

# **Longhoughton Housing Needs Survey Final Report**

**July 2019**

*Produced for Longhoughton  
Neighbourhood Development Steering Group*



## Introduction

In May 2019, Longhoughton Neighbourhood Development Steering Group commissioned Community Action Northumberland (CAN) to undertake a Local Housing Needs Survey for the Longhoughton parish. This was designed to provide information useful to the Group and the Parish Council as part of work designed to assess the wider needs of the community.

Since April 2017, CAN has been contracted by Northumberland County Council to establish a Community-led Housing Hub to act as a support platform for local communities wishing to explore the potential for community-led housing in its various forms and to deliver local affordable homes where they are needed. This hub is called 'Communities CAN.'

This work is initially funded through the Northumberland County Council allocation of the government's Community Housing Fund and seeks to support all stages of development, including the initial identification of housing need.

As part of this work, CAN is funded to undertake Local Housing Needs Surveys where requested to do so and where there is a realistic prospect of any need identified resulting in the delivery of additional affordable homes.

In undertaking Housing Needs Surveys, CAN follows the principles set out in national guidelines drawn up by the Rural Housing Enablers Network as follows:

1. The goal of all Housing Needs Surveys is to provide an objective evidenced overview of the scale and nature of the full range of housing need in a locality, usually a village or parish.
2. Housing Needs Surveys are independent and balanced and seen to be so.
3. The process for collecting the data is open, fair and transparent.
4. Any secondary data used as a principal source of information or to augment data collected from households is up to date and relevant to the geography of the survey.
5. Data is anonymised and confidentiality and data protection statements are clear and correct.
6. The community, which is wider than just the Parish Council, is informed of the reasons for the survey, invited to participate and able to access the results.
7. The reports are written in plain English with explanations of how the findings and conclusions are drawn, including any caveats and noting sources of data.
8. Housing Needs Survey reports are publicly available once the commissioning body has agreed and signed off the survey.
9. Housing Needs Surveys are a snapshot in time, their 'shelf-life' is stated and a process for updating the data is available.
10. The Housing Needs Survey is only the start of the process. Once it is completed ongoing liaison should be maintained with the community, housing association or other developer, local authority and landowner to take the project forward.

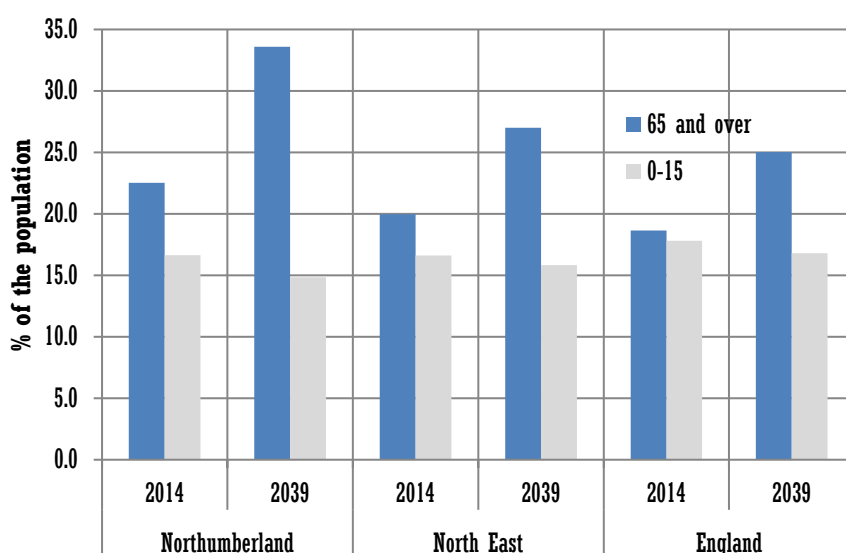
## Population profile

At the time of the 2011 Census 1960 people lived in Longhoughton parish in 675 households. Average household size was 2.6 people per household. 23% of the population was aged 0-15 years (compared to 17% across Northumberland) whilst 12% were aged 65 or over (compared to 20% across Northumberland).

44% of households were owner occupiers compared to 66% across the county, whilst 13% of households were renting from a social landlord (19% for Northumberland) and 43% rented from a private landlord (13% across the county). These figures are obviously influenced by the strong presence in Longhoughton Parish of accommodation provided by the RAF for their personnel.

20% of households contained just one person, 50% of which were 65 years or older. 9% of households had no car or van compared to 22% across Northumberland.

The ageing population structure of Northumberland is well documented and this trend is predicted to continue into the future. The graph below shows projections from Northumberland Knowledge with respect to the growing proportion of the population that will be 65 years and older by 2039. In Longhoughton parish, just 12% of the population fell into this age group at the time of the census in 2011, lower than the county average.



Source: [Northumberland Knowledge Age Profiles](#)

## The Housing Needs Survey

Our Housing Needs Survey involved the distribution of a questionnaire to all households within the parish of Longhoughton. The questionnaire was based on a tried and tested questionnaire utilised elsewhere which was developed and amended through discussion and agreement with Longhoughton Neighbourhood Development Steering Group.

