Block Beds Service Consultation: Resident survey

Findings by Consultation & Engagement Team

August 2026

1. Background and methodology

Between 29th June and 10th August 2026, the Council ran a targeted consultation, seeking to engage residents, carers and stakeholders that used the block beds service in Bolton, in sharing their reflections on the service. During that period, a comprehensive communication plan was implemented to raise awareness of the proposal across the borough, with a strong emphasis on engaging all previous service users via a direct letter to addressees (number of total service users for block beds = 52).

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 offline to residents, and a freepost envelope was provided to addressees to return their completed survey. An easy-read copy of the survey was available upon request.

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

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 two 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

2a. Responses

A number of open-ended questions were included in the questionnaire to give respondents the opportunity to comment on their experience of block beds and to suggest alternative approaches to the service. A total of 14 residents and stakeholders took part in the survey, outlining their reflections on the Block Beds service. 11 family members or carers of residents that have used block beds completed the survey. Three residents that directly accessed block beds completed the survey. In addition, telephone feedback was provided by one stakeholder (refer to Appendix A)

2b. Strengths and limitations

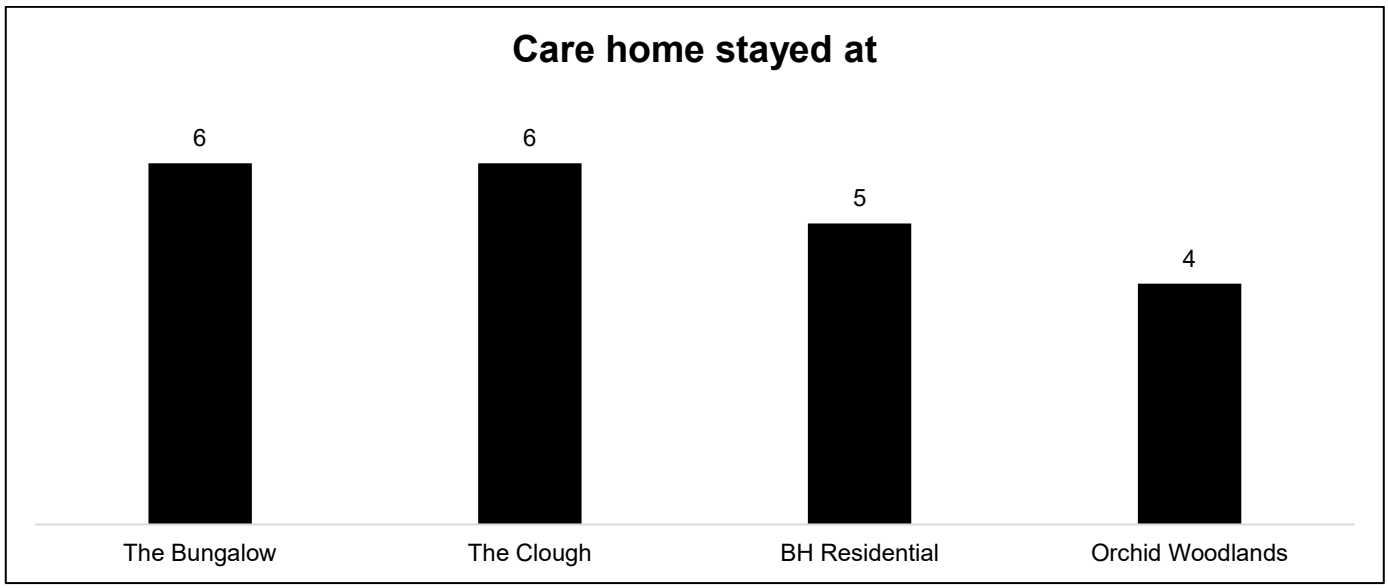
While efforts were made to make the sample representative and ensure a high response rate via direct letters to residents, this consultation did not receive a response from all previous block bed service users. The response rate was 27%, excluding the upcoming service users for block beds, as this was not applicable.

Responses were received from all neighbourhoods, despite the low response rate, and all care settings with STC block beds were accessed from the respondents. There were a high proportion of respondents who are family members or carers of residents that have accessed block beds, with only three respondents with direct lived experience represented in the findings. Over half of the respondents completing on behalf of someone who accessed block beds had caring responsibilities of over 50 hours a week (7 responses).

3. Resident views

3a. Care home settings

Respondents were asked to share which care home they / their relative used as a block bed. All respondents responded. Six respondents stayed at The Bungalow and The Clough, five stayed at BH Residential and four stayed at Orchid Woodlands.



