

**Community
Engagement
Report
September 2022**



Report Structure

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Executive summary

Executive summary [1 of 2]

We are a decade on from the pioneering Islington Fairness Commission. Lots has been done, but national and global challenges – austerity, Brexit, the Covid-19 pandemic and the current cost of living crisis – mean there is so much more to do in bridging the gap between the “haves” and the “have nots” in our borough. **Let’s Talk Islington aims** to work with our communities to fundamentally change the way we work to tackle inequality for the next decade.

From November 2021 to August 2022, we undertook extensive engagement to understand residents’ perceptions and experiences of inequality and their priorities and aspirations for Islington. Much of this work took place prior to April 2022, when public attention to the cost-of-living crisis began to grow.

This report presents **evidence and insights from**: an open survey (n=1,561), student-facilitated discussions at 13 primary and secondary schools (n=640), and targeted engagement including 12 voluntary and community sector (VCS) workshops, puppetry workshops with students with special educational needs (SEN), participatory mapping, a creative competition for young people, a survey of professionals working with children and young people and social media comments.

Perceptions of inequality within and beyond Islington was widespread. Adults predominantly spoke about **disparities in income and wealth** affecting opportunities and services. Students also mentioned differences in access, but their concept of inequality was much more **interpersonal**, giving examples of how people are treated differently.

Housing and safety were top priorities in VCS workshops and in the open survey across gender, ethnic groups and disability status. There was a clear priority in the survey (housing), whereas there was much more variation in VCS workshops. Residents highlighted the **interconnections** across priority areas and importance of joined up work.

Executive summary [2 of 2]

Students spoke about a broad range of **aspirations**. When asked about Islington in 10 years' time, adults most frequently wrote about a greener and cleaner borough, despite this being a lower priority for action.

Residents also raised a **wide range of other issues** affecting their lives including their:

- Pride in Islington's **inclusiveness and diversity**, although some raised concerns about divisions and exclusion
- Concern that Islington is increasingly **unaffordable**
- Desire for **more meaningful dialogue, engagement and action** and **more responsive council services**, and frustration that they do not feel like they are being heard, particularly those opposed to low traffic neighbourhoods
- Concerns and aspirations related to health and wellbeing, employment and education, although these themes were raised less often

Residents of all ages offered **ideas** on how to tackle inequality and improve the borough, including repurposing existing buildings, progressive taxation, civic education, easy read signage, community energy hubs, specific services and support, and more opportunities for people of different ages and backgrounds to interact.

This wealth of insight will now be built into the council's "Islington Together 2030 Plan" which will be the guiding document over the coming decade.

We also encourage anyone who reads this pack to freely use and cite the rich data and insights, including quotes from adults and young people.

What we did

Let's Talk: In Numbers

N.B. Not all of these sources analyzed in this pack-list of sources included in appendix.

Over 6000 local people engaged...

Worked with over **50 participants** in participatory projects

Almost **1600** local people completed our survey

77 people participated in 12 community workshops

10 VCS groups submitted evidence

2,500 social media interactions

21 staff working with children & young people told us about the inequality they see

Across engagement carried out by colleagues in Public Health, Community Safety, Inclusive Economy and others **we've heard from over 3000 local people**

3 public webinars with **100** attendees to explore solutions

640 students from **13** schools took part in group discussions

Some highlights

-  Working with **24 VCS organisations** to facilitate workshops, gather evidence and disseminate our survey
-  Distributing **surveys to 21 venues** including libraries, leisure centres, community centres and GP practices
-  Delivering 25 outreach sessions in communities at **17 locations across the borough**

5 participatory projects

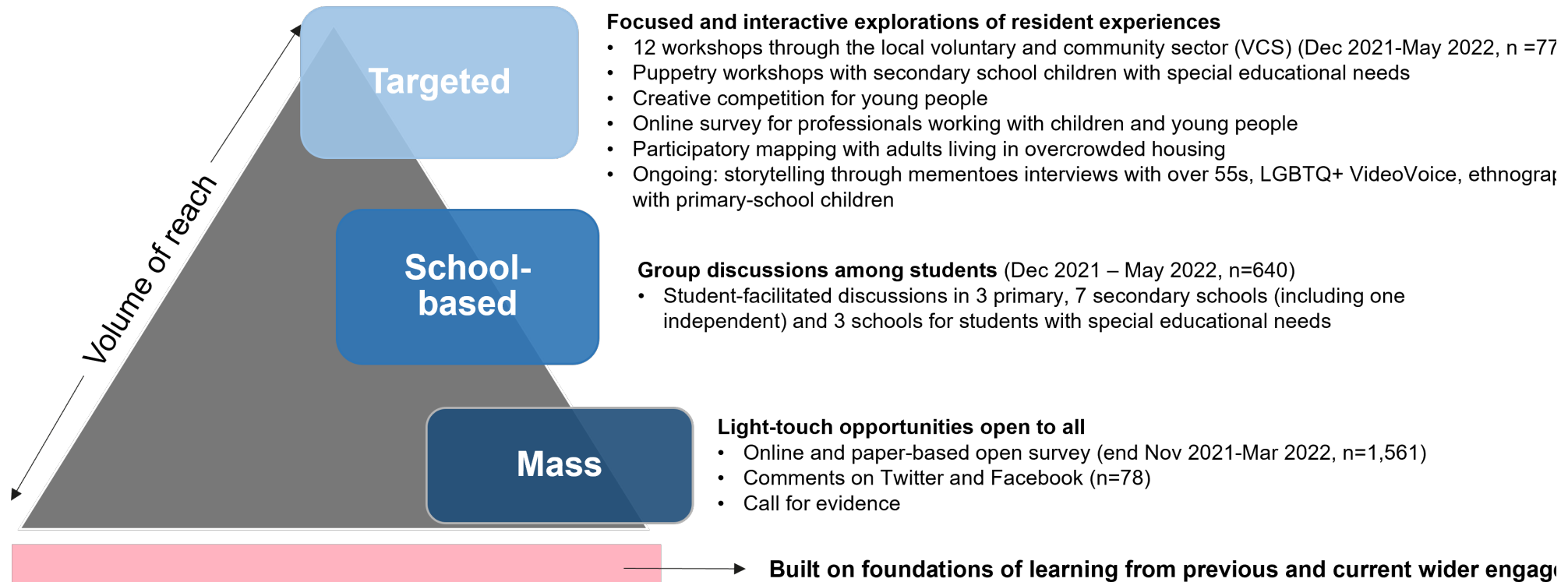
-  Documentary film making workshops with the LGBTQ+ community
-  Puppetry with young people with special educational needs and disabilities
-  Storytelling with older people experiencing poverty
-  Lunch clubs with school children in deprived areas
-  Mapping with people living in overcrowded and / or private rented accommodation

Supported by our Inequality Task Force...

- 8** group members
- 3** intensive workshops
- 10** proposals or change 

Engagement and participation workstreams

This pyramid shows the breadth and depth of engagement between November 2021-August 2022. These activities aimed to provide a range of opportunities and formats for residents to share their perspectives and priorities. Our targeted engagement sought to better understand the experiences of residents who are more likely to be living in poverty (young people, older people), for whom we have less local evidence (LGBTQ+ residents, overcrowded tenants) and those with complex needs.



Methodological limitations

These findings are based on **convenience** (people who heard about activities and chose to take part) and **purposive** (specific groups we intentionally reached out to in order to capture particular perspectives) samples and therefore **cannot be generalised** to the borough population as a whole.

In the open survey, men, residents of white and mixed ethnicity and under 45s are underrepresented relative to the population. Moreover, we are missing demographic information for 28-54% of survey respondents, depending on the question.

For the quantitative questions in the open survey, we have calculated confidence intervals to determine if responses among different groups are **statistically significant** – that we are 95% confident the difference is not due to chance. The width of the confidence interval depends on the number of respondents (sample size) and the degree of variability in the response, so a group for whom we have few respondents (i.e. residents who identified as trans) and whose responses ranged considerably, will have a wider confidence interval.

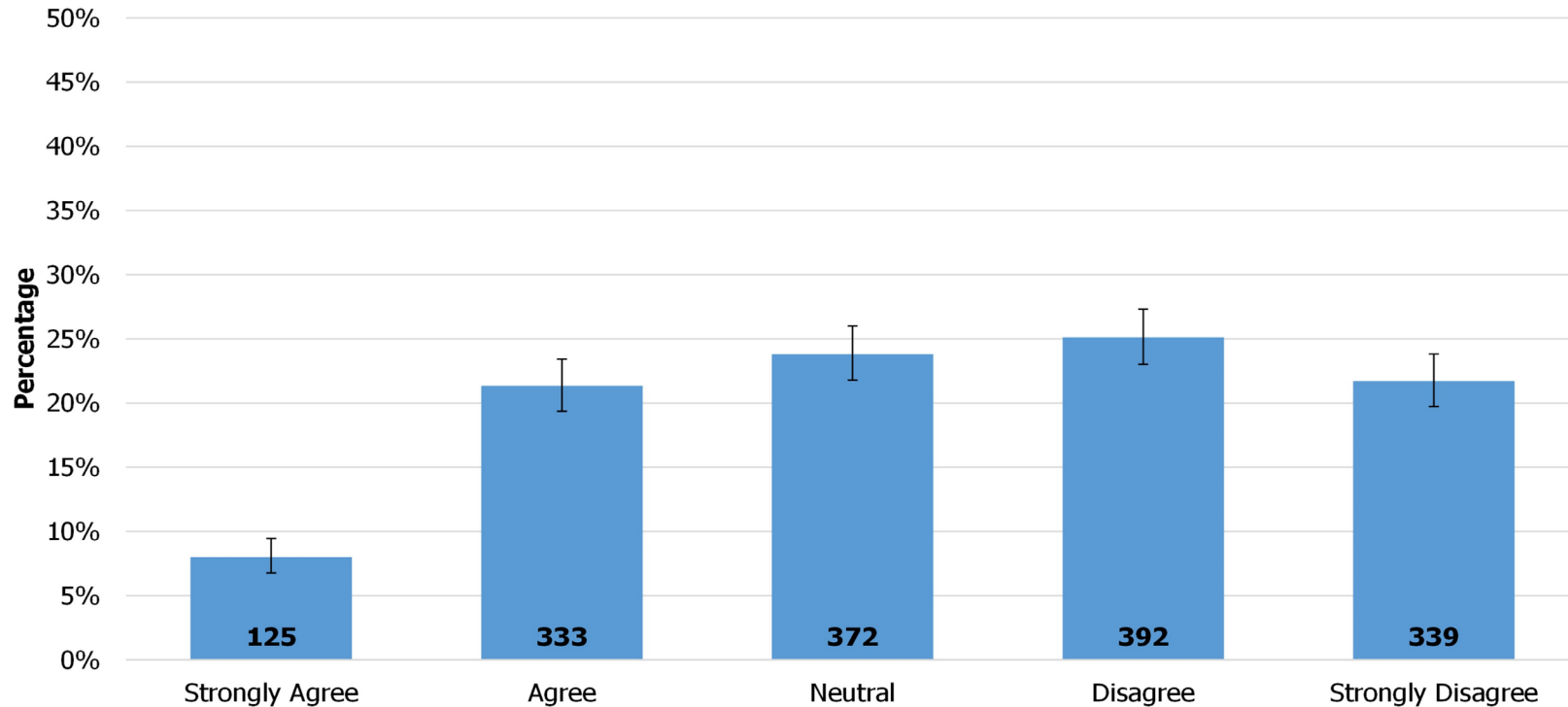
VCS workshop participants were invited by the organisation hosting the session and may not reflect the views of all members or people the organisation supports. Student selection varied by school: some included all form students, others only elected school council members, selected students or those who volunteered. Group discussions were facilitated by LBI staff (VCS, SEN schools) or by a peer or an older student (schools). Therefore, there was likely some variation in how the questions were framed and discussions were facilitated.

For free text responses from the surveys and group discussions, we have highlighted prominent themes and any notable similarities and differences across respondents. In some cases, residents made directly opposing comments. It is therefore important to remember that **'resident voice' is not uniform**.

What we heard:
Perceptions of equality,
future aspirations and
priorities

Perceptions of Islington: a fair and equal place for all?

In your experience, to what extent do you agree or disagree that Islington is a fair and equal place for all who live here?



Note: Survey respondents n=1561

Source: Let's Talk Islington online survey, November 2021 - March 2022

Just under half (47%) of survey respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that Islington was a fair and equal place, compared to 29% who agreed or strongly agreed.

Younger age groups and black*, Asian and other ethnic groups had more **favourable** perceptions.

Gay/lesbian residents, those with a disability* and in the highest and lowest income brackets had more **negative** perceptions.

There were **no significant differences** between males and females.

* These findings are consistent with the 2021 Islington resident survey.

Disparities in income, opportunities, services

The most prominent reason for residents' perceptions of inequality were disparities in income and wealth, opportunities, open space and services. This was raised by adults across the income spectrum and by some students, including those with special educational needs.

"There are **huge discrepancies in income and wealth** in the Borough and those with less income don't have **access** to all the opportunities and activities of those with high incomes."

(Female, 65+, White other, £20-39K)

"Some people can't get houses and others do. **Some people can afford food and some people can't.**"

(Secondary school SEN student)

"Islington is for the **few not the many.**"

(Male, 45-64, White British, £40-59K)

"There is one **extreme** to another in regards to poverty, income and housing."

(Female, 25-44, Black/Black British, £40-59K)

"I cannot say that Islington is unfair but in my opinion it is certainly unequal. **The gap between the haves and have nots has accelerated** across the whole country in the last ten years and this is evident in Islington."

(Male, 25-44, White British, >£100K)

"The Council sets higher **standards for the provision of its services** in the better off South Islington compared to the poorer deprived North Islington."

(White Irish, £20-39K)

"Lots of inequality, **parks** and garden squares are in the richer areas, **pollution and ill-health** in poor areas."

(Female, 45-64, Mixed ethnicity, £20-39K)

Note: In this and other slides, we include demographic information for participants; quotes without this information indicate that the respondent chose not to provide it.

Student perceptions of inequality: unfair treatment of others

Students predominantly described inequality as the unfair or unkind treatment of others. They often related this to protected characteristics, most frequently mentioning race and ethnicity, disability and gender. Students also spoke about different levels of access between groups in terms of resources, opportunities and rights. Inequality was seen as something beyond people's control, the result of a wider social system.

"When people **treat people differently** and don't treat them like how they wanted to be treated. To me it also means when people just **ignore each other as if they're invisible.**"

(Primary school student)

"When you look at someone/**treat someone differently** because of their race, religion, gender, sexuality, disability, intellect, social status/job or age."

(Secondary school student)

"An **imbalance of money and resources**, distributed unfairly. Some people having excess, and others not enough. People are also **treated differently** or given different opportunities depending on social background, ethnicity or identity."

(Secondary school student)

"Not having the opportunities that other people have due to **circumstances not within your control**, facing discrimination due to some part of your identity, being underprivileged in any aspect of life."

(Independent secondary school student)

"I've seen people getting **stopped in shops** even though they've done nothing wrong or suspicious, just **because they aren't white.**"

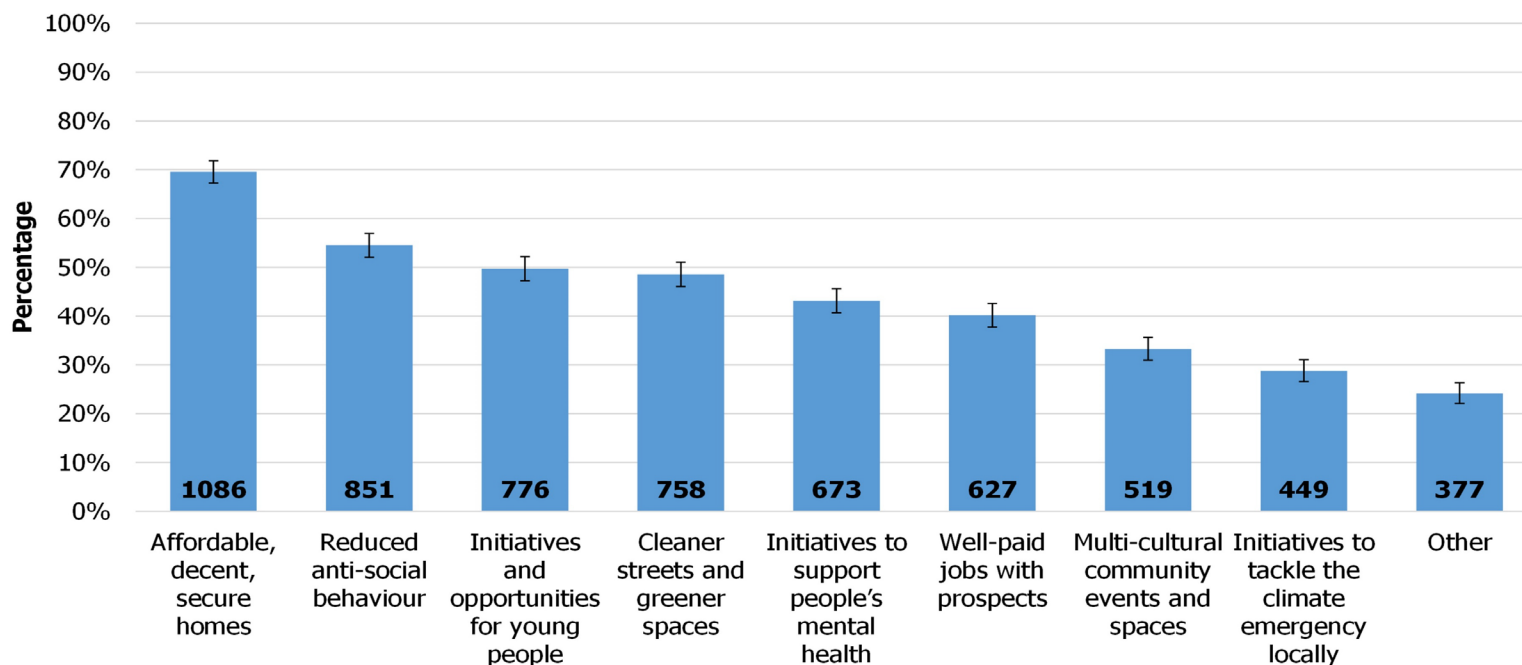
(Secondary school student)

"It's when people have **more rights** than others and when people are given **advantages that others don't have.**"

(Secondary school student)

Top priorities: Affordable housing and safety

What do you think we can do to improve life in Islington, together? Tell us your top priorities below.



Housing and safety were the top priorities among both VCS workshop participants and survey respondents across gender, ethnic groups and disability status.

"...I [was] able to rent a flat when I first arrived in 2013. I had to downsize to a room at the age of 30 six years ago. ...Right now I am being evicted for the second time in 18 months on a whim of the landlord. ...I am fully employed, have been working for the NHS in the community for the last 4 years...."
(Female, Other ethnicity, £20-39K)

Note: Survey respondents n=1561, respondents could pick multiple answers

Source: Let's Talk Islington online survey, November 2021 - March 2022

"I cannot afford to buy a house, neither do I qualify for housing from the council so eventually I **will have to end up moving because rents are too high.**"

(Resident, Manor Gardens)

"There is a long-term impact of experiencing **antisocial behaviour**. It reduces you to **vulnerability** and a feeling of not being safe in your home."

(Holloway Neighbourhood Group)

Aspects of people's lives are interconnected

In both the survey and particularly in VCS discussions residents spoke about the interconnections across priority areas.

"We can **reduce the mental and physical health impacts** of poor environment, noise, litter, ASB, addiction, and poverty by investing in **early intervention**. This would save money in the long run with reduced need for social support and prisons, etc."

(Female, mixed ethnicity, 45-64, £40-59K)

"Community activities, mental health and wellbeing – I think these two go **hand in hand** as one issue."

(Eagle Recovery member)

"Having good, reliable **housing is essential to thrive in other areas**: family, mental health, physical health, wellbeing, relationships." (Parent champion)

"All issues are **interconnected: services need to talk to each other**. Each issue can't be properly addressed without addressing all of them equally."

(Parent champion)

"We know how important a **clean, safe, warm place to live** is to everyone's and one's **well being**."

