



Alcohol Consumption Public Space Protection Order Consultation - 2026

Findings by Consultation & Engagement Team

July 2026

1. Background and methodology

Between 4th June and 15th July 2026, the Council ran a public consultation, seeking to engage residents and provider organisations, in sharing their reflections on the proposed extension of the current Alcohol Consumption PSPO, which is due to expire on the 20th October 2026. During that period, a comprehensive communication plan was implemented to raise awareness of the proposal across the borough, with a strong emphasis on engaging residents and relevant third sector organisations. The consultation was promoted through the Consultation bulletin, E-View. An email was distributed to all stakeholders, including Elected Members. Supporting documentation was made accessible on the Council's consultation webpages and social media was heavily utilised throughout the period to share key messages about the consultation.

Participants were surveyed using a questionnaire tool made up of open and closed questions, over a period of six weeks, providing respondents the opportunity to reflect and share their thoughts on the proposal. The questionnaire was made available both digitally and offline, with the questionnaire being accessible on the council's consultation web page, as well as in hard copy format in Bolton libraries or on request.

A copy of the questionnaire is included at the end of this document, located in Appendix A.

Analysis notes

- Results are presented in the questionnaire format with 'Don't know' type responses removed unless stated.
- Comments have been categorised where feasible. Unless otherwise stated, categories with five or more responses are shown. Categories may overlap and a comment from one respondent included in multiple categories. A sample of comments [verbatim] are included in the report. Comments may be abbreviated so that only the relevant extract is included. One comment may be coded into multiple categories, and each category may only cover a certain aspect of the comment, for example a respondent may have made both positive and negative comments about the same aspect.
- Base: unless otherwise stated the base is the number of respondents to a particular question.
- Data has been cleansed where appropriate, e.g., comments moved into existing responses.

2. Consultation responses

A number of open-ended questions were included in the questionnaire to give respondents the opportunity to comment on the proposal, suggest alternative approaches to a Public Space Protection Order and to outline the support needed if the proposal was approved.

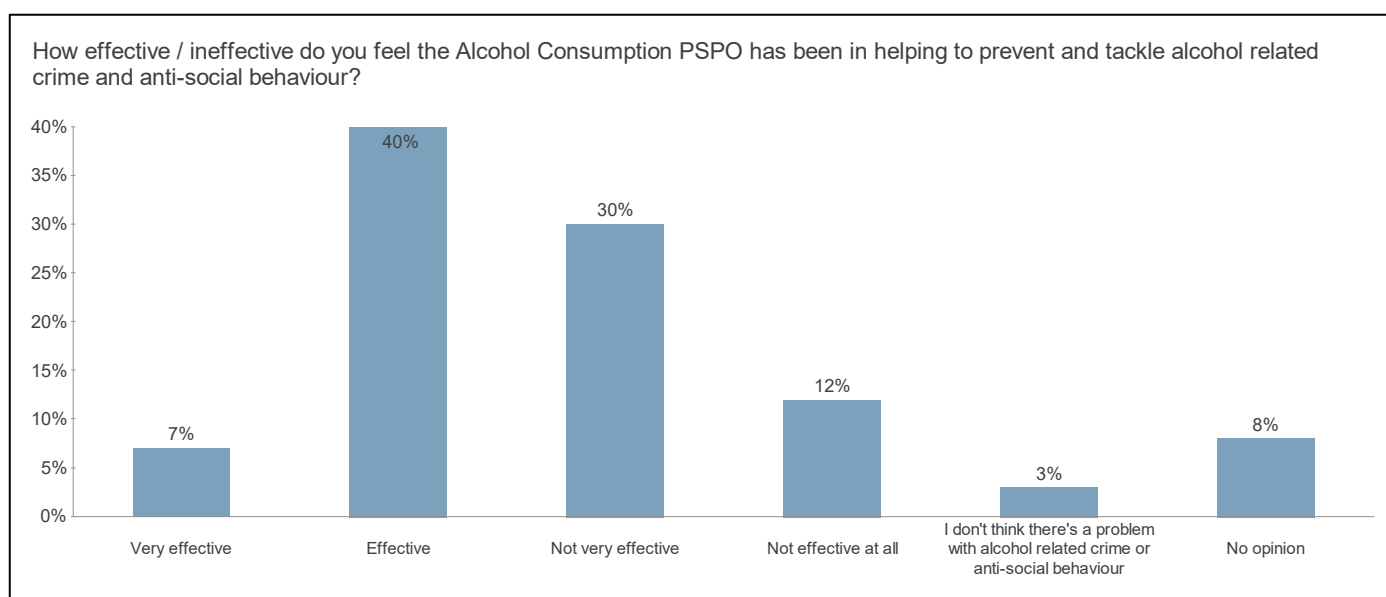
Throughout the consultation period the following responses were received:

- 133 completed electronic questionnaires from residents and stakeholders
- 2 completed paper questionnaires from residents.

A total of 135 residents and stakeholders took part in the survey, outlining their reflections on the proposed extension of the Alcohol Consumption Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO).

3. Effective

131 respondents shared their views on how effective they feel that the current PSPO has been in tackling alcohol-related antisocial behaviour. 47% of respondents think the PSPO has been effective, which is a 2% decrease from 2023. 42% of respondents believe the PSPO has been ineffective in preventing and tackling alcohol related crime and anti-social behaviour. 8% of respondents had no opinion and 3% think there are no issues with alcohol related crime or anti-social behaviour.



