## **New Housing Occupancy Study**

## Flintshire County Council

Report September 2015

**Main Contact: David Tonks** 

Email: david.tonks@arc4.co.uk

Telephone: 0800 612 9133 Website: www.arc4.co.uk



#### **Table of Contents**

Introd	uction	. 4
Sectio	n 1 - About your current property	. 5
Sectio	n 2 - Where you live now / Where you lived last?	.8
Sectio	n 3 - About Moving to this property	11
Sectio	n 4 - Welsh language	17
Equali	ities Policy Monitoring	20
List o	of Charts and Figures	
Q1a	Is your property a new build or a converted property?	. 5
Q1b	When was your property built / converted?	. 5
Q1c	When did you move into the property (year)?	. 6
Q1d	Are you the first occupant of the property?	
Q1e	Are you a first time buyer?	
Q2a	What type of property do you live in now?	. 8
Q2b	What type of property have you moved from?	. 8
Q3a	How many bedrooms does your current property have?	
Q3b	How many bedrooms did your previous property have?	
Q4a	Tenure now	
Q4b	Previous tenure	. 9
Q5a	How many people live in the property?	. 9
Q5b	How many people lived in your previous property?	
Q6	How many adults in the household work?	
Q7a	Where did you live before you moved to this property?	
Q7b	If you moved from elsewhere in the UK or from outside the UK, have you ever previously lived in Flintshire / elsewhere in Wales?	12
Q8	What was your main reason for moving to the property?	13
Q9	What was the purchase price of the property?	
Q10	If you are renting the property please give the amount you pay in rent each month	
Q11a	Have all of the houses on the development where you live been completed?	
Q11b	Are there any issues / problems with the new development?	15
	What could have been done differently to improve the development where	
	you live?	
Q12a	What languages are spoken at home?	17
Q12h	What Welsh Language Skills do members of your household have?	18



Gender:	20
National Identity: How would you describe your National Identity?	
Ethnic Group: What is your Ethnic Group?	21
Sexual Orientation: Which of the following options best describes how you think of yourself? (Over 16's only)	
Religion or Belief: What is your religion?	22
Marital Status: Are you married or in a same-sex civil partnership?	22
Disability: Using the definition of disability as contained within Section 6(1) of the Equality Act 2010 do you consider yourself to be disabled?	

This report takes into account the particular instructions and requirements of our client. It is not intended for and should not be relied upon by any third party and no responsibility is undertaken to any third party.

arc<sup>4</sup> Limited accepts no responsibility or liability for, and makes no representation or warranty with respect to, the accuracy or completeness of any third party information (including data) that is contained in this document.



#### Introduction

To complement the recently completed Local Housing Market Assessment (LHMA), Flintshire County Council commissioned arc<sup>4</sup> Ltd to conduct a survey of newly occupied dwellings built or converted within the County over the period 2010 – 2014.

The findings from this survey together with those from the LHMA and suite of other evidence based documents, will help inform the development of the new Local Development Plan for Flintshire. This report therefore aims to provide a picture of the underlying patterns and reasons for people moving into new build/ newly converted housing within the County.

Over July and August 2015, a total of 1,994 questionnaires were distributed to dwellings identified by the Council as "new residential properties" on the Council Tax address list. A total of 391 questionnaires were completed and returned. This represents a response rate of just under 20% or around 1 in every 5 newly built / converted properties.

English and Welsh language paper based questionnaires were posted out to all 1,994 dwellings with a further option for occupants to complete the survey on-line (bi-lingual) if preferred.

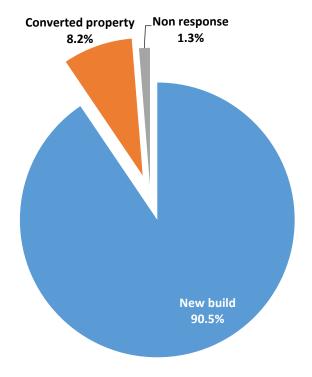
A total of 369 paper based questionnaires were returned in the medium of English, 8 paper based questionnaires were competed and returned in the medium of Welsh and 14 on-line responses were received in the medium of English. Therefore around 2% of all responses were received in the medium of Welsh.

This report provides a summary over-view in graph and table form of the findings from the survey. A copy of the questionnaire is also provided in Appendix A for reference.



