Westminster After Dark Consultation Summary

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1. Overview

1.1 Methodology

The public consultation for Westminster After Dark took place over 14 weeks, between the 11th of March and the 22nd of June 2025. During this period, we launched an online survey seeking feedback on the draft strategy, as well as an option to provide comments on the draft implementation plan (2025-2030). Engagement with the online survey was facilitated by four drop-in sessions held in local libraries and family hubs, four drop-in sessions held online during out-of-work hours (5-7pm), a launch event chaired by Cllr Barraclough and Cllr Less, and two workshops held with key stakeholders: accessibility charities (Gig Buddies, Bubble Club, Learning Disability Network), Westminster's LGBTQ+ Forum, the Night Time Industry Association, and the Safer Business Network. Alongside these sessions, we presented the strategy at a London Heritage Quarter event, the quarterly Strand West Task Force meeting as well as Soho PRIDE Pubwatch and Women's Night Safety Oversight meeting.

The open-ended question responses to the survey were analysed using a 10-point code frame for each question.

This engagement makes up the overall consultation feedback, which will inform the recommendations for revisions to the final version of the strategy and implementation plan.

1.3 Number of responses

- 2659 visitors to commonplace during the consultation period
- 177 new subscribers
- 252 online survey responses (strategy)
- 31 comments (implementation plan)
- 18 written responses on behalf of businesses, organisations etc.

Total number of responses: 301

1.4 Stakeholders

Businesses and Sector Body Representatives: Capital Arches Group, Shaftesbury Capital, Sustainable Acoustics, UK Hospitality, Institute of Licensing, Six Till Six, Night-Time Industry Association, Tandtp, Marble Arch BID, Harley Street BID, Baker Street BID, Heart of London Business Alliance, London Heritage Quarter, Soho Business Alliance, Fitzrovia Partnerships, Knightsbridge Partnerships, Soho Estates, Grosvenor, Portman Estate, Greater London Authority, Metropolitan Police, Club Watch London, Safer Business Alliance, Landsec, Network Rail.

Resident, Community Organisations and Charities: The Soho Society, Covent Garden Community Association, Fitzrovia Neighbourhood Association, Grand Junction, Westminster Amenities Society Forum, WAD Stakeholder Assembly Members, Bubble

Club, GIG Buddies, London Disability Network, Parapride, Westminster LGBTQ+ Forum, Queen's Park Family Hub, Portman Centre Family Hub, Church Street Library, Maida Vale Library, Charing Cross Library.

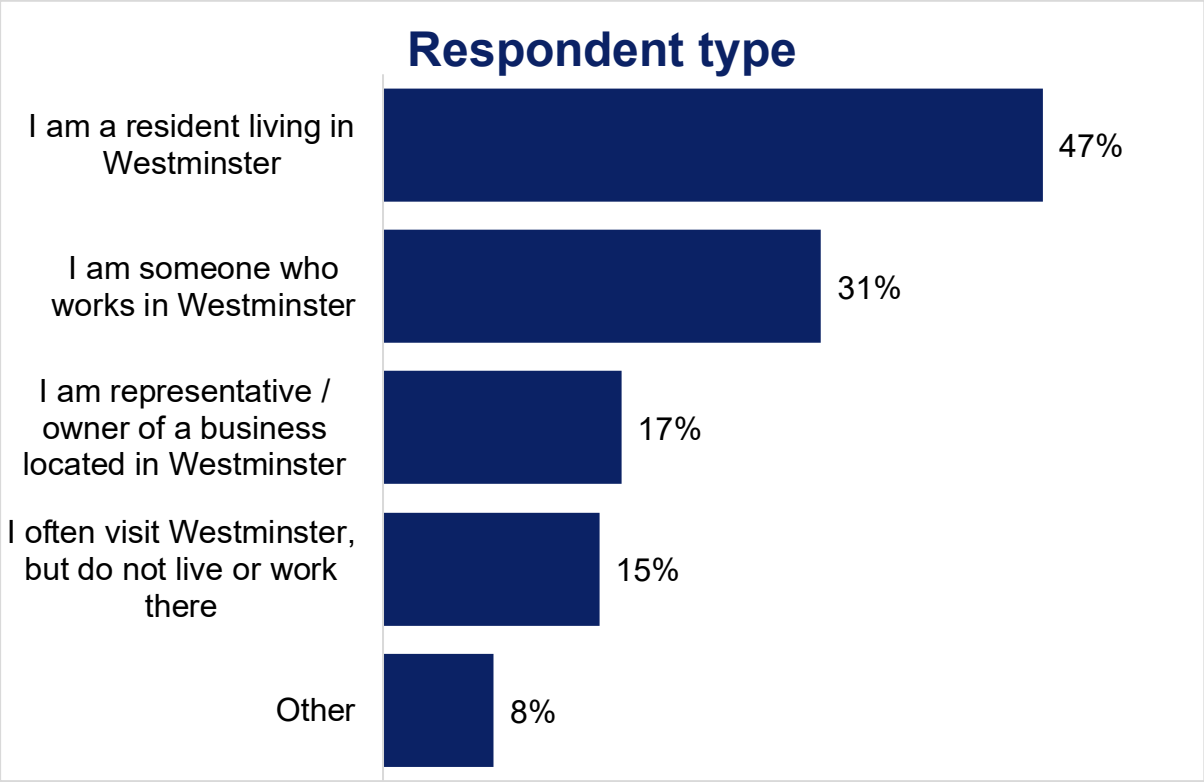
2. Online survey

Executive Summary

- 252 survey responses
- Almost half (47%) of respondents were residents, with businesses representing just over a quarter or responses (17%)
- Over half (55%) of respondents agreed with the overarching vision for the strategy
- Across all questions on all pillars, the most common feedback raised was that the policies needed more detail, measurable outcomes, and clear funding sources.

Demographic Information

Visual representation in Appendix 1.



Just under half of (47%, 119) respondents were residents living in Westminster. Just under a third (31%, 79) were workers in Westminster. The remainder of respondents own or represent a business in Westminster (17%, 43) or were regular visitors to

Westminster (15%, 39). **This means the biggest proportions of responses were from residents.**

Most workers responding to the survey (66%) worked between 6am and 6pm, with 14 respondents working between 6pm and 6am. **This means the overall response from night-workers was relatively low.**

Most business represented were from the arts, entertainment and recreation sector (43%) and the food and hospitality sector (25%). Other businesses represented were property, security services, broadcast, accountancy, and content marketing. There were no responses from representatives of manufacturing, transport, retail, or health and social work sectors. The largest group of responses from business representatives were from businesses that closed between 9am and midnight.

An almost equal number of respondents identified as female (45%) and male (44%), with 4% selecting 'Other (trans man, trans woman, non-binary)' and 6% preferring not to say.

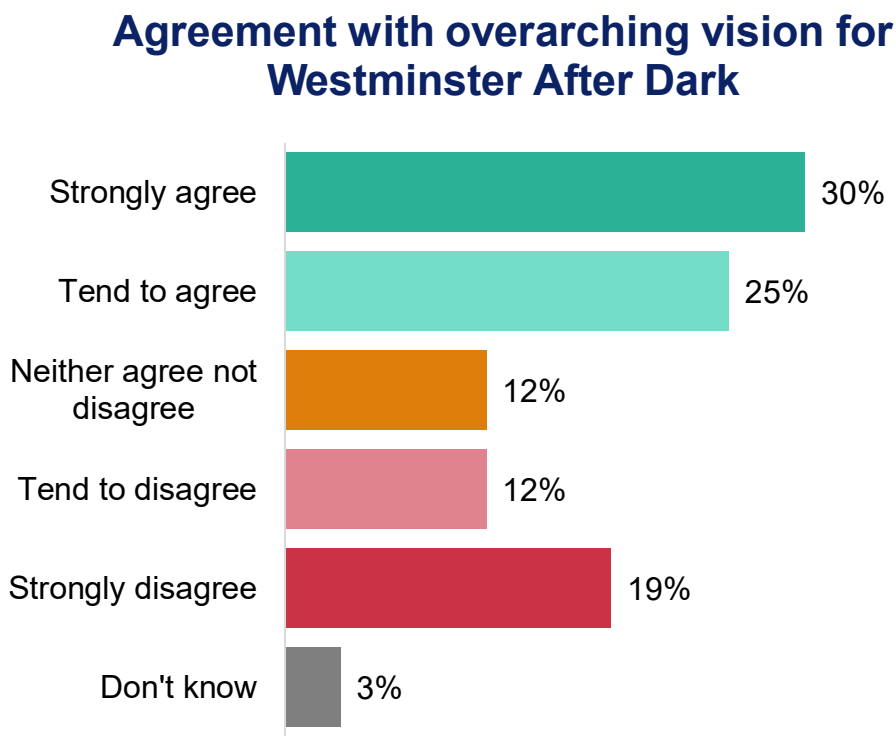
Most respondents (52%) were White British, with the second highest ethnicity being 'Any other White background' (16%). 3% of respondents were White and Asian, with 2% being Indian, 2% Irish, 1% Arab, 12% 'Prefer not to say.'