Base: 131

4. Comments about the effectiveness of the PSPO

42 respondents shared their thoughts on the effectiveness of the PSPO, which have been coded into four main themes. Many respondents discussed continued challenges with alcohol in the borough, such as antisocial behaviour, harassment and feeling unsafe. Several discussed there are areas to improve, including suggestions for the PSPO, while others discussed the impact of the current PSPO. A minority shared their support for the PSPO.

Please use this space for any comments about the effectiveness of the current PSPO and the issues it is designed to tackle		
Rank	Category	Number of respondents
a.	Comments about drug / alcohol issues in Bolton	16
b.	Suggestions for improvement / PSPO to cover drug usage	15
c.	Impact / effectiveness	11

d.	General agreement for PSPO	5
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a. Comments about drug / alcohol issues in Bolton

16 respondents discussed anti-social behaviour related to alcohol and drugs in Bolton, with several discussing Bolton town centre. Several personal experiences were shared, including people who live and work in Bolton, where alcohol is a persistent issue, particularly near Elizabeth Park and local convenience stores. Groups of *"beggars...that harass the public"* and *"youths"* were mentioned. Respondents shared how *"intimidating"* anti-social behaviour driven by alcohol usage results in people feeling *"vulnerable"*, with one respondent noting that *"no time is safe for me... as a lone woman"*.

- *"There is still an issue at certain main junctions close to the town centre, especially St George's Road. It is very intimidating to walk past or stop at the traffic lights in your car."*
- *"Having people drinking in public places which aren't controlled feels threatening & cans & bottles etc are often left continuing the impact after the people have left. However nitrous oxide also seems to be used in a similar way now"*
- *"Go any where near the town centre, bus station or local convenience stores throughout the more deprived areas and it is very clear that Bolton council does not do enough to tackle these issues."*
- *"Halliwell Road outside Best One and at the round about middle aged men regularly drink from morning to night abusing women and girls. Now no time is safe for me to be down there as a lone woman."*
- *"Unfortunately youths are a big problem needs to be tackled more vigorously"*
- *"The new park by the market is used as a meeting place for homeless people. The One Stop shop sells single cans of beer which encourages drinking"*
- *"The problem is there are gangs of homeless 'beggars' in the town centre that harass the public"*
- *"Alcohol consumption appears to have increased, especially round Lever Chambers Health Centre. We are frequently disturbed due to swearing, fighting, shouting near the new One Stop shop, we have to apologize to our patients in clinic and close windows, they feel vulnerable when leaving the health Elizabeth park is encouraging them to sit around drinking all day. its not a nice place to work anymore."*
- *"I live and work in Bolton and there are regular drunks in the town centre early morning and all day. I am regularly woke up by people walking up and down my lane drinking and shouting at all hours."*
- *"There are still many individuals who are consuming alcohol in the town centre where I work"*

b. Suggestions for improvement / PSPO to cover drug usage

15 respondents shared comments around reducing the impact of anti-social behaviour driven by alcohol, including suggestions for enforcement such as *"more sanctions"*, *"a targeted approach"* and *"more presence within the shopping area of Bolton Town Centre"*. Other suggestions include publishing the effectiveness of the PSPO regularly, considering the influence of *"drug use"*, and a *"more thorough evaluation"* of the PSPO.

- *"Publicized the effectiveness or otherwise over the PSPO... regularly"*
- *"Try to tackle the problem not a symptom"*
- *"The epidemic of drug use is a major factor."*
- *"More presence within the shopping area of Bolton Town Centre for example Victoria Square / Newport Street where I regularly see people drinking alcohol in unauthorised areas and shouting / swearing"*

- *"I would suggest it may require more thorough evaluation to inform ongoing decision making during the next three years? could consider the quality of life of residents affected / feelings of safety / compliance / none compliance rates / impacts of displacement / impact on poverty / impact on vulnerable people"*
- *"Needs to be tightened with more sanctions"*
- *"But it needs policing or it fails."*
- *"Some area are more problematic than others so perhaps a more targeted approach to these areas would improve efficacy"*

c. Impact / effectiveness

11 comments discussed the impact and effectiveness of the PSPO in curtailing anti-social behaviour. There was a mixed response, from *"very poor"* to *"effective"*, with some noting that the PSPO is not effective without enforcement, for example *"you hardly see... enforcement officers"*, and others believing that *"the PSPO has enabled the Police to address alcohol-fuelled ASB and violence"*. One respondent shared their disagreement with the proposed restrictions as *"most people having a drink... aren't there causing trouble."*

- *"The PSPO has enabled the Police to address alcohol-fuelled ASB and violence and has improved community safety."*
- *"Somewhat effective? I personally do not see it because I don't venture into areas at times when this happens, but it obviously still goes on as there is plenty of evidence to suggest that people have been drinking and then causing a disturbance"*
- *"If it continues to be advertised enough, people will know there are restrictions and actions in place should they use alcohol in restricted areas."*
- *"I've actually no idea"*
- *"I think there's worse issues and actually, most people having a drink in a park on a Sunday day aren't there causing trouble"*
- *"The current PSPO is effective insofar as it is imposed whenever it is spotted."*
- *"Very poor you hardly see and police or enforcement officers"*
- *"Don't see people drinking in street so it must be effective"*

d. General agreement for PSPO

Five respondents shared comments outlining their general agreement for the PSPO.