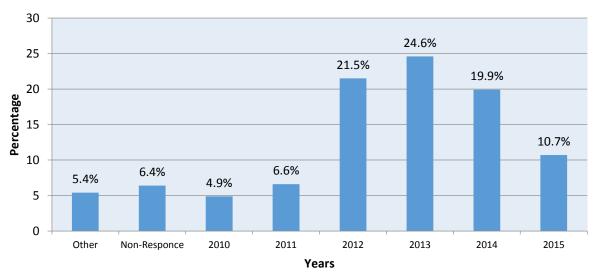
## Section 1 - About your current property

#### Q1a Is your property a new build or a converted property?



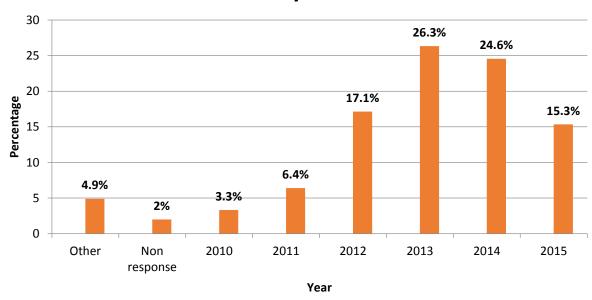
#### Q1b When was your property built / converted?

#### When was your property built?

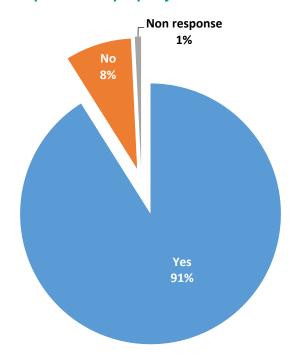


#### Q1c When did you move into the property (year)?

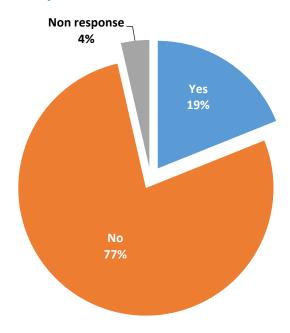
## When did you move?



#### Q1d Are you the first occupant of the property?



#### Q1e Are you a first time buyer?



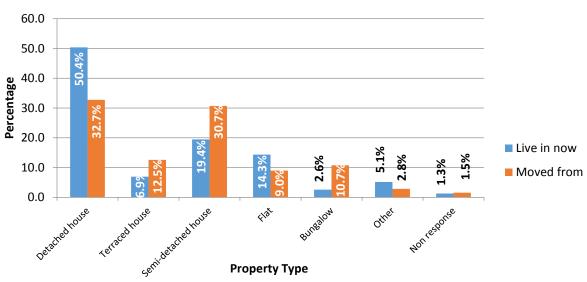
Unsurprisingly just over 90% of all respondents live within a "new build" property with over three quarters of all property built from 2012 onwards and two thirds of these properties occupied over the period 2013 - 15.

Given the nature of the survey and stock (by age) most respondents were the first occupiers of these properties and around 19% of all occupiers were first time buyers.

## Section 2 - Where you live now / Where you lived last?

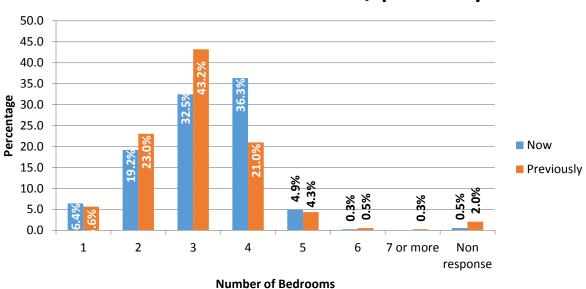
Q2a What type of property do you live in now? Q2b What type of property have you moved from?





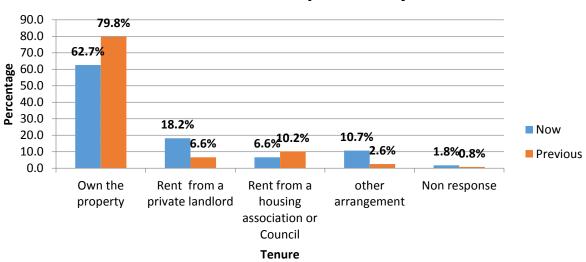
Q3a How many bedrooms does your current property have? Q3b How many bedrooms did your previous property have?

