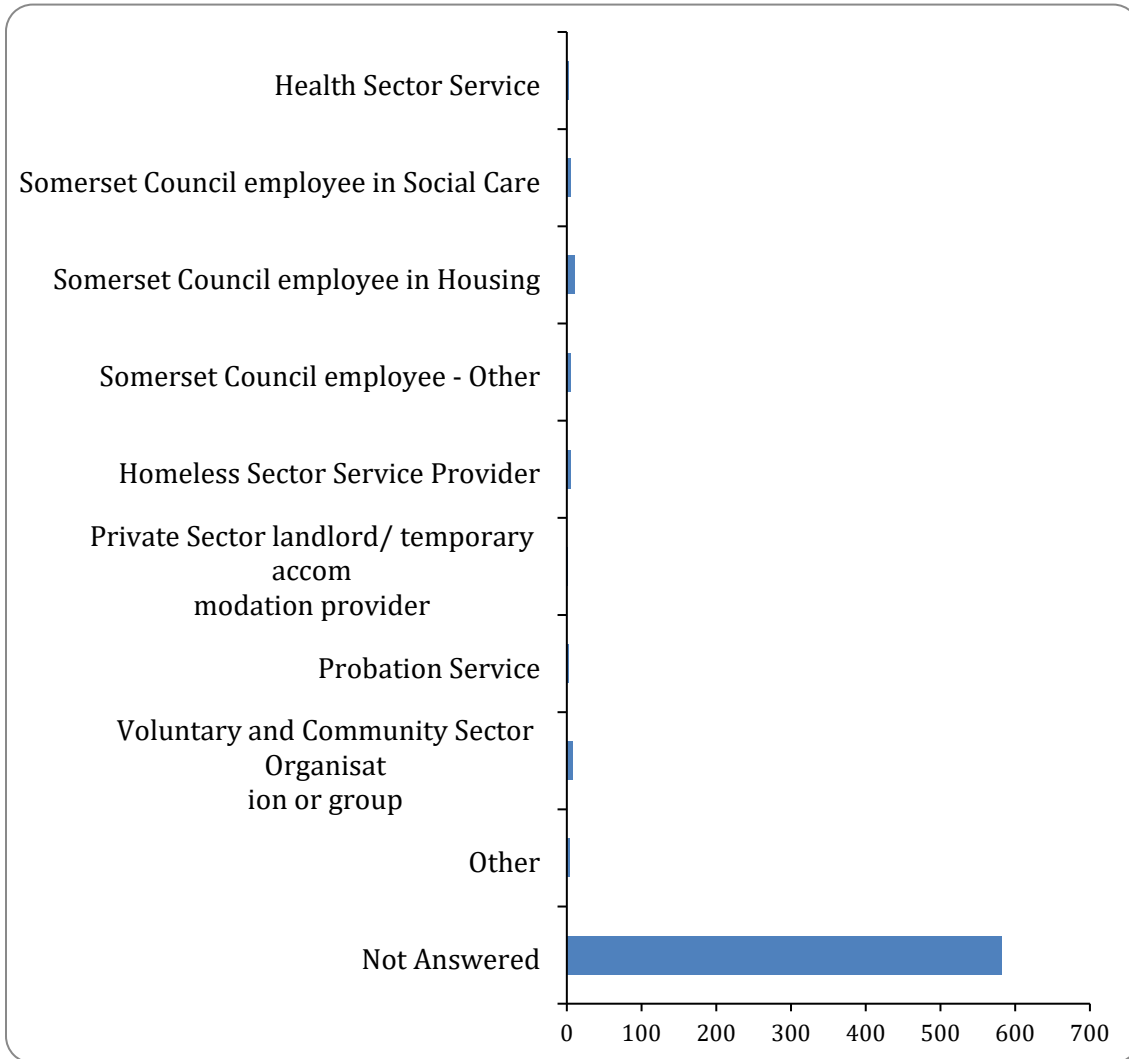
**comments**

There were 281 responses to this part of the question.

See text responses, separately.

**O1: Are you responding as a responding as**

There were 44 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Health Sector Service	3	0.48%
Social and Affordable Housing Provider	0	0.00%
Somerset Council employee in Social Care	5	0.80%
Somerset Council employee in Housing	11	1.76%
Somerset Council employee - Other	5	0.80%
Homeless Sector Service Provider	5	0.80%
Private Sector landlord/ temporary accommodation provider	1	0.16%
Business	0	0.00%
Probation Service	2	0.32%

<b>Voluntary and Community Sector Organisation or group</b>	8	1.28%
<b>Other</b>	4	0.64%
<b>Not Answered</b>	582	92.97%

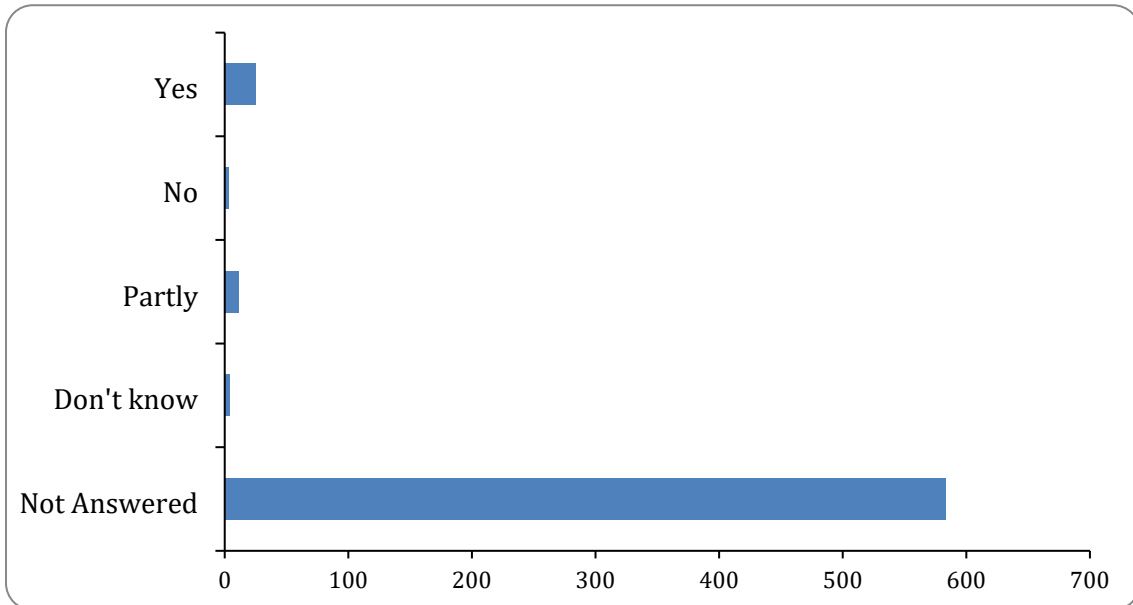
**If you selected other, please tell us more**

There were 6 responses to this part of the question.

See text responses, separately.

**O2: Does the consultation document present an accurate picture of homelessness and rough sleeping across Somerset?  
accurate picture**

There were 43 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Yes	25	3.99%
No	3	0.48%
Partly	11	1.76%
Don't know	4	0.64%
Not Answered	583	93.13%

**O3: What gaps are there in service provision and which local services and accommodation providers can we work with to prevent and resolve homelessness and rough sleeping across Somerset?**

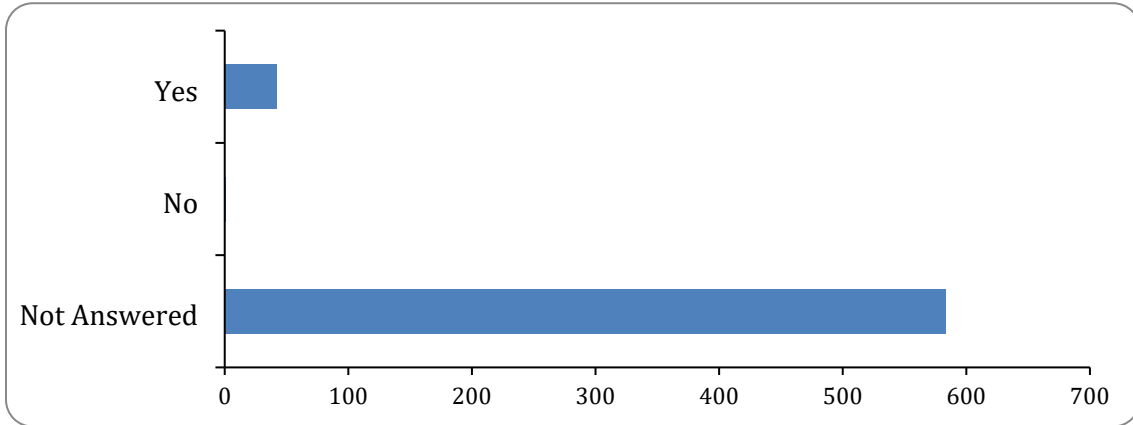
**Gaps in provision**

There were 39 responses to this part of the question.

See text responses, separately.

**O4: Do you think central government should increase funding to prevent and support homelessness and rough sleeping to meet local need?  
increase funding**

There were 43 responses to this part of the question.