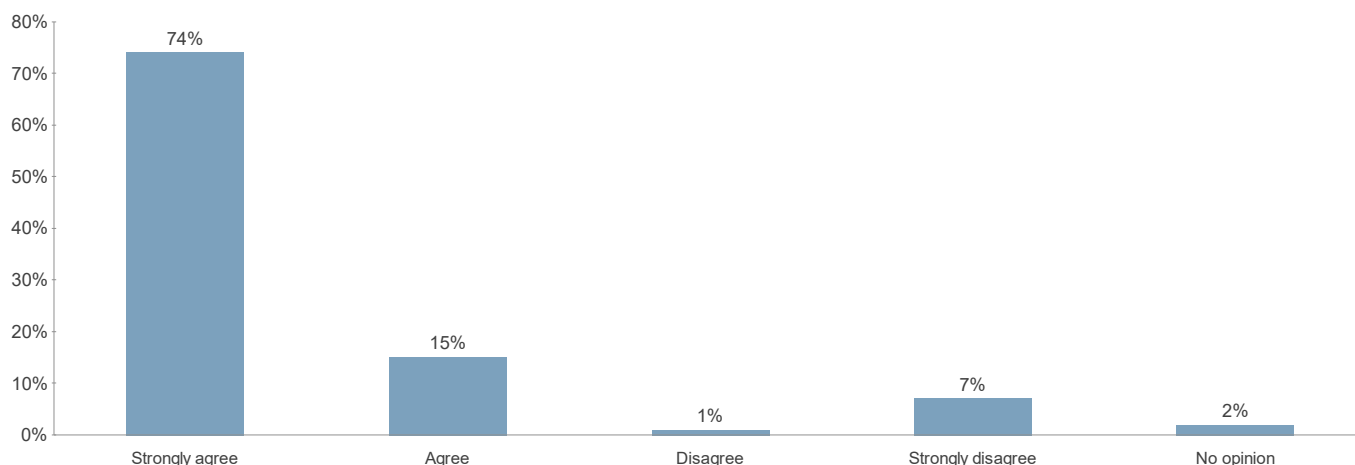
- *"Good to keep alcohol off the town centre streets and areas, other than in designated areas (e.g. food and drink festival)."*
- *"It is not safe to drink on the streets. It causes people to feel scared, the Police need the powers to stop anti social behaviour."*
- *"All very well and good to have the order in place, but it needs enforcement, protection for our Police Officers and offenders brought to justice."*

5. Renewal of the PSPO

134 respondents shared their thoughts on the proposed renewal of the Alcohol Consumption PSPO.

89% of respondents agree that the PSPO should be renewed: a 3% decrease from 2023. 8% disagree that the PSPO should be renewed, which is a 3% increase from 2023. 2% had no opinion.

How strongly do you agree / disagree that the Alcohol Consumption PSPO which is due to expire in October 2023 should be renewed for another three years?



Base: 134

6. Comments and suggestions about the proposal

Finally, respondents were asked to share any other comments or suggestions they had relating to the PSPO. 35 comments were received in total. These were coded into three categories, namely support for the PSPO, the effectiveness of the PSPO and comments centred on safety and drugs.

Please use this space for any comments about the proposal to extend the PSPO for another three years, or to suggest any alternatives that we should consider.

Rank	Category	Number of respondents
a.	Support for PSPO	13
b.	Effectiveness	12
c.	Safety and drugs	8

a. Support for PSPO

13 comments included support for extending the PSPO to “*protect all the community*” by “*targeting alcohol-related ASB*”. One respondent shared a suggestion that officers “*should know where and how to refer people for specialist treatment and support*” and “*how best to consider vulnerabilities e.g. homelessness / addiction*”.

- “The PSPO is a robust way of targeting alcohol-related ASB in public areas and should be renewed.”
- “Without this things would be worse than they are now”
- “It is important to continue to set boundaries to protect all the community from those who misuse alcohol”
- “Other LA evaluations have suggested that best practice is to have a balanced approach to implementations of the order. Front line officers should be able to consider enforcement along side compassion and should know where and how to refer people for specialist treatment and support

should they need it to address their drinking if dependent on alcohol, and to have an understanding of how best to consider vulnerabilities e.g. homelessness / addiction etc"

- *"Should be extended"*
- *"People drinking and rowdy not a good representation of Bolton, it needs to be kept under control."*

b. Effectiveness

12 comments discussed the effectiveness of the PSPO, revealing a mix of views. Some believe that the PSPO has been *"quite ineffective"* due to a lack of enforcement and police presence. One person noted that opening *"pubs and bars to all"* contradicts the PSPO's intentions. Several discussed recruiting civil enforcement officers and having more police presence.

- *"No point renewing it if you dont act upon it"*
- *"Whats the point when you encourage people to go in town centres and have pubs and bars open to all hours and dodgy off licences selling to anybody"*
- *"Though i think it has been quite ineffective to date, the consistency needs to be there"*
- *"Extension can only help. Needs a strategic approach to implement it more effectively"*
- *"Recruit more civil enforcement officers in the Interchange and Bolton railway station."*
- *"More police presence would help, a council enforcement officer was having a chat with one lady yesterday but made no attempt to move her on or stop her drinking."*

c. Safety and drugs

Eight comments discussed safety and drugs, with several discussing challenges with anti-social behaviour in Bolton increasing. A couple of respondents discussed that drugs should be added to the PSPO and that drug usage needs curtailing.