Most respondents (40%) identified as having no religion, with 32% identifying as Christian, 4% as Jewish, 1% as Muslim, and 20% preferring not to say. This means there was an over-representation of those with no religion and an underrepresentation of Muslim respondents compared to the 2021 census data for Westminster (37% Christian, 26% no religion, 20% Muslim).

Most respondents (61%) identified as heterosexual, with 20% identifying as gay, lesbian, or bisexual, and 18% preferring not to say.

Most respondents (75%) do not have a health condition or disability, with 15% reporting a health condition or disability. 10% of respondents preferred not to say.

Q1. Vision



Key points

- **Over half of respondents (55%) agreed with the overarching vision**
- **30% disagreed, with 12% neither agreeing nor disagreeing**
- **Those who agreed praised the support for a vibrant Westminster After Dark, its focus on safety and inclusivity, and the balance of different interests**
- **Most people who disagreed with the vision did so on grounds of noise and anti-social behaviour or that it did not go far enough to support nightlife**
- **The theme raised most frequently across different responses was the need to protect Westminster's evening and night-time vibrancy**

Residents were asked to explain their response to the overarching vision.

A greater proportion of respondents who disagreed with the vision provided explanatory comments than those who responded positively. This means **the explanatory comments are over-represented by those who responded negatively to the vision**, and this should be kept in mind.

Respondents who agreed with the vision expressed support for the nightlife and entertainment venues in Westminster, mentioning the 'vibrancy' of Westminster's evening and night-time economy. Other reasons for agreeing with the vision included its emphasis on safety and inclusivity, and the balance of interests represented.

The main reason respondents disagreed with the vision was because they felt it failed to capture the importance of managing high levels of noise, disruption, and anti-social behaviour relating to the evening and night-time economy, particularly experienced by

residents. Another key reason for disagreement was the concern that the vision did not go far enough to support nightlife and would negatively impact venues through high costs and restrictive licensing. Other reasons for disagreeing were concerns that balancing 'incompatible' interests had led to vagueness in the strategy.

Those who neither agreed nor disagreed, or clicked 'I don't know', explained that this was because whilst they felt the principles expressed in the vision were worthwhile, they did not believe they would/could be delivered or funded. Other issues raised were the prominence of short-term letting, the proliferation of low-quality tourist businesses, and the need to protect Soho as the key cultural centre of the borough.

The theme raised most across **all responses (agree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree)** was the need protect and enhance the vibrancy of Westminster's evening and night-time economy, with issues of safety being the second most raised theme, and the impact of noise and anti-social behaviour being the third.

Q2. Safe and Secure



Almost 7 in 10 respondents think that enhancing women's safety and developing funding to tackle crime / ASB will be effective in achieving the Safe and Secure pillar. Around 6 in 10 think that fostering a collaborative / responsible environment, and strengthening safety / reducing ASB in residential areas will be effective in achieving this pillar.

The objective considered most effective was enhancing women's safety and combatting violence against women and girls with the second rated most effective being leveraging new funding sources to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour.

There were more mixed views on the effectiveness of developing a licensing policy framework and minimising noise impacts of the night-time economy. Just over half think these objectives will be effective, with around 4 in 10 saying the objectives would not be effective.

Respondents were asked to explain their response to the Accessible and Positive Places objectives

22% of survey respondents provided no written comments.

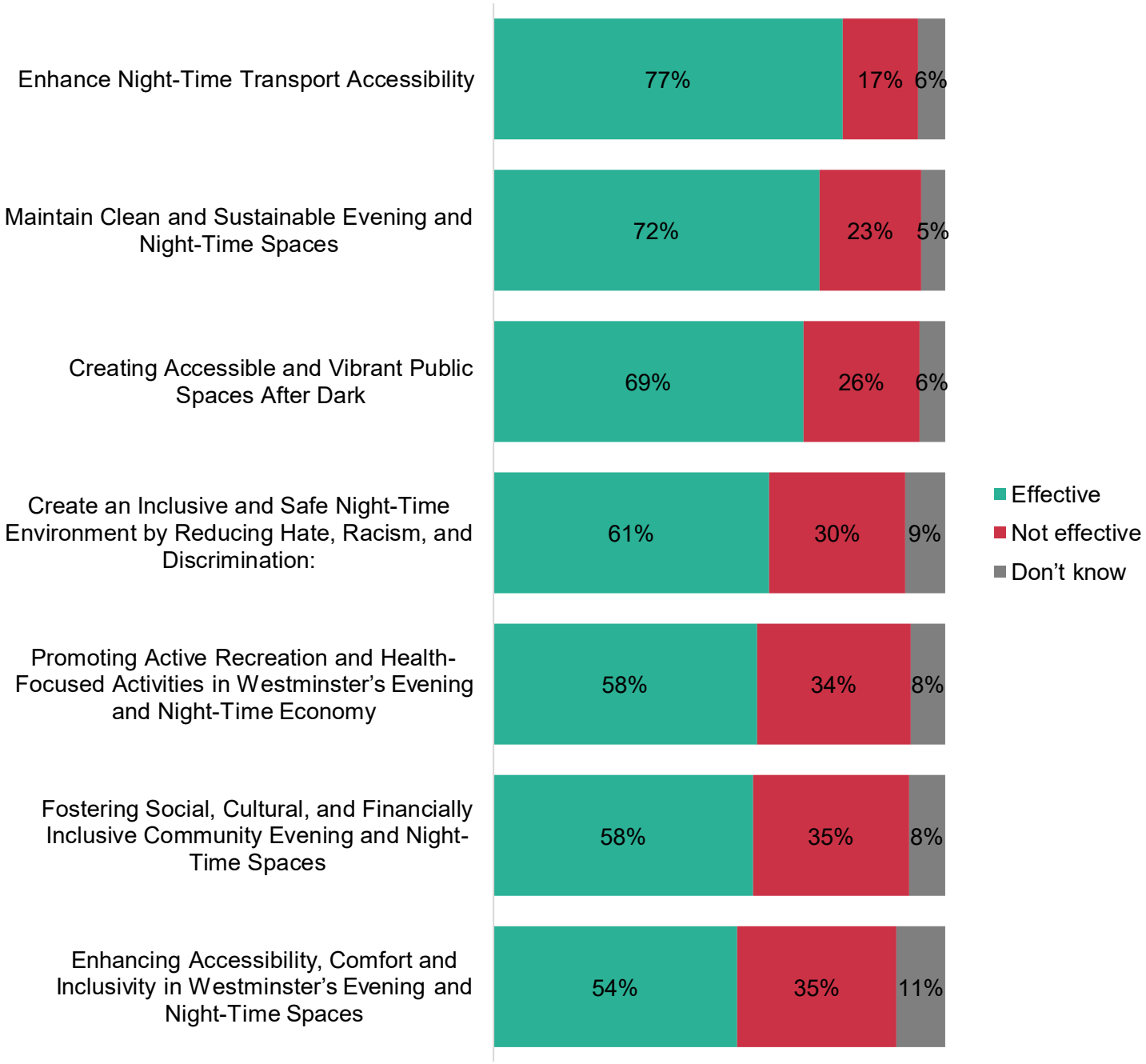
Amongst the 78% of people who commented, the most frequent theme raised was the lack of detail and firm commitments, practical steps, or funding to fulfil the objectives. Another recurring theme was that anti-social behaviour and petty crime (e.g., phone thefts) had already been normalised. Several respondents praised the focus on safety for women, with others urging the language needed to be stronger and more action based.

