

October 2024



Accommodation Strategy Report

What do people want and need from accommodation as they get older in Wiltshire?



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Voice It, Hear It

Community voices inspiring positive change to local support and services.

Voice it, Hear It is an engagement project that works with people aged 18+ living in Wiltshire to get involved in shaping the health and social care services they use.

We work with people with physical disabilities, sensory needs, mental health issues, learning disabilities, neurodiversity, long term conditions, complex needs, older people and people with dementia.

We also work alongside Wiltshire Council and the Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire Integrated Care Board (BSW ICB) and people living and working in Wiltshire to co-produce, co-design and co-develop health and social care services in Wiltshire.

Voice It, Hear It is a partnership project led by Community First, working with Wiltshire Service Users' Network, Wessex Community Action, Age UK Wiltshire, Alzheimer's Support and Celebrating Age Wiltshire.

Delivered by:



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Introduction

Wiltshire Council approached Voice It, Hear It to carry out an engagement project to support with the development of its 2024–2029 Accommodation Strategy. The strategy includes four key objectives which underpin the focus of this engagement project:

1. Ensuring information about housing choices and options is easy to find.
2. Helping older people be more involved in planning for their accommodation needs in a timely way.
3. Strategically planning for sustainable housing that meets the needs and aspirations of older people now and in the future.
4. Supporting older people to live independently, in all tenures and ensuring greater availability of preventative services.

The aim of the project was to find out what people aged over 55 years have to say about remaining independent within their own home and how services can be designed to be comfortable if older residents are unable to stay in their current home. Findings from the engagement project will be used to develop the strategy and inform future housing needs for older people who live in Wiltshire.

Key Highlights

Future Housing Needs

Residents in Wiltshire are willing to proactively consider their future housing needs, especially in relation to health, mobility and ageing. The majority of older residents want to stay in their own home for as long as possible but may need adaptations and practical support to achieve this.

Finding Information About Housing

Improvements could be made to the availability of information about housing choices and options locally, as well as ensuring information is accessible to all and easy to understand. Older residents want equitable access to support and housing options regardless of their personal circumstances.

Planning for Future Housing Needs

Over half of residents suggested their housing needs were likely to change in future and, whilst most people wish to stay in their own home, over a third would consider downsizing. There was a significant preference for private bungalows with a small garden. The provision of bungalows is felt to be insufficient locally for both private owners, social housing tenants and retirement villages.

Living an Independent Life

Perception of independence in older age was strongly tied to remaining independent for as long as possible at home. In order to live an independent life, older residents may need help with

adaptations to their current home, care and support (including personal care), help with small tasks in the home or garden and staying connected to facilities and the wider community.

Living in a Care Home

Living in a care home is the least desirable option for older residents in Wiltshire. A private room with an en-suite bathroom is felt to be essential, along with outdoor space, entertainment, high quality meals and opportunities so socialise. Care home residents want to stay active and independent with frequent visits from family and friends. Care home residents would like to continue making choices for themselves.

Rural Residents

Almost half of respondents said they live in a rural area and residents in rural areas are likely to need a lot of practical support to remain in their own home as they get older. Almost a quarter of rural residents can only access essential services with help from others and some said they cannot access essential services at all. There is likely to be significant overlap between the theme of transport and access to facilities, health care and social activities for older rural residents.

Suggested approaches:

A number of suggested approaches are presented including

- Help with home adaptations
- Increased provision of bungalows,
- Centralised access to housing information
- A personalised approach to housing options for all older residents.

Factors include familiar, fair, feelings, family, friends, features, floors, facilities and fields (green space).

Engagement Methods

Voice It, Hear It worked closely with Wiltshire Council and our partner organisations to develop an Accommodation Strategy Survey. This was an online survey with a total of 37 questions covering a range of topics including:

- Demographic information
- Future housing needs
- Finding information about housing
- Planning for future housing needs
- Living an independent life
- Living in a care home
- Specific questions for rural residents
- Staying up to date with the strategy

The survey featured a range of question types including multiple choice, single choice and text boxes to capture more detailed responses. The Accommodation Strategy Survey was open for responses for eight weeks between July–September 2024.

A copy of the Accommodation Strategy Survey can be found in **Appendix 1**.

The link to complete the online survey was shared amongst partner networks including on websites and blogs, social media, email newsletters and area board briefings.

Response Rate

1,119

Survey visits

165

Total Responses

95

Completed responses

61

Partial responses

A total of 1,119 people accessed the Accommodation Strategy Survey between July and September 2024. This suggests promotional activity for the survey was effective in reaching people in the community.

- There were 165 responses in total which represents a 15% response rate.
- 95 people submitted a completed response by clicking submit at the end of the survey.
- 61 people submitted a partial response by answering some questions but not clicking submit at the end of the survey. This may indicate abandoned surveys.

Please note, figures have been rounded for this report. Figures have been calculated as a percentage of respondents answering each individual question. Not all of the respondents provided answers to all of the questions available.

Demographics

Demographic data collected as a part of the accommodation strategy survey suggest that the survey captured a broad range of views amongst older adults in Wiltshire as it relates to their current and future accommodation needs.

The majority of adults in our sample were aged 26-64 years, have a disability or health condition and live in social housing. Almost a third live in their own home.

Typical Respondent Profiles

60%

A woman aged between 26-64 (with or without a disability or health condition) who lives in social housing or her own home. She may also live in private rented accommodation.

40%

A man aged 65+ with a disability or health condition who lives in social housing or his own home. He may also live in supported accommodation.

Age Range

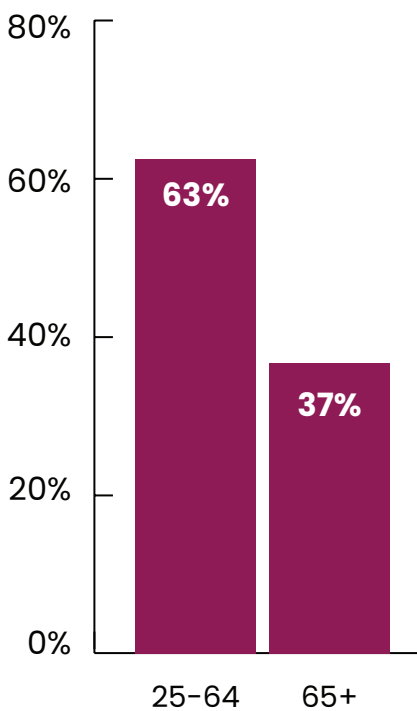


Figure 1: Respondent age ranges

Gender

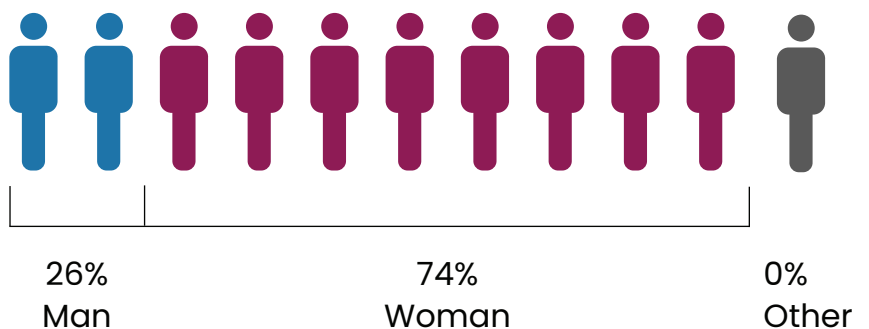


Figure 2: Gender of respondents

Age and Gender

- All survey respondents were adults aged between 25–64 (63%) or aged 65+ (37%). There were no responses from young adults (18–25) or young people aged under 18.
- 74% of responses were from women, with a further 23% from men. None of the survey respondents said they identified as non-binary, transgender or other gender.
- Amongst individuals who responded to the survey, the majority of women (65%) were aged between 26–64 years, with 35% who were over 65 years. 56% of responding men were aged 26–64 and 44% were aged over 65 years.
- Male respondents were on average older than female respondents.

Disability and Existing Care and Support Needs

- 58% of respondents said they had a disability or existing care and support need. 42% did not have a disability or care/support need.
- Overall, 79% of men who responded to the survey said they had a disability or care and support need, this was significantly higher compared to women (52%).

Housing Situation

- Over half (55%) of all survey respondents said they currently live in social housing.
- A further 32% live in their own home.
- A small number live in supported accommodation (8%), a private rented home (3%), with a family member (2%) or accommodation tied to their job (1%).
- Survey respondents were broadly happy with their current housing situation, with an average happiness rating of 4 out of 5 (4.08). Half of all respondents rated their current housing situation as 5 out of 5 stars for happiness.
- 19% of respondents rated their current housing situation as 3 stars which suggests their current accommodation is satisfactory.
- In total 9% of respondents rated their current living situation as 1–2 stars. Overall, respondents who lived in their own home were happiest (4.34), followed by social housing (4.18), supported accommodation (3.50) living with a family member (3.57) and private rented accommodation (2.25).

Star Rating	%
★ Very Unhappy	4%
★★ Unhappy	5%
★★★ Satisfied	19%
★★★★ Happy	22%
★★★★★ Very happy	50%

Feedback suggests people are happiest overall in their own home, followed by social housing. There is more dissatisfaction with supported accommodation, living with a family member and (in particular) a private rented home. This feedback suggests that stability of tenure is likely to be a feature in overall satisfaction.

Project Findings

Future Housing Needs

Respondents were asked to consider their future housing needs, including where they want to live and what sort of accommodation would meet their needs. 80% of all survey respondents said they had considered their future housing needs. This suggests that people are broadly aware that their housing needs might change in the future.

Amongst those who had considered their future needs around housing, respondents were asked what made them consider their future housing needs. This was an open ended question with 91 responses. Responses were analysed and coded for key themes which are highlighted in below, along with a selection of verbatim quotes. Some respondents mentioned more than one theme in their answer.

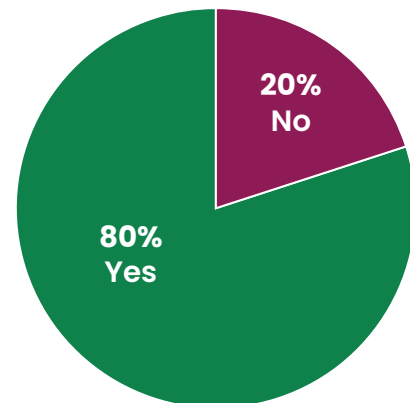


Figure 3: % of respondents who had considered their future housing needs

Health and Mobility

Almost half (48%) of survey respondents mentioned health and mobility as a key reason they had considered their future accommodation needs. Some people had recently been diagnosed with a health condition or had been living with a disability or health condition for some time, and considered how this might impact upon their mobility and moving around their home in the future. Concerns about mobility included stairs and steps, location of the toilet in their home, accessible bathing facilities, mobility scooter or wheelchair access, a current lack of access for a vehicle and general maintenance of their home or garden due to reduced mobility or anticipated reduced mobility.