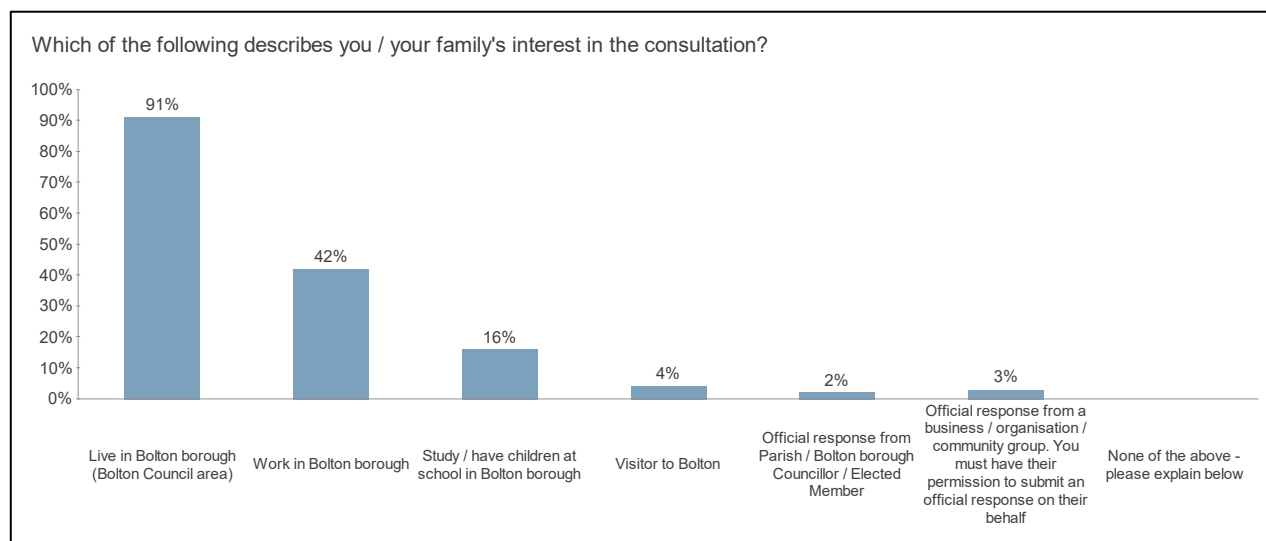
- *"Please patrol the park regularly, I work at Level Chambers , the smell of Cannabis is awful plus we hear swearing daily. It was fine before the park!"*
- *"Alcohol increases anti-social behaviour however there is increased criminality and disturbing behaviour in Bolton."*
- *"Add drugs!"*
- *"Bolton needs to be put back on the map, the town is disintegrating before our eyes and it's plagued with drug addicts and drunks in town centre, Tonge fold, Tonge moor."*

Six other comments included some disagreement with the PSPO: *"it should not be renewed"*. Other comments discussed *"the mess people leave all around bolton town centre after consuming alcohol... disgusting and costly for council tax payers"*, with one respondent suggesting that licensing laws are reviewed for the night-time economy, alongside bringing *"back the old dress code for customers"*.

7. Interest in the proposal

Respondents were asked to outline their interest in the proposal. Most respondents live in the borough (91%), and 42% work in the borough. 16% study or have children at school in Bolton. Seven official responses were received, including four from businesses, organisations or community groups, including a CEO of a charity in Great Lever, the Health and Wellbeing lead from Halliwell Community Alliance, a representative from a mental health organisation in Bolton, and a Director of a town centre public house.

There were also three responses from elected members from Bromley Cross, Queens Park & Central Ward and Kearsley.



Base: 135

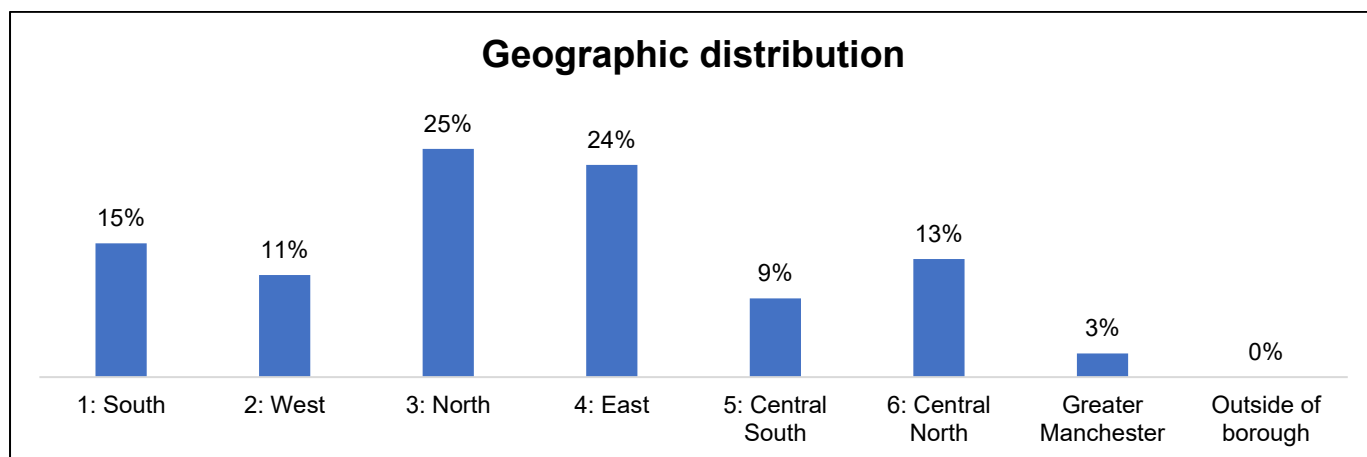
8. Demographics

8a. Geographical

The graph below outlines the demographics of respondents by geographical neighbourhood. A total of 114 respondents provided a valid full postcode. Almost half of the respondents were received from the North (25%) and East (24%) of the borough.

