

Findings Report: East Lothian
Council Meeting the future
housing needs of older
people within East Lothian



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1. Introduction

As a local authority, East Lothian Council has a legislative requirement to routinely produce a Local Housing Strategy (LHS), which outlines, over a 5 year period, how best to improve housing and its related services, specific to the challenges faced in the county.

As the current LHS 2018-2023 approaches its end, East Lothian Council is in the process of producing the next LHS 2023-2028. Over the period April to September 2022, engagement and consultation took place with key stakeholders and local residents. Evidence gathered will help to shape the LHS. Therefore, to ensure it's reflective of the diverse needs and priorities of the population, consultation methods were wide-ranging and key groups were targeted.

In line with this, a survey was designed to understand the key challenges which are faced older people living within East Lothian, specifically the future housing needs of older people within the region.

The survey was not age restricted and was designed to take into account the views of younger age groups in order to ascertain their views in regards to their likely future housing needs as they age.

Survey Design

The survey, accessed through East Lothian Council's consultation Hub, was published on the 7th of July and remained open for a period of one month, closing on the 7th of August 2022.

The survey was advertised routinely through East Lothian Council's social media pages including platforms such as Facebook and Twitter. Contacts within East Lothian's area partnerships, representing different areas of East Lothian, also helped promote the survey, forwarding details of the survey to interested parties to share. Aware of the fact that there is often less digital engagement amongst older people an officer visited sheltered housing complexes in the county in order to ascertain views and hand out paper copies which were collected at a later date and manually input into Citizen Space. This provided an opportunity for those who would otherwise have not been able to take part to share their opinions.

In total there were 94 respondents to the survey.

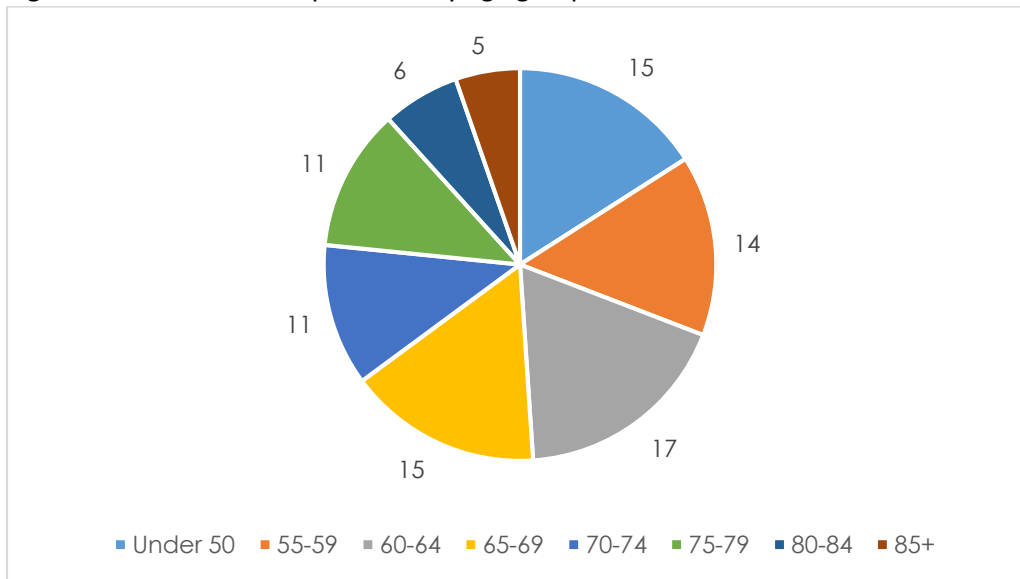
2. Demographics

Age of respondents

Figure 1.1 shows the number of respondents to the survey by age group. The chart shows that there was a wide range of age groups represented with no single age group having more than 18.1% of respondents. The age group with the largest representation was those aged 60-64 (18.1%) while those aged 80-84 (6.3%) and 85+ (5.3%) having the lowest number of respondents. This may indicate that those in the oldest age groups are the less likely to be digitally engaged.

Over half of respondents to the survey (51.1%) were aged 65 and over.

Figure 1.1: Number of respondents by age group



Gender of respondents

Figure 1.2 shows that the vast majority of participants in the survey were female (78.7%) with males accounting for (21.3%) a much lower number of those who took part. This can be partly explained by the larger numbers of female amongst the older population, however, the stark difference in representation is not representative of this.

Figure 1.2 Number of respondents by gender

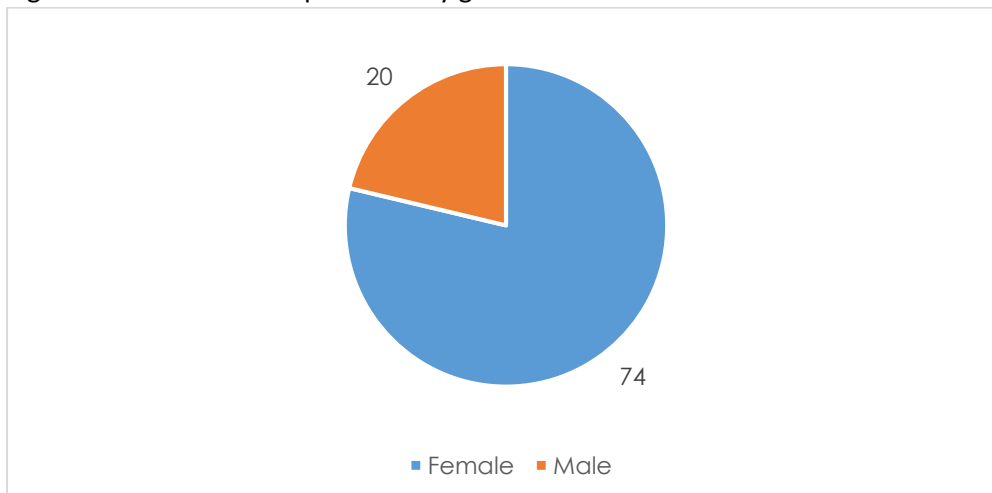
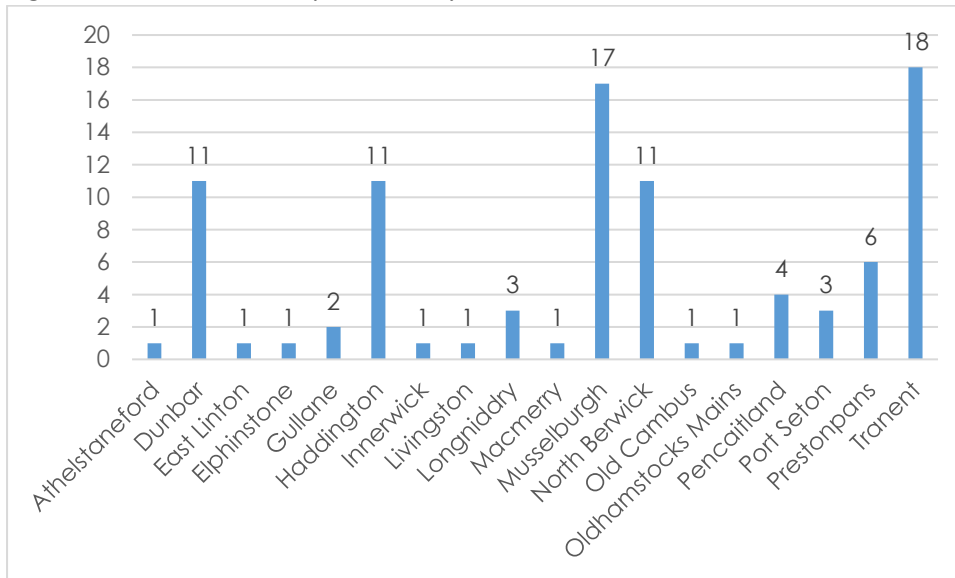


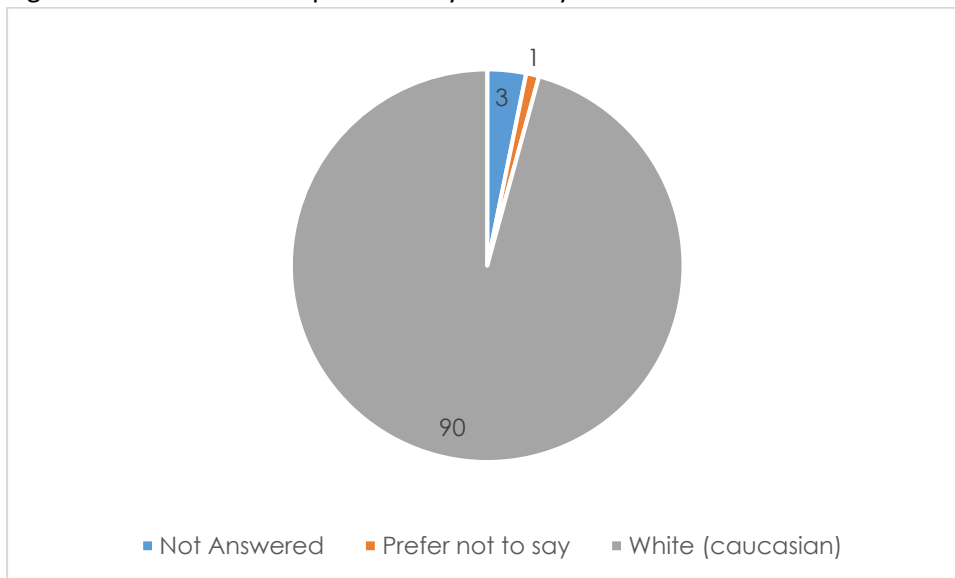
Figure 1.3 shows that the majority of respondents came from the larger settlements within the region. Tranent accounted for the largest proportion (19.1%) followed by Musselburgh (18.1%). There was also representation from smaller settlements and villages, in total respondents came from a total of 18 different places.

Figure 1.3: Number of respondents by settlement



Participants were asked which ethnic group they belonged to. Almost all of the respondents (95.7%) stated that they were white a small number either did not answer (3.2%) or stated that they would prefer not to say (1.1%). The results clearly show a lack of representation across different ethnic groups.

Figure 1.4: Number of respondents by Ethnicity



Summary

There was a good balance in terms of the age range of respondents to the survey, with just over half aged 65 and over and the remainder aged under 65. There was an imbalance in terms of the number of females and males, with over three quarters of respondents to the survey being female. As expected, the majority of those who took part came from the main urban areas of the region,

however, there was also representation from smaller settlements across East Lothian. All of the respondents who provided an ethnic group stated that they were white. Although the majority of the East Lothian population is white, wider representation of other ethnic groups would help us to better understand their needs and other forms of engagement may be required to ascertain their views.