The questionnaire was distributed by hand to all 710 households in the parish. A freepost envelope was provided to each household for return of completed questionnaires.

The questionnaire included five initial questions to be answered by all households and a further nine questions which only needed to be answered by those households who had expressed some form of housing need. For respondents planning to divide their current households into two or more households, an additional sheet was included enabling relevant questions to be completed for each of the proposed new households.

**Longhoughton Parish  
HOUSING NEEDS SURVEY**

We are currently preparing a neighbourhood plan and are interested in your views on the principle of providing affordable homes for local people in Longhoughton parish. We would therefore be grateful if you could take a little time to help us by filling in this questionnaire.

**PART ONE – TO BE COMPLETED BY ALL HOUSEHOLDS**

**Q1. Please tell us about your household's connection with the Longhoughton Parish**

Do you live in the Longhoughton Parish? Yes  No

- If yes, how long has a member of your household lived here? Yrs  Mths

Does any member of your household have close family (parents, children or siblings) living in Longhoughton Parish? Yes  No

Does any member of your household work in the Longhoughton Parish? Yes  No

- If yes, how long have they worked here? Yrs

**Q2. Please provide details of everyone living in your home including yourself.**

Relationship to You	Employment status*	<25	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+
Self								

\*Please select one of the following options: employed/ looking after home or family/ sick or disabled/ unemployed/ student/ child/ retired

**Q3. About the home you currently live in. Do you:**

Rent from local authority	<input type="checkbox"/>	Rent from Housing Association	<input type="checkbox"/>
Live in accommodation provided by your employer (the RAAP)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Rent from Private Landlords	<input type="checkbox"/>
Live in accommodation provided by your employer (other than the RAAP)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Own with or without mortgage	<input type="checkbox"/>
Part own / part rent (shared ownership)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Q4. What type of property do you currently live in?**

	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4 bed	5 bed+
House					
Bungalow					
Flat/maisonette/apartment/bedsit					
Chalet/retirement housing					
Caravan/mobile home/temp structure					
Other (please specify)					

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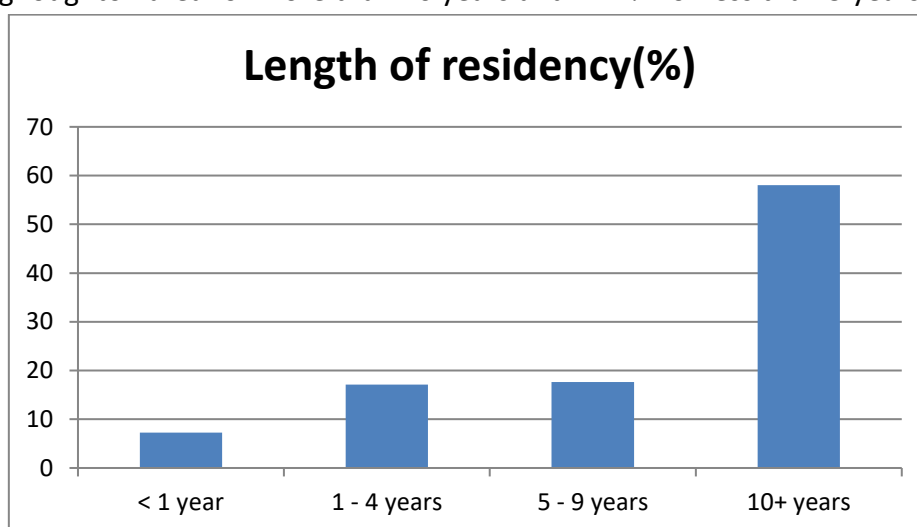
A total of 199 completed questionnaires were returned representing a response rate of 28%. This is a good response rate for questionnaires of this nature and compares well with other surveys carried out in recent months.

This was a survey of existing residents and, therefore, is an expression of the needs and desires of these residents.

## Research Findings

### Connection to the Longhoughton area

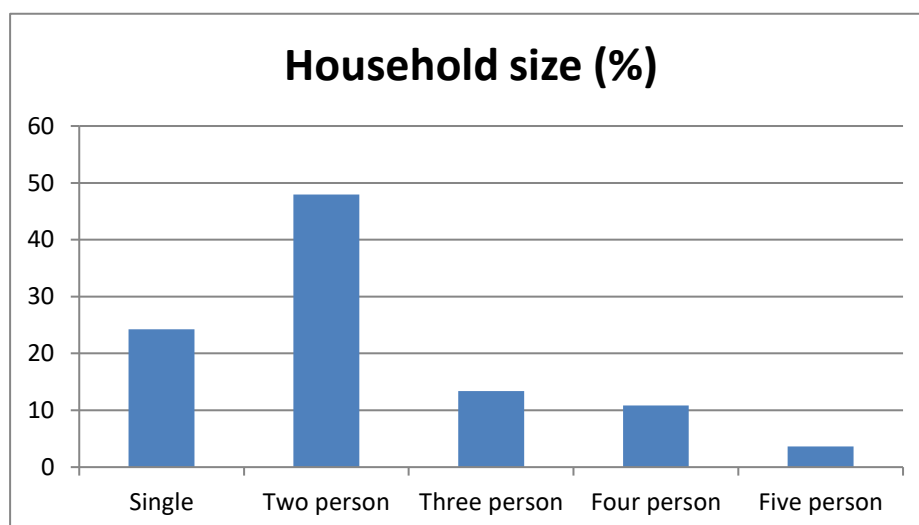
99.5% of respondents to the questionnaire lived in the Longhoughton area. This is not surprising given the distribution of the questionnaire to households in the Longhoughton area only but does mean that the responses represent local views. 58% of respondents had lived in the Longhoughton area for more than 10 years and 24.4% for less than 5 years.