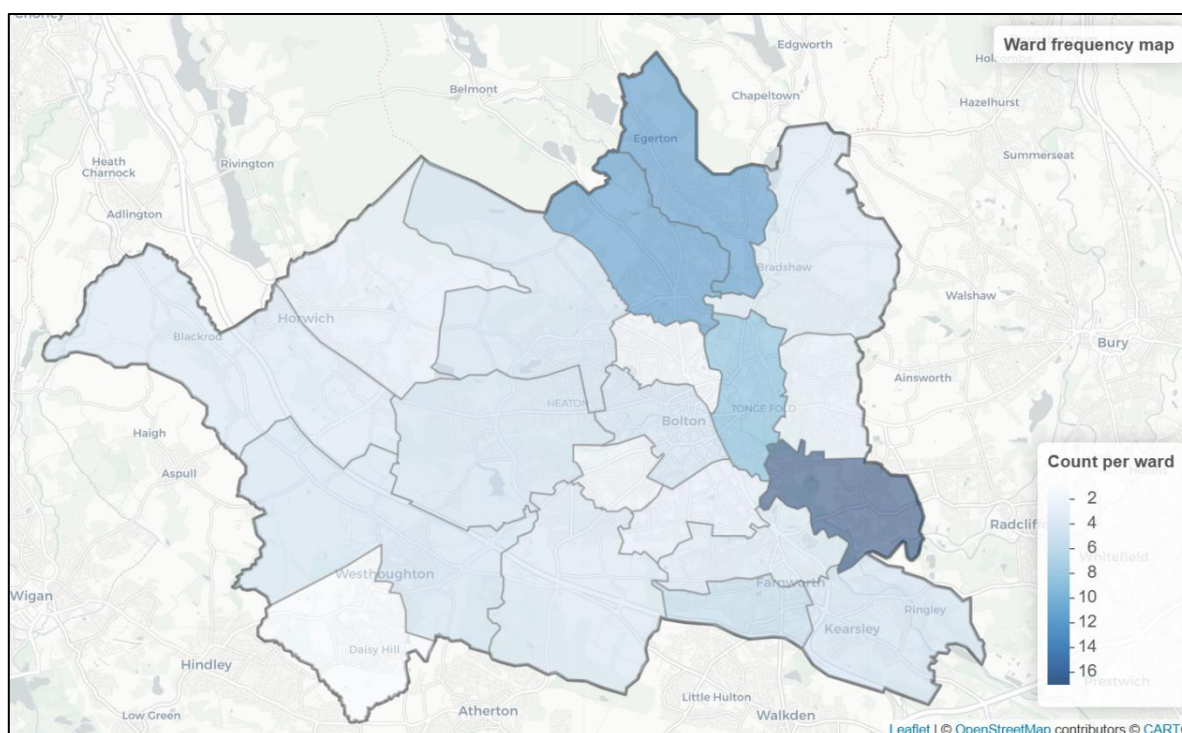


*Neighbourhoods are a local geography for integrated health and social care; all have a population of around 50,000 residents.



Base: 114

The map below shows the frequency of responses by ward. There were anomalously high response rates from Little Lever and Darcy Lever (17), Astley Bridge (12) and Bromley Cross (12).

