



Forced Entry Consultation

August 2019

Background



Commissioned by:

Claire Stone, Executive Director of Customer Experience

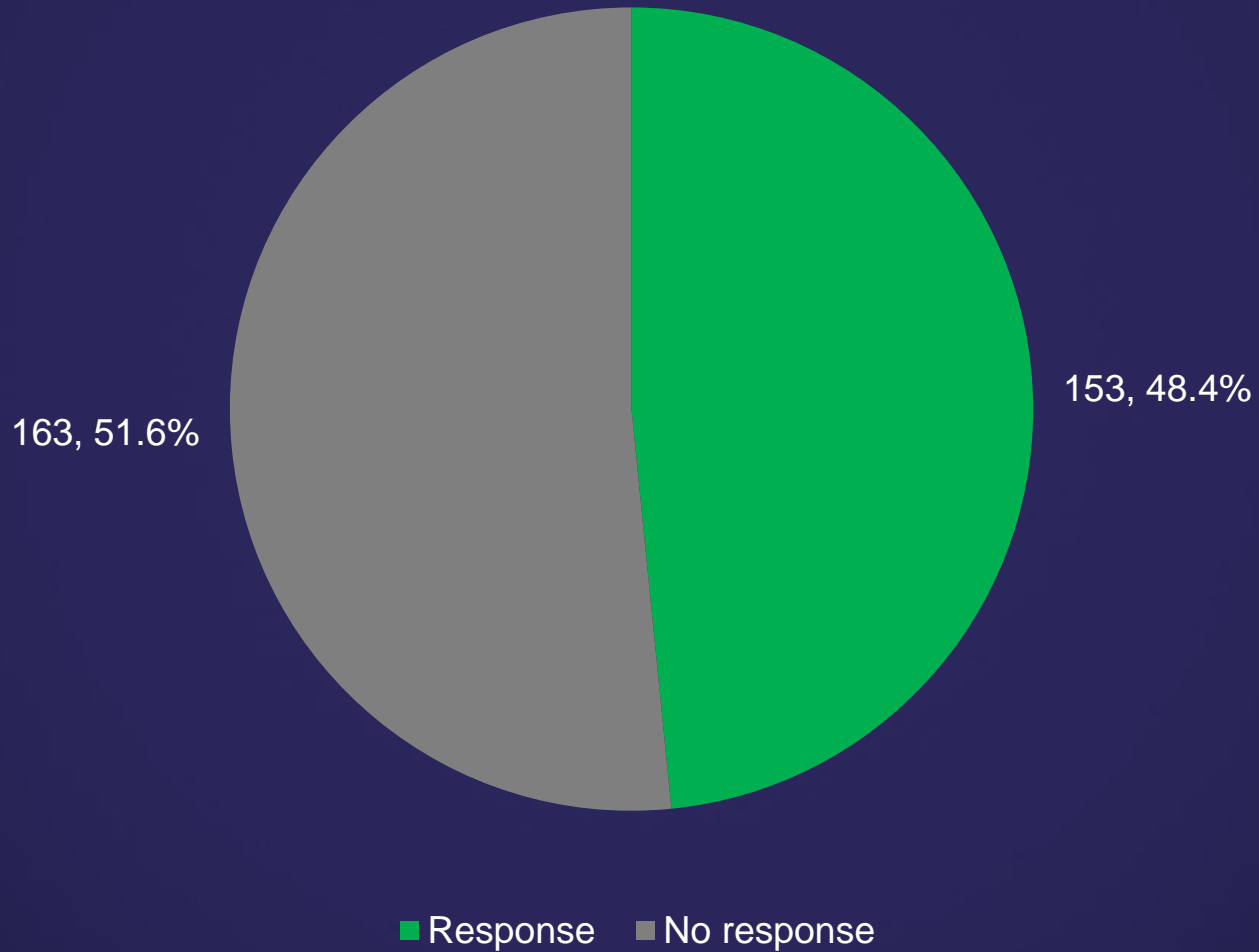
Rationale:

A survey to find out whether customers would endorse a policy allowing Accent to force entry into residents' properties to carry out essential health and safety checks, when all other means of gaining entry have been exhausted.