Comments highlighted that new sources of funding should not pose additional pressure on businesses (e.g., through increased business rates). Several respondents raised the need for more visible policing, whilst others raised that they did not find the prospect of increased policing reassuring due to lack of trust in the MET, particularly amongst women, the LGTBQ+ community, and local community groups. Other measures to increase feelings of safety and reduce ASB were proposed, including more accessible and visible public toilets.

The theme of noise was raised by several respondents, with some (including residents) stating that noise-reduction should *not* be part of the strategy since noise-complaints restrict the vibrancy of central London. Several others wrote that high noise levels cause profound sleep disturbance. Empty commercial refuse (5-6am)[1], early morning cleaners with wash hoses, and the noise of dispersal were highlighted most frequently in the context of noise disturbance.

[1] The waste team at the council are reviewing the time bands and will conducti a consultation on proposed changes. The trade-offs are being looked at between exceptionally high service- levels and respite from noise impacts.

Q3. Accessible and positive places



Almost 8 in 10 respondents think that enhancing night-time transport will be effective in achieving the Accessible and Positive Places pillar. Around 7 in 10 thinking maintaining clean and sustainable spaces and creating accessible and vibrant evening and night-time spaces will be effective in achieving the pillar's aims.

Around 6 in 10 respondents think that creating an inclusive and safe night-time environment, promoting active recreation and health focussed activities, and fostering social, cultural, and financially inclusive spaces will be effective in achieving the Accessible and Positive Places pillar.

A little over half think that enhancing accessibility, comfort, and inclusivity will be effective in achieving the pillar.

The most highly rated objective was to enhance night-time transport accessibility through expanding public transport options during the night-time hours. Maintaining clean and sustainable evening and night-time spaces was also rated highly by most respondents (72%), as well as creating accessible and vibrant public spaces after dark (68%).

The least highly rated objective (although still over half of respondents agreed with the ambition) was enhancing accessibility, comfort and inclusivity in Westminster's evening and night-time spaces.

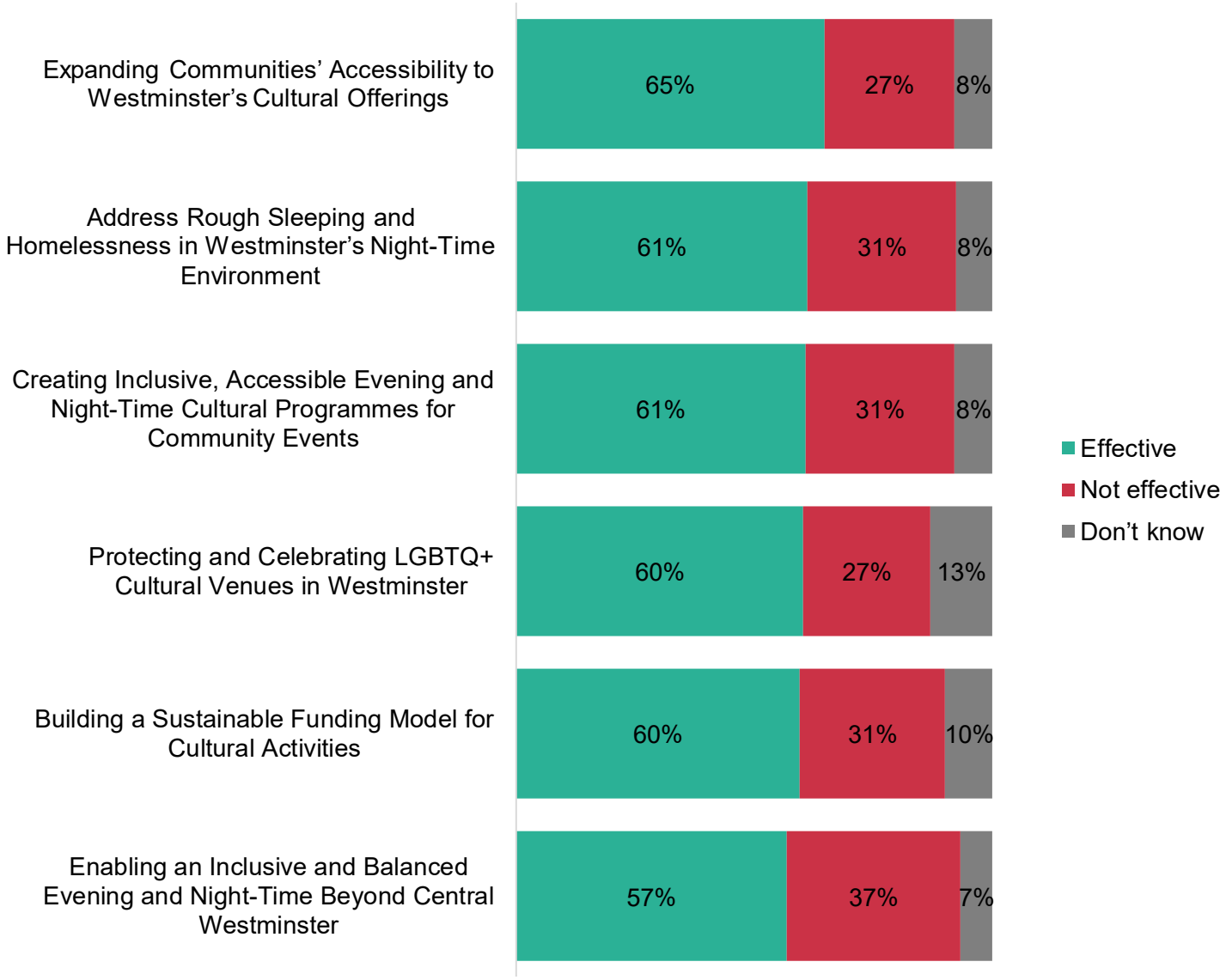
Respondents were asked to explain their response to the Accessible and Positive Places objectives

Most people (54%) did not provide any written comments on the accessible and positive places pillar. Among the 46% of people who provided explanation, the most frequent critique was again the lack of measurable outcomes, enforcement mechanisms, and financial resourcing for the proposed objectives.

Other recurring comments concerned the need for more accessible transport options across the evening and night-time (including 24/hour tube), the desire for cleaner streets, and for there to be more public realm improvements (lighting, greenery, wider pavements) and more accessible and visible public toilets. Soho was highlighted by several respondents as needing to be prioritised in terms of inclusivity due to its narrow pavements and minimum public realm investment compared to Covent Garden and Mayfair.

Some expressed negative views about non-alcoholic options, with a few writing that night-time was 'not for families' and others stating that the proposals unfairly target Soho's cultural scene. However, a similar number of people were encouraged by the shift-away from alcohol led venues and towards a greater diversity in evening and night-time activities. Others expressed that the diversification of spaces centred around alcohol was positive but should not be done at the expense of pubs and bars.

Q4. Communities and Culture



Almost two thirds of respondents think that expanding communities' accessibility to cultural offerings will be effective in achieving the Communities and Culture the pillar. Around 6 in 10 respondents think that addressing rough sleeping and homelessness, creating inclusive and accessible cultural programmes, protecting and celebrating LGBTQ+ venues, and building a sustainable funding model will be effective in achieving this pillar.

Under 6 in 10 think that enabling an inclusive and balanced evening and nighttime beyond central Westminster will be effective in achieving the Communities and Culture pillar, with almost 4 in 10 thinking the opposite.

The most highly rated objective was Expanding Communities' Accessibility to Westminster's Cultural Offerings, with the least highly rated being Enabling an Inclusive and Balanced Evening and Night-Time beyond Central Westminster.