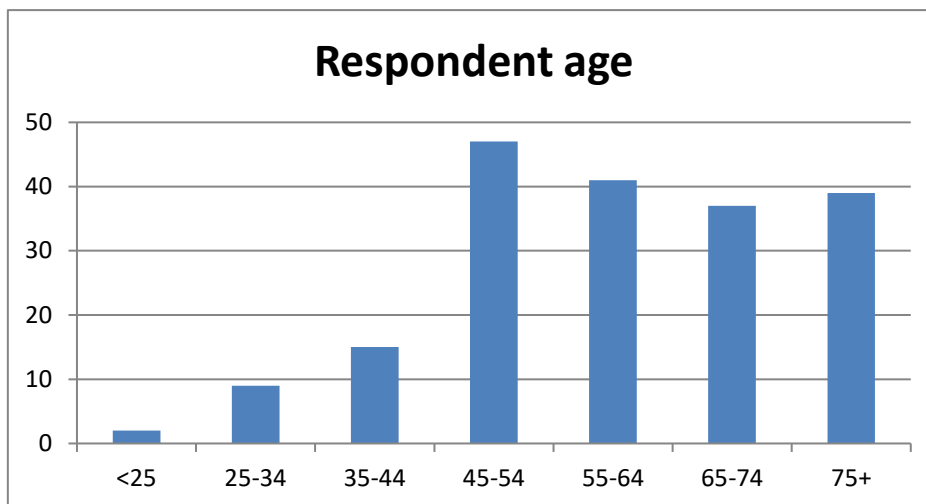
71.9% of respondents did not have close family (parents, children or siblings) living in Longhoughton Parish. Just 22.1% of all respondents had at least one member of their household who worked in the Longhoughton area. Most of these family members (71.4%) had worked in Longhoughton for 5 or more years.

### Household characteristics

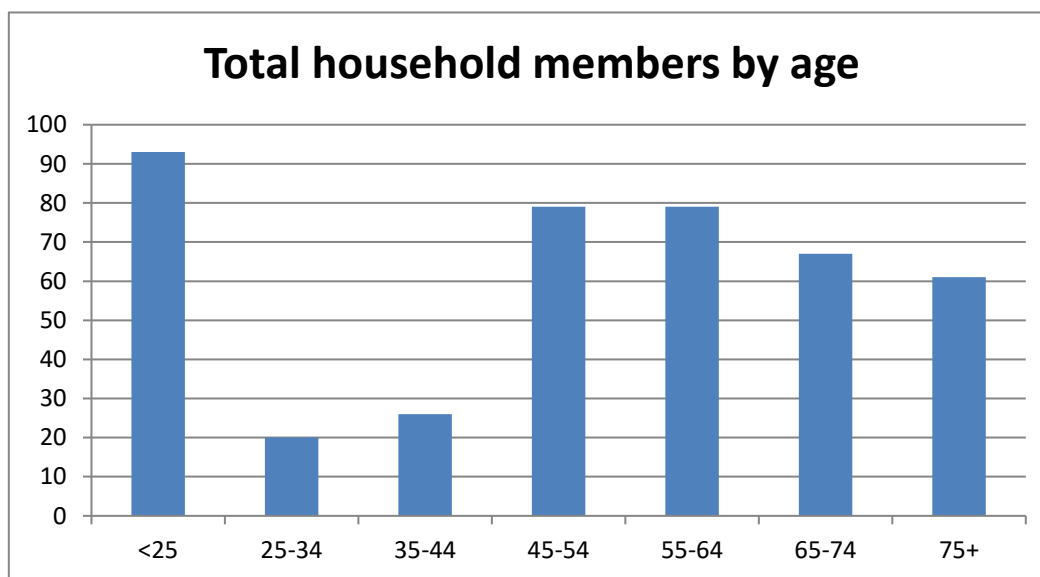
Almost half of respondents (47.9%) were in two-person households with a further 24.2% living alone. 27.8% of respondents lived in households containing 3 or more people.