#### Number bedrooms current / previously



Q4a Tenure now Q4b Previous tenure

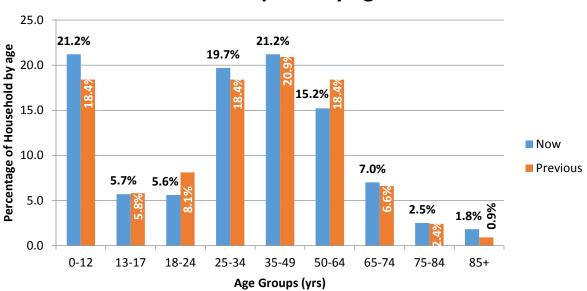




Q5a How many people live in the property?

Q5b How many people lived in your previous property?

#### % occupants by age



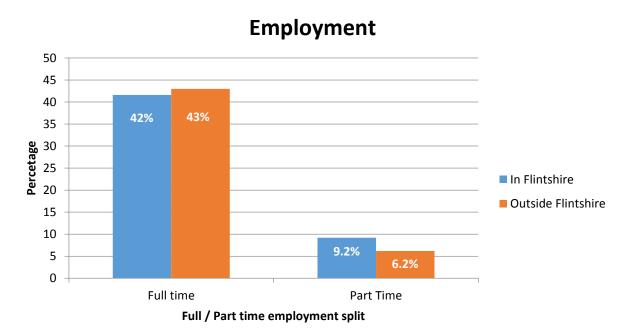
The survey revealed that there are a total of 917 people living within the 391 properties which responded. This would imply an average household size of 2.34 people per dwelling which is in line with the Stats Wales estimates of average household sizes for Flintshire. Analysis of the responses given for occupancy within previous accommodation shows an average household size of 2.52 people per dwelling, again supporting the trends of reducing household sizes.



That said the new build market within Flintshire appears however to be operating principally for economically active households with younger children (0-12 years) looking to up-size and purchase detached 4 bedroom houses, and for older person households looking to downsize and move from traditional 3 bed semi-detached accommodation into smaller flatted accommodation. Locally this pattern for older person housing appears to have also been influenced by the 2 new extra care housing schemes coming on stream within the County over the study period. This influence has also meant that there has been a noticeable increase in the proportion of households renting accommodation from the Council over this period.

Interestingly this survey shows there to has been a reduction in the number of households renting from a private landlord. Whilst this is opposite to the more general trend of a rapidly growing private rented sector, it must be remembered that this survey focuses largely upon new build properties often with financial assistance or incentive schemes (such as Help-to-Buy Wales) not available to investors and landlords. Positively this also shows that there are a number of households who have been able to move tenures and access home-ownership within Flintshire.

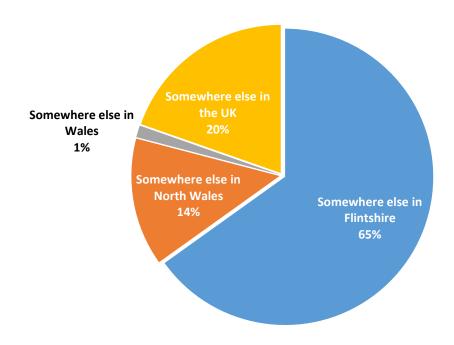
#### Q6 How many adults in the household work?



The analysis revealed that there are 563 employed or economically active residents living within the properties surveyed. A slightly higher proportion of people within full time employment work outside of the County, whilst proportionally more part time employees work within Flintshire. This pattern of employment shows the very strong and established economic links with areas outside of Flintshire principally with West Cheshire (retail, banking and service sectors), Ellesmere Port and the Wirral (manufacturing sector). Flintshire's relative residential appeal to both households wishing to remain within Flintshire and those moving into the County is largely underpinned by its own strong employment base as well as the excellent transport and communication links to employers, principally in neighbouring English authority areas.

