

Committee:	Lead Member for Learning and School Effectiveness
Date:	31 January 2012
Title of Report:	Proposed enlargement of Sidley Community Primary School, Bexhill
By:	Director of Children's Services
Purpose of Report:	To seek Lead Member approval to publish statutory notices in respect of a proposal to enlarge Sidley Community Primary School from September 2013, increasing its capacity from 210 places to 525 places.

Recommendation:

The Lead Member is recommended to:

- i) Authorise the publication of statutory notices in respect of a proposal to enlarge Sidley Community Primary School from September 2013, increasing its capacity from 210 places to 525 places, by relocating the school to Gunters Lane, Bexhill TN39 4ED; and**
 - ii) Delegate authority to The Director of Children's Services to amend the proposals prior to their publication if required.**
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1. Financial Appraisal

1.1 **Revenue:** this proposal will not affect the Schools Formula, although it will affect the budget position of Sidley Community Primary School, which will increase in accordance with rising pupil numbers.

1.2 **Capital:** capital investment will be required to provide additional places at the school. Currently £1.02m is identified in the Capital Programme to provide additional places in Bexhill, made up from £670,000 Basic Need allocation, £115,000 Primary Capital Programme contingency and contributions from previous housing developments of £235,000. Detailed design work will be undertaken to determine the level of capital funding required to deliver the additional places.

2. Supporting information

2.1 On the 8 November 2011 Lead Member for Learning and School Effectiveness approved public consultation on a proposal to enlarge Sidley Community Primary School from September 2013, increasing its capacity from 210 places to 525 places. The proposal is in response to an increase in demand for reception places as a result of a rising birth rate in Bexhill. In order to achieve the enlargement, we intend to relocate the school from its existing site in Buxton Drive, Sidley, Bexhill TN39 4BD to a new site in Gunters Lane, Bexhill TN39 4ED.

2.2 As the Gunters Lane site is less than 2 miles from the existing Sidley Community Primary School site, we were not legally obliged to consult on the proposal to relocate the school. The consultation document made clear that we were only seeking views on the proposal to permanently enlarge the school.

2.3 This report details the responses received during the consultation period and seeks approval from Lead Member for the publication of statutory notices.

2.4 Proposed changes to the organisation of schools have to follow a prescribed process established by:

- Education and Inspections Act 2006 (EIA 2006);
- The School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended by The School Organisation and Governance (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2007 which came into force on 21 January 2008;
- The School Organisation and Governance (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2009 which came into force on 1 September 2009)

This process complied with these requirements.

2.5 Consultation took place over a 4 week period between 21 November and 19 December 2011. Approximately one thousand, two hundred (1,200) consultation documents were distributed to interested parties in accordance with The School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended). The full distribution list can be found as part of **Annex 1**. The consultation document was also made available on the County Council's website. A number of consultation events were held during the consultation period, including parent drop-in sessions and a public meeting.

2.6 By the close of the consultation period, 66 replies had been received. This equates to a response rate of only 5.5%. Of the responses:

- 27 (40.9%) supported the proposal
- 6 (9.1%) neither agreed or disagreed with the proposal
- 33 (50%) did not support the proposal.

2.7 It is interesting to note that 38 of the 66 respondents (57.6%) were either parents/carers of a child at Sidley Community Primary School and/or members of staff at the school. Of those parents/carers:

- 18 (47.4%) supported the proposal
- 4 (10.5%) neither agreed or disagreed with the proposal
- 16 (42.1%) did not support the proposal

2.8 12 of the 17 members of the local community, who responded, disagreed with the proposal, with traffic congestion and parking in Gunters Lane being the most significant reason for objection. While these are valid concerns they are more relevant to the statutory planning process consultation for the remodelling of the Gunters Lane site and building. Respondents will have an opportunity to comment formally on these particular issues during this process.

2.8 **Annex 1** provides detailed analysis of the consultation process and responses received.