(White male, 45-64, £20-39K)

"**Substance abuse and mental health, housing services need to be joined up**. Those experiencing all or two are so vulnerable and can't get help - catch 22."

(White female, 25-44, £60-99K)

"**All** of the [priorities], as one is no more important than the other."

(Female, White British, 65+, <£20K)

"Affordable and good quality **homes is essential to people['s] health and well being**."

(Asian female, 25-44, £20-39K)

Aspirations for the future



When asked what kind of place they'd like Islington to be in 10 years' time, survey respondents most frequently wrote about a **greener and cleaner** borough, despite this being a lower priority for action. **Students discussed a broader range** of aspirations, including a kinder society, free from hate and injustice, good local services, an end to homelessness and more affordable housing, quality job opportunities, a safer and more accessible borough, and investment in the environment.

"**Greener**, with more people able to access green spaces for physical and mental health, more pocket parks outside schools and cafes **where people can meet**, chat and rest. More benches to encourage more walking. More recycling on estates. More trees. Less traffic. Carbon neutral."
(Female, 65+)

"We should **help the environment** and save animals, be **kinder to each other**, more **financial benefits** should be put in place, **more housing, help for the homeless**, more police presence and stricter laws to **end knife crimes and robberies**, more **kindness and respect** on social media."

(SEN secondary school student)

"[I] want lots of **jobs that are interesting**, and we can all do. **Houses that are cheap** that I can afford to live in. I want it to be **safe place** where there are no gangs or knife crime."

(Secondary school student)

"A **safe, organically diverse, affordable, welcoming** place to live. I don't want to live in a borough that is **built up** and overpopulated."

(Black Caribbean female, 45-64, £40-59K)

"Making sure we all look after the **environment** and investing in things like solar power"

(Primary school student)

Community powered solutions

In VCS workshops, residents offered specific ideas on how to tackle inequality and improve the borough:

Improved communication and coordination

- Improve communication about activities, benefits and eligibility requirements
- Translate information into other languages and provide access to interpreters, offer more English classes
- Improve coordination across council teams, between council and resident groups

Housing

- Place someone with a disability within the housing team
- Hire local repair firms who are more invested in the area
- Conduct greater oversight of private landlords, improve tenant protection, create higher standards for housing inspections

Community & support

- More community activities and events where people can interact, where people with different types of disabilities share issues that are most important to them, and timed so that people who work during the day can also attend
- More mental health support, including drop-in sessions and in-school counsellors
- More groups, better employment opportunities and work experience for teenagers so they have alternatives to gangs
- More accessible facilities and events including in hospitals, GPs and shops: easy read signs and menus, accessible seating, maintained disabled toilets
- Reduce the cost of space hire for community groups
- Create quiet / sensory parks
- Incentivise people to report crimes by offering rewards

Community-powered solutions (2)

Residents of all ages and backgrounds suggested a range of solutions.

Civic education for residents that empowers local communities to take part in local governance.

(White female, 25-44, £60-99K)

"Grants to develop **gardens**."

"**Easy read signage** really needs to be more widespread: restaurants, businesses, streets."

(Elfrida Parent Support Group member)

" A **robust and well-resourced youth service** offering real and attractive alternatives to gang-life for young people. **Study clubs with homework mentors** to raise the attainment of children with little or no family support or resources. **Regular arts and other creative opportunities** that help with stress and anxiety."

(White female, 65+, £20-39K)

"A more balanced distribution of wealth with high and affluent being **taxed** to support those less fortunate."

"All Islington **schools** should be **made available to youth organisations in the evenings and weekends**. The buildings and grounds are standing empty and unused."

(White female, 45-64, £40-59K)

"More activities **celebrating different cultures**."

(Sixth form student)

"The Council could scour the borough for disused or **underused properties** and, with the help of innovative architects and designers, create more affordable homes for the less privileged residents."

(White male, 45-64, <£20K)

Community-powered solutions (3)

"More mental health monitoring and support in schools like measuring happiness and having **in-school counsellors** ."

(Prospex Youth Centre member)

"**Community energy hubs** which create / use energy from renewable sources for the benefit of everyone who lives here."

(White female, 45-64, <£20K)

"Use **community forums** on specific topics to **develop policy options** that the local community then votes on..."

(White male, 45-64, £60-99K)

"**Stop outsourcing**. All these **repairs** [are] outsourced and the people don't have incentive to do a good job because they're not part of the community."

(Holloway Neighbourhood Group member)

"**Money should be given to parents to pay for essentials** (food, basics - some children might only be eating lunch, textbooks, stationary, uniform). **Breakfast clubs** are great."

(Sixth form student)

" Schools could support **local children helping the older community with tasks like gardening** where the children learn how to grow things and cook to be more self-sufficient and the older generation feel involved educating the young and being valued members of society, reducing the impact of mental decline which may be seen with advancing age."

(Adult resident)

"..using **enhanced weathering** in public gardens and parks"

(White male, 25-44, £20-39K)

"Have all young unemployed or street [people] come plant and rewild with us. **Train as guilds:** hedge-laying properly, green roofing, green building, rewilding."

(Adult resident)

What we heard:
Spotlight on priority
themes



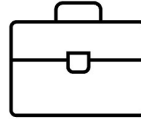
Diversity & inclusion



Health & wellbeing



Housing &
homelessness



Employment



Safety



Education



Environment



Resident-council
interactions



Affordability

Diversity & inclusion: Pride in Islington's sense of community



Many survey respondents and workshop participants felt that Islington is a welcoming, diverse community. Many also aspired for a more inclusive borough in the future.

"Many **diverse** small community groups with lots of different cultures."

(Resident, Holloway Neighbourhood Group)

"Islington is **home**."

(Parent Champion)

"There are lots of different people from **different nations living together in peace**."

(Turkish male, 25-44, £20-39K)

"Islington is quite **diverse** and **welcoming** and **inclusive** in places that I have been."

"People are very **friendly** and **interactive** in Islington."

"I would like Islington to come as **community** and support each other no matter what race, religion, colour or sexuality you are. We are all from the human race! We need to be **sticking together and make Islington a better place** for our future kids."

(Black male, 16-24, <£20K)

"[I would like Islington to be] a cohesive place **where we no longer have to discuss equality issues because we practice it**."

(White female, 45-64, £20-39K)

"I would love Islington to be a place where **everyone is welcome**. Where the divide between the rich and poor is a lot less pronounced. [...] I would **love to feel and see a real sense of community** whereby everybody is treated equally, and people help each other."

Diversity & inclusion: Concerns about divisions and exclusion



Negative perceptions were less common, but still expressed, including residents who felt unwelcome and excluded and those who had experienced discrimination. Some respondents felt too much attention was given to immigrants and other minority groups.

"The world has changed, and we haven't accommodated for a **fractured world** – we haven't taken into consideration the fact that people need to be grounded and part of a community."

(Resident, Holloway Neighbourhood Group)

"I know there is a duty of care to refugees; however, I feel **we should look after our own citizens first**, as this is the major cause of racial / cultural disharmony in our communities."

(Female, 65+, mixed ethnicity, <£20K)

"There are **no businesses run by the black and Caribbean community.**"

"[There should be] more contact between different communities, there is a **big divide within the borough** – schools, housing and council estates."

(Secondary school student)

"Now I am older I am starting to be aware of the **invisibility** of older people and women in particular."

"I do feel there is still **structural racism** which needs to be tackled. As an Asian and a Muslim I feel there are still some **barriers I face as a result of my background** and when people hear a Muslim name."

(Male, 25-44, £60-99K)

Housing: Affordability is a concern across all housing tenures



Affordability affects residents through high rents, prohibitively expensive sales prices and high maintenance charges in social housing. The lack of affordable housing was raised by secondary school students as well as adults.

"...I [was] able to rent a flat when I first arrived in 2013. I had to downsize to a room at the age of 30 six years ago. ...Right now I am being evicted for the second time in 18 months on a whim of the landlord. ...I am fully employed, have been working for the NHS in the community for the last 4 years...."

(Female, Other ethnicity, £20-39K)

"Rent prices are extortionate."

(White male, 16-24)

"Islington housing is **no longer affordable for "normal" people**. It's become ridiculously expensive and only affordable to the elite. **Even if your parents own their own home, it's still not enough for children to buy in Islington.** ...I do not think I'll be able to afford to live in Islington once my parents sell our home."

"Affordable housing that goes to locals not the rich."

(Secondary school SEN student)

"Islington is very **polarized** between the very wealthy and poor. **Those in the middle (for example, teachers) are being squeezed out**, not being eligible for social housing or able to pay for private housing."

(Male, 65+, White, £60-99K)

"The **prices of the houses are very expensive**. I think they can encourage people to lower the prices, so people can buy more houses and live in London more."

(Secondary school SEN student)

"I like the area well enough, but the **rent is so high for such tiny spaces**. My partner and I were dealing with this ok when we were at the office every day, but now ...we're stuck in our tiny apartment working from home with no extra budget to move it's miserable."

(White, £40-59K)

Housing: Current social housing stock is perceived to be inadequate



The **need for more housing** was a recurring theme, although some respondents expressed dissatisfaction that additional housing is being built, which was perceived to contribute to borough overcrowding and depletion of green spaces.

Respondents living in council housing commonly expressed concerns about the quality and timeliness of **maintenance and repairs**, housing **allocation policies** and long waiting lists. Some criticized council housing as "handouts" and the perceived prioritization of migrants over local residents.

"No private property developments. **More council housing.**"

"I would like to see **a great deal more council housing** being built and filled as I know the **waiting lists** in Islington are long, this needs to change."

"No more new building and **cramming ever more people** into the space we have available."

"We are a **family of four living in a one-bedroom flat** who have been on the **waiting list for housing for almost 20 years** no complaints, full paying rent and no one has followed up **we have just been forgotten.**"

"**Very poor service for social tenants.** I know people who have waited months to get a boiler or shower fixed or are **waiting years** to get damp and mould remedied..."

(Female, mixed ethnicity, 45-64, £40-59K)

"Long standing residents in good stead paying full rent, etc. get no help to move or improve the quality of living. **Others seem to get everything for free.**"

(Female, 45-64, £20-39K)

Housing: People of all ages are concerned about people experiencing homelessness



"A homeless man got **treated unfairly** in the shop."

(Primary school student)

"Help to the people living on the streets to address their problems and help them to find **proper, decent living spaces**." (Adult resident)

"I see a lot of homeless people on the streets. Mostly **under bridges or in the streets**, begging for money, mostly. Sometimes I [give] them £1, **I feel bad**."

(Secondary school SEN student)

"Rough sleeping deterrents [are] demonstrating hostility to this group. Remove these and create more housing and opportunities for the homeless (temporary and permanent). ...Give them money, talk to them, give them food...**They need more support. Stop treating them like the enemy..**"

(Sixth form students)

"[I want Islington to be] a place that has prioritised helping the homeless, **helping those on the margins of society**."

(White British female, 25-44, <£20K)

"Eradicate homelessness and give homeless people a **way out**."

(Female, 45-64)

"Greater support for the **homeless**."

(White British male, 25-44, £20-39K)

"What I have noticed is **hostile architecture to keep house-less people away**."

(Adult resident)

"I've seen a lot of homelessness, especially under the bridge in Finsbury Park.

...What's the point in giving them money, if they're going to spend it on cigarettes?

...I think homeless people should get treated right; when they apply for a job, the employer may say 'we don't want you'."

(Primary school student discussion)

Safety



Safety and reduced crime was raised by adults and students, more often by females than males. Some respondents felt more police were needed, although others (fewer) expressed concerns about police behaviour or emphasised the need to address underlying drivers of crime.

"I got mugged and don't want to leave the house, it's a massive problem for people my age. I think there needs to be more done to address this like **restricting who can buy knives.**"

(Secondary school student)

"Reduced crime, specifically **drug dealing, mugging and burglary.**" (Female)

"There is trouble [in] parks, for **women being alone in a park there is danger.**"

(Elfrida Power and Control Group member)

"Less violence and anti-social behaviour, particularly with **young people** and each other - particularly on **estates.** I want it to be safe when I go out."

(Adult resident)

"**Police powers need to be cut** particularly in relation to stop and search."

(Black British Caribbean female, 45-64, £40-59K)

"Bring back **youth clubs and community policing.** Police walking the street and having a presence to keep everyone safe."

(Male, 45-64)

"**I feel it is safe...**for all who live here."

(Indian female, 25-44)

"More **community safety** measures. Feeling safe; there is a lot of crime and anti-social behaviour. **Better communication** between council/police and residents." (Pakistani female, 45-64)

"ASB tends to emanate from a small number of known people and occasional bored teenagers. We need existing resources aimed at the first group to work together more effectively. Sadly some of the funding for this - such as health - is not in council hands. **We don't need more police.** They do nothing. We need to **remove the realities that drive up crime.**"

(Adult resident)

Environment



When talking about the future of Islington, a greener, cleaner, less polluted environment was raised most frequently, although it was rated a lower priority relative to housing and safety.

"More green with **loads of parks and trees**"

(Mixed ethnicity, 25-44)

"Making sure we all look after the environment and investing in things like **solar power**"

(Primary school student)

"More access to **nature.**"

(Secondary school student)

"**As green as it can be**"

(White female, 45-64)

"More **cleanliness in the streets**"

"There is **very little green space in Islington**, compared to other boroughs."

(Male, mixed ethnicity, 65+, £60-99K)

"The **streets are dirty** - there is too much dog poo. I love Islington but there are too many dirty streets which is bad for our health." (Female, mixed ethnicity)

"There should be **quiet parks for those with disabilities, mental health issues, learning difficulties, autism** – sensory parks."

(Elfrida Power and Control Group member)

"**Well maintained green spaces.**"

(Black female, 65+, <£20K)

"There is **a lot of litter**"

(Female, 25-44, £20-40K)

"Stop **pollution**. Stop throwing **litter** in the ocean. Plant more **trees**."

...For every 200 pieces of **garbage** they find and take out of the ocean and land, get 1 month of free rent and bills.

...I would make more parks and green areas where people can relax and where there are **trees that filter air** and make it easier for people to breathe. I would make a park where people can sit down with **animals.**"

(Primary school student discussion)

Affordability



Survey respondents wrote about wanting to live a borough that was generally more “affordable”, “cheaper”, and “less expensive”. More students than adults mentioned increased costs of energy and food, likely reflecting the data collection time frames, with the survey closing in March and student discussions continuing through May.

"I can't afford to live here in the **future**."

(Asian female, 16-24)

"Islington is not equal yet...**bills are going up and people don't have enough to eat**. It's a real struggle. We need to remember that."

(Secondary school SEN student)

"I am disabled and work part time. I **struggle with bills** although I receive some help from benefits. **I feel forgotten**."

(White female, 45-64, £20K)

"**Everything is expensive** – [it's] unaffordable for a single, elderly person to live in Islington and enjoy life, have money for leisure and wellbeing activities."

(Resident, Hornsey Lane Estate Community Centre)

"Even after working here for a few years my perception of Islington is still that in comparison to other parts of London it is quite well off and 'posh'... this also means **the cost of living...is expensive**. Buying a cup of coffee or a meal in a restaurant is more expensive than other parts of London. So while some people may live in the borough, they may not be able to afford to enjoy what is on offer."

"I've got a letter saying my **energy bill** will go up by £700 a year. This will have a huge impact on me and my family."

(Asian male, £20-39K)

"[I would like to see] more **affordable shops**. There seems to be a lot of luxury shops opening up, which does not tailor for all incomes and rest of community."

Health & wellbeing



Mental health and wellbeing was raised in all but one VCS workshop, but overall, health was infrequently raised in the resident survey and student discussions, which took place while the Omicron variant was spreading rapidly. When health was mentioned, residents most often spoke about the need for more mental health support (although this was a lower priority for action) and about the effects of other areas of their lives on health and wellbeing.

"...We are **feeling overwhelmed** so missing school, being late. I find it **hard to get out of bed in the morning.**"

(Youth hub member)

"**Support better** those residents who suffer from **severe and enduring mental health issues.**"

(Somali male, 45-64, £20-39K)

"[People] are **struggling** with their mental health and are very vulnerable. They need to be able to go somewhere. ...[there is] nothing there to say 'look, this is how you can prevent this from happening again...'"

(Elfrida Society parent group)

"It's not a community like it used to be, people are being driven out, ... **It's actually becoming a very lonely place to live now** and very isolated and depressing...."

(Female, 45-64, £20-39K)

"There isn't hardly any **high quality mental health support** or therapy for the black community."

(Black female, 25-44, <£20)

"**A sense of community** is essential to happy and health residents."

(Hornsey Lane Estate Community Centre)

"It is **very difficult to access** high quality mental health support for free, especially for moderate to severe conditions ...NHS **waitlists are endless).**"

(White female, 25-44, £60-99K)

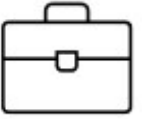
"Need to **actively promote** wellbeing and health – the council needs to be proactive with this and not leave it until it is too late and becomes an emergency."

(Resident, Holloway Neighbourhood Group)

"We know how important a **clean, safe, warm place to live** is to everyone's and one's **well being.**"

(White male, 45-64, £20-39K)

Employment



Good work was identified as a priority by the Task Force, although employment not a prominent theme raised by residents. When it was mentioned, respondents most frequently spoke about access to employment. They also raised concerns about wages, prioritising local jobs for local people, LBI as an employer and investment in the local economy.

"More support to **find local jobs or education** for the [over] 55."

(White female, 45-64)

"People who live in Islington **struggle to secure jobs** that are based in the borough."

(Black African female, 25-44)

"I would want this to be a place where everyone is on a decent paid job. Still **too many low paid jobs** which contributes to in work poverty."

(Asian male, 25-44, £40-59K)

"[I would like Islington to be] a place where good **jobs with prospects and progression** are secured for local residents to aid work/life balance and support the circular local economy."

"**Further support** is needed than just the jobs bulletin."

(Parent Champion)

"**Work experiences** for younger students - addressing age discrimination in application and appointment of local jobs."

(Secondary school student)

"**Job prospects** for young people. It can help your parents and [you] can save it up for your future."

(Primary school student)

"The Council also needs to lead from the front more on employment... Too many council jobs have **little training, few prospects and wages that are shrinking in real terms**... it's increasingly hard to get by."

(White, non-binary, 25-44, £60-99K)

Education



Education was not a prominent theme in the resident survey and group discussions. When it was raised, students and professionals working with them offered insights into the role of schools and ways to support students.

"Make sure teachers **teach inclusion** and be inclusive."

(Primary school student)

"**Teach the school** how to properly deal with mental health problems."

(Secondary school student)

"**Expose students to more**, more culture, more extra-curricular experiences, expose them to different kind of people and **different routes for the future.**"

(Secondary school staff member)

"There is inequality of attitudes towards pupils from **state school and pupils from private schools** such as prejudice regarding appearance and smell."

(Independent school student)

"[Provide] support for pupils in the transitions between phases in school (e.g., secondary to further education) ... [There should be] better support and guidance for those not looking to go to university. **We are often taught that failure is a bad thing.**"

(Sixth form student discussion)

"It is important to continue the **investment in prevention** and in the early years of life"

(Early Help practitioner)

"There is inequality in almost **every aspect of many young people's lives** - housing, social activities, opportunities, education, aspirations, parenting, racial inequality, class inequality etc. It leads to **poverty of aspiration** and a sense that there is no point in doing well at school or partaking in society. It also leads to a deep **distrust of authority** and a feeling that, no matter what they do, society will not treat them fairly." (Secondary school staff member)

Resident-council interactions: Desire to be heard



Overall, statements about resident-council interactions were more negative than positive. Many respondents felt that their concerns were ignored by the council and that some voices mattered more than others. They called for greater transparency and accountability.

"It is **very hard to be heard, listened to or taken seriously** if you come from a **poorer or BAME background.**" (Female, 45-64)

"[I would like Islington to be] a place in which **all sections of the community have a voice that is heard** by the Council, not just those who shout the loudest or have professional backgrounds which give them the confidence to speak up."

"[I would like Islington to be] run by a council that **listens** and is **honest, open and transparent** with its decisions."