3. Health of respondents

Respondents were asked whether they considered themselves to have a long-standing physical or mental health condition or disability. It can be seen that the most common response was 'no', the second most common response was that they had a long-standing health condition at 29.8%. A smaller number of respondents stated they had a long-standing mental health condition (8.5%) or a disability (10.6%). There were also a number of respondents who preferred not to say (11.7%).

Figure 2.1 Number of respondents by health conditions

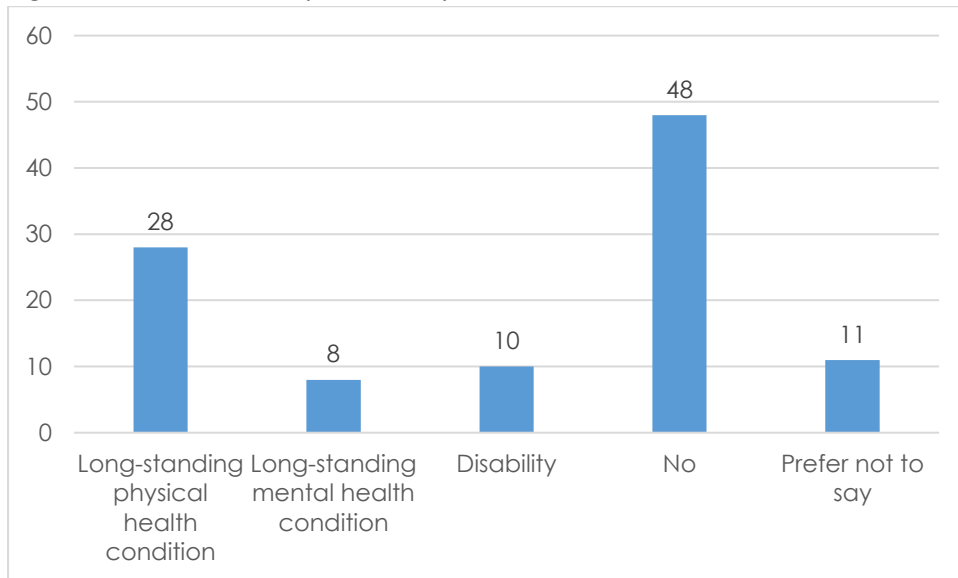
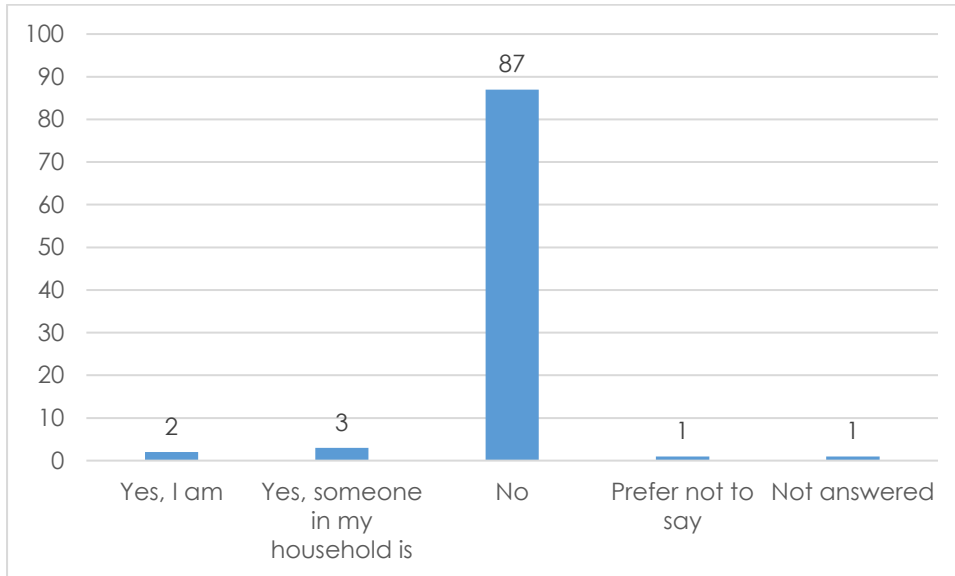


Table 2.1 shows health conditions by age group of respondents as a percentage of all respondents from that age group. Lower levels of health conditions were seen amongst those aged 65 and under, with just under one in five respondents stating that they had a health condition compared to just under two in five or almost double the rate in the over 65s. Over 65s were also more likely to have a disability than those who were aged under 65. In terms of mental health, rates of long term mental health condition were higher amongst the younger age groups.

Table 2.1: Health conditions by age group			
Age group	Health condition	Mental Health Condition	Disability
Under 65	19.6%	13.0%	6.5%
Over 65	39.6%	4.2%	14.6%

Residents were also asked if they or someone they live with is living with dementia. The overwhelming majority (92.6%) stated that they were not living with dementia. A small number stated that they were either living with dementia (2.1%) or someone in their household was living with dementia (3.2%).

Figure 2.2 Respondents living with dementia



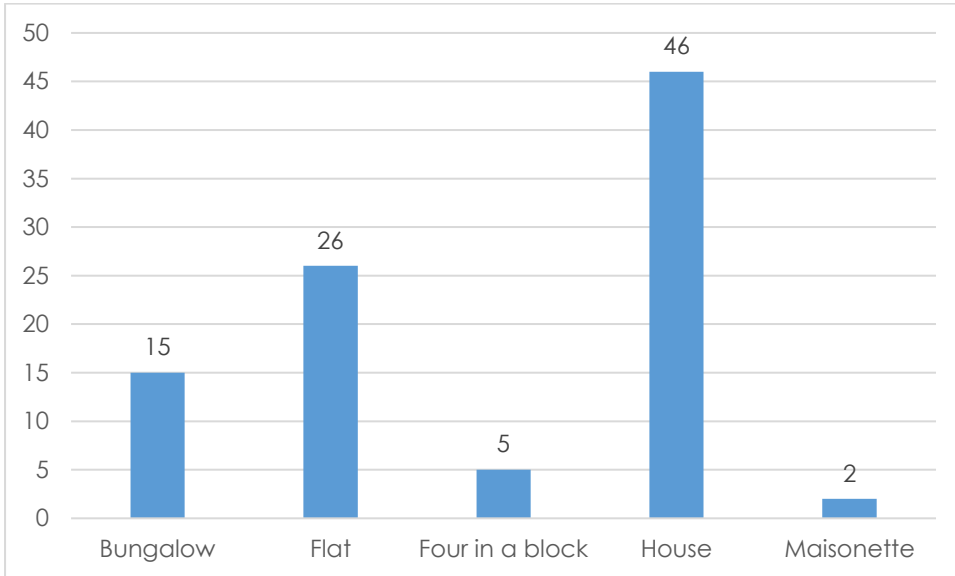
Summary

Although the majority of respondents stated that they did not have a long standing health condition, a significant minority of respondents stated that they had a long term health condition. There were also a proportion who stated that they had either a mental health condition and one in ten stated that they had a disability. In terms of age, those who were older were more likely to have a physical health condition or a disability, while the younger age groups were more likely to have a mental health condition. If this is representative of the older population, then it will impact upon the way housing for older people is designed and delivered, in terms of access and service provision. In addition, there is a need to be mindful of the fact that more people in younger age groups appear to have mental health conditions and think about how they can be supported as they age. A small number of respondents stated that they were either living with dementia or had someone in their household who was living with dementia. As dementia is a progressive illness, housing that is suitable at this point in time may rapidly become unsuitable and provision should be in place to support those living with dementia to live independently where this is possible.

4. Current housing situation of respondents

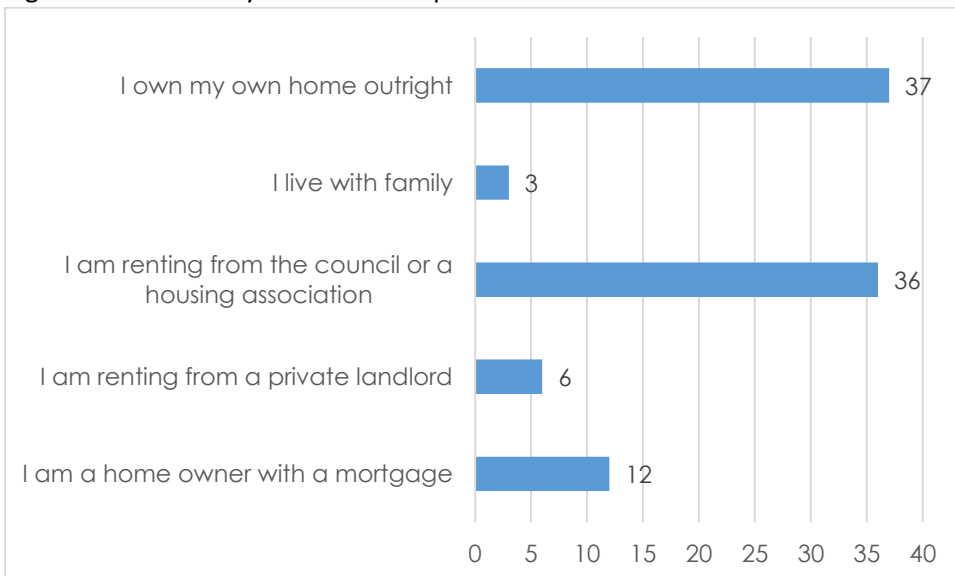
As part of the survey, participants were asked about their current property. Almost half of all respondents lived in a house (48.9%). There was also a significant proportion living in flats (27.7%) and bungalows (16%). A smaller number of participants also stated that they lived in either a four-in-a-block (5.3%) or a maisonette (2.1%).

Figure 3.1 Property types of respondents



In regards to tenure, over half of respondents were home owners, with 39.4% of respondents owning their home outright and 12.8% being home owners with mortgages. A large number of respondents (38.3%) were renting from either the council or a housing associations. A smaller number were living in the private rented sector (6.4%), while some lived with family (3.2%).

Figure 3.2: Tenure by number of respondents



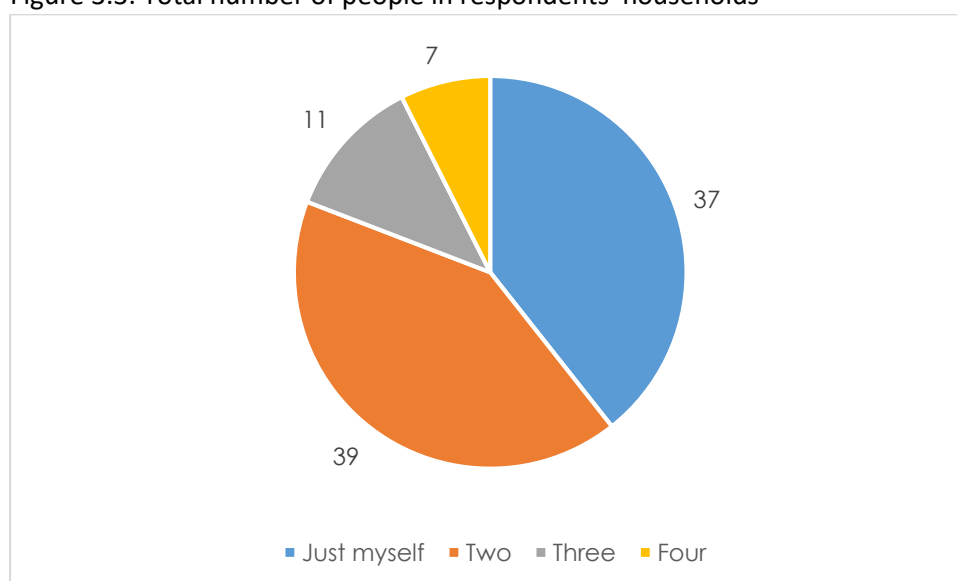
Analysing tenure by age group, it is clear that those in older age groups are more likely to own their home outright, with over half of the over 65s who responded doing so. Those over 65 were also

more likely to be renting within the social rented sector. Under 65s were more likely than over 65s to be either renting in the private sector or be home owners with a mortgage.