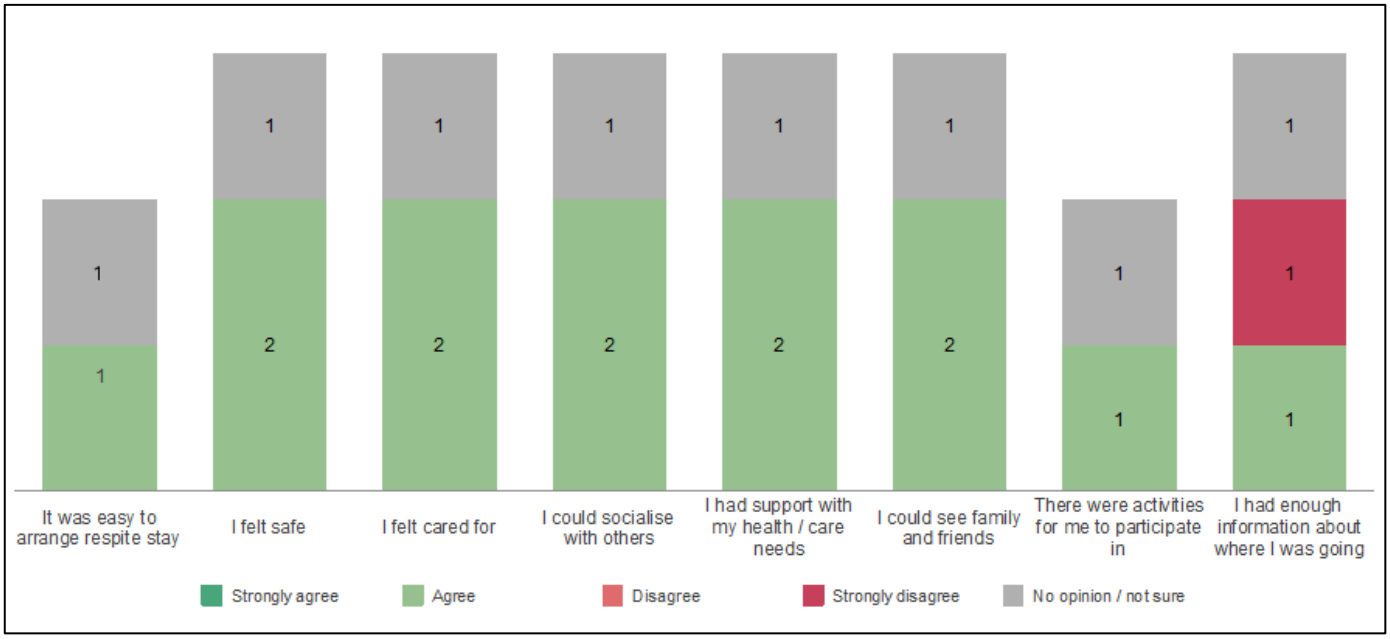
Base: 14

3b. Awareness of Block Beds

All respondents (14) became aware of the service via a Social Worker or Community Assessment Officer.

3c. Satisfaction – service users of Block Beds

Residents with direct experience of using Block Beds shared their views on their stay. All three previous service users of block beds responded. At least a third of the response to the following statements was *"no / not sure"*. Overall, there was agreement with the statements: *"I felt safe"*, *"I could socialise with others"*, *"I had support with my health / care needs"*, *"I could see family and friends"*. One respondent disagreed that they *"had enough information"* about where they were going.