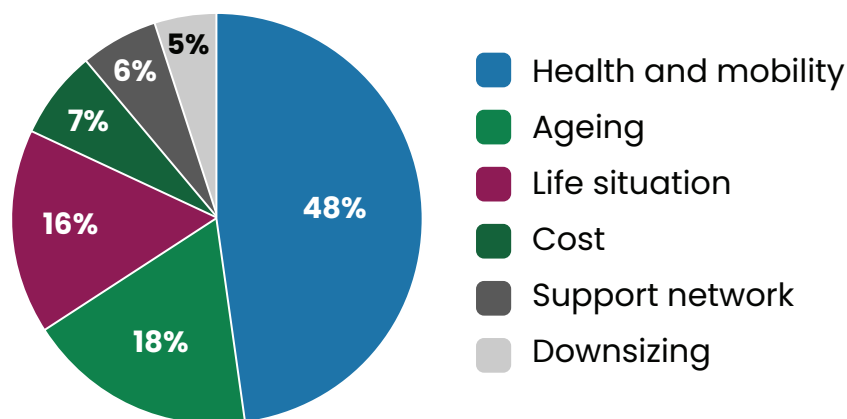


Figure 4: Themes associated with future housing needs

"I can't manage the stairs to my first floor flat."

"My brother who is 66 lives downstairs and sometimes struggles to go upstairs to the toilet in time due to diabetes."

“As my body continues to fail I will need renovations to the bathroom, to be in a single level home or one with a lift. It scares me because there is not much of that in England.”

“Having a shower fitted would be a big help as getting in and out of the bath is difficult.”

“Several falls on steps outside my bungalow, also if I have to start using mobility scooter or wheelchair unable to get it indoors. I’m struggling with the steps as it is.”

Ageing

18% of respondents said that ageing was a factor in considering their future housing needs. Whilst there was overlap between the themes of health and mobility and ageing amongst survey respondents (i.e. reduced mobility due to age), these responses were categorised separately to highlight the number of young people who had considered their future accommodation needs in anticipation of getting older, rather than those who were currently experiencing age-related health or mobility issues.

“I am aging, and my accommodation needs could change.”

“Age. I hope to remain in my council home for many years yet, but I’ve thought about the options if and when I need to move elsewhere.”

“Aware of difficulties relatives have had as they have become older.”

“Will I be able to maintain my current house or garden when I’m older?”

Life Situation

16% of respondents considered recent changes in their life situation or how this may change in future when thinking about their future housing needs. Responses included death of a spouse, retirement, family circumstances, age of children and their need for privacy/space and caring duties. Some respondents said their current housing was unsuitable for their needs. Several respondents said they were just ‘planning’ for the future rather than stating a specific reason for considering their future housing needs.

"Having my 88 year old Mum living with me and caring for her."

"Current housing situation does not meet my needs."

"Being recently widowed."

"Son is getting older and needs more space."

"On retirement deciding where to move that is right for us."

Cost

Cost was mentioned by 16% of survey respondents as a factor in considering their future housing needs. This included the cost of living, rental/house prices, bedroom tax, energy prices and income after retirement.

"Our rent doubled last year."

"House prices, cost of living, housing energy prices."

"Avoiding bedroom tax."

"Can I afford to remain in my current home?"

"I want my own space! But I cannot afford it on my own."

Support Network

6% of respondents said their support network was a factor in considering their future housing needs. This included moving to be closer to family and access to social activities. Some respondents suggested they were concerned about living alone in future and who would be able to help them. Others were concerned about not being able to drive and becoming isolated.

"Worry about isolation if unable to drive anymore. I live in a rural area."

"Potential move out of area to be near family."

"I'm on my own with an autoimmune condition."

"I am single and may need help in the future."

"Access to community if I can't drive, social isolation..."

Downsizing

5% of respondents said they had considered downsizing when thinking about their future housing needs. Reasons for wanting to downsize included health issues, being unable to manage a bigger home, a large, unmanageable garden and a desire to downsize but no suitable property available e.g. a bungalow rather than a family home.

"I live in large family home with husband. Have been trying to downsize for years. No such luck only swapping available. A bungalow would be great but never available."

"I have MS which is starting to become more challenging. I won't need such a big home."

"My garden is so big that I am unable to manage it properly now. I am 77 years of age, and I am told there is no room on the gardening scheme. I also find stairs difficult now but am never selected for a bungalow when I bid for one. I have a three bed roomed house."

"Decreasing mobility. Downsizing to something more manageable."

"Smaller place with no stairs."

When asked about future housing needs, 20% of respondents said they had not considered this. These individuals were asked whether there were any reasons for this. Reasons included being satisfied with current accommodation, not wanting to move again, not wanting to leave their current home in future and not wanting to think or plan for the future at the current time.

"Hopefully won't need to think about it until later. Buried head in sand!"

"Think my housing needs are suitable for the foreseeable future."

"Love my home and can't see me ever leaving."

"Trying to live in the moment."

"Love my home and can't see me ever leaving."

"At nearly 80 I do not plan on moving."

Planning for Future Housing

Survey respondents were asked whether they trusted people in their lives who could help them make plans for their future housing. Respondents were invited to select more than one option (if applicable).

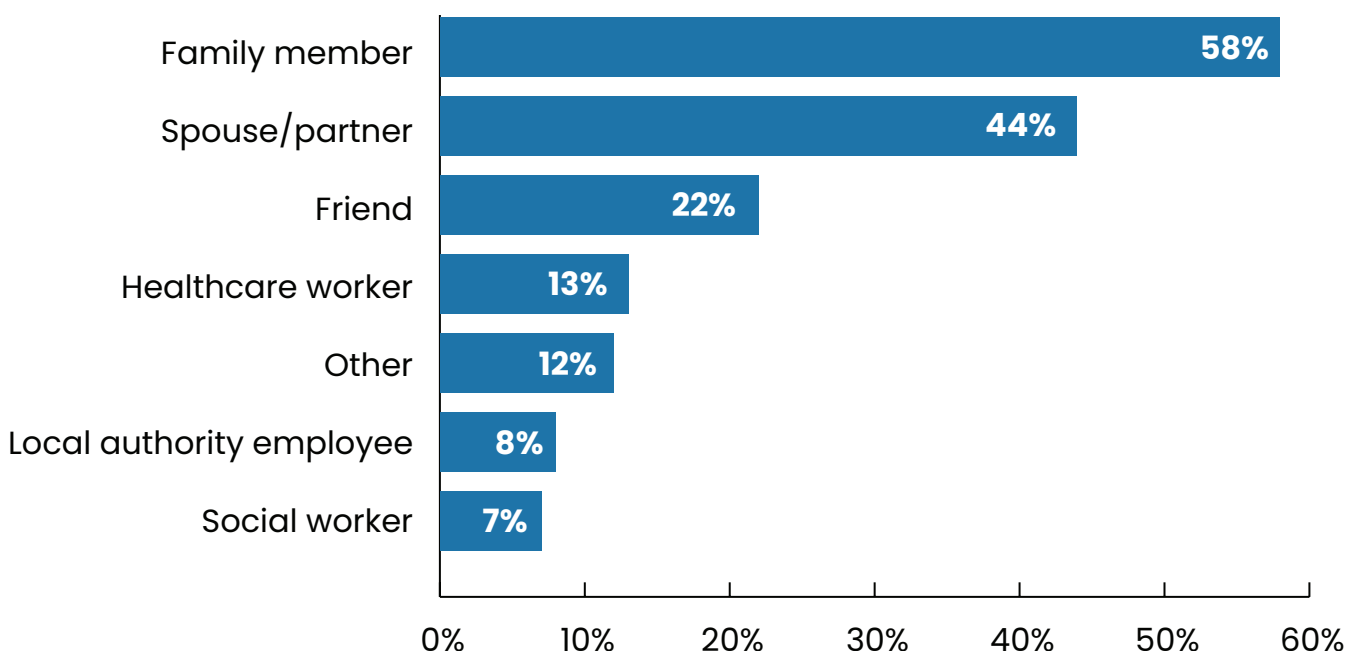


Figure 5: Planning for future housing needs – trusted people

58% of respondents said they would talk to a family member if they needed help to make plans for their future accommodation needs. 44% said they would talk to a partner or spouse and 22% would talk to a friend.

Some survey respondents also said they would talk to a professional, this included healthcare workers (13%), local authority employees (8%) and social workers (7%). 12% of respondents selected 'Other' in response to this question. The majority of other responses were from people who suggested they would have no one to help them make plans for their future housing needs.

Where do people want to live?

Survey respondents were asked what sort of housing they might want or need in the future. This was an open-ended question with some examples included as a prompt: 'stay in your own home, downsize, housing with support.' There were 112 responses to this question, responses have been summarised and grouped.

Feedback is presented in the charts on the next page.