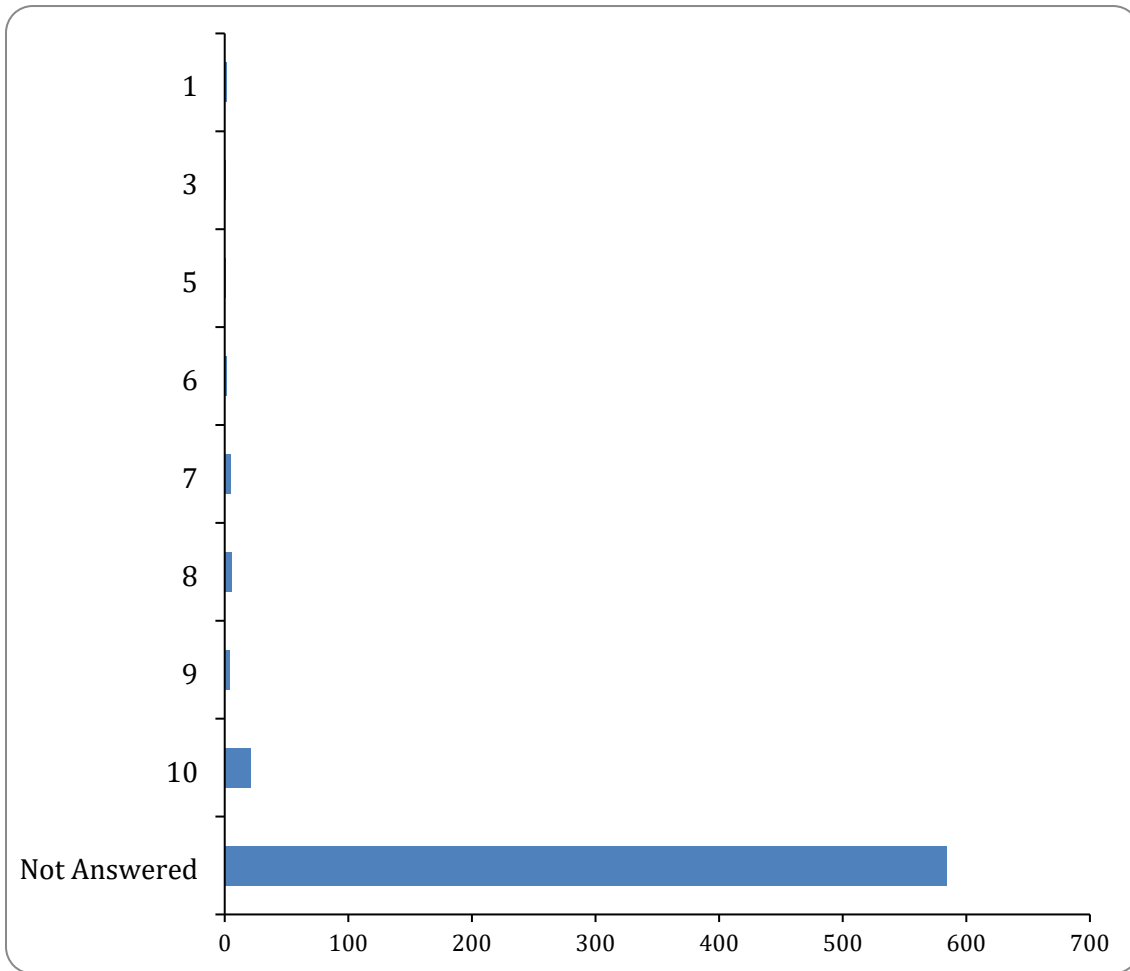


Option	Total	Percent
Yes	42	6.71%
No	1	0.16%
Not Answered	583	93.13%

**O5: What do you think should be prioritised to reduce homelessness and rough sleeping?**

**Prioritised - Take every opportunity to work with our planning colleagues and housing developers to deliver more social and affordable homes**

There were 42 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
1	2	0.32%
2	0	0.00%
3	1	0.16%
4	0	0.00%
5	1	0.16%
6	2	0.32%
7	5	0.80%
8	6	0.96%
9	4	0.64%
10	21	3.35%

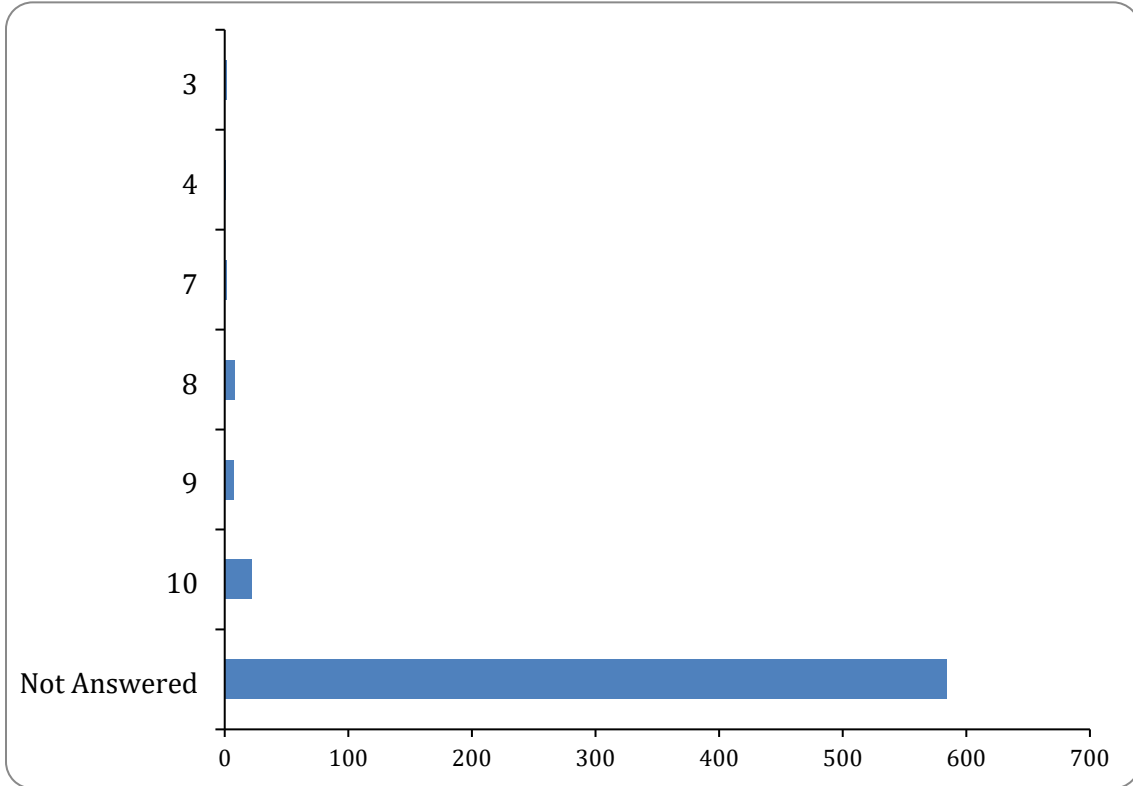
<b>Not Answered</b>	584	93.29%
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O5

**Prioritised - Creation of more temporary accommodation**

There were 42 responses to this part of the question.

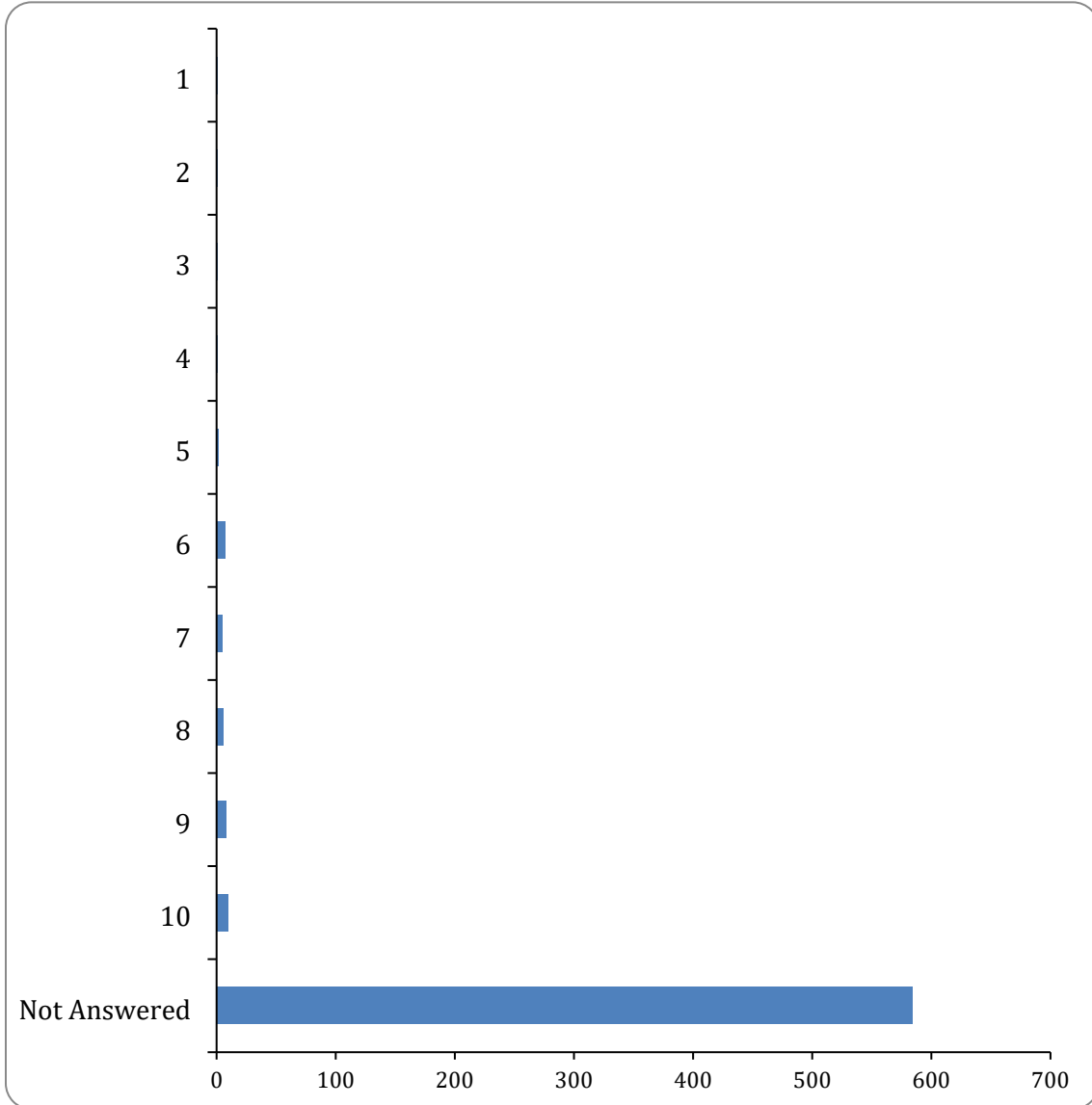


Option	Total	Percent
1	0	0.00%
2	0	0.00%
3	2	0.32%
4	1	0.16%
5	0	0.00%
6	0	0.00%
7	2	0.32%
8	8	1.28%
9	7	1.12%
10	22	3.51%
Not Answered	584	93.29%

**O5**

**Prioritised - Work with private sector landlords to reduce evictions**

There were 42 responses to this part of the question.