I'm a **middle-aged, white, straight man.** My needs and opinions are of **no interest to Islington Council.**"

"**Thank you** for this opportunity to be heard."
(White British female, 45-64)

"I don't believe the council pays any attention to what is said in **surveys. Results and text are not published.**"

"Islington council seem to **disregard its residents' opinion.**"
(Black female, 45-64, £40-60K)

"The council does what it wants to do and **couldn't care less about the people.**"
(White male, 65+, <£20K)

Resident-council interactions: More dialogue, engagement & action



"Residents must feel that their voice is heard. **Diversity of approach** is needed so that it's not only the already-engaged that bring their point of view."

(White British female, 45-64, £60-99K)

"[I would like] for the council to open up **more meaningful dialogue with residents.**"

(Female, mixed ethnicity, 25-44, <£20K)

"It's **unclear to me what the Council is doing** regarding consultations as **I receive nothing through my letterbox** to tell me about the Council. It is only when I hear info from someone ...that I am alerted to what is going on."

(White British female, 65+)

"[The] council **needs to stop just consulting and begin taking action.** Residents want to know what you're doing, because it's a lot of talking."

(Holloway Neighbourhood Group member)

"It feels like [the council] keeps its business close to its chest and so who knows what it's doing? ... Basically, if it really is interested in doing something better for the future then **open up the doors and get people really involved** rather than just pinging out meaningless feedback forms."

(White British female, 45-64, £60-99K)

"**More transparency** also with choices that are made by the council, where **the public can scrutinise and review** every meeting and choice if they wish."

"I find that the council often wants residents to be involved and engaged but fails to show residents how. Most people have no clue how decision making happens on the inside, which makes it easy to antagonize the council and feel powerless. ...there's a lot of exciting opportunities for councils to teach their residents civics and **facilitate more active engagement** beyond sending out endless surveys :)"

(Female, white other ethnicity, 25-44, £60-99K)

Resident-council interactions: Communication and responsiveness



Services was the most prominent theme in VCS discussions, where residents noted the variety on offer and identified gaps, especially communication with residents about what is available. In the resident survey, many respondents spoke about what they perceived as a lack of responsiveness and efficiency from the council. Some acknowledged the limits of what the council could influence.

"Islington council is not communicating services well, particularly support with employment. There are many **good services** and activities available, to address the need for community, however **people do not know about them.**"

(Hornsey Lane Estate
Community Centre member)

"I feel like there should be better customer service at the offices and on the phone. I think staff should be a little **more considerate** and services should be run more efficiently and more transparently."

(White male, 65+, <£20K)

"[With council services, I] **never get through to the same person, have to retell** [my story, there is] no follow up. Who do I turn to?"

(Outlook member)

"We live in a very unequal society. I think **the council does great things to try to improve this but has limited resources.**"

(White female, 25-44, >£100K)

"In the last 3 years **they never care to get back to you.** Any issue we have is not an emergency and they don't take any action in helping us."

(Resident, 25-44)

"[I would like Islington to be] a place where the complaints process [**responds**] **within the 10 days.** A council who **hears,** and **acts** on resident and business concerns."

"I would like some competent staff working at the council with a better understanding of how they **treat members of the public** and especially how they interact with people with mental health issues."

Resident-council interactions: low-traffic neighbourhoods (LTNs)



LTNs were a common theme in the survey expressing a range of supportive and opposing views, including to do with experiences of the consultation process. All comments in relation to LTNs have been picked up by the relevant LTN team and are being reviewed as part of the next phase of LTN planning.

"Decisions continue to be made regarding extreme road closures **without any consultation** with residents."

(White female, 25-44)

"I'd like to see it expand the LTNs and provide more spaces that are car free and are people and dog friendly."

(White male, 45-64, <£20k)

"ELIMINATE ALL LTNs now. Of course I know you will not do this because you are all convinced of your own genius and have done lots of totally **biased studies** to show that you are right."

(White male, 45-64, £40-59K)

"Affordable homes. More green spaces. **Private vehicles banned from most roads**, with priority instead for pedestrians, cyclists and other vulnerable road-users."

(White female, 45-64, £60,000-£99,999)

"There is only one area where **I feel particular disparity** as a resident here, and that is **as a driver**. Over the last year, life has been made increasingly difficult for drivers in the area in ways that are understandable (obviously cleaner air and road safety are priorities for anyone) but which make no concession to the fact that, in order to be able to live here, I need to be able to drive to work. **Worse, when I have raised this, the impression I get is that I [am] viewed as being part of a heinous group of lazy polluters** who don't care about pedestrians and who will drive 2 minutes rather than walk to Budgens."

(White male, 25-44)

**Appendix:
Detailed findings from
each evidence source**

Overview of Evidence Sources

List of evidence sources

1. Open survey
2. Student discussion groups
3. Puppetry workshops with SEN young people
4. Online survey with professionals working with children & young people
5. Creative competition
6. VCS workshops
7. Participatory mapping with private renters and people living in overcrowded accommodation

Open survey

Open survey methods

Our main survey ran from November 2021 – March 2022, prior to heightened public attention to the cost-of-living crisis. The online survey was a convenience sample, supplemented with paper survey responses gathered at the local venues listed below. Relative to the borough population, males, under 45s and people of white and mixed ethnicities are underrepresented.

“Let’s Talk About...The Future of Islington – open survey”

1561 valid responses

QUAL

In 10 years’ time, what kind of place would you like Islington to be?

Why do you (dis)agree that Islington is a fair and equal place for all?

QUANT

In your experience, to what extent do you agree or disagree that Islington is a fair and equal place for all who live here:

5-point scale: strongly agree to strongly disagree

QUANT

All of us in Islington have to decide how we can improve life in our borough – for now, and in the future. What do you think we can do to improve life in Islington, together? Tell us your priorities below.

Affordable, decent, secure homes
Well-paid jobs with prospects
Initiatives to support people’s mental health
Initiatives and opportunities for young people
Multi-cultural community events and spaces
Reduced rates of anti-social behaviour
Cleaner streets and greener spaces
Initiatives to tackle the climate emergency locally

Mapping the engagement



As well as online submissions, the project team ran pop up outreach activities to speak directly and administer paper surveys to local people at the following places:

- Andover Estate
- Andover Community Centre
- Chapel Market
- Finsbury Library
- Archway Library
- Archway Market
- Central Library
- Fortune Street Park
- St. Luke’s Community Centre
- Highbury Fields Playground
- Whittington Park
- Finsbury Park Mosque
- Sobell Leisure Centre
- Brickworks Community Centre
- Highbury Station
- N4 Library
- Iron Monger Row Baths

Characteristics of survey respondents

Gender

- Female: 43%
- Male*: 28%
- Non-binary: 1%
- Prefer to self-describe: 0.1%
- Prefer not to say/missing: 28%

Trans

- No: 69%
- Yes: 1%
- Prefer not to say/missing: 30%

Sexual orientation

- Heterosexual: 51%
- Gay/Lesbian: 5%
- Bisexual: 3%
- Prefer not to say/missing: 40%

Annual household income

- Less than £20K: 13%
- £20-39K: 11%
- £40-59K: 9%
- £60-99K: 8%
- £100K+: 6%
- Prefer not to say/missing: 54%

Index of multiple deprivation

- 1 (most deprived): 11%
- 2: 20%
- 3: 24%
- 4: 9%
- 5 (least deprived): 0.2%
- Prefer not to say/missing: 35%

Ethnicity

- White*: 42%
- Black: 8%
- Asian: 5%
- Mixed*: 5%
- Other: 4%
- Prefer not to say/missing: 35%

Age group

- Under 16: 2%
- 16-24*: 4%
- 25-44*: 26%
- 45-64: 27%
- 65+: 13%
- Prefer not to say/missing: 27%

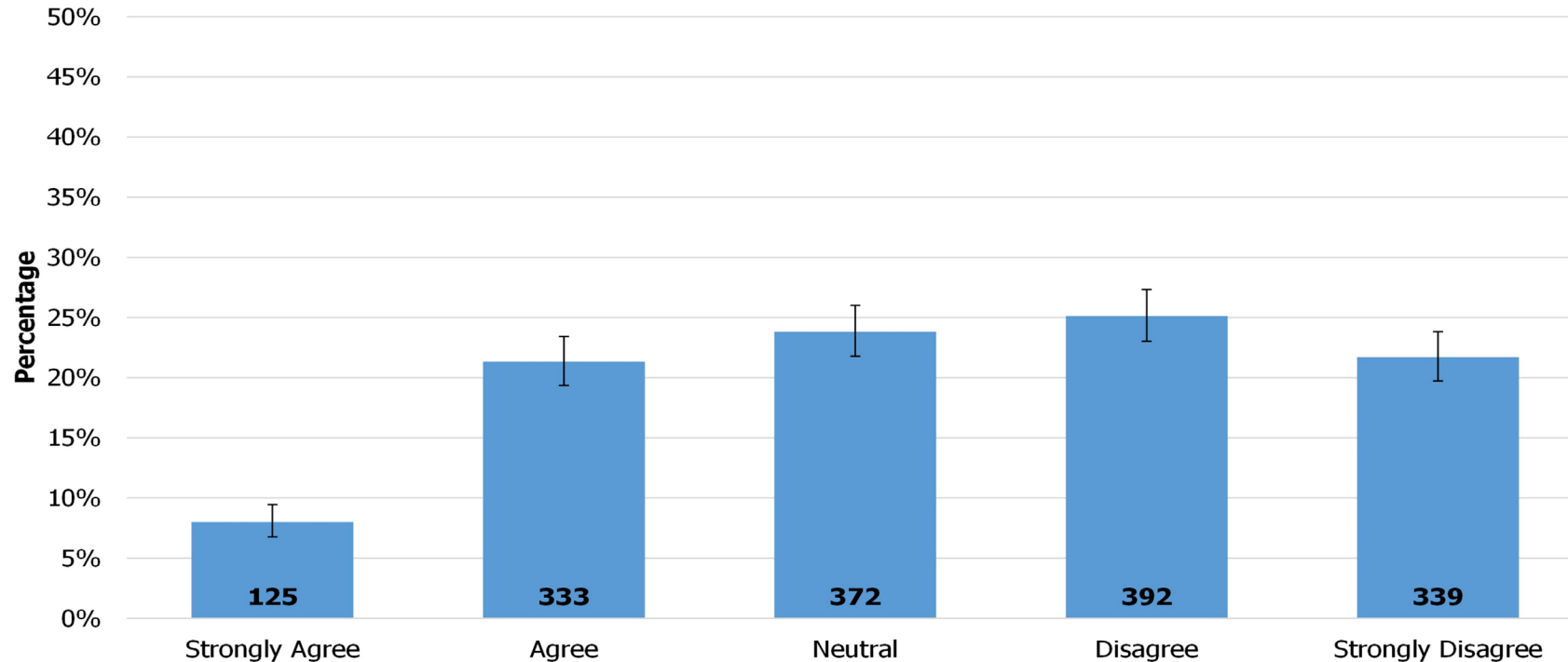
Disability status

- No disability: 45%
- Any disability: 24%
- Prefer not to say/missing: 31%

* Underrepresented relative to the overall LBI population, excluding prefer not to say respondents

Islington: a fair and equal place for all?

In your experience, to what extent do you agree or disagree that Islington is a fair and equal place for all who live here?



Just under half (47%) of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that Islington was a fair and equal place, compared to 29% who agreed or strongly agreed.

Younger age groups and black, Asian and other ethnic groups had more **favourable** perceptions.

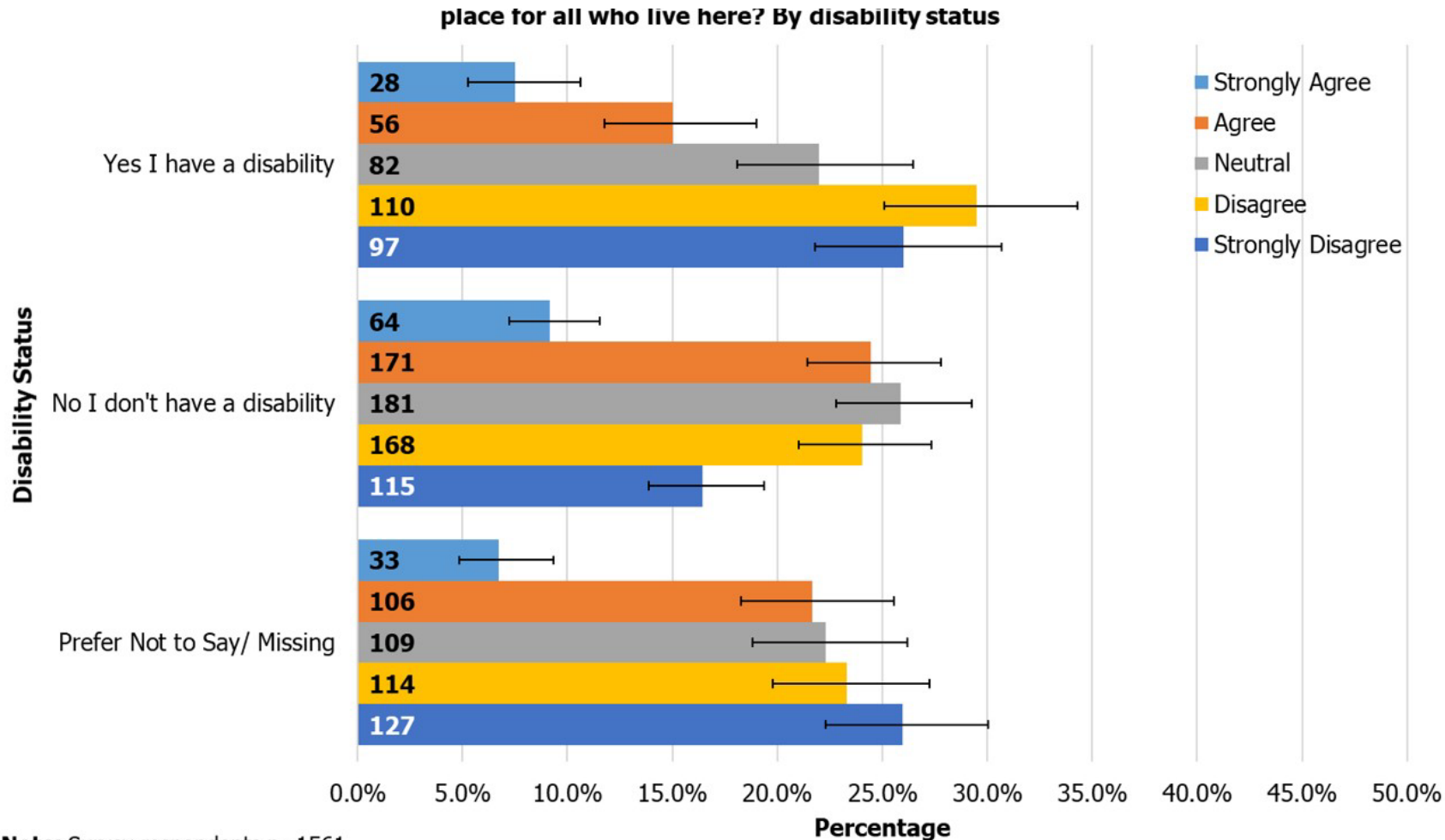
Gay/lesbian residents, those with a disability and in the highest and lowest income brackets had more **negative** perceptions.

There were **no significant differences** between males and females.

Note: Survey respondents n=1561

Source: Let's Talk Islington online survey, November 2021 - March 2022

Fair and equal for all: differences by disability status



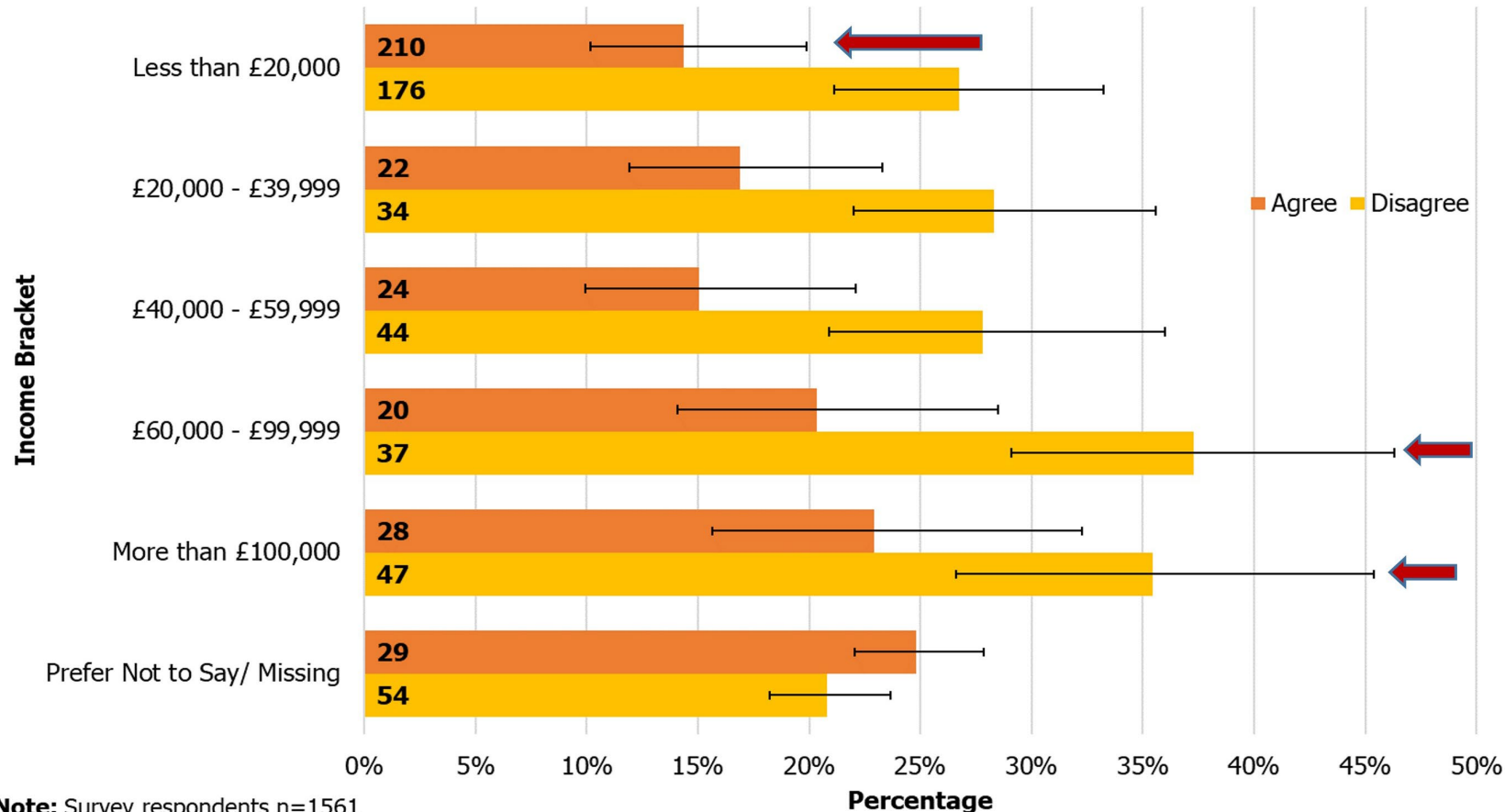
Note: Survey respondents n=1561

Compared to residents without a disability, a significantly **lower proportion** of residents with a disability **agreed** (24% vs. 15%) and a significantly **higher proportion strongly disagreed** (16% vs. 26%)

Note: In this and other slides, the red arrows highlight response categories where there were significant differences from the overall sample.