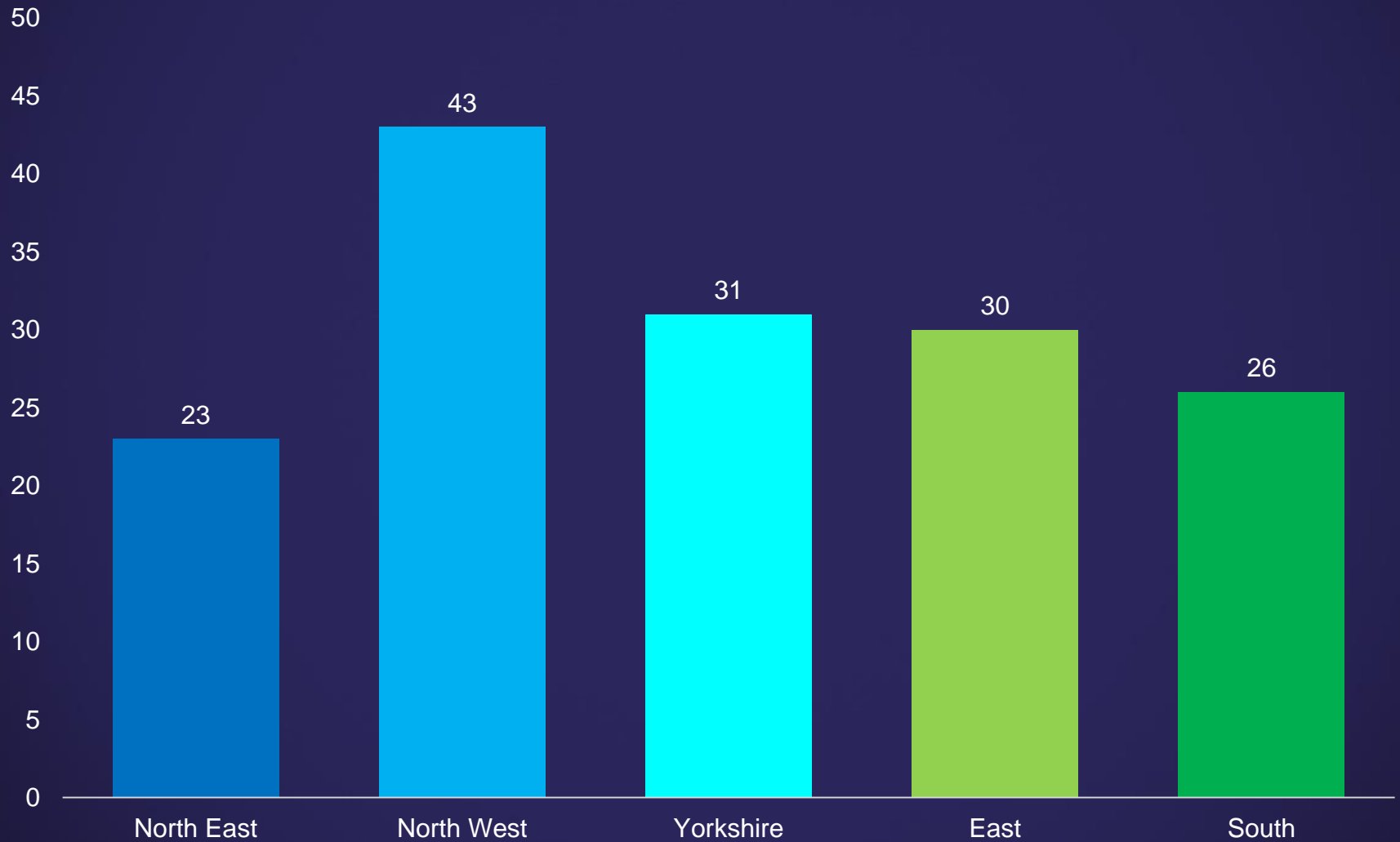
Sample size:

The Accent 500 were invited to take part in this consultation, except homeowners. The survey was carried out exclusively by email. After one attempt and a timespan of one week, the survey yielded 153/316 responses (48.4%) with a margin of error of $\pm 8.0\%$.