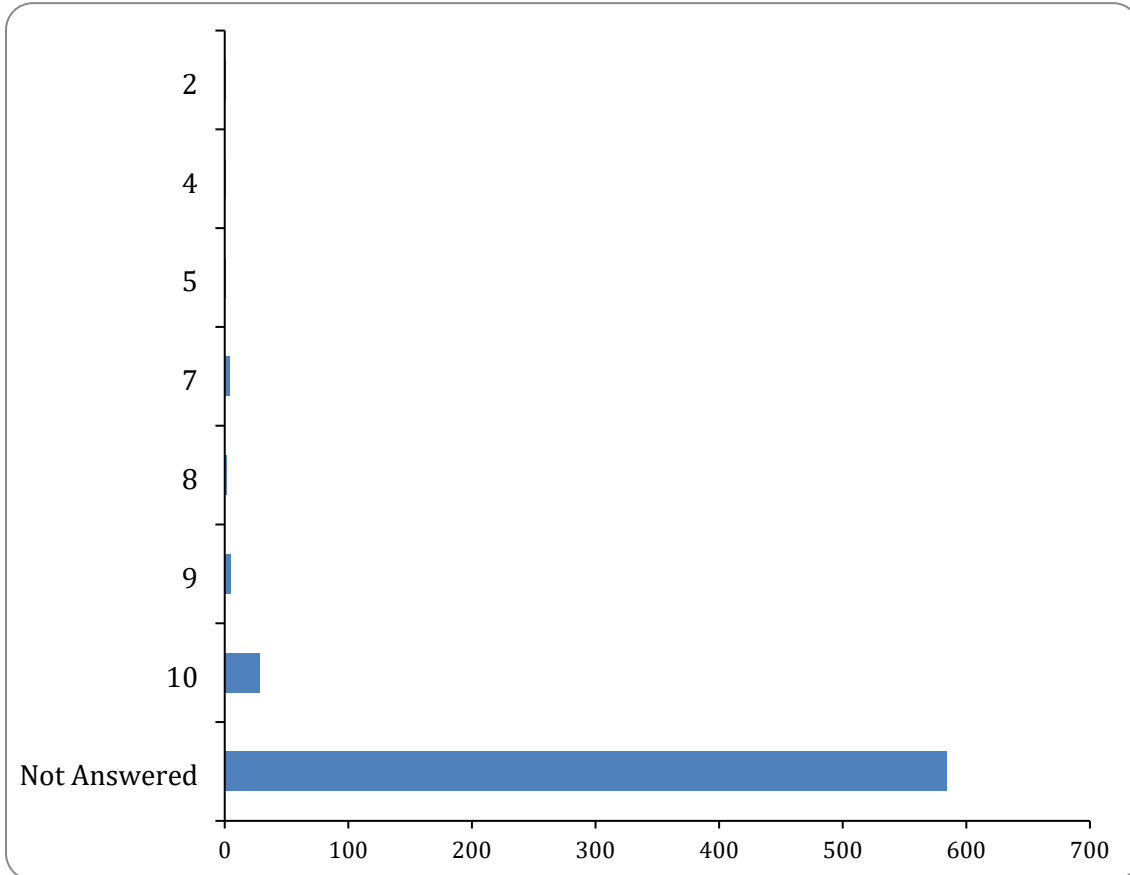
Option	Total	Percent
1	1	0.16%
2	1	0.16%
3	1	0.16%
4	1	0.16%
5	2	0.32%
6	7	1.12%
7	5	0.80%

<b>8</b>	6	0.96%
<b>9</b>	8	1.28%
<b>10</b>	10	1.60%
<b>Not Answered</b>	584	93.29%

**O5**

**Prioritised - Enhanced partnership working between health, care, housing and other agencies**

There were 42 responses to this part of the question.

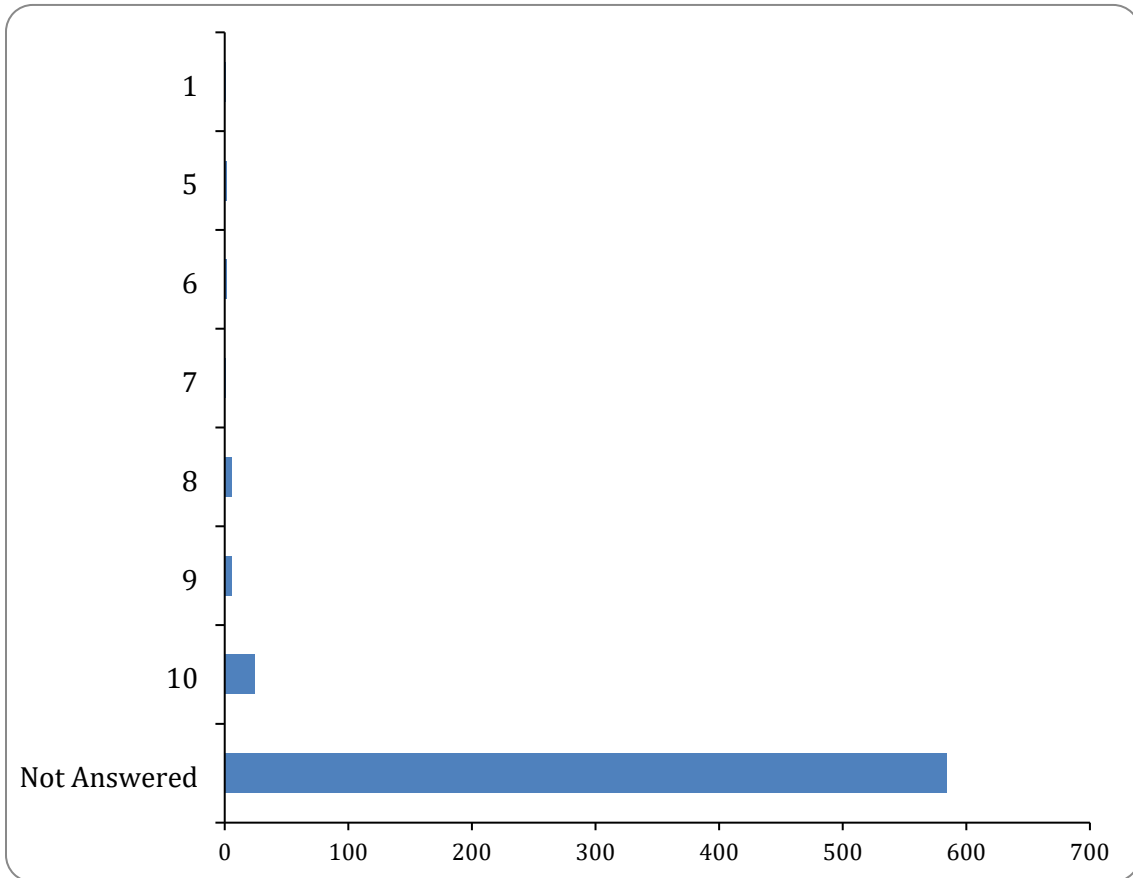


Option	Total	Percent
1	0	0.00%
2	1	0.16%
3	0	0.00%
4	1	0.16%
5	1	0.16%
6	0	0.00%
7	4	0.64%
8	2	0.32%
9	5	0.80%
10	28	4.47%
Not Answered	584	93.29%

**O5**

**Prioritised - Supporting people with learning disability, neurodiversity (e.g. ADHD/Autism), physical disabilities, mental health and drug and alcohol conditions**

There were 42 responses to this part of the question.

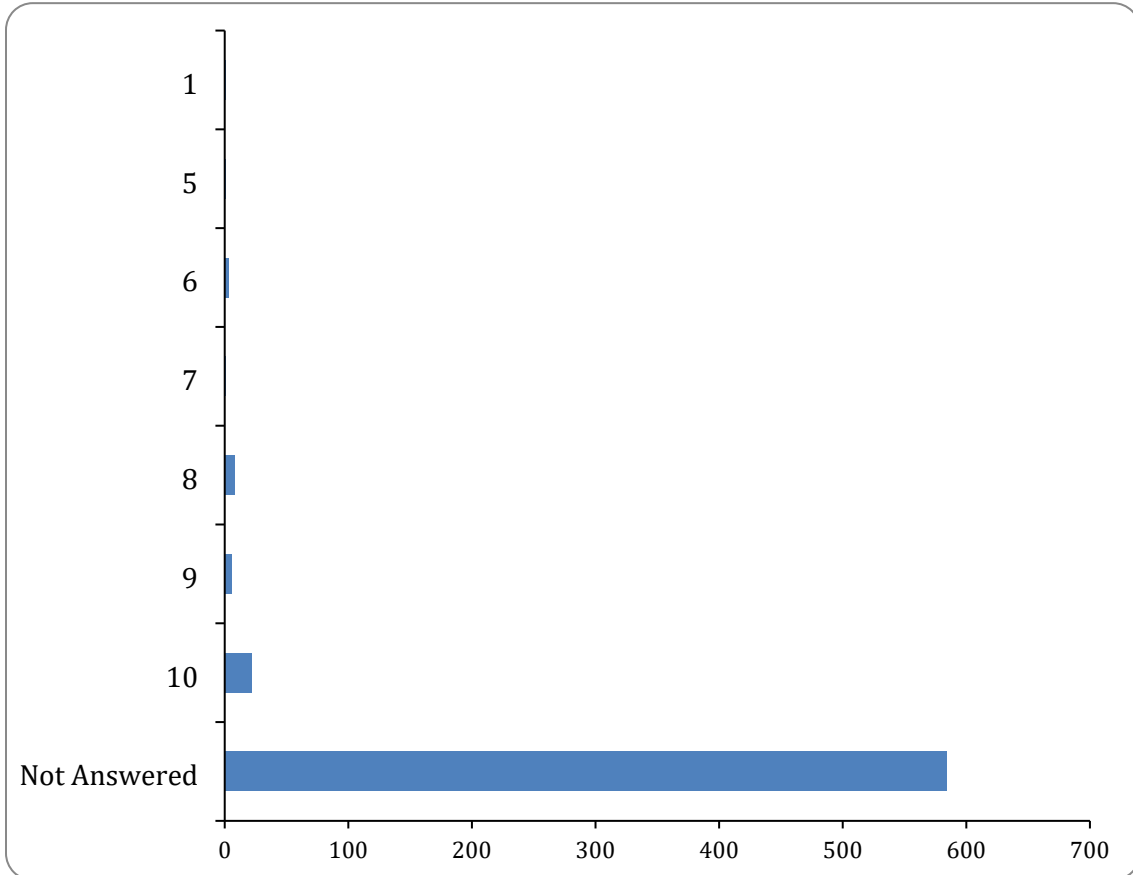


Option	Total	Percent
1	1	0.16%
2	0	0.00%
3	0	0.00%
4	0	0.00%
5	2	0.32%
6	2	0.32%
7	1	0.16%
8	6	0.96%
9	6	0.96%
10	24	3.83%
Not Answered	584	93.29%

O5

**Prioritised - Supporting people leaving institutions such as hospitals, care settings and prison etc**

There were 42 responses to this part of the question.