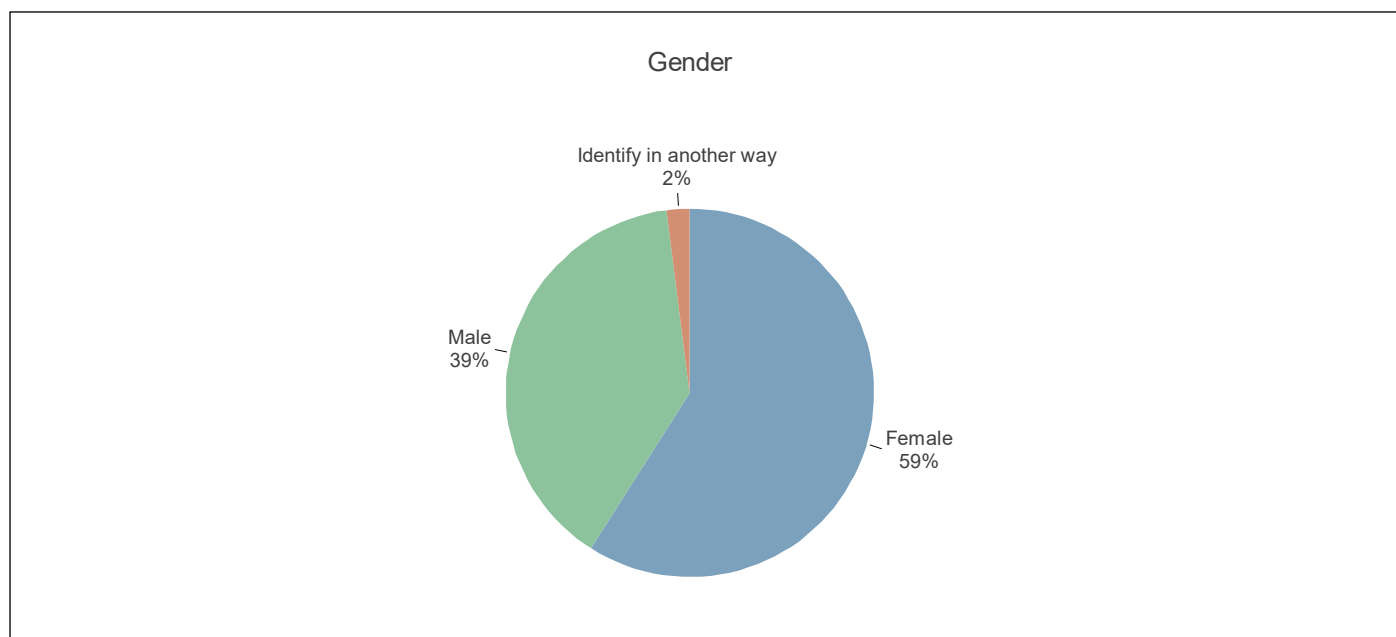


Ward	Number of responses
Little Lever & Darcy Lever	17
Astley Bridge	12
Bromley Cross	12
Tonge with the Haulgh	9
Farnworth South	6
Heaton, Lostock & Chew Moor	5
Kearsley	5
Queens Park & Central	5
Smithills	5
Westhoughton North & Hunger Hill	5
Bradshaw	4

Farnworth North	4
Horwich South & Blackrod	4
Hulton	4
Breightmet	3
Great Lever	3
Horwich North	3
Halliwell	2
Rumworth	2
Westhoughton South	1

8b. Preferred identity

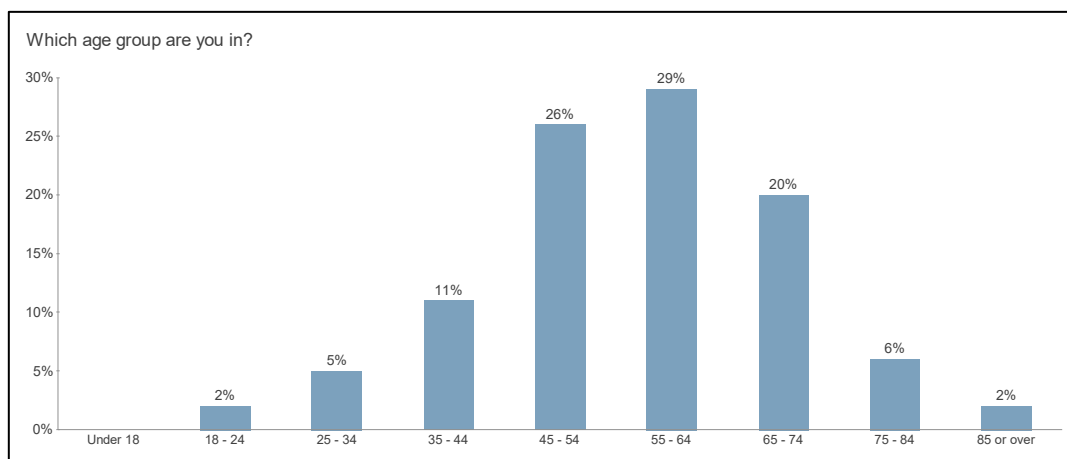
123 responses were received providing the respondent's preferred identity. 59% of respondents identity as being female, 39% as male and 2% of respondents identified as 'other'.



Base: 123

8c. Age

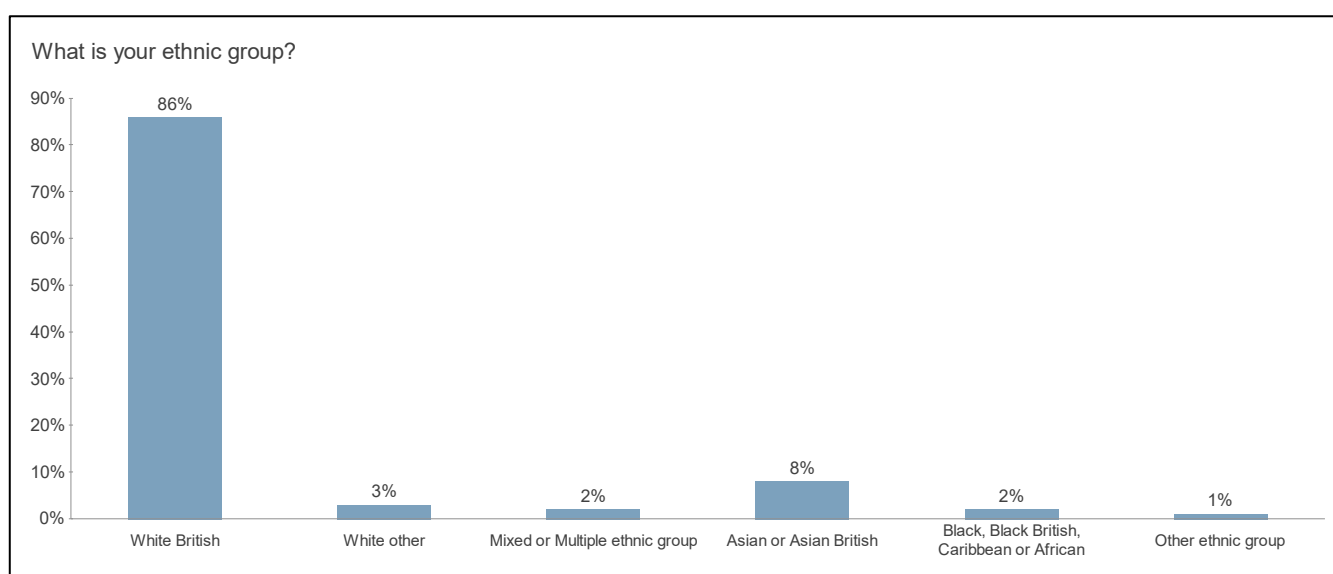
Responses were received from individuals in all age categories above 18 years old. 7% of respondents were under the age of 34 years. 75% of respondents were aged between 35 – 64 years. 28% responses were received from individuals above the age of 65 years.