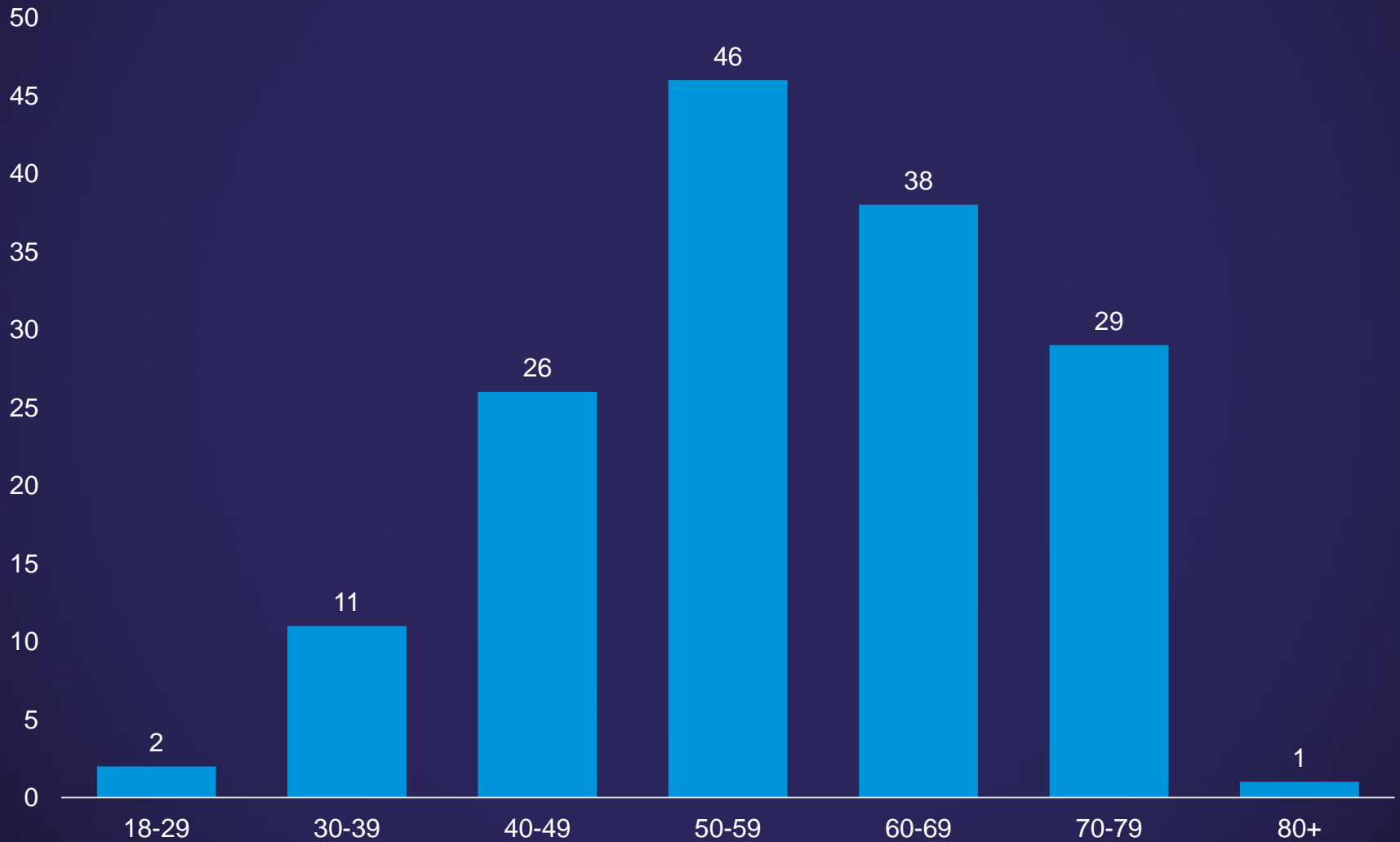
Responses



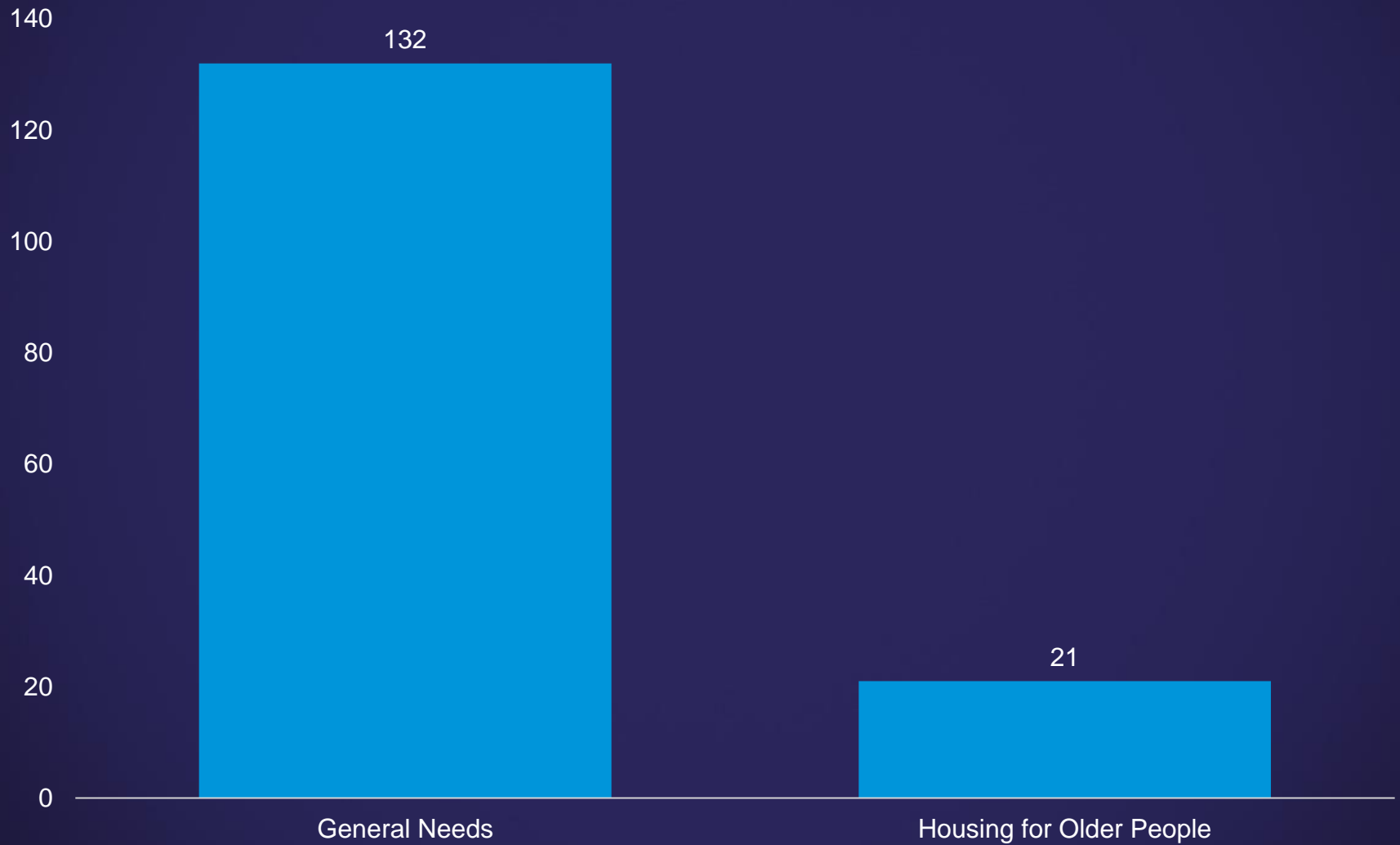
Responses by Region



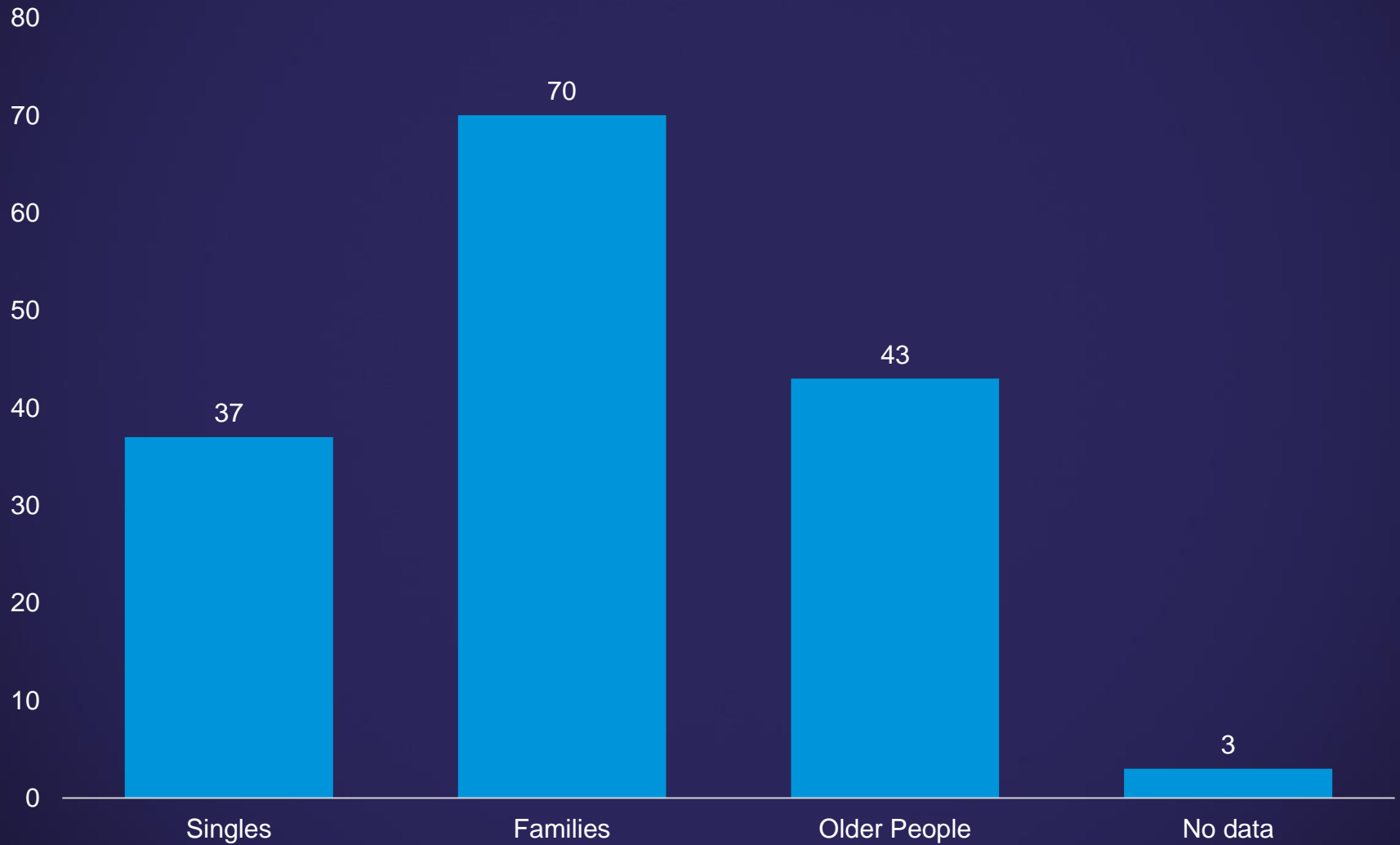
Responses by Age Band



Responses by Tenure Type



Responses by Household Type



Do you have any suggestions as to how we can engage with residents who consistently ignore reminders and warnings from us, and refuse to answer the door to us?



First to try to contact the families of the residents whose properties you are trying to gain entrance to. I would think that to do this is essential, where vulnerable residents are concerned.

A concern for welfare letter with a notice attached to front door giving 7 days notice - otherwise forced entry would be applied, with charges to the resident. This would certainly make me contact you!

Maybe talk to a neighbour to ask if they have heard anything.

Be more flexible with appointments, including out of office hours appointments.

Do you have any suggestions as to how we can engage with residents who consistently ignore reminders and warnings from us, and refuse to answer the door to us?



After everything else fails put a notice on the resident's front door stating that you need to gain entry as a safety measure. I'm sure once the other residents see this they will help to gain access with their neighbour.

Actually phone tenants (you never tried in my case).

I have noticed that phone calls are not from an individual and you get an automated message that you want us to call you. No reason is given either so it is not surprising that people do not call you back.

I've had a problem in previous years and came to an arrangement whereby a neighbour would act as key holder and we arranged for the checks to be carried out at the same time.

Do you have any suggestions as to how we can engage with residents who consistently ignore reminders and warnings from us, and refuse to answer the door to us?



I would like it if, before someone forced entry, they contacted my sister who has a spare set of keys and knows my intruder alarm code.

Having some form of 'hard to reach' engagement officer to build up the relationships.

If the person is vulnerable you could try to work with other professionals such as health and social care workers or groups. If that does not work you could try working with the local council or police.

If they are vulnerable adults maybe a team of familiar people that these people can get to know and trust.

Do you have any suggestions as to how we can engage with residents who consistently ignore reminders and warnings from us, and refuse to answer the door to us?