Table 3.1: Tenure by age group					
	Home owner with a mortgage	Renting from a private landlord	Renting from the council or a housing association	Live with family	Own my own home outright
Under 65	27.3%	11.4%	34.1%	4.5%	27.3%
Over 65	0.0%	2.1%	43.8%	2.1%	52.1%

Respondents were also asked a question about the size of their household. The majority of respondents lived in a household with either one (39.4%) or two (41.5%) inhabitants including themselves. In terms of larger households, 11.7% of respondents lived in a household with three people including themselves while 7.4% resided in a household with a total of four residents.

Figure 3.3: Total number of people in respondents' households



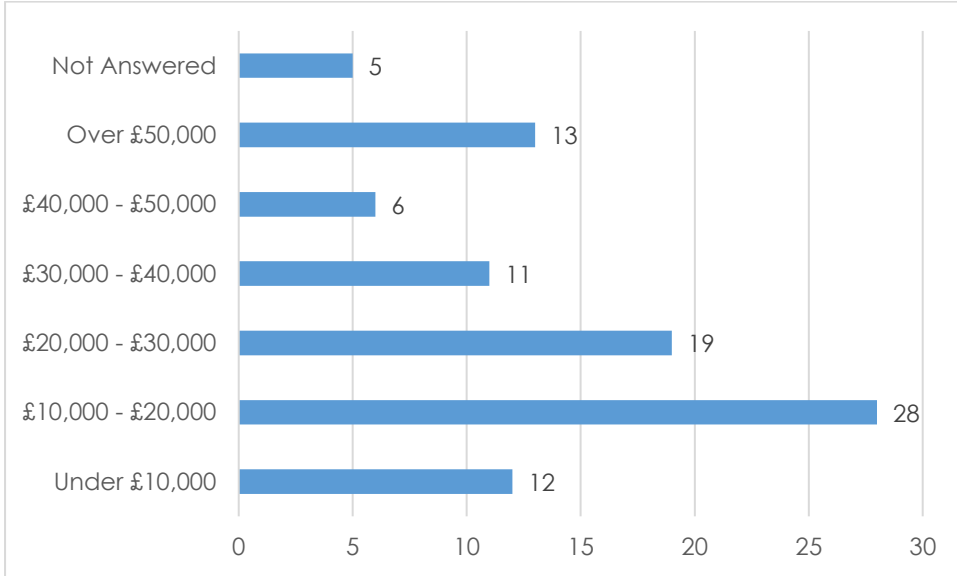
Summary

The majority of respondents live in houses, followed by those who reside in flats. Over half of those who took part were home owners. Home ownership amongst older people within East Lothian is high so this is perhaps unsurprising, there was also a large proportion of respondents who live in social housing. Those in younger age groups were more likely to be renting in the private sector and less likely to own their home outright. If more people are living in the private sector as they get older, consideration needs to be given to how the tenure supports these people. Most of the respondents (over 80%) lived in smaller households containing one or two people, older people are less likely to have dependent children living at home so it is to be expected that households will be smaller.

5. Income and expenditure

Respondents were asked how much their annual income was. The most common response was an income of between £10,000 and £20,000. The next most common household income was between £20,000 and £30,000 (20.2%). Of those who responded 12.8% had a household income of less than £10,000 while at the other end of the scale 13.8% had a household income of over £50,000.

Figure 4.1: Annual household income of respondents



Participants were asked how much they spent on mortgage or rent payments per month. The most common response overall was zero (41.5%), which is unsurprising given the numbers who own their property outright. The next most common response was over £500 per month (16.0%). A small number did not answer (2.1%) or preferred not to say (4.3%).

Figure 4.2: Monthly outgoings on rent or mortgage

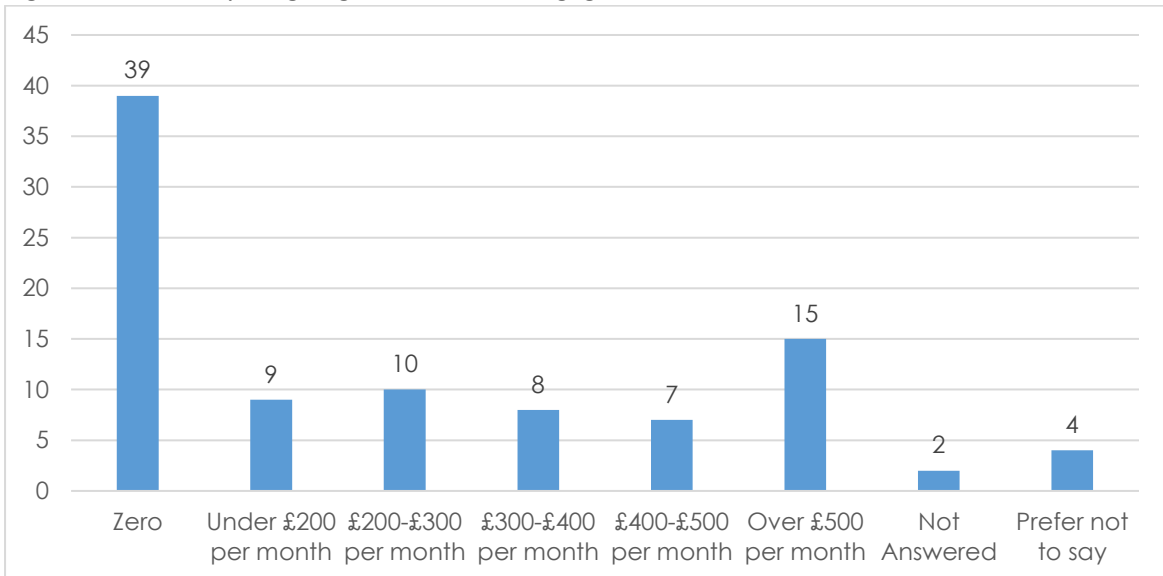


Table 4.1 shows that as to be expected the vast majority of those who do not pay rent of mortgage are those who own their property outright. Those with higher housing costs, paying over £500 per month were those who owned with a mortgage followed by those who rented in the private sector. Those living in the social rented sector had rents that varied, with responses covering all categories.

Table 4.1: Monthly rents by tenure					
Tenure	I own my own home outright	I am a home owner with a mortgage	I am renting from a private landlord	I am renting from the council or a housing association	I live with family
Zero (£0)	33		1	5	
Under £200 per month	1			7	1
£200-£300 per month		2		8	
£300-£400 per month				7	1
£400-£500 per month		1	1	5	
Over £500 per month		8	4	2	1
Prefer not to say	2	1		1	
Not Answered	1			1	

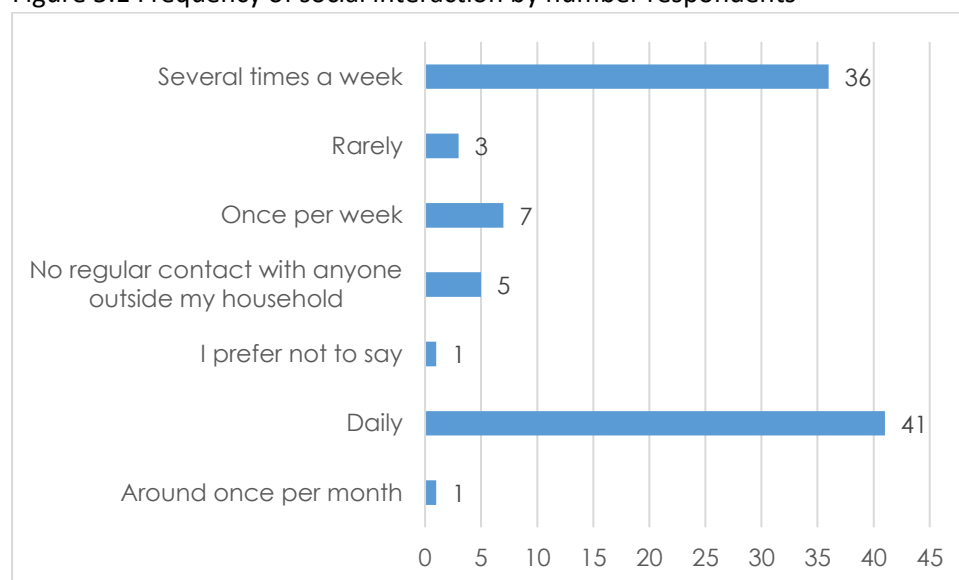
Summary

Respondents most commonly had an income of between £10-20,000 per annum. Just over 40% of respondents had an income of £20,000 or less, this may mean that they are more vulnerable to price rises and the cost of living crisis, particularly if they are on a fixed income such as a pension. Although the survey did not ask about savings and it is possible that some respondents have savings in addition to their regular income. A large number of those who took part did not have any monthly outgoings in terms of a mortgage or rent, however, the next highest proportion of respondents had commitments of £500 or more in terms of outgoings on rent or mortgages. Highest costs tended to be associated with those who had a mortgage or were in the private rented sector. Those in social housing had rent levels that covered all categories, rent levels will vary according to property size and services provided.

6. Socialising and loneliness

Figure 5.1 shows the frequency with which respondents have social interaction with people outside of their own household. The majority socialised either several times a week (38.3%) or daily (43.6%). There were a small number of respondents who only socialise with other households rarely (3.2%), while 5.3% said they do not have contact with anyone outside of their own household.