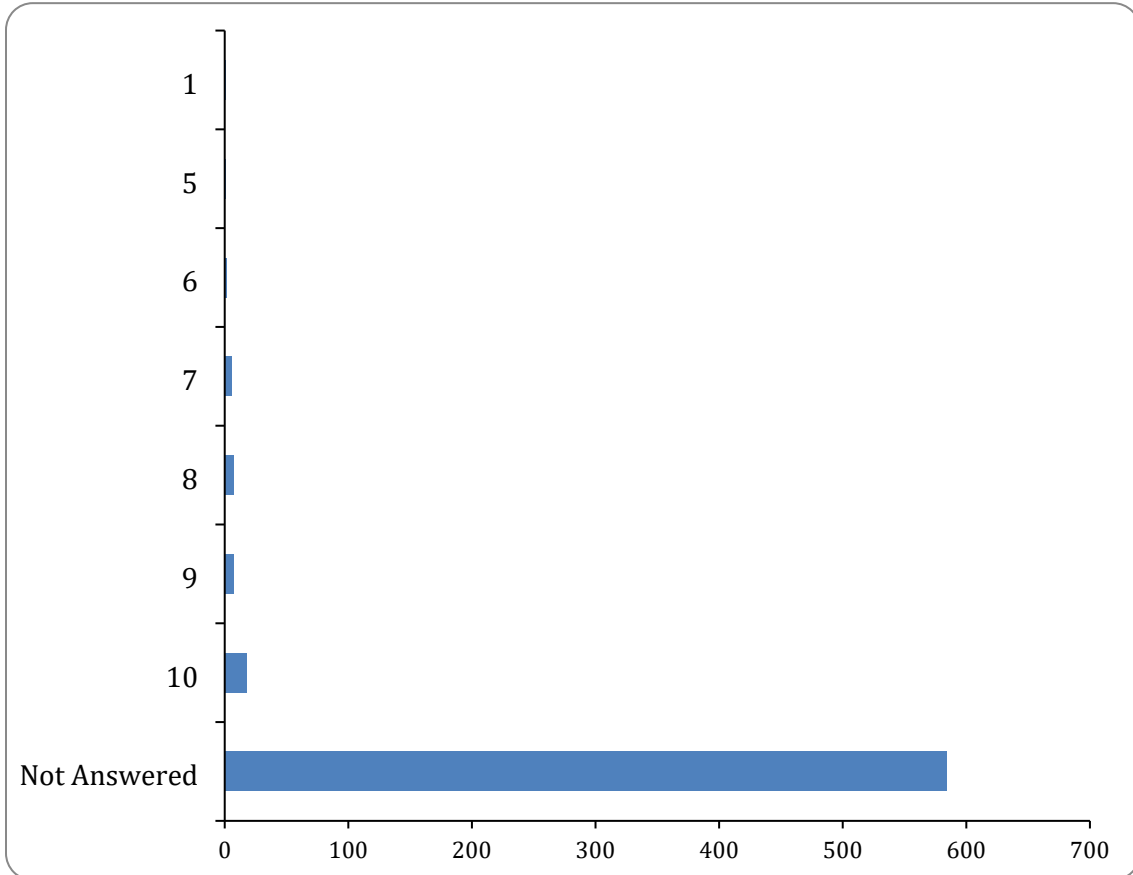


Option	Total	Percent
1	1	0.16%
2	0	0.00%
3	0	0.00%
4	0	0.00%
5	1	0.16%
6	3	0.48%
7	1	0.16%
8	8	1.28%
9	6	0.96%
10	22	3.51%
Not Answered	584	93.29%

O5

**Prioritised - Supporting asylum seekers/refugees, victims of domestic abuse, and armed forces veterans**

There were 42 responses to this part of the question.

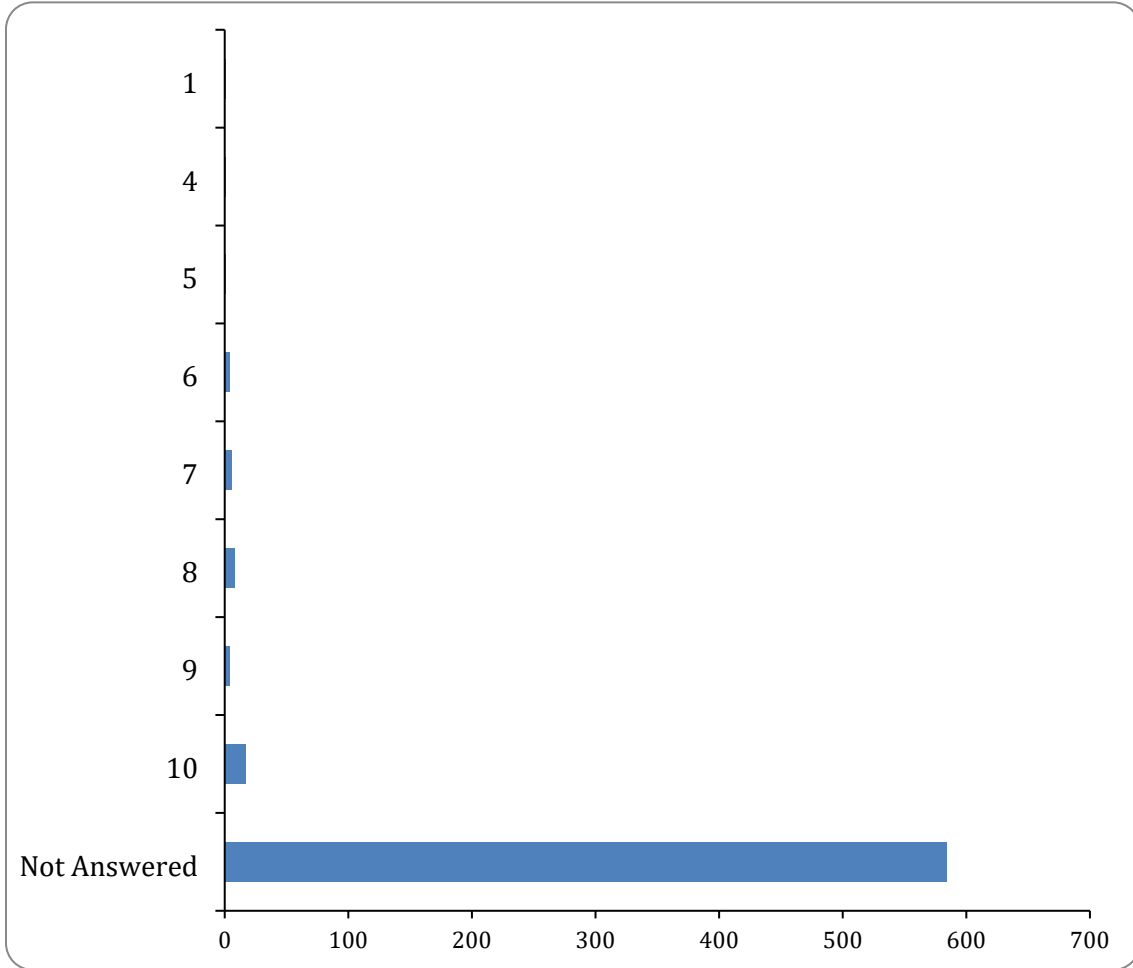


Option	Total	Percent
1	1	0.16%
2	0	0.00%
3	0	0.00%
4	0	0.00%
5	1	0.16%
6	2	0.32%
7	6	0.96%
8	7	1.12%
9	7	1.12%
10	18	2.88%
Not Answered	584	93.29%

O5

**Prioritised - Supporting the elderly to access stable accommodation and support**

There were 42 responses to this part of the question.



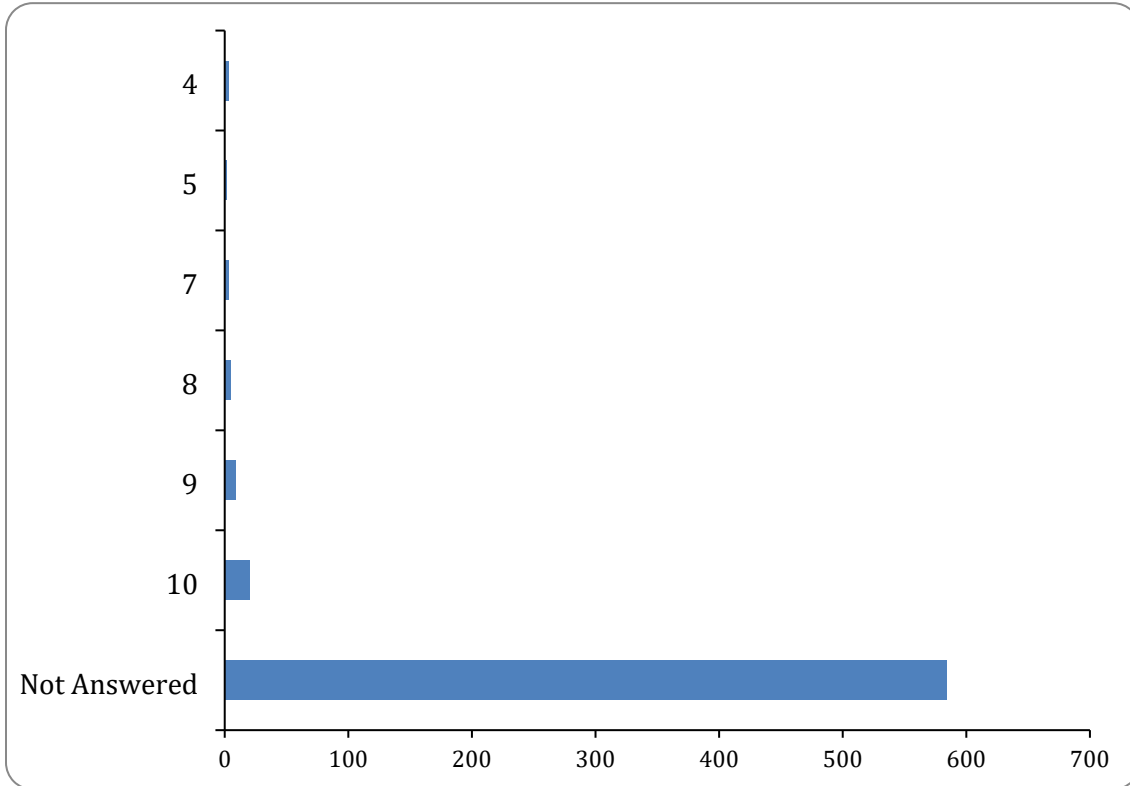
Option	Total	Percent
1	1	0.16%
2	0	0.00%
3	0	0.00%
4	1	0.16%
5	1	0.16%
6	4	0.64%
7	6	0.96%
8	8	1.28%
9	4	0.64%
10	17	2.72%
Not Answered	584	93.29%



**O5**

**Prioritised - Supporting young people to access stable accommodation and support**

There were 42 responses to this part of the question.