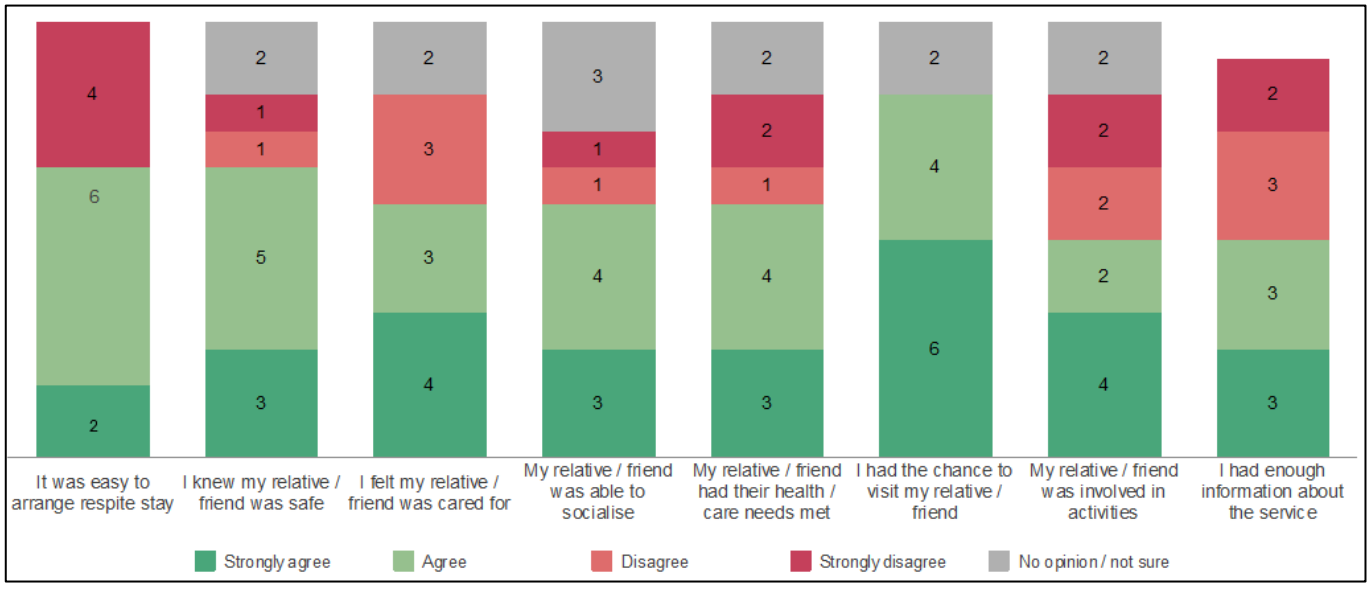
Base average: 3

3d. Satisfaction – family members / carers

An average of 12 respondents provided their views on their experience of Block Beds as a relative of someone that used the service. Most respondents agreed with the following statements:

- 8 of 12 agreed *"it was easy to arrange respite stay"*
- 8 of 12 agreed *"I knew my relative/ friend was safe"*
- 7 of 12 agreed *"I felt my relative/ friend was cared for"*
- 7 of 12 agreed *"my relative/ friend had their health / care needs met"*
- 10 of 12 agreed *"I had the change to visit my relative / friend"*
- 6 of 12 agreed *"my relative / friend was involved in activities"*
- 6 of 11 agreed *"I had enough information about the service"*

Most disagreement with the statements pertained to the ease of arranging respite stay (4), their relative/ friend being involved in activities (4), and having enough information about the service (5).



Base average: 12

3e. Explanation for satisfaction

Respondents were asked to explain their agreement with the following statements. Nine comments were received from residents / stakeholders. Comments focused on the care provided, the booking system, staff and the information about the service.

Satisfaction – please explain your reasoning.		
Rank	**Category**	**Number of respondents**
a.	Care	4
b.	Booking	3
c.	Staff	3
d.	Information	2

a. Care

Four respondents discussed the care associated with the Block Beds. All respondents discussing their relatives care expressed dissatisfaction. Several respondents shared that the care could not meet their expectations, although one recognised this could be due to their relative having complex needs.

"I asked for a T.V in his room, as he watch most days. There was a T.V, but it had no plug or arial. My son mentioned this to the staff, but it never got sorted. His room was very bland, just plain painted walls, no pictures or anything to make it feel homely. He was not keen on the food either!!"

"Mum was very withdrawn, pale and unhappy when we picked her up. She wouldn't even try to communicate. It took quite a few days to get her back to her old self. She said, she didn't like it there (she really enjoyed it when she went to the Farnworth one not now available). I don't think they did anything with her. No stimulus etc at BH Res. Really disappointed."

"My husband…suffered a major stroke … leaving him paralysed down his left hand side. He is now hoisted as he is unable to move himself at all. He is also no longer able to do any of his own care needs himself and as a result, I am now his carer 24/7 at 79 years of age. During the last 6.5 years, I have been offered only 3 weeks of respite. The first one was at Hazelbrook in Horwich … we ended up bringing him home early due to the unacceptable care ... The second one was at Meadowbank House in Great Lever. The care here was a lot better. However, the room was very small and whenever he had visitors, they had to stay in the room with him. The third and final one was at The Bungalow in Farnworth. [He] went in on a Friday and by Monday; the manager informed my daughter that they were unable to give him the correct care he needed. In their opinion, he should have been nursing care. Again, the room was so small, it was difficult to hoist [him], therefore, he stayed in the room most of the time. Also, the chair that was supplied … was totally inadequate for him and he was constantly sliding out of it. My children had to take in his own special chair for his own safety. [He] came home early from this respite, as they were unable to cope with his complex needs. I feel that I am caught between the devil and the blue sea. Bolton nursing and the district nurses says he does not meet the criteria for nursing care. But when I try to get him into respite, as soon as the care homes are aware of him being hoisted and his complex caring needs, they either do not respond or are unable to take him. I have even offered to pay the difference for nursing care and have been advised this is not acceptable by Bolton Council. I look after [him] extremely well, I deal with all his needs … without bothering the district nurses or doctors and I feel that this goes against me. After spending just a week in respite, he had always come home with sores and skin breakouts due to the care he is given as he is not there as a nursing case."

"I didn't feel that my dad was looked after well at all. Maybe this was because his needs were more complex than far a normal respite bed. In my opinion and the managers, he should have been a nursing care case. However, district nurses do not agree. I feel he was left alone too much particularly in meal times, when I wasn't allowed to stay, so as he couldn't reach his meals at times, he just didn't eat them"

b. Booking

Three respondents discussed issues with booking, such as *"booking consistent respite",* booking ahead and a lack of communication about booking system changes.

"When I tool my husband in, they had his booked for the next day, so had to re-take him the next day."

