

Ready to Downsize? A survey of Housing for Older People in Wolverton and Greenleys.

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Elderflowers Projects Company Ltd

Milton Keynes

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Elderflowers Survey 2019 Analysis

Background

Elderflowers Projects Co. Ltd (Elderflowers Projects) has been investigating the provision of housing for older people in Wolverton for over twenty years. At an early meeting with members of the Wolverton and Greenleys Town Council it was reported to Elderflowers Projects that there was a shortage of suitable housing for older people to move into, in the local area.

Recently, in 2018, the remaining housing built specifically to accommodate older people was closed down needing extensive repair, and converted to housing for homeless people.

Elderflowers Projects explained to members of the local Town Council their approach to housing older people, so that they can remain independent. Although efforts have been made to incorporate housing for older people in the new developments along the V5, on the land from Radcliffe School, and elsewhere, this has not been successful. It is hoped that new developments taking place to replace the Agora, and on British Rail land bought by St Modwen's will take account of the market for housing for older people to move into, when this need is clarified.

Pilot survey

Elderflowers Projects Co. Ltd drew up a proposal to pay interviewers to carry out door to door interviews with up to 300 residents aged 50 and over in the Wolverton and Greenleys Ward, and submitted the proposal to the Wolverton and Greenleys Town Council for their agreement and funding. The council agreed to part funding and further funding was sought from the Milton Keynes Community Foundation Trust. However they would only provide funds if further matching funding could be found. Under these circumstances, Elderflowers Project decided to go ahead with a pilot survey in the area carried out by members of the Elderflowers Team.

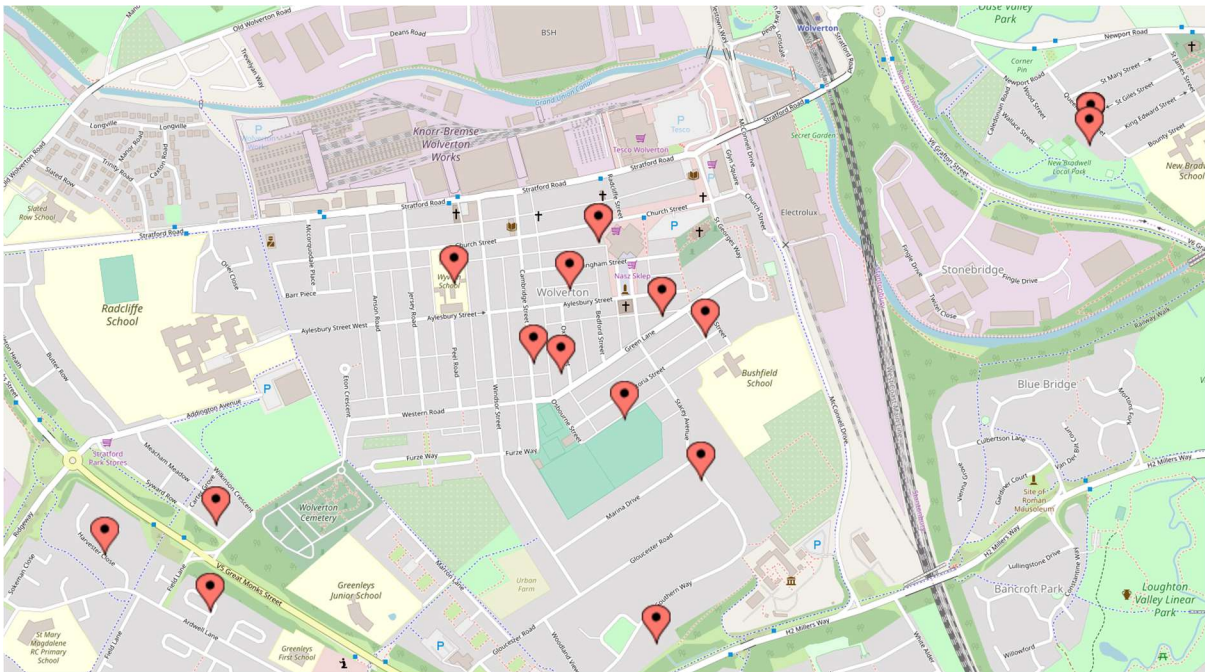
The pilot survey of Wolverton and New Bradwell residents was carried out to ascertain whether local residents over the age of 50 were intending to move to more suitable accommodation as they aged, or not. The survey was completed in two ways. Members of the team went door to door to interview residents personally in the area, and copies of the survey were left at key locations in Wolverton for individuals to complete.

This survey has been funded by Wolverton & Greenleys Town Council.

Survey Results

Survey Population and location

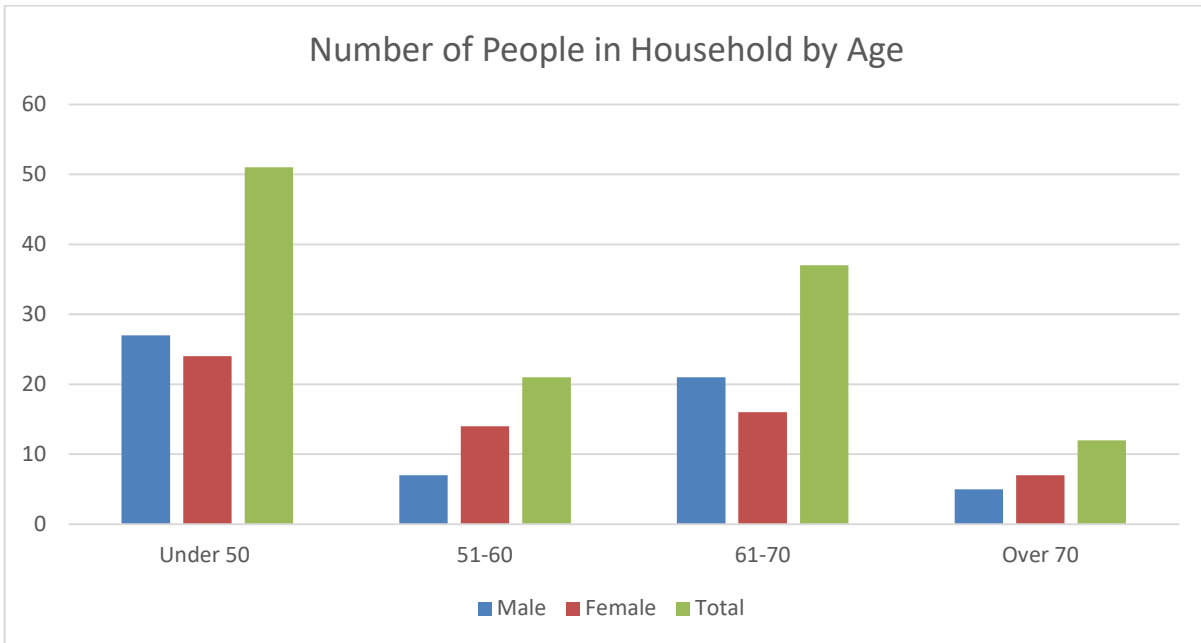
60 households responded to the survey across Wolverton. The geographic spread of respondents who provided their postcode is as follows. Unfortunately some of the respondents choose not to include details of their home postcode. No personal data was collected from any of respondents.



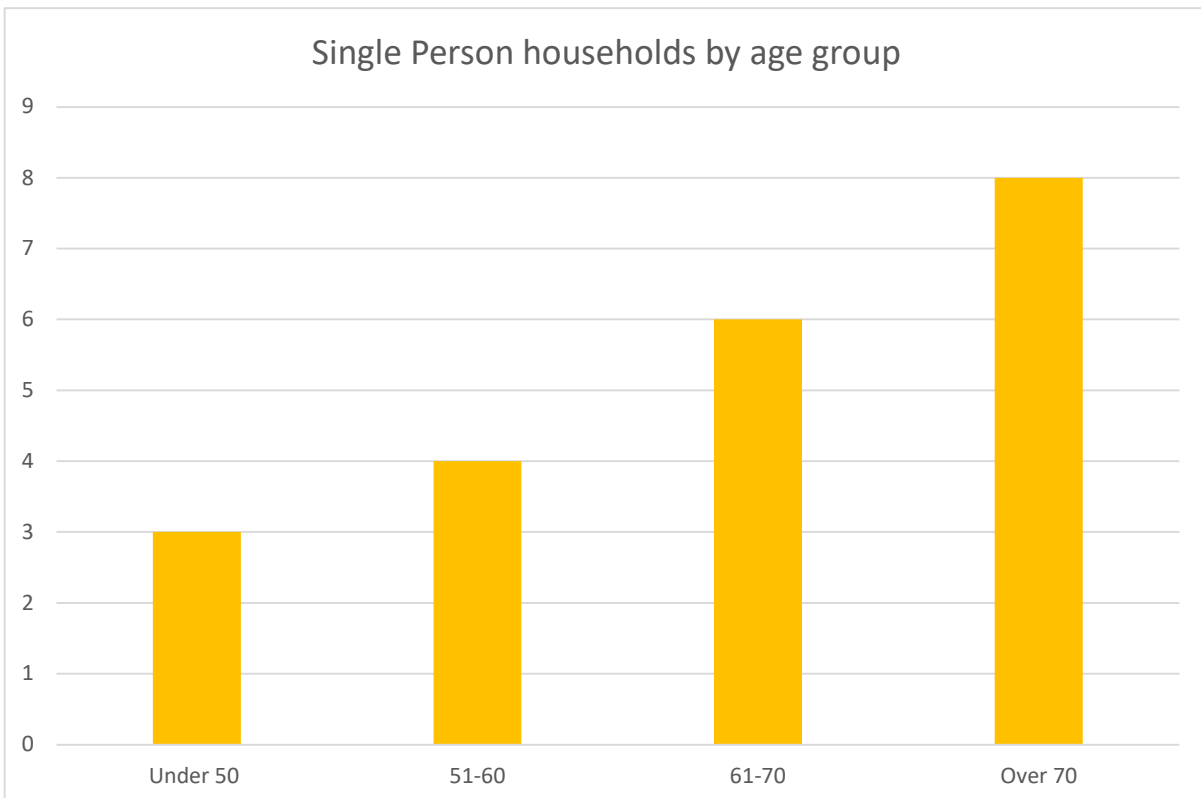
Gender and Age Profile

The average household size for those participating in the survey was 2.01

The age profile of those in the households answering the survey is as follows.

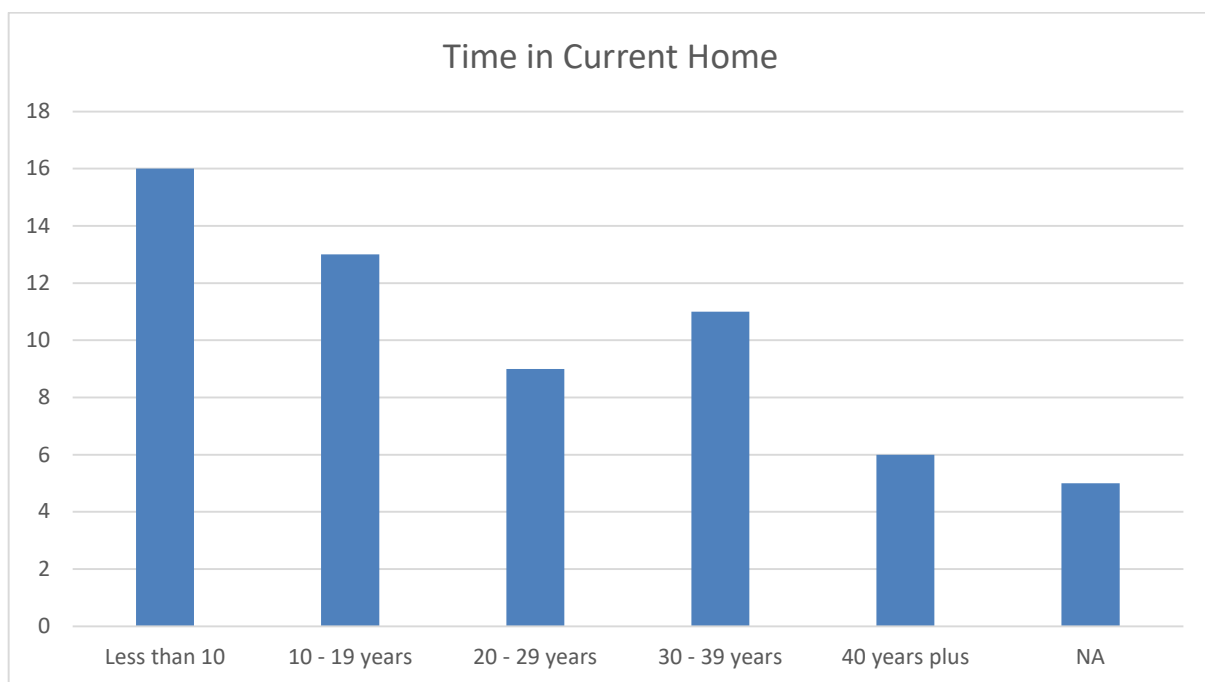


Just over one third of the respondents (21 out of 60) are living alone at home. The breakdown of these single person households by age is shown in the chart below.



Time in Wolverton

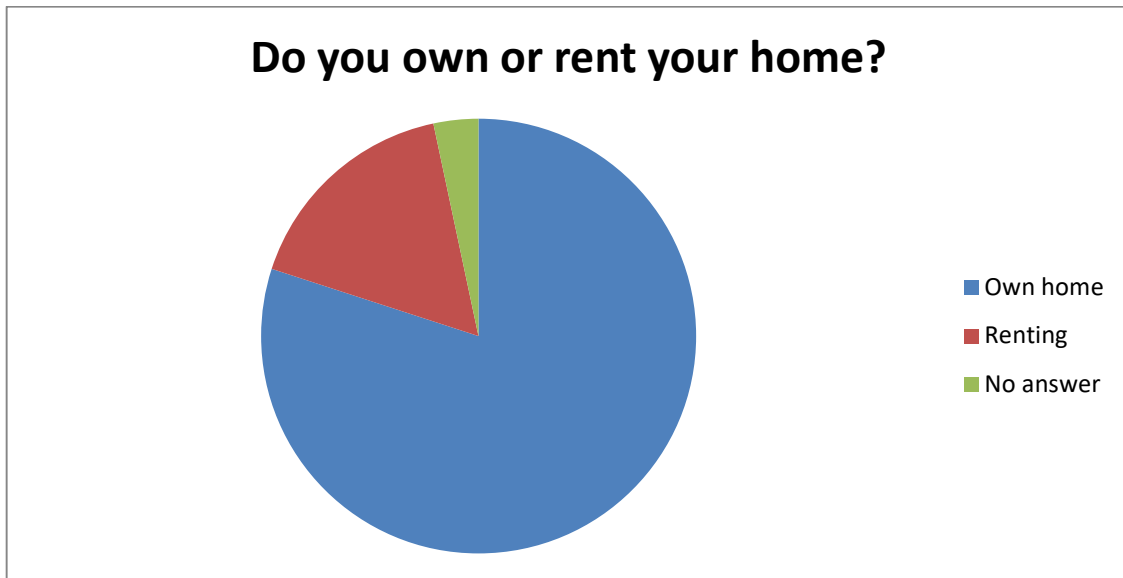
A significant number of the survey respondents had been living in their current properties for a very long time. The length of tenure ranged from 1 year to 64 years with an average of 19 years 275 days. The graph below shows the time in current home grouped into ten year time blocks.



Elderflowers Projects' research suggests that downsizing becomes more difficult as people get older and remain in the houses they have lived in for a long time. However, where very old people are living alone in large homes it generally becomes more difficult for them to maintain and heat them, therefore a move to a smaller modern home would be helpful to them. Of those respondents who were single people households over the age of 61 (14 households), we found that 42% had lived in their house for more than 30 years with an average tenure of 22 years.

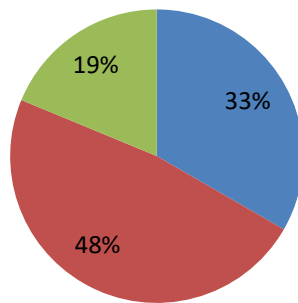
Ownership Status

A question was asked in the survey as to the type of household tenure that the respondent household had. The responses to the questions are shown below. A significant majority of the respondents to the survey were homeowners, and of this number nearly half (48%) were mortgage free.



If you own your own home do you have a mortgage

■ Have Mortgage ■ No mortgage ■ No answer

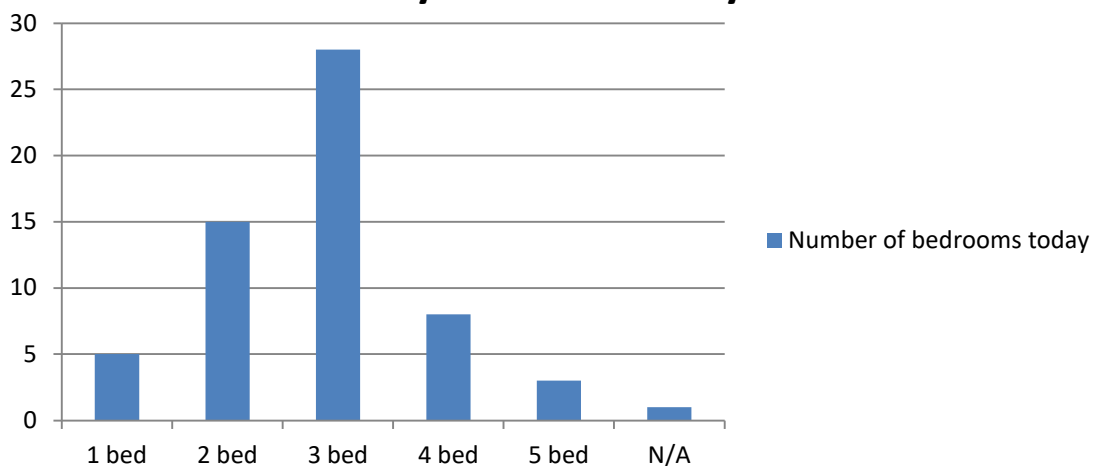


Number of Bedrooms

Current Bedrooms

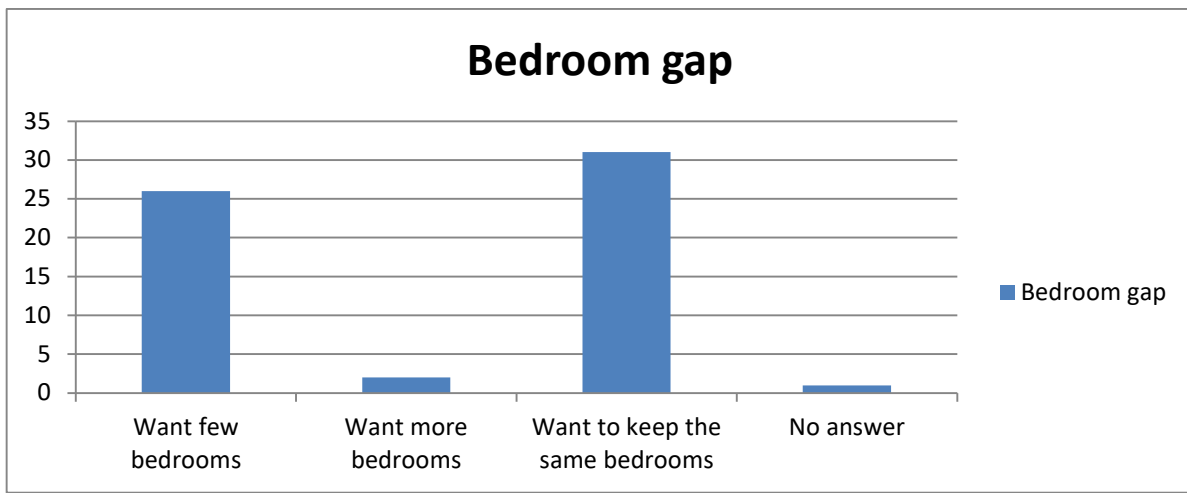
The survey found that average number of bedrooms that respondents have today is 2.81, whilst the median number of bedrooms is 3.

How many bedrooms do you have

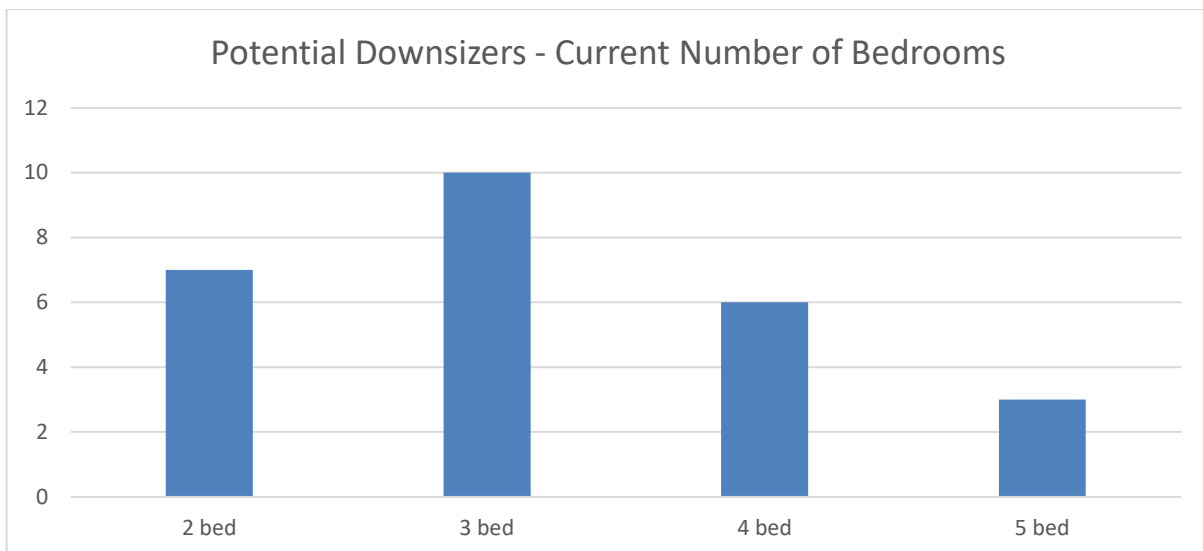


Bedroom Gap

The survey asked about the number of bedrooms that the respondents have today in their homes compared with how many they need, the so called bedroom gap. A significant majority of the respondents stated (95%) said that they need the same or fewer bedrooms. 43% of the respondents stated that they needed fewer bedrooms than they have at present.



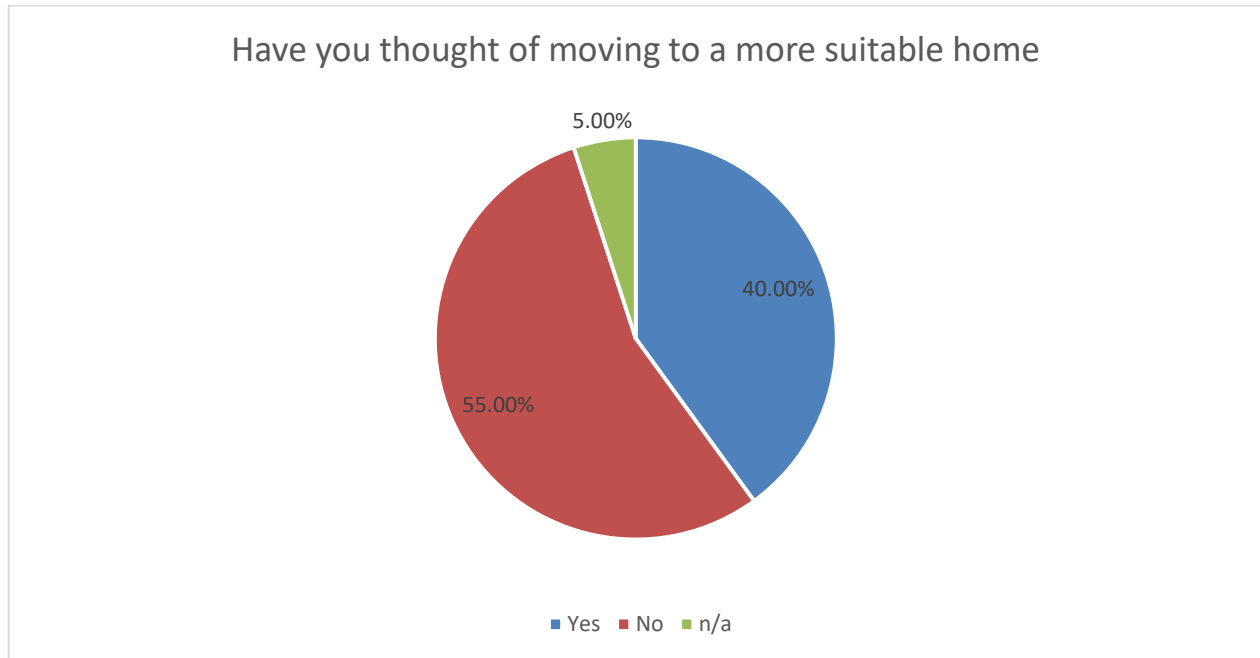
Of those who wanted to downsize to a house with fewer bedrooms the majority of those were in larger houses with 3 bedrooms or more.



100% of the survey respondents that had 5 bedrooms wished to downsize as did 75% of those with 4 bedrooms.

Moving home?

There was a slight majority of respondents, who had not yet thought about moving home.



This does not mean that they will not be interested in moving should there be suitable accommodation offered to them.

Conclusions

The results of the pilot survey show that there is a very high number of people living in their own homes in the Wolverton and Greenleys area (80% in this survey), and that over half of those had paid off their mortgage and had lived there for over 20 years.

Of those who said they were interested in moving from their homes, 33% were residents who had lived in their homes for over 30 years whilst 29% were living alone.

Many people said that they would be interested in moving only if there was suitable accommodation provided within the Wolverton and New Bradwell area.

Elderflowers Projects has therefore come to the conclusion that the provision of homes specifically aimed at the range of people over 50 who would prefer to move would satisfy an identified market.

This survey was carried out by members of the Elderflowers Projects Team.

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Ref: "A New Type of Housing for Active Older People" pub. March 2007 Upstart Press

Ref: "Evaluating Demand for Housing for Older People in Milton Keynes" pub. 2011

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