Respondents were asked to explain their response to the Communities and Culture objectives

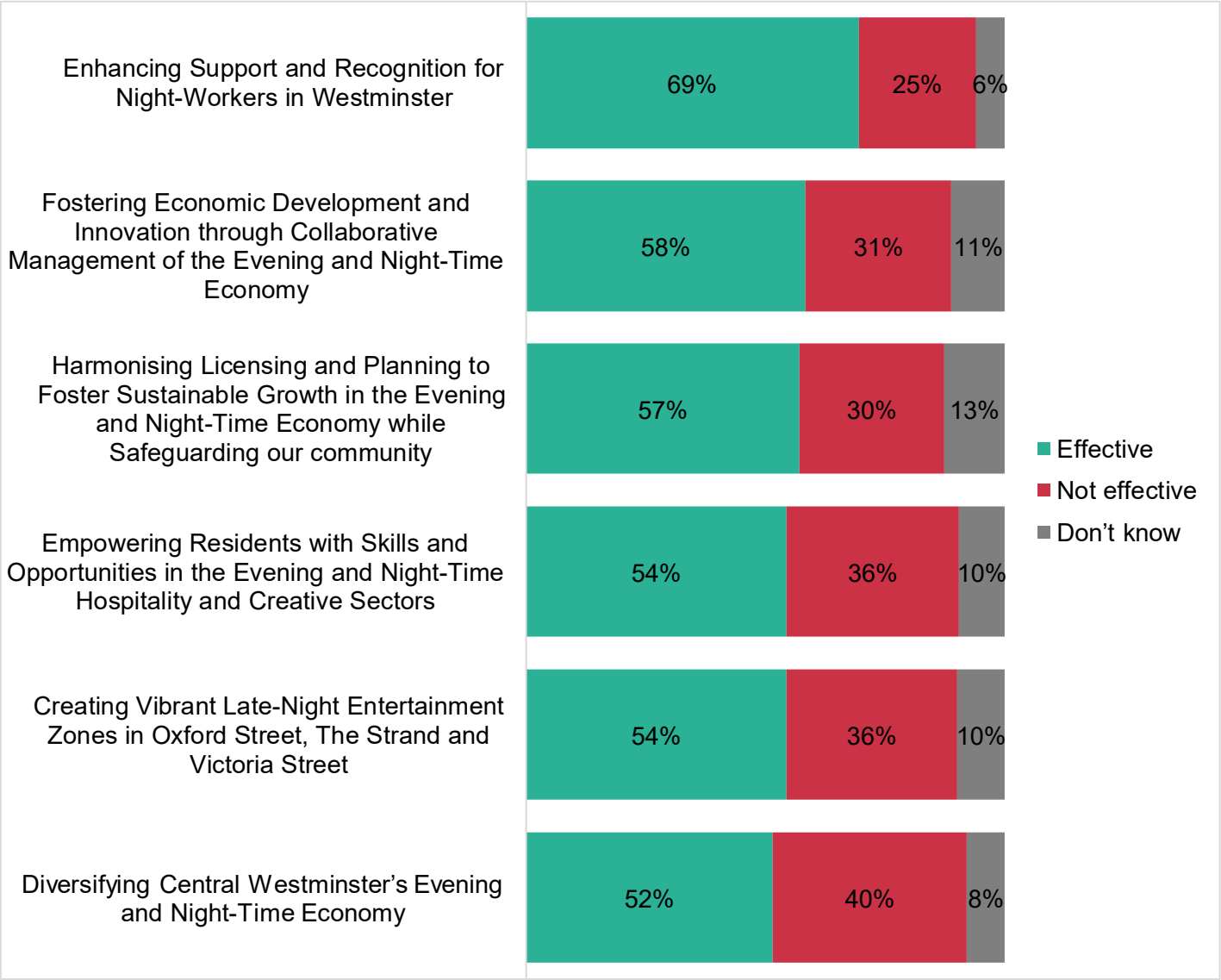
46% of respondents provided no further comments on the objectives of the pillar.

Among the 53% of people who provided further comment, the most frequent was that they were not sure how rough sleeping would be addressed through the Westminster After Dark strategy, as well as the lack of precision, firm commitments, or clear funding in the objectives. Several respondents commented positively on the affordability aspect and the fact this promotes inclusivity for all demographics. A similar number of respondents urged that family-friendly and non-alcoholic activities should not be introduced at the expense of existing clubs, bars, and restaurants. A common theme was that whilst affordability and accessibility are important, these objectives were diverting energy and resources from assisting existing independent cultural paces, such as live music venues, that serve alcohol and are struggling to survive.

Key concerns raised were how affordability and alternative cultural activities would be possible without rent control, or how protecting LGBTQ+ spaces would be achieved without leveraging landlords and mitigating corporate real estate expansion. Few respondents expressed a negative view of quiet nights, suggesting they were appeasing voters who chose to live in central London, and that nightlife is an inherently 'adult industry.'

Other themes raised in the comments included the needed for more public space for teenagers, that a lot of the affordability and non-alcohol led activities were already happening across cultural industries (theatres and museums), and that expanding evening activities beyond Central Westminster risked prioritising 'wealthy newcomers over long-standing business areas' (including Soho).

Q5. Economic Development and Opportunities



Nearly 7 in 10 respondents think that enhancing support and recognition for night-time workers will achieve the Economic Development and Opportunities pillar.

Almost 6 in 10 think that fostering economic development and innovation and harmonising licensing and planning will be effective in achieving this pillar.

Respondents were less positive about upskilling residents in the hospitality and creative sectors, creating late-night entertainment zones, and diversifying central Westminster's evening and nigh-time economy. Just over half of respondents thought these objectives would be effective in achieving the Economic and Development and Opportunities pillar.

The most highly rated objective was Enhancing Support and Recognition for Night Workers in Westminster. The least highly rated, but still over half of respondents

agreeing with the objectives, were creating Late-night Entertainment Zones in Oxford Street, the Strand and Victoria Street, and Diversifying Central Westminster's Evening and Night-Time Economy (54% and 52% respectively).

Respondents were asked to explain their response to the Economic Development and Opportunities objectives

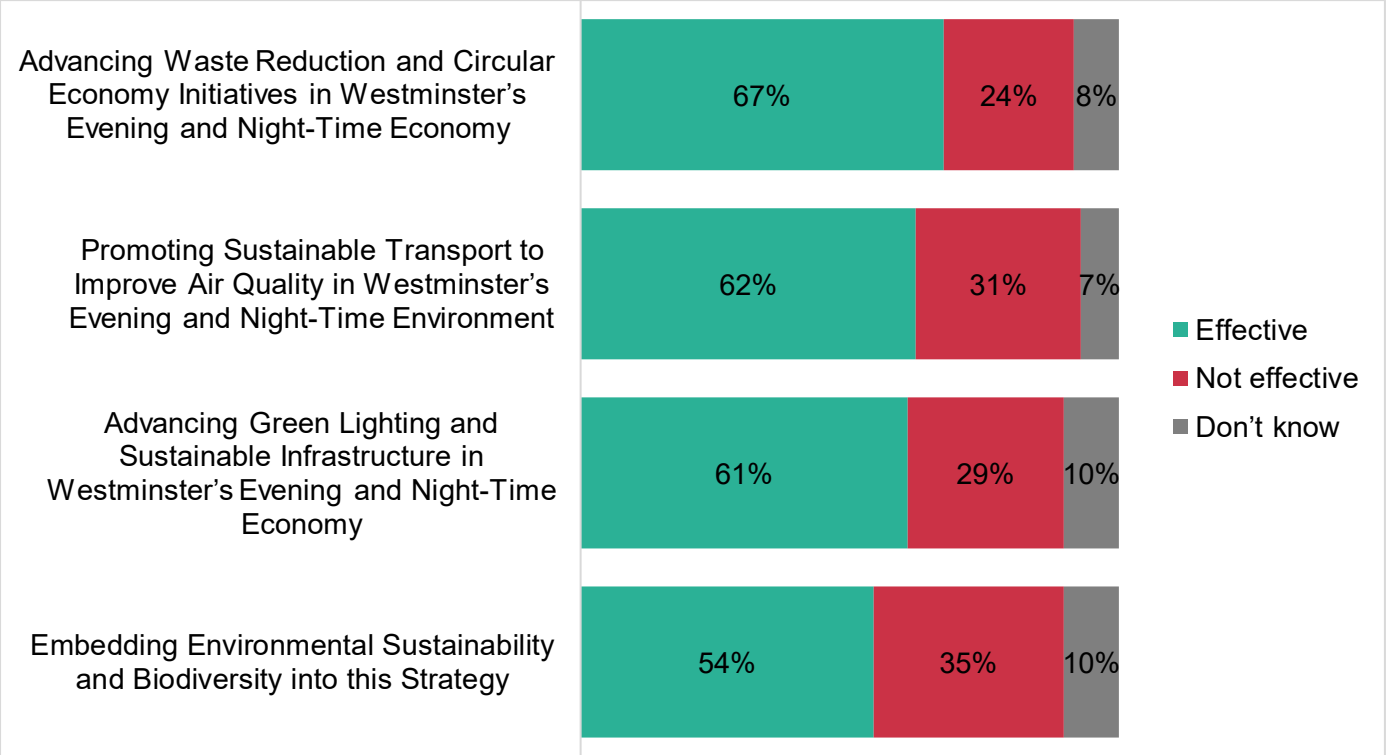
48% of respondents provided no further comments on the Economic Development and Opportunities objective.