""The Clough is not a good experience Booking consistent respite is most difficult making other responsibilities challenging The service is both necessary and well received"

"Once my mum is in the care home for respite, the service is good - and that has been true at the Clough, The Bungalow and Orchid Woodlands. The reason for negative feedback is the process/administration, which has been incredibly poor. 1- the move from the old system to the new was not communicated - booked beds were cancelled - this caused a huge issue for my parents - putting them at risk. 2- Since then, booking ahead was very difficult for several months- my parents had and needed respite every 6 weeks - this was in place for 15 years, then it stopped. We had to fight for a bed. This meant that prolonged periods went by with no respite - then with irregular respite. This was hugely troubling for my parents."

c. Staff

Three respondents shared their views on the staff at the care homes. All had positive comments about the staff, although one resident shared that the staff at the block bed arrangement could not meet their relative's care needs.

"The staff were lovely, but just couldn't look after my dad as he should have been looked after."

"The staff are friendly and really looked after my mum. It's 100% all round."

"Staff at Blackrod House, Orchid Woodlands and The Bungalow are great"

d. Information

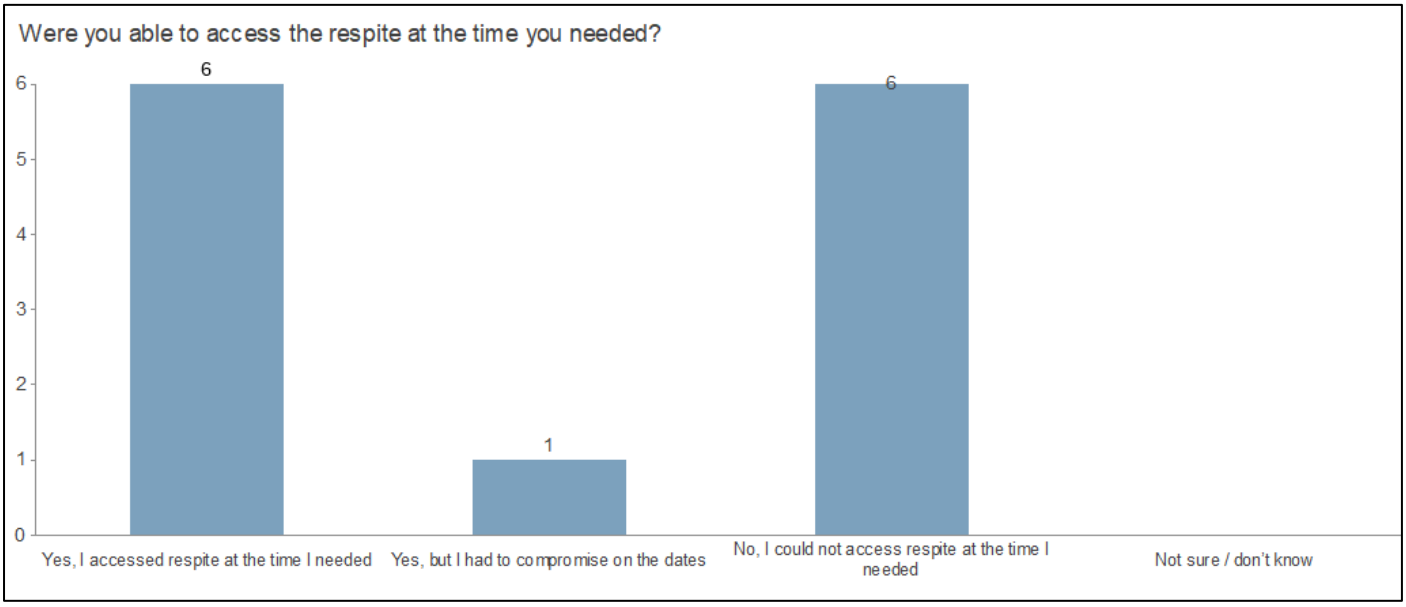
Two respondents shared they had challenges with accessing necessary information about the Block Bed service, such as logistics, and what services are offered.

"I would have liked contact from the respite home prior to her stay and someone to explain what happens at the home, what services the home offers e.g. hairdressing, activities etc."

"Once booked in I had no information regarding drop off, pick up and what to take with me. Had to ring Orchid and ask"

3f. Accessing respite

Respondents were asked whether they could arrange respite when they needed it. Of the 13 respondents, seven could access respite when they needed it, although one of these had to compromise on the dates, while six respondents could not access respite when they needed it.