Figure 5.1 Frequency of social interaction by number respondents

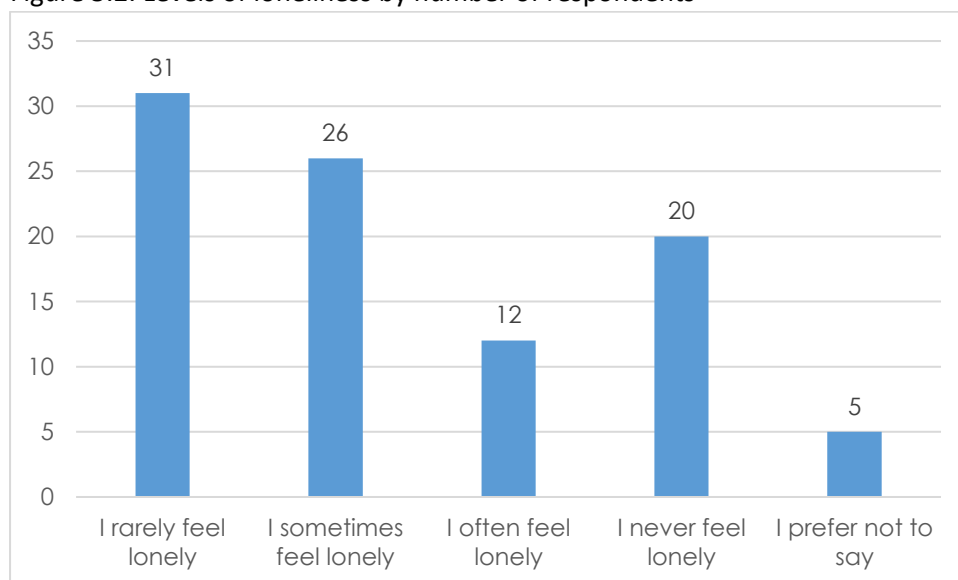


Looking at table 5.1, it shows that those in younger age groups are more likely to have social interaction. Those aged over 70 were more likely to have either no contact or rare contact with people outside of their household.

Age group	Daily	Several times a week	Once per week	Around once per month	Rarely	No regular contact with anyone outside my household	I prefer not to say
Under 55	7	8					
55-59	8	4	1	1			
60-64	11	3	3				
65-69	4	8	2		1		
70-74	3	4				4	
75-79	5	4			2		
80-84	2	2	1				1
85+	1	3				1	
Total	41	36	7	1	3	5	1

Figure 5.2 shows levels of loneliness felt by respondents. The most common response amongst participants was that they rarely feel lonely accounting for 33% of those who took part. A significant proportion (27.7%) stated that they sometimes feel lonely. In total, 21.3% stated that they never feel lonely. A smaller number (12.8%) stated that they often feel lonely while 5.3% said that they would prefer not to say. In total, 40.5% of those who took part said that they either sometimes or often feel lonely. Although this is not a majority of respondent, it still demonstrates that levels of loneliness amongst older people in the region are likely to be high.

Figure 5.2: Levels of loneliness by number of respondents



In terms of age groups, those who were aged between 70 and 74 were most likely to often feel lonely. Younger respondents, those aged under 65 were most likely to say that they sometimes feel lonely. Those aged 85+ were most likely to say that they rarely feel lonely.

Table 5.2: Loneliness by age group					
Age group	I never feel lonely	I rarely feel lonely	I sometimes feel lonely	I often feel lonely	I prefer not to say
Under 55	6.7%	40.0%	33.3%	13.3%	6.7%
55-59	14.3%	35.7%	35.7%	14.3%	0.0%
60-64	23.5%	35.3%	35.3%	5.9%	0.0%
65-69	40.0%	13.3%	26.7%	13.3%	6.7%
70-74	18.2%	18.2%	27.3%	27.3%	9.1%
75-79	9.1%	54.5%	18.2%	9.1%	9.1%
80-84	33.3%	16.7%	16.7%	16.7%	16.7%
85+	40.0%	60.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Summary

Most of the participants interacted with other households, however, there were a proportion who either rarely or never have social interaction with people outside of their own household. The results of the survey show that the older age groups were less likely to have social interaction than younger ones.

Loneliness was felt by respondents from all age groups within the survey to varying degrees. There were high levels of responses indicating that people sometimes feel lonely, particularly amongst

those who are age under 65. Respondents who were aged 70-74 and 80-84 were most likely to say that they often feel lonely.

7. Current and future suitability of respondent's homes

Respondents were asked if their current property was suitable for their needs, with the largest proportion (43.6%) agreeing that it was suitable. A large number of those who took part (36.2%) also view their property as very suitable for their needs. In terms of those who viewed their property as unsuitable, 12.8% felt their home was not very suitable and 4.3% felt it was not suitable at all. This means that a total of 17.1% of respondents were living in accommodation which they do not feel meets their needs.

Figure 6.1: How suitable is your current home?

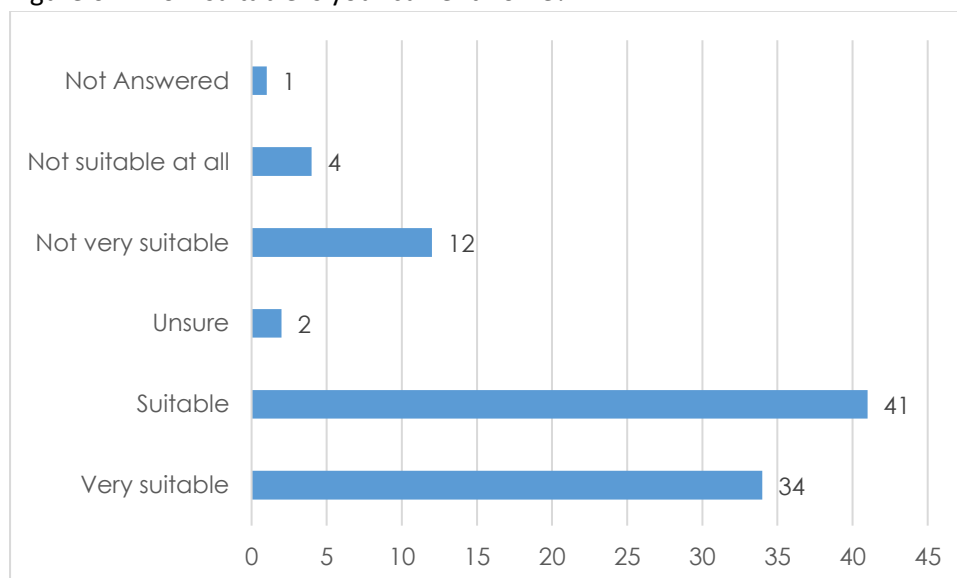


Table 6.2 shows that those who would describe themselves as living in accommodation which was not suitable at all or not very suitable were most likely to be living in the private rented sector. Those who felt their property was very suitable were most likely to own their own property, either outright or with a mortgage.

Table 6.1: Current suitability of housing by tenure					
Response	Home owner with mortgage	Own home outright	Private Rented Sector	Renting from Council or Housing Association	Live with family
Very suitable	66.7%	66.7%	0.0%	30.6%	0.0%
Suitable	33.3%	33.3%	16.7%	47.2%	66.7%
Not very suitable	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%	11.1%	33.3%
Not suitable at all	0.0%	0.0%	16.7%	8.3%	0.0%
Unsure	0.0%	0.0%	16.7%	0.0%	0.0%
Not Answered	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.8%	0.0%
Grand Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 6.2 shows that those in older age groups are slightly less likely to believe that they are living in suitable accommodation with 18.8% stating they live in either not suitable or not very suitable accommodation compared to 15.2% of those who are under 65.

Table: 6.2 Suitability of accommodation by age group						
Age group	Not Answered	Not suitable at all	Not very suitable	Suitable	Unsure	Very suitable
Under 65	0.0%	4.3%	10.9%	50.0%	2.2%	32.6%
Over 65	2.1%	4.2%	14.6%	37.5%	2.1%	39.6%

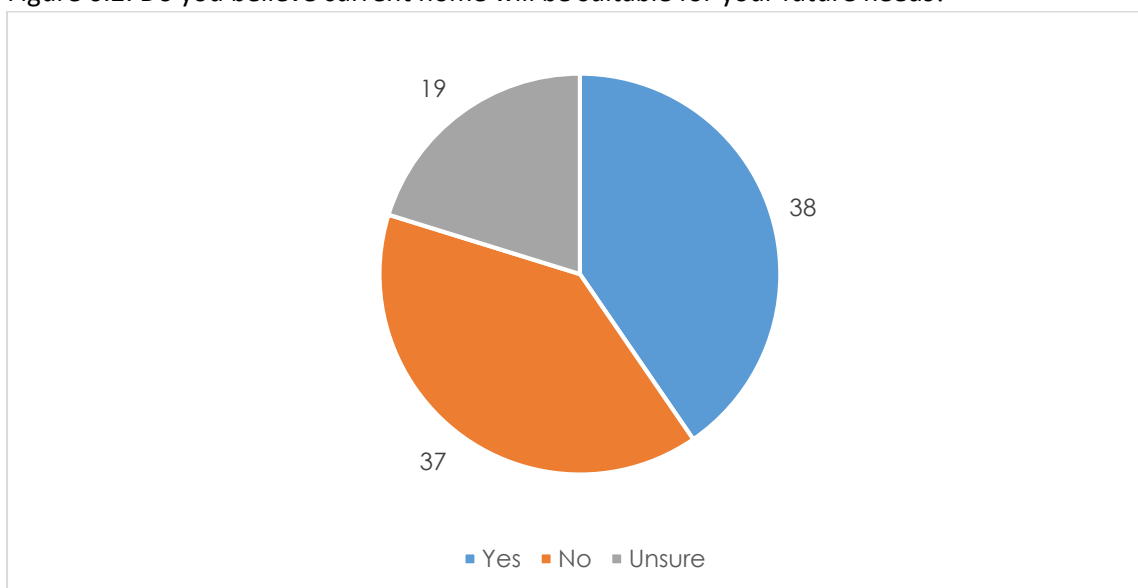
Those who had responded that their accommodation was not suitable were then asked why they felt that this was the case. Some of the common reasons given were

- gardens being difficult to maintain (2 respondents),
- property being too large (7 respondents),
- difficulty with stairs (4 respondents),
- rents too high (2 respondents), small kitchen (2 respondents),
- property too small (2 respondents).

The following were each mentioned once by a single respondent, bath or shower access, need for adaptations, lack of storage, poor service from landlord, issues with others living in the property, difficulty accessing carers, lack of a garden and finally the property being too rural.

Respondents were also asked if they think their property will be suitable for their future needs. There was an even split between those who answered yes (40.4%) and those who answered no (39.4%) with a further 20.2% stating that they were unsure. This shows that a significant number of respondents are concerned around their ability to age in their current property.

Figure 6.2: Do you believe current home will be suitable for your future needs?



Breaking it down by tenure, table 6.3 shows that those who are living in the social rented sector were most likely to believe that their property would meet their future needs. Worryingly, all of those currently living in the private rented sector believe that their current property will not meet their future needs.