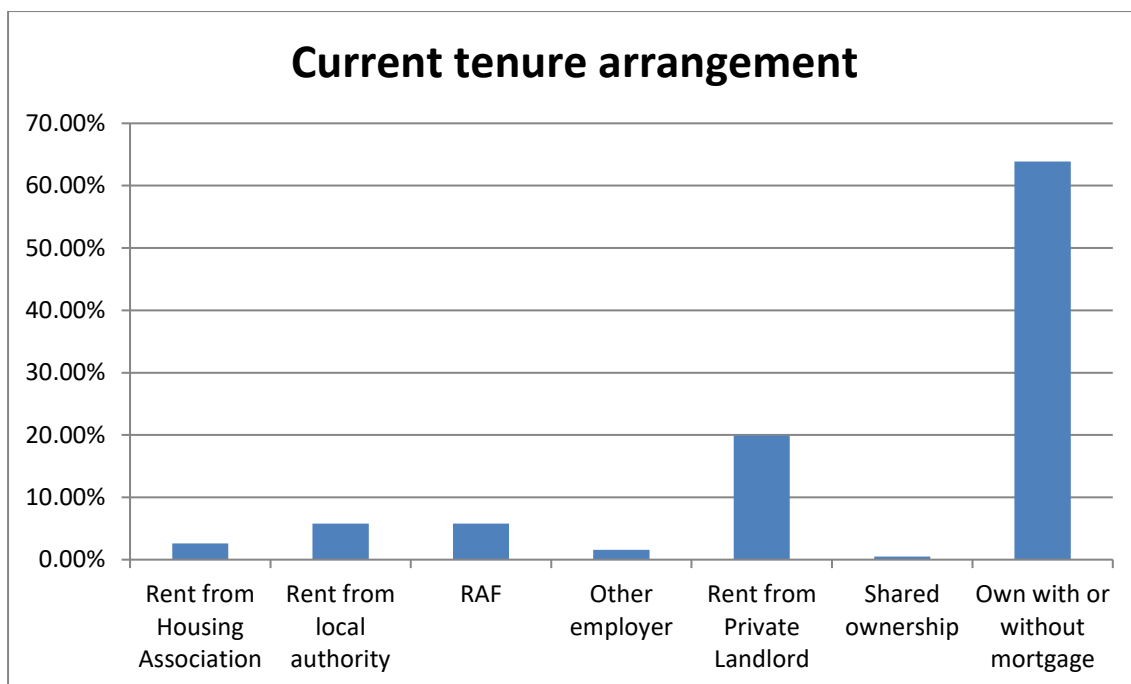
The proportion of individuals completing the questionnaire who were employed and retired were fairly evenly split with 50% employed and 47.8% retired. This contrasts with the general population where, according to the 2011 census, 74% of all residents were in employment and 12% were retired. The age profile of those completing the questionnaire is shown below.



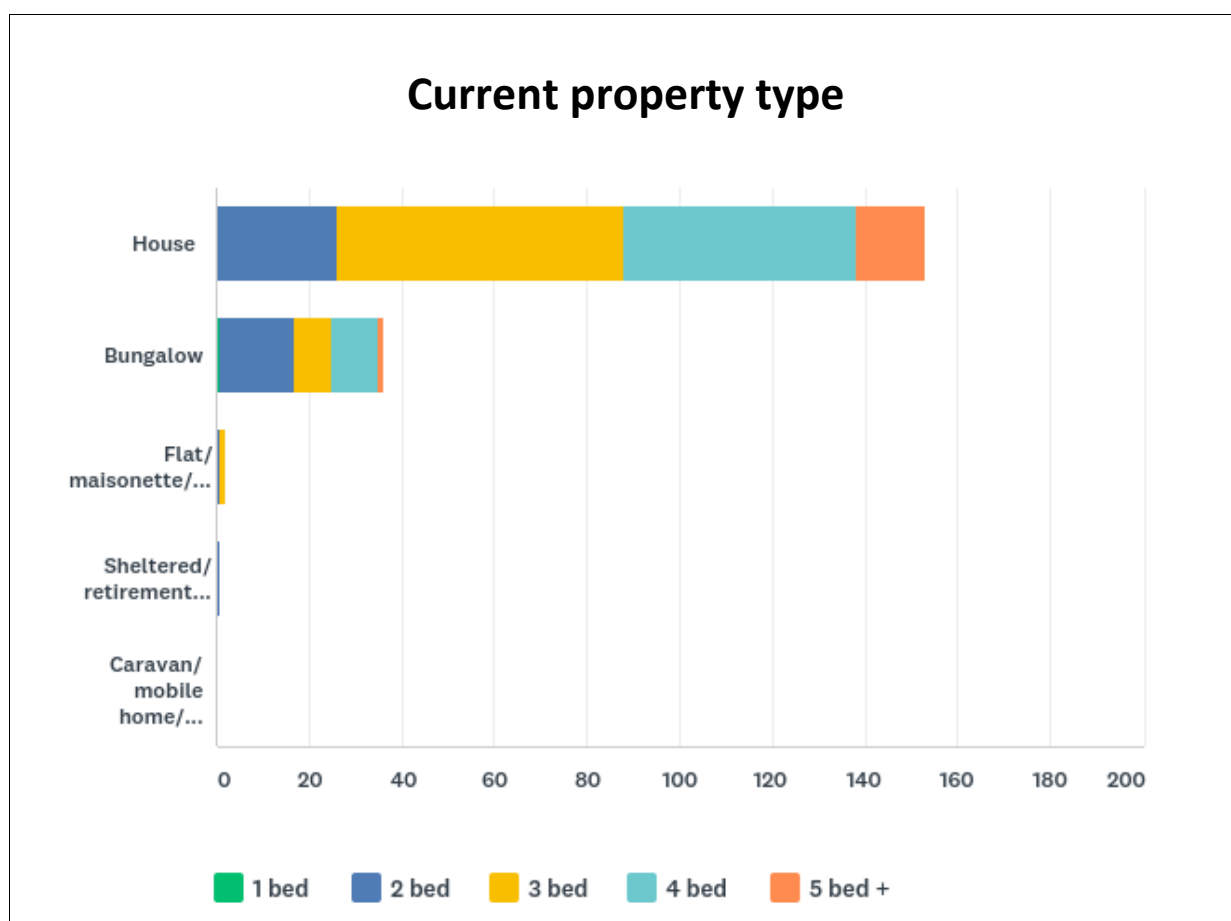
The table below shows the total number of people living in the respondent households by age. The average household size of respondent households was 2.24.