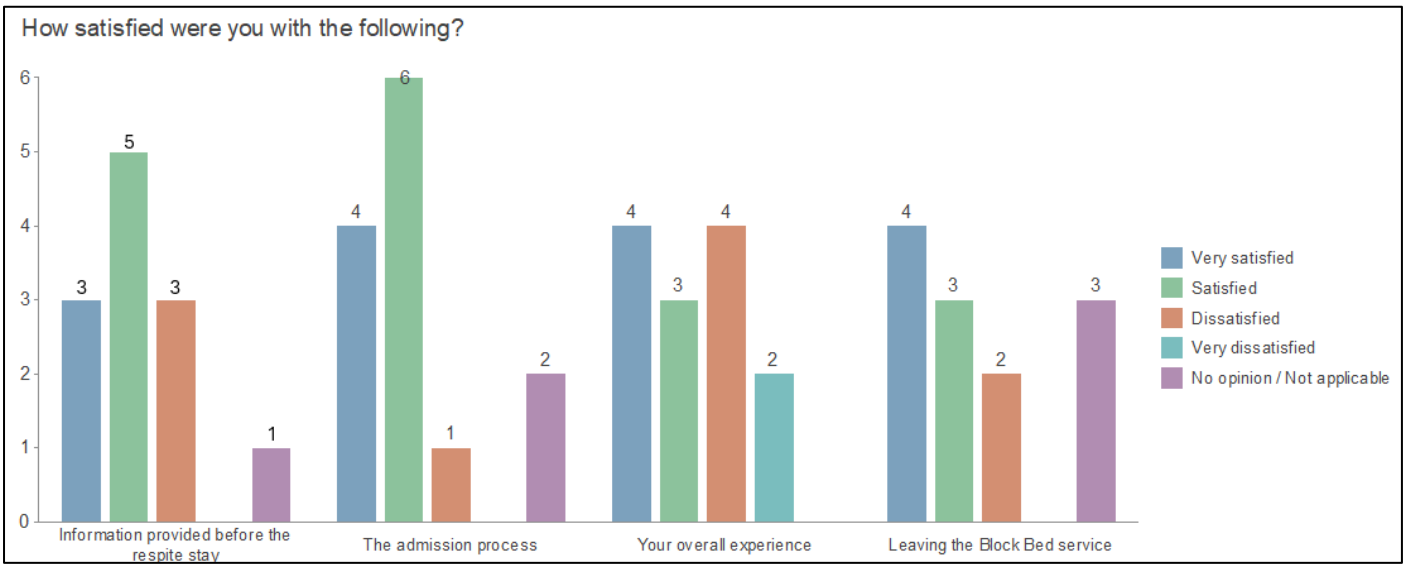
Base: 13

3g. Your experience

Respondents were asked to share their satisfaction with the service. An average of 13 responses were received.

- 8 of 12 respondents were satisfied with the information provided before the respite stay
- 10 of 13 respondents were satisfied with the admission process
- 7 of 13 respondents were satisfied with their overall experience
- 6 of 12 respondents were satisfied with leaving the Block Bed service.

The area seeing most dissatisfaction was the overall experience, with six respondents in disagreement.



Base average: 13

3h. Follow up after respite

Ten respondents shared there was no follow up after using the block bed. Three respondents shared that there was follow up contact.

3h. Service improvements

Eight respondents provided comments about what improvement could be made to the Block Beds service. Respondents focused on care, the choice available to them, and the information provided.

What could be improved about the Block Beds service?		
Rank	**Category**	**Number of respondents**
a.	Care	4
b.	Choice	3
c.	Information	3

a. Care

Four respondents discussed the care they received, including being able to meet their relative's needs.

"Listening to family about clients routines so that they can try to do the same. Rooms not big enough for hoisted clients. Manager said they would compile a report of how they felt my dad should have been nursing care. AS far as I am aware it still has not been done."

"I think activities should definitely be included regularly and patients not just left sitting all day with the TV on. Movement to music. Singing to old songs. Gentle ball games. Painting/colouring."

"Consistently in line with medical plan"

"The respite rooms are very small, especially for someone who has to be hoisted and requires additional assistance. Each time [he] has been in respite, rooms have had to be rearranged"

b. Choice

Three respondents suggested having more choice of properties with respite care, having access to book themselves, and having the choice to book for fixed periods.

"Fundamentally, my parents needed the certainty of fixed respite - for 2 weeks even 6 weeks. At the moment the "block beds" service seems to struggle to deliver that"

"More choice of places to choose from"

"Give us access to book them rather than wait for a social worker to do it."

c. Information

Three respondents requested more information before accessing the service and about payment options. One respondent shared that staff struggled with using the system.

"More information before and feedback after."

"More information about options. Part payment etc"

"The whole process needs to work better. There has been poor communication throughout. Staff did not seem to know how to use the system - there must have been no training?"

3i. Further comments

Six further comments were received. The comments discussed the booking process and the care provided.

Do you have any other suggestions or comments about the Block Beds service?		
Rank	**Category**	**Number of respondents**
a.	Booking	3
b.	Care	3

a. Booking

Three comments about booking included prior contact to discuss care needs, arranging booking for residents with complex needs and being able to book in regular blocks.

"Contact from the home before her respite to discuss her needs"

"Not easy to arrange when hoisting and complex care required"

"Happy to discuss further… Simply, where the customer needs require it, enable booking of regular blocks - up to 6 months ahead- provide certainty - actually would be more efficient - currently huge waste of our and staff time"

b. Care

Three comments about the care were received. One comment suggested socialisation opportunities for service users, one complimented a scheme, and one reiterated the importance of access to respite.

