

Report on findings of 'Lockdown and Housing, Your Stories' Survey carried out via Survey Monkey, May – July 2020

As lockdown started, everyone at BHCLT started to think about what we could do to continue our vital work fighting for more community led housing in the city in a meaningful way. The Covid-19 crisis meant that much of our usual community outreach could not happen. We also realised that this was the first national crisis that people have had to navigate while restricted to their homes. We wanted the survey to give a voice to those people; to explore if people's housing situation impacted on their experience of lockdown; and to reach out to new people who may be interested in supporting our campaign for a fairer, affordable, secure housing future for everyone in Brighton & Hove.

A Community Land Trust (CLT) is a nonprofit community-led organisation that develops and stewards affordable housing and other assets that meet the needs of a community. Community Led Housing (CLH) 'is a growing movement of normal people taking action and managing housing projects that build the decent and affordable homes that the country so desperately needs'. (www.communityledhomes.co.uk).

Brighton & Hove Community Land Trust

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1 Who responded and how did we promote the survey?



- **The survey was completed by 272 people, 257 online via a web link, and 15 printed surveys via direct liaison with the Brighton & Unemployed Centre Families Project temporary foodbank.**
- **217 filled it out anonymously and 45 gave us their contact details so they could be part of our work in the future.**

It was promoted via a number of local networks:

- The BHCLT direct email list – 560 people. This includes members and stakeholders of the CLT and the wider public who have expressed an interest.
- The SCIP (Sussex Community Internet Project) voluntary and community sector email group.
- All three city's MPs social media channels.
- Facebook – via the BHCLT Facebook page (1000 followers), and the city's various community FB pages. Also via local housing organisations such as Acorn Renters Union Brighton & Hove, Knight Support homeless charity and Brighton & Hove Housing Coalition.
- Radio Reverb interview https://www.mixcloud.com/RadioReverb/thursday-in-brighton-9720-with-melita-dennett-on-radioreverb/
- Article in Brighton & Hove Independent: https://www.brightonandhoveindependent.co.uk/news/politics/covid-19-has-amplified-brighton-and-hoves-housing-inequalities-2930120

2 The housing situation of those that responded



Headline results:

- 53% are renters (138 responses)
- 35% are home owners (92 responses)
- 8% are homeless or in insecure/temporary accommodation (22 responses)
- Most people (198 responses) had lived in their current housing situation for 2+ years

We also had 5 people tell us they were in Sheltered Housing and 6 tell us they were in council housing or part of a housing association or co-op.

3 Elements of housing that have made lockdown easier or harder



41% of people said their housing situation made lockdown a lot or a little bit harder (102 respondents).



60% of renters and 73% of those without their own outdoor space said their housing situation made lockdown harder.



53% of people said their housing situation made lockdown a lot or a little bit easier (131 respondents)



82% of people who owned their own home and 77% of people with their own outdoor space said their housing situation made lockdown easier.

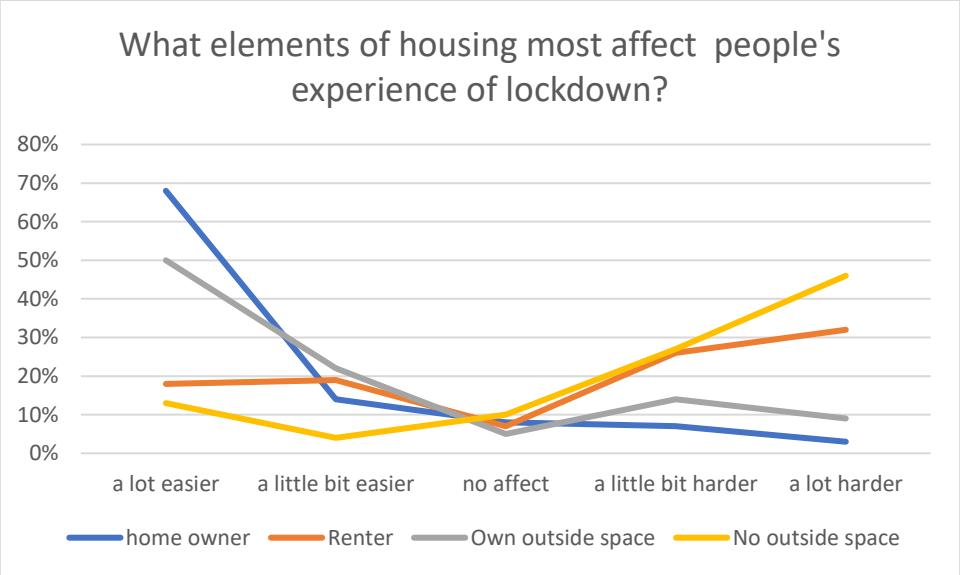
There was clear evidence about what made lockdown easier in terms of people's housing situation:

- When the house had private outdoor space.
- When people owned their own home.
- When people had a spare room for home working.
- Where people weren't worrying about the security of their housing, or how to pay for it.
- Where people felt they lived in supportive communities.
- Where people's homes were properly equipped to be accessible for people with disabilities.