## Section 3 - About Moving to this property

#### Q7a Where did you live before you moved to this property?



This means that 4 out of every 5 moves into new build accommodation in Flintshire over the study period came from households formerly residing either within Flintshire itself (65%) or from other parts of Wales (15%). Of the 20% of households who previously lived "somewhere else in the UK" and moved into Flintshire, the most frequent origins for movers were from:

- Chester 6%
- Other West Cheshire 2.8%
- The Wirral 1.6%

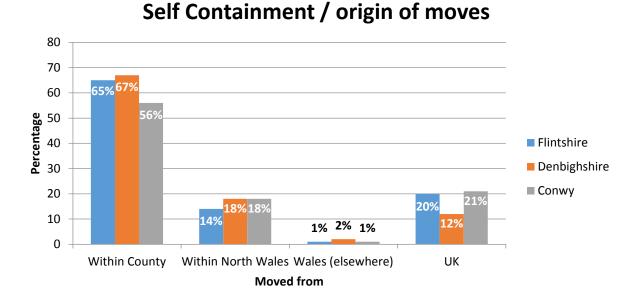
There were no other main or strong patterns of movement from any other region or part of the UK with individual moves originating from as far afield as Devon, Edinburgh, Gloucestershire and Leeds.

Similar new housing occupancy surveys have also been undertaken in both Denbighshire County (Dec 2011) and Conwy County Borough Council (Dec 2011) areas. The comparison of certain outputs of these surveys can provide some interesting information, however it must be remembered that as the date of these surveys is now over 4 years old, responses for these two other council areas are more likely to reflect a different stage of the over-riding economic cycle.

The chart below shows that there are broadly similar levels of self-containment across the three authorities. Denbighshire reports the highest level of movers into new build accommodation originating from either within the County itself or elsewhere in North Wales (85%), with Flintshire at 79% and Conwy at 74%. All three counties show that where movers originate from outside of Wales (UK), many relocate from North West



England (typically Cheshire, the Wirral, Merseyside and Manchester) as well as from further afield.



## Q7b If you moved from elsewhere in the UK or from outside the UK, have you ever previously lived in Flintshire / elsewhere in Wales?

Of the one in five households who moved into Flintshire from elsewhere in the UK around 14% of these stated that they had previously lived within the County with a further 9% having stated a previous residential connection to other parts of Wales.

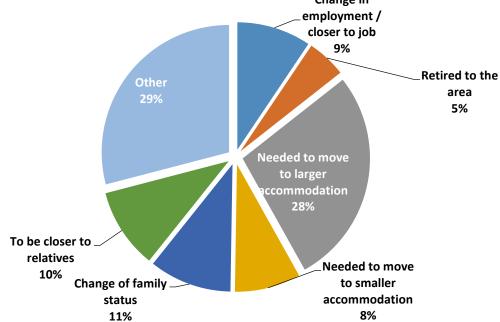
In comparison, of the 21% of households who moved into Conwy from elsewhere in the UK (outside of Wales), just under a third (29%) had previously lived either within the County (13%) or had previously lived somewhere else in Wales (16%). In Denbighshire the picture was slightly different with just under a quarter of respondents stating they had moved from outside of Wales having previously lived either within the County (9%) or elsewhere in Wales (14%).



Q8

#### Change in employment / closer to job 9%

What was your main reason for moving to the property?



The single biggest reason for moving was to move into larger accommodation. This reflects the responses presented earlier within this report (Questions 2 & 3) which showed the most popular and frequent type and size of accommodation moves being to detached four bedroom properties.

Of the 29% of "other" reasons given for moving, the most frequent reasons were:

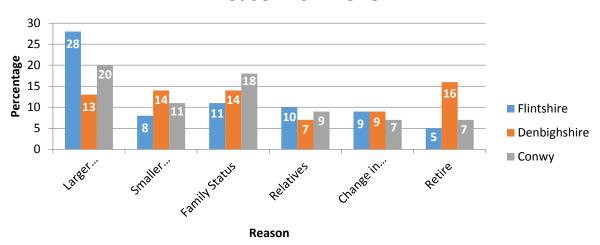
- First Time Buyers / moving from parental home / buying instead of renting (10%),
- Moving to a better area (5%)

Other less frequent reasons included moving due to retirement / old age / into extra care and to be near better schools.

A comparison (see chart below) of the reasons for moving within Denbighshire and Conwy areas confirms that accommodation size (larger property) is the biggest influencing factor in moves into new housing in Flintshire. Surprisingly the proportion of people moving into new build property for retirement in Conwy is low (7%) but is comparatively higher in Denbighshire (16%) – although these figures may be reflective of the availability of appropriate accommodation at the time of the surveys.