"Maybe have days when more able bodied ones who still communicate mix with the ones who cannot. Sometimes it's company that helps."

"The Bungalow stand out as very good."

"My mum has been told she is entitled to 6 weeks of respite per year. She has had 3 in 6.5 years. More effort should be made to ensure respite is given before she actually needs a home herself!"

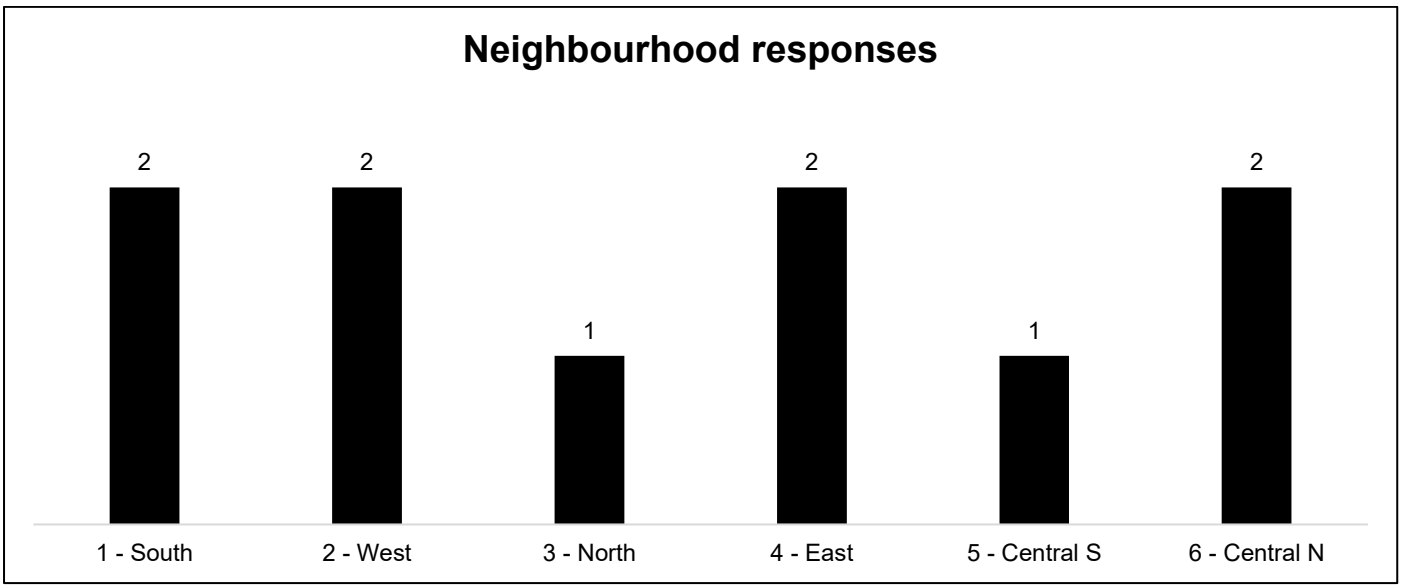
4. Demographics

4a. Geographical

The chart below outlines the demographics of respondents by geographical neighbourhood. A total of 12 respondents provided their full postcode. 10 respondents responded from Bolton addresses, one from Bury, and another from London. A ward breakdown can be found too.



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



Base: 12

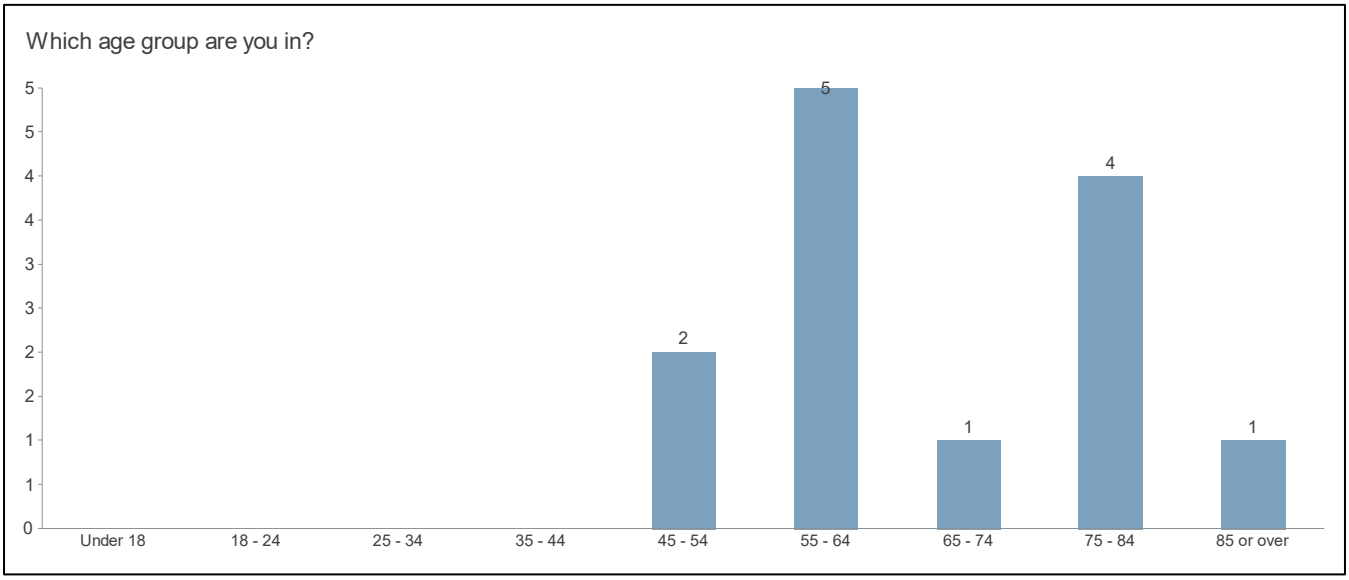
Ward name	Number of respondents
Astley Bridge	1
Hulton	1
Farnworth North	1
Queens Park & Central	1
Great Lever	1
Horwich South & Blackrod	1
Horwich North	1
Little Lever & Darcy Lever	2
Halliwell	1