63.9% of respondents owned their own homes (with or without a mortgage). 19.9% rented from a private landlord and 8.4% from a social landlord (local authority or housing association). 7.3% of respondents lived in accommodation provided by their employer. The majority of these respondents lived in accommodation provided by the RAF, although this only amounted to 11 households in total.



32% of all responding households lived in a 3-bedroom house and 25.8% in a 4-bedroom house. 13.4% of households lived in a 2-bedroom house and 7.7% in a 5-bedroom house. 19.6% of households lived in a bungalow.

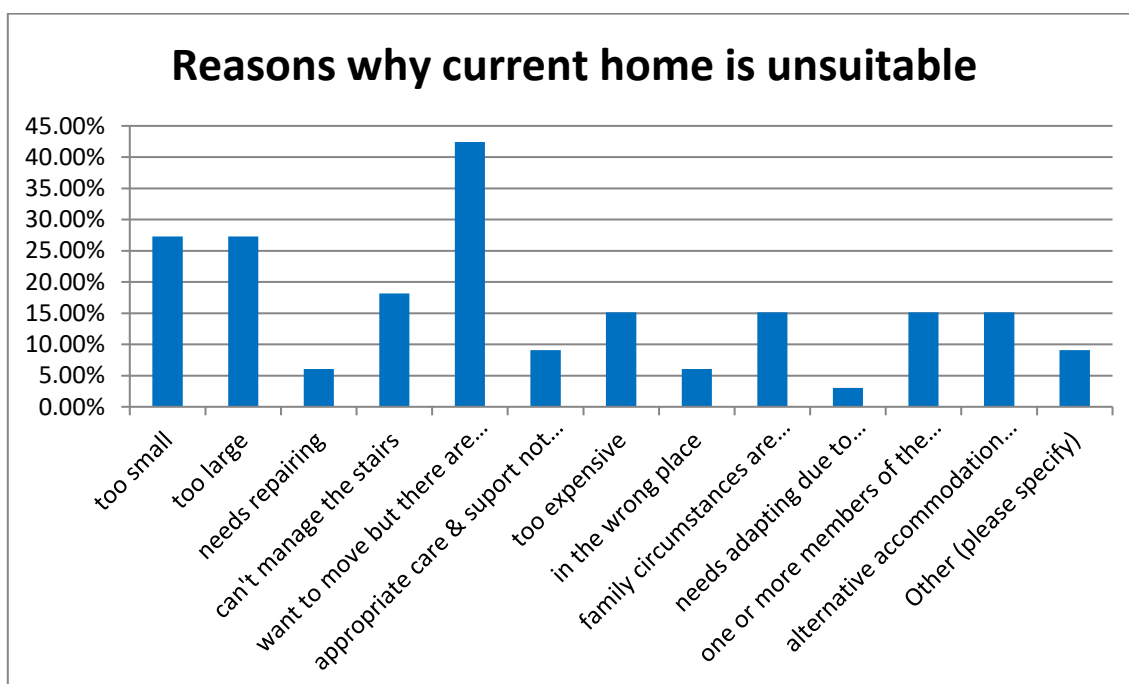


## Households in need

The majority of households who responded to the questionnaire indicated that their current home was suitable for their household's needs over the next five years. However, 18.1% of respondents indicated that this was not the case representing 35 households in total. The remaining elements of the questionnaire were only to be completed by these 35 households. The Research Findings below relate solely to these respondents.