Fair and equal for all: differences by income group

In your experience, to what extent do you agree or disagree that Islington is a fair and equal place for all who live here? By Income bracket



Relative to the overall sample, a significantly **lower proportion** of lower income residents (<£20K) **agreed** (14% vs. 21%)

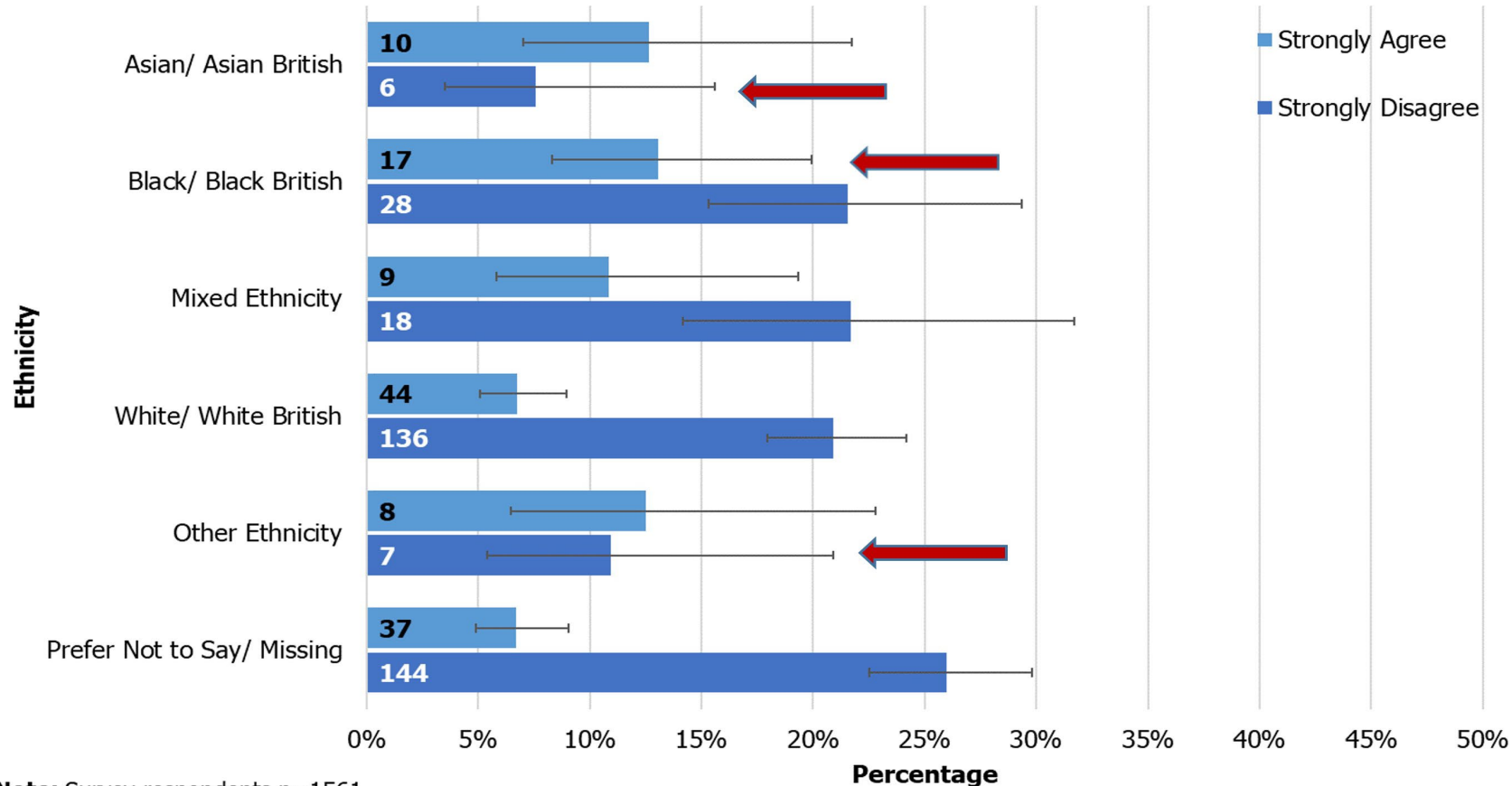
A significantly **higher proportion** of higher income residents (£60-99K, £100K+) **disagreed** (37% and 35% vs. 25%)

Note: Survey respondents n=1561

Source: Let's Talk Islington online survey, November 2021 - March 2022

Fair and equal for all: differences by ethnicity

In your experience, to what extent do you agree or disagree that Islington is a fair and equal place for all who live here? By ethnicity



Relative to the overall sample, a **higher proportion** of black residents **strongly agreed** (13% vs. 8%)

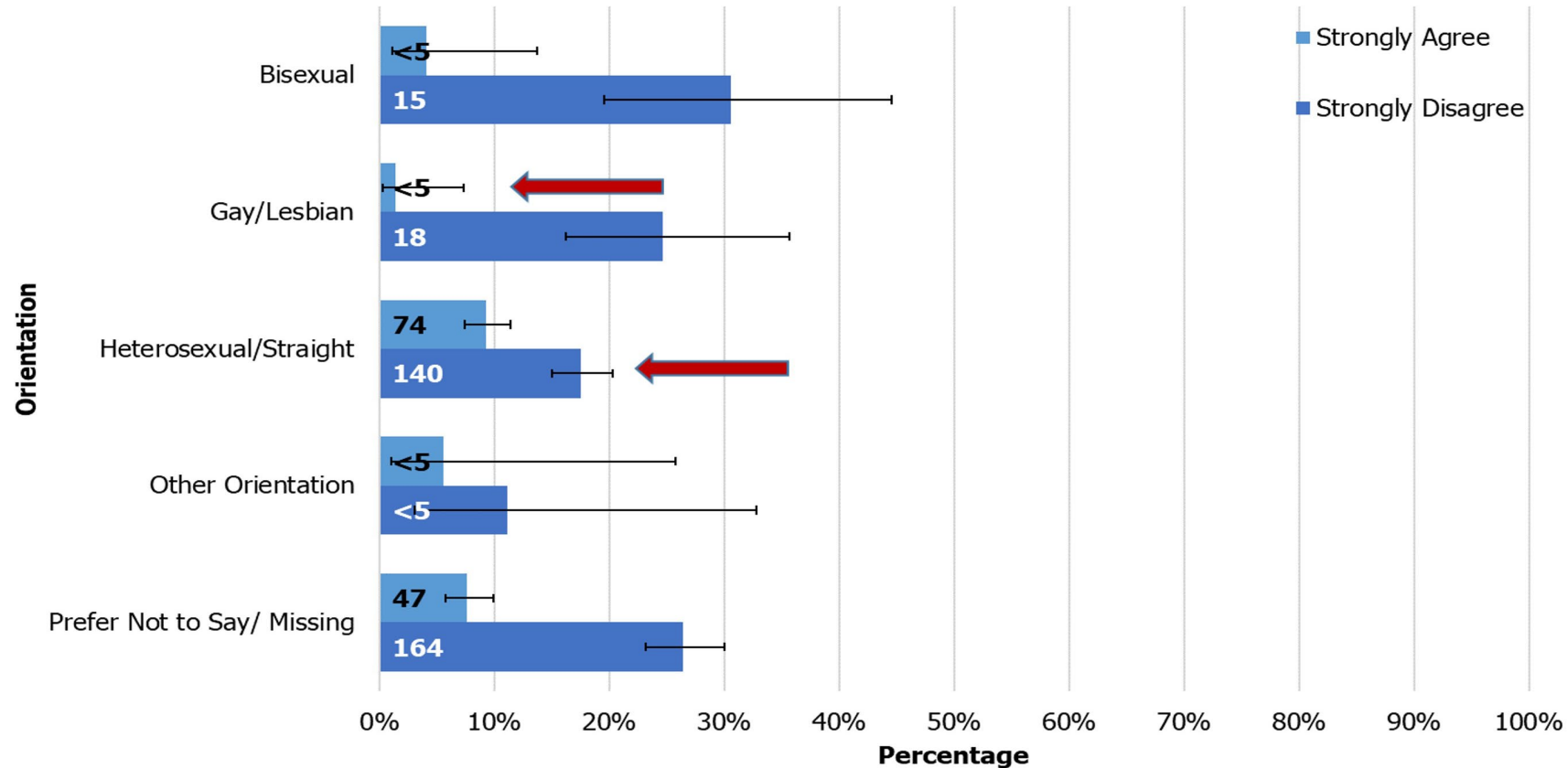
A significantly **lower proportion** of Asian residents and those of other ethnicity **strongly disagreed** (8% and 11% vs. 22%)

Note: Survey respondents n=1561

Source: Let's Talk Islington online survey, November 2021 - March 2022

Fair and equal for all: differences by sexual orientation

In your experience, to what extent do you agree or disagree that Islington is a fair and equal place for all who live here? By orientation



Relative to the overall sample, a significantly **lower proportion** of gay/lesbian residents **strongly agreed** (1% vs. 8%)

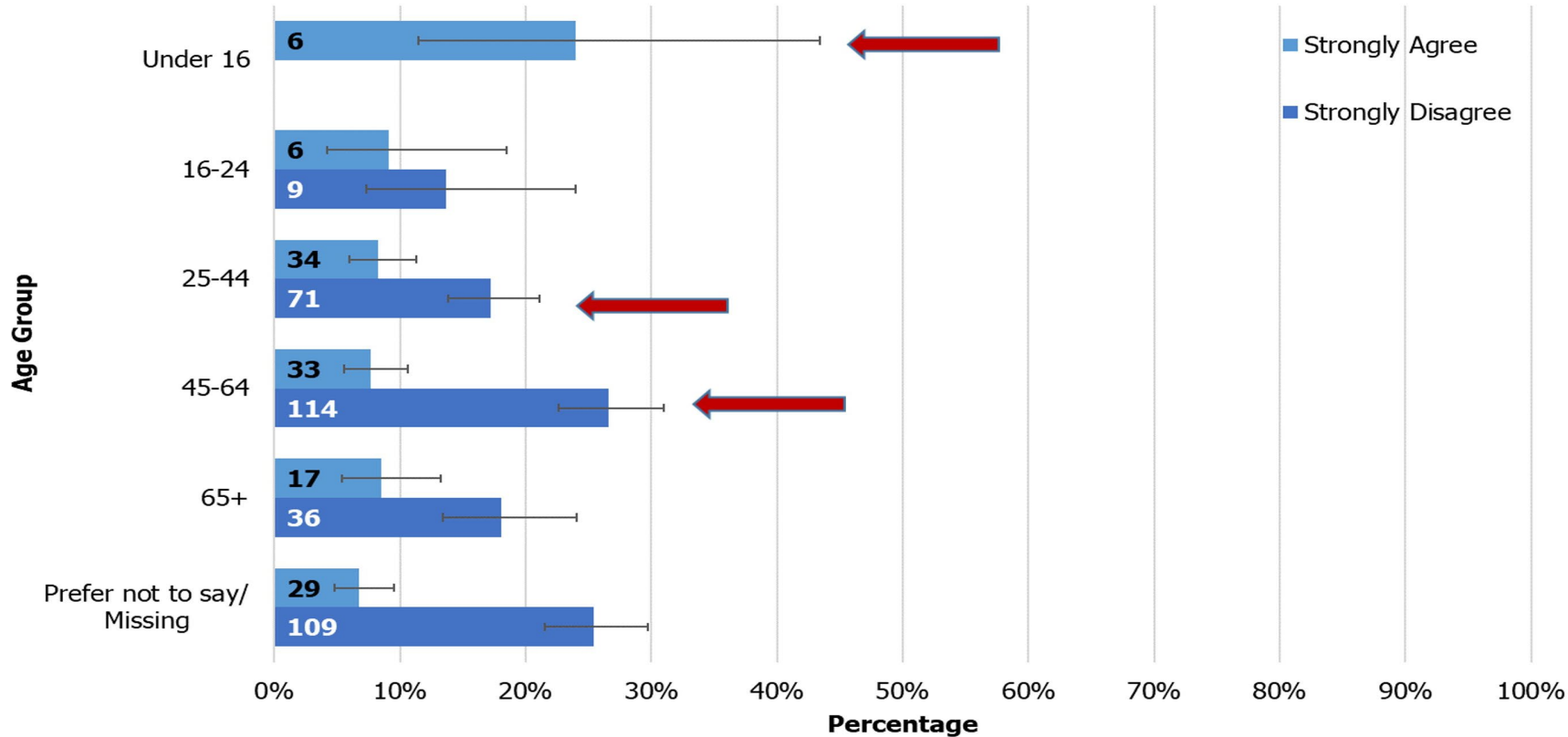
A significantly **lower proportion** of heterosexual residents **strongly disagreed** (17% vs. 22%)

Note: Survey respondents n=1561

Source: Let's Talk Islington online survey, November 2021 - March 2022

Fair and equal for all: differences by age

In your experience, to what extent do you agree or disagree that Islington is a fair and equal place for all who live here? By Age group



Younger age groups had more favourable perceptions of equality than older age groups.

A significantly higher proportion of

Under 16s strongly agreed (24% vs. 8%)

16-24s agreed (32% vs. 21%)

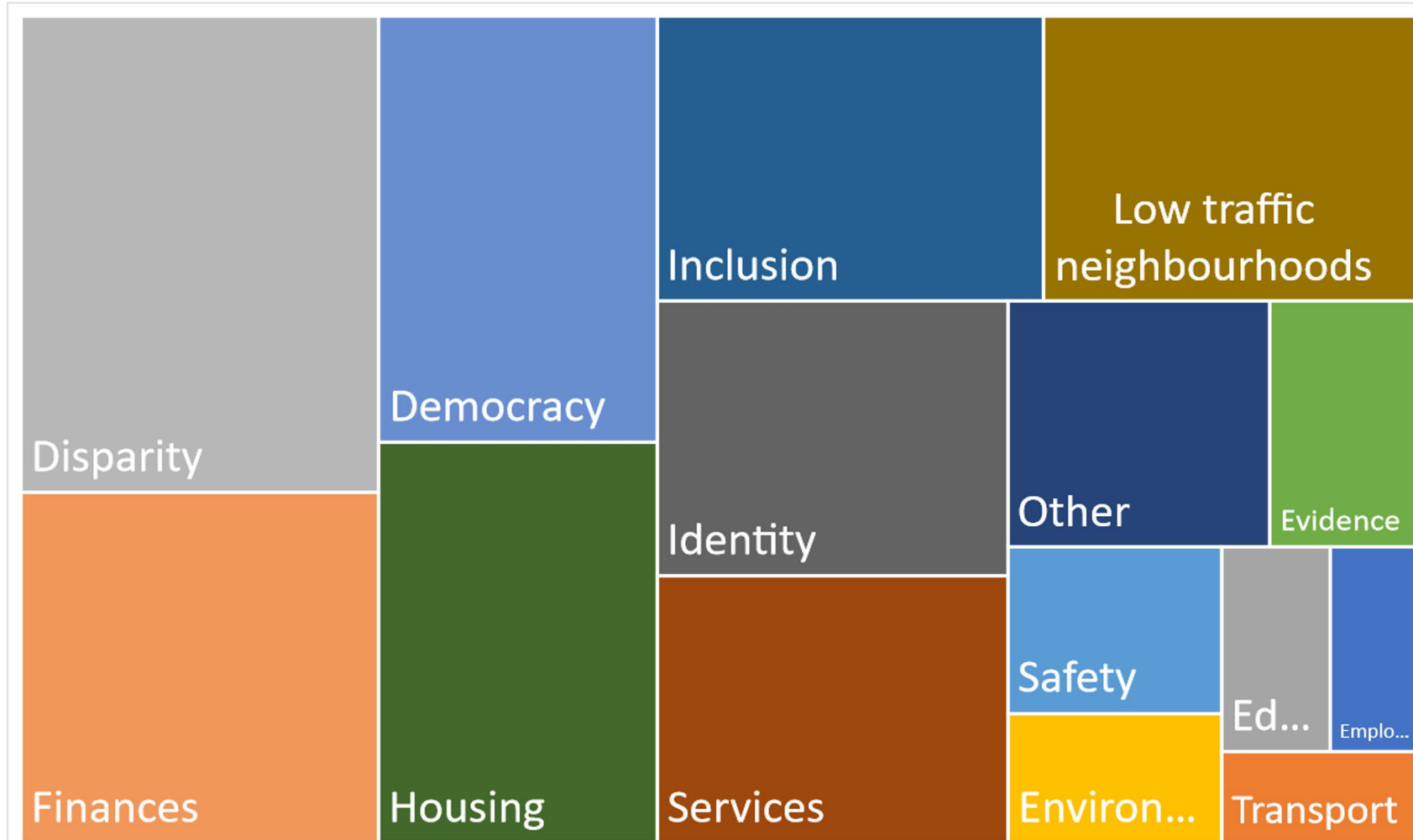
A significantly lower proportion of 25-44s strongly disagreed (17% vs. 22%)

A significantly higher proportion of 45-64s strongly disagreed (27% vs. 22%)

Note: Survey respondents n=1561

Source: Let's Talk Islington online survey, November 2021 - March 2022

Why do you (not) agree that Islington is fair and equal for all?



The top reasons given were:

- **Disparities, particularly income and wealth gaps**
- **Affordability and quality of housing**
- **Diversity, inclusion or lack thereof**
- **Low traffic neighbourhoods (LTNs)**

Less commonly, respondents mentioned safety, the environment, education and employment.

Disparities in income, opportunities, services

Disparities were mentioned most frequently as the reason for respondents' perceptions of (in)equality in Islington, noted by residents across the income spectrum.

“There are **huge discrepancies in income and wealth** in the Borough and those with less income don't have **access to all the opportunities and activities** of those with high incomes.”

(Female, 65+, White other, £20-39K)

“I cannot say that Islington is unfair but in my opinion it is certainly unequal. The **gap between the haves and have nots has accelerated** across the whole country in the last ten years and this is evident in Islington.”

(Male, 25-44, White British, >£100K)

“Islington is **for the few not the many.**”

(Male, 45-64, White British, £40-59K)

“There is one **extreme** to another in regards to **poverty, income and housing.**”

(Female, 25-44, Black/Black British, £40-59K)

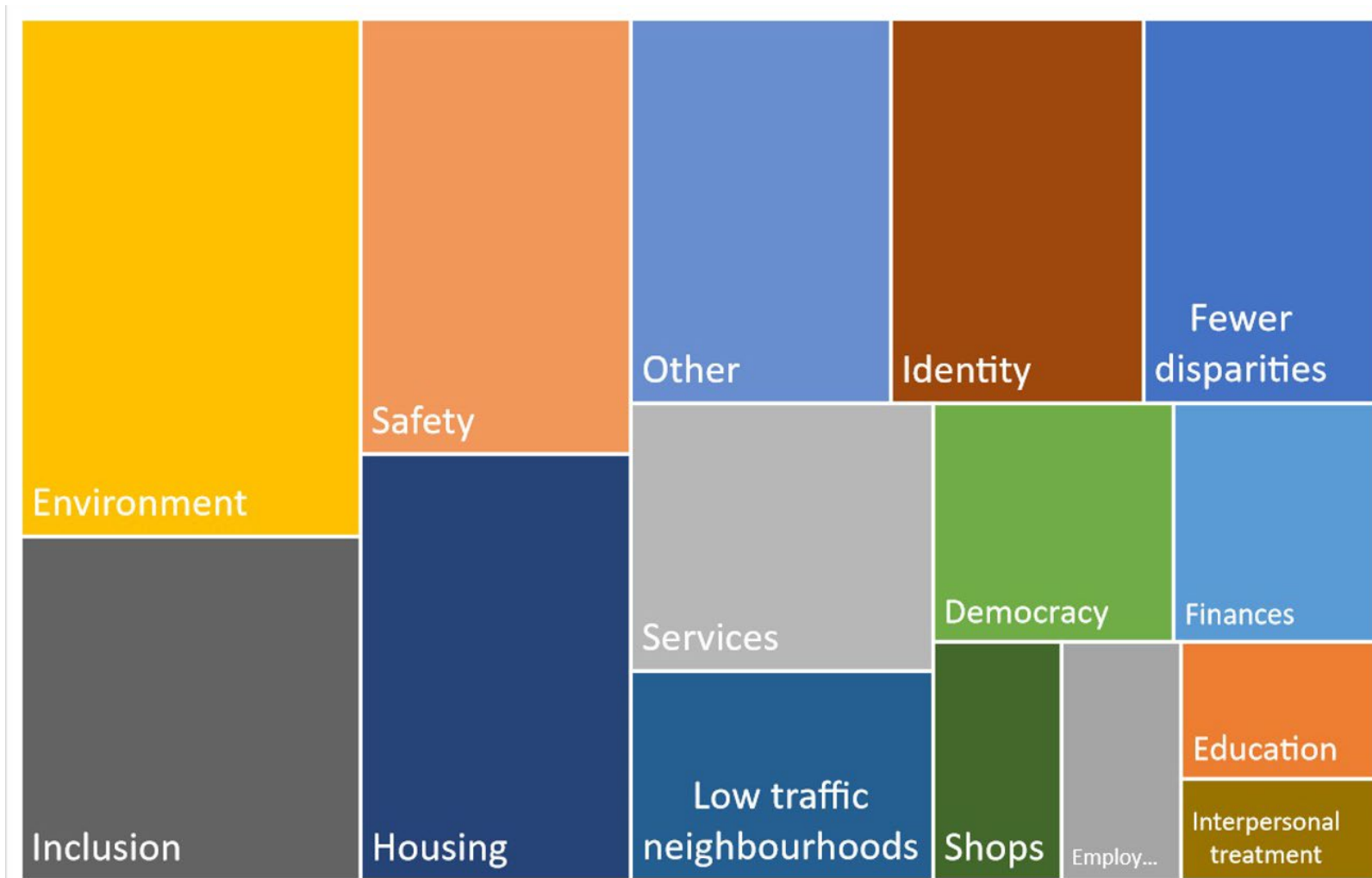
“The Council sets higher **standards for the provision of its services** in the better off South Islington compared to the poorer deprived North Islington.”