2.9 The publication of statutory notices would initiate a further 4 week period of consultation, known as the representation period. Within two months of the end of the representation period, Lead Member must decide on the proposal taking into account the views of all those affected by the proposal or who have an interest in it, including for example: pupils; parents and carers; staff; other schools; local residents; diocesan bodies and other providers. It is envisaged that a decision would be made at the Lead Member for Learning and School Effectiveness meeting on 17 April 2012.

3. Conclusion and Reason for Recommendations

3.1 The Council has a statutory duty to ensure there is a pattern of school provision across Bexhill which meets current and future demand for places, driven by a rising birth rate and planned housing development. In light of the very low response rate (5.5%) and the fact that a minority of parents/carers of a child at Sidley Community Primary School and/or members of staff at the school who responded did not support the proposal, Lead Member is recommended to:

- i) Authorise the publication of statutory notices in respect of a proposal to enlarge Sidley Community Primary School from September 2013, increasing its capacity from 210 places to 525 places, by relocating the school to Gunters Lane, Bexhill TN39 4ED.
- ii) Delegate authority to The Director of Children's Services to amend the proposals prior to their publication if required.

MATT DUNKLEY
Director of Children's Services

Contact Officer: Penny Gaunt, Deputy Director, Children's Services
Tel: 01273 481660
Local Members: All
Background Documents: NONE

ANALYSIS OF RESPONSES

1. Background:

- 1.1 East Sussex County Council undertook a consultation between 21 November and 19 December 2011 on a proposal to enlarge Sidley Community Primary School from September 2013, increasing its capacity from 210 places to 525 places. This would be achieved by relocating the school from its existing site in Buxton Drive, Sidley, Bexhill TN39 4BD to a new site in Gunters Lane, Bexhill TN39 4ED.
- 1.2 As the Gunters Lane site is less than 2 miles from the existing Sidley Community Primary School site, we were not legally obliged to consult on the proposal to relocate the school. The consultation document made clear that we were only seeking views on the proposal to permanently enlarge the school.

2. Purpose of report:

- 2.1 This report is in two parts:
- Part 1: the consultation process
 - Part 2: analysis of consultation responses

3. Part 1: the consultation process:

- 3.1 One thousand two hundred (1,200) consultation documents were distributed in accordance with The School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended). Consultees included for example: pupils; parents and carers; staff; other schools in Bexhill; the local MP; the District Council; diocesan bodies and local early years providers. The full distribution list is provided in Table 1 below. The consultation document explained the proposal and provided a range of means to respond. These included: by freepost reply, online questionnaire or by emailing East Sussex County Council. The consultation document was also made available on the County Council's website.

Table 1: Consultation distribution list

Organisation	Number of Copies
Sidley Community Primary School – pupils and parents/carers	200
Sidley Community Primary School – staff	40
Sidley Community Primary School – governors	20
Sidley Community Primary School – main entrance	30
All Bexhill primary schools	15 copies each
All Bexhill secondary schools	15 copies each
All Bexhill special schools	15 copies each
Bexhill College	5
ESCC Councillors	50
ESCC Chief Officers Management Team	7
ESCC Children's Services Senior Management Team	7
Gregory Barker MP	5
DFE	1
Rother District Councillors	45
Diocese of Chichester (Church of England)	5
Diocese of Arundel and Brighton (Catholic)	5
Collington Surgery	30

Cont...	
Little Common Surgery	30
Old Town Surgery	30
Pebsham Surgery	30
The Surgery	30
Sidley Surgery	30
Albert Road Surgery	30
Sussex Voluntary and Community Learning Consortium	10
Bexhill Library	30
Unions: Association of Teachers & Lecturers / NASUWT / NHT / NUT / Voice of the Union of Education Professionals / GMB / UNISON	1 copy each
Sidley Children's Centre	30
Pebsham Children's Centre	30
Egerton Park Children's Centre	30
Amberley Nursery	30
Birkdale Hall Day Nursery	30
Charters Ancaster Nursery School	30
Early Years - Glyne Gap	30
1st Friends Day Nursery	30
Sidley Neighbourhood Panel	25
Spares used for consultation events	106
Total	1,200

3.2 A range of consultation events were held to provide staff, governors and public with further information and evidence of the benefits of enlargement of the school, and to discuss and answer any questions raised. Below is a brief synopsis of each event.