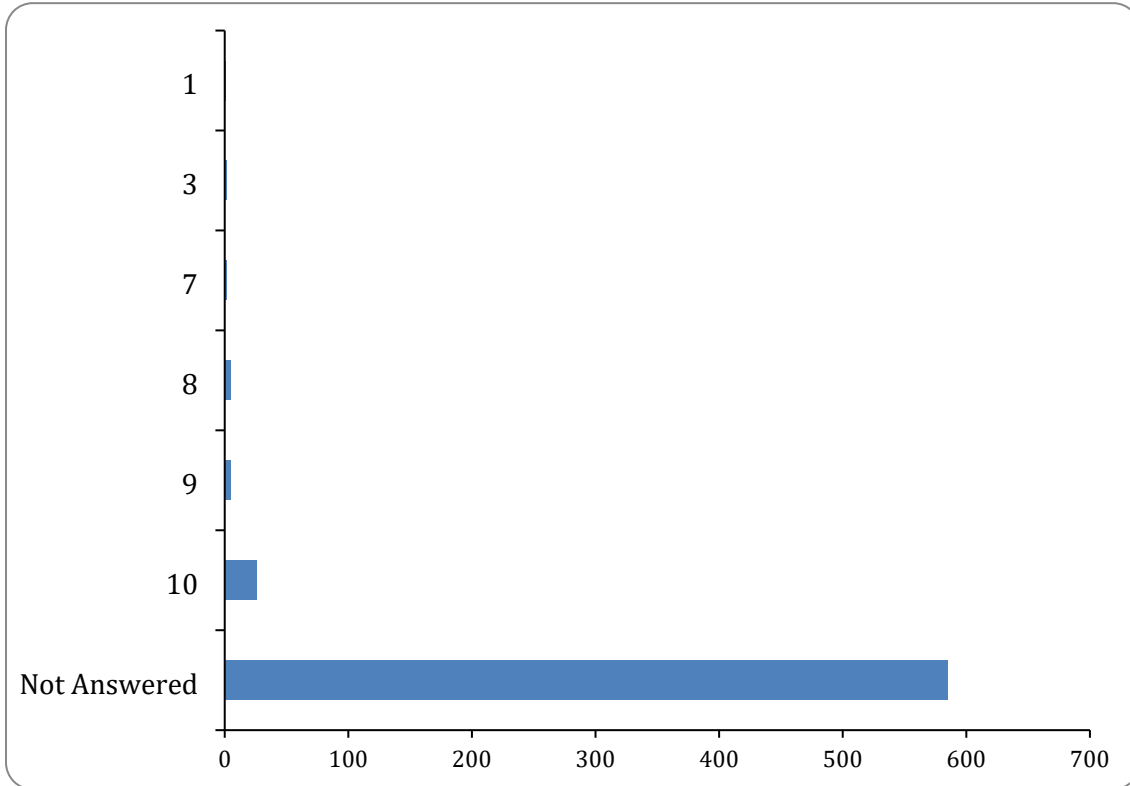


Option	Total	Percent
1	0	0.00%
2	0	0.00%
3	0	0.00%
4	3	0.48%
5	2	0.32%
6	0	0.00%
7	3	0.48%
8	5	0.80%
9	9	1.44%
10	20	3.19%
Not Answered	584	93.29%

**O5**

**Prioritised - Supporting rough sleepers to access services, stable accommodation and support**

There were 41 responses to this part of the question.

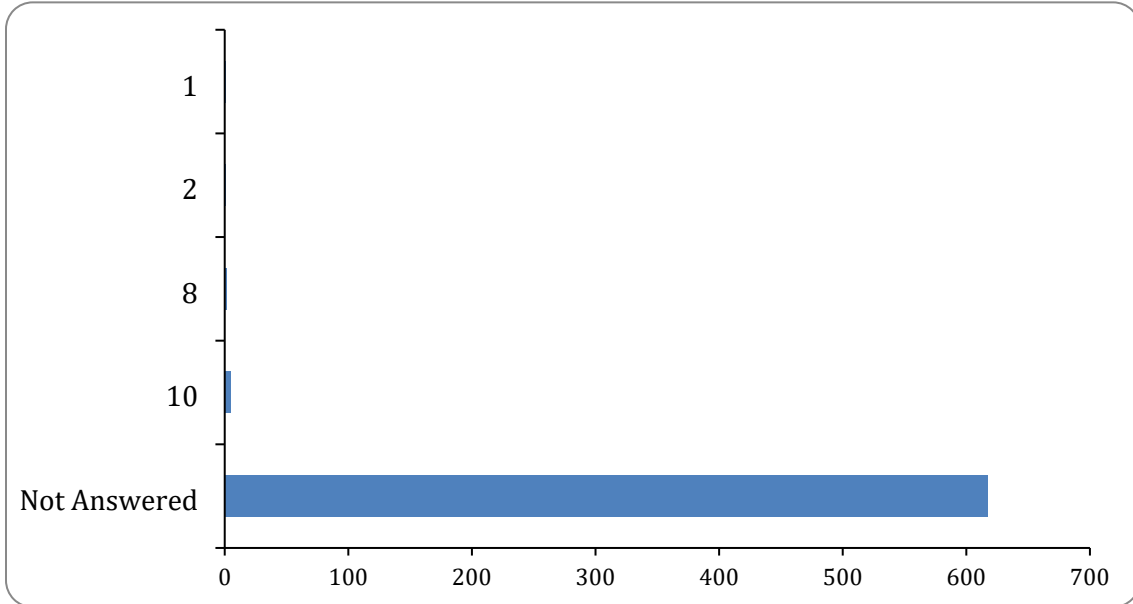


Option	Total	Percent
1	1	0.16%
2	0	0.00%
3	2	0.32%
4	0	0.00%
5	0	0.00%
6	0	0.00%
7	2	0.32%
8	5	0.80%
9	5	0.80%
10	26	4.15%
Not Answered	585	93.45%

**O5**

**Prioritised - Other**

There were 9 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
1	1	0.16%
2	1	0.16%
3	0	0.00%
4	0	0.00%
5	0	0.00%
6	0	0.00%
7	0	0.00%
8	2	0.32%
9	0	0.00%
10	5	0.80%
Not Answered	617	98.56%

**If you selected other, please tell us more**

There were 7 responses to this part of the question.

See text responses, separately.

**O6: Do you have any further suggestions on how we can prevent or resolve homelessness and rough sleeping that has not already been covered?**

**Other comments**

There were 22 responses to this part of the question.

See text responses, separately.

## Summary of replies to questions inviting written comment

### ORGANISATION RESPONSES

#### O3 Main Themes and Key Points:

*What gaps are there in service provision and which local services and accommodation providers can we work with to prevent and resolve homelessness and rough sleeping across Somerset?*

#### 39 responses

1. **Supported Accommodation and Housing Needs:**
  - a. **Affordable Supported Accommodation:** Emphasizes the need for affordable supported accommodation tailored to individuals with multiple disadvantages, highlighting the importance of stable, supportive environments within their local community.
  - b. **Temporary and Emergency Housing:** Calls for more temporary accommodation that meets the high needs of individuals with mental health and substance abuse issues, and emergency housing with comprehensive support services to prevent isolation.
  - c. **Specialist and Women's Services:** Advocates for trauma-informed care, holistic support, and female-only emergency and temporary accommodation to ensure safety and address specific needs.
  - d. **Clients with Pets:** Lack of supported housing for those with pets and complex needs.
  - e. **Lack in East:** Calls for more 1 bed social housing in the East.
  - f. **Step Down Accommodation:** Calls for Step Down accommodation with training programmes for Rough Sleepers (Root Connections Community Initiative, Green Space, Housing First, Peer Mentor training at Somerset Drug & Alcohol Service - SDAS).
  - g. **Drug & Alcohol Treatment Supported Accommodation for Complex Needs:** Calls for such accommodation.
  - h. **Optimise Community Assets:** Calls for optimising community assets to increase supply.
2. **Barriers and Accessibility:**
  - a. **Verification Processes and Basic Amenities:** Discusses barriers to accessing hostel accommodation due to verification processes and lack of basic amenities (assistance with uploads and photocopying), leading to hidden homelessness.
  - b. **Housing Policies and Vulnerability:** Criticizes housing policies that exclude individuals based on past issues like rent arrears or risk of cuckooing and calls for an expanded definition of vulnerability prioritizing women's safety. Criticism of the council's policies on priority need and being found intentionally homeless, causing revolving door cases.
3. **Interagency Collaboration and Support Services:**
  - a. **Collaboration and Consistency:** Highlights the need for better communication between services (Adult Social Care for Autism Spectrum Disorder – ASD, and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder -

ADHD), consistent support, and interagency collaboration to support tenancy sustainment and provide comprehensive care.

b. **Outreach and Community Support:** Praises the work of outreach teams (Mendip Rough Sleeper initiative - RSI) and calls for more supported accommodation for high complex needs, advocating for trauma-informed environments and therapeutic support.

c. **Support from Communal and Emergency Settings:** Calls for comprehensive support out of communal and emergency settings for those individuals with complex needs and mental health issues that cannot receive treatment/ wrap around care on the street.

d. **Need for Flexible Support:** Calls for flexible support for complex needs e.g. 24/7 Occupational Therapists in the West, timely care assessment for those in Temporary Accommodation (TA) and more mental health support.

4. **Funding and Resource Allocation:**

a. **Funding Uncertainty and Service Continuity:** Highlights the uncertainty around funding for homelessness services and the potential socioeconomic repercussions if funding is not continued (Julian House).

b. **Resource Allocation and Training:** Discusses the impact of insufficient funding on staffing and resources, calling for more permanent housing officers (i.e. not agency) and better training.

c. **Ringfencing of monies:** Advocates for the ringfencing of central government monies to ensure it is not used to fill the gaps within the Council.

d. **Delegated Discretionary Budget:** Calls for such flexible funding for complex needs.