Of the 52% who commented, the most frequent theme raised across all responses related to the late-night entertainment zones (LNEZs).

The largest portion of comments on the LNEZs expressed concern that preferential licensing treatment would detract from existing late-night areas and businesses in Westminster, which were already struggling. Respondents suggested improving existing historic areas rather than creating new zones. There was a particular emphasis on the need for the strategy to recognise and protect the uniqueness of Soho as a culturally significant late-night area, cautioning against policies that would disperse late-night activities across the borough. The second most frequent comment about the LNEZs were concerns they would be a magnet for anti-social behaviour in residential areas, which are already ASB and crime hot spots. Other respondents were positive about the LNEZs (and suggested their expansion across London), including residents living in the areas proposed for the zones.

Again, the need for more detail and targets across the policies was raised. There was near unanimous affirmation of the need to support night-workers through wage recognition and late-night amenities, and a positive response to the proposed harmonising of licensing and planning frameworks. Other themes raised by several respondents included supporting local and independent business and promoting evening café culture.

Q6. Environmental Sustainability and Biodiversity



The most popular objective (67%) was advancing waste reduction and promoting circular economy initiatives, with the least popular (but still 54% agreement, 35% disagreement) being embedding biodiversity into the strategy.

Just over two thirds think that advancing waste reduction and circular economy initiatives will be effective in achieving the Environmental Sustainability and Biodiversity pillar. Around 6 in 10 respondents think that promoting sustainable transport and advancing green lighting and sustainable infrastructure will be effective in achieving the pillar.

Over half of respondents think that embedding environmental sustainability and biodiversity into the strategy will be effective in achieving this pillar.

Respondents were asked to explain their response to the Environmental Sustainability and Biodiversity objectives

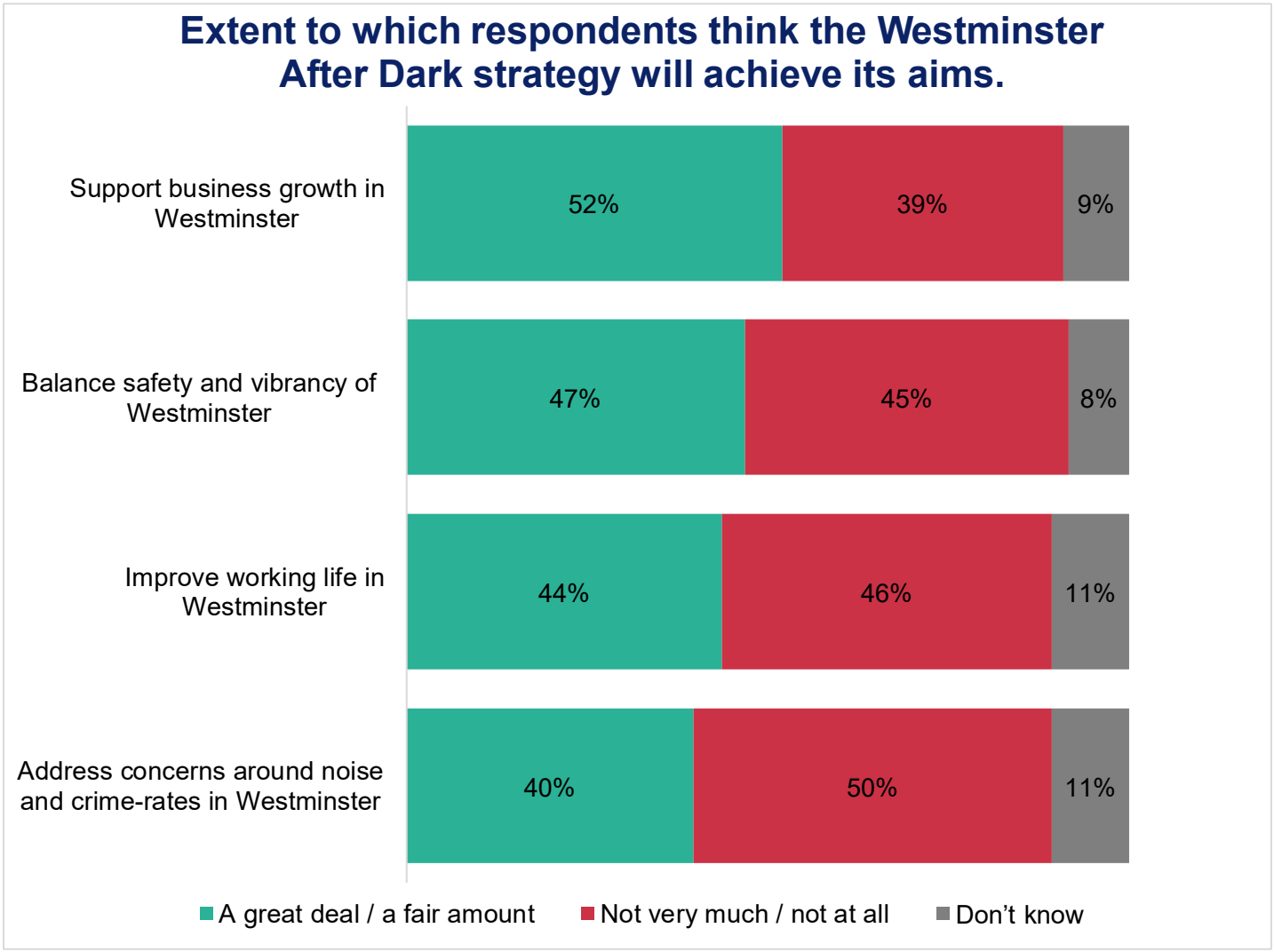
51% of respondents did not provide any additional comments on this pillar.

Of the 49% of people who did leave comments, most respondents were positive about the intent of the objectives but felt they did not relate to the crux of Westminster After Dark. Other recurring themes were on the need to manage rubbish collection (to ensure minimum night-time noise disturbance), that cycling was dangerous at night/ after the consumption of alcohol, and that the focus should instead be on cheaper and more accessible public transport options. Several respondents (including residents) raised

the point that Soho should be pedestrianised, with only a few respondents claiming the opposite. Several people wrote positively about how greenery, cleaner air, and wider pavements would positively affect the experience of key areas of Westminster in the evening and night-time.

Again, the lack of firm commitments in the policies was raised an issue, with comments requesting more detail, measurable outputs, and tangible steps to delivery.

Q7. Achieving Aims



Just over half (52%) of respondents felt the strategy would support business growth in Westminster, with 39% thinking it would not do so very much or at all.

There is an almost equal split between among respondents as to whether Westminster After Dark will balance safety and vibrancy of Westminster and improve working life in Westminster.

Half of respondents thought the strategy would not address concerns around noise and crime-rates compare with 4 in 10 who said that it would.

Respondents were asked to explain their response to the previous question.

54% of respondents did not provide any further written comments.

Of the 46% of people who provided explanation, most commented that success of the strategy depended on the implementation and delivery plan, and there was a need for stronger/more committed wording and clear resourcing. A high proportion of respondents expressed concern that the strategy would negatively impact existing evening and night-time businesses in Westminster through placing restrictions on struggling alcohol-based venues, many of which are cultural hubs. An equal number highlighted that there should be greater emphasis on managing ASB and the high levels of noise that already exist and are associated with the evening and night-time.

Other comments were that the strategy covered a good range of issues and was well-balanced across businesses, workers, and communities, and that it has the potential to make Westminster a leader in responsible and inclusive night-time planning. At the same time the point was raised that the strategy tries to be too many things to too many people with the risk of being ineffective.

3. Commonplace- Developing the First Actions

There were 31 responses to the questions on the implementation plan. **This is a very small sample and the themes emerging from this part should be given less weight than those of the smart survey above.**

Most respondents were residents, with a similar number of workers and business owners. The rest were visitors and those who owned property in the borough (presumably that they do not reside in).

Q1. How effective, if at all, do you think the proposed actions will be in achieving the strategy objectives?

Open-ended text box for respondents to write their comments.