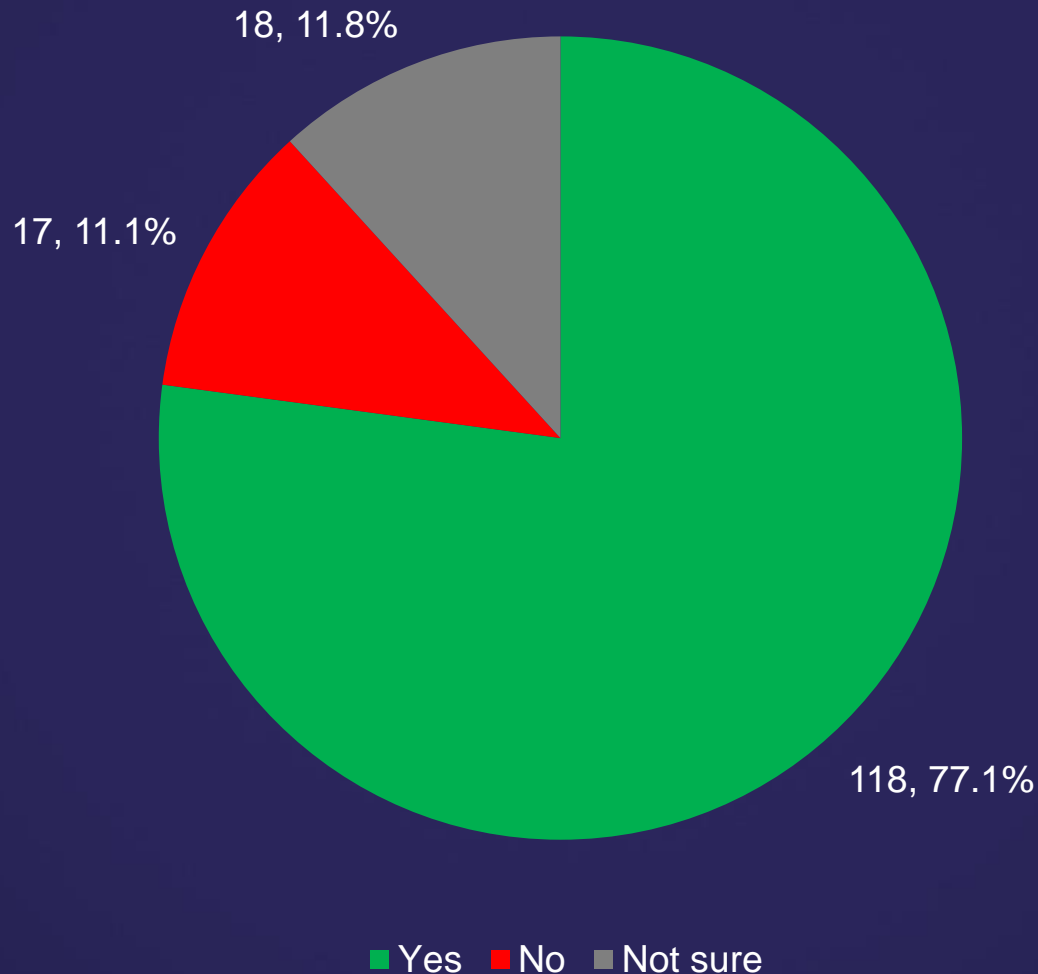
More regular contact to promote engagement, instead of just demanding entry on an ad hoc basis.

More regular engagement from the housing officer would help build a relationship and trust.

The current Monday to Friday access is not practical for residents who work full-time, offering a Saturday and Sunday option will probably reduce anyone refusing to cooperate.

The only suggestion I can make is to ask the scheme manager to allow you to enter the property as he/she would have a master key and know the state of the mental or physical problem the resident has.

Do you agree that Accent should have a policy to allow us to force entry into a property to carry out essential health and safety checks, when all other means of gaining access have been exhausted?



Please let us know why you think this is a good or bad idea.



A property that is not meeting safety requirements could put adjoining properties at risk.

Accent as the landlord are under a legal obligation to carry out these checks, and would be liable if failing to carry out these checks, a third party sustained injury.

A landlord need only show that they have taken reasonable steps to gain access to a property to carry out checks (this does not include forced entry).

As you have stated that person or children may be in need of other help. If all else has not worked... there is no other choice.

Please let us know why you think this is a good or bad idea.



Could possibly save a life.

Yes, if you think the tenant is a danger to him or herself or the family through mental health problems. No, if a tenant has been known to be violent and under police record.

'Forced entry' seems a bit of an extreme term and a designated Accent staff member acting as key holder would seem the most considerate option to me.

Health and safety should be the top priority by both Accent and its tenants. Why would they not agree to that?

Please let us know why you think this is a good or bad idea.



I work full time and recently phoned to change the appointment, then on the morning of the original appointment the workman came. I told him I'd changed my appointment and he said he still had to come!

If checks are not getting done, you should not do repairs.

It is someone's home and they would feel violated and intimidated by such a forceful action.

Forcing entry costs money for repairs which we as the tenants will ultimately have to pay for, so I believe that it would be much better to have spare keys to all properties.