5. **Mental Health and Substance Abuse Support:**

a. **Mental Health Services:** Emphasizes the need for more mental health support alongside temporary and permanent housing solutions.

b. **Substance Abuse and Rehabilitation:** Calls for rehabilitation services for long-term drug users to support their recovery and integration into stable housing.

c. **General Practitioner (GP - i.e. doctors) Funding:** Emphasizes the need to fund GP services adequately to ensure continuity of care.

d. **Lack in East:** Calls for more long-term mental health support in the East.

e. **Lack in North:** Calls for more engagement with SDAS in Bridgwater.

6. **Employment and Financial Independence:**

a. **Employment Support:** Discusses the challenges in supporting homeless individuals into employment due to mental health issues and the need for better employer engagement and early intervention to maintain financial independence and tenancy.

b. **Job Centres and Homeless Support:** Suggests linking job centres with homeless support services to provide better employment opportunities for individuals without fixed addresses.

7. **Community and Social Integration:**

- a. **Community Engagement:** Highlights the need for better community engagement, including from private sector landlords, to ensure move-on accommodation and support for those leaving temporary or supported housing.
- b. **Social Housing and Development Incentives:** Discusses the mismatch between housing development and social housing needs, suggesting incentives for developers and innovative solutions like modular homes.
- c. **Increase Awareness:** Calls for the need for better awareness of available services amongst homeless individuals and improved accessibility of information.
- d. **Lack of Domestic Abuse Lived Experience:** Lack of detailed information on the lived experiences of domestic abuse survivors and calls for details about the ongoing partnership working with SDAS.

These points reflect the diverse and complex needs of individuals experiencing homelessness and the multifaceted approach required to address these issues effectively.

## O5 Themes

*What do you think should be prioritised to reduce homelessness and rough sleeping? - If you selected other, please tell us more.*

## 7 responses

### Early Help and Prevention

- **Support for People Leaving Prison:** Emphasis on providing targeted support for individuals transitioning out of the prison system.
- **Training Pathways with Tied Accommodation:** Suggestion to collaboratively create training pathways linked with supported accommodation to help individuals gain skills and stable housing.

### Homelessness and Health

- **Hostels and Night Shelters:** Focus on creating safe spaces that support health and wellbeing needs.
- **Criticism of Cohort Grouping:** Concerns about the effectiveness of grouping different cohorts (e.g., domestic abuse survivors, veterans, asylum seekers/refugees) together, as their needs and scores would differ significantly.
- **Intensive Wrap-Around Services:** Proposal for the creation of new, intensive wrap-around services for complex cases to provide comprehensive support.

### Accommodation

- **Women-Only Accommodation:** Suggestion for more permanent housing solutions specifically for women.
- **Influence Over Housing Allocations:** Call for greater influence over housing provider allocations to ensure more vulnerable homeless individuals are housed, rather than lower-risk applicants.

### Reducing Rough Sleeping

- **Hostels and Night Shelters:** Again, the emphasis on creating safe spaces that support health and wellbeing needs, which directly contributes to reducing rough sleeping.

These responses highlight a range of priorities and suggestions aimed at addressing the multifaceted issue of homelessness and rough sleeping through early intervention, health support, targeted accommodation, and specific measures to reduce rough sleeping.

## O6 Core Themes and Suggestions

*Do you have any further suggestions on how we can prevent or resolve homelessness and rough sleeping that has not already been covered?*

### 21 responses

#### Early Help and Prevention

- **Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs):** Emphasized the need for system-wide recognition of ACEs' impact on young people and their journey into homelessness. Advocated for early help, well-funded prevention, low-threshold support, and a compassionate, person-centred approach.
- **Support Workers and Mentors:** Suggested increasing the number of support workers to provide real advice and not just triage services. Highlighted the need for purpose-built council flats or HMOs with 24/7 support for those with mental health or substance abuse issues.
- **Trauma-Informed Training:** Recommended mandatory trauma-informed training for housing officers and council staff to better support adults with multiple disadvantages, especially those affected by domestic abuse and exploitation.
- **Collaboration with Employers:** Proposed collaboration with employers to provide tied accommodation and training, with potential grant funding for additional needs like learning to drive.
- **Questioning assumptions:** Men's unwillingness to access support.

#### Homelessness and Health

- **Outreach and Long-Term Support:** Highlighted the importance of not cutting existing services due to established relationships and the value of outreach work. Advocated for long-term support and coaching for clients with complex needs.
- **Basic Necessities for Rough Sleepers:** Suggested providing basic necessities like tents and camp stoves for rough sleepers.
- **Supported Housing for Ex-Prisoners:** Called for investment in supported housing for people leaving prison early to reduce reoffending and homelessness.
- **Countywide Housing First Schemes:** Supported the implementation of Housing First schemes and listening to feedback based on lived experiences.
- **Engagement with Homeless Individuals:** Urged council leaders to engage directly with homeless individuals to gain firsthand experience and insights.
- **Specialist Housing Officers:** Proposed specialist housing officers for vulnerable groups to reduce disengagement and develop relationships with local businesses for affordable accommodation options.
- **Lobbying for Funding:** Advocated for lobbying central government for more funding for vital services.



## Accommodation

- **Purpose-Built Flats and HMOs:** Suggested increasing purpose-built council flats or Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) with 24/7 support for those with mental health or substance abuse issues.
- **Supported Housing for Ex-Prisoners:** Called for investment in supported housing for people leaving prison early to reduce reoffending and homelessness.
- **Housing First Schemes:** Supported the implementation of Housing First schemes and listening to feedback based on lived experiences.
- **Collaboration with Employers:** Proposed collaboration with employers to provide tied accommodation and training, with potential grant funding for additional needs like learning to drive.
- **Specialist Housing Officers:** Proposed specialist housing officers for vulnerable groups to reduce disengagement and develop relationships with local businesses for affordable accommodation options.
- **Direct Access Hostels:** Stressed the need for more housing such as direct access hostels for emergencies, affordable and social housing, and affordable private rented properties.
- **Collaboration with Landlords:** Suggested collaboration with landlord and letting agents associations to prevent tenancy breaches and provide guidance on housing options.
- **Collaboration with Clients:** Suggested collaboration with homeless clients and high risk care leavers to design housing provisions that suit their needs and abilities.

## Reducing Rough Sleeping

- **Support Workers and Mentors:** Suggested increasing the number of support workers to provide real advice and not just triage services. Highlighted the need for purpose-built council flats or HMOs with 24/7 support for those with mental health or substance abuse issues.
- **Outreach and Long-Term Support:** Highlighted the importance of not cutting existing services due to established relationships and the value of outreach work (Second Step, Open Door and many others). Advocated for long-term support and coaching for clients with complex needs.
- **Basic Necessities for Rough Sleepers:** Suggested providing basic necessities like tents and camp stoves for rough sleepers.
- **Engagement with Homeless Individuals:** Urged council leaders to engage directly with homeless individuals to gain firsthand experience and insights.
- **Specialist Housing Officers:** Proposed specialist housing officers for vulnerable groups to reduce disengagement and develop relationships with local businesses for affordable accommodation options.
- **Direct Access Hostels:** Stressed the need for more housing such as direct access hostels for emergencies, affordable and social housing, and affordable private rented properties.
- **Housing First System:** Supported the Housing First system for long-term homeless individuals to re-adjust to independent living for the long term.

These summaries reflect the key points and suggestions made in the consultation responses across the specified themes.

## GENERAL PUBLIC RESPONSES

### Main Themes and Issues Highlighted:

*To what extent do you agree that these are the causes of homelessness and rough sleeping?*

**127 responses**

1. **Council and Government Criticism:**
  - a. Poor attitude towards the homeless while favoring illegal economic migrants.
  - b. Ineffective Homefinder Somerset system and poor financial management.
  - c. General criticism of government policies contributing to homelessness.
2. **Housing and Evictions:**
  - a. Issues with Section 21 no-fault evictions.
  - b. Criticism of landlords turning properties into short-term rentals like Airbnbs.
  - c. Need for affordable private housing and mortgages.
  - d. Overpriced private rental properties and landlords letting properties fall into disrepair.
  - e. Criticism of housing allocations that prohibit younger people from over-55 accommodation.
  - f. Criticism of housing priority for single males.
3. **Support Services and Vulnerable Groups:**
  - a. Lack of support for ex-military individuals, domestic violence victims, and those leaving prison or hospitals.
  - b. Insufficient support for care leavers and people with mental health issues.
  - c. Overstretched support services and prioritization of immigrants over nationals.
4. **Social and Economic Issues:**
  - a. Relationship breakdowns, addiction, and corporate greed as causes of homelessness.
  - b. Economic issues like increased mortgage payments and cost of living- faced by all spectrum from old unable to retire due to high rental costs, and young without family support and life skills.
  - c. Impact of housing and living costs on disabled clients.
  - d. Impact of COVID-19 on businesses and housing stability.
5. **Housing Market and Development:**
  - a. Criticism of new developments focusing on luxury housing rather than affordable homes.
  - b. Wealthy individuals inflating housing prices, making it unaffordable for average earners.
  - c. Lack of accessible and affordable housing and large properties for families.
  - d. Rise or AirBnBs.
  - e. Prevalence of Second Homes.
6. **Public Perception and Awareness:**

- a. Criticism of the council for not knowing the extent of rough sleeping and its causes.
- b. Public perception issues and categorization of homeless individuals.
- c. Ineffective council homelessness service, especially in Taunton.

7. **Miscellaneous Issues:**

- a. Mention of false homeless claims and relocation of problematic individuals into certain areas causing ASB.
- b. Criticism of 'religious fraud' and housing of illegal immigrants.
- c. Issues with bureaucracy and delays in paperwork hindering timely assistance.
- d. Absence of local organisations such as Emmaus.

These comments reflect a wide range of concerns and criticisms related to homelessness, housing policies, and support services.

**P7 Key Themes and Suggestions:**

*What do you think should be prioritised to reduce homelessness and rough sleeping?*

**74 responses**

1. **Homelessness and Health:**

- a. **Support for Specific Groups:** Many responses emphasized prioritizing domestic abuse victims, ex-service personnel, and local homeless people over illegal migrants and asylum seekers.
- b. **Health and Well-being:** Suggestions included providing support with budgeting, addressing drug issues, and ensuring access to health-related appointments and self-care facilities.