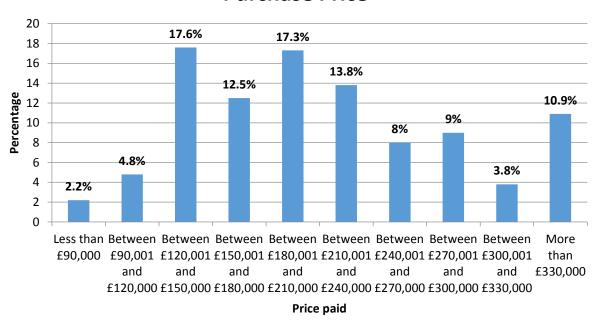
Again surprisingly, changes in employment don't appear to be a large influencing factor in the reasons for moving, but this may also reflect the relative accessibility of all three counties to the major employers / centres of employment.





#### Q9 What was the purchase price of the property?

#### **Purchase Price**



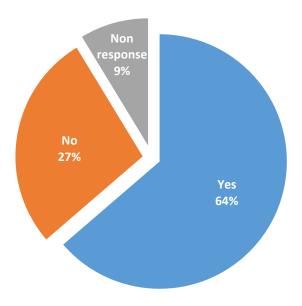
Typically most purchase activity is shown below the stamp duty threshold at £250k. This reflects the relatively high incidence of first time buyers entering the Flintshire market, most around the £100k - £150k price points, and the relative affordability of larger detached properties for households seeking to up-size around the £180k - £250k price points.



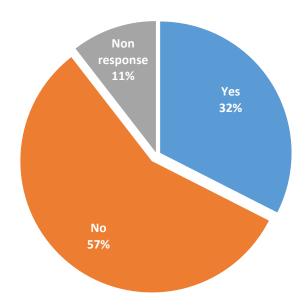
## Q10 If you are renting the property please give the amount you pay in rent each month

Responses indicated that rents ranged from as little as £100 per month up to £1,350 per month. There was however no clear or consistent detail on rental values with around two thirds of those renting accommodation paying between £400 and £700 per month and the median or mid rental price point being £500 per month.

Q11a Have all of the houses on the development where you live been completed?



Q11b Are there any issues / problems with the new development?



There was a variety of issues or problems noted by respondents however the most commonly stated issue related to the lack of adequate car parking including:

arc4)

- narrow roads;
- too few car parking space(s) per house;
- no visitor car parking;
- resultant on street car parking problems

There was also a level of notable dissatisfaction with the condition of the roads/ highways in terms of their surfacing, lack of street lighting and time taken to complete works (notable from respondents who had lived on an estate early within build programmes).

A number of respondents also commented about the issue and impact of management and leasehold arrangements including:

- the costs for service, maintenance and ground rent;
- impact upon mortgage availability / ability to easily re-mortgage;
- apparent lack of services received i.e. inadequate estate maintenance, incomplete or un-opened play facilities.

## Q11c What could have been done differently to improve the development where you live?

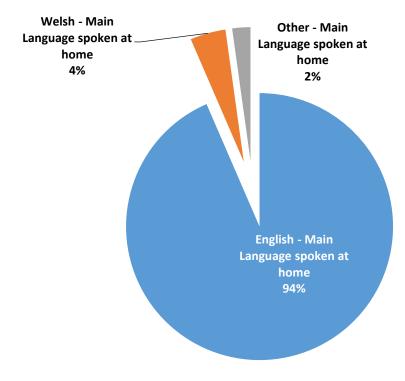
Reflecting the issues and problems noted above the most common suggestions to improve new developments concerned:

- Car parking principally a stated requirement for more per house and availability of visitor car parking;
- Better / improved highways including estate layout, carriageway widths, road surfacing, lighting, traffic calming;
- Improved communication with house-builder including better / improved communication with named site manager; and
- Availability, condition and management of open spaces / play spaces.



## Section 4 - Welsh language

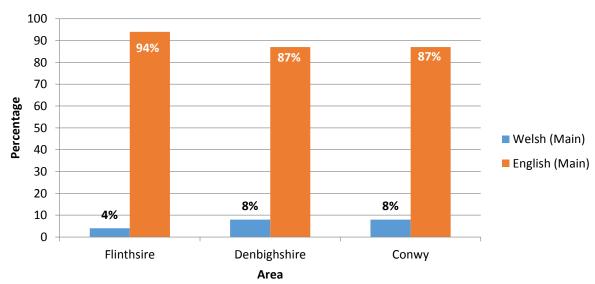
Q12a What languages are spoken at home?



Other main languages spoken at home include Polish, Portuguese, German, Hindi and Czech.