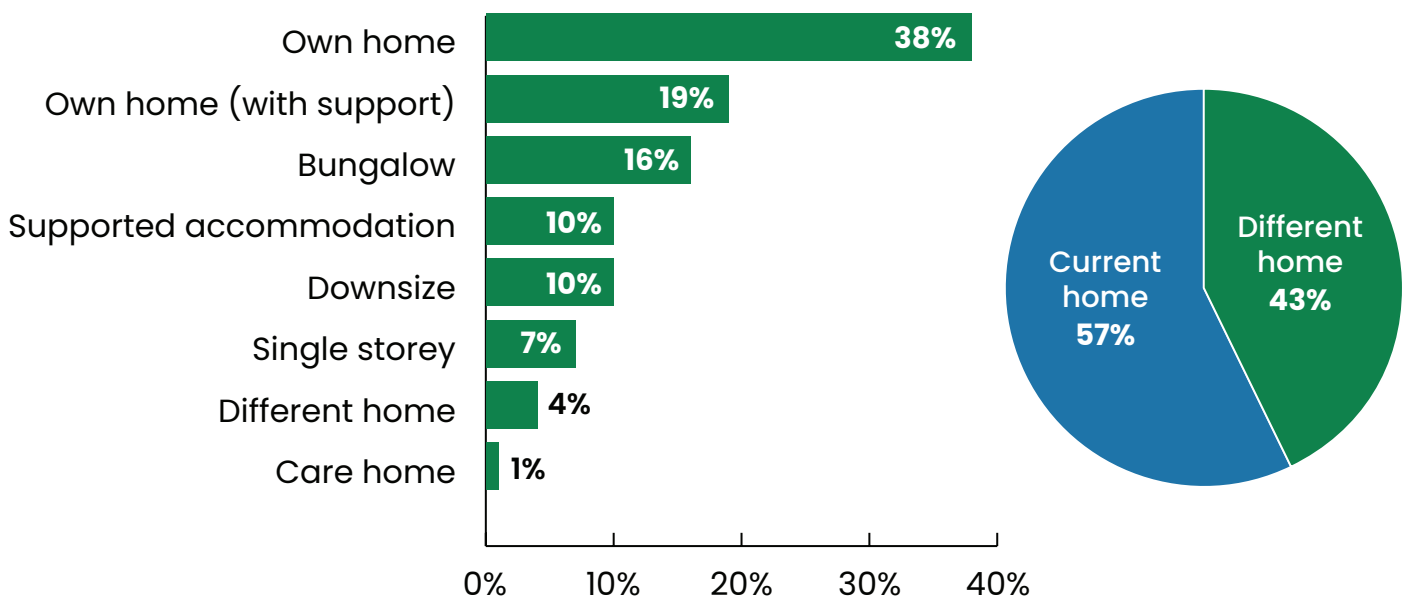


Figure 6: Preferred accommodation type for future housing needs

When thinking about their future housing needs, 38% of respondents said they wanted to stay in their own home, or in their own home with additional support (19%). Amongst those who said they may need support to stay in their own home, some respondents said they would need adaptations to their property to help with mobility issues. This could include stair lifts, ramps, bars, accessible toilets/washrooms and adapting their home to live on one-level e.g. access to a downstairs toilet. Others suggested they may need help with tasks in the home or garden so they can remain in their own home in future. A large garden in particular was felt to be difficult to maintain for some people as they get older.

Amongst people who would consider moving to a different home in future, 16% of respondents said a bungalow would be most suitable for their needs, an additional 7% of respondents said they wanted single storey living e.g. a ground floor apartment or did not specify what type of single-storey property they preferred. Some respondents suggested there were not enough suitable bungalows in their local area or that they had already requested help to move into a bungalow and been refused.

10% of respondents said they would consider supported accommodation in future. Some people used terms like 'extra care housing' or 'community type housing' to describe the sort of housing they would need. This would include private accommodation with communal facilities and a warden. 10% of people said they would like to downsize in future and 4% said they would consider moving to a different property. 1% suggested a care home may be an option.

A selection of comments are included on the next page.

“Having lived in my home for over 40 years I would be very reluctant to downsize and leave. I would love to stay here if I could get practical help with house work, gardening and shopping.”

“Possibly downsize, but I would be keen to remain in my local area to maintain my contacts and friends. I get on well with my neighbours and this is important for me. I love gardening so a garden is essential.”

“A two bed bungalow would be ideal, but Wiltshire housing said we couldn’t have one!”

“Downsize to over 60’s type housing scheme.”

“Support to remain in current home and keep independent. Adjustments to current home to aid my safety i.e. hand rails.”

“Hopefully it would be possible for me to remain where I am, perhaps with some help.”

Finding Information about Housing

Survey respondents were asked about how they would find information about different housing choices and options available for them. Respondents were also asked whether they have looked for information and if it was easy to find, easy to understand and provided what they needed in terms of information. They were also asked for general comments on looking for information about housing choices.

Survey respondents were asked where they would go to find information about different housing choices and options available for them. There were 98 responses to this question.

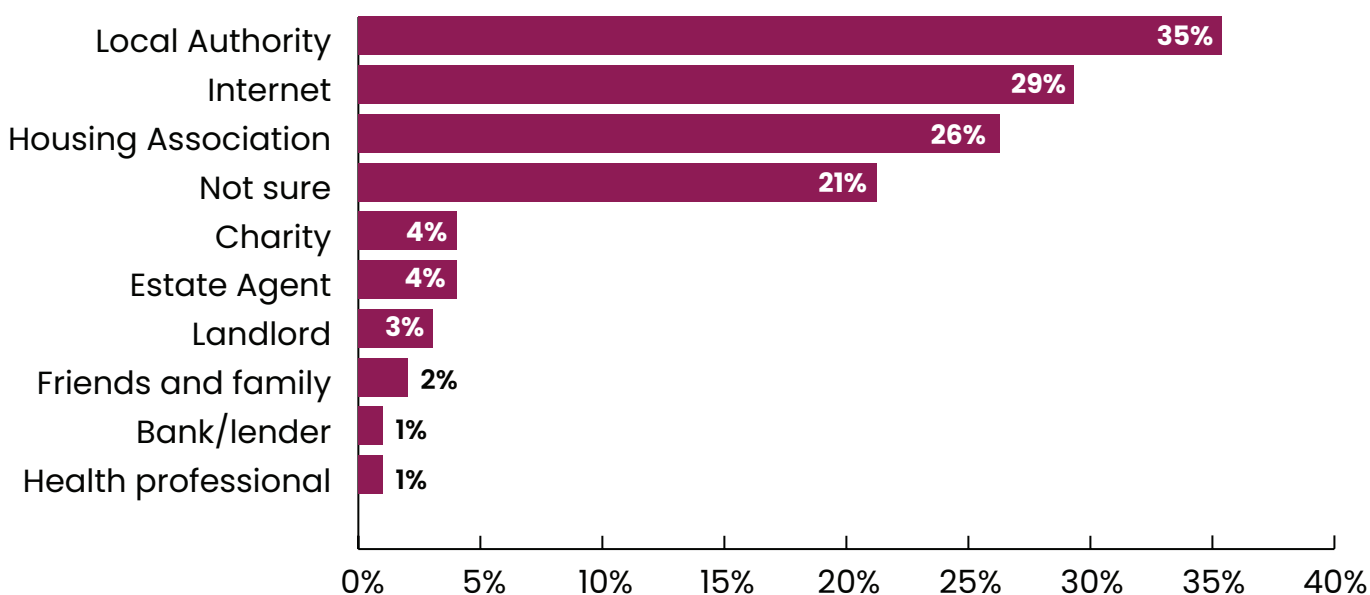


Figure 7: Preferred source of information relating to housing options

When asked how they would find information about housing options, 35% of respondents said they would contact the Local Authority. This included the Housing Officer, Adult Social Care and a Social Worker. Most respondents who said they would contact the Local Authority wrote 'Wiltshire Council' or 'the Council' as the first place they would look for information and options.

29% of respondents said they would use the internet to find information about housing options. Most people did not specify which website or online resource they would use to find information. Amongst those that did, Rightmove, Purple Bricks, local housing websites, Gov.uk, Homes4Wiltshire and the Home Swapper website were mentioned.

A further 26% of respondents said they would approach their Housing Association for information about housing options. Selwood Housing was mentioned frequently. Many survey respondents also mentioned the Local Authority alongside their Housing Association as a source of information. This suggests that people are likely to approach both organisations if they need help with information about housing options.

4% of respondents said they would approach a charity for information. Charities included Age UK, Citizens Advice Wiltshire and Help the Aged. A further 4% would approach a local estate agent, 3% would ask their landlord and 2% would approach family/friends. 1% said they would seek information/advice from their lender (a bank) and 1% said they would ask a health professional.

Overall, 21% of respondents suggested they did not know where to go to find information about different housing choices and options for them. Amongst those that were unsure about where to find information about housing options and choices, the majority of respondents were people who live in their own home.

Searching for Information

Amongst those who had previously searched for information about housing options and choices, survey respondents were asked whether the information was easy to find, easy to understand and whether it gave them what they need in terms of their own personal circumstances (i.e. whether it was helpful). 113 respondents answered the questions relating to information gathering.

The majority (75%) of respondents said they had not searched for information about housing choices. The chart below shows a breakdown of responses. Individuals who did not search for information are indicated as 'N/A' on the chart.

Please see the chart on the next page

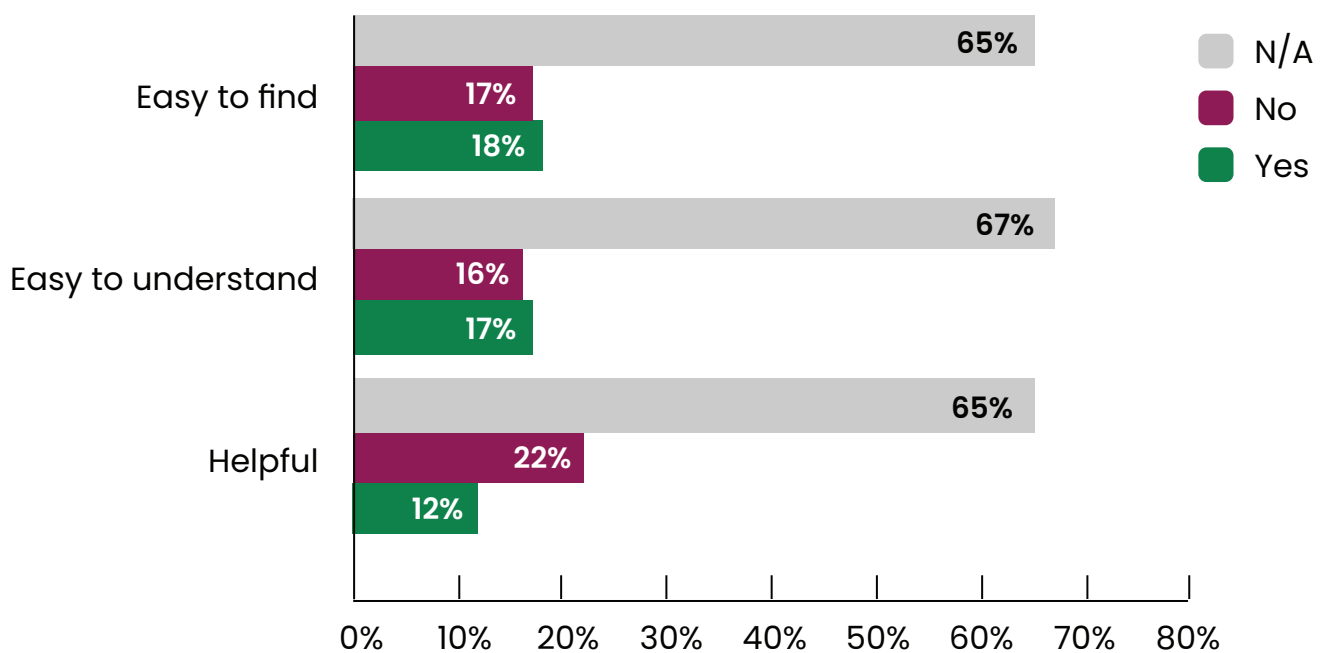


Figure 8: Assessment of information about housing options

- Amongst those who had searched for information, 18% of respondents said the information was easy to find and 17% indicated it was not easy to find.
- Once people had searched for information, 17% said the information was easy to understand and 16% indicated it was hard to understand.
- Finally, amongst survey respondents who had search for information, 12% suggested the information was helpful for them and gave them what they needed for their personal circumstances. 22% suggested the information about housing choices and options was unhelpful when thinking about their personal circumstances.