There was clear evidence about what made lockdown harder in terms of people's housing situation:

- Where they had no access to private outdoor space.
- When they rented.
- Where they worried about the security of their housing or how to pay for it.

- Where they felt isolated or trapped (this could be down to having a disability or long-term health condition, or caring for a family member with a disability of long-term health condition).
- Where they suffered from antisocial or disruptive behaviour from neighbours.
- Where their home was too small for their household.
- Where they felt their home was unsafe or not well maintained.



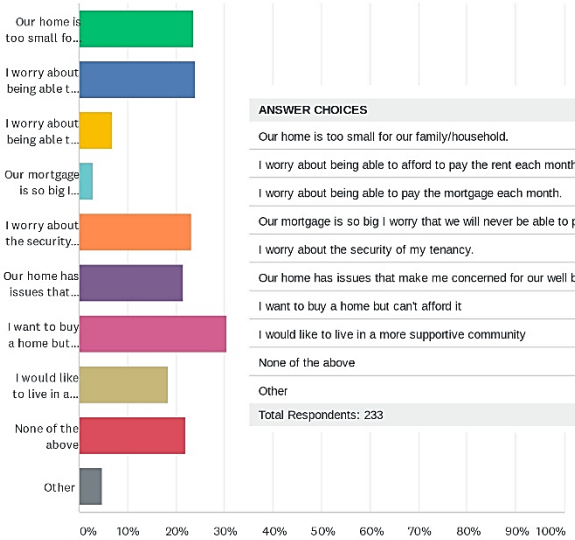
4 What housing issues were respondents dealing with?

Headline results:

- 40% of renters worried about paying their rent each month.
- 40% of renters worried about the security of their tenancy.
- 17% of home owners worried about paying their mortgage each month.
- 50% of non home-owning respondents would like to buy their own home but can't afford it.
- A significant proportion said their home was too small, and were worried that their housing was bad for their wellbeing.

Q8 Do any of the below apply to you? (click on all that apply)

Answered: 233 Skipped: 36

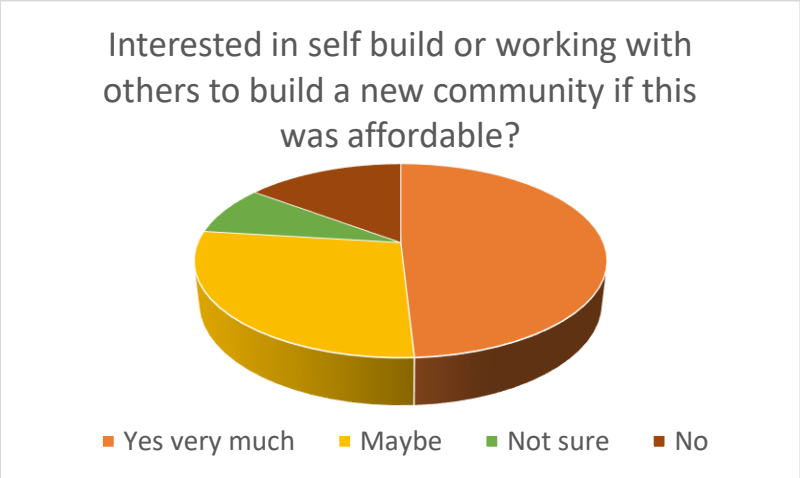


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Our home is too small for our family/household.	23.61%	55
I worry about being able to afford to pay the rent each month.	24.03%	56
I worry about being able to pay the mortgage each month.	6.87%	16
Our mortgage is so big I worry that we will never be able to pay it off.	3.00%	7
I worry about the security of my tenancy.	23.18%	54
Our home has issues that make me concerned for our well being (i.e. damp, structural issues etc)	21.46%	50
I want to buy a home but can't afford it	30.47%	71
I would like to live in a more supportive community	18.45%	43
None of the above	21.89%	51
Other	4.72%	11
Total Respondents: 233		

5 Interest in Community Led Housing

There was a strong interest in self-build and living in more supportive/integrated communities:

- Nearly 80% of people were interested in self-build or community led housing (180 respondents)
- 26% of people said living in an integrated community with mutual support was a top housing priority.
- 21% said they would like to live in a community with shared community workspace/workshops.
- 18% said not living in a supportive community made lockdown harder.