4b. Preferred identity

13 responses were received providing the respondent's preferred identity. 11 respondents identify as being female, 2 as male.

4c. Age

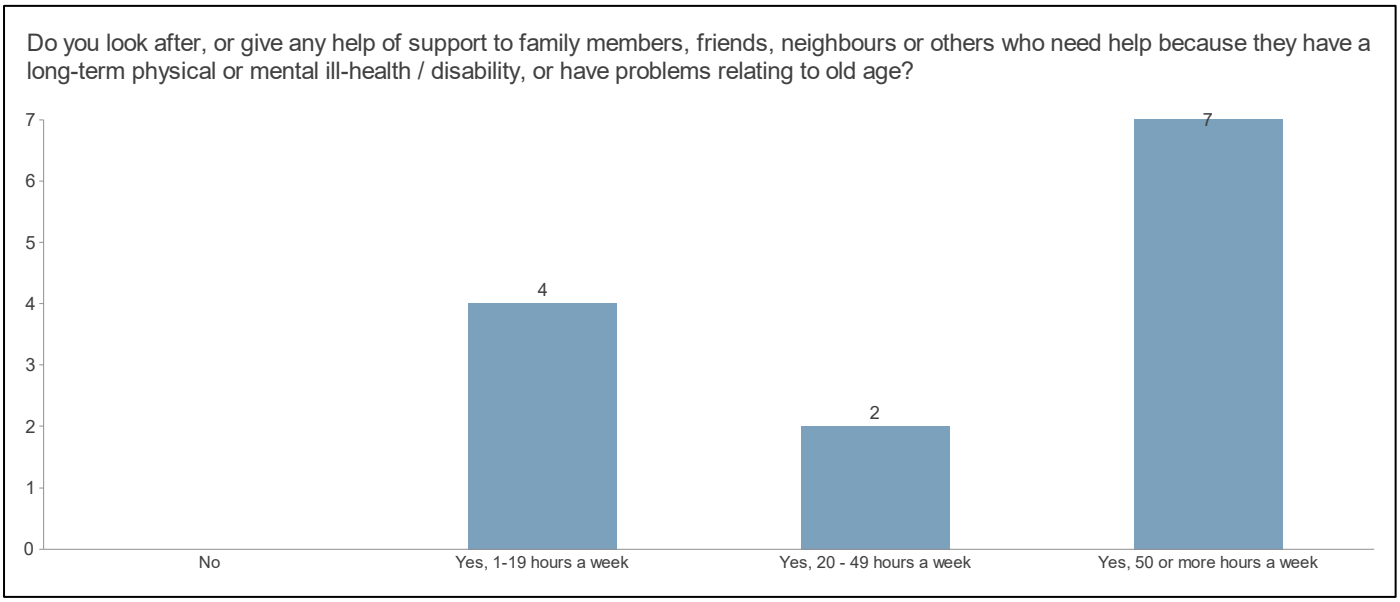
Responses were received from individuals over 44 years old. No respondents were under the age of 44 years. Seven respondents were aged between 45 – 64 years. Six responses were received from individuals above the age of 65 years.



Base: 14

4d. Caring Status

Respondents were asked whether they provide any care or support to individuals with long term physical and mental health difficulties. Over half of respondents give over 50 hours of care a week or more to someone (7) and six respondents give up to 50 hours of care a week. No respondents did not have any form of caring responsibility.



Base: 13

4e. Ethnicity

14 respondents provided their ethnicity when undertaking the consultation. 12 reported as being white – British. Two reported as being from other ethnically diverse communities, this includes one from the Asian / Asian British community and one from a Black, Black British, Caribbean or African background.

Appendix A - Other responses

Telephone call notes - 15.7.2026

Spoke to husband of a service user, whose wife has been taking advantage of the STC block beds on a regular basis. This provides the service user with regular respite and enables him to continue in his caring role. The resident stated that he would not manage without these breaks as his wife's needs are complex and caring for her can be overwhelming and tiring, he is also elderly. They have used various homes over the years and are happy that this service is available. The resident requested a separate feedback form to be posted to a family member as he would struggle to respond and could not access support in completing the survey.

Appendix B - Copy of the questionnaire

Bolton Council

Short Term Block Beds - Resident Experience

Consultation closes on 10th August 2026

Respite is a short-term stay in a residential home that provides professional care for a loved one, while giving those who care for them an opportunity to take a break from their caring role. This support plays an important role in maintaining carers' health and wellbeing, helping to prevent burnout and ensure they are able to continue in their caring role safely and sustainably.

Bolton Council currently offers access to respite through a block bed arrangement with four care homes across the borough. This enables people with eligible needs to access short-term residential support when required, providing reassurance to both individuals and their families that care is available at times of need.

Help us improve respite arrangements in Bolton

We are undertaking this survey to better understand how well the current arrangements are working in practice. In particular, we want to hear about the experiences of people who access respite, as well as their families and carers. This includes feedback on the block bed booking system, the quality and experience of the respite stay itself, and the overall process from requesting to completing a stay. The gathered feedback will help us identify what is working well and where improvements may be needed. The findings will be used to strengthen the current approach, improve the experience for people using respite services, and inform how similar arrangements may be developed and delivered in the future.

Your response - keeping your data safe

Most questions are optional; just miss out any that you don't want to answer.

The results of this consultation may be made public. If you're responding as an individual you won't be identified in any report as your responses will be anonymised and grouped with those from other people. If you're 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-notices

We use Snap Surveys professional software to collect and process your data. Snap Surveys Ltd. follow the UK General Data Protection Regulation, and their privacy policy can be found by following this link:

www.snapsurveys.com/survey-software/privacy-policy-uk/.

Your interest

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

- ☐ Resident that used Block Beds for respite in Bolton
- ☐ Family member / friend of resident that used Block Beds for respite in Bolton
- ☐ None of the above - please explain below

1.a If none, please say what your interest is.

2. Which care home did you / your family member or friend stay in?

- ☐ The Bungalow
- ☐ The Clough
- ☐ BH Residential
- ☐ Orchid Woodlands

Block Beds

3. How did you become aware of the short-term care Block Bed service?

- ☐ Through social worker / Community Assessment Officer
- ☐ Through care home staff
- ☐ Healthcare professional e.g. GP
- ☐ Letter / pamphlet
- ☐ Website
- ☐ Email
- ☐ Word of mouth
- ☐ Another way

Your experience

4. If you have experience of using a Block Bed, how would you rate your experience of using Short Term Beds? (Skip if responding as a family member / friend)

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	No opinion / not sure
It was easy to arrange respite stay	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I felt safe	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I felt cared for	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I could socialise with others	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I had support with my health / care needs	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I could see family and friends	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
There were activities for me to participate in	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I had enough information about where I was going	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

5. As a family member or friend, how would you rate your experience of the Short Term Beds service? (Skip if you are the recipient of the Block Bed service)

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	No opinion / not sure
It was easy to arrange respite stay	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I knew my relative / friend was safe	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I felt my relative / friend was cared for	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My relative / friend was able to socialise	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My relative / friend had their health / care needs met	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I had the chance to visit my relative / friend	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My relative / friend was involved in activities	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I had enough information about the service	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

6. Were you able to access the respite at the time you needed?

☐ Yes, I accessed respite at the time I needed
☐ No, I could not access respite at the time I needed
☐ Yes, but I had to compromise on the dates
☐ Not sure / don't know

Satisfaction

7. How satisfied were you with the following?

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	No opinion / Not applicable
Information provided before the respite stay	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The admission process	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Your overall experience	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Leaving the Block Bed service	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

8. Please explain your reasoning. You may want to share what went well and what did not during the respite.

Follow up and improvements

9. Was there any follow up contact after the respite?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Can't remember / not sure

10. What could be improved about the Block Beds service?

Further comments

11. Do you have any other suggestions or comments about the Block Beds service?

About you

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

12. Please give your full postcode

13. Are you...?

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

14. Which age group are you in?

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

15. Do you look after, or give any help of support to family members, friends, neighbours or others who need help because they have a long-term physical or mental ill-health / disability, or have problems relating to old age?

Please don't count anything you do as part of paid employment.

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes, 1-19 hours a week
- ☐ Yes, 20 - 49 hours a week
- ☐ Yes, 50 or more hours a week

16. What is your ethnic group?

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

Thanks! Please send your response through to us:
Freepost RTTT-YTEL-YSXS Consultation & Research Team, 2nd Floor, Town Hall, Victoria Square, Bolton, BL1 1RU.