Key themes related to fears that over-enforcement and regular inspections could threaten business viability, concern over the introduction of the late-night levy, and an urge for 'partnership over punishment' with businesses. Concern was also raised over the replacement of area-specific licensing representatives who 'understood the nuances of licensed venues on their patch' with roaming teams of inspectors who have sometimes applied a 'heavy-handed approach' and at other times failed to act on long-term issues.

There was unanimity amongst respondents on the police needing to be better resourced. Whilst business operators emphasised that changes should be made to infrastructure (lighting, CCTV, and public toilets), residents expressed concern that venues would not be 'subject to enforcement.' Concern was also raised that the actions treat Westminster as a single entity, without attention to defining and managing each area individually.

Further comments raised the lack of practical detail and KPIs across the actions, including how the council would actively protect LGBTQ+ spaces. Whilst there was general approval for making things more culturally diverse and accessible, businesses raised that new cultural venues/spaces should not pose a risk to the viability of existing venues. Clarity on the delivery of the implementation plan was requested to ensure the strategy is not just a document of intention but rather of action.

A couple of respondents raised concerns that establishing LNEZs outside of the West End would be inconsistent with protecting residential amenity. Further information was requested on the development and oversight of these areas, as well as how they link in with the planned Mayoral developments for Oxford Street. Concern was also raised that the creation of new 'late-night' zones will be detrimental to existing venues, and that more must be done to support Westminster's existing businesses. It was requested that the creation of LNEZs should be supported by area-specific placemaking strategies that encourage reduced traffic and improved infrastructure to support a more amenable night-time landscape. One respondent outlined the need for the heritage of Soho to be protected whilst continuing to embrace diversity and growth in the area. There was a desire from one respondent to incorporate more energy efficient practices and encourage sustainability as part of this night-time strategy – something that was felt to be missing or lacking from the existing proposals.

Several respondents raised the need for more detail on how the unified licensing policy framework would work and raised questions on what was meant by 'tailored licensing zones.' One respondent strongly supported the publication of the framework.

Q2. Do you have any further comments?

Some residents emphasised they had chosen to live in a 'vibrant city' and were worried it would be made 'bland', whilst others commented that the plans were 'very business focussed', ignoring the voices of residents who experience high levels of anti-social behaviour relating to late-night venues. Several business representatives expressed a desire for more late-night licenses to be awarded for bars and restaurants in Soho, alongside the pedestrianisation of some streets, and whilst crime needed to be effectively dealt with it should not be used as a veil to close struggling businesses.

The issue of noise was raised, with business operators stating they already work hard to reduce noise from their premises, residents requesting businesses be more proactive in

managing noise, with noise relating to timed waste collections being pertinent. Creative response to waste and street cleaning were proposed- such as bicycle cleaners operating during the night. Dispersal was highlighted as having the biggest impact on community well-being, with a 'comprehensive dispersal policy, supported by appropriate and enforceable conditions' being 'one of the best ways of balancing well-being and night-time growth.'

4. Workshops

4.1 LGBTQ+ Stakeholder Roundtable

Attendees: Westminster LGBTQ+ Forum, Freedom Bar, Rupert Street Bar, The Admiral Dunkin, The King's Arms, Eagle London, Ku Bar, Metropolitan Police

Summary: The Westminster After Dark LGBTQ+ Stakeholder Roundtable focused on community representation, safety, economic sustainability of Westminster after dark from the perspective of LGBTQ+ venues in the borough. Attendees emphasised the need for better communication from the Council, diverse representation on future LGBTQ+ venues forums, and greater efforts to address safety and business challenges.

Key themes:
Safety: Participants called for more police presence, reintroduction of CCTV cameras, and smarter policing strategies to enhance safety for residents and venue patrons. Concerns were raised about noise from motorbikes and pedicabs, and poor lighting, with suggestions for introduction of artistic lighting and support for the unified planning and licensing approach in the strategy to improve the area's cultural atmosphere.

Economic Opportunities: Several suggestions were made to support businesses, through measures like reducing business rates and more streamlined and clearer planning laws. Participants also raised concerns about inconsistent council engagement with venues, particularly across licensing and planning teams, which impacts the overall effectiveness of these initiatives in supporting business development of LGBTQ+ venues.

4.2 Accessibility and Safety Workshop

Attendees: Westminster LGBTQ+ Forum, London Disability Network, Bubble Club, GIG Buddies, Night-time Industries Association

Summary: During the workshop various stakeholders discussed experiences, challenges, and effective practices related to accessibility ratings, sensory-friendly events, and safety measures.

Methodology: The accessibility and safety workshop invited participants to assess a series of proposed actions by ranking each on a scale of 1 to 5 (with 5 the being the

most effective). They then shared personal experiences and reflections to explore how these actions had worked in practice.

Key themes:
Accessibility and Inclusivity: Proposals included implementing a food hygiene-style accessibility rating system (1-5) and training staff and security to improve emergency support for people with disabilities (for example, those having an autistic meltdown or sensory overload). Discussions also covered designated drop-off and collection spaces for transport and more accessible transport options (e.g., Dial-A-Ride). It was noted that many individuals with learning disabilities might avoid loud venues due to over stimulation and other needs, but that others enjoyed the bustle of late-night venues. Suggestions included providing clear guidance on what venues mean by 'accessible' or 'sensory friendly', staff displaying their training on lanyards and sunflower badges. There was a strong emphasis on creating welcoming public spaces with diverse representation and prioritising accessibility in planning and licensing decisions around the evening and night-time. The fact that cash-free bars can exclude disabled people (many of whom do not have bank accounts) was raised.

Safety: Participants raised that hate crimes directed towards minorities had increased during the evening and night-time. Whilst about half of the people supported increased CCTV and police visibility, others expressed concern over the bias of CCTV facial recognition and feeling like a 'police state'. Representatives from the LGBTQ+ community raised the fact that women and queer people can find police presence more daunting rather than less, urging that public realm features are an alternative way to engender feelings of safety during the night-time. Workshop participants also highlighted the need for safer, more frequent transport options, such as buses and taxis.

5. Written Consultation Feedback

Geographically Tailored Policies

A key recurring theme from stakeholder responses centred on the need for geographically tailored policies within Westminster's diverse neighbourhoods. Several respondents, including Shaftesbury Capital, Fitzrovia Neighbourhood Association/ FitzWest NF, Soho Estates, and the Conservative Party, criticised the strategy's grouping of distinct areas such as Soho, Covent Garden, Fitzrovia, Mayfair, and St James's under a single umbrella. They argued that this approach overlooks the substantial differences in venue density, resident impact, licensing pressures, and local character. For example, Soho's nightlife environment and associated challenges are markedly different from the more residential and less venue-dense Fitzrovia or the commercial Mayfair. Stakeholders advocated for the strategy to be refined with dedicated sub-sections or area-specific annexes that acknowledge these unique dynamics, enabling more effective and targeted policy interventions for established entertainment hubs and residential zones alike.

Balancing Innovation with Traditional Nightlife

Related to this, there was widespread concern about the balance between preserving traditional nightlife culture and encouraging innovation. Organisations such as Poppleston Allen, UKHospitality, Soho Business Alliance, and Soho Estates expressed apprehension that policies promoting non-alcohol-led events, family-oriented entertainment, or new concepts like Late Night Entertainment Zones (LNEZs) could dilute or displace historic, alcohol-focused venues that form the cultural backbone of the West End's night-time economy. This group urged caution to avoid undermining the identity and economic viability of established nightlife areas, stressing the need for a careful balance that supports innovation without eroding heritage.

Community Safety

Stakeholders also raised significant issues relating to community safety, enforcement, and public realm management. Residents, Fitzrovia Neighbourhood Forum, and Soho Society highlighted recurring problems of antisocial behaviour, petty crime, noise nuisance, and the proliferation of short-term lets, particularly in residential areas adjacent to entertainment zones. They emphasised that policing resources are currently insufficient, with minimal officer presence to manage large visitor volumes effectively. Many respondents pointed to weak enforcement frameworks around noise and public safety, calling for clearer crime reduction targets, better use of CCTV, and increased private security measures to improve safety and resident quality of life.