2. **Accommodation:**

- a. **Affordable Housing:** Calls for continuous building of homes, capping private rental prices, and ensuring affordable housing remains affordable through covenants.
- b. **Utilizing Empty Properties:** Proposals to convert vacant shops and empty properties into temporary housing and hygiene facilities.
- c. **Regulation and Scrutiny:** Recommendations for stricter scrutiny of supported accommodation providers and private rented properties, especially those receiving council funding.
- d. **Accommodation for Separated Parents:** Calls for housing for separated parents without child benefit to be suitable for children.
- e. **Decent Homes:** Calls for social and affordable lets to be safe and dignified, tackling ASB, and evicting rule breakers to create more supply.
- f. **Accommodation for clients with Pets:** Calls for support for people with pets with no conviction in threat of eviction.

3. **Early Help and Prevention:**

- a. **Education and Life Skills:** Emphasis on teaching life skills, providing relationship counselling, and supporting people in sourcing their own income and managing finances.
- b. **Support for At-Risk Groups:** Advocates for free nursery places, more financial support for schools, and better safety nets for at-risk children. Also highlights the issue of people on benefits with children unable to obtain mortgages.

- c. **Housing Priority:** Calls for changes to the way Council designates housing to those in need.
  - d. **Change of Verification Process:** Calls for investigations in loopholes e.g. Verification via address.
4. **Reducing Rough Sleeping:**
- a. **Temporary Housing Solutions:** Suggestions included converting vacant shops into temporary housing and providing supported living as a halfway house for people transitioning from rough sleeping.
  - b. **Long-Term Lets:** Creating more long-term lets for local residents and restricting properties from being turned into Airbnb.
5. **Other Concerns:**
- a. **Criticism of Grouping:** Several responses criticized the inclusion of illegal economic migrants with ex-service people and domestic abuse victims, suggesting a bias in the survey.
  - b. **Local Prioritization:** Many respondents advocated for prioritizing local people over immigrants and asylum seekers.

#### Notable Proposals:

- **Fair Frome Network:** Praised for its support network, with suggestions to replicate similar support in other towns.
- **Swedish Model in Gothenburg:** Recommended for different levels of accommodation.
- **Wigan Council's Empty Homes Programme:** Suggested for tackling empty houses through compulsory purchase.

These responses highlight a strong preference for supporting local and vulnerable groups, improving affordable housing, and ensuring health and well-being services are accessible to those in need. There is also a clear call for better regulation and utilization of existing properties to address homelessness and rough sleeping effectively.

#### P9 Themes

Do you have any other comments or suggestion?

276 responses

#### Early Help and Prevention

- **Community Involvement:** Emphasis on involving community groups and educational institutions to support young people at risk of homelessness.
- **Caring Community:** Calls for a return to a caring community with less focus on profits.
- **Stigma Reduction:** Importance of reducing stigma around homelessness and raising awareness of hidden homelessness.
- **Support for Families:** Highlighting the need for better support for families before they become homeless.
- **Financial Management:** Suggestions for more financial management support for individuals, particularly those from care, with mental health problems, and/or drug/alcohol dependencies. Advocates for the removal of deposits for renting, especially for single parents.
- **Training for Staff:** Calls for better training and qualification of staff providing caring and empathetic homelessness services, particularly for neurodivergent clients with mental health issues. Staff should also listen to individuals' needs and offer appropriate housing. Identification of Taunton as a particular area of improvement.

- **Early Intervention:** Emphasis on early intervention to prevent homelessness, especially within families and care homes, focusing on younger people. There is also a particular focus on those leaving prison, especially those who have disclosed the lack of accommodation *before* leaving.
- **Reducing Bureaucracy:** Criticism of the form-filling and verification process (proof of address despite being a car dweller) and the lack of personal support (eg. Uploading documents). Also a respondent who has provided 2 Doctor's letters to no avail.
- **Sofa Surfing/ Car Dwellers:** A respondent specifically living in Frome and some other respondents have linked sofa surfing to its effect on mental health. 2 respondents pointed out that they were car dwellers.
- **Rural Villages:** Calls for more support for low wage worker to access affordable housing in rural locations.
- **Single Parents:** Calls for more support for single parents, criticising the housing priority and allocation system, including being provided homes to cater for children not living with them.
- **Benefit Recipients:** Highlights the private rental market for excluding benefit recipients and calls for policy changes.
- **Homefinder System:** Calls for more photos of properties on Homefinder, more accurate advertisements and criticism for the loss of evidence when the system was updated. Calls for provision of offline support. Also calls for better communications (eg. Removal from waiting list).
- **Character References:** Recommends character references when evaluating homelessness risk.
- **Hub/ Website for Vacant Properties:** Calls for the facilitation of identification and matching of vacant properties with those in housing need.
- **Job Centre:** Criticism of advice of 'playing the system'.
- **Lobbying the Government:** To invest in social housing.
- **Charity:** Linking in with charity efforts.
- **Links with Agencies:** Advocates for better networking opportunities with agencies that are working with homeless individuals.

### Homelessness and Health

- **Mental Health and Substance Abuse:** Need for supported accommodation for people with mental health and substance abuse issues, suggesting collaboration with GPs and charities. Calls for an overhaul of the mental health service. Always seek to address the underlying issues such as mental health and addictions first.
- **Temporary Accommodation:** Criticism of temporary accommodation in Travelodges and the need for more housing workers.
- **Long-term Support:** Emphasis on the need for long-term support and a fairer economic system.
- **Affordable Housing:** Calls for more affordable housing and criticism of the perceived prioritisation of immigrants over local residents.
- **Health Impact:** Highlighting the impact of high rents on health, especially for those with disabilities and those working long hours. The impact of sofa surfing on mental health as well.
- **Support Services:** Need for better support services for the homeless, including mental health support as the first step. Proposals of local hubs with facilities for homeless people and temporary 'pod' villages.

### Accommodation

- **Housing Prioritisation:** Suggestions to prioritise housing for British citizens over immigrants and asylum seekers. Other respondents that have called for review of the housing prioritisation are single mothers and single males.
- **Affordable Housing:** Calls for more affordable housing, including state builders, and criticism of the power of landlords and the prevalence of second homes.
- **Innovative Solutions:** Proposals for using brownfield sites, large disused premises, converted shipping containers, downsizing and empty buildings (Wilco building in Yeovil) for housing the homeless. Suggestions of businesses and the community to provide temporary shelters and support services.
- **Social Housing:** Emphasis on building more social housing and addressing the confusion between social and affordable housing. Respondents have provided a range of solutions such as: social housing quotas (50%) in new developments, regular inspections of housing conditions, linking housing and support with prisons and probation services, enforcing on social tenants who do not live in their properties, autonomy for RPs re allocations, tightening of ASB rules.
- **Housing Allocation:** Criticism of the housing allocation system and suggestions for better management of housing stock, including decreasing void times. Calls for the removal of age restriction on Extra Care Housing (ECH) properties for younger clients.
- **Support for Specific Groups:** Highlighting the need for better housing options for different needs, such as females, domestic violence victims, complex needs clients, clients with pets, disabled clients, separated parents (sufficient bedrooms or proximity to help), hospital discharge clients and older person who are disqualified from benefits.
- **Relocation of clients:** Criticism of the concentration of homeless clients in areas such as Gascony, Beach Hotel and Prospect House causing ASB. Some respondents have also complained of the prevalence of drug use in town centres, advocating for medical help for addicts.
- **AirBnBs:** Calls for regulation for AirBnBs.
- **Private Landlords:** Calls for working with private landlords to provide affordable housing for the homeless.
- **Long Wait Times:** A respondent highlights the long wait at Norie despite being offered a flat 3 years ago. Another respondent was a sofa surfing single older woman with underlying health conditions waiting since 2022.
- **Rural Locations:** Highlights the lack of choice for those living in rural locations and private renting due to caring responsibilities and employment. Difficulty in downsizing from a rural location.
- **Scrapping of Right to Buy (RTB):** Calls for the scrapping of RTB.
- **Need for 2/3 Bed Bungalows:** Calls for such accommodation.
- **Impact of Temporary Accommodation:** Respondents have highlighted the detrimental effects on their physical and mental health. Calls for improvements to be made. Also calls for banning drug and alcohol on the premises.
- **Sofa Surfing:** A respondent specifically living in Frome and some other respondents have linked sofa surfing to its effect on mental health.
- **Need for Larger Homes:** Calls for larger family homes to combat the health issues caused by damp and mould.

- **Need in Frome:** Respondent from within the criminal justice system with a misdiagnosis struggling to find housing in Frome.