(White Irish, £20-39K)

“Lots of inequality, **parks and garden squares are in the richer areas, pollution and ill-health in poor areas.**”

(Female, 45-64, Mixed ethnicity, £20-39K)

In 10 years' time, what kind of place would you like Islington to be?



Most prominently, survey respondents aspired for:

A **greener, cleaner** Islington, including more and well-maintained parks, green space and trees, cleaner air and less pollution, less litter and more recycling

A strong(er) **sense of community**, a diverse, vibrant, inclusive, fair and equal borough, with less gentrification and development

A **safe** borough with less crime

Affordable, fairer housing, including social housing, affordable rent and rent controls, better and fairer provision and an end to homelessness

Other aspirations included less traffic, improved transport and infrastructure

In 10 years' time, what kind of place would you like Islington to be?

"**Greener**, with more people able to access green spaces for physical and mental health, more pocket parks outside schools and cafes **where people can meet**, chat and rest. More benches to encourage more walking. More recycling on estates. More trees. Less traffic. Carbon neutral."
(Female, 65+)

"Where Finsbury Park and Holloway ha[ve] as **little litter and rubbish** on the streets as is the case already in South Islington."

"**More greenery, more community** events for families to get together. **Good quality housing** for people where people don't notice the difference between council and private rented properties."

(Asian female, 65+ £20-39K)

"A **vibrant multicultural** borough that has a strong **community bond and interaction**. More public events such as Soul in the City and Eat with the Mosque."

(Black African male, 25-44)

"A place where you can **walk freely even at night without fear** regardless of who you are."

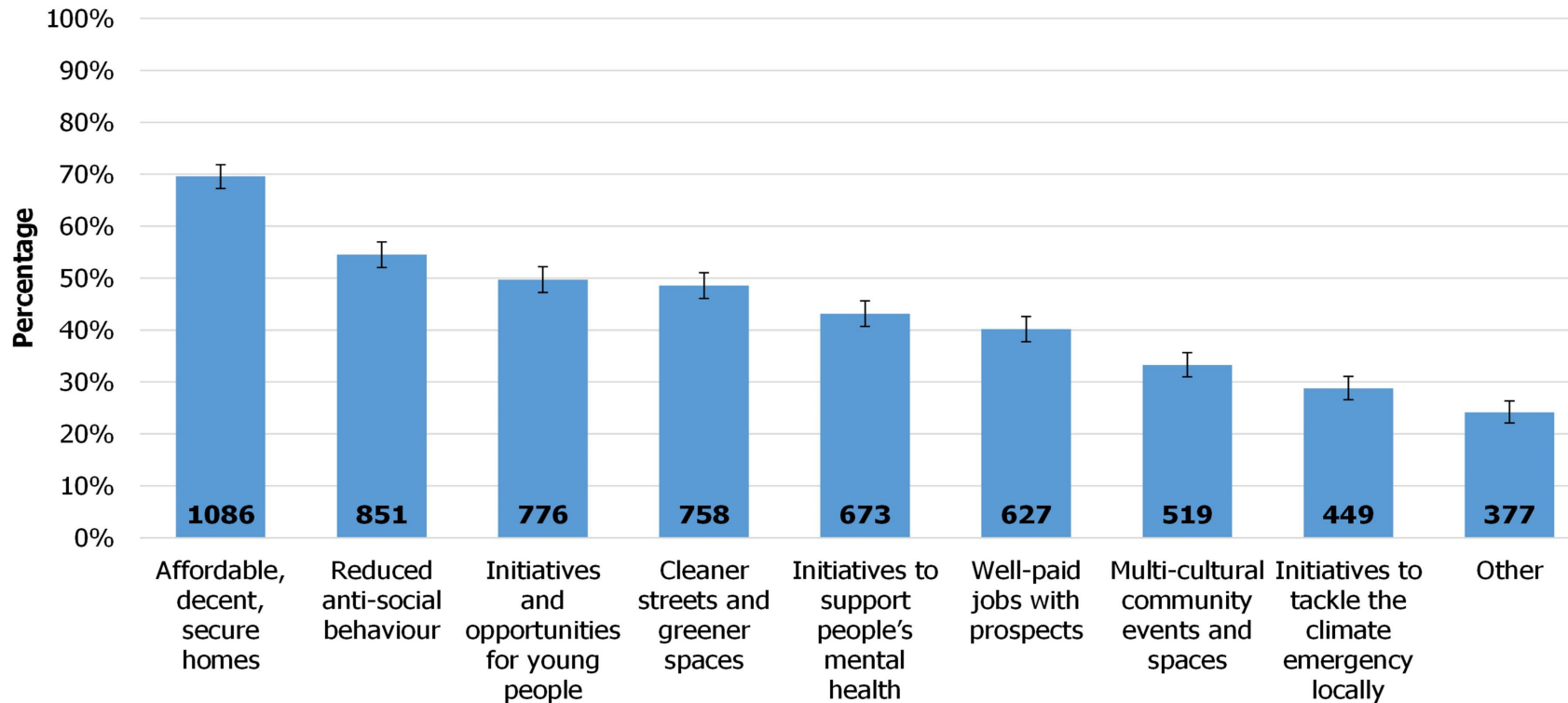
"A **safe** neighbourhood, not with drug addicts at every corner...It should be a **fair** Islington with chances for **everyone to be respected**, to have the **opportunity to give back to the community** and to feel safe in their own home or on the streets."

"A **safe, organically diverse, affordable, welcoming** place to live. I don't want to live in a borough that is **built up** and overpopulated."

(Black Caribbean female, 45-64, £40-59K)

Priorities for improving life in Islington

What do you think we can do to improve life in Islington, together? Tell us your top priorities below.



Housing was by far the top priority (70%), rated highest across all ethnic groups, gender and disability status.

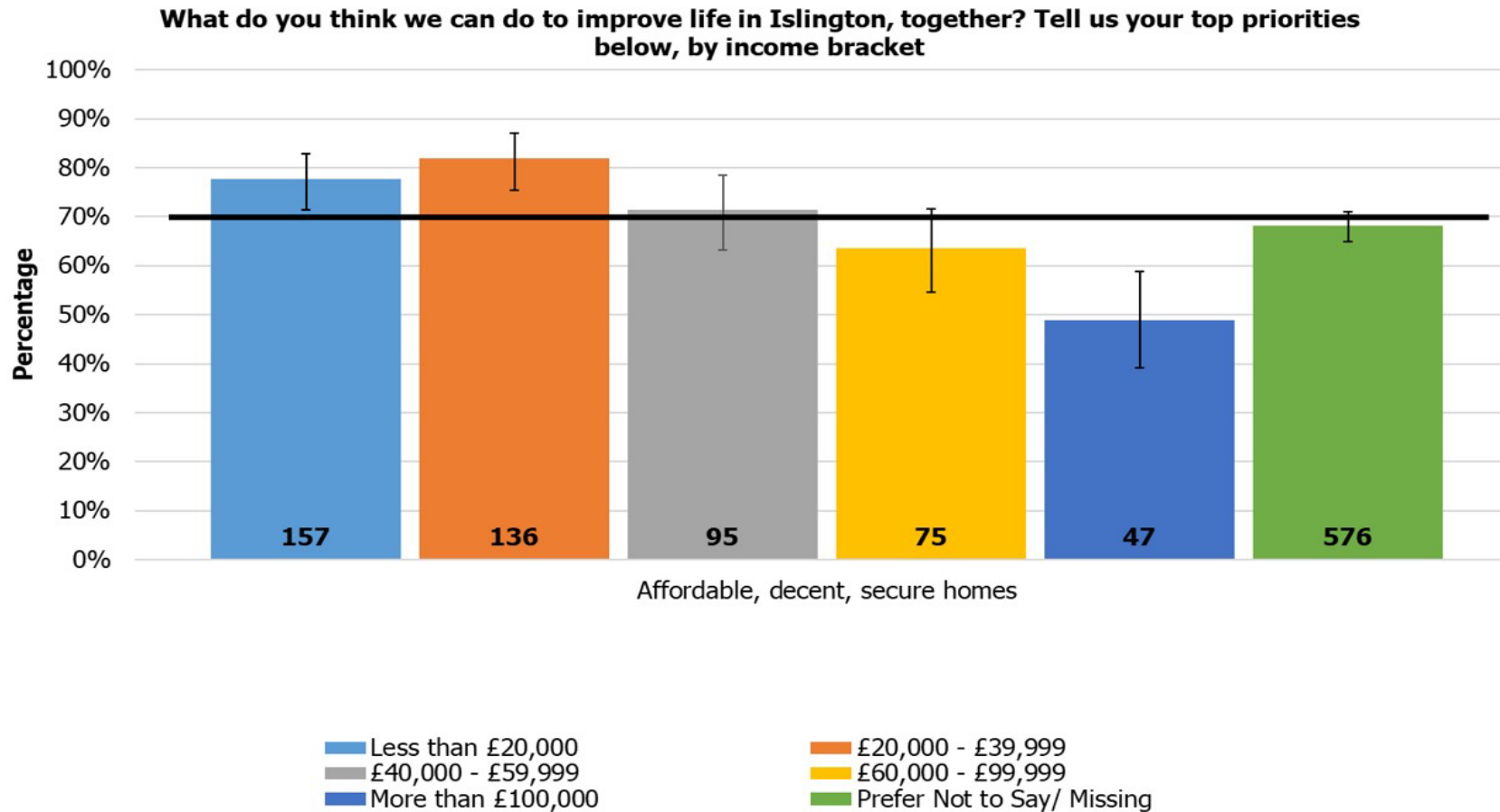
Other priorities/comments, related to:

- How the council operates and interacts with residents
- LTNs
- Safety
- Quality of services
- Concerns around finance
- Education

Note: Survey respondents n=1561, respondents could pick multiple answers

Source: Let's Talk Islington online survey, November 2021 - March 2022

Housing is a higher priority for lower income households



There were significant differences by income group, with:

- A significantly higher proportion of residents in the **lowest two income brackets (below £40K)**: 78% and 82% vs. 70%.
- A significantly lower proportion of those earning over £100K: 49% vs. 70%.
- A significantly lower proportion of gay/lesbian residents (52%) and a higher proportion of those **over age 65** (78%) rated housing as a priority

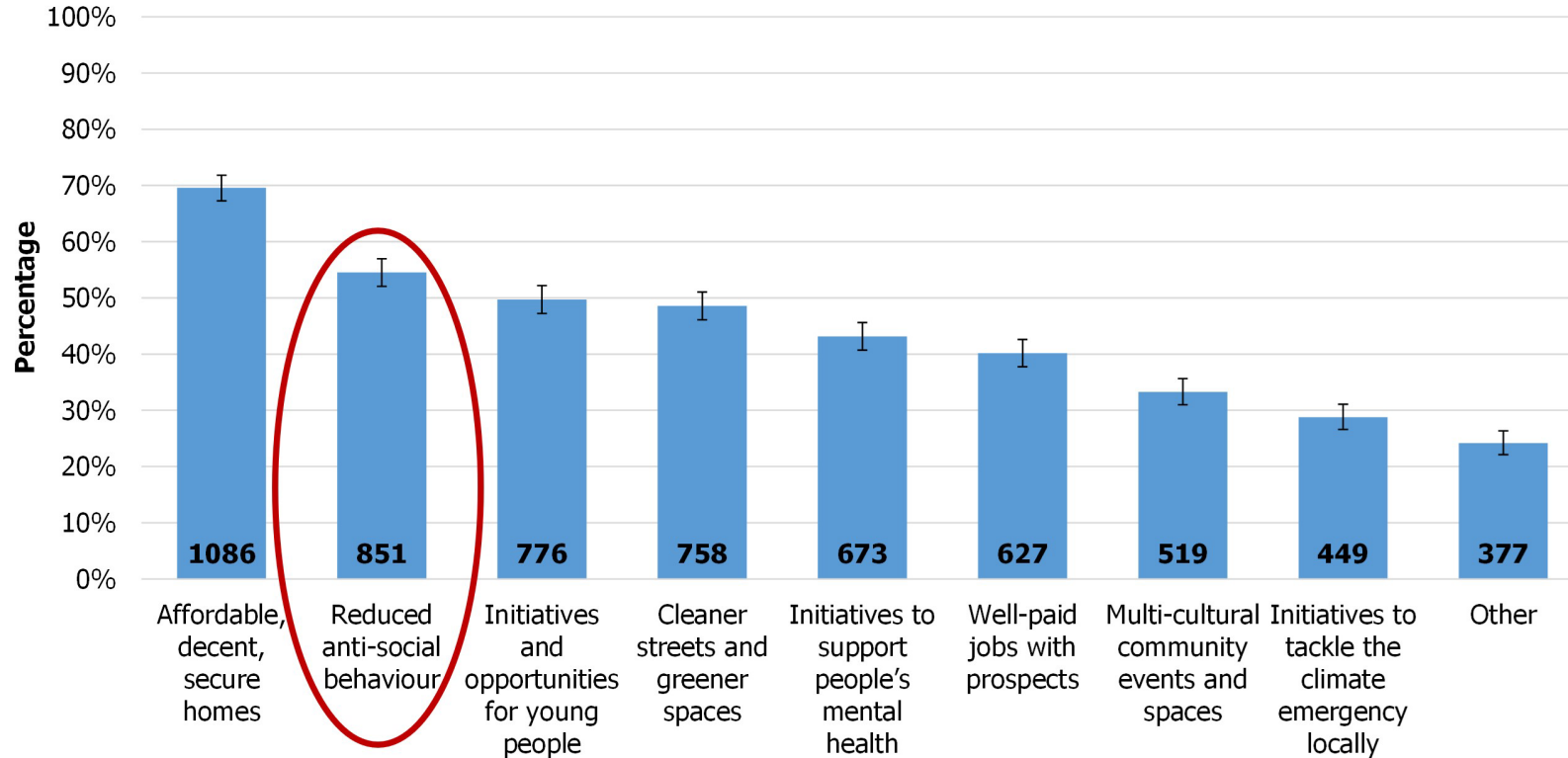
There were no significant differences by ethnicity, disability, gender, or other age groups.

Note: Survey respondents n=1561

Source: Let's Talk Islington online survey, November 2021 - March 2022

Improving life in Islington: Reducing anti-social behaviour

What do you think we can do to improve life in Islington, together? Tell us your top priorities below.



55% of respondents rated reducing ASB as a priority, with significant differences by age group, with a

- Higher proportion of residents ages 45-64: 61%
- Lower proportion of under 16s (32%) and ages 16-24 (42%)

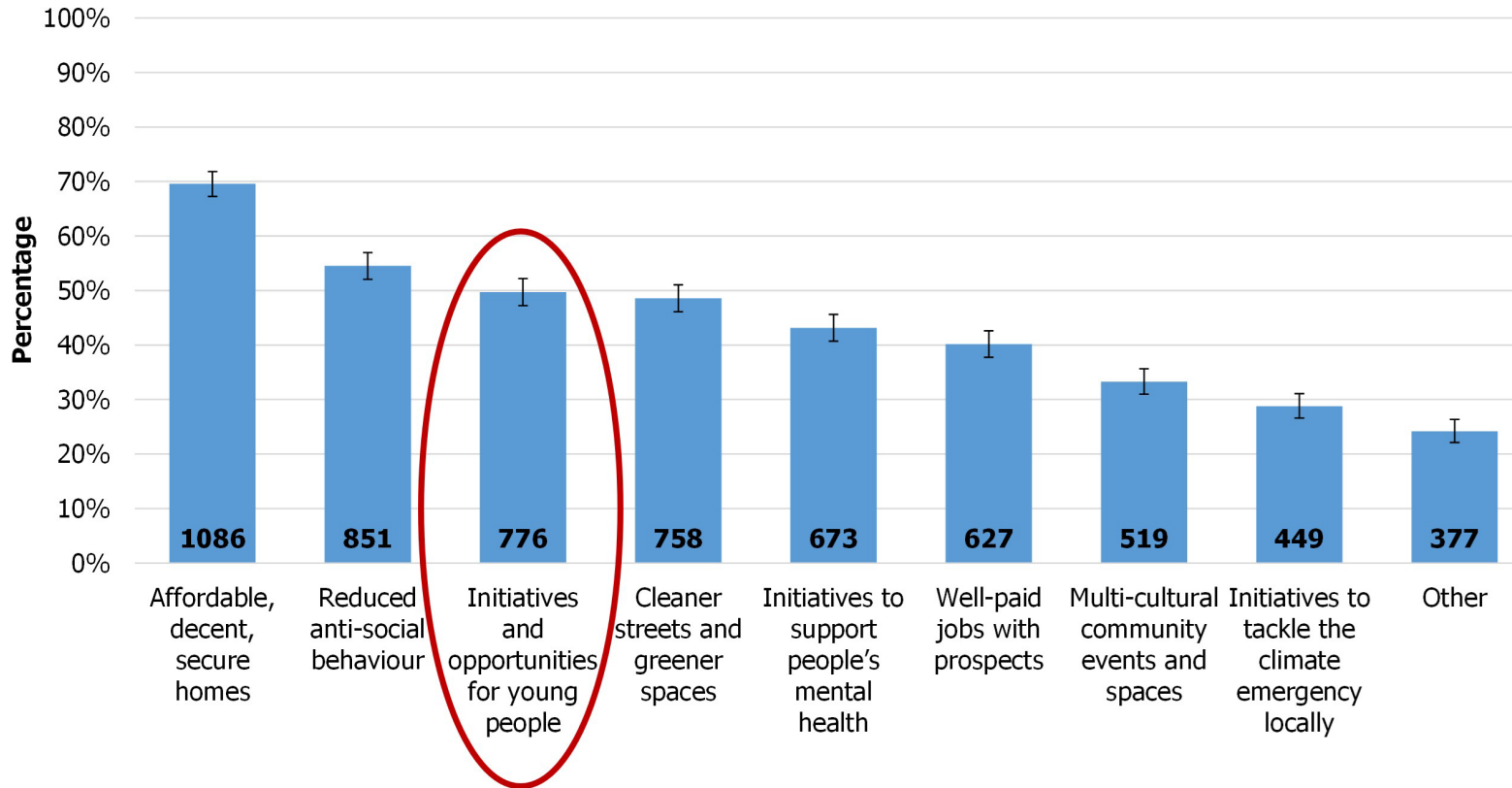
There were no significant differences by ethnicity, income group, disability, gender, sexual orientation or deprivation level.

Note: Survey respondents n=1561, respondents could pick multiple answers

Source: Let's Talk Islington online survey, November 2021 - March 2022

Improving life in Islington: Initiatives for young people

What do you think we can do to improve life in Islington, together? Tell us your top priorities below.