Whilst the majority of individuals who responded to the survey reported no experience of searching for housing-related options and choices, those who did search for information reported generally low levels of satisfaction with what they found. This suggests improvements could be made to the availability of information about housing choices and options locally, as well as ensuring the information is accessible and easy to understand for a range of audiences.

Information about Housing Options and Choices – General Comments

Survey respondents were invited to leave a general comment about access to information about housing choices and options. There were 43 comments in total, approximately half of these comments were from people who indicated they had nothing further to add e.g. 'no'.

Some individuals suggested there was a lack of accessible information about housing choices and options, including where to find help. Some comments also suggested

the information was not user-friendly or well publicised. One person suggested that Citizens Advice was an option for navigating information about housing options, but the organisation no longer offers a walk-in service which made it less accessible for them. Some people felt the information could be made more accessible and user-friendly for people with disabilities.

Availability of housing information and options for single people and people in private rental or homeowners was felt to be insufficient for some respondents. One commenter suggested that social housing prioritises couples and families over single people. Some concerns were highlighted around the availability of long-term housing options, particularly for people with disabilities and health conditions.

There was some frustration with the process of accessing information and support. These included reports of long wait times, barriers to accessing support, lengthy forms and communication between organisations. This included one respondent who was unable to access help from the housing team as their doctor did not provide a letter within a one-month timeframe.

Another respondent reported frustration with the process of accessing housing adaptations offered through Local Authority disability grants. This person suggested the process is too lengthy and current needs are considered rather than the long-term needs of people with disabilities and health conditions.

“I have had friends looking for affordable housing who have struggled. Seems to be little available for single people.”

“Too much is online like applying for housing. You only get 15 minutes to fill out a HUGE form!”

“I tried talking to Wiltshire Council but could not get hold of anyone, the call wait times and call back service was very bad.”

“Housing adaptations via local authority disability facilities grants take a long time and only considered with present issues does not plan for future i.e. my husband will eventually need a wheelchair. We cannot get doors widened until he has one which means up to 18 months waiting for adaptation. We have just had a wetroom fitted, the doors could have been added to this grant.”

“Really didn’t help at all. Still unclear about where to go for help and citizens advice is no longer walk in you have to book.”

“It could be simpler for people with disabilities. Long term housing should be considered to reduce the stress of moving.”

Planning for Future Housing Needs

Survey respondents were asked about planning for their future housing needs. This included whether their housing needs might change in future, what sort of home they might need in future and the types of features they would need in a potential future home.

Survey respondents were asked to think about where they currently live and whether they think this would need to change to meet their future needs. 111 respondents answered this question and a breakdown of responses is displayed in the chart.

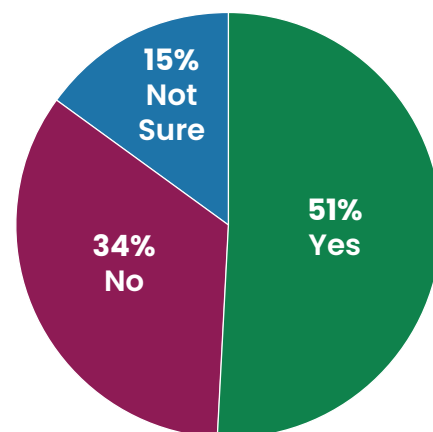


Figure 9: % of respondents who said their housing situation would change in future

Amongst those who said their housing needs would change in future; respondents were invited to leave an open-ended comment with more detail about what would need to be different for them. 55 respondents left a comment. Comments are summarised below.

The majority of comments related to stairs and steps within the current home which respondents felt may become difficult in future. This was especially the case for people with an upstairs bathroom. Some people suggested a stairlift may help them overcome this issue and remain in their home. Some users also suggested they would need to make changes to their bathroom in the future for example to install a wetroom, walk in bath or shower. A shower over a bath was felt to be unmanageable for some respondents. Others suggested they might need a downstairs toilet.

Some survey respondents indicated they may need adaptations and aids to help them in their home in future. This included ramps, bars and hoists. Other comments said they would ideally like to live in single-storey accommodation or adapt their current home so they are living on one level e.g. with a bedroom and toilet downstairs. One person suggested they may need an extension to their living room to make space for a bed.

Some individuals said a large garden may be difficult for them to manage in future and suggested they might move to a property without a garden or a smaller garden/courtyard. Some respondents indicated that they would need better parking access and somewhere to park a mobility scooter. A small number of respondents said they would consider downsizing to smaller accommodation such as a bungalow.

A selection of comments can be found on the next page.

“Multi-floor and steps everywhere here. Also garden and courtyard, so none of these, or just a smaller garden.”

“If walking upstairs became difficult, I’ll need a lift.”

“Probably more wheelchair friendly access. Downstairs bedroom. Mobility scooter storage.”

“Have a downstairs toilet would be very helpful.”

“Just a few more safety bars installed.”

“Wetroom instead of over bath shower.”

Preferred Accommodation Type

Survey respondents were asked what sort of home they might need in the future which would meet their choice and needs. There were 100 responses to this question which was a multiple choice question. Please note, some respondents selected more than one option as part of their answer.

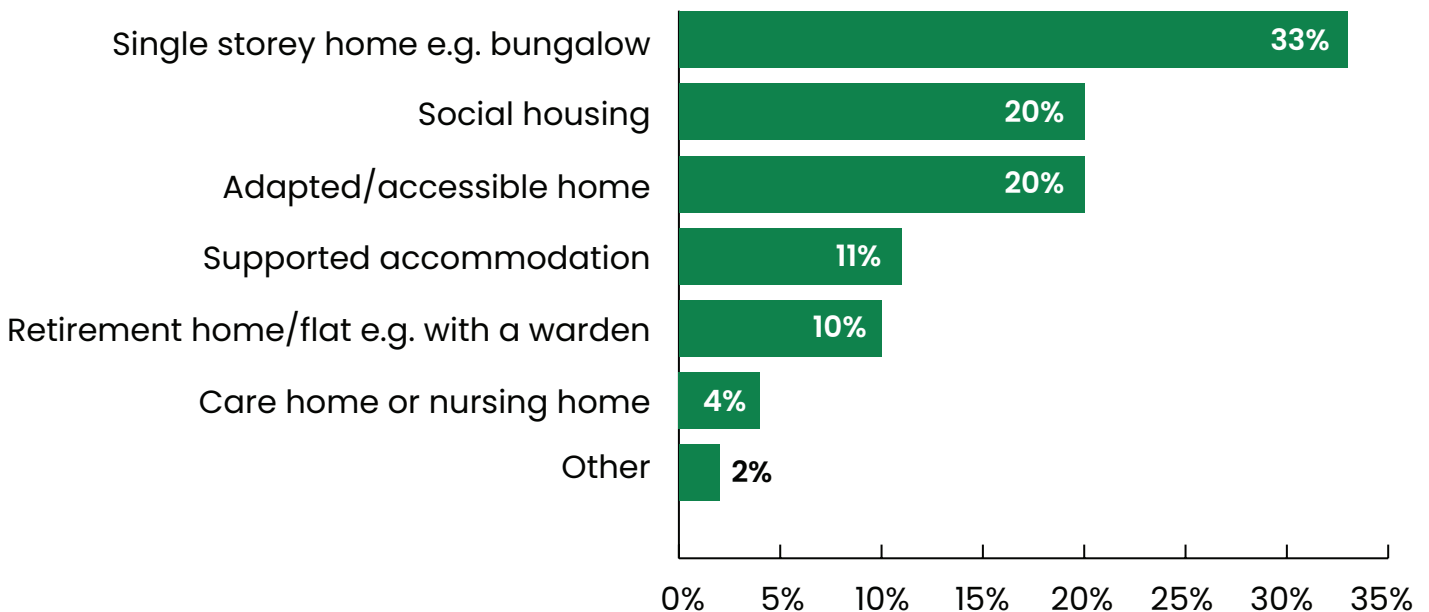


Figure 10: Preferred future accommodation type

A third (33%) of survey respondents said a single-storey private home such as a bungalow or ground floor flat would meet their needs in future. 20% said social housing would be their choice and 20% selected an accessible or adapted home. Based on responses to a previous question in the survey, this is likely to be from homeowners who want to stay in their own home as long as possible but may need adaptations such as stair lifts and mobility aids to help them stay independent in their own home.

11% of respondents said supported accommodation would meet their needs and choices in future. 10% selected a retirement home or flat (e.g. with a warden) and 4% said they would choose a care home or nursing home. There were a small number of other comments (2%) which were from people who said they wanted to stay in their own home, needed better parking or said they did not know what sort of home would meet their future needs.

Important Housing Features

Alongside the type of accommodation they would prefer in future, survey respondents were also asked what type of features would be important for them in a home as they get older. This was a multiple choice question which was answered by 109 respondents. Please note, some respondents selected more than one option as part of their answer.