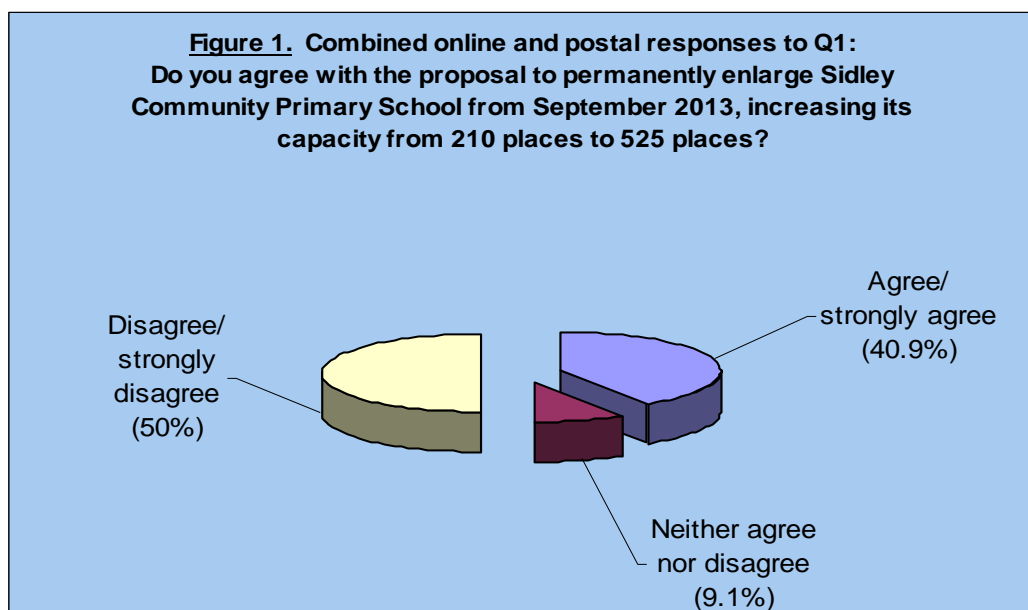
- Prospective parents open morning at Sidley Community Primary School held on Wednesday 23 November 2011 and attended by 9 people. The event was facilitated by colleagues from the school (including the Executive Headteacher and Head of School), 2 officers from ESCC and a representative from the Bexhill Consortium. Generally there was a positive response from those who attended.
- Playground consultation at Sidley Community Primary School held on Monday 28 November 2011. The session was attended by 2 officers from ESCC. There was a mixed response from parents to the proposals.
- Public meeting at Sidley Community Primary School held on Wednesday 7 December 2011 and attended by 12 people. The event was facilitated by colleagues from the school (including the Vice-Chair of the Governing Body, the Executive Headteacher and Head of School) and 2 officers from ESCC. Although concerns were raised during the meeting, generally there was a positive response from those who attended.

4. Part 2: analysis of consultation responses:

4.1 Question 1 on the questionnaire asked people to indicate whether they agreed with the proposal to permanently enlarge Sidley Community Primary School from September 2013, increasing its capacity from 210 places to 525 places. 66 people responded to this question, of which:

- 27 (40.9%) supported the proposal
- 6 (9.1%) neither agreed nor disagreed with the proposal
- 33 (50%) did not support the proposal

4.2 Figure 1 below shows the breakdown of responses as a pie chart.



4.3 Of the 1,200 consultation documents distributed, 59 (4.9%) responded using the paper questionnaire and 7 (0.6%) responded online. This equates to an overall response rate of only 5.5%.