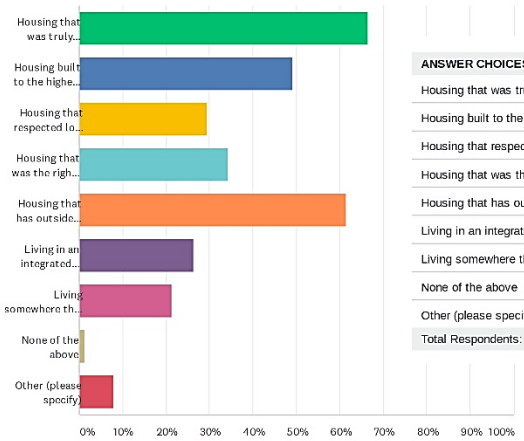
6 People's housing priorities

Headline results: People's top three priorities when it came to their housing were:

- Housing that is truly affordable 66% (149 responders)
- Housing that had outside space 62% (138 responders)
- Housing that is built to the highest environmental and energy saving standards 49% (110 responders)

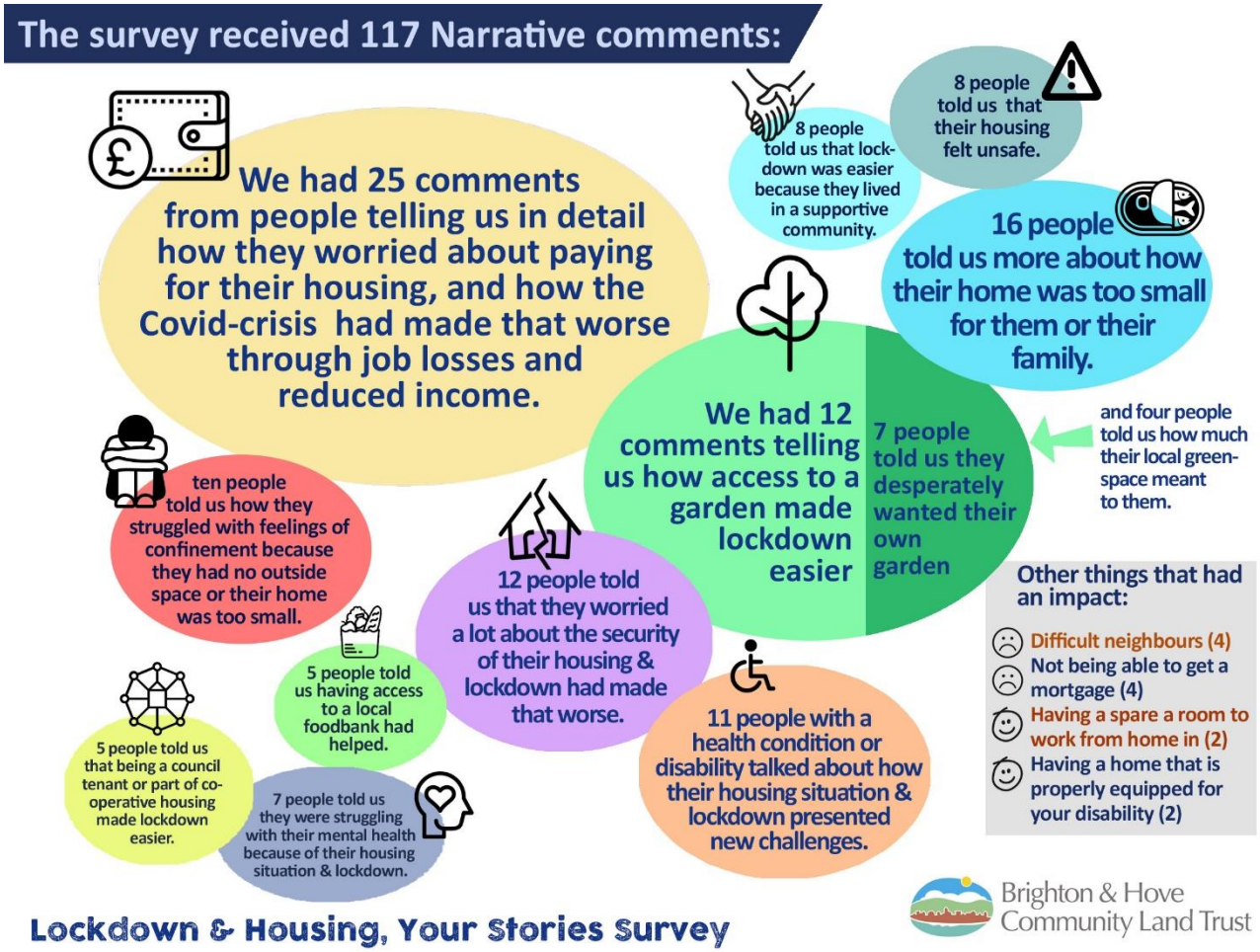
Q10 In an ideal world, what would be the top three things that would make your home/housing situation perfect? (Tick the three that are the most important to you).