Table 6.3: Will your current home meet your future housing needs - by tenure			
Tenure	Yes	No	Unsure
I own my own home outright	35.1%	40.5%	24.3%

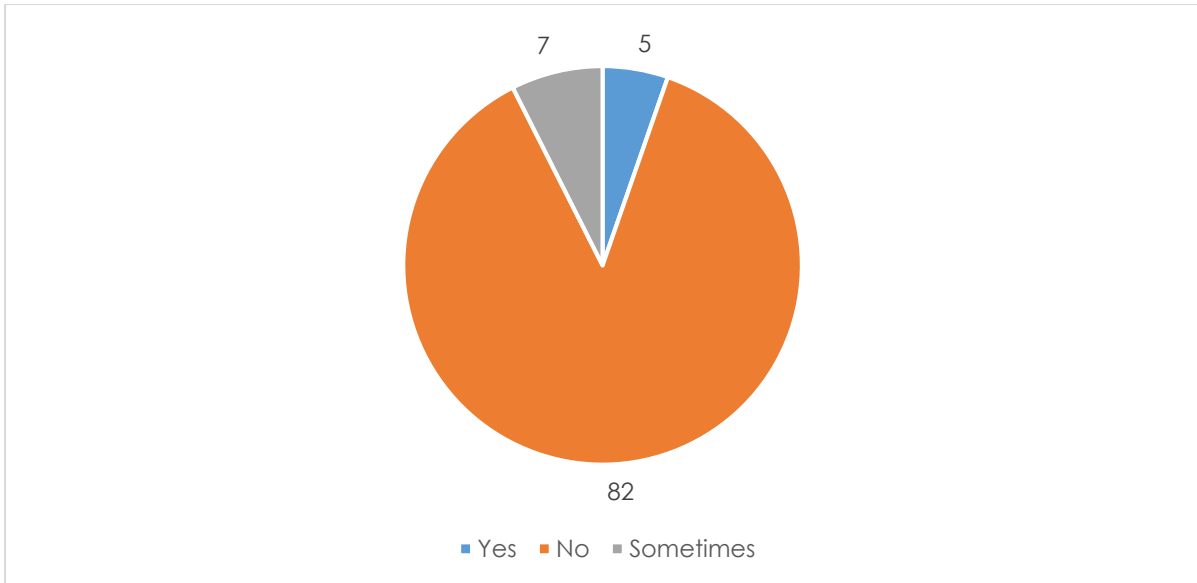
I am a home owner with a mortgage	33.3%	16.7%	50.0%
I am renting from a private landlord	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%
I am renting from the council or a housing association	58.3%	33.3%	8.3%
I live with family	0.0%	66.7%	33.3%

Respondents who had stated that they did not feel their home would meet their current needs were then asked to provide reasons in relation to why this was the case. Table 6.4 shows that the most common reason was the respondents concern over their ability to manage their stairs. The property being too large was a concern for some too as was their ability to maintain their garden. Both suggest that properties that require more maintenance are more difficult for older people to manage. There was also concern around bathrooms, both in terms of accessing baths and showers and only having an upstairs bathroom.

Table 6.4: Reasons property does not meet current needs	
Area of concern	No. respondents
Ability to manage stairs	17
Property too large	6
Garden maintenance	5
Accessing bath or shower	4
Having an upstairs bathroom	4
Need for internal adaptations	3
Lack of local services or facilities	3
Issues with heating home	3
Affordability of current property	2
Restrictions around adaptations	2
Inability to afford to move out	1
Lack of carers	1

The overwhelming majority (87.2%) stated that they do not struggle with access to their property. A small minority stated that they do struggle (5.3%), with the rest of the respondents (7.4%) stating that they sometimes struggle with access. This means that 12.7% of those who took part have some level of difficulty accessing their property.

Figure 6.3: Do you struggle with access to your property?



Those who stated they struggle with access were asked to provide details. Of those who did the most common reason was difficulty with stairs, mentioned by 11 respondents. Difficulty putting out their recycling bins, lack of parking, issues around a stiff back gate and a tree blocking access were each mentioned by a single respondent.

Conclusion

Around 17% of respondents felt that they were living in a home which is unsuitable for their needs, although this represents a minority of those who took part, it still represents a significant proportion of people living in accommodation that they feel is unsuitable. Those who are over 65 were more likely to believe that they were living in accommodation that was unsuitable for them. In addition those who were living in the private rented sector were more likely to feel they were living in property which was not suitable. Reasons given for properties being unsuitable included the stairs and the property being too large. This points to a need for suitable provision for older people as well as provision of opportunities to obtain housing of a suitable size. In regards to the future suitability of housing, there was a 50/50 split between those who felt their current property would be suitable and those who did not. This is quite a high rate of people feeling that their property will be unsuitable in the future. Again, the two most common reasons were stairs and properties being too large. Both point to a need for more single level properties for older people. In terms of access 12.7% had some difficulty with access to their property, this was mainly those who struggled with stairs.

8. Care and Repair and Adaptations

The majority of respondents (79.8%) had not made any adaptations to their property. A number (14.9%) had seen adaptations made to their home while 2.1% were in the process of having adaptations done to their property. A small number of respondents either did not want to say (1.1%) or did not provide an answer (2.1%).

Figure 7.1: Have you made any adaptations to your current property?

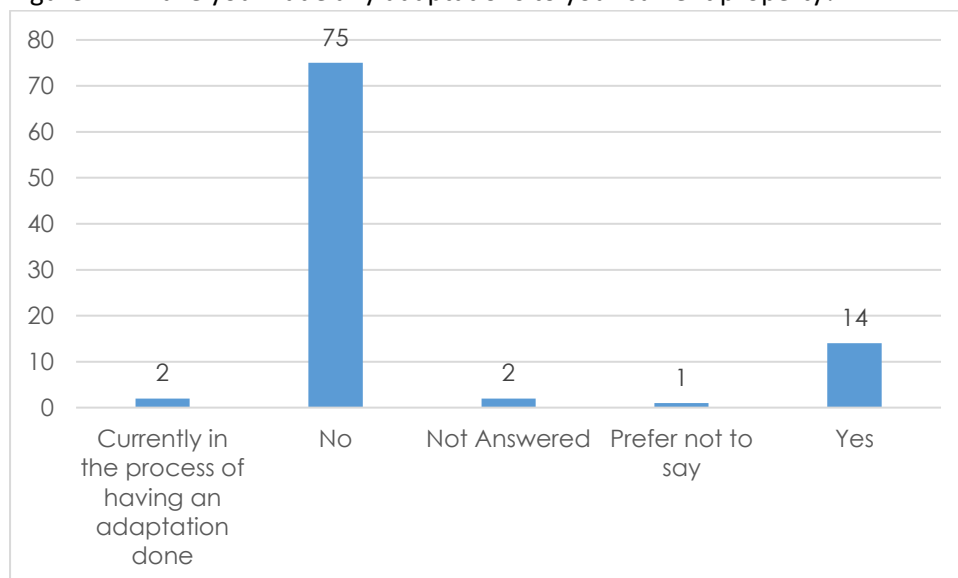


Table 7.1 indicates that those living with family were most likely to have had their property adapted although only three people stated that they were living with family so the sample size is low. Those renting from a housing association or East Lothian Council were least likely to have had their property adapted.

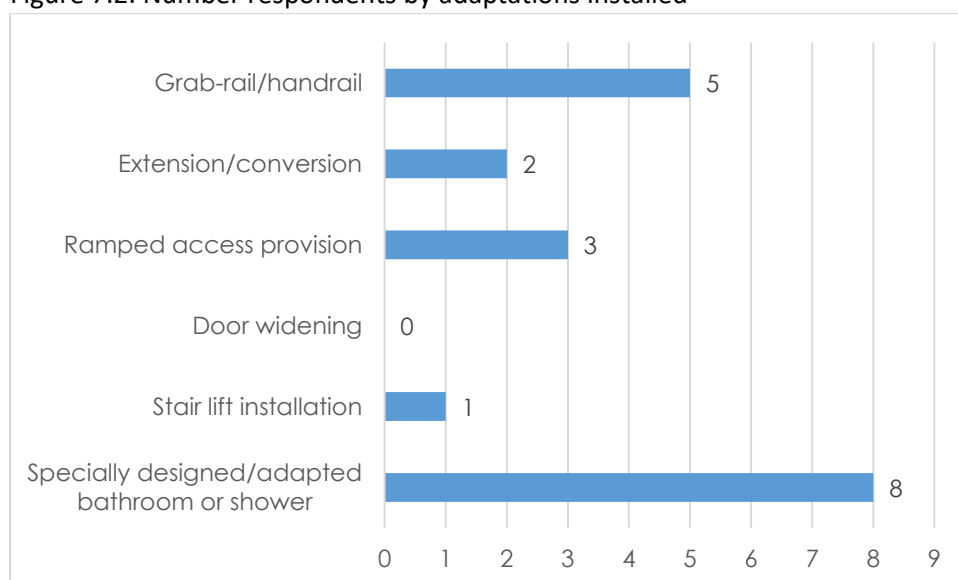
Tenure	Yes	Currently in the process of having an adaptation done	No	Not Answered	Prefer not to say
I own my own home outright	27.0%	2.7%	67.6%	2.7%	0.0%
I am a home owner with a mortgage	0.0%	8.3%	83.3%	8.3%	0.0%
I am renting from a private landlord	16.7%	0.0%	83.3%	0.0%	0.0%
I am renting from the council or a housing association	5.6%	0.0%	94.4%	0.0%	0.0%
I live with family	33.3%	0.0%	33.3%	0.0%	33.3%
Grand Total	14.9%	2.1%	79.8%	2.1%	1.1%

Table 7.2 shows the percentage of those aged over and under 65 who have made adaptations to their property. The majority within both age groups had not made any adaptations, however, those over 65 were more likely to have adapted their property.

Table 7.2: Adaptations by age group						
Age group	Currently in the process of having an adaptation done	No	Not Answered	Prefer not to say	Yes	Grand Total
Under 65	4.3%	84.8%	2.2%	2.2%	6.5%	100.0%
Over 65	0.0%	75.0%	2.1%	0.0%	22.9%	100.0%

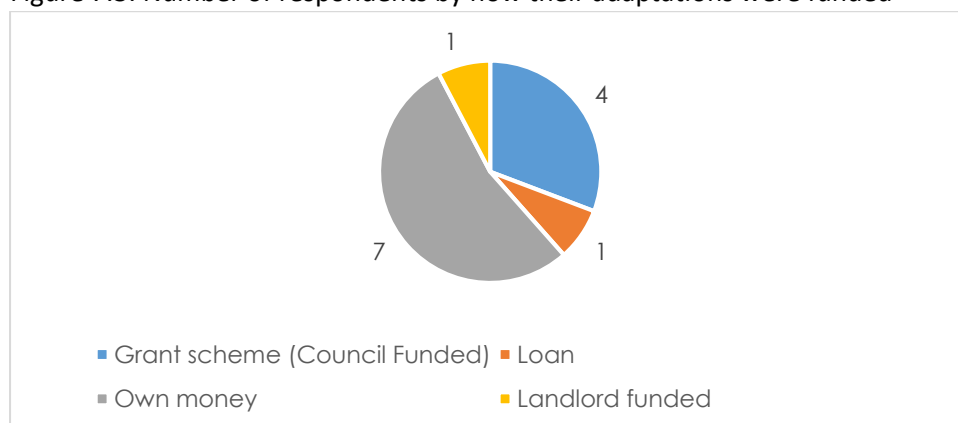
Those who had an adaptation were asked the nature of that adaptation. The most common type of adaptation was an adapted bathroom or shower (42.1%), a significant proportion (26.3%) had installed a grab rail at their property. Other adaptations included a ramped access (15.8%), an extension or conversion (10.5%). A small number of respondents (5.3%) had also had a stair lift installed.