4.4 38 of the 66 respondents (57.6%) were either parents/carers of a child at Sidley Community Primary School and/or members of staff at the school. Of those:

- 18 (47.4%) supported the proposal
- 4 (10.5%) neither agreed or disagreed with the proposal
- 16 (42.1%) did not support the proposal

4.5 12 of the 17 members of the local community, who responded, disagreed with the proposal, with traffic congestion and parking in Gunters Lane being the most significant reason for objection. While these are valid concerns, respondents would have an opportunity to comment formally on these particular issues during the statutory planning process for the remodelling of the Gunters Lane site and building.

4.6 Question 2 asked people to give reasons for their answers to question 1 above. The main areas of concern were: traffic congestion and parking problems in Gunters Lane; the school will be too big; the school would no longer be a part of the community; the risk of exposing young children to the behaviour of older students at the adjacent High School; loss of the swimming pool. Comments from people who supported the proposal included: the move is essential to the continuing success of Sidley School; the larger school will create more work opportunities for people; a move to Gunters Lane with its larger/newer facilities would be extremely beneficial for the children; a new start for the school; opportunities for pupils and staff.

4.7 Table 2 below summarises the comments received. A full list of responses is available for inspection.

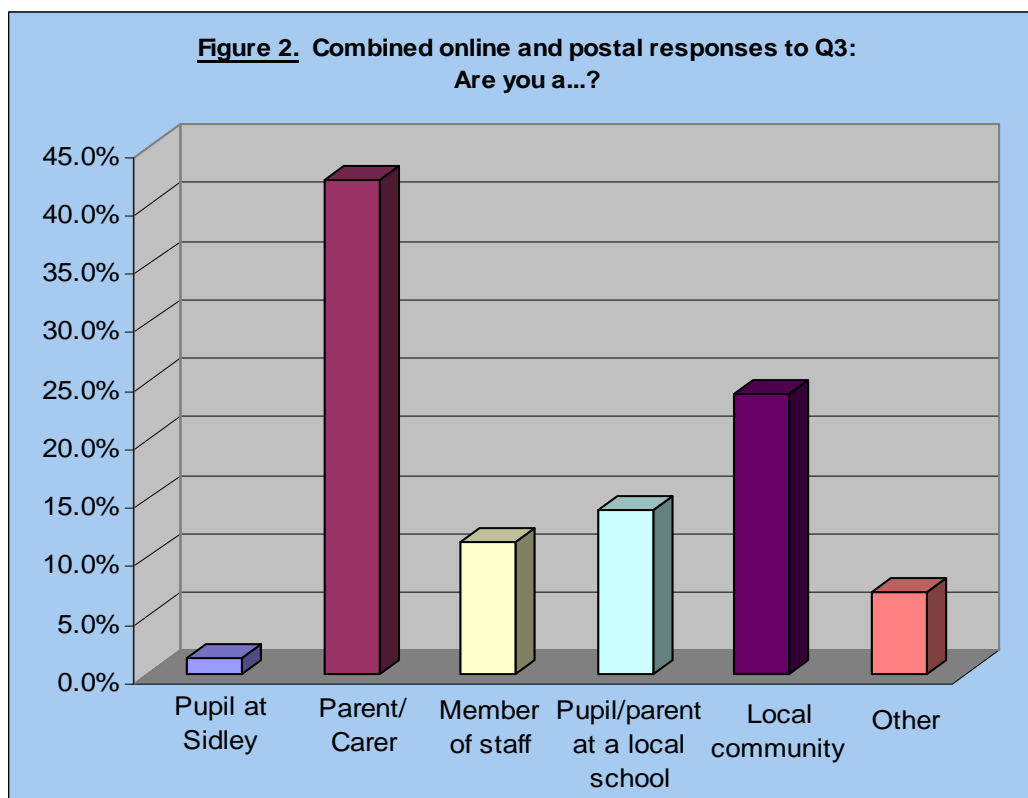
Table 2: Summary of main comments

Comment summary	
1	Strongly disagree. Traffic congestion already a problem, would be very dangerous with more students.
2	Strongly agree. This move is essential to the continuing success of Sidley School.
3	Strongly disagree. The school will no longer be a part of the community. It will be too big. No swimming pool.
4	Neither agree nor disagree providing each class doesn't increase by 30 pupils.
5	Strongly disagree. Moving Sidley School to the proposed site will leave a very large gap in Sidley – it will cause hardship to the Sidley parents and in many ways leave the area without a focus or identity.
6	Strongly disagree. I do not think it is a good idea to put another school at Gunters Lane as traffic and parking will be a problem. Where will parents be able to park? The road system will become even more congested than it is now.
7	Strongly agree. Concerned older children will bully the little ones
8	Strongly disagree. The children will not benefit from a large environment. The children are so small and need a smaller environment to do well before senior school
9	Strongly agree. It will give other people chance to get work
10	Strongly disagree. Traffic congestion in Gunters Lane with 2 large schools – safety and noise – parking.
11	Strongly agree. The existing school building fabric is run down, plus prone to flooding, which has happened three times in the last 10 years, at great expense. A move to Gunters Lane with its larger/newer facilities would be extremely beneficial for the children
12	Neither agree nor disagree. I don't know how I feel but I do think it will be a big change for the children having to get used to a new building and a whole new environment