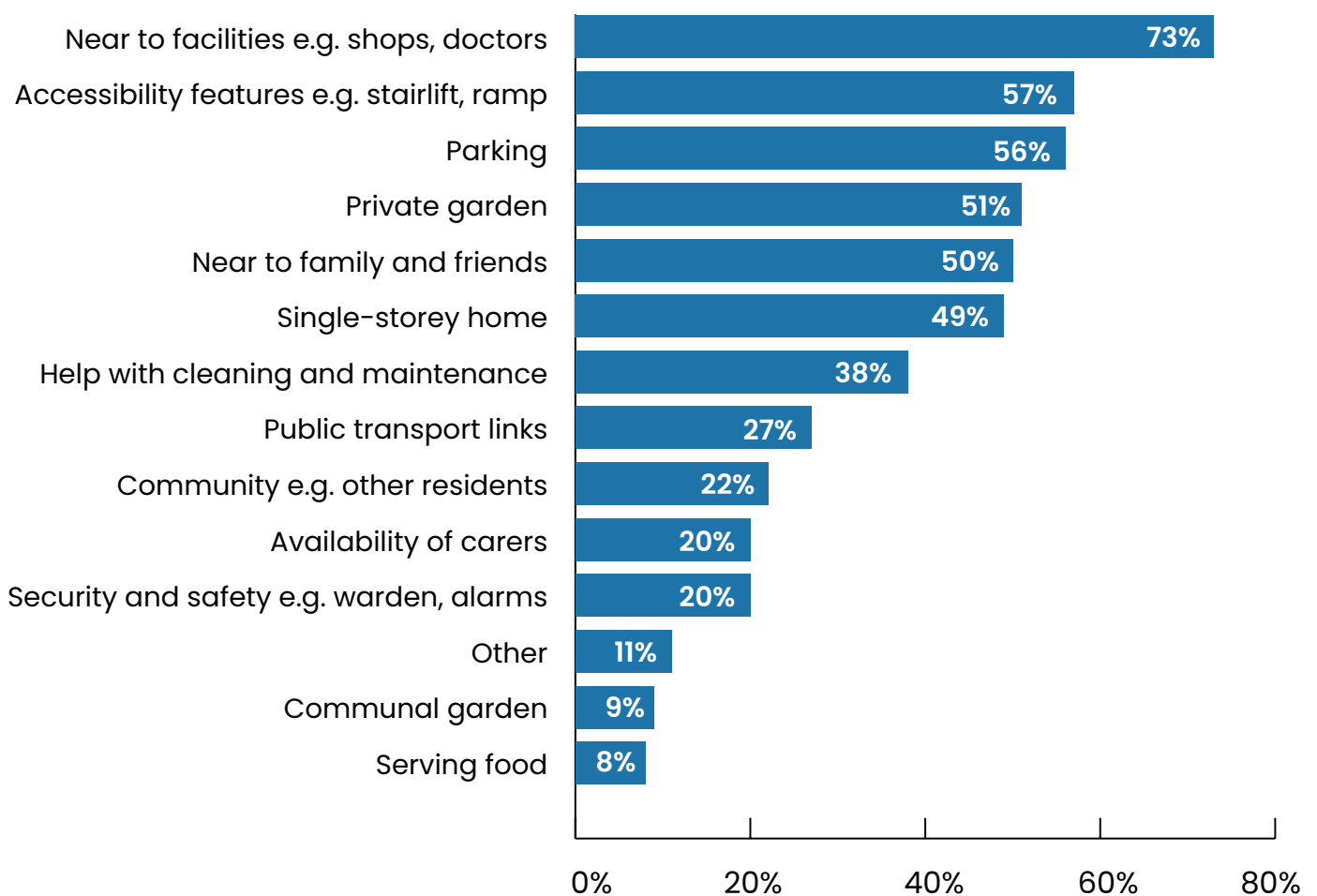


Figure 11: Important features for future accommodation

Just under three quarters (73%) of respondents said they would like to be near to local facilities such as shops and doctors. Over half of all respondents said their future home would need accessibility features (57%), parking (56%), a private garden (51%) and be near to family and friends (50%). Just under half of respondents said they would need a single-storey home in future.

Other features that were selected by survey respondents as important features for a home as they get older included help with cleaning and maintenance (38%), close to public transport networks (27%), near to other residents e.g. older residents (22%), carer availability (20%), security features such as alarms, wardens and a sign-in desk (20%), a communal garden (9%) and serving food (8%). Some respondents selected 'other' and the majority of comments were absorbed into the multiple choice options outlined in the chart. Additional comments included temperature control, no neighbours (e.g. younger, noisy neighbours) and the ability to have pets.

Using the information outlined above (and elsewhere in the report), the ideal future home for a person as they get older is outlined in the box below.

- 1. Is a single-storey, private home – preferably a bungalow.**
- 2. Has a small, private garden or courtyard (which is easy to maintain).**
- 3. Has safety bars and a walk in shower, bath or wetroom.**
- 4. Is located near to a town or village with facilities and other people.**
- 5. Has adequate parking.**

Respondents were asked if they had any additional comments to make about the features they would like to see in a potential future home as they get older. There were 47 comments in total. Comments closely mirrored feedback already shared in this report. To avoid unnecessary repetition, please see the sections called 'Preferred Accommodation Type' and 'Important Housing Features' which provide a comprehensive outline of feedback shared.

In additional comments, some respondents wanted to highlight that it was important for them to be able to have a pet as some types of accommodation do not currently allow pets. There were also some comments and concerns about the cost of utilities.

Living an Independent Life

Survey respondents were asked about living an independent life and what matters most to them. This included practical things they might need to live independently, support or services they might need access to and consideration of alternatives for those who may not be able to remain in their own home.

Respondents were asked to think about the future and what practical things they might need to live independently. This was an open-ended question with 68 responses. Responses have been analysed for key themes, along with a selection of quotes.

Please see the chart on the next page

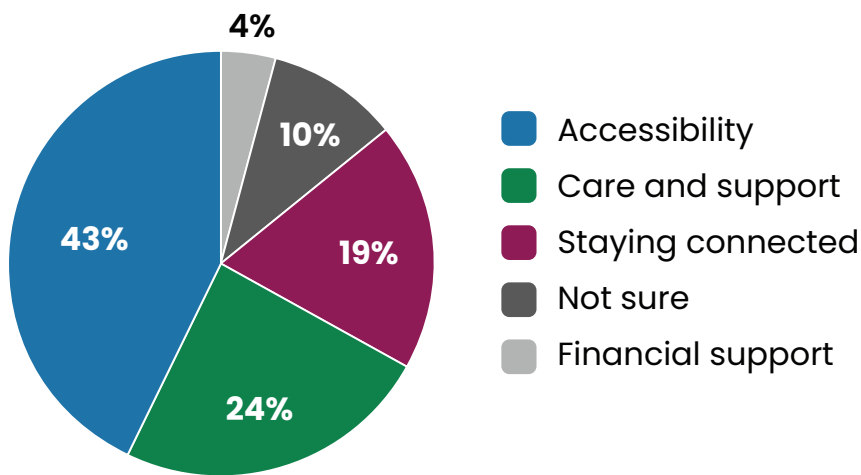


Figure 12: Themes associated with practical support needed to live an independent life

43% of respondents said they would need help with accessibility features including bars, rails, ramps, wheelchair access, adapted bathrooms and parking in order to remain independent in their own home in future.

24% said they would need help with care and support including personal care, help around the home or garden and help with shopping, getting out of the house and accessing medical care.

Staying connected was important for 19% of survey respondents. This included public transport and proximity to the community, including shops, medical care and other community facilities. Some comments included concerns about not being able to drive and becoming isolated in older age.

10% of respondents said they were unsure what practical things they would need to remain independent in their home in future. A small number of comments (4%) were from people who said they may need financial assistance or support for example grants for adaptations.

“Easy maintenance. Wide accessible doors. Large walk in shower with seat.”

“Carer support to bathe, shop, clean home and achieve daily tasks.”

“Help in the garden, someone (or a place I can safely contact) for odd jobs which I cannot do myself. Help with cleaning.”

“I might not be able to drive as an older person so I would need to be near to shops and doctors etc.”

“Availability of local bus services and bus stops nearby.”

“Access to grants to make changes to my home.”

Support and Services to Live Independently

Survey respondents were asked what support and services they felt they might need to live independently. This was an open-ended question with 61 responses. Responses have been analysed for key themes, along with a selection of quotes.

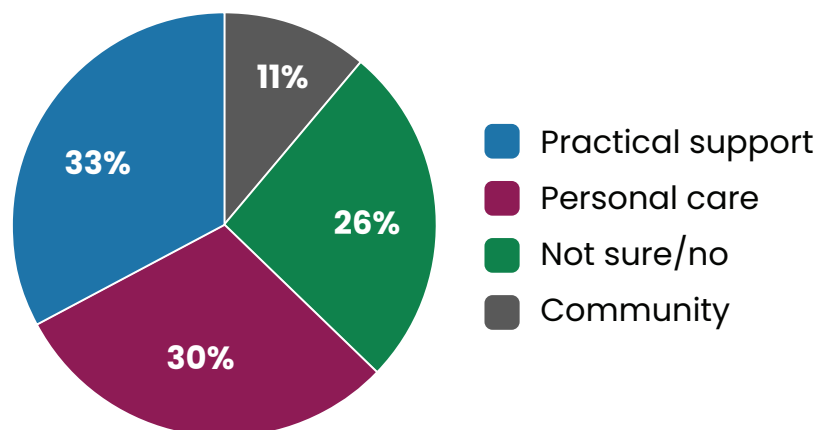


Figure 13: Themes associated with support and services needed to live an independent life

A third (33%) of survey respondents said they thought they might need practical support services to help them live independently. This included help around the home and garden (including cleaning) and help to get out and about. Some of the support required aligns with 'Good Neighbour' services offered by some Wiltshire Link Schemes.

30% of respondents said they may need personal care services in future. This includes carers in the home and health care professionals such as district nursing and GP care. 26% of responses were from people who were unsure about what support and services they might need to live independently in future. Some people also indicated that they did not think they would need or want any such support.

11% of respondents said community support and services were important to help them live independently in future. This included opportunities to be around other people, access to shops and public transport such as a bus service.

"I already get some help with cleaning, tidying, dog walking, ironing, and gardening, I would need this, and probably personal care in due course, statistically speaking."

"As I get older and possibly more infirm - help at home, shopping, getting out, doctor appointments."

"Facilities for socialising, film club, book club etc I am not a bingo playing, tv soap watching type of person."

"Probably personal care. Dressing/bathing."

Alternatives to Remaining at Home

Survey respondents were asked what sort of alternative they would wish for if for any reason they were unable to remain in their own home. This was an open-ended question with 75 responses. Responses have been analysed for key themes, along with a selection of quotes.

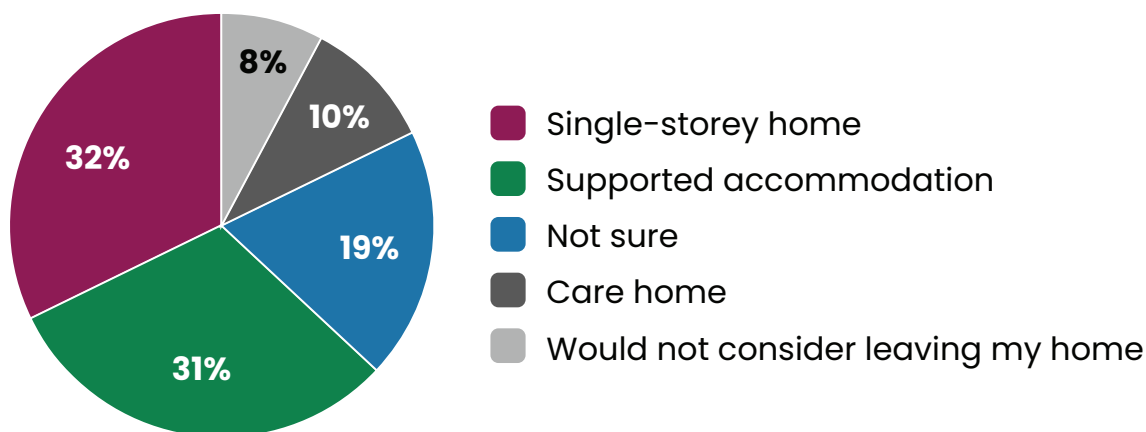


Figure 13: Themes associated with preferred alternatives to remaining at home

Almost a third (32%) of respondents said they would want to live in single-storey accommodation if they were unable to remain in their home. Most would prefer a private bungalow with or without a small garden. 31% of survey respondents said they would consider supported accommodation if they were unable to remain in their own home. This included a community for older residents with private living space, communal facilities and a warden.