4% of English (main language) speaking homes responded as also speaking Welsh at home and just over half of Welsh (main language) speaking homes responded as also speaking English at home.







The preceding chart shows that the vast majority of households within all three areas who have recently moved into new build accommodation use English as their main language. The proportion of households who use Welsh as their first language is higher (at 8%) in both Denbighshire and Conwy. This is however lower than the level of "fluency" in the Welsh language as reported in the Welsh Language use in Wales 2013 – 2015 study, which suggests that 11% of people in Wales are fluent in the Welsh language.

Welsh language use as reported within the occupancy surveys does however reflect the overall level and pattern of fluency with Welsh language fluency levels rising into the more westerly authority areas.

Q12b What Welsh Language Skills do members of your household have?

People Aged						65 - 74		85+	All
Understands Welsh									
None	32	12	8	125	83	29	11	7	307
Some	29	57	14	142	45	17	2	2	308
Intermediate	2	14	6	32	7	1	0	0	62
Fluent	1	5	5	22	9	3	1	3	49
Total	64	88	33	321	144	50	14	12	726
			Spe	aks Wel	sh				
None	29	7	10	134	85	33	11	8	317
Some	24	52	11	113	27	7	2	0	236
Intermediate	2	11	4	24	3	0	0	0	44
Fluent	1	3	5	22	10	3	1	3	48
Total	56	73	30	293	125	43	14	11	645
			Rea	ads Wels	sh				
None	44	16	8	152	90	30	10	8	358
Some	8	41	11	91	16	6	3	0	176
Intermediate	1	13	3	22	2	0	0	0	41
Fluent	1	2	4	23	10	4	1	3	48
Total	54	72	26	288	118	40	14	11	623
	Writes Welsh								
None	44	17	8	173	95	34	12	8	391
Some	6	36	10	75	12	4	1	0	144
Intermediate	1	12	5	13	2	0	0	0	23
Fluent	1	2	4	21	8	4	1	3	44
Total	52	67	27	282	117	42	14	11	602

The responses show that there is between a 7-8% fluency rate in written and spoken Welsh. This is higher than the proportion of households responding to say that Welsh is their main language used at home, indicating that some of these households use English or other languages as their main language at home.

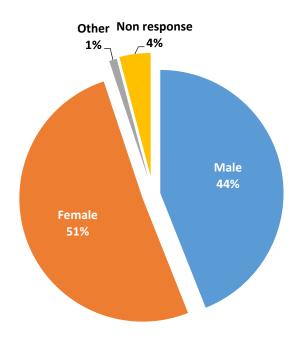


Around half of the households surveyed can understand some (or more) spoken Welsh, however this proportion falls in relation to written Welsh.