Base: 122

8d. Ethnicity

118 respondents provided their ethnicity when undertaking the consultation. 86% report as being White British. 14% report as being from other ethnically diverse communities, this includes 8% from the Asian / Asian British community.

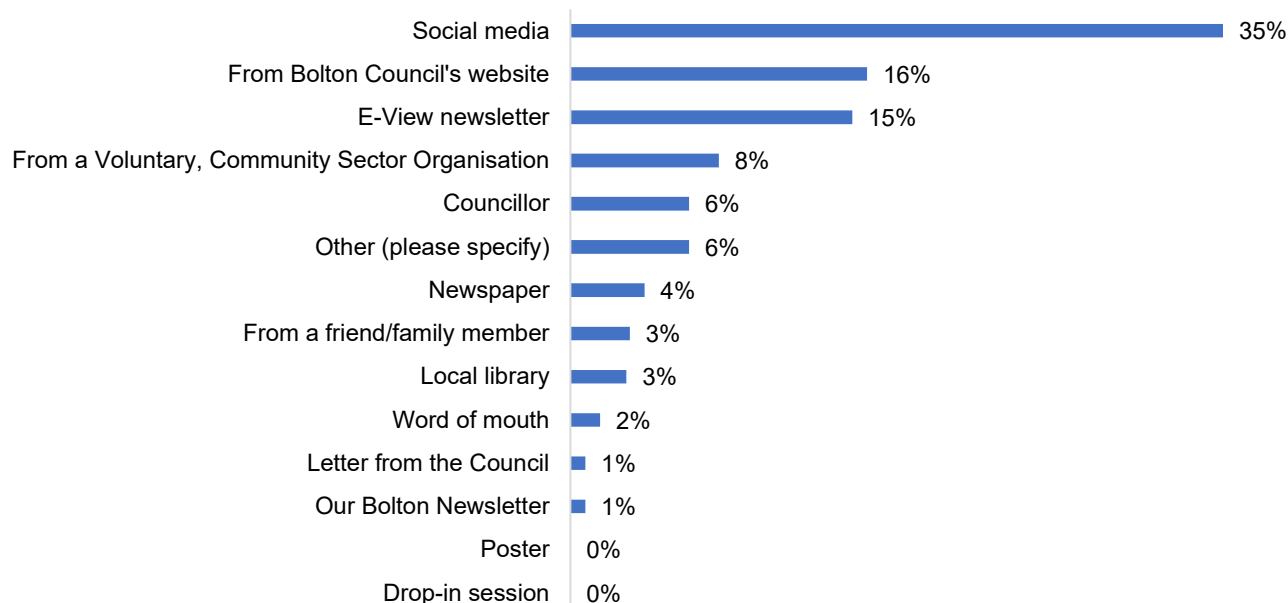


Base: 118

8e. Awareness of the consultation / survey

Respondents were asked how they found out about the consultation / survey, resulting in 126 responses. The medium seeing the highest level of engagement is social media (35%), followed by Bolton Council's website (16%) and E-view newsletter (15%).

Awareness of consultation



Base: 126

9. Summary

Between 4th June and 15th July 2026, the Council ran a public consultation, seeking to engage residents and provider organisations, in sharing their reflections on the proposed extension of the current Alcohol Consumption PSPO, which is due to expire later on 20th October 2026. During that period, a comprehensive communication plan was implemented to raise awareness of the proposal across the borough. Participants were surveyed using a questionnaire tool made up of open and closed questions, over a period of six weeks, providing respondents the opportunity to reflect and share their thoughts on the proposal. The questionnaire was made available both digitally and offline, with the questionnaire being accessible on the council's consultation web page, as well as in hard copy format in Bolton libraries or on request.

135 responses to the questionnaire were received. 91% of these respondents live in the borough and 42% work in the borough. Seven official responses were received from Elected Members and businesses / organisations. Most people discovered the consultation via social media (35%), the Council website (16%) and the Consultation bulletin, E-view (15%). Responses were received across all neighbourhoods, with almost half responding from the North (25%) and East (24%) neighbourhoods.

47% of respondents think that the Alcohol Consumption PSPO is effective, and more people thought it was effective than not (42%). This follows the same outcome as the previous consultation.



Comments about the PSPO focused on drug and alcohol issues in Bolton, suggestions for improving antisocial behaviour, and comments on the effectiveness of the PSPO. Respondents outlined concerns with alcohol-related anti-social behaviour in the town centre and shared experiences of where they felt "*vulnerable*" or unsafe. Suggestions included consideration of drugs within the PSPO, improved enforcement, and targeted action in problematic areas.