Figure 7.2: Number respondents by adaptations installed



In addition to this, those who had adaptations were asked how they were funded. The most common answer was that they had funded them themselves (53.8%). A number were also funded by grant schemes (30.8%). In addition a small number had been funded either by a landlord (7.7%) or a loan (7.7%).

Figure 7.3: Number of respondents by how their adaptations were funded



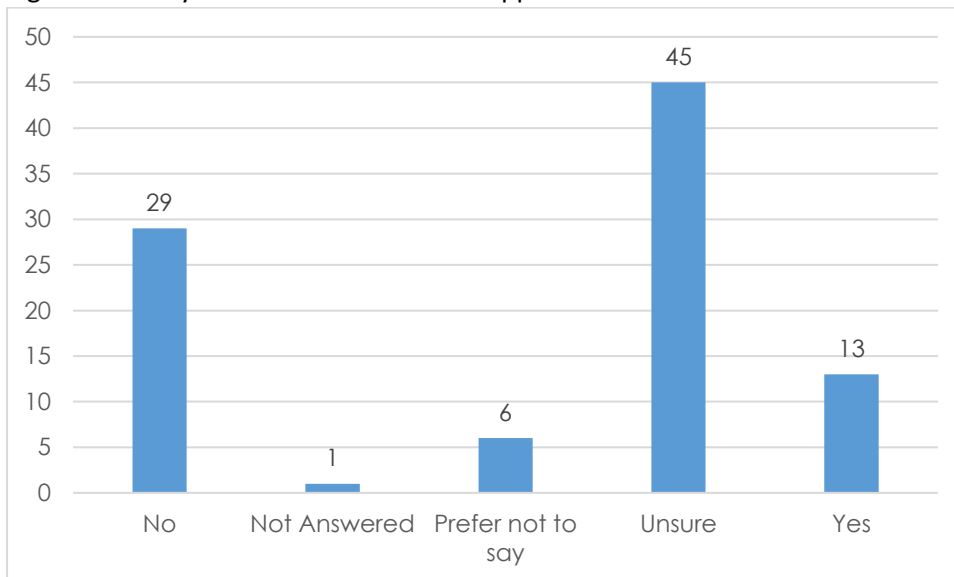
Conclusion

Most respondents had not made any adaptations, of those who had the majority were in relation to adapting a bathroom or shower followed by those who had installed a grab rail. In terms of funding the largest proportion were self-funded. Those who were in older age group were more likely to have had their property adapted than younger respondents to the survey. Furthermore those who stated they were living at home had the highest percentage of respondents stating that they had adapted their property, the lowest percentage was among those living in the social rented sector.

9. Future property intentions

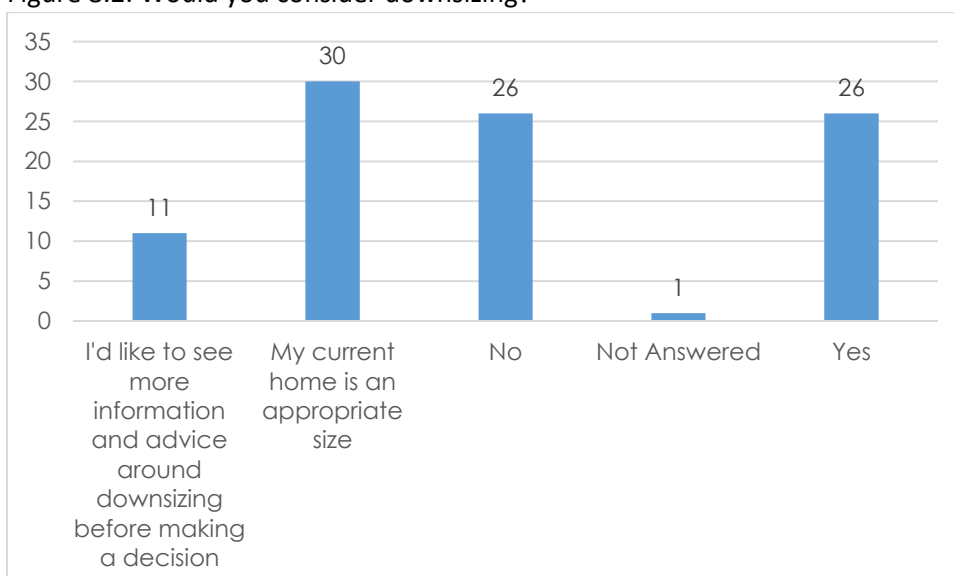
Those who took part were asked if they plan to move into supported accommodation such as sheltered housing, retirement housing or supported living accommodation at some point in the future. More of those who took (30.9%) part did not intend to move into supported accommodation than those who did (13.8%). There were a large number of respondents who stated that they were unsure so it is difficult to ascertain what proportion would be happy to move into supported accommodation if this was in their best interests. The uncertainty may be largely down to general uncertainty around what the future will bring in terms of housing requirements and general health.

Figure 8.1: Do you intend to move into supported accommodation?



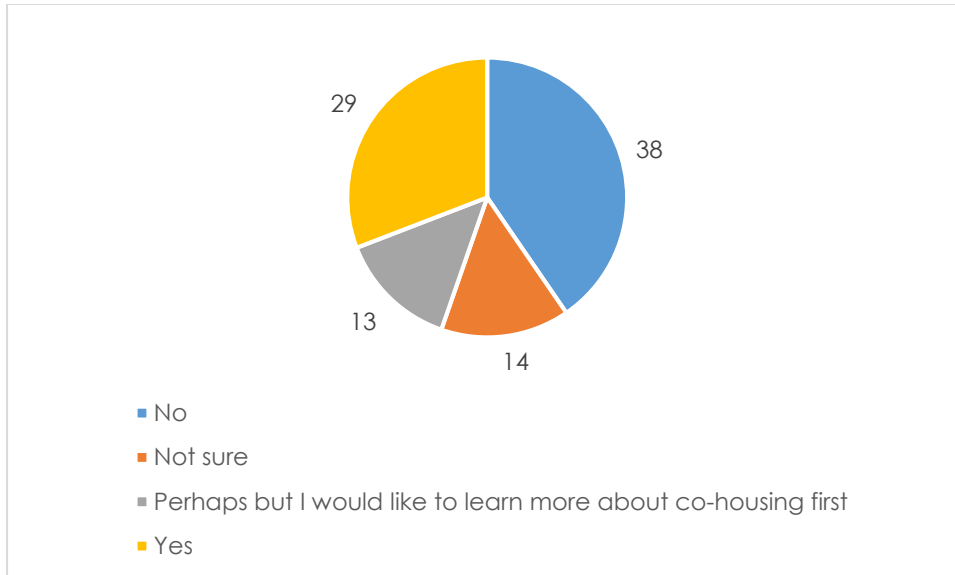
Participants were asked if they would consider downsizing from their current property. There was a fairly even split in terms of those who felt their current home was an appropriate size (31.9%), those who said no (27.7%) and those who said yes (27.7%). A proportion of respondents (11.7%) stated that they would like to see more information and advice before making a decision. These numbers show that there is an appetite for downsizing amongst older people, even if it is not universal.

Figure 8.2: Would you consider downsizing?



Respondents were also asked if they would consider co-housing (where residents have their own homes which surround shared spaces where people can meet, eat together and share resources) as they get older. The largest proportion of respondents was amongst those who said no (40.4%). A total of 30.9% said that they would be interested. Again, this demonstrates some desire to explore other avenues for housing as people get older. Although it is not universally seen as desirable, a large proportion do see it as potentially being a viable option.

Figure 8.3: Would you be interested in co-housing?



Those who took part were asked about their future property intentions in terms of whether they intended to move. The most common answer among respondents was that they were unsure (36.2%) followed by those who do not intend to move (35.1%). Of those who do intend to move 9.6% intend to move in the next 1-2 years, 2.1% in the next 2-5 years and 11.7% stated they intend to move in 5 or more years.

Figure 8.4: What are your future property intentions?

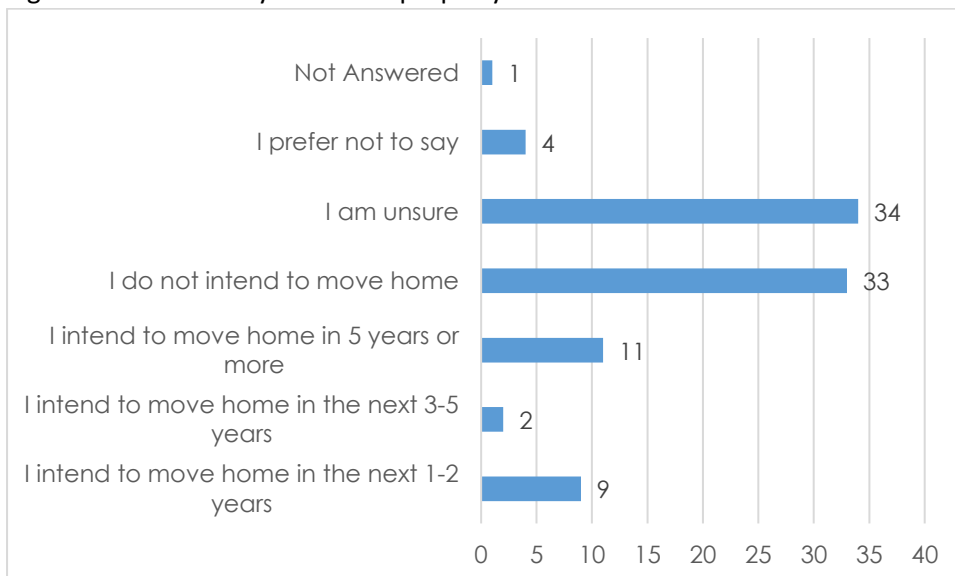


Table 8.1 shows the intention to move by age group. None of the respondents aged 80+ had any intention of moving. Those in the youngest age category were most likely to intend to move in five

years or more while those aged 75-79 were most likely to have the intention of moving in the next 1-2 years.