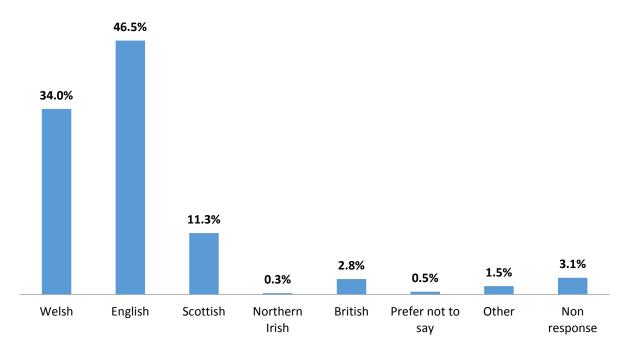


## **Equalities Policy Monitoring**

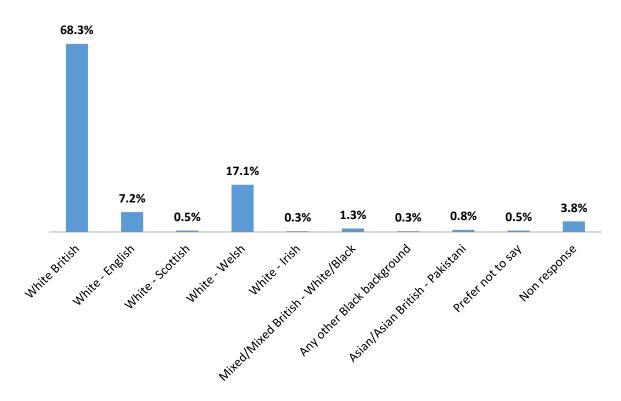
#### **Gender:**



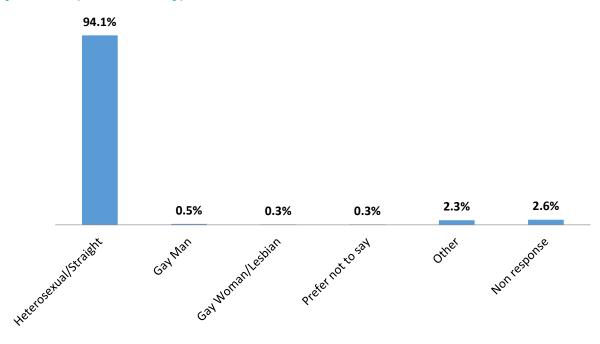
#### National Identity: How would you describe your National Identity?



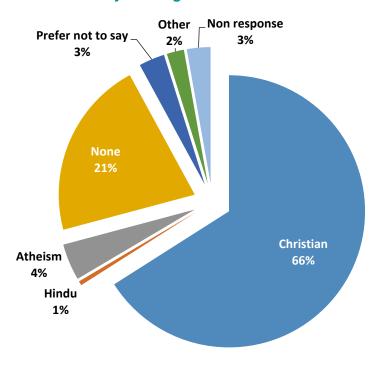
Ethnic Group: What is your Ethnic Group?



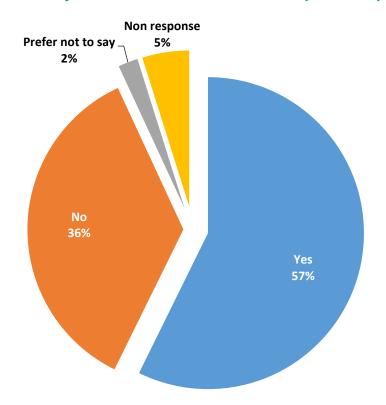
Sexual Orientation: Which of the following options best describes how you think of yourself? (Over 16's only)



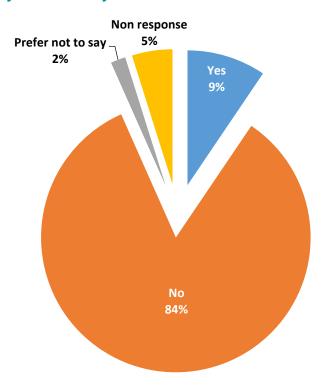
#### Religion or Belief: What is your religion?



#### Marital Status: Are you married or in a same-sex civil partnership?



Disability: Using the definition of disability as contained within Section 6(1) of the Equality Act 2010 do you consider yourself to be disabled?



## Flintshire County Council

# **New Housing** Occupancy Survey





For each of the questions please tick the appropriate boxes or enter your answer in the box provided.

If you do not want to answer all of the questions we would still appreciate a partially completed questionnaire.

About your current property	Where you live now / Where you lived last				
Q1a Is your property a new build or converted property?  New build	Q2a What type of property do you live in now?  Detached house				
Q1c When did you move in to the property (year)?  Q1d Are you the first occupant of the property?  Yes	Q2b What type of property have you moved from?  Detached house				
Q1e Are you a first time buyer?  Yes	Q3a How many bedrooms does your current property have?				

#### Where you live now / Where you lived last

Q3b How many bedrooms did your previous property	have?	Q5a How many people live in the property? (Please enter the number in the age groups below)			
		0-12 1 50-64 6			
		13-17 2 65-74 7			
Q4a Do you:		18-24 3 75-84 8			
Own the property?	□ 1	25-34 4 85+ 9			
Rent the property from a private landlord?	_ 2	35-49 5			
Rent the property from a housing association	□ 3				
or Council?	_	Q5b How many people lived in your previous property?			
	П4	(Please enter the number in the age groups below)			
Live in the property under another arrangement?	□ 4	0.40			
		0-12 1 50-64 6			
Q4b Did you:		13-17 2 65-74 7			
Own your previous property?	□ 1	18-24 3			
Rent your previous property from a private landlord?	2	25-34 4 85+ 9			
Rent your previous property from a housing	<b>П</b> з	35-49 5			
association or Council?	_				
		Q6 How many adults in the household work?			
Live in your previous property under another 4 arrangement?		(Please enter the number in the box below)			
		In Flintshire Full Time Part Time			
		Outside Flintshire Full Time Part Time			