Licensing

The matter of licensing and business viability was another prominent theme. Groups including Poppleston Allen, UKHospitality, Shaftesbury Capital, and Soho Estates argued that increased licensing restrictions, rigid rules around 'alcohol as ancillary' use, and proposals for a Late-Night Levy risk penalising responsible hospitality businesses. They warned that such measures could threaten the financial sustainability of venues, especially given rising business costs and the post-Covid economic environment. Related to this, several stakeholders highlighted the need for the strategy to better recognise the economic contribution of night-time hospitality. HOLBA, UKHospitality, Soho Estates, Soho Business Alliance, and DMT pointed to challenges such as rising business rates, staffing shortages, rent pressures, and venue closures. They advocated for stronger partnership governance including advisory boards that include sector voices, and for the development of economic KPIs such as gross value added (GVA), employment figures, and business resilience metrics to monitor and support the sector effectively.

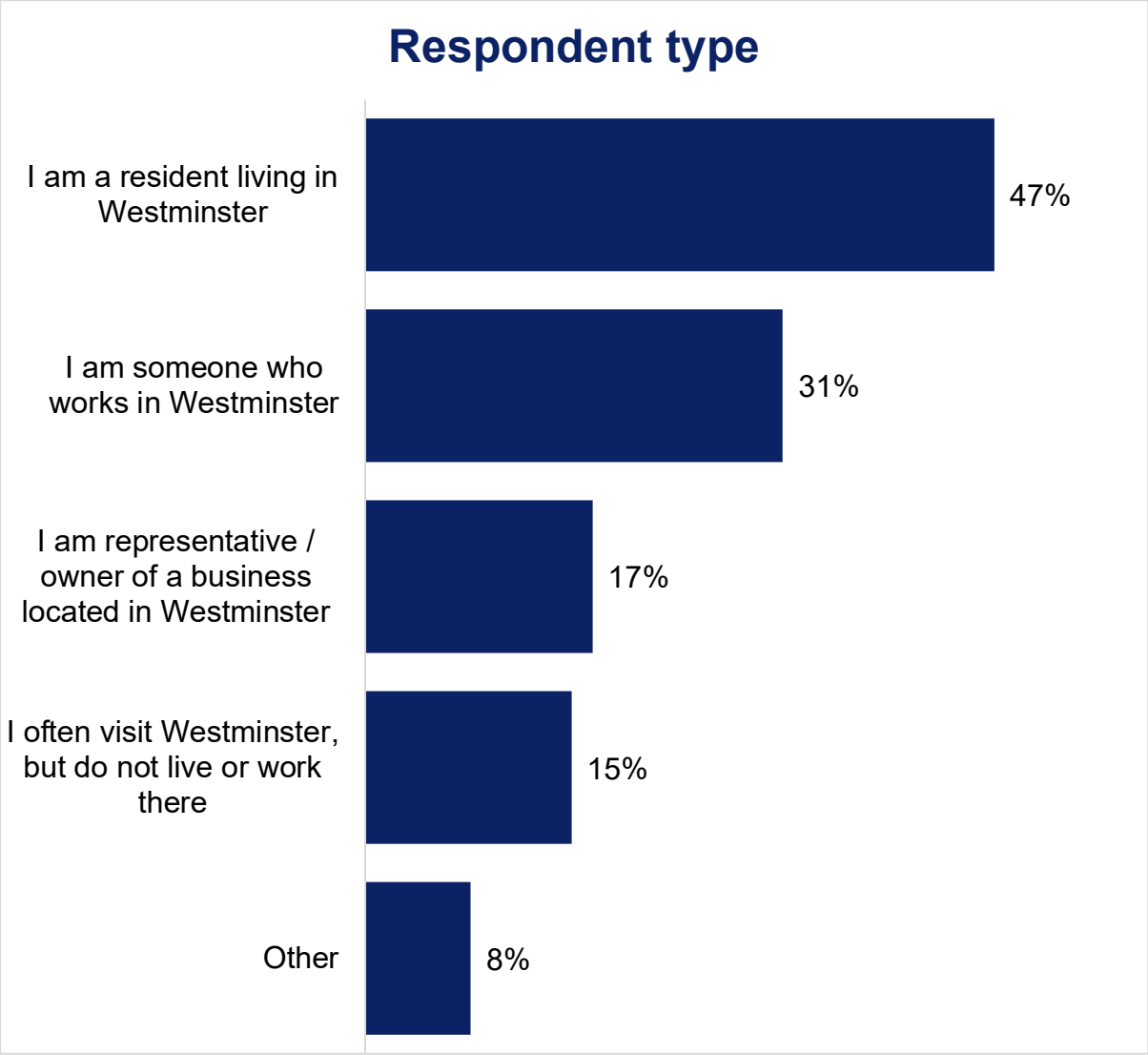
Ensuring Cultural Diversity and Inclusivity

On the topic of inclusivity and cultural diversity, there was broad support for aims to protect LGBTQ+ venues and promote cultural diversity within the night-time economy, with endorsement from HOLBA, DMT, Poppleston Allen, UKHospitality, and Landsec. However, many questioned how these aims would be delivered in practice, including how LGBTQ+ venues would be defined, how grassroots spaces would be supported, and how displacement risks from planning restrictions could be mitigated. Stakeholders recommended clearer definitions, stronger support mechanisms, and sustainable funding for community-led and non-commercial evening activities to ensure inclusivity is meaningful and impactful.

Conclusion

In summary, the written responses reflect a desire for a more nuanced, place sensitive approach to managing Westminster's night-time economy, one that respects the unique character and needs of different neighbourhoods while balancing heritage with innovation. There is a clear call for improved safety and enforcement, recognition of economic realities, and inclusive cultural policies backed by practical support and governance. Addressing these themes through tailored sub-policies, robust enforcement frameworks, partnership governance, and clear economic and social metrics would strengthen the strategy's effectiveness and stakeholder confidence.

Appendix 1 – Online survey demographics



You said you work in Westminster. Do you mainly work during the day or in the evening and night-time? (Please select one option only)

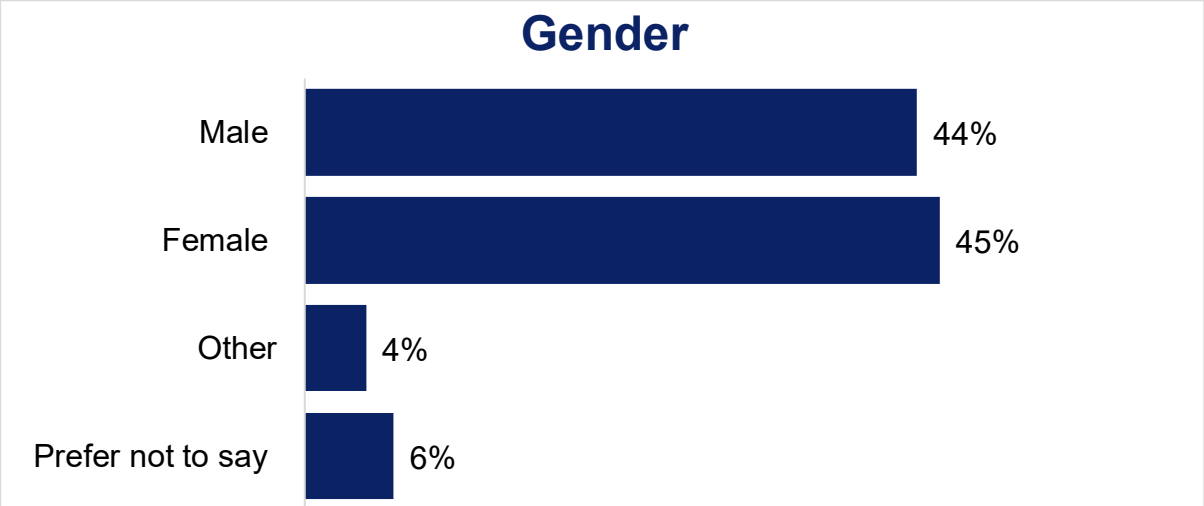
Answer Choices	Responses	
I mainly work during the day – between 6am and 6pm	82.28%	65
I mainly work during the evening and night-time – between 6pm and 6am.	17.72%	14
Answered: 79 Skipped: 173	Response Total:	79

You said you are a representative / owner of a business located in Westminster. Which, if any, of the following industries is your business in? (Please select one option only)