19% of respondents said they were unsure and 10% said they would consider a care home if this was needed in future.

8% of survey respondents said they would not consider any alternative to their current home and suggested they would not want to leave their home under any circumstances.

"If there was time I could not remain in my own home, a place where its warden controlled like a bungalow community."

"Bungalow with a small garden."

"I would want my private space but maybe in a retirement community, I think I would look at this as an option. I would want a garden."

"Care home or retirement home with warden services."

"I really don't want to move from my current home."

"Need to stay in my own home."

Living in a Care Home

Survey respondents were asked about living in a care home. This included the facilities they would like to see provided, the location of the care home and how they might find information about local care homes if needed.

Respondents were asked what facilities they would like to see if they needed to live in a care home. This was a multiple choice question with 89 responses. Please note, some respondents selected more than one option.

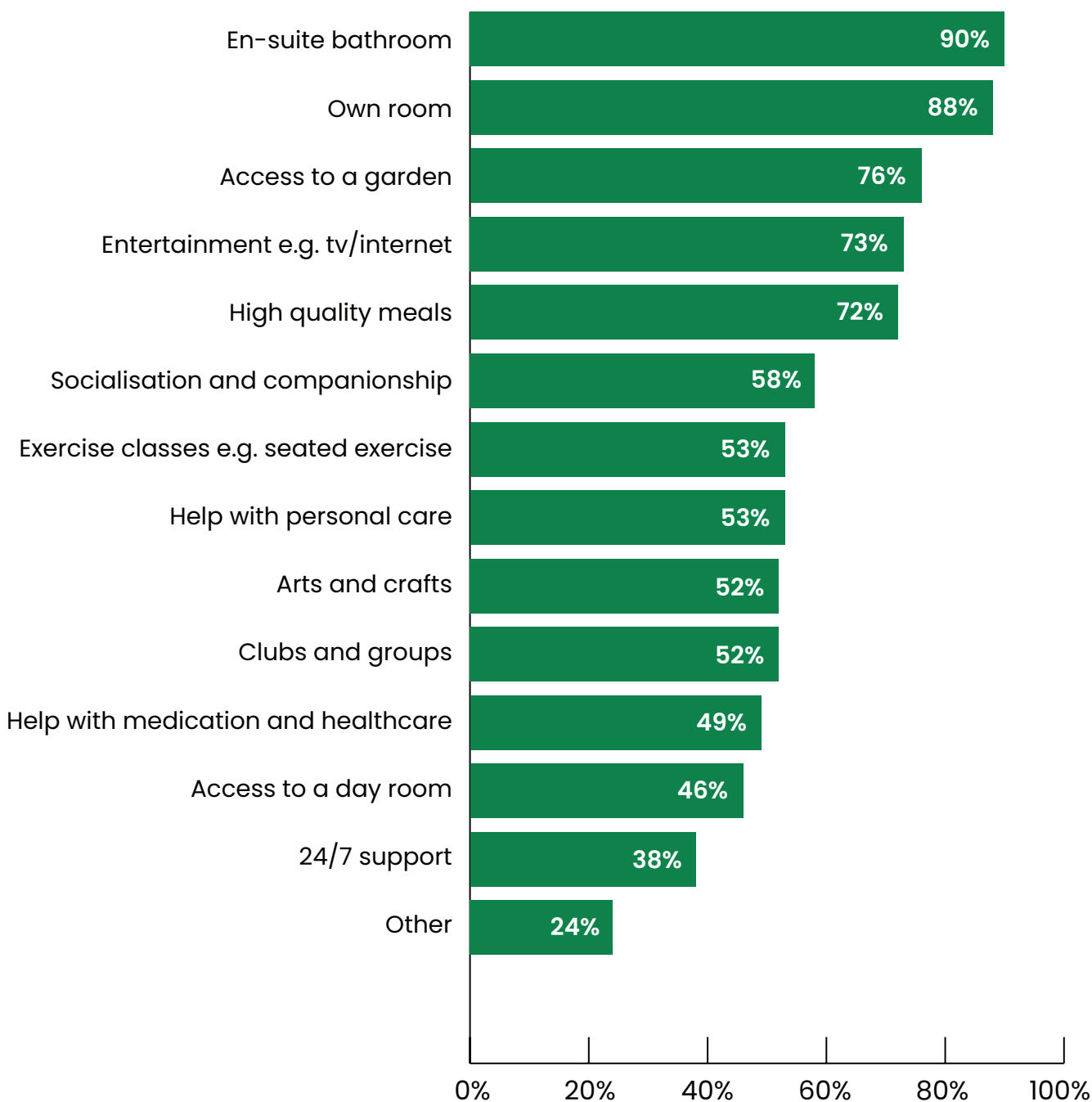


Figure 14: Facilities requested if living in a care home

The vast majority of survey respondents (90%) would want an en-suite bathroom and 88% would want a private room in a care home. Over 70% said they would want access to a garden, entertainment and high-quality meals. Almost half of all survey respondents felt they would want all of the features included in the above chart. Fewer (38%) would expect to see 24/7 support, but this is still a relatively high figure.

Other responses included a swimming pool, flexible visiting hours for friends and family, pets, day trips, help with laundry and a place for family to stay. Two respondents said they would want to be able to make their own decisions and be independent if they needed to live in a care home e.g. being able to go out.

“Trained staff who know my life history, care plan that involves me in all decisions, listen to me, freedom to go out unless I am living with dementia.”

“Need to control my own life and make my own decisions.”

“Possibly space for family to visit.”

“Pets being allowed.”

Using the chart above, the ideal future care home has the following features:

1. **A private room with an en-suite bathroom.**
2. **Access to a garden or outdoor space.**
3. **Entertainment and high-quality meals.**
4. **Social activities and opportunities to spend time with other residents.**
5. **Help with personal care and help to stay active.**

Care Home Location

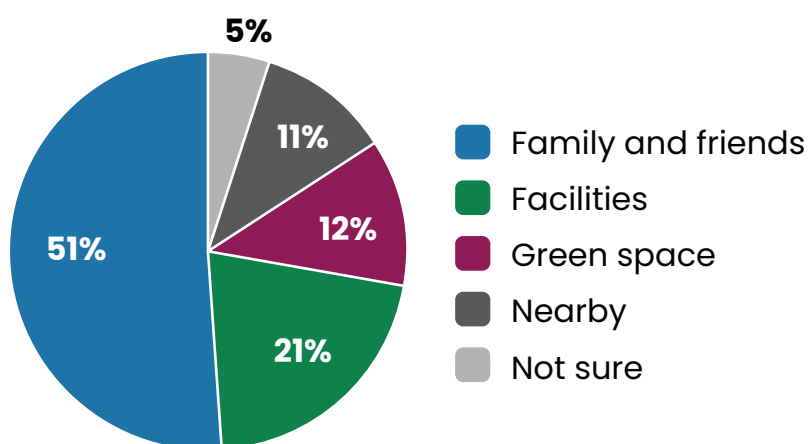


Figure 15: Important factors in care home location

Survey respondents were asked what would be important about the location of a care home for them. Example prompts included ‘close to family and community you are familiar with.’ This was an open-ended question with 72 responses. Responses have been analysed for key themes, along with a selection of quotes.

Over half of respondents (51%) suggested proximity to family and friends was an important

factor in the location of a care home. For most people, family was a priority. 21% of survey respondents said a care home should be near to local facilities. This included access to a town or village centre, shops, pub, medical care, cafés and transport links. One person said they would like to have access to a church. 12% of respondents said a care home should be located near green space or outdoor space, for example a park or garden. 11% said they would like a care home to be located near to where they already live in a place that was familiar to them. 5% of respondents were unsure.



Finding Information about Care Homes

Survey respondents were asked where they might look for information about care home. This was a multiple choice question with 90 responses in total. Most people selected more than one source of information as part of their answer and the responses are presented in the chart below.

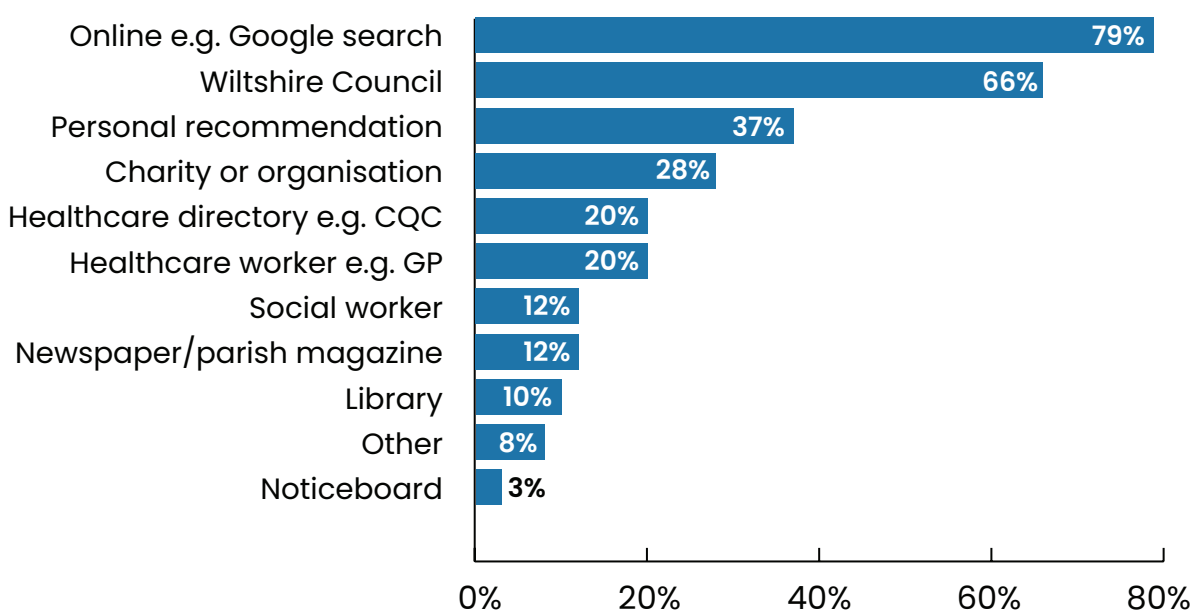


Figure 16: Preferred method of finding information about local care homes

The majority (79%) of respondents said they would look for information about local care homes online e.g. through a Google search. 66% said they would look for information from Wiltshire Council and 37% said they would ask a family member or friend for a personal recommendation. This suggests that most people would prefer a self-directed approach with some input from the local authority.