Age group	I am unsure	I do not intend to move home	I intend to move home in 5 years or more	I intend to move home in the next 1-2 years	I intend to move home in the next 3-5 years	I prefer not to say	Not Answered
Under 55	33.3%	20.0%	40.0%	6.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
55-59	57.1%	0.0%	14.3%	14.3%	0.0%	14.3%	0.0%
60-64	64.7%	11.8%	11.8%	5.9%	5.9%	0.0%	0.0%
65-69	20.0%	60.0%	0.0%	13.3%	0.0%	6.7%	0.0%
70-74	45.5%	27.3%	0.0%	9.1%	0.0%	9.1%	9.1%
75-79	18.2%	45.5%	9.1%	18.2%	9.1%	0.0%	0.0%
80-84	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
85+	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

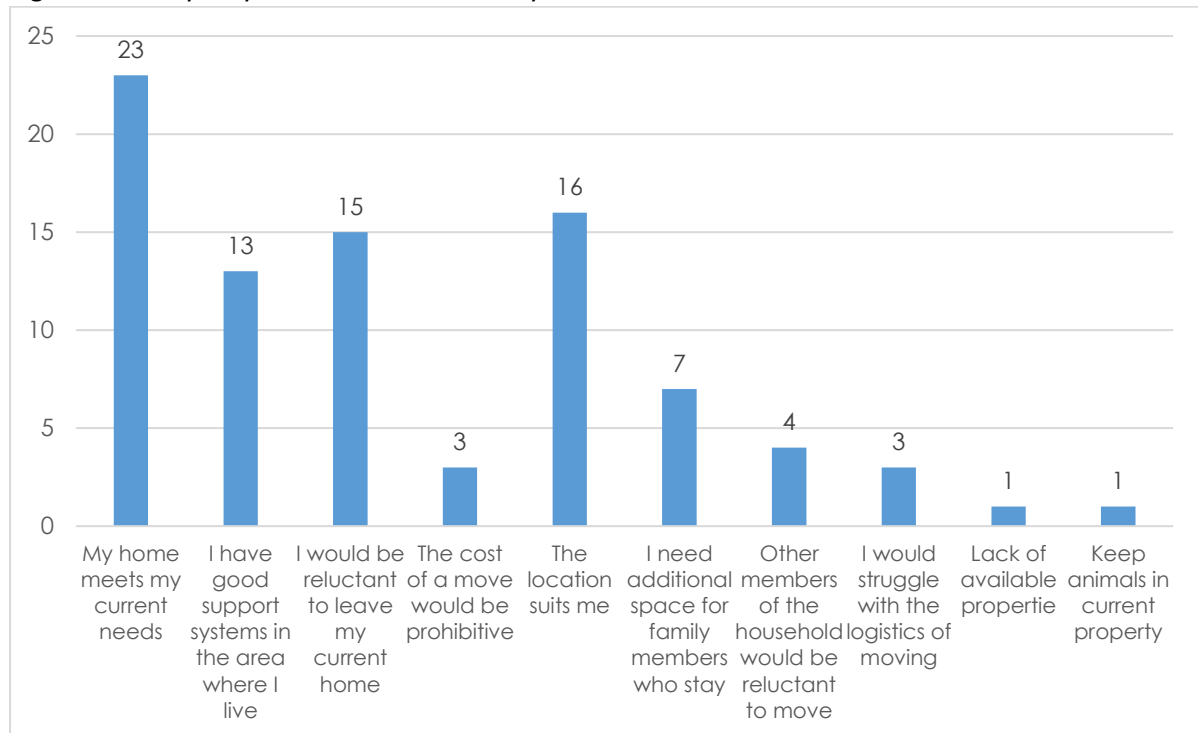
Respondents who were renting within the social rented sector were most likely to have no intention to move home, whereas those in the private rented sector were most likely to have intentions to move. Of those living within the private rented sector none of the respondents stated that they did not intend to move.

Tenure	Do not intend to move	Intend to move	Unsure	Prefer not to say	Not Answered
I am a home owner with a mortgage	16.7%	41.7%	41.7%	0.0%	0.0%
I own my own home outright	40.5%	18.9%	35.1%	2.7%	2.7%
I am renting from a private landlord	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%
I am renting from the council or a housing association	44.4%	19.4%	27.8%	8.3%	0.0%
Total	35.1%	0.0%	36.2%	4.3%	1.1%

Those who stated that they had no intention of moving were then asked why they would like to remain in their current property. Participants were able to select more than one option for remaining in their current property.

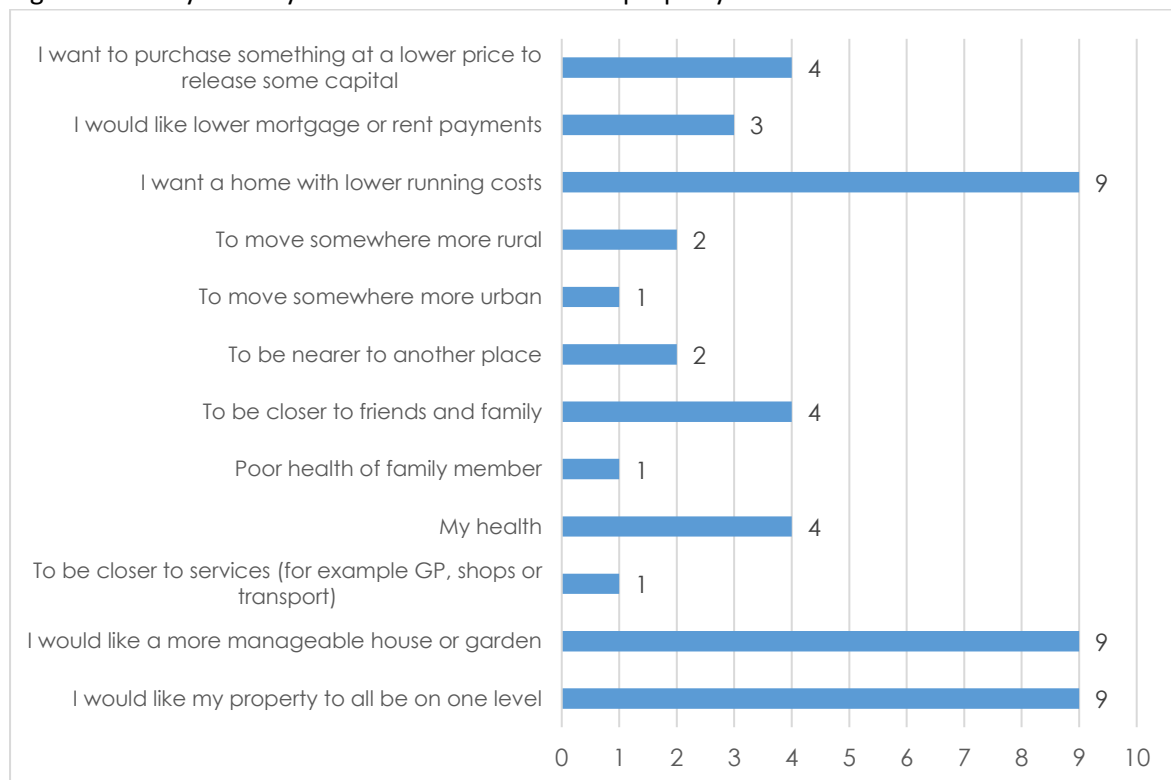
The most commonly cited reason was that their current home meets their needs. This was followed by 'the location suits me' (48.5%), 'I would be reluctant to leave my current home' (45.5%) and 'I have good support systems in the area where I live' (39.4%). Figure 8.5 provides a full breakdown of reasons.

Figure 8.5: Why do you intend to remain in your current home?



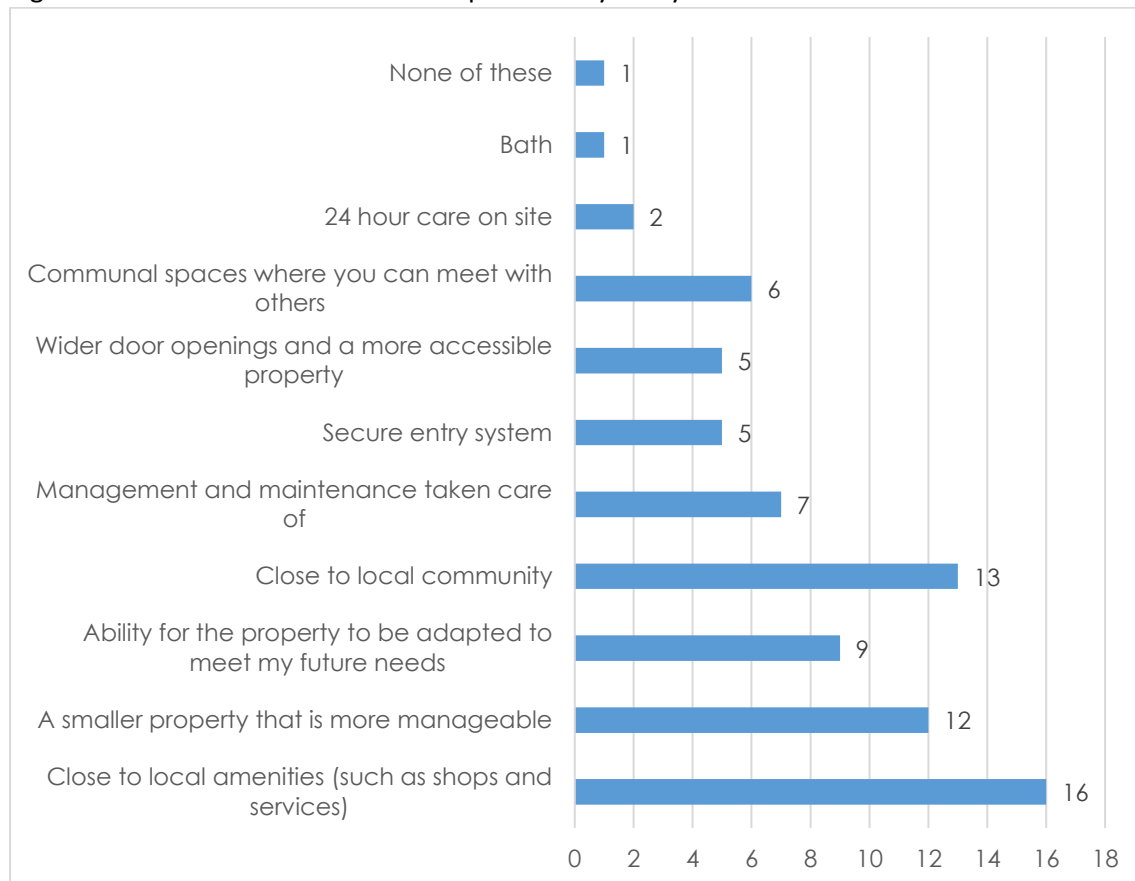
Similarly those who stated they would like to move were asked why they wish to do so, again respondents could select more than one option. The most common answers were 'I would like my property to all be on one level' (40.9%), 'I would like a more manageable house or garden' (40.9%) and 'I want a home with lower running costs' (40.9%). Figure 8.6 provides a detailed breakdown of reasons given.

