



WRITTEN QUESTION FOR SUBMISSION TO HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE ON 6 SEPTEMBER 2022

QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR MUSTARD

Housing Need Assessment Survey

Recently I had a neurodivergent constituent contact me about the Transport Scotland Survey on the A96 which they found difficult to complete because of the wording within some of the questions. They felt some of the questions were vague, i.e. without definitions or making assumptions about the interpretation of the questions, and therefore found it difficult to respond. The work I have been involved in shows that when issues arise which prevents the person from understanding the question, they do not continue to complete the survey and therefore their potential input is lost. Taking lessons from this constituent's concerns and looking at some of the phraseology within the questions within the housing needs assessment, some questions may create difficulties for some people.

For instance, neurodivergent people may struggle with questions which ask 'could you' and then ask for details such as the income questions. The phrase 'could you' implies a yes/no answer, as in 'yes, I could provide you with details'. Instead, something more direct as such "Please provide" may be better.

This type of vague language also does not assist people whose first language is not English, such as British Sign Language (BSL) users. From the training provided to members by the British Deaf Association, written surveys pose difficulties for BSL users, and they would recommend an alternative format such as access to signed questions.

Additionally, the Scottish Government are consulting on a draft plan to improve and strengthen Scotland's equality evidence base. The consultation runs until 21 September 2022. As part of the strategy, new guidance on sex, gender identity and trans status was published by the Chief Statistician in September 2021. Therefore, the housing needs assessment should follow that guidance

These are just a few examples of what may be problematic to some people within our community whose voices are important, and their input is valuable to gain an accurate picture of the housing need in Moray.

What consideration was given to equalities in the phrasing of the questions and what mitigating action is in place to assist people to complete the survey?

RESPONSE FROM EDWARD THOMAS, HEAD OF HOUSING AND PROPERTY SERVICES

Firstly in terms of methodology, the Housing Need and Demand Assessment survey is being undertaken using a hybrid research methodology, incorporating both telephone and online survey methods.

For the telephone methodology, it is one which allows the consultant Research Resource to readily support residents to 'talk through' the interview meaning that any who have difficulty in reading or understanding can be supported through the process. It also allows them to identify any other particular needs when they are speaking to respondents and do what they can to provide for these. If any respondents have hearing difficulties they can utilise TypeTalk technology if required. Moreover, those individuals selected for the survey have been notified by letter and on that letter there is a telephone number and email address for Research Resource where they can get in touch to make arrangements for interview. These arrangements may include appointments at particular dates, times or in a particular way. They can, and are happy to, liaise with support workers, interpreters and family members to facilitate inclusion in the research process.

The consultant has augmented this with an online methodology in order to broaden access and participation in the survey. The online methodology allows respondents to use text readers, increase font size, use online translation facilities or change background colours in order to make the screen more accessible when completing. The survey is also developed as a multi-mode online survey and is screen adaptive meaning that respondents can take part on PC, tablet or mobile phone and the survey will adapt, which has been found to help response and inclusion.

In terms of questionnaire design, the consultant has been very mindful of inclusion, but happy to respond to feedback. A large number of the survey questions used are tried and tested and have been successfully used in other similar surveys. They are Market Research Society Company Partners and follow their guidelines with respect to questionnaire design. This means asking questions in a clear and unbiased way, to ask questions that are within the frame of reference of the respondent and can be easily responded to and delivering these in an accessible structure.