Answered: 224 Skipped: 45



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Housing that was truly affordable	66.52%	149
Housing built to the highest environmental and energy saving standards	49.11%	110
Housing that respected local biodiversity and the local environment	29.46%	66
Housing that was the right size for my family/household	34.38%	77
Housing that has outside space	61.61%	138
Living in an integrated community with shared spaces and lots of mutual support.	26.34%	59
Living somewhere that I could also work from (i.e with access to studios/workshops)	21.43%	48
None of the above	1.34%	3
Other (please specify)	8.04%	18
Total Respondents: 224		

7 Narrative results – what people told us about their experiences



Some examples of what people told us in the narrative sections of the survey:

"I have been very relieved to have outdoor space but I have spent the whole of lockdown completely paranoid and out of my mind with worry that should I die, my 2 young adult aged children with health issues would find themselves in our present 3 bed temporary which would then be classed as to big for them and then would they be thrown out or end up on the streets…The fear of leaving them without a permanent home for the future has impacted on my mental health really severely and consumed me with fear."

"I'm a single mum, currently not working. Receiving universal credit…after paying all the bills I got very little money left for living. Not able to find a cheaper place to live as no one wants to rent a flat to a single mum on benefits."

"I am fleeing domestic violence but there are NO women's refuge spaces available so I will end up a rough sleeper on the streets unless the council buck up their ideas and stop asking me for ''evidence'' of DV - not everyone wants to report it to the police or has injuries they went to hospital with.... the discrimination from the council needs to stop, or they are to blame for the deaths of women and children forced to return to their risk areas, or be in a worse place on the streets than previously having a roof over their heads…"
"My children are doing lockdown in bedrooms full of damp."

"Tiny flat, I'm disabled, can't cope."

"I live with 4 children 2 which are classed as disabled in an overcrowded small 3 bed house."

"The lack of financial security is an overwhelming and terrifying reality."

"I'd love to feel secure in my home. Something affordable with a sense of community and outdoor space."

"Having no outdoor space exacerbates the feeling of confinement and has definitely affected my mood as well as my physical wellbeing."

8 Summary

When we launched our survey we had some ideas about what respondents might tell us; however, we were overwhelmed by how many people went into detail about their challenges, and the range of issues they were facing. It is impossible to study the quantative results from direct questions, and read the 117 narrative comments made and not be moved and angered by the insecure, unsafe and unfair situations people found themselves in, in terms of their housing.

It is clear that there is a profound and direct link between people's housing situation and their mental, physical, emotional and social health. It is also clear that people know what would make their situation better: affordable, secure, environmentally friendly housing with outside space that benefits local biodiversity and is part of integrated and supportive communities.

This, coupled with the fact that more than three quarters of respondents were interested in self-build, and more collaborative eco-friendly communities, presents a set of challenges and aims that community led housing (CLH) is uniquely placed to deliver. Social housing is a priority, but it does not address the needs of many of the city's residents who wouldn't qualify, or are stuck in unaffordable private rented accommodation. Having more innovative and collaborative models for social housing and ethical rental, alongside CLH would also make meeting the needs of the 9000 residents currently on the housing list more achievable; and bring money back to council coffers that currently goes in the pockets of private landlords. In light of this we are delighted that Brighton & Hove City Council recently voted, cross party and almost unanimously, to support the development of CLH in the city and to explore ways to make land affordable.

Private developments consistently fail to provide a meaningful amount of affordable housing, do not deliver true affordability, do not prioritise local environmental concerns and biodiversity, and are created for the enrichment of individuals or businesses, not local people.

The results of our survey make it clear that community led housing is a vital component of thriving, resilient communities and truly affordable and sustainable housing, in a city which is crippled by a housing crisis that affects everyone from rough sleepers to home owners.