28% of respondents would ask a charity or organisation for information. 20% would use a healthcare directory (e.g. Care Quality Commission) and 20% would ask a healthcare worker such as a GP. Fewer respondents overall said they would consult a social worker (12%), newspaper or magazine (12%), library (10%) or noticeboard (3%).

Amongst respondents who selected 'other' (8%) individuals said they were unsure or suggested that they would not consider a care home and therefore would not look for information.

Rural Residents

Survey respondents were asked about living rurally. Amongst those that said they live rurally, respondents were asked what support they would need to remain in their rural home as they get older, whether they can access essential services, the provision of social activities in their area and specific issues which might influence their decision to remain in a rural area. Conditional logic was applied to the online survey questions which only displayed additional questions relating to rurality for those who said they live in a rural area.

Survey respondents were asked if they currently live in a rural area. There were 92 responses to this question and the breakdown of responses is shown in the chart.

Just under half (46%) of respondents said they live in a rural an area they would describe as rural. 54% said they did not live in a rural area.

Support Needed to Stay at Home

Rural respondents were asked what (if any) support they felt they might need to remain in their rural home as they get older. This was a multiple choice question with 40 responses and a summary of responses is displayed in the chart on the next page. Please note, many respondents selected more than one type of support.

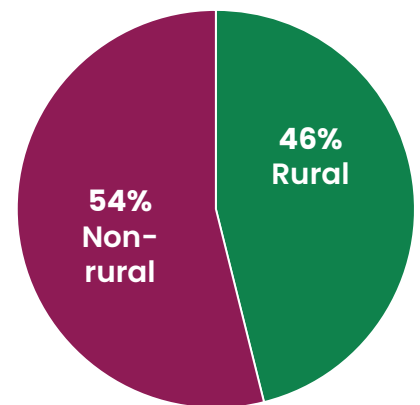


Figure 17: Rural vs. non-rural respondents

Chart included on next page

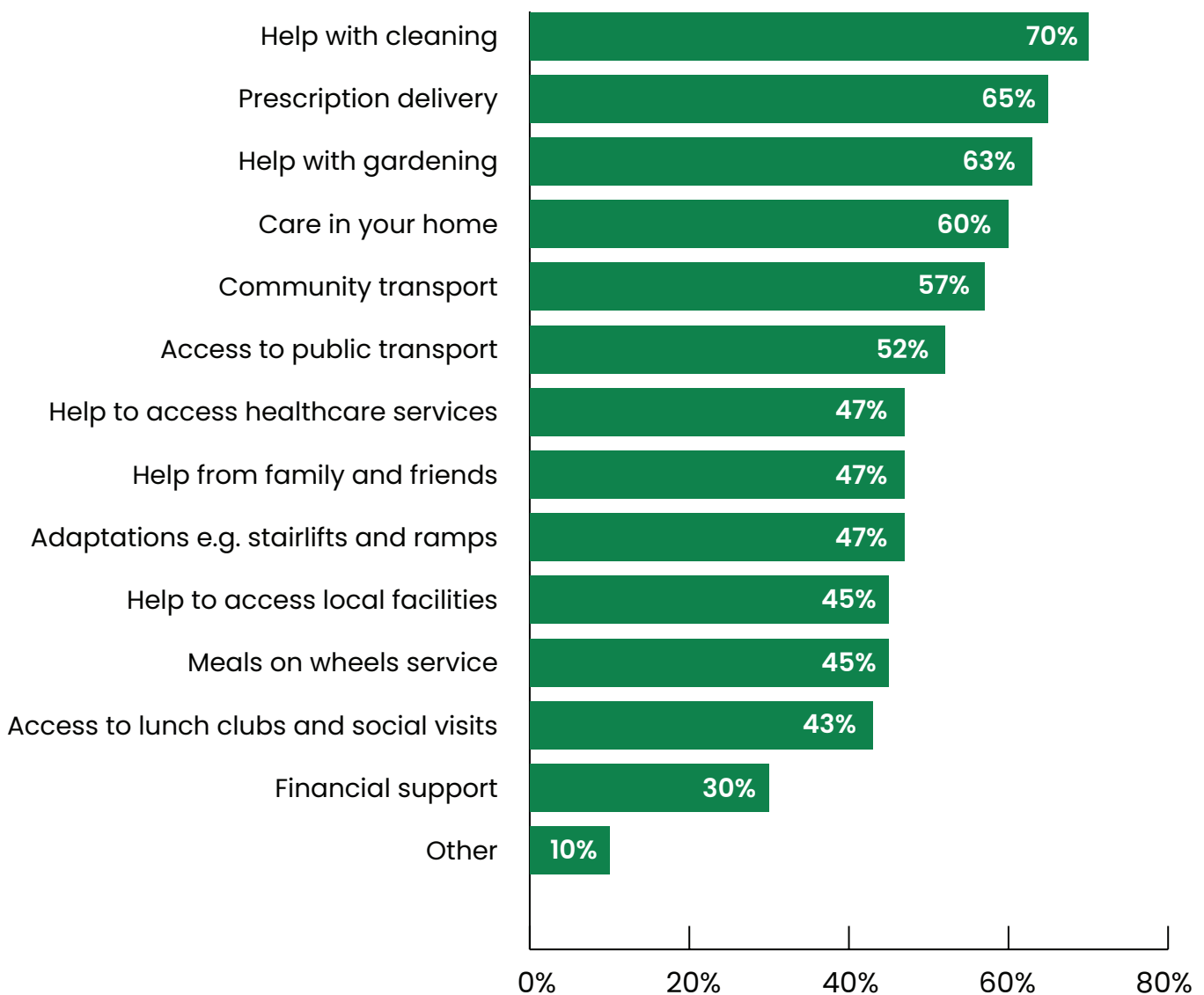


Figure 18: Support needed to stay in a rural area

Overall, rural respondents suggested they would need a lot of practical support to remain in their own home as they get older. This included help with cleaning (70%), prescription delivery (65%), help with gardening (63%), care in their own home (60%) and help from family and friends (47%). In addition to practical support in the home or garden, 47% of rural respondents also said they would need adaptation such as stairlifts, walk in shower or bath and ramps to remain in their rural home as they get older.

More than half of rural respondents said they would need help with transport, this included community transport (57%) and access to public transport (52%). In addition, 47% said they would need help to access health care services, 45% said they would need help to access local community facilities and 43% said they would need help with social visits and lunch clubs. There is likely to be significant overlap between the theme of transport and access to facilities, health care and social activities for rural residents

who wish to remain in their home as they get older. Some rural respondents said they would also need help with meals on wheels (45%) and financial support (30%).

Amongst those who selected 'other', comments included banking, accessible paths and a general comment about the standard of existing support services for rural residents.

Accessing Services and Social Activities in Rural Areas

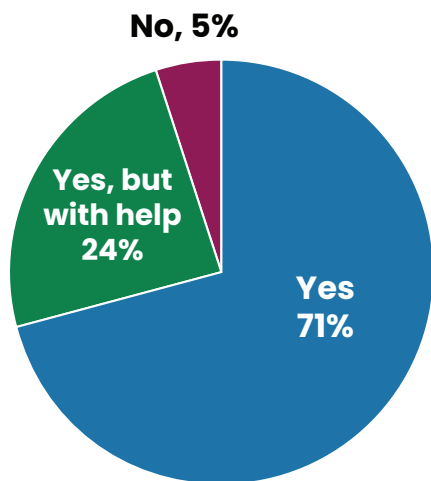


Figure 19: Rural residents' access to essential services

Rural respondents were asked whether they could currently access essential services such as shops, banks and medical services e.g. a GP or pharmacy. There were 42 responses to this question and responses are summarised in the chart (left).

The majority of rural respondents said they could access essential services (71%) with an additional 24% who said they could do so with help. 5% of rural respondents indicated they could not currently access essential services such as shops, banking and medical care.

Rural respondents were also asked whether there were enough social activities in their area to meet their needs and choices in the future. There were 41 responses to this question and responses are summarised in the chart (right).

46% of rural respondents said there were enough activities in their local area, 29% were unsure and 24% said there were not enough activities in their area to meet their needs and choices in the future.

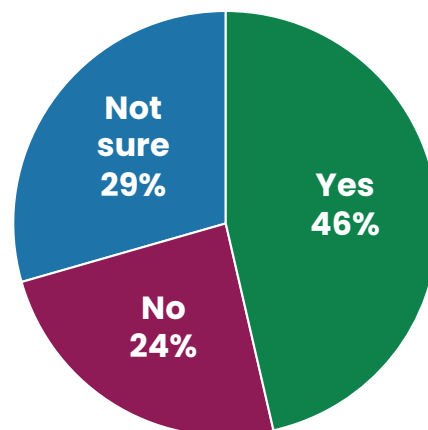


Figure 20: Satisfaction with provision of social activities in rural areas

Staying in a Rural Area

Rural respondents were asked about specific issues that might influence their decision to stay in a rural area as they get older. There were 21 responses to this question which are summarised on the next page with a selection of quotes.

A positive, situational and negative factors table can be found on the next page

Positive Factors	Situational Factors	Negative Factors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staying in a familiar community with existing social networks. • Proximity to family members. • Nature and countryside. • Peace and quiet. • Feeling safe. • Fresh air, less pollution (and associated health benefits) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability of support and services. • Transport provision. • Ability to drive. • Proximity to community facilities and healthcare. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social isolation. • Lack of social activities and fewer people.

“If in future I were to lose the ability to keep a car on the road I would be forced to consider moving closer to facilities such as shops and medical support.”

“I get disability flares living in polluted areas. I literally need a rural option.”

“I’m rural enough but can get where I need to at the moment.”

“Loneliness, often don’t see anyone for two or three days.”

“Being near my family is the most important.”

Factors which impact a decision to remain in a rural area were positive, negative and situational. Positive factors include social networks, family members, fresh air, quiet and health benefits associated with living rurally and away from urban areas which may have more pollution.

Situational factors are those which depend on the individual and their proximity to local services, availability of services and ability to travel (if needed) to access these services. The most significant situation factor cited by rural residents who are thinking about whether to remain in a rural area is likely to be transport provision e.g. a private vehicle or public transport networks.

There were a small number of negative factors associated with decision making about whether to remain in a rural area. This included social isolation and lack of access to social activities.