Figure 8.6: Why would you like to move to another property?



Participants were also asked what features were most important to them if they were to move. The most popular response was to be close to local amenities (20.8%). Being close to the local community (16.9%) and a smaller property that is more manageable (15.6%) were also seen as important. Figure 8.7 provides a breakdown of reasons provided.

Figure 8.7: What features would be important to you if you were to move?



Conclusion

More respondents stated that they had no intention to move into supported accommodation, however, there were a large number who were unsure so it is difficult to ascertain future intentions from these answers as for many it will likely depend upon their health. There was some appetite for downsizing with over a quarter of respondents stating that it is something that they would consider. In regards to co-housing, over 30% of those who took part would consider this. Consideration of alternative models and the benefits they could potentially bring in regards to housing older people may well be essential in order to adequately house them in later years. Overall, 23.4% of respondents stated that they intend to move in the future with the largest number of these planning to do so at the earliest in five years. In terms of age, younger age groups were more likely to have intentions of moving in the longer term while those in the oldest age groups had no intention of moving from their current property. Those in the social rented sector were most likely to wish to remain in their current home, with those renting privately most likely to have a desire to move elsewhere.

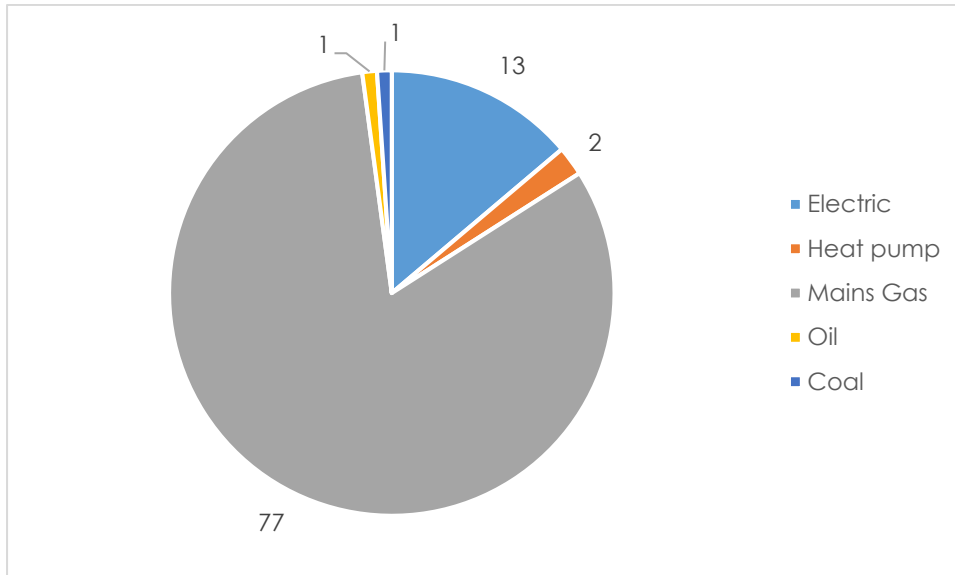
Respondents who wanted to remain in their own home mainly wanted to so as it was in a suitable location; because they would be reluctant to leave their current property; or because they had good support systems in place where they live. Conversely those who wanted to move stated having a property all on one level; a more manageable house or garden; or a property with lower running

costs as the main reasons. This again demonstrates a desire on the part of older people to have smaller more manageable properties and a potential appetite for downsizing. Amongst respondents the most commonly raised things they were looking for if they were to move included local amenities links to the local community and smaller more manageable properties. This shows that the location as well as the type of housing is of paramount importance.

10. Energy efficiency and warmer homes

The survey asked what the main source of heating in participants' homes was. The vast majority indicated that the main source of heating was main gas (81.9%), followed by electric heating (13.8%). A smaller number stated that they used oil (1.1%), coal (1.1%) or a heat pump (2.1%).

Figure 9.1: Main source of heating by number of respondents

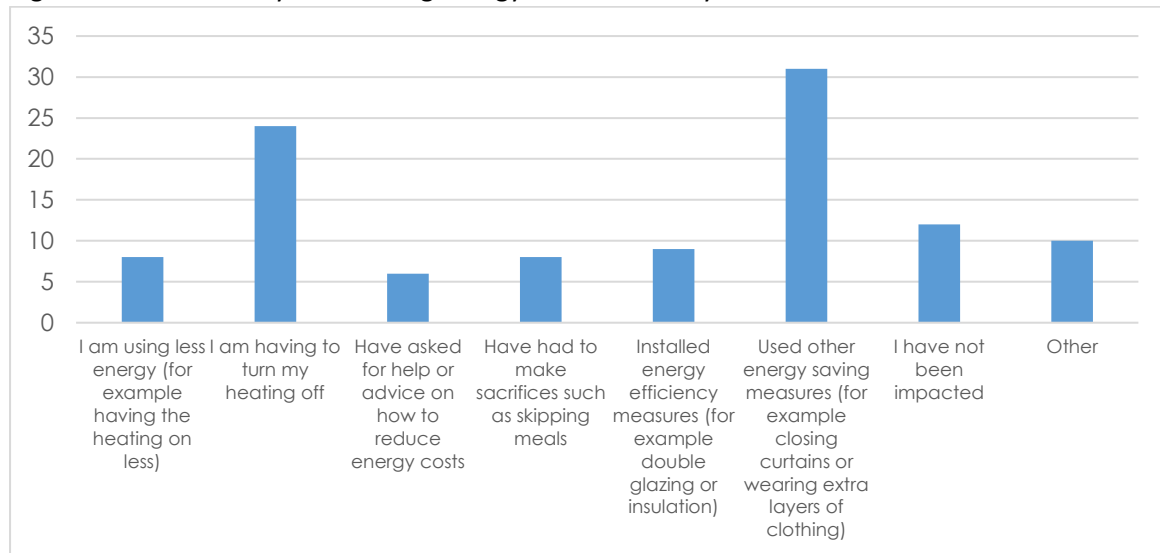


Participants were also asked how much they spent on energy bills each month. The average amount spent was £163 per month, with the median being £160 per month. The survey was undertaken in the summer of 2022, at this time it was likely that energy usage was lower and the survey was also prior to the October price cap increase.

Respondents were also asked in what way rising energy costs had affected them. Around one in three (33%) had used other energy measures such as closing curtains or wearing extra layers in order to combat rising energy costs. A proportion had also had to either turn their heating off (25.5%) or use less energy (8.5%) showing that people are having to cut back on energy usage in order to cut costs. Worryingly 8.5% had made sacrifices such as skipping meals in order to cut costs.

Of the respondents 10.6% selected other, they were then provided with a text box to expand on the reasons. Some of the examples provided here were not using the tumble dryer, spending time at a relatives in order to save energy and one respondent stated they had been unable to retire when they hoped too as a result of rising costs.

Figure 9.2: In what ways have rising energy costs affected you?



Conclusion

The majority of respondents heated their home using gas, with electric being the next most common heating form used. On average, respondents were spending £163 per month on energy, with the median amount spent being £160. Older people are more likely to spend longer periods of time at home and therefore may use more energy. This along with a fixed income means that they are vulnerable to current inflationary pressure. A number of energy saving measures had been used by respondents including turning off their heating or cutting back on energy use but also more traditional energy saving measures such as thicker curtains or extra layers of clothing. It is worrying that this survey was largely conducted during the summer when heating and energy usage would have been much lower and people were already making cut backs.

11. Conclusions

In terms of response the survey had 94 respondents, with a balance between those who are over 65 and those under 65 who are likely to be looking at their future housing needs, the majority who participated were female. It is perhaps worth considering how to better engage with older males. In addition the survey respondents who provided data were all white, again it may be that there needs to be consideration given to how best to engage with older populations within ethnic minority groups.

Looking at the health of respondents, the survey evidenced that older participants were more likely to have a long-term health condition or disability, while younger participants were more likely to have a long term mental health condition. In terms of future provision, it is important to give consideration to both health and mental health conditions when designing property for older people. Those with dementia also need to be supported and recognition should be given to the fact that it is a progressive illness meaning that there is not one solution that suits all of those living with dementia.

A large number of respondents were owner occupiers without mortgages who therefore do not have any housing costs. Younger respondents were more likely to be living in the private rented sector and in terms of properties most lived in houses. Those living in the private sector will need to be given avenues to adapt properties if their health declines and they are to remain in adequate housing in older age.

The most common income banding was 10-20k, with over 40% of respondent having a household income of less than £20,000. Support needs to be targeted at those who are most vulnerable, particularly those who are older without savings and a low income who are most vulnerable to the cost of living crisis.

In terms of social interaction, older age groups were less likely to interact than younger ones and loneliness was felt across all age groups with those in older age groups particularly those between 70-74 and 80-84 generally more likely to say that they often feel lonely.

From those who took part, 17% felt that their home was unsuitable for their needs, this means that almost one in five feel that their accommodation is unsuitable. Older respondents were more likely to believe that their accommodation was not suitable, perhaps as they have aged their needs are greater, meaning they need more support. Preventative measures and early intervention would help to avoid situations such as this. Unsuitable accommodation can result in accidents such as falls resulting in hospital stays. Those in the private rented sector were most likely to be living in accommodation which they deemed unsuitable for their needs. The main issue centred around stairs, with many struggling as they are getting older or worrying that this will be an issue as they age. It highlights the importance of single story accommodation for older people.

Adaptations that respondents had undertaken were mainly bathroom adaptations and grab-rails, again low level interventions such as these can greatly improve quality of life for older people, as well as providing them with a safer home.

Looking to the future, there was a sizeable number of respondents who would like more information around downsizing or alternative housing models such as co-housing. It is important that any strategies look at the whole spectrum of potential housing options to ascertain whether or not there are any options or choices that could benefit the residents of East Lothian.

There are many who will prefer to remain in their own property, for reasons such as location, family and support systems in the area and they should be supported to do so across all tenures where feasible. Those who wanted to move mainly cited the size of the property or wanting something on one level, again highlighting the need for appropriate accommodation that is suitable for older people. Options across all tenures would be beneficial, some will prefer to own their own property and should have options to do so that suit their needs. Respondents who currently live in the social rented sector were more likely to have a preference to remain in their current property, whilst those renting privately most likely to have wish to move.

The majority of participants used mains gas, and utility bills were on average £160 per month, however, this should be caveated with the fact that the survey was undertaken in the summer when energy usage is low and prior to the October price increase. Research into the impact of energy price increases on those within the region, including older people will be important to identify any issues around fuel poverty and effectively target any support that is available.