13	Strongly agree. We would need a much better bus service from Bexhill to the new site
14	Agree. Although I have agreed what plans have you for the old site. Regarding the new location can the existing roads cope and the local infrastructure
15	Strongly disagree. Too much congestion, dangerous, it's bad enough now.
16	Agree. It will be a new start for the school
17	Agree. Opportunities for pupils and staff
18	Disagree. Just won't have the same atmosphere as the current smaller classed school which I think is better for younger children. They may feel lost within a larger pupil school.
19	Strongly agree. I agree with increasing school size. However increased traffic at Gunters Lane would be an issue. In an already very congested area. Will there be enough secondary places in Bexhill available once the new children enter year 7.

4.8 In answer to question 3, respondents classified themselves as:

- 1 (1.4%) were pupils at Sidley Community Primary School
- 30 (42.3%) were parents/carers of children at Sidley Community Primary School
- 8 (11.3%) were members of staff at Sidley Community Primary School
- 10 (14.1%) were pupils or parents/carers of a child at a local school
- 17 (23.9%) were members of the local community
- 5 (7%) were classed as other

4.9 The responses to question 3 totalled 71. This is because some respondents ticked more than one box. Figure 2 below shows the breakdown as a bar chart.



4.10 'About you' questions. We collect this information to ensure that we are seeking the views of everyone in our community and to demonstrate that we are complying with relevant diversity and equalities legislation. The responses to the 'About you' questions are available for inspection.

4.11 A copy of the consultation document is provided below.

4.12 At the time of writing, 4 responses had been received after the closing date of the consultation period.

November 2011

Have your say on a proposal by East Sussex County Council to increase the size of Sidley Community Primary School

The consultation runs from 21 November to 19 December 2011.

Due to a rising birth rate in Bexhill, there is an increase in demand for reception places. The Council proposes to make Sidley Community Primary School larger, so that it can accommodate more pupils from September 2013. In order to achieve this we intend to relocate the school to Gunters Lane. We are consulting with a wide range of people, and welcome your views on this proposal.



What is the proposal?

The proposal is to permanently enlarge Sidley Community Primary School from September 2013, increasing its capacity from 210 places to 525 places. This would increase its Published Admission Number (the number of places the school can offer in each year group) from 30 places to 75, that's 2.5 classes per year group rather than 1.

This consultation document is for pupils, parents and carers, staff, the local community and other interested parties. The Council will consider all the views put forward before we decide whether to continue with the proposal to enlarge. We welcome your views on this proposal.

What is the background to this proposal?