Suggested Approaches

This section presents some suggested approaches based on the feedback received from people who took part in the Accommodation Strategy Survey. This summary reflects consistent feedback from those who took part in the survey as it relates to the future housing needs and options of older residents in Wiltshire.



Adaptations and Accessibility

Older residents would like to stay in their own home for as long as possible but may need practical solutions to make their home accessible as they get older. This may include advice, guidance and support relating to stairlifts, a walk in shower or bath, wetrooms, ramps, rails, space for a scooter or wheelchair and other equipment to make existing homes safe and accessible for older residents. This will allow older people to stay mobile and independent in their own home for longer. Some residents may also benefit from financial support such as a grant towards the cost of making adaptations. A large percentage of survey responses were from social housing tenants, it is therefore recommended that the Council work with Housing Associations around support for tenants who may need adaptations to existing properties as well as thinking about future provision of accessible homes for older people and people living with disabilities.

Provision of Bungalows

Whilst most residents want to remain in their own home, some individuals are willing to consider downsizing to a single-storey home as they get older and less mobile. There is a significant preference for private bungalows with a small garden amongst older residents who wish to downsize. Despite this, homeowners and social housing tenants suggested there are not enough bungalows to meet demand locally. Wiltshire Council could consider opportunities to work with developers, Housing Associations, Community Land Trusts and planners to increase the provision of bungalows with small gardens or courtyards to meet this demand. Amongst some respondents who said they would consider supported accommodation e.g. a retirement village with a warden, these individuals also expressed a preference for a bungalow rather than an apartment within a retirement village.

Access to Information and Support

Some residents suggested it can be challenging to find information about housing options and choices locally and information is not felt to be relevant or accessible to a wide range of audiences e.g. people with disabilities. Some people also suggested that information about housing options is often tailored towards social housing tenants

rather than those who own their own home or live in other types of accommodation. Housing options and choices for single people were also felt to be insufficient. People who responded to the Accommodation Strategy Survey would like to see fair access to centralised information, support and options for their individual needs and circumstances. Wiltshire Council could consider a centralised housing options information hub with resources designed for different scenarios and groups. This could take the form of a decision tree or equivalent online solution which presents information based on a dynamic search query. Local charities and community organisations could also help to share information with service users who need help with housing choices and options.

Personalised Approach to Housing Options

Older residents want to feel in control and maintain their independence as they get older. Whilst there were some common themes (e.g. wanting to stay at home), decisions about how and when to move, downsize, accept help and support or go into a care home are highly personal and individual. Older residents would appreciate a personalised approach to housing options which considers their wishes, circumstances, family and social networks, personal preferences, current standard of living, need for space, pets, desire to live rurally (or in a town) and ability to get around independently.



Important factors to consider and options preferences (by accommodation type) are included in the tables on the next pages.

Please see the tables on the next pages

Accommodation – Important Factors for Older People

Familiar	I want to stay in my own home for as long as possible. If I have to move, I prefer to be somewhere familiar (e.g. near to where I already live), with my own things and a pet if I want one.
Fair	I want equitable access to support and housing options regardless of my personal circumstances e.g. if I live alone or have a disability.
Feelings	I would like to feel in control of my housing options and choices as I get older. I want to make decisions for myself and feel independent.
Family	I want to be close to my family and enjoy regular visits. I may need to help care for a loved one or a loved may care for me at home as I get older.
Friends	I want to be near friends and/or make new friends. Community is important to me. I want to stay active and social for as long as possible, even if I am in a care home.
Features	I may need adaptations to features such as the bathroom or stairs to make my home accessible and safe for me.
Floors	I would like to live on the ground floor. My ideal home is a private bungalow, rather than a flat.
Facilities	I want to live somewhere safe and peaceful near to local facilities. I may need access to public transport or help with transport if I cannot drive.
Fields	I would like to see fields and green space, or have my own small, private garden. If the garden is too big it might become unmanageable for me.

Housing Options and Choices – What Support or Services are Needed?

Most preferred



Least preferred

1. Stay in my own home	2. Downsize	3. Supported accommodation e.g. retirement village	4. Care home
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stair lift • Ramps and safety bars • Wetroom, walk in shower or bath, downstairs toilet • Ability to live on one floor of the home if needed e.g. space for a bed downstairs • Space for a wheelchair or electric scooter (if required) • Wider doorways if wheelchair user • Help in the home or garden • Personal care (if required) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A bungalow • Small, private garden or courtyard (which is easy to maintain) • Safety bars and a walk in shower, bath or wetroom • Space for a wheelchair or electric scooter (if required) • Wider doorways if wheelchair user • Located near to a town or village with facilities and other people e.g. older people • Adequate parking or transport links • Quiet location • Personal care (if required) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retirement community with private accommodation (preferably a bungalow) • Access to outdoor space e.g. small garden or communal garden • A warden and sign in desk • Located near to a town or village with facilities and other people e.g. older people • Space for family to visit • Ability to have a pet • Transport links • Personal care (if required) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private room with en-suite bathroom. • Access to a garden or outdoor space • Entertainment • High-quality meals • Social activities and opportunities to spend time with other residents • Personal care • Help to stay active • Ability to stay in charge of decisions about care and remain independent • Family visits at flexible times

Appendix 1: Survey Questions

Wiltshire Council Accommodation Strategy

About the Survey

Wiltshire Council is currently writing its 2024–2029 Accommodation Strategy and is looking to find out what older people think about maintaining their independence in their own home. If staying their own home is not practical, the Council would like to understand how local services can be made as comfortable as possible and feel like home for residents.

There are four key objectives within the strategy that we will be focussing on throughout the project:

1. Information about housing choices and options is easy to find
2. Older people are more involved in planning for their accommodation needs in a timely way
3. Sustainable housing that meets the needs and aspirations of older people now and in the future is strategically planned.
4. Older people are supported to live independently, in all tenures and there is greater availability of preventative services.

Responses from this survey will be used to develop the strategy and inform future housing needs for older people in Wiltshire.

This survey is open for responses until 30th September 2024

Page 1 – About You

Please select your age group

Under 18

18–25

26–64

65+

What is your gender?

Man

Woman

Non-Binary

Other Gender (Please specify)

Would you describe yourself as having a disability or an existing care and support need?

Yes No

What is your current living situation?

Own home

Rented home (private rental)

Social housing

Supported accommodation

Care home

Living with family member

Other (Please specify)

How happy are you with your current housing situation? (Scale of 1-5 with 1 being very unhappy and 5 being very happy)

* ** *** **** *****

Page 2 – Your Future Housing Needs

Thinking about your future housing needs – this might be in relation to where you want to live, what sort of accommodation would meet your needs and choices or about practical aspects of future accommodation.

Have you thought about your future housing needs?

Yes No

Are there people in your life you would consult about planning for your future housing? Please tick all that apply

Spouse/partner

Family member

Friend

Social worker

Healthcare worker

Local authority employee

Other (Please specify)

What sort of future housing do you think you might want or need? (e.g stay in your own home, downsize, housing with support)

[Text box]

Page 3 – Finding Information About Housing

Where would you go to find information on different housing choices and different options available to you?

[Text box]

If you have looked for information about housing choices, was it easy to find?

Yes No I have not looked for information

If you have looked for information about housing choices, was it easy to understand?

Yes No I have not looked for information

Thinking about your personal circumstances did the information about housing options and choices give you what you needed?

Yes No I have not looked for information

Do you have any comments to make about looking for information about housing choices?

[Text box]

Page 4 – Planning your Future Housing Needs

Thinking about where you currently live, do you think this would need to change to meet your future needs?

Yes No Not Sure

What sort of home do you think you might need in the future to meet your choice and needs?

Single-storey private home (e.g. bungalow/ground floor flat)

Retirement home or flat (e.g. with a warden)

Adapted/accessible home

Social housing

Supported accommodation

Care home or nursing home

Other (Please specify)

What are the most important features for you in a home as you get older? Please select all that apply.

Single-storey home

Accessibility features e.g. stairlift, ramp, walk-in shower or bath
Security and safety e.g. live-in warden, alarms, sign-in desk
Community e.g. other older residents
Near to local facilities e.g. shops, doctors
Near to family and friends
Parking
Close to bus station/train station or other public transport
Private garden
Communal garden
Availability of carers
Serving food
Help with cleaning and maintenance
Other (Please specify)

Do you have any comments to make about what kind of features are important for you in a home as you get older?

[Text box]

Page 5 – Living an Independent Life

Thinking about the future are there practical things you feel you might need to live independently?

[Text box]

Is there any support or services that you feel you may need to live independently?

[Text box]

If for any reason you did not feel able to remain in your own home, what sort of alternative would you wish for?

[Text box]

Page 6 – Living in a Care Home

If you needed to live in a care home. What facilities would you want to see provided? Please select all that apply.

Own room
En-suite bathroom
High quality meals

Help with personal care (e.g. bathing/dressing)

Help with medication and healthcare

Access to a garden

Access to a day room

Socialisation and companionship

24/7 support

Clubs and groups

Exercise classes (e.g. seated exercise)

Arts and crafts

Entertainment e.g. tv/internet

Other (Please specify)

What would be important about the location of the care home to you? E.g. Close to family and community you are familiar with.

[Text box]

Where might you look to find information about local care homes? Please select all that apply.

Online (e.g. Google search)

Wiltshire Council

Charity or organisation

Newspaper/parish magazine

Noticeboards

Friends/family members/personal recommendation

Social worker

Healthcare worker (e.g. GP)

Healthcare directory (e.g. Care Quality Commission)

Library

Other (Please specify)

Page 7 – Rural Residents

Do you currently live in an area you would describe as rural?

Yes No

What (if any) support do you think you might need to remain in your rural home as you get older? Please select all that apply.

Adaptations e.g. stairlift, ramps, walk-in shower or bath
Community transport
Access to public transport
Care in your home
Meals on wheels service
Prescription delivery
Help to access healthcare services
Help to access local facilities
Help to access lunch clubs or social visits
Help from family or friends
Financial support
Help with gardening
Help with cleaning
Other (Please specify)

Are you currently able to access essential services such as shops, banks and medical services (e.g. GP or pharmacy)?

Yes Yes, but with help from others No

Are there enough social activities in your area to meet your needs and choices in future years?

Yes No Not Sure

Are there any specific issues that might influence your decision to remain in a rural area?

[Text box]

Page 8 – Stay Up to Date

Thank you for taking the time to share your views. If you would like to be sent a link to the completed accommodation strategy, please fill out your details below.

Your Name

[Text box]

Your Email Address

[Text box]

Please check to confirm

[Yes / No] Please send me a copy of the completed accommodation strategy by email.

Acknowledgements

Our thanks to everyone who gave their time to take part in the Accommodation Strategy Survey to help inform this important work.

This report has been produced by:



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