## Type of need

The reasons why households indicated that their current home is unsuitable for their needs were varied. The main reason for housing need was that there were no suitable homes available locally. Properties were also often cited as being too small or too large for the household's future requirements. The percentage of respondents indicating each area of need is shown in the table below (NB: respondents could indicate multiple reasons).



The survey included an opportunity for respondents to explain their reasons for needing to move in more detail. Responses to this question break down into a range of broad categories shown in the table below.

Response	%
Health issues & ageing (future proofing)	42
Growing family	21
Downsizing as children leave	17
Poor current state of property repair	12
Children in need of own property	8



Overall, responses indicate clear issues relating to:

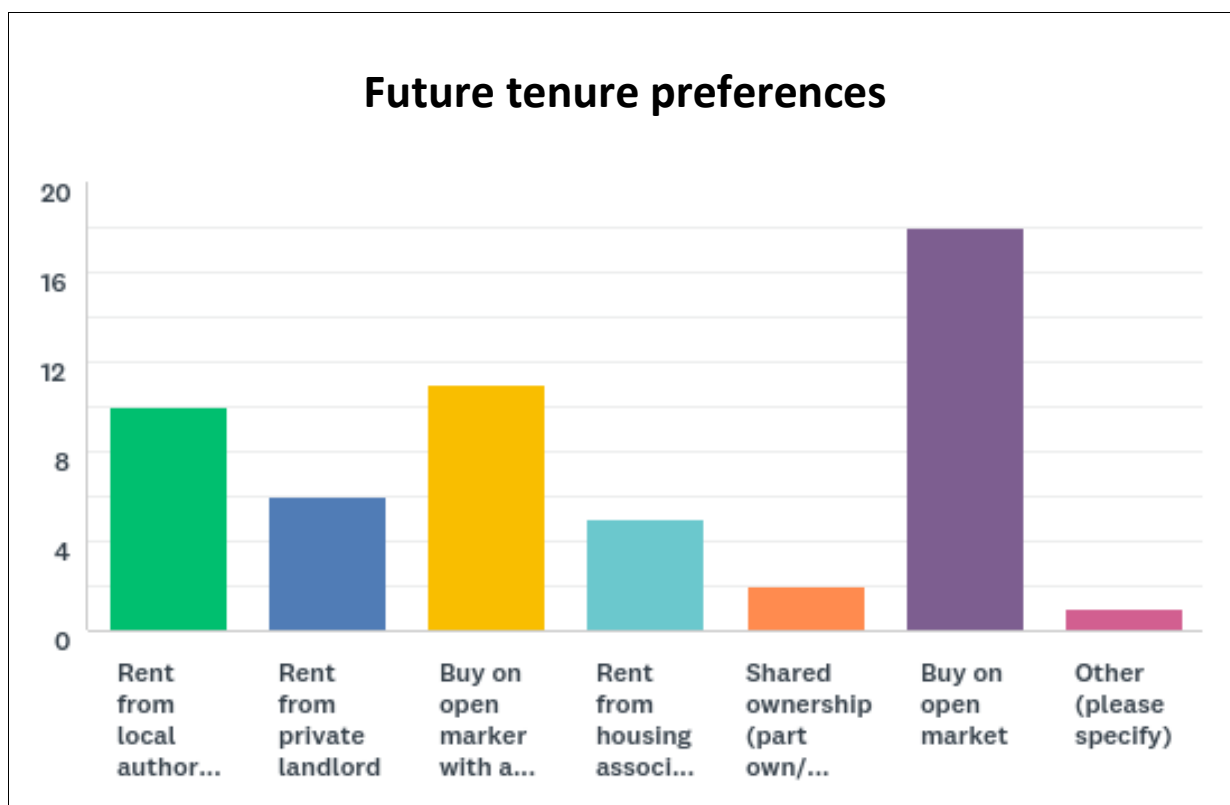
1. The need to adjust housing accommodation and downsize as people grow older with stairs often cited as a particular barrier.
2. The need to accommodate growing families.

The vast majority of respondents (81.8%) who expressed a housing need would be happy to live in Longhoughton. Of those who would prefer to live elsewhere, the main reason was to be closer to amenities.

### Future tenure preferences

Buying on the open market was the preferred option for 56.2% of those households expressing a housing need. 31.2% indicated a desire for affordable rented homes from the local authority (10 households) with 15.6% expressing a similar desire for affordable rented homes from a housing association (5 households). 34.4% of households expressing a housing need were interested in buying on the open market with a discount (11 households) and 18.7% expressed a desire to rent from a private landlord (6 households).