### About moving to this property

Q7a Where did you last live before you moved to this property?	Q8 What was your main reason for moving to the property?
Somewhere else in Flintshire	Change of employment/closer to job 1
Somewhere else in North Wales 2	Retired to the area
Somewhere else in Wales 3	Needed to move to larger accommodation 3
Somewhere else in the UK	Needed to move to smaller accommodation 4
If so please write which town, county or	Change of family status (such as marriage,divorce) 5
region of the UK you lived in:	To be closer to relatives
	Other
	Please Specify:
Outside the UK	
Q7b If you moved from elsewhere in the UK or from outside the UK, have you ever lived:	
In Flintshire Yes No Somewhere else in Wales Yes No	

#### **Cost of the property**

#### Q9 What was the purchase price of the property? Less than £90,000 Between £90,001 and £120,000 Between £120,001 and £150,000 П 3 Between £150,001 and £180,000 Between £180,001 and £210,000 П5 Between £210,001 and £240,000 П6 Between £240,001 and £270,000 П 7 Between £270,001 and £300,000 □ 8 Between £300,001 and £330,000 9 More than £330,000 □ 10 Q10 If you are renting the property please give the amount you pay in rent each month

#### **General Questions**

Q11a	Q11a Have all the houses on the development where you live been completed?							
	Yes	_ 1	No	_ 2				
Q11b	Are the	ere any issue	s / probl	lems with the new development?				
	Yes	1	No	_ 2				
Ехі	Explanation:							
Q11c What could have been done differently to improve the development where you live?								

Q12a What languages a	re spoken at	home?						
Main Lar	nguage spoke	en at home	e Also	spoken	at home	e Oth	ner, Pleas	e spe
English Welsh Other	☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3				4 5 6		,	
Q12b What Welsh langı	ıage skills do	o membe	rs of you		ehold ha		ease ente	er the
	03-04	4 05-15	16-19	20-44	45-64	65-74	75-84	85+
Understands Wels	sh							
None								
Some								
Intermediate								
Fluent								
Speaks Welsh								
None								
Some			一		一	一	一	
Intermediate								
Fluent								
Reads Welsh								
None								
Some								
Intermediate								
Fluent								
Writes Welsh								
None								
Some						一		
Intermediate					一一	一		
Fluent				Ħ	一	一		

below. T	all and free from bias, we would appreciate your co-operation in providing, on an entirely voluntary basis, the information as requested below. The information is confidential and anonymous, and will be used solely for statistical monitoring purposes. It is separated from any correspondence received from you and will be securely destroyed after we have captured the information.							
Sex:	Male	<u> </u>	Female	_ 2	Other	3	Prefer not to say	<u></u> 4
Nationa	National Identity: How would you describe your national identity?							
Welsh British English	1 2 3	Irish Scottish Northern	Irish [		Prefer Not To S Other (please o	-	□ 7 □ 8	
Ethnic C	Ethnic Group: What is your ethnic group? Choose one option that best describes your ethnic group or background.							
E E P S V	White British English Northern Irish Scottish Welsh rish Gypsy or Irish Traveller	1 2 3 4 5 6 6	Mixed/ White / White / Any oth Black/ Caribbo	/Mixed Bi / Black Ca / Black Afi / Asian her Mixed Black Bri ean	ritish aribbean rican I background	10   11   12   13   14   15   16	Other / Other British Arab Other (state if required)  Asian/Asian British Indian Bangladeshi Pakistani Chinese	☐ 17 ☐ 18 ☐ 19 ☐ 20 ☐ 21 ☐ 22
	-						Asian other Prefer not to say	☐ 22 ☐ 23

In order to monitor the effectiveness of our Equality Policy and practice, and to ensure our services are delivered in a way that is fair to

Sexual Orientation: Which of the following options best describes how you think of yourself? Over 16's only.								
Heterosexual / Straight	Other (state if desired) 5  Prefer not to say 6							
Religion or Belief: What is your religion?	Disability:							
Buddhist	Section 6(1) of the Equality Act 2010 states that a person has a disability if:  (a) That person has a physical or mental impairment, and (b) The impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.							
Marital Status: Are you married or in a same-sex civi	il partnership? Using this definition do you consider yourself to be disabled?							
Yes	Yes							

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.

#### PLEASE RETURN in the FREEPOST envelope provided to:

arc4 Ltd c/o PHL, PO Box 393, Aycliffe Industrial Park, Newton Aycliffe, DL5 6WR

#### By Friday 14th August 2015