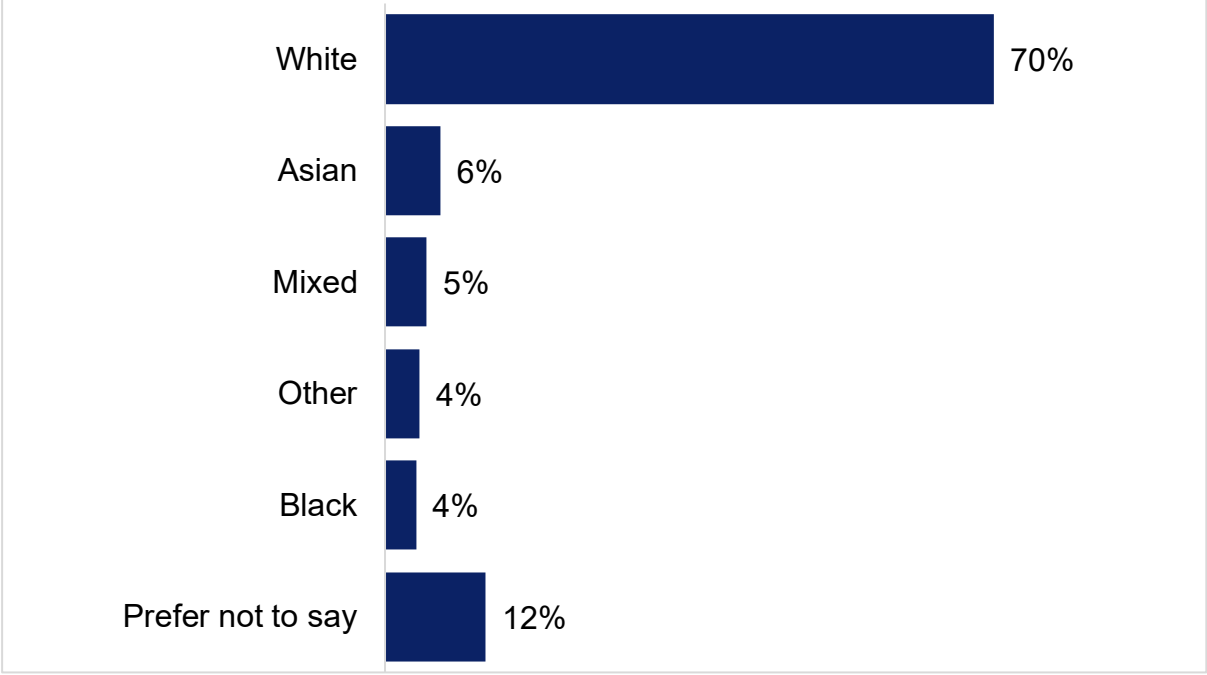
Answer Choices	Responses	
Food and hospitality	25.00%	7
Arts, entertainment and recreation	42.86%	12
Manufacturing	0.00%	0
Transport	0.00%	0
Health and social work	0.00%	0
Wholesale and retail	0.00%	0
Other (please specify): Show	32.14%	9
Answered: 28 Skipped: 224	Response Total:	28

In a typical week, what is the latest closing time of your business? (Please select one option only)

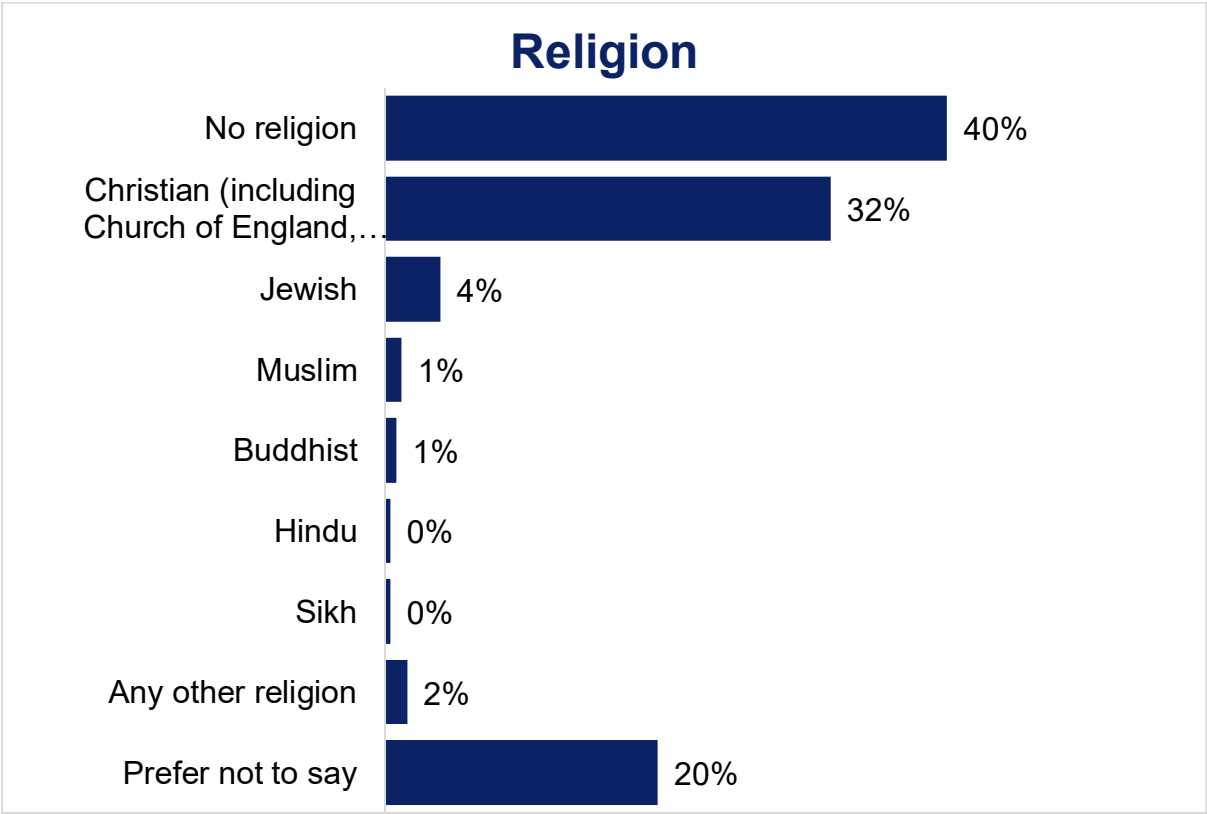
Answer Choices	Responses	
Before 6pm	10.71%	3
Between 6pm and 9pm	17.86%	5
Between 9pm and midnight	46.43%	13
Between midnight and 3am	14.29%	4
After 3am	10.71%	3



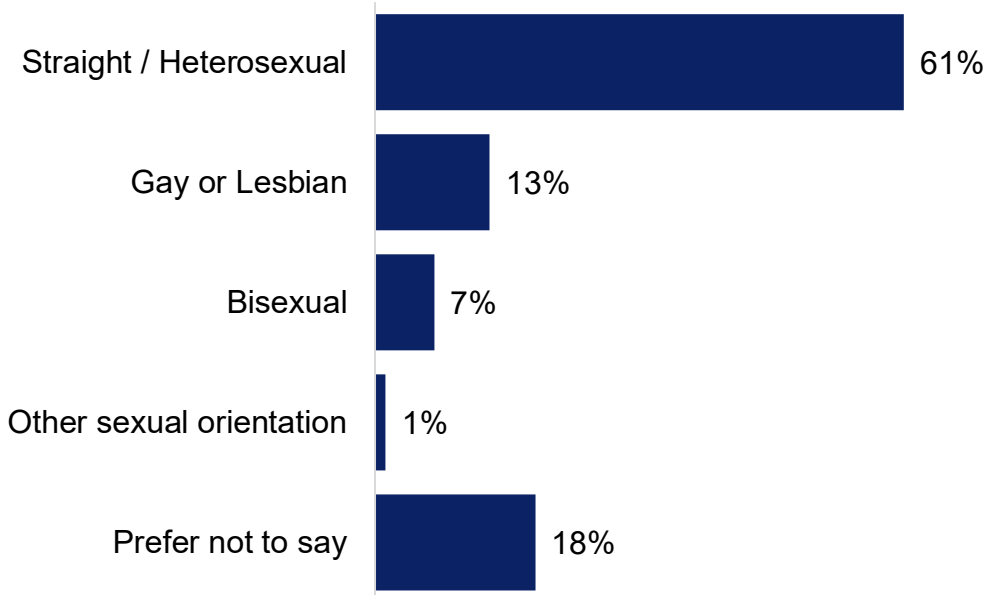
Ethnicity



Religion



Sexuality



Disability / health condition