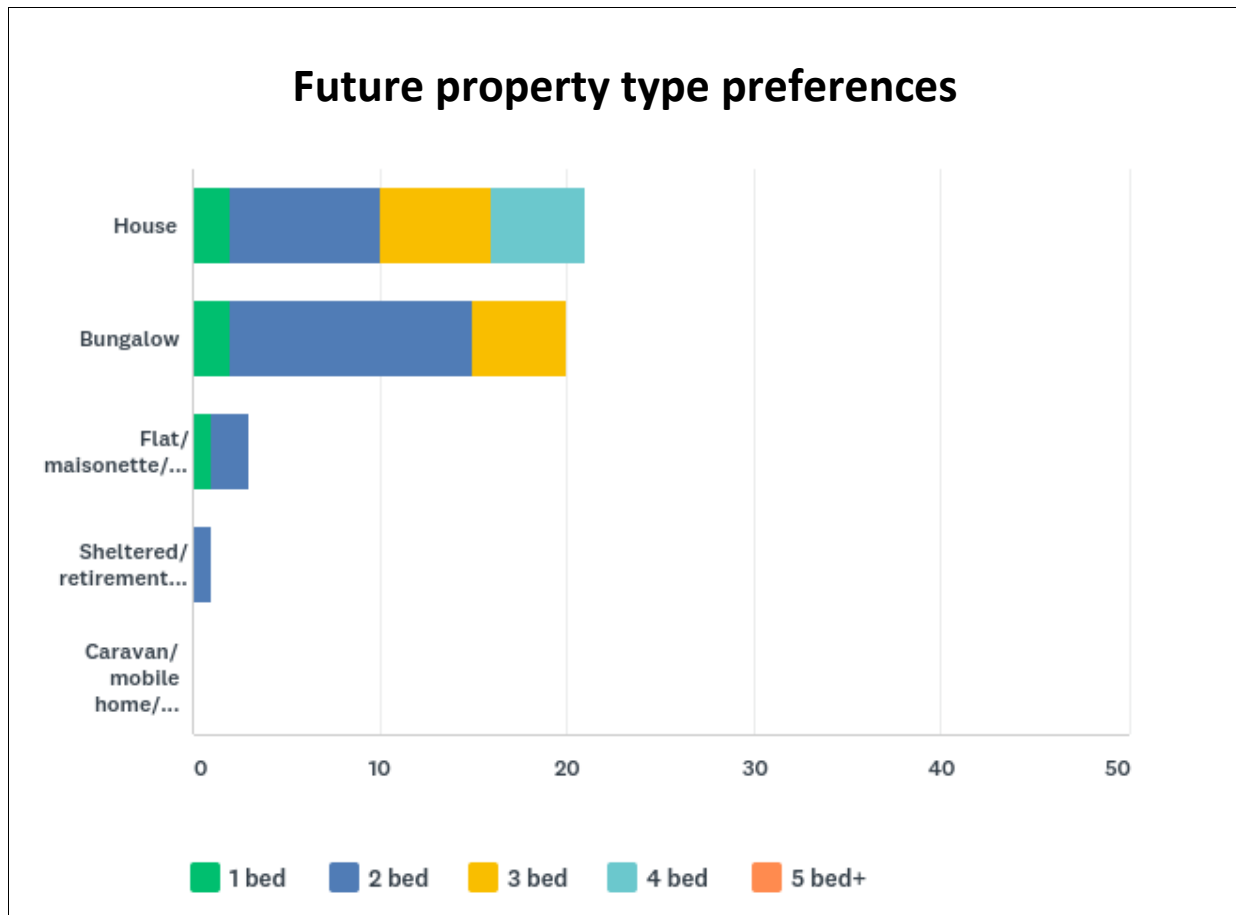
*NB: respondents could indicate multiple preferences.*



## Future property type preferences

The largest demand is for two-bedroom bungalows (13 preferences in total) followed by two-bedroom houses (8 preferences). Demand is also expressed for three-bedroom houses (6 preferences), four-bedroom houses and three-bedroom bungalows (5 preferences each).