Due to a rising birth rate in Bexhill, there is an increased demand for reception places. Births in Bexhill have risen from 289 in 2004/05 to 368 in 2008/09, an increase of 27% in 4 years. This trend is similar to what is happening in other areas of the country.

The Council has a duty to ensure there are sufficient school places available for all children. We must also ensure that the number, location and organisation of pupil places offers the best value to the taxpayer.

Following construction of the new Bexhill High School building in Gunters Lane, the school's former premises (known as the Year 7 Block and adjacent to the new High School building) became vacant in October 2010. The Council believes this building is suitable for remodelling as a primary school and is well located to serve the rising demand for primary school places. In order to increase Sidley Community Primary School's capacity from September 2013, we would relocate the school from its existing premises in Buxton Drive to the former Year 7 Block during the 2012/13 academic year.

At this stage we are only seeking your views on the proposal to permanently enlarge Sidley Community Primary School. It is important to note that if it were enlarged, the school would have to move to Gunters Lane.

What size would the enlarged school be?

The Council proposes to increase the size of the school to accommodate up to 75 pupils in each year group. The school's capacity would increase from 210 pupils in 7 classes to 525 in 18 classes.

The school would grow gradually as each larger year group moves through the school. It is anticipated that the increased capacity of 525 could be reached in the 2018/19 academic year, as illustrated in the table below.

	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Maximum reception year intake	30	75	75	75	75	75	75	75
Approximate number on roll	175	225	275	320	375	425	470	525

Who would fund the enlargement of the school building?

It is the intention of the Council to fund the permanent enlargement of the school's premises.

When would building work start and finish?

The Council anticipates that building work on the former Year 7 Block would begin in summer 2012 and would be completed in summer 2013. The exact programme would be determined through the building design and planning process.

Who makes the final decision and when?

We wish to enlarge the school with effect from September 2013. In order to achieve this, a number of statutory procedures have to be followed. These are:

The Council will consider all the views expressed during the consultation, which closes on 19 December 2011. We then have several choices and the next steps would depend on what decision was taken. Following consideration of the consultation responses we could choose to:

- stop the process - in this case the enlargement of the school would not proceed;
- change the proposal - in this case the next steps would depend on what the changed proposal was; or
- continue with the proposal - the Council would publish a Statutory Notice for the enlargement of the school in the local paper, probably in February 2012, after which would follow a further 4-week consultation period (known as the representation period).

The Council is the final decision maker for this proposal. We have a duty to make a final decision on the proposal within two months of the end of the representation period. This decision would probably be taken in April 2012. In considering its decision the Council could:

- reject the proposal;
- approve the proposal;
- conditionally approve the proposal; or
- approve the proposal with a modification

Alongside this process the Council will separately consult during January and February 2012 on increasing Sidley Community Primary School's Published Admission Number from 30 to 75 from September 2013. We have to determine admission arrangements for the school by 15 April 2012.

Who is being consulted?

The Council is consulting with pupils, parents and carers, staff, other local schools and trade unions. We are also consulting with a wide range of other groups including the Borough Council, the local MP, and the Church of England and Catholic Diocesan Boards.

How do I have my say?

This consultation runs until **19 December 2011**.

You can give your views by:

- Completing the attached questionnaire
- Completing the online questionnaire at: www.eastsussex.gov.uk/yourcouncil/consultation
- Emailing the County Council at schoolsamp@eastsussex.gov.uk
- Attending a prospective parents open morning at **Sidley Community Primary School** on **Wednesday 23 November 2011 from 9.15am**
- Attending a playground 'drop-in' session at **Sidley Community Primary School** on **Monday 28 November 2011 from 3pm**
- Attending a public meeting at **Sidley Community Primary School** on **Wednesday 7 December 2011 between 6.30 and 8pm**



Consultation – Response Form

Our proposal is to permanently enlarge Sidley Community Primary School from September 2013, increasing its capacity from 210 places to 525 places. This would increase its Published Admission Number (the number of places the school can offer in each year group) from 30 places to 75, that's 2.5 classes per year group rather than 1.