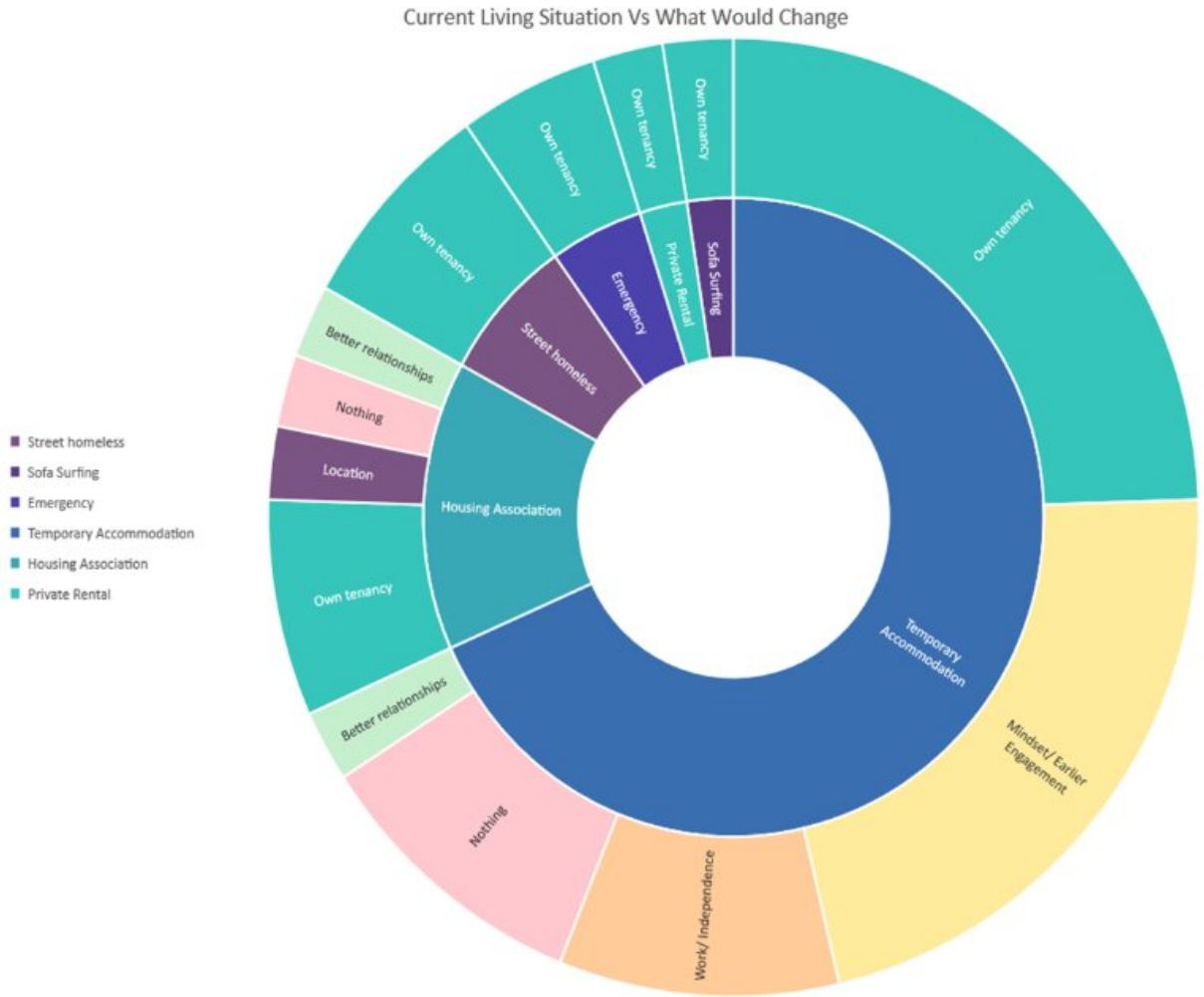
### Reducing Rough Sleeping

- **Public Information:** Recommendations to provide more information to the public to assist in reporting and mobilising volunteers to support rough sleepers.
- **Root Causes:** Importance of ascertaining the root causes of rough sleeping and addressing them.
- **Emergency Housing:** Calls for more emergency housing solutions and support for people who become homeless suddenly.
- **Drug and Alcohol Rehabilitation:** Highlighting the lack of drug and alcohol rehabilitation projects and the need for more supported accommodation, especially for those leaving prison.
- **Government Action:** Emphasis on the need for government action to address the roots and rise in rough sleeping.
- **Covid 19:** Learn from the achievements.
- **Outreach Services:** Provision of a comprehensive rough sleeping outreach service.
- **Denmark:** Utilise the compassionate model Denmark employs.

These summaries capture the key themes and suggestions from the consultation responses under each heading.

# Summary of Lived Experience, Outreach and Supported Housing Feedback written comment

## Lived Experience





The Impact of Homelessness - 100% Negative Comments



**“Having my own place and more personal space to give me more independence”**

**“Being allowed to do paid work.”**

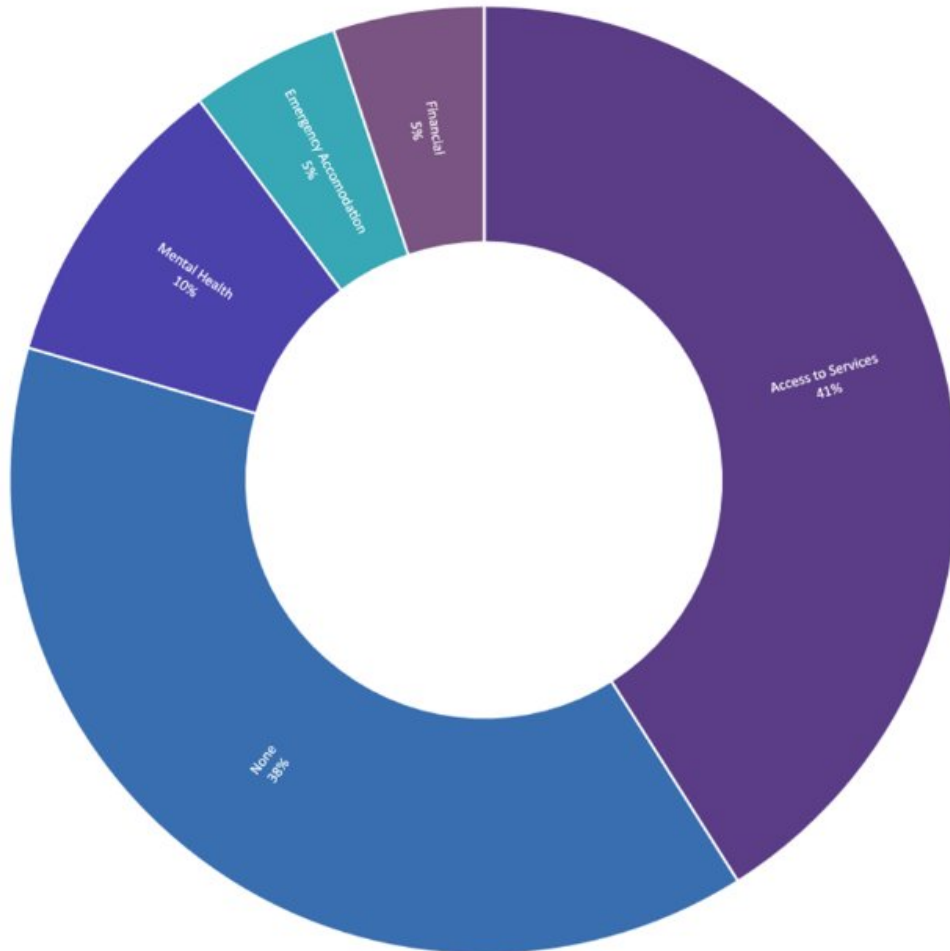
**I think more accommodation is needed; it took a long time to find somewhere. If there was a way to make the private sector landlords more accommodating that would help.”**

**“Definitely better than being homeless, but not an ideal situation. Having to share a house with 7 other people is not ideal, lack of personal space, having to share bathroom, kitchen and laundry facilities can be hard and can have a negative effect on my mental health.”**

### The Impact of Living in Temporary Accommodation



Looking back, what support may have helped you avoid becoming homeless?



“I should have engaged in a pilot detox”

“Second step is good with contact. More contact with other services would be helpful.”

“I’m not sure anything could have prevented me from becoming homeless, but more could have been done to get me in the right accommodation or get me off the streets earlier. It took 5 years for them to offer me my own council flat but then I didn’t feel safe there so had to leave. I then got put into supported accommodation many years later, but it was full of people using and drinking so the atmosphere there wasn’t nice to be around. I’m not sure why they would put me into that sort of environment when I was trying not to use or drink myself.”

## Outreach Services

- No consistency across the system
- Hard to get information from the police (some areas)
- Differences and separation between the 4 areas
- Different providers different offers in different areas
- Many housing officers are not local and agency
- Housing services are not linked up
- SWEP accommodation is often in hotels – this is not suitable for many rough sleepers
- We need more accommodation, and a pathway that people can move through
- We are missing people's window in their cycle of change because services are slow or inaccessible
- Intentionally homeless decisions despite MH/ND
- It would be helpful if we could work more closely with ASC and they could evolve a more effective way of working with rough sleepers
- ASB, arson convictions, arrears and debt + big barrier to accessing accommodation
- A culture of punishment in TA. Social housing has become a business
- Overuse of hotels
- Lack of empathy and compassion for these we support
- Inappropriate placements due to lack of accommodation
- Debt is being held against people when looking at accommodation options
- No joined-up system between e.g. housing providers, Housing Benefit, DWP
- Supported housing can feel like a goldfish bowl for clients
- Services not sharing information in the client's best interests
- Individuals in addiction having to travel all the way to Taunton under SDAS and scripts not following placements jeopardizing the accommodation

## Supported housing feedback

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### • What's going well:

- Gold banding model
- Tenancy Accreditation Schemes
- Weekly Case Meetings to discuss complex cases, promoting collaborative working and accountability.
- Outreach Teams working with the Outreach Nurses and SDAS.
- GP and Dual Diagnosis Drop In Service

### • Challenges:

- Lack of social Housing and any move on
- Residents not being flexible about move on locations'
- Housing Benefit – issues with residents working and the model for this within the system; want to encourage residents to work but this can be difficult to maintain.
- Grey area needs to be clarified – where individuals sit between Housing and Social Care

### Challenges:

- Large increase in Home Officer leavers which can be difficult to ensure accommodation supply meets demand.
  - Lack of clear pathway for some of these individuals
  - Language barriers
  - Issued with benefits and entitlements.
  - HL settings may not always be best suited to need.
- Challenges for residents working in supported accommodation
- Support individuals who don't want to make changes and supporting their lifestyle choices.
- Revolving door with little change. We support the patterns, but we do not prevent them.
- Lack of high support accommodation in some areas, leading to increasing numbers of Rough Sleepers
- Lack of medium supported accommodation services (intermediate move on) to facilitate move on from high support services

## Supported housing feedback - Wishlist

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- More affordable housing stock
- Own internal housing stock to accommodate those transitioning through the pathway
- Internal YMCA accommodation
- More affordable HMOs @ LHA
- Continued funding for move on items (like the Community Foundation Move On fund)
- Complex provision: more units needed that are smaller as large environment doesn't always work and might not be right for people.
- Clear move on process.
- More buy in from Creative Solutions, especially from Housing, ASC to really break down blocks in the system
- Learning Sets – opportunities for sharing learning with peers.
- Groups to share learning at different levels, across orgs, including reflective space for staff.
- Delivering a pattern changing course that would be delivered in prison or available on release.
- HUBs, where multiple services are in one place, including a GP surgery for the homeless
- Mental Health provision- accommodation with mental health support as part of the tenancy. Changes are necessary to reduce numbers of customers with MH issues who are losing their tenancies and facing homelessness.
- Support for all customers that are hoping to get into employment, so they do not get penalised / lose their accommodation due to HB shortfalls/ unaffordability, funding through financial employment support schemes.
- Small units of Off the Street Accommodation, for Rough Sleepers that the LA do not have a duty to accommodate.
- More supported accommodation services, supporting customers to move through a pathway of accommodation rather than accommodation services getting blocked.