*NB: some respondents gave more than one preference*



## Specific health, accessibility and other needs

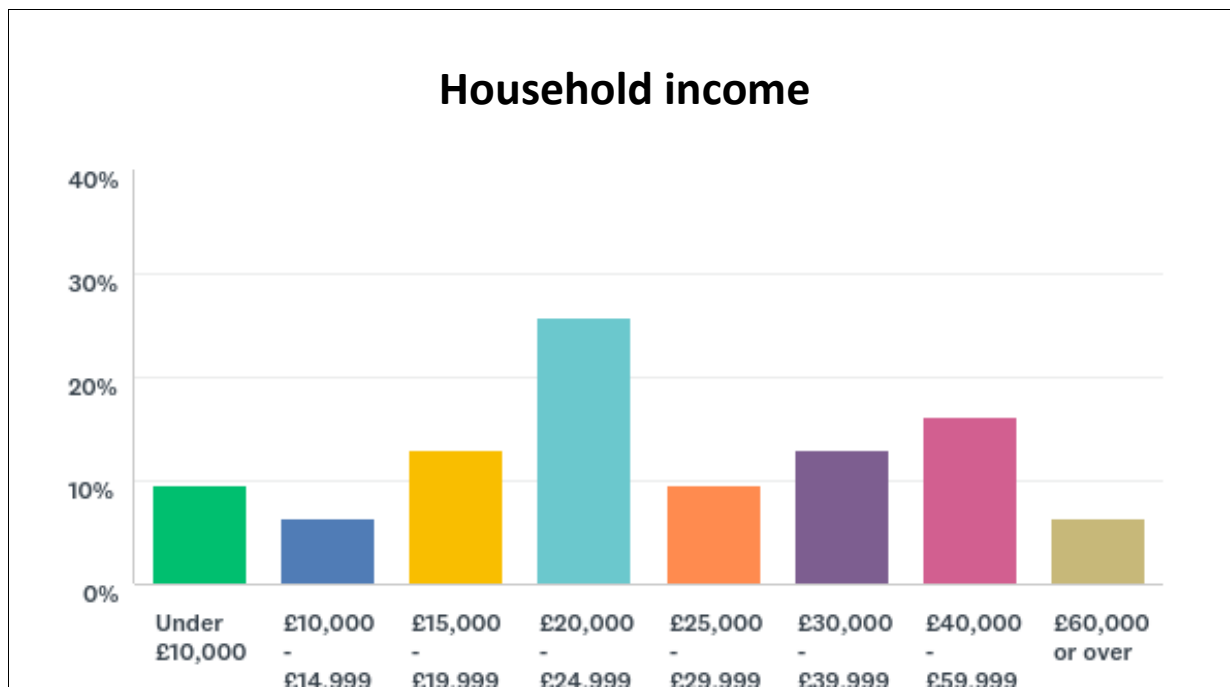
Seven respondents expressed specific health or accessibility issues which would require a specific type of accommodation. All responses related to problems with stairs and mobility.

## Northumberland Homefinder register

Five of the households who expressed a housing need were registered with Northumberland Homefinder. Only one respondent indicated that they had bid for a property in the last 12 months. This confirms the view that data available from the register only relates to a small subset of need.

## Household income and affordability

54.8% of respondents, who indicated their household income and expressed a housing need, indicated an annual household income of less than £25,000. 22.6% of respondents indicated an annual household income above £40,000.



In terms of the amount households could afford to pay for their housing, 32.1% could not afford more than £400 per month.

In terms of a deposit, 22% of respondents who indicated their household income and expressed a housing need, could not afford a deposit of £1000. In total, 30% could not afford a deposit of £5000 or more.

### A selection of individual responses

"I am getting older and need one level living."

"Too many homes being built in the area for purchase but there is a real lack of affordable rentals. The council houses have been sold off."

"We wish to prepare for old age before we need to adapt our home for disability/health/stairs issues."

"I like living in Longhoughton but unfortunately it offers nothing for a younger person. There are no social facilities, bus service etc."

"Would prefer a bigger house to accommodate my future family."

"Longhoughton is now overrun with houses and do not need more building. The type being built are too large and expensive for local people. They were advertised in Newcastle as suitable as a second home."

"This village needs more affordable housing. Private rental agreements are reviewed every 6 months and is very worrying."

"Knee joint problems mean that I find stairs difficult to climb."

"What used to be council retirement bungalows have not been kept for the local retired people."

"Living where we do there is no public transport, so have to be able to drive but when I am older I don't know if I will be able to."

"The children have left home leaving just myself. The house is too expensive to run."

"My children are now mature enough to find their own homes but cannot afford accommodation."

"Family have now left home and the property is too large. Council tax and other bills too high as we now approach retirement."

"Knee replacement operation has made it difficult for me to climb the stairs."

"The Landlord will not carry out repairs."

"Son needs his own house."

"Garden too big to manage. Household bills very high."

## Key messages from the survey

This was a survey of existing residents and, therefore, is an expression of the needs and desires of these residents reflecting the current age profile of Longhoughton parish. Key messages from the survey include the following:

- A good response rate of 28% was achieved with 35 households expressing some form of housing need.
- The most common reasons expressed for housing need were that no suitable homes were available locally, the current home was too large, or the current home was too small.
- A strong theme emerged around the need to adjust housing accommodation as people grow older. This was often associated with access issues using stairs, a perceived lack of local amenities or the need to downsize and reduce outgoings.
- Evidence of some need for families to grow and for children to find their own accommodation was also present.
- 34% of households expressing a housing need were interested in buying on the open market with a discount (11 households).
- 31% indicated a desire for affordable rented homes from the local authority (10 households) with 15% expressing a similar desire for affordable rented homes from a housing association (5 households).
- Buying on the open market was the preferred option for many households expressing a housing need (56%).
- The largest demand is for two-bedroom bungalows (13 preferences in total) followed by two-bedroom houses (8 preferences). Demand is also expressed for three-bedroom houses (6 preferences), four-bedroom houses and three-bedroom bungalows (5 preferences each).
- 55% of respondents, who indicated their household income and expressed a housing need, indicated an annual household income of less than £25,000. 32% could not afford more than £400 per month for their housing and 22% could not afford a deposit of £1000.

## **Credits**

*Sincere thanks go to the Longhoughton Neighbourhood Development Steering Group and the residents of Longhoughton Parish for their participation in this survey.*