89% of respondents supported the extension of the PSPO, a three per cent decrease from the previous consultation. Other comments pertained to the importance of the PSPO in protecting the community, the importance of providing support to individuals with substance misuse, recruiting more civil enforcement officers and improving the experience of visiting the town centre.

Alcohol Consumption Public Space Protection Order review 2026

Consultation closes on 16th July 2026

The Council welcomes your views to help us review the Alcohol Consumption Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) for the Borough of Bolton.

Background

The Alcohol Consumption Space PSPO was last renewed in 2023 and is due to expire on 20th October 2026.

The PSPO enables Greater Manchester Police (GM Police) and any other authorised officer to challenge alcohol-related crime and anti-social behaviour in a public place.

A Designated Public Protection Order was originally granted in 2012 and this became a PSPO under the Anti-social behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.

A PSPO can last up to three years, after which it must be reviewed. Following a review, the PSPO can be extended for a further three years. There is no limit to the number of times a PSPO can be renewed.

Please read the background documents for full details of the PSPO before giving your views on the proposal to renew this PSPO:

www.bolton.gov.uk/directory/13/consultations/category/195

Your views will be considered alongside other information to help Bolton Council decide whether to renew the PSPO or not.

Area and behaviour covered

The PSPO covers the Borough of Bolton but does not apply to anywhere with a temporary or permanent license to serve alcohol. This means that people would still be able to drink alcohol at licensed events and in pubs, clubs, bars and restaurants etc.



The PSPO allows GM Police, or any authorised person, to control the consumption of alcohol in public places where it is linked to anti-social behaviour, crime, and disorder. If someone is consuming or intends to consume alcohol, they can be ordered to stop. If they do not stop, the alcohol can be confiscated.

Anyone who fails, without reasonable excuse, to comply with a request from GM Police or other authorised person under this provision, may be issued with a £100 Fixed Penalty Notice for disorder, or may be liable to prosecution, and, if convicted, fined up to £500.

Your response - keeping your data safe

Most questions are optional; just miss out any that you do not want to answer.

The results of this consultation may be made public. If you are responding as an individual you will not be identified in any report as your responses will be anonymised and grouped with those from other people.

If you are responding in an official capacity, your response may be published but no personal details will be included.

Any personal data you provide will be held securely, in line with our retention schedule and privacy policy: www.bolton.gov.uk/data-protection-freedom-information/privacy-notice

We use Snap Surveys Ltd professional software to collect and process your data. Their privacy policy can be found here: www.snapsurveys.com/survey-software/privacy-policy-uk/. Snap Surveys Ltd. follow the UK General Data Protection Regulations.

Effectiveness of Alcohol Consumption PSPO

How effective / ineffective do you feel the Alcohol Consumption PSPO has been in helping to prevent and tackle alcohol related crime and anti-social behaviour?

- ☐ Very effective
- ☐ Effective
- ☐ Not very effective
- ☐ Not effective at all
- ☐ I don't think there's a problem with alcohol related crime or anti-social behaviour
- ☐ No opinion

Please use this space for any comments about the effectiveness of the current PSPO and the issues it is designed to tackle.

☐ No comments

Renewal of Alcohol Consumption PSPO

How strongly do you agree / disagree that the Alcohol Consumption PSPO which is due to expire in October 2026 should be renewed for another three years?

☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree ☐ No opinion

Please use this space for any comments about the proposal to extend the PSPO for another three years, or to suggest any alternatives that we should consider.

☐ No comments

Your interest

Which of the following describes you / your family's interest in this consultation?

- ☐ Live in Bolton borough (Bolton Council area)
- ☐ Work in Bolton borough
- ☐ Study / have children at school in Bolton borough
- ☐ Visitor to Bolton
- ☐ Official response from Parish / Bolton borough Councillor / Elected Member
- ☐ Official response from a business / organisation / community group. You must have their permission to submit an official response on their behalf
- ☐ None of the above - please explain below

Please say what your interest is.

Please say which ward, business organisation or community group you represent.

Please say what your role is - in what official capacity do you represent the business, organisation or community group?

Q8How did you find out about this consultation? Please select one option.

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| ☐ Councillor | ☐ From a Voluntary, Community Sector Organisation | ☐ Our Bolton Newsletter |
| ☐ Letter from the Council | ☐ From Bolton Council's website | ☐ Poster |
| ☐ E-View newsletter | ☐ Local library | ☐ Social media |
| ☐ From a friend/family member | ☐ Newspaper | ☐ Drop-in session |
| | | ☐ Word of mouth |
| | | ☐ Other (please specify) |

Q9 If 'other', please specify.

About you

Your answers in this section help us to make sure we are getting views from different types of people. They will not be used to contact or identify you.

Please give your full postcode:

Are you...?

- | | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|---|
| ☐ Female | ☐ Male | ☐ Identify in another way |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|---|

Which age group are you in?

- | | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| ☐ Under 18 | ☐ 35 - 44 | ☐ 65 - 74 |
| ☐ 18 - 24 | ☐ 45 - 54 | ☐ 75 - 84 |
| ☐ 25 - 34 | ☐ 55 - 64 | ☐ 85 or over |

What is your ethnic group?

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ White British | ☐ Asian or Asian British |
| ☐ White other | ☐ Black, Black British, Caribbean or African |
| ☐ Mixed or Multiple ethnic group | ☐ Other ethnic group |

Thanks! Please click 'submit' to send your response through to us.