50% of respondents rated initiatives for young people as a priority, with

- A significantly higher proportion of **black residents (62%)**, **over 65s (57%)** and **women (55%)**

There were no significant differences by income group, disability status, sexual orientation, deprivation level or other ethnic or age groups.

Note: Survey respondents n=1561, respondents could pick multiple answers

Source: Let's Talk Islington online survey, November 2021 - March 2022

Improving life in Islington: Cleaner streets and greener spaces

What do you think we can do to improve life in Islington, together? Tell us your top priorities below.



49% of respondents rated cleaner streets and greener spaces as a priority, with a significantly **higher proportion** of residents:

- Earning £100K+ (61%)
- Other ethnic groups (61%)
- Second to the lowest level of deprivation (58%)
- Without a disability (54%)
- 25-44s (54%)

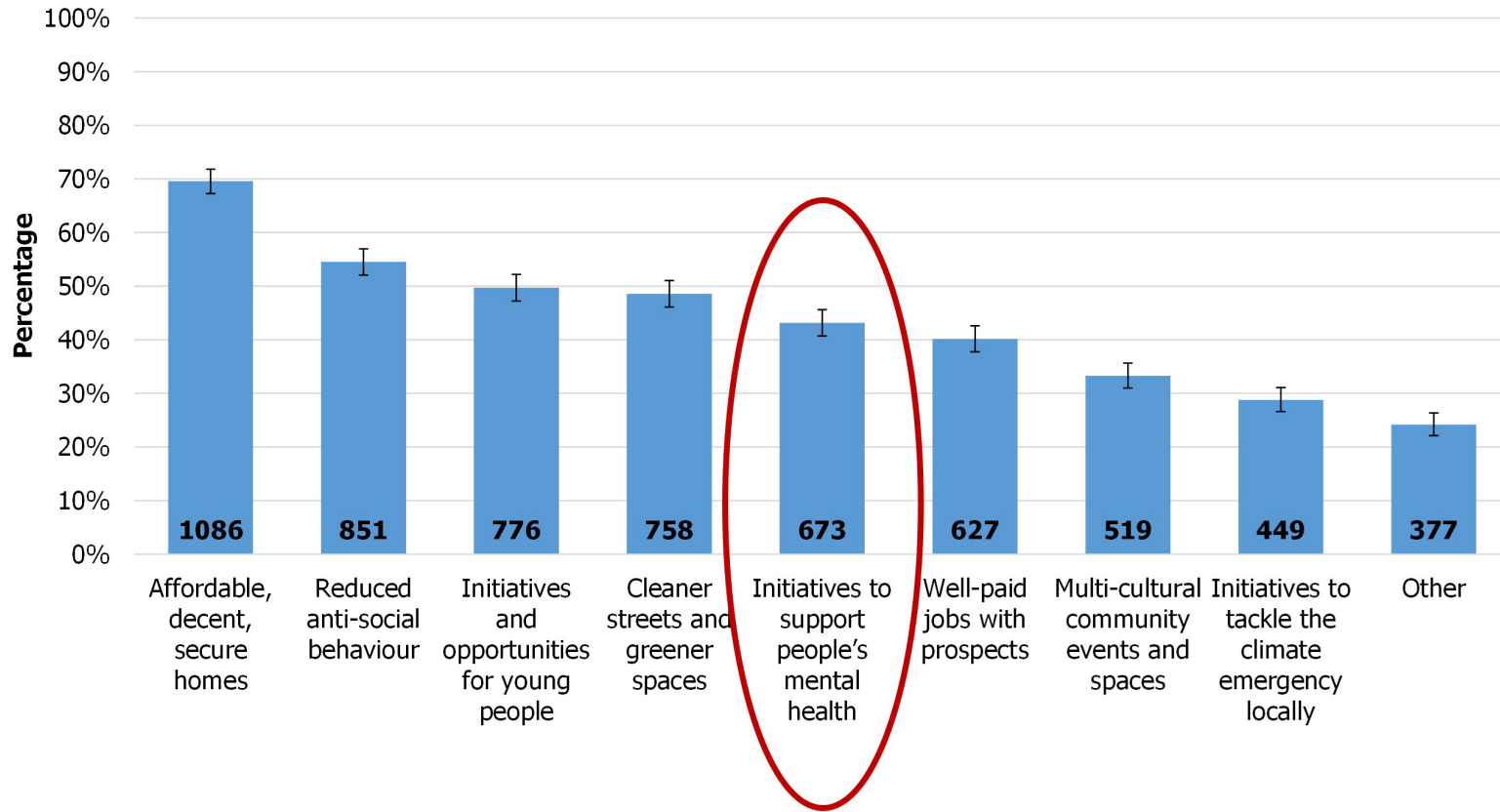
There were no significant differences by gender, sexual orientation, or other ethnic, income and age groups.

Note: Survey respondents n=1561, respondents could pick multiple answers

Source: Let's Talk Islington online survey, November 2021 - March 2022

Improving life in Islington: Initiatives to support people's mental health

What do you think we can do to improve life in Islington, together? Tell us your top priorities below.



43% of respondents rated initiatives to support mental health as a priority, with

- A significantly higher proportion of residents of **black ethnicity** (55%), people with a **disability** (53%) and in the **most deprived** areas (52%)
- A significantly lower proportion of residents of Asian ethnicity (30%), earning >£100K (31%) and without a disability (37%)

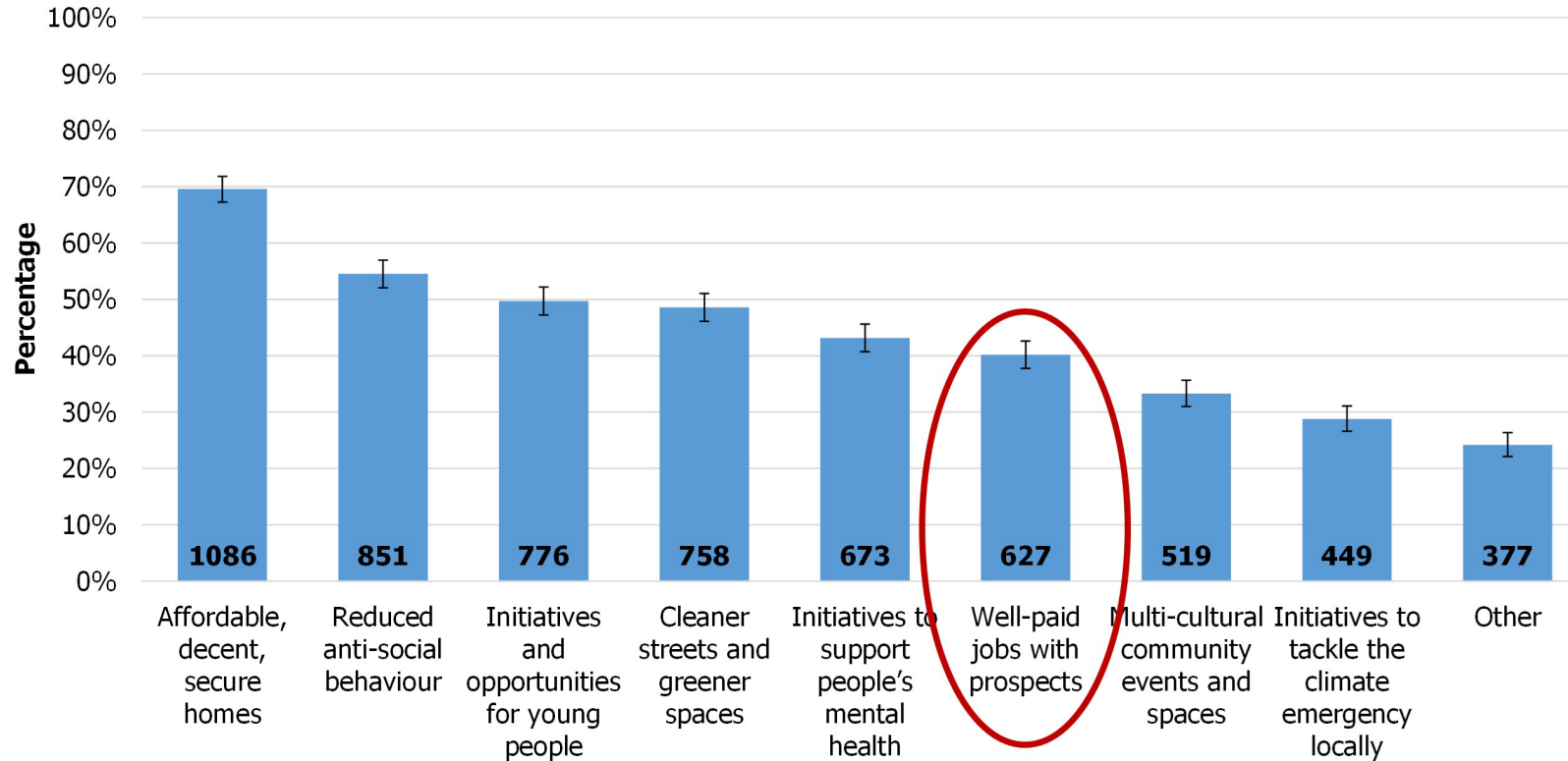
There were no differences across gender, sexual orientation, age group or other ethnic or income groups.

Note: Survey respondents n=1561, respondents could pick multiple answers

Source: Let's Talk Islington online survey, November 2021 - March 2022

Improving life in Islington: Well paid jobs with prospects

What do you think we can do to improve life in Islington, together? Tell us your top priorities below.



40% of respondents rated well paid jobs as a priority, with

- A significantly higher proportion of **under 16s** (60%) and **16-24s** (55%), residents of **black ethnicity** (57%) and those earning between **£20-39K** (54%)
- A significantly lower proportion of residents of white ethnicity (34%), earning >£100K (25%)

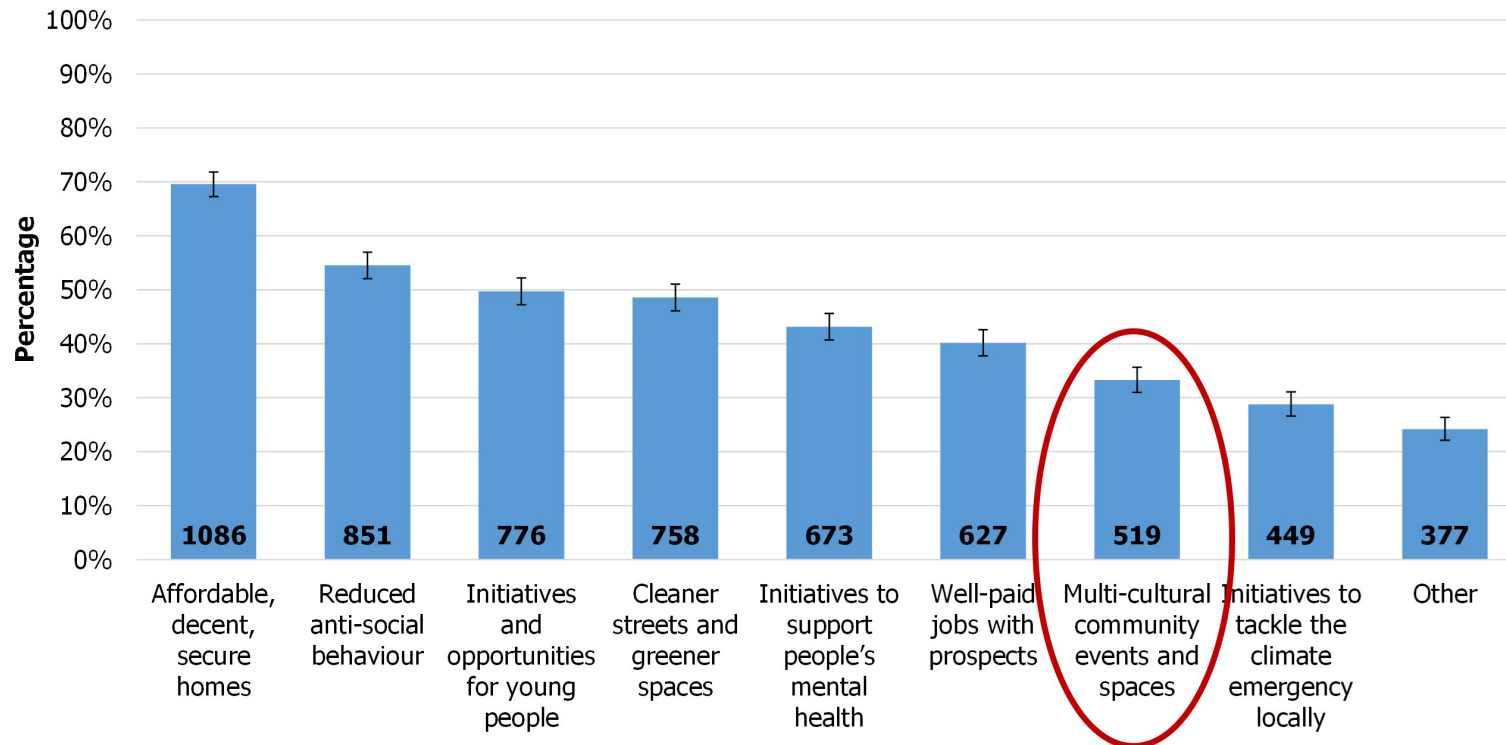
There were no significant differences by disability status, gender, sexual orientation, deprivation level or other ethnic, income and age groups.

Note: Survey respondents n=1561, respondents could pick multiple answers

Source: Let's Talk Islington online survey, November 2021 - March 2022

Improving life in Islington: Multi-cultural community events & spaces

What do you think we can do to improve life in Islington, together? Tell us your top priorities below.



33% of respondents rated multi-cultural community spaces as a priority, with

- A significantly higher proportion of residents of **Asian** (48%) and **black ethnicity** (47%), those earning between **£20-39K** (46%) and **women** (40%)

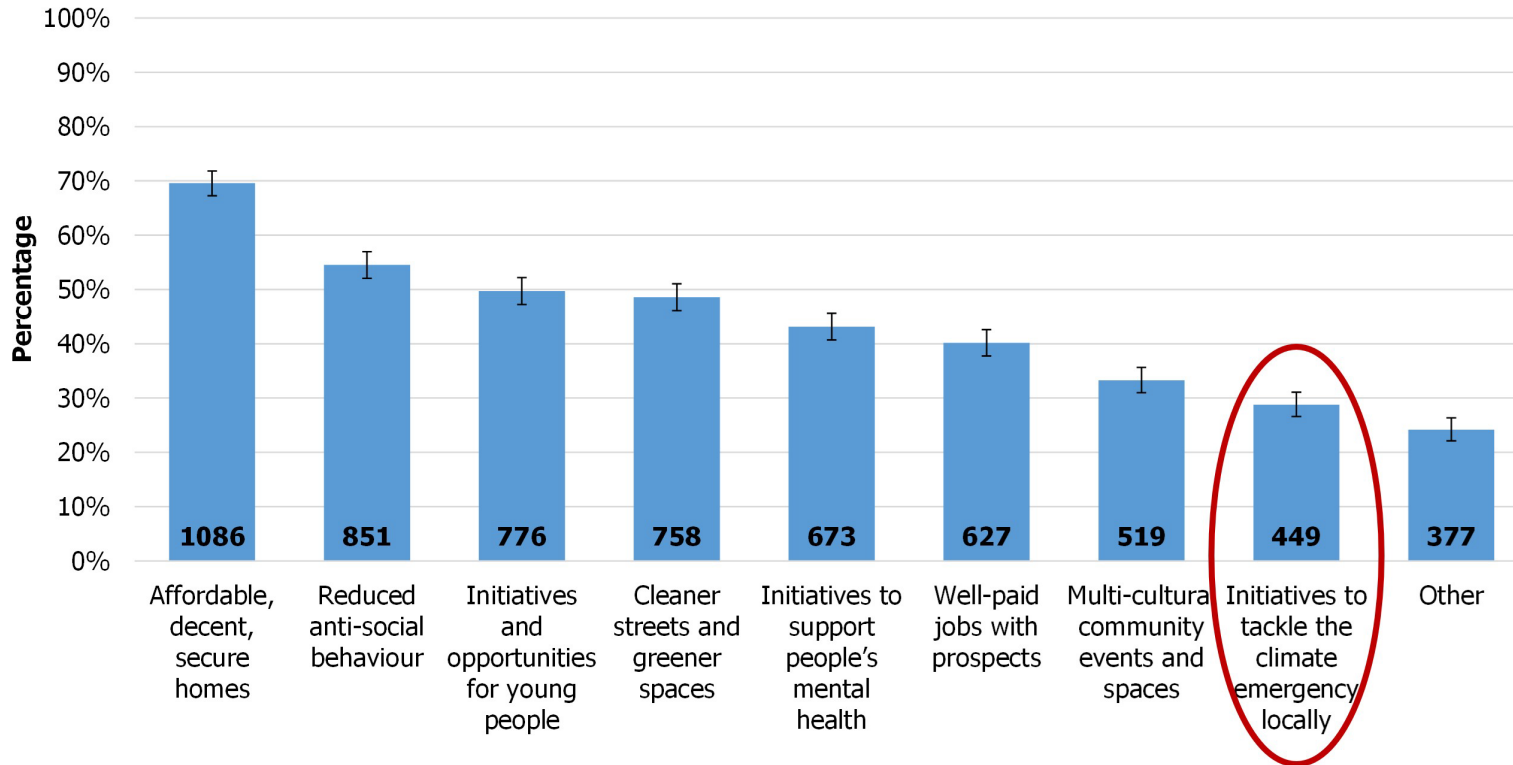
There were no significant differences by disability status, sexual orientation, deprivation level, age or other ethnic and income groups.

Note: Survey respondents n=1561, respondents could pick multiple answers

Source: Let's Talk Islington online survey, November 2021 - March 2022

Improving life in Islington: Tackling the climate emergency locally

What do you think we can do to improve life in Islington, together? Tell us your top priorities below.



Note: Survey respondents n=1561, respondents could pick multiple answers

Source: Let's Talk Islington online survey, November 2021 - March 2022

29% of respondents rated initiatives to tackle the climate emergency as a priority, with a significantly **higher proportion** of residents:

- Earning between £20-39K (36%), £60-99K (39%) and £100+ (44%)
- Over 65s (36%)
- Women (34%)
- Without a disability (33%)
- White ethnicity (33%)

A significantly lower proportion of residents earning <£20K (21%) rated this as a priority.

There were no significant differences by sexual orientation, deprivation level or other ethnic, income and age groups.

Student-facilitated group discussions

Group discussion methods

From December 2021 – May 2022, students facilitated small group discussions among their peers and younger students, sometimes with the support of school and/or LBI staff. These took place in different settings including School Council sessions, form time, ‘Philosophy 4 Children’ (enquiry-based learning) or specially-arranged LTI discussion sessions. Students and teachers were provided with a workshop structure and briefed on Let’s Talk; however, the way in which questions were framed and discussions were facilitated likely varied across groups. Student responses may have been affected by the extent to which they felt comfortable discussing these topics in English with their peers.

“Inequality in Islington – student discussions”

640 participants from 13 schools

QUAL

What does inequality mean to you?

Can you give an example of when you’ve seen inequality in your area? What could be done to help the situation?

What could be done to make Islington a fairer and more equal place?

If you were the Leader of Islington Council, what is the most important change you would make to improve life in Islington for young people?

How can you show fairness and equality today?

Profile of participating schools

Schools were selected to reflect a range of income levels based on the proportion of students eligible for the Deprivation Pupil Premium (DPP), which ranged from 34% to 82%.

Primary: Drayton Park Primary School, Pakeman, Montem

Secondary: Beacon High, City and Islington College*, Elizabeth Garrett Anderson school, St Mary Magdelene Academy Sixth Form, London Screen Academy Sixth Form*, Stoke Newington School and Sixth form*

Independent: Northbridge Senior School*

Special educational needs (SEN): Samuel Rhodes, The Bridge School, Richard Cloudesley

* DPP not available

What does inequality mean to you?

Inequality was largely seen by students as the **unfair or unkind treatment of others**, often related to **protected** characteristics. When students spoke about specific subgroups, they mentioned **race and ethnicity, disability and gender** most often.