In order to achieve this we would relocate the school from its existing premises in Buxton Drive to the former Year 7 Block during the 2012/13 academic year.

The Council would welcome your views on the proposal. Please complete this response form and return it to the address at the bottom of the page no later than 19 December 2011.

Q1. Do you agree with the proposal to permanently enlarge Sidley Community Primary School from September 2013, increasing its capacity from 210 places to 525 places?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Q2. If you wish, please give your main reasons for your answer to Q1 above, and/or any other options you think the Council should consider:

Q3. Are you a...?

- Pupil at Sidley Community Primary School
- Parent/carer of a child at Sidley Community Primary School
- Member of staff at Sidley Community Primary School
- Pupil or parent/carer of a child at a local school
- Member of the local community
- Other (please say) _____

Once completed, please tear off this page along the perforation, fold and return it in the window envelope provided by **19 December 2011** to the address below.

Please ensure that the address is clearly visible in the window of the envelope.

You don't need a stamp.

**Sidley Community Primary School Consultation
FREEPOST BR157
County Hall
St Anne's Crescent
Lewes BN7 1SG**

About you ... We want to make sure that everyone is treated fairly and equally and that no one gets left out. That's why we ask you these questions. We won't share the information you give us with anyone else. We will only use it to help us make decisions and make our services better.

If you would rather not answer any of these questions, you don't have to.

Q4. Are you.....? Male Female Prefer not to say

Q5 Do you identify as a transgender or trans person?
 Yes No Prefer not to say

Q6. How old are you? **Q7. What is your postcode?**

Q8. To which of these ethnic groups do you feel you belong ? (Source 2011 census)

White	Mixed	Asian or Asian British	Black or Black British
<input type="checkbox"/> British	<input type="checkbox"/> White & Black Caribbean	<input type="checkbox"/> Indian	<input type="checkbox"/> Caribbean
<input type="checkbox"/> Irish	<input type="checkbox"/> White & Black African	<input type="checkbox"/> Pakistani	<input type="checkbox"/> African
<input type="checkbox"/> Gypsy/Roma	<input type="checkbox"/> White & Asian	<input type="checkbox"/> Bangladeshi	<input type="checkbox"/> Other*
<input type="checkbox"/> Irish Traveller	<input type="checkbox"/> Other*	<input type="checkbox"/> Other*	
<input type="checkbox"/> Other*	<input type="checkbox"/> Arab	<input type="checkbox"/> Chinese	<input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say

***Other Ethnic Group** If your ethnic group was not specified in the list please describe your ethnic group:

The Equality Act 2010 describes a person disabled if they have a longstanding physical or mental condition that has lasted or is likely to last at least 12 months; and this condition has a substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day to day activities. People with some conditions (cancer, multiple sclerosis and HIV/AIDS, for example) are considered to be disabled from the point that they are diagnosed.

Q9. Do you consider yourself to be disabled as set out in the Equality Act 2010?
 Yes No Prefer not to say

Q9a. If you answered yes to Q9, please tell us the type of impairment that applies to you.
 You may have more than one type of impairment, so please select all that apply. If none of these apply to you please select other and write in the type of impairment you have.

- Physical impairment
- Sensory impairment (hearing and sight
- Long standing illness or health condition, such as cancer, HIV, heart disease, diabetes or epilepsy
- Other, please specify
- Mental health condition
- Learning disability
- Prefer not to say

Q10. Do you regard yourself as belonging to any particular religion or belief?
 Yes No Prefer not to say

Q10a. If you answered yes to Q10, which one?
 Christian Hindu Muslim Any other religion, please specify
 Buddhist Jewish Sikh

Q11. Are you...?
 Bi/Bisexual Gay woman/Lesbian Other
 Heterosexual/Straight Gay Man Prefer not to say

Thank you for providing this information, your feedback is important to us.