

Maidstone Town Centre Public Spaces Protection Order Consultation 2020



Methodology

The survey was open between 17th June and 7th August 2020. It was promoted online through the Council's website and social media channels. Residents on the Council's Consultation mailing list were notified and sent an invitation to participate in the consultation.

There was a total of 1209 responses to the survey, there are 1065 weighted responses.

As an online survey is a self-selection methodology, with residents free to choose whether to participate or not, it was anticipated that returned responses would not necessarily be fully representative of the wider adult population. This report discusses the weighted results to overall responses by demographic questions to ensure that it more accurately matches the known profile of Maidstone Borough's population by these characteristics.

The results have been weighted by age and gender based on the population in the ONS mid-year population estimates 2018. However, the under-representation of 18 to 34 year olds means that high weights have been applied to responses in this group, therefore results for this group should be treated with caution. It should also be noted that respondents from BME backgrounds are under-represented at 3.2% compared to 5.9% in the local area. The results for this group should also be treated with caution.

There were a total of 1065 weighted responses to the survey based on Maidstone's population aged 18 years and over. This means overall results are accurate to $\pm 2.99\%$ at the 95% confidence level. This indicates that if we repeated the same survey 100 times, 95 times out of 100 the results would be between $\pm 2.99\%$ of the calculated response, so the 'true' response could be 2.99% above or below the figures reported (i.e. a 50% agreement rate could in reality lie within the range of 52.99% to 47.01%).

Where reference has been made in the report to a 'significant difference' in response between difference groups, the proportional data has been z-tested.

The z-test is a statistical test which determines if the percentage difference between subgroups is large enough, taking into account the population size, to be statistically significant (meaning that if we were to run the same survey 100 times, 95 times out of 100 the same result would be seen) or whether the difference is likely to have occurred by chance.

Please note that not every respondent answered every question, therefore the total number of respondents refers to the number of respondents for the question being discussed, not to the survey overall.

Summary Findings

- People using or smoking legal highs in public was the behaviour that had the greatest proportion of respondents stating that this is worse than it was three years ago.
- People lying or sleeping in a public place was the behaviour that had the greatest proportion of respondents expressing that this is better than it was three years ago and the greatest proportion that said 'Stayed about the same'.
- The behaviours 'People using or smoking legal highs in public' and 'People using illegal substances (drugs) in public' had the greatest proportions responding, 'Don't know', with a third answering this way.
- When asked about specific behaviour changes in the last three years, Economically Active respondents were consistently more likely to state that the behaviour being asked about had gotten worse in the last three years than Economically Inactive respondents
- The top themes arising from the comments about behaviours seen or experienced in the Town Centre were alcohol or drinking, drugs or illegal substances, shouting and rowdy people.
- Support for both measures was strong with over nine in ten respondents supportive of continuing with measure 1 and over five out of six respondents in favour of continuing with measure 2.
- The 18 to 34 years group had lowest proportions agreeing to renew both measures. Agreement with both measures increases with age.

Visiting Maidstone Town Centre

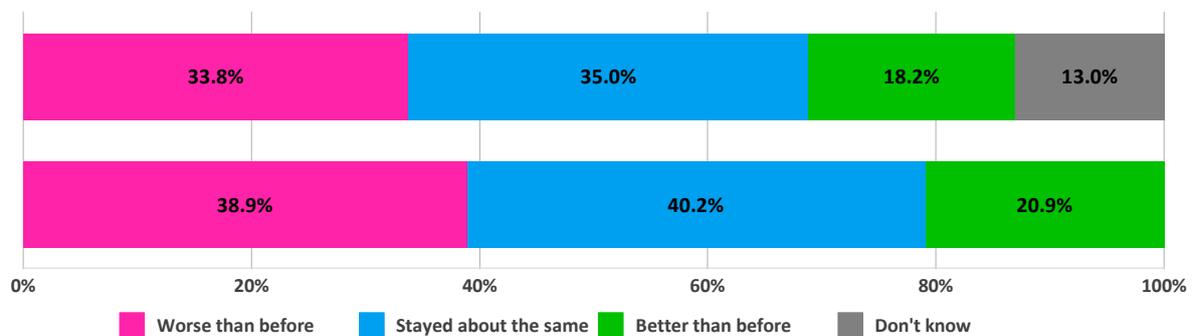
Survey respondents were asked how they felt Maidstone Town Centre had changed in the last three years regarding specific behaviours. The available response options for these questions were 'Worse than before', 'Stayed about the same', 'Better than before' and 'Don't know'.

People being drunk or rowdy in public places

Overall, there were 1057 weighted responses to this question. The most common response was 'Stayed about the same' with 370 responding this way.

Overall, excluding respondents that said they did not know, almost four in ten respondents said that people being drunk or rowdy in public places has gotten worse in the last three years.

The chart below shows the response to this question. The top bar chart shows all of the answer options that were provided and the bottom bar chart shows the response to this question excluding 'don't know' responses.



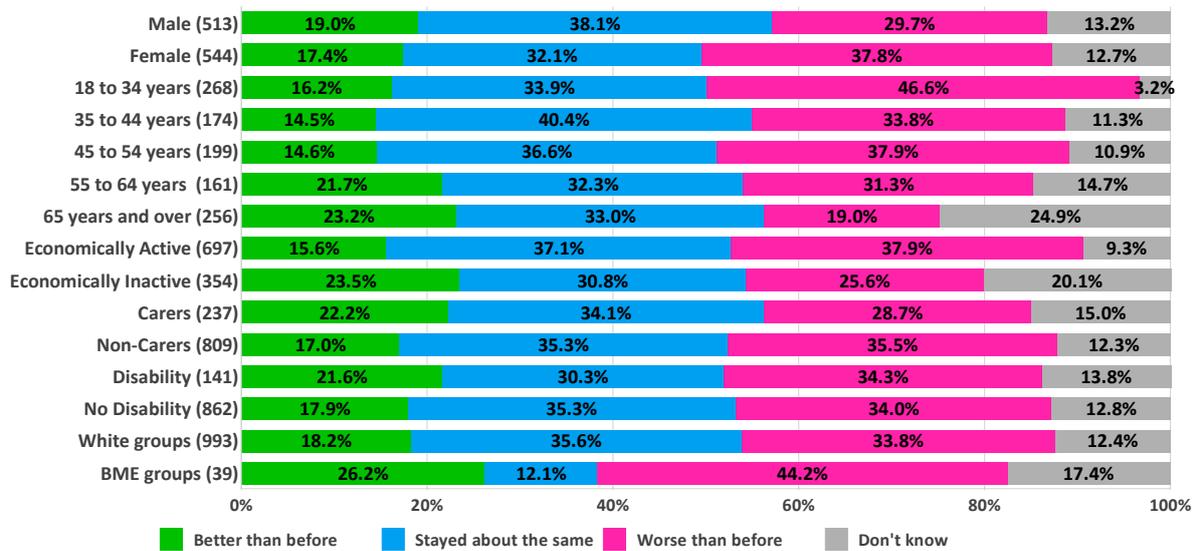
Male respondents were more likely than female respondents to state that the level of this type of behaviour had stayed about the same over the last three years with 38.1% answering this way compared to 32.1% of female respondents. Female respondents had a greater proportion than males stating that this behaviour has gotten worse.

Respondents that are Economically Active had a greater proportion responding that this behaviour has gotten worse in the Town Centre in the last three years with 37.9% responding this way compared to 25.6% of Economically Inactive respondents. One in five of the Economically Inactive respondents stated that had no knowledge of this behaviour compared to less than one in ten from the Economically Active group.

In terms of age, the 65 years and over group had the lowest proportion stating this behaviour had gotten worse at 19.0%. The 18 to 34 years group had the greatest proportion stating that this behaviour has gotten worse with 46.6%. It should be noted that there is a lot of crossover between the Economically Inactive and the 65 years and over groups. The data suggests that knowledge of this reduces as age increases. This is likely to be due to the different types of visits made, at differing times of day.

Respondents from BME groups were less likely to respond that this behaviour has stayed the same over the last three years at 12.1% compared to the result for white groups which was 35.6%.

Respondents from BME groups and those under 35 years had the greatest proportions of respondents stating that this behaviour has gotten worse.

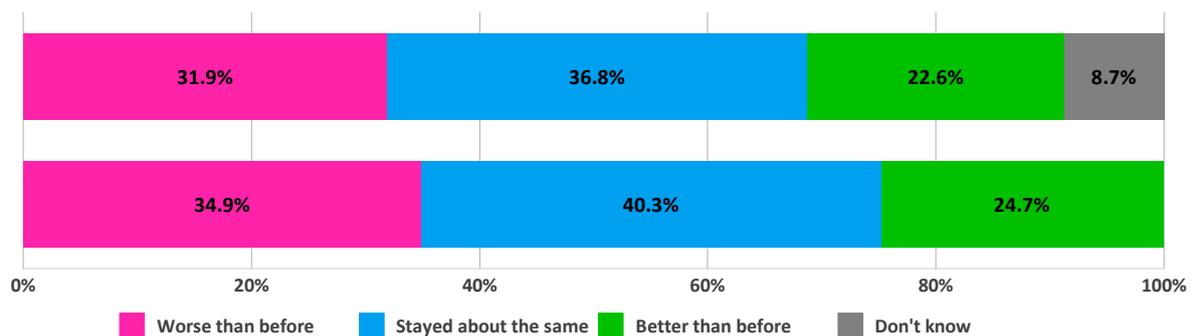


People (e.g beggars) loitering in a public place

There were 1057 weighted responses to this question. The most common response was ‘Stayed about the same’ with 389 responding this way.

Overall, excluding respondents that said they did not know just over one in three respondents said that people loitering (begging) in a public place has gotten worse in the last three years.

The chart below shows the response to this question. The top bar chart shows all of the answer options that were provided and the bottom bar chart shows the response to this question excluding ‘don’t know’ responses.



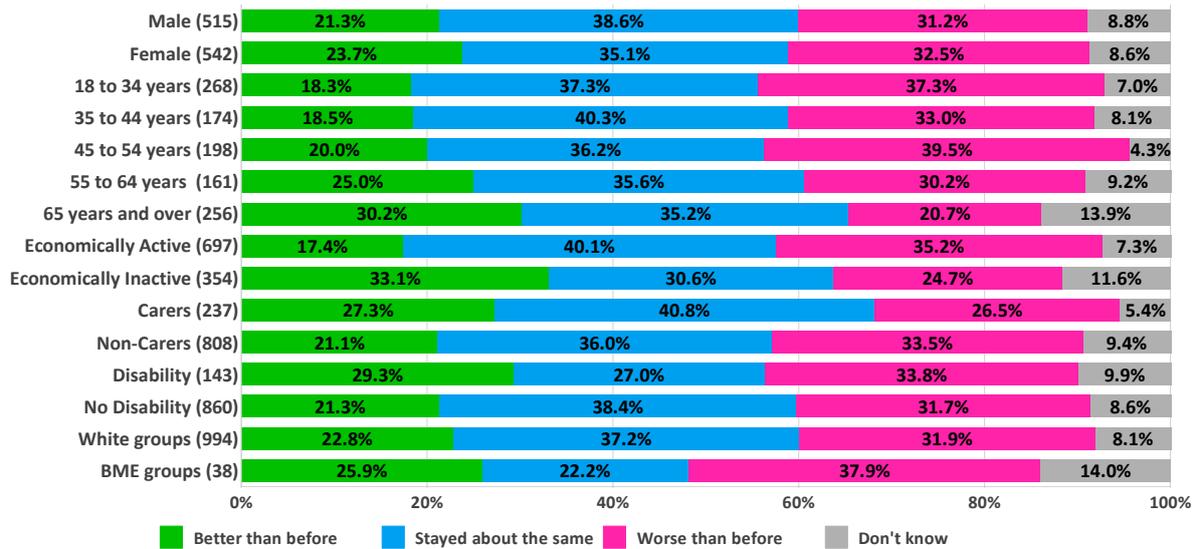
Several demographic groups a mode (response that occurs most frequently) that differed from the overall results. The most common response from respondents aged 45 to 54 years and from BME groups was ‘Worse than before’. The most common response for the Economically Inactive group was ‘Better than before’.

Respondents that were Economically Active had a greater proportion that were negative, saying that this type of behaviour had worsened over the last three years compared to those who were Economically Inactive;35.2% responded this way compared to 24.7% of Economically Inactive

respondents. A third of Economically Inactive respondents stated that people loitering in places had improved compared to one in six from the Economically Active group.

The data shows that the proportion of respondents answering ‘Better than before’ increases with age. The 18 to 44 years had the lowest proportions responding this way at 18.5% and the 65 years and over group had the greatest proportion answering this way at 30.2%.

Respondents with a disability were more likely than non-disabled respondent to say that this type of behaviour has improved with 29.3% stating it is ‘Better than before’, compared to 21.3% of those without a disability answering the same.

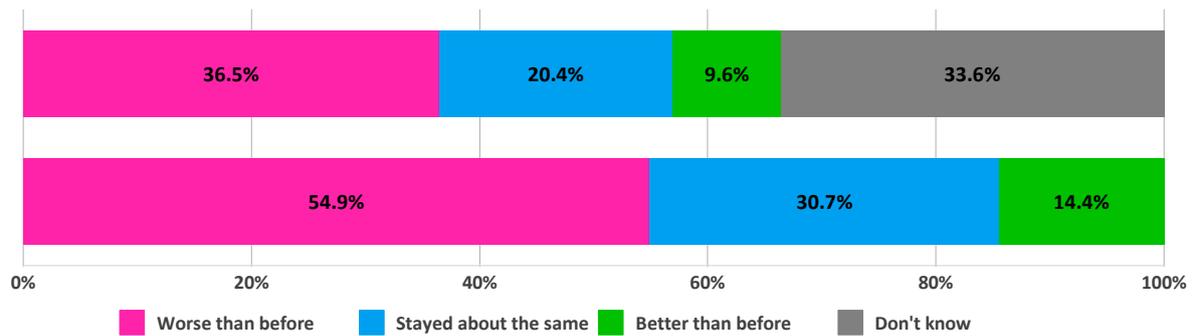


People using or smoking legal highs in public

Overall, there were 1055 weighted responses to this question. The most common response was ‘Worse than before’ with 385 responding this way. A third of respondents stated they had no knowledge of this type of behaviour in Maidstone Town Centre.

Overall, excluding respondents that said they did not know more than half of respondents said that people loitering (begging) in a public place has gotten worse in the last three years.

The chart below shows the response to this question. The top bar chart shows all of the answer options that were provided and the bottom bar chart shows the response to this question excluding ‘don’t know’ responses.

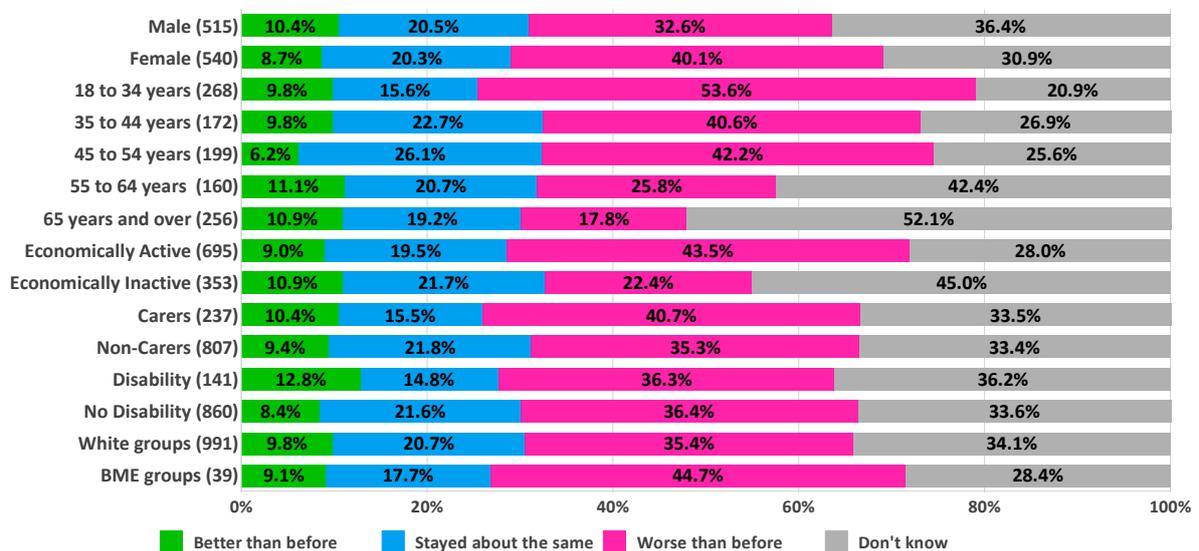


‘Worse than before’ was not the most common response across all the demographic groups. The most common responses for Male respondents, those aged 55 to 64 years, 65 years and over and the Economically Inactive was ‘Don’t know’.

Female respondents had a greater proportion responding ‘Worse than before’ compared to male respondents with 40.1% answering this way compared to 32.6% of male respondents.

Respondents that are Economically Active had a greater proportion that were negative, with 43.5% stating that this type of behaviour had worsened over the last three years compared to those who are Economically Inactive where 22.4% answered this way. More than two in five of the Economically Inactive respondents stated that had no knowledge of this behaviour compared to less than one in ten from the Economically Active group.

The data shows that the proportion responding ‘Don’t know’ increases with age. The 45 to 54 years group had the greatest proportion out of the age ranges responding ‘Stayed the same’ at 26.1%. This is significantly greater than the proportion answering the same for the 18 to 34 years group where 15.6% gave the same response.

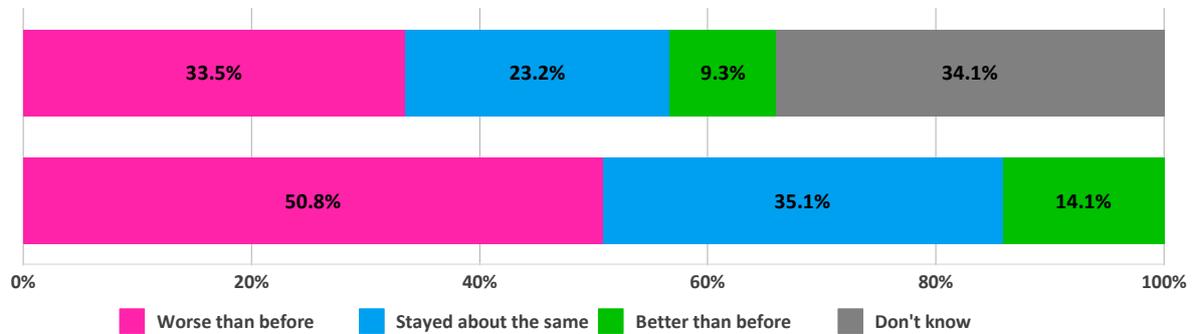


People using illegal substances (drugs) in public

There were 1057 weighted responses to this question. The most common response was ‘Don’t know’ with 360 responding this way.

Overall, excluding respondents that said they did not know, more than half of respondents said that people using illegal substances (drugs) in public had gotten worse in the last three years.

The chart below shows the response to this question. The top bar chart shows all of the answer options that were provided and the bottom bar chart shows the response to this question excluding 'don't know' responses.

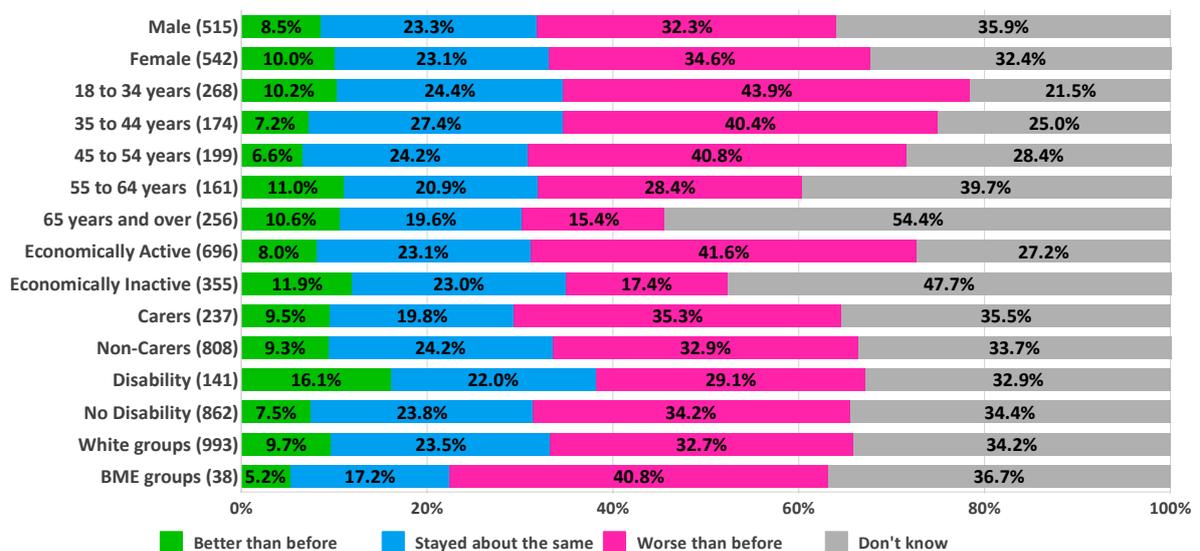


'Don't know' was not the most common response across all demographic groups. For age groups up to 54 years, females, the Economically Active and those from BME groups the most common response was 'Worse than before'.

Respondents that are Economically Active had a greater proportion that were negative, with 41.6% stating that this type of behaviour had worsened over the last three years compared to those who are Economically Inactive where 17.4% answered this way. Just under half of the Economically Inactive respondents stated that they had no knowledge of this behaviour compared to just over one in four from the Economically Active group.

There no significant differences across the age groups in the proportions that responded 'Better than before'. However, the proportions responding 'Worse than before' decreases with age and those responding 'Don't know' increases with age'.

Respondents with a disability were more positive than their counterparts, 16.1% of respondents with a disability answered 'Better than before' compared to 7.5% of respondents without a disability.

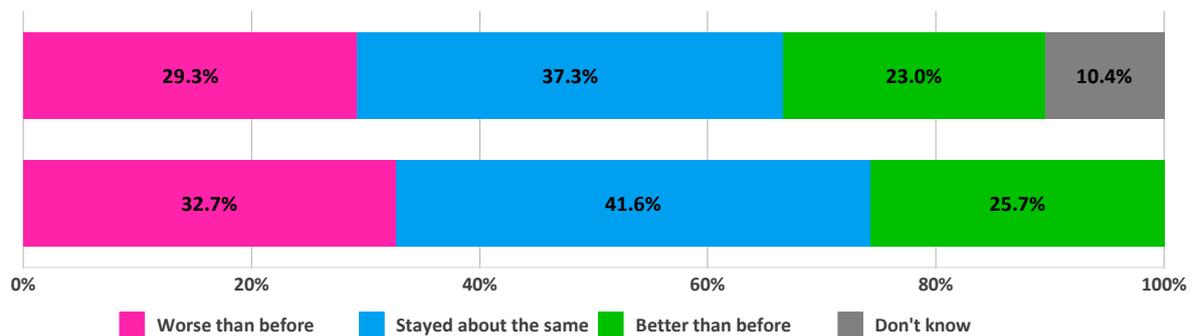


People lying in or sleeping in a public place

There were 1057 weighted responses to this question. The most common response was 'Stayed about the same' with 394 responding this way.

Overall, excluding respondents that said they did not know, a third of respondents said that people using illegal substances (drugs) in public had gotten worse in the last three years.

The chart below shows the response to this question. The top bar chart shows all of the answer options that were provided and the bottom bar chart shows the response to this question excluding 'don't know' responses.