There was also the understanding that inequality involved **different levels of access** between groups: resources, opportunities and rights. Inequality was seen by young participants as something **beyond people's control**, the result of a wider social system.

"When people **treat people differently** and don't treat them like how they wanted to be treated. To me it also means when people just **ignore each other as if they're invisible.**"

(Primary school student)

"When you look at someone/**treat someone differently** because of their race, religion, gender, sexuality, disability, intellect, social status/job or age."

(Secondary school student)

"Not having the opportunities to that other people have due to **circumstances not within your control**, facing discrimination due to some part of your identity, being underprivileged in any aspect of life."

(Independent secondary school student)

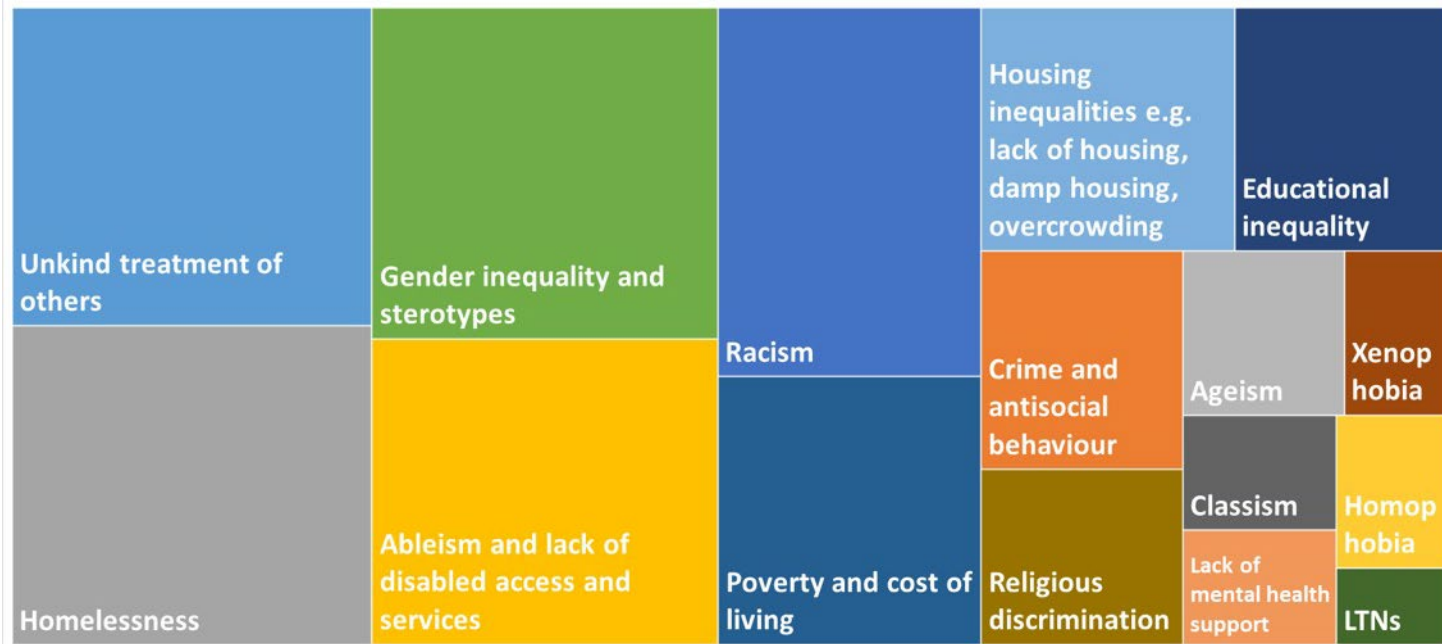
"It's when people have **more rights** than others and when people are given **advantages that others don't have.**"

(Secondary school student)

"An **imbalance of money and resources**, distributed unfairly. Some people having excess, and others not enough. People are also **treated differently** or given different opportunities depending on social background, ethnicity or identity."

(Secondary school student)

Can you give an example of when you've seen inequality in your area?



The most common examples of inequality students raised were:

- Unkind treatment of others
- Homelessness
- Gender inequality and stereotypes
- Lack of access and services for people with disabilities
- Racism

Other examples included: poverty, lack of affordable housing and overcrowding, antisocial behaviour and inequality in the education system.

"Some people can't get houses and others do. Some people can afford food and some people can't. There are not enough facilities for people with disabilities to mix and have fun."

(SEN secondary school student)

"I am Muslim and I was wearing a headscarf. People on the street made Islamophobic comments and assumed I didn't know because they assumed I don't speak English."

(Secondary school student)

"[There is] lots of homelessness...and shops are increasing their prices. Some areas people do not care for so they are not nice to go, they are scary and dangerous with unkind people. Some jobs women get paid less than men."

(SEN secondary school students)

What could be done to make Islington a fairer and more equal place?

Improving disability access across the borough.

Investing in more **homeless shelters**

Creating more **work and apprentice opportunities** for young people.

Educating people about prejudice and discrimination and holding more community events celebrating different cultures

Making Islington a **safer place** by increasing police presence, security cameras, having 'safe zones', more knife bins and restrictions on knife sales.

Anti-poverty measures such as providing resources for low-income people.

Making **changes to the education system**: more life skills lessons in school and incorporating inclusion into the curriculum.

More services, especially **activities for young people** and support for **mental health and social isolation**.

Investing in the environment such as more solar power, climate change education and more green spaces.

"We should **help the environment** and save animals, be **kinder to each other**, more **financial benefits** should be put in place, **more housing, help for the homeless**, more police presence and stricter laws to **end knife crimes and robberies**, more **kindness and respect** on social media."

(SEN secondary school student)

"[I] want lots of **jobs that are interesting**, and we can all do. **Houses that are cheap** that I can afford to live in. I want it to be **safe place** where there are no gangs or knife crime"

(Secondary school student)

"Making sure we all look after the **environment** and investing in things like solar power"

(Primary school student)

Similarities across the deprivation spectrum

Across ages and school types, there was widespread awareness of social and economic inequalities and a desire for more equal access to opportunities.

" Give people the **same opportunities**."

(Primary school student,
34% students eligible for DPP)

"There is [an] **inequality of attitudes** towards pupils from state school and pupils from private schools such as prejudice regarding appearance and smell."

(Independent secondary school student)

"[There is a] **huge clash between different social class[es]** which turns into racism, bullying, constant fights."

(Secondary school SEN student,
82% student eligible for DPP)

"Making **basic living expenses cheaper** and make private schools less "private."

(Independent secondary school student)

"People could support others who are less lucky than others. By accepting and understanding people on their own individual merits and **appreciating the hardships some people face** to have/do the things others may take for granted."

(Independent secondary school student)

Puppetry workshops for young people with Special Educational Needs (SEN)

Growing up in Islington, represented through puppetry

In addition to a group discussion, 10 students ages 11-16 at The Bridge School participated in workshops with the Little Angel Theatre, where they created their own puppets and used them to 'act out' their audio. The final result was recorded and created into a short video, accessible here: [Let's Talk Islington Bridge School Project - YouTube](#)



"[On my way to school] I just look out the windows, just to have good vibes: **construction sites, high roads, apartments and shops**. It's actually a **pretty fun journey**, even though it's sometimes tiring but I can imagine things when looking outside."

" I really want to live in **Islington**, but I think the **rent's about £500 a month.**"

"Mostly, I stay in London because, you know, [I feel] a little bit **safe there...**"

"I see a lot of **homeless people** on the streets. Mostly under bridges or in the streets, begging for money, mostly. Sometimes I get them £1, **I feel bad.**"

" I mean I do like my area but there's lots of weird stuff going on, like **loud cars, playing loud radio...** We live next to a pub and [there's] also **drunk people in our neighbourhood.**"



What would you change about Islington?



"The **prices of the houses are very expensive**. I think they can encourage people to lower the prices, so people can buy more houses and live in London more."

"It would be nice see **more jobs for teenagers**."

"If I ever was in charge of Islington Council, I would make **more therapy sessions for mentally ill people**."

"There's **a few murder[s]** happening in Islington."

"I think there could be more **Action for Children**, for kids to enjoy being out of the house, ...and the parents can take a break. **People with disabilities could have fun there**, probably painting or going out, playing on the playground."

"It could change a lot. **The bills are very high now**. The internet cut off a little bit a few weeks ago, but it's fine. ...The prices have gone a little higher because of the war in Ukraine also."

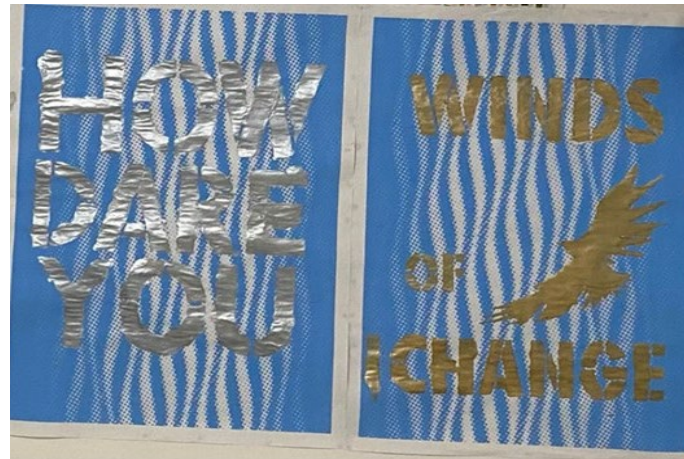
"I would love to see **more [youth] clubs and theatres** as well."

Creative Competition

Creative competition: Young peoples' aspirations for the future

We also ran a creative competition with under 18s so young people could visually express what a fair and equal future in Islington means to them. 14 young people submitted an entry.

Submissions dealt with a range of important inequality-related issues such as the class gap, overcrowded housing and the climate emergency. Young people also considered the importance of community, green space and access to rights and opportunities.



**Survey among
professionals working
with children & young
people**

Survey methods

From February – May 2022, professionals working with children and young people and one parent responded to an online survey, sharing their observations of how inequality impacts young people, as well as more specific topics such as persistent absence, SEN inclusion, fixed term exclusions and support students at risk of becoming not in education, experience or training (NEET).

“Let’s Talk Islington – staff working with children & young people” *21 participants*

Where do you see inequality in the lives of the young people you work with?

What could be done to make Islington a more equal borough for young people and support the most disadvantaged?

What do you think would help reduce persistent absence – what would make children and young people come to school every day?

The increased demand of children with special educational needs remains a significant factor – what could we do to support schools manage this better?

In Islington we are a trauma-informed borough, yet fixed term exclusions are still a challenge. What do you think could be a solution to this?

What can we do to improve support for those at risk of becoming not in education, experience or training (NEET)?

Profile of respondents

We engaged with staff who work with children and young people across the following age ranges:

- Early Years (under 5s)
- Early Help (school age to 19)
- Primary
- Secondary
- Sixth-form

Where do you see inequality in the lives of the young people you work with?

Many of the respondents saw **high levels of poverty** in young peoples' lives, which impacted several areas including:

- Poor housing conditions and a stressful home life
- Access to cultural experiences and opportunities beyond the classroom
- Access to support
- Aspirations and self-belief

Others highlighted the **racial inequality** faced by young people, experiencing racial discrimination and micro-aggressions.

They observed many **knock-on effects** such as a 'poverty of aspiration', poor academic outcomes, and a disinterest in education. They also spoke about the relationship between poverty, poor nutrition, and children's growth and ability to perform well in an educational setting.

"There is a significant difference in the **aspirations of students** and what they think they can strive for and achieve."

(Secondary school staff member)

"Poverty is the biggest determinant of opportunities, or lack of, that **combined with race and disability is a powerful cocktail of inequality** and adversity in children's lives."

(Early Help practitioner)

"There is inequality in almost **every aspect of many young people's lives** - housing, social activities, opportunities, education, aspirations, parenting, racial inequality, class inequality etc. It leads to **poverty of aspiration** and a sense that there is no point in doing well at school or partaking in society. It also leads to a deep **distrust of authority** and a feeling that, no matter what they do, society will not treat them fairly."

(Secondary school staff member)

What could be done to make Islington a more equal borough for young people and support the most disadvantaged?

- Provide **more services for young people** such as youth centres, drama, sport and arts activities for young people which are accessible for all, including those from a low-income background. Increase access to safe places.
- Ensure all young people have access to cultural capital, expose students to **more cultural experiences and opportunities**.
- Invest in **early intervention and prevention**. Inequalities start antenatally and so early help support needs to be continued to a high quality.
- **Offer** free school meals, breakfast clubs and holiday clubs; get rid of FSM stigma.
- Work together to **stop racism** within the education setting and create more diverse management teams.
- Proactively identify and support young carers and young people facing adverse situations. Ensure staff **understand the root causes of challenging behaviour**.

"Expose students to more, **more culture, more extra-curricular experiences**, expose them to different kind of people and **different routes for the future**."

(Secondary school staff member)

"**Understand the difficult issues black children face** especially black boys. **Reduce school exclusions**. We know that statistic[s] show that black students are more likely to be permanently excluded."

(Sixth Form staff member)

"It is important to continue the **investment in prevention** and in the early years of life"

(Early Help practitioner)

What do you think would help reduce persistent absence – what would make children and young people come to school every day?

Staff spoke of the need to provide **sufficient support networks** for young people at school and extend those support systems to parents.

It was seen as important to create a **culture of understanding** around issues children face at home which influence attendance, including adverse childhood experiences and caring responsibilities.

Respondents also discussed the need to provide an **interesting curriculum** and to **encourage alternative pathways**.

Other solutions to absence included smaller classrooms, setting goals for young people, better support for young people with SEN, access to free meals in school.

"If they had encouraging parents/staff/colleagues/peers, that made them see multiple **opportunities schooling and education opens up for them**.

Creating a **more interesting curriculum**. EBacc is not for every child. We need to appeal to what is of interest to them."

(Secondary school staff member)

"Access to breakfast in school.
Parents being able to freely discuss issues and have **home support**."

(Primary school staff member)

"The first step is **understanding what is the root cause of the absence**."

(Young carer support worker)

"Give them a named person to check in with and **allow them to talk about why** they are not attending as much as they should."

(Secondary school staff member)

The increased demand of children with special educational needs remains a significant factor – what could we do to support schools manage this better?

86% of respondents worked with students with special educational needs. They suggested increased training, funding, classroom support and specialised services, and working more with parents and other agencies.

"Teachers should have **training** around this area SEN as part has their degrees as this affects a large amount of children. **Listening and working with the parents** who know their child's needs better than anyone. **Recognizing that race and culture** can also have an impact on how children are treated as certain races and culture would do things differently."

(Sixth form staff member)

"Much much more **in class support and one to one aids.**"

(Secondary school staff member)

"**Reach out to families** to see if we can better meet their needs."

(Secondary school staff member)

"**Improved awareness of conditions.** Support from health colleagues. Supervision, **multi-agency conversations.** Resources. **Parents, volunteers as a possible resource.**"

(Early Years, Early Help practitioner)

Increased availability for services such as Educational Psychology Service, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, and Speech and Language Therapy, allowing for larger caseloads and **impactful assessment** of those students who do not have Education, Health and Care Plans as this is an increasing concern."

(Secondary school staff member)

What would be a solution to fixed term exclusion?

Staff spoke about the importance of increased prevention and behaviour support in schools. They had different perspectives on the effectiveness of trauma-informed approaches in practice.

"Not sure how you know you are a trauma informed borough and **how even with the training it lands for those on the receiving end** of an experience, so more training, education, opportunity to reflect as a multi-agency forum, young people feedback. Understand that it doesn't stop with one off training but a **constant effort to change the culture** of any organisation."

(Early Years, Early Help practitioner)

"**Education of parents and children in relation to trauma** and its impact. ...Increased training in relation to trauma informed approach to behaviour and what this means."

(Secondary school staff member)

"There is a lot of sense in the theory behind a trauma-informed approach; however, in practice, it often becomes a system whereby students are **allowed to get away with appalling behaviour**. This in turn traumatises other children (often the ones with SEND) and there is a sense of unfairness that appalling behaviour is not being dealt with."

(Secondary school staff member)

"**Rules need to be followed**. Sometimes fixed exclusions happen."

(Secondary school staff member)

"The **schools, parents, social care and youth offending team** if they are involved need to all **work together** to keep the individual in mainstream school. ...Majority of children that are excluded are at a **greater risk of being exploited** and groomed and possibly end up in the criminal justice system."

(Sixth form staff member)

"I believe **social media** has a strong influence. More student guidance on safe use. And **workshops on sexual health**. [This] would have an in-turn effect on many of issues which lead to exclusions and the behaviour involved." (Secondary school staff member)

What can we do to improve support for those at risk of becoming not in education, experience or training (NEET)?

Staff highlighted the importance of providing young people with different pathways, practical and life skills training, and emotional support and encouragement.

"Allow them to **explore different routes** that are aimed at different prospects. They need to make the decisions and choices that are made in their lives so **more exposure and communication** could possibly help these students. "

(Secondary school staff member)

"Begin the process at aged 14 and potentially bring **more pre and post support** into schools. Research shows that students do need a lot of **support from staff** "

(Early Years staff member)

"**Widening of opportunities** in relation to skills-based subjects, practical offers which schools can take part in for example running hospitality and catering BTEC from year 10 in a commercial environment with part time academic provision in mainstream school."

(Secondary school staff member)

"Some children are not very academic and are made to feel excluded if they are not. They feel that if they don't fit into the norm of being able to access the national curriculum in the standard way, they will not achieve great things. **This needs to change, we need to change the narrative**".

(Sixth Form staff member)

"Have more **open access youth provision** across the borough and aim times at 16+ groups where they can get **support with emotional issues, housing and life skills**.

(Secondary school staff member)

Workshops with VCS organisations

Workshop methods

From December – May 2022, LBI and VCS staff facilitated small group discussions of 2-14 people online, in person and using a hybrid approach. The host organisation recruited people to take part.

“Inequality in Islington – VCS workshops”

12 workshops involving 77 people in total

What do you like about working or studying in Islington?

What could make it better?

From the following list of 10 topics, which are the 3 most important to you?

- Air pollution and noise
- Green spaces and parks
- Crime and safety
- Inequality based on who you are
- Opportunities for young people
- Local employment opportunities
- Housing
- Community activities and social networks
- Good quality services for residents
- Mental health and wellbeing

How do these issues make you or your community feel? What are the effects on your life?

What are the 3 most important changes we could make to reduce inequality in Islington?

Why? What difference would these changes make to your life or the lives of people in your community?

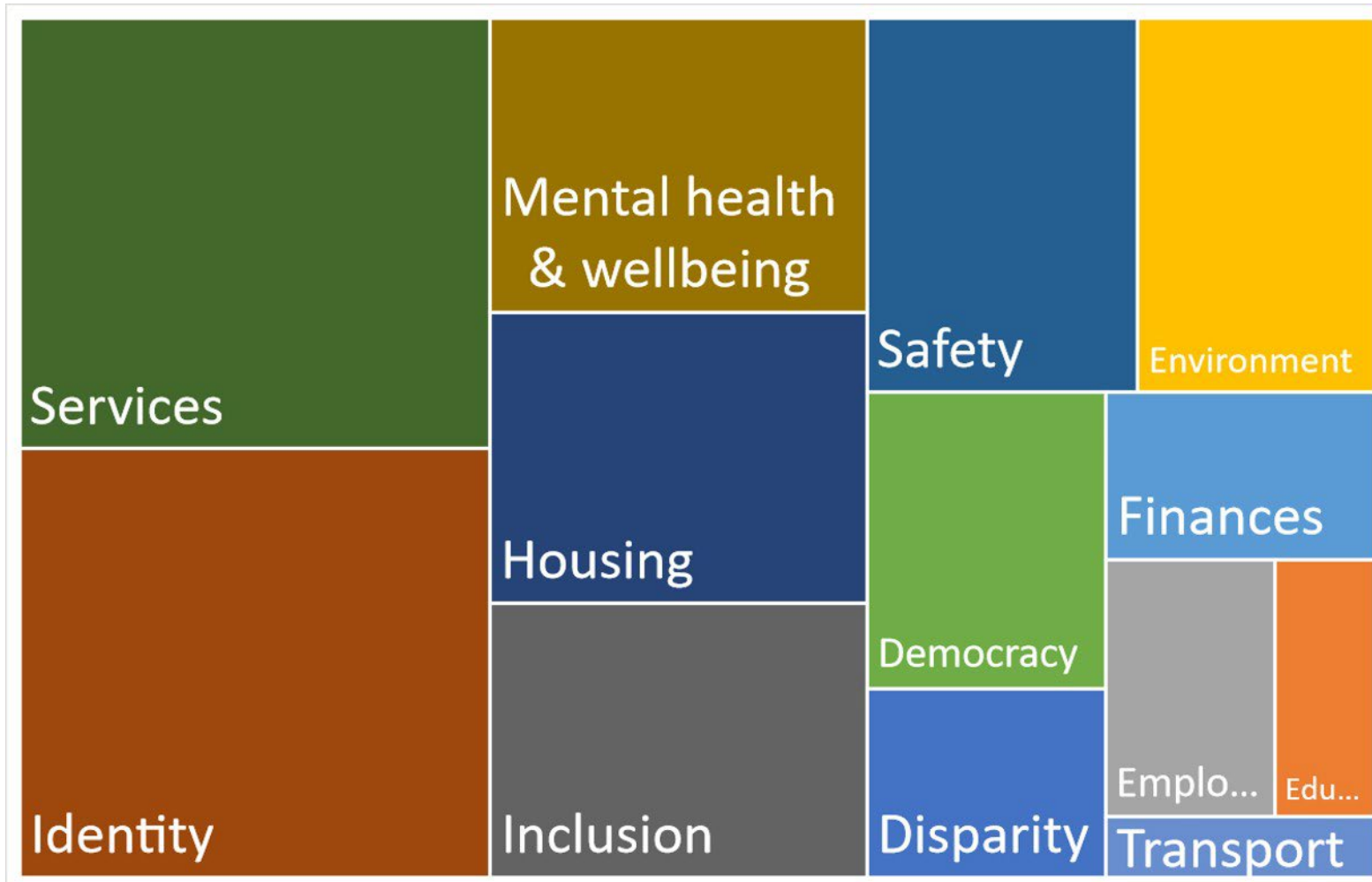
Any other comments?

Profile of participating organisations

We held workshops with residents in partnership with the following groups:

- Prospex Youth Centre (*youth hub and activities for young people*)
- You Lead (*Targeted Youth Support and Youth Offending Service service-user group*)
- Bright Start parent champions (*parent volunteers*)
- Elfrida Society Power and Control group (*charity service supporting people with learning disabilities*)
- Elfrida Society Parent Support Group
- Adult Community Learning (*free education courses for adults*)
- Eagle Recovery (*support group for adults in recovery from substance abuse*)
- Outlook (*resource centre for adults with physical disabilities, sight and hearing impairments*)
- Hornsey Lane Estate Community Centre (*community centre for children and adults*)
- Holloway Neighbourhood Group (*community centre for adults*)
- Manor Gardens Welfare Trust x 2 (*charity providing health and wellbeing services*)

Workshop discussion themes



In workshop discussions, residents spoke most often about:

Council and VCS services, noting the variety of services on offer as well as identifying gaps. They felt the council could improve communication about activities and services that are available.

Specific identity groups, mentioning people with disabilities by far the most often, followed by ethnic minorities, children and young people, largely reflecting the demographic of workshop participants.

Mental health and wellbeing, including improved support and access to specialist services

Housing affordability, overcrowding, repairs, allocation policy and homelessness

What do you like about working or studying in Islington?

"This is a **[central] place** in London that stills feel like a **small town with community opportunities.**"

(Resident, Manor Gardens)

"My **network, neighbourhood and community support.** From Manor Gardens Welfare Trust, Somalian and different language speakers."

(Resident, Manor Gardens)

"I feel like there's a security here, it **feels safe** for me and my kids."

(Member, Elfrida Power and Control Learning Disability Group)

"Outlook – as well as gym, using **services which benefit mental health** e.g. building courage to get out again, can relax with others"

(Member, Outlook)

"I never feel like I need a car."

(Parent champion)

"**Welcome, open ethos**"

(Resident, Hornsey Lane Estate Community Centre)

"I love **the edge, the buzz, the diversity of people** – you don't get this so much in outer London boroughs – adds vibrance."

(Member, Eagle Recovery group)

"Quite a **friendly area – very multicultural.** People are quite open and quite friendly. Lots of different shops and markets – nice area in the sense that there's a lot on offer."

(Member, Holloway neighbourhood group)

"[I] think **local services are good** in Islington including Islington Council, GPs."

(Member, Adult Community and Learning)

What issues are most important to you? What is the effect they have on your life?

There was **substantial variation in what areas were considered most important**, both across groups as well as among participants in the same workshop, who shared a common characteristic (i.e. youth, parents, disability type), who lived in the same neighbourhood or who were receiving services from the same organisation.

Of the 10 areas they collectively rated as priorities, the following were the most frequent and ranked highest:

1. Cr& safety
2. Housing
3. Mental health & wellbeing

In half of the discussions, residents spoke about the **interconnections** across ime areas – the influence of ASB, homelessness, unemployment, community activities and green space on mental health, effects of overcrowded housing on education, health and family relationships.

"All issues are **interconnected: services need to talk to each other**. Each issue can't be properly addressed without addressing all of them equally."
(Parent Champion)

"There is a long-term impact of experiencing **antisocial behaviour**. It reduces you to **vulnerability** and a feeling of not being safe in your home."

(Resident, Holloway Neighbourhood Group)

"I cannot afford to buy a house, neither do I qualify for housing from the council so eventually I **will have to end up moving because rents are too high**."

(Resident, Manor Gardens)

"**More spaces for all and mental health support**. It's important to support those who are lonely and suffering from mental health, especially after Covid and how much people have gone through."

(Member, Elfrida Power and Control Group)

What are the most important changes we could make to reduce inequality?

Residents offered a range of specific suggestions related to:

Improved communication and coordination

- Improve communication about activities, benefits and eligibility requirements
- Translate information into other languages and provide access to interpreters, offer more English classes
- Improve coordination across council teams, between council and resident groups

Housing

- Place someone with a disability within the housing team
- Hire local repair firms who are more invested in the area
- Conduct greater oversight of private landlords, improve tenant protection, create higher standards for housing inspections

Community & support

- More community activities and events where people can interact, where people with different types of disabilities share issues that are most important to them, and timed so that people who work during the day can also attend
- More mental health support, including drop-in sessions and in-school counsellors
- More groups, better employment opportunities and work experience for teenagers so they have alternatives to gangs
- More accessible facilities and events including in hospitals, GPs and shops: easy read signs and menus, accessible seating, maintained disabled toilets
- Reduce the cost of space hire for community groups
- Create quiet / sensory parks
- Incentivise people to report crimes by offering rewards

Youth hub members & youth workers: Prospex & You Lead

Top priorities

- Environment: green space & parks, air pollution & noise
- Crime & safety
- Mental health & wellbeing
- Local employment opportunities

Tackling these issues would **enable** them to feel safer, healthier and to take part in more activities.

They felt **Islington would be better** with reduced knife crime and violence, less air and noise pollution, more green space, better public transport and more spaces for young people

Recommendations

- Incentivise people to report crimes by offering rewards
- Better employment opportunities and work experience as alternatives to organised crime
- More mental health support, including in schools (measure happiness, in-school counsellors, shorter waiting lists)
- Period passes so girls don't have to ask teachers for a toilet pass
- Better and more responsive housing repairs services

"Make children in the borough feel **safer** and prevent them falling into organised crime or unemployment"

"We are feeling **overwhelmed**, so missing school, being late. I find it hard to get out of bed in the morning."

"**Rich people can pay for [mental health support] but poor people can't.**

If someone is suffering with anxiety or depression, people can look down on that and call them lazy or overreacting or [a] drama queen."

"It's **expensive** to have to buy new clothes to meet school uniform [requirements] ...it's £30 to buy a new coat."

Parent Champions

Top priorities

- Crime & safety
- Housing
- Identity-based inequality

They emphasised the **linkages** between these issues and their effects on relationships, physical and mental health and wellbeing.

These parents expressed **satisfaction** with the diversity and friendliness of the borough, its transport links, local charities supporting parents with SEND children and the parent champion scheme.

Recommendations

- Improve communication about services & eligibility requirements, particularly for minority groups and children's activities
- Improve coordination across council teams, with resident groups
- Address overcrowding and affordability of housing
- Widen the reach of Let's Talk to engage all residents
- More support for families with SEND children
- Free Adult Community Learning and other courses to help residents gain employment skills and confidence

"All issues are **interconnected**: services need to talk to each other. Each issue can't be properly addressed without addressing all of them equally."

"**Inclusion** is a big thing [to improve upon]."

" [There are] no activities for **children with additional needs and SEND**"

"The council doesn't do anything to act on **antisocial behaviour reported by the Neighbourhood Watch team.**"

"Housing is being built but is not going to supporting those who most need it – **new housing is unaffordable** and goes to private renters and buyers."

"Use the **skills, experience and knowledge** of residents."

Elfrida Society Power & Control Group members

Top priorities

- Mental health support
- Housing
- Racism & injustice

They also spoke of the **importance** of green spaces and human interaction for mental health, lack of safety for women in parks, housing wait lists and ASB, police discrimination against ethnic minorities, and lack of visual and physical accessibility across a range of venues.

They **enjoy** Islington parks and events, organisations like Elfrida and Mencap, markets in Holloway and local shops.

Recommendations

- Drop-in sessions for people who are lonely and those with mental health issues
- Local events where people with different types of disabilities share issues that are most important to them
- Someone with a disability sitting within the housing team
- More accessible facilities and events including in hospitals, GPs and shops: easy read signs and menus, accessible seating, maintained disabled toilets
- More training on how to be safe and first aid
- Quiet / sensory parks

"If the government are cutting back money, how can the council say they will improve services? **Where is the money coming from?**

...Government is not going to give money for the services that we want. ...**No one listens.** This always happens to disabled people."

"[I] went to an event in Finsbury Park that was **very inaccessible** for [me], was very crowded and no bathroom facilities."

"Women are not safe to walk alone at the parks at nighttime...That isn't fair. **Women should be able to go wherever and feel safe.**"

Elfrida Society Parent Group

Top priorities

- Pollution
- Good local services
- Parks & green space
- Mental health support

These parents **enjoy** the range of activity and support groups, parks, shopping centres and Arsenal stadium.

They had **mixed experiences** with the extent to which services were accessible and different perceptions about safety. They spoke about the **intersections** between disability and race, religion and family status.

Recommendations

- Disabled people have different needs and shouldn't be treated all the same. Some people might need more or less than others. Make reasonable adjustments and be patient.
- Ensure that other parent groups are accessible
- Improve phone wait times (which can also be costly on pay as you go contracts) and coordinate across services, rather than pass residents around
- Create groups for teenagers so they have alternatives to gangs

"[Ask] people with disabilities to say what they want and how they want it...The more we **listen**, the more we hear each other and can understand we're all the same. Other people can **treat us like we are different**, or like this person is better than this person."

"I feel like there's a **security** here. It feels safe for me and my kids."

"It can be a **scary** place."

"[People] are **struggling with their mental health** and are very vulnerable. They need to be able to go somewhere. ...[there is] nothing there to say 'look, this is how you can prevent this from happening again, here are the tools for you to manage your mental health.'"

Eagle recovery group members

Top priorities

- Community activities, mental health & wellbeing
- Housing
- Identity-based inequality

They spoke about the **linkages** between community activities (positive) and homelessness (negative) on mental health, raised concerns about the housing allocation process and lack of transparency in the appeals process, and lack of affordable options on Upper Street.

The members **loved** the vibrancy and diversity of the borough and appreciated the ability to get to regular support group meetings quickly and efficiently.

Recommendations

- Social spaces where people can meet, offering activities which get people talking to each other
- Reduce the cost of space hire for small community groups
- Tenant protection schemes

"[Islington] needs to build an **infrastructure of social wellness instead of focusing on 'good causes'** – how many senior management people live in the borough – are they actually that interested?"

"[I] was told to tell the council that I'm Irish or gay in order to get housing. It builds resentment that I see people who are **refugees who've been here 3 months get housing, but I don't** because I'm old, white English... **you feel like you're a non-person.**"

"**I was made homeless** in 2015 – rent places don't take DHS. I am angry about the housing situation."

"[I] have a friend living in a 3-story house which has been converted into 10 bed-sits – **mind-blowingly cramped and claustrophobic.**"

Outlook members

Top priorities

- Crime & safety
- Community spaces
- Good services – which are accessible!

The members **appreciated** services like St. Lukes, Outlook and the gym, being given a free laptop and the cleanliness of their estate.

They raised **concerns** about lack of accessible transport and facilities at Manor Gardens, lack of responsiveness from the ASB team, challenges getting OT equipment changed and digital exclusion.

"**Accessibility** – who is championing that and can support...in accessing services?"

"Not a lot of **transport** work[s] for disabled residents."

"[With council services, I] never get through to the same person, have to retell [my story, there is] no follow up. **Who do I turn to?**"

Adult Community Learning participants

Top priorities

- Good services
- Well paid jobs for local people
- Affordable, quality housing

Participants **spoke positively** about local services, including job centre staff and GPs, Islington parks (and their importance for mental and physical health, children and young people), shops, schools and transport. They had mixed experiences with the council and different perceptions of safety.

They raised **concerns** about affordability (housing, food, utilities), housing repairs, overcrowding, financial and language barriers to health services, age discrimination in access to jobs, and emphasised the importance of mental health support and addressing racism.

Recommendations

- Higher standard for housing inspections to minimise false advertising
- Translated leaflets/ information
- More English classes

"Islington Council helped [me] find a space on the adult learning class – and it has **helped [me] speak English**, [my] children now say “mum, you’re British!”

"[Islington would be better] if you called the council about **housing** issues and they come...[it's] different now; the **council's not the same as before.**"

Manor Gardens residents

Top priorities

- Crime & safety
- Inequalities (identity-based, income, health)
- Housing

Across the 7 subgroups in the workshop, residents identified 9 priority areas, reflecting a range of preferences.

They **valued** their family and community networks, access to a variety of food, shops, the sport centre, Islington's walkability, and volunteer opportunities.

They expressed **concerns** about homelessness, crime, overcrowding, the need for cleaner streets, more streetlights, shops, access to mental health support and activities for youth

Recommendations

- More community activities, including for people who work
- Promote healthier life choices, free access to sports
- Improve access to mental health facilities
- Community support: outreach, social care, integration
- Support with the cost of living, understanding benefits
- Access to interpreters
- More oversight of private landlords
- Transport for the elderly like the old days

"This is a **central** place in London that **stills feel like a small town** with community opportunities."

"I am aged over 60 and **feel discriminated against because of my age**. My health and wellbeing is also affected."

"[The] job centre chases people to work but do[es] not offer enough support to individuals. [There is a] **lack of understanding about the health issues and difficulties we face** in life."

"I cannot afford to buy a house, neither do I qualify for housing from the council so eventually I **will have to end up moving because rents are too high.**"

"I have been here for 8 years and want to continue but ... even though I am working and have a good salary, **with these prices and other expenses** I really struggled and often feel like I just work to be able to pay the nursery. ...But I love the activities for parents and children in the children centres and libraries."

"My daughter is growing, and we are **overcrowded.**"

Holloway Neighbourhood Group

Top priorities

- Crime & safety
- Environment
- Housing, Mental health

These residents identified 8 priority areas, reflecting a range of preferences. They also spoke about **links** between ASB, community activities, green space and mental health. They were concerned about the housing allocation process and endless poor-quality repairs, drugs and lack of response from the council.

These residents **enjoyed** the diversity, friendliness, cultural and volunteering opportunities and sense of community in Islington, although some felt increasing fragmentation.

Recommendations

- Take advantage of the skills residents have to offer
- Improve advertisement of community activities
- Time events so people who work during the day can attend; important to develop a community before people retire
- Hire local repair firms who are more invested in the area
- Proactively promote wellbeing and health, not wait until it becomes an emergency

"In many ways Islington feels safer that it used to, but then you hear about stabbings. One of them right outside of your house. ...It makes you doubt safety."

"There is a long-term impact of experiencing **antisocial behaviour**. It **reduces you to vulnerability** and a feeling of not being safe in your home."

"**Community spaces** and activities are **so important for reducing inequality**, community and wellbeing" ...This is a...class but it is really so much more."

"[The] council **needs to stop just consulting and begin taking action**. Residents want to know what you're doing, because it's a lot of talking."

"Inequality is not caused by these big things the council is talking about like racism or LGBTQ+ stuff. Most people feel inequality because **the rules and criteria deciding when who gets help feel really arbitrary**. Like you have a mixer tap, so you can't have your kitchen renovated, but if you have separate cold/hot taps than you can."

"[The] world has changed and we haven't accommodated for a **fractured world** - we haven't taken into consideration the fact that **people need to be grounded and part of a community**."

Hornsey Lane Estate Community Centre

Top priorities

- Crime & safety
- Housing
- Mental health & wellbeing

They were also **concerned** about affordability and identify-based judgements and wanted more face-to-face interactions rather than phone calls with a GP.

Those spoke about **linkages** between unemployment, noise pollution and wellbeing, between overcrowded housing, education, health and family relationships.

They appreciated the well-managed and well-maintained estate, activities available and the welcoming, open ethos.

Recommendations

- Improve communication about council services, particularly employment support
- Better train police, they need to build relationships with the community like they used to
- More opportunities for young people and services for the elderly

"A **sense of community** is essential to happy and healthy residents."

"**Compassion** needs to be taught from a young age."

"**Community centres reach people in a way that the council is not able to.** Many people are not online, and community centres share information about services and support available through in-person relationships and word of mouth."

Participatory Projects

Experiences of Overcrowded Housing

Participatory mapping is a technique that enables people to share experiences related to physical space. Through this process of describing their lives in the borough, 3 residents living in overcrowded housing highlighted the trade-offs they are making in their choice of where to live and how to spend limited financial resources. Many of the key themes overlap with those in the open survey, the relationship between housing, safety, community, transportation and the environment.



What makes a good home?

- **Safety** as the most important attribute: physical safety, but also cultural security (e.g.: safety wearing head scarf, relationship between Black youth and police)
- Good **neighbours and community** feel – gentrification described as disruptive.
- **Good transport routes** including accessible bus access, cycle routes, step-free pedestrian routes, and well-lit streets
- Access to safe **outdoor and community spaces** (including play space)
- **Quality and usability** of home more important than size, but space must be adequate.



Choosing where to Live

- **Islington seen as the borough with best support services.**
- **Families are willing to live in very poor-quality housing** within the borough to be able to access Islington services.
- **Social housing** seen as a blessing.
- Access to **community activities** and groups is incredibly important.
- **Knife crime** makes certain areas unsafe.
- Access to **culture-specific hubs and communities important for maintaining identity** (e.g. Jamaican restaurants; Chinese supermarket).



Housing Affordability

- Families are making **daily choices** to make living in Islington affordable. These include **foregoing children's activities** and **grocery shopping outside of borough.**
- **Private rental is seen as unaffordable** and financially risky.
- There is **no hope of being able to purchase property** in Islington.
- Families in council housing do not see possibilities for adult **children to continue living in-borough** due to cost.
- Good quality **private rentals will not accept housing benefit.**

Ongoing participatory engagement activities

In addition to the puppetry workshops, creative competition and participatory mapping, we undertook the following participatory activities. Analysis of these activities is ongoing, and a supplementary report will be published with these findings.

LGBTQ+ Videovoice: 9 residents were taught documentary filmmaking techniques and created short films about being LGBTQ+ in Islington. Participants applied and were selected through open recruitment.



Storytelling with Elders: 11 residents, all over aged 55, were interviewed using a personal memento to share their story of life in Islington. They then had their portraits taken with a personal memento. Participants were recruited through an older people's lunch club in a deprived area in Hornsey.



Anthropology for Kids: year 6 students in Montem and Drayton Park primary schools participated in a series of lunchtime classes on anthropological methods. Students self-selected to participate.





Let's talk
Islington



About the Let's Talk Islington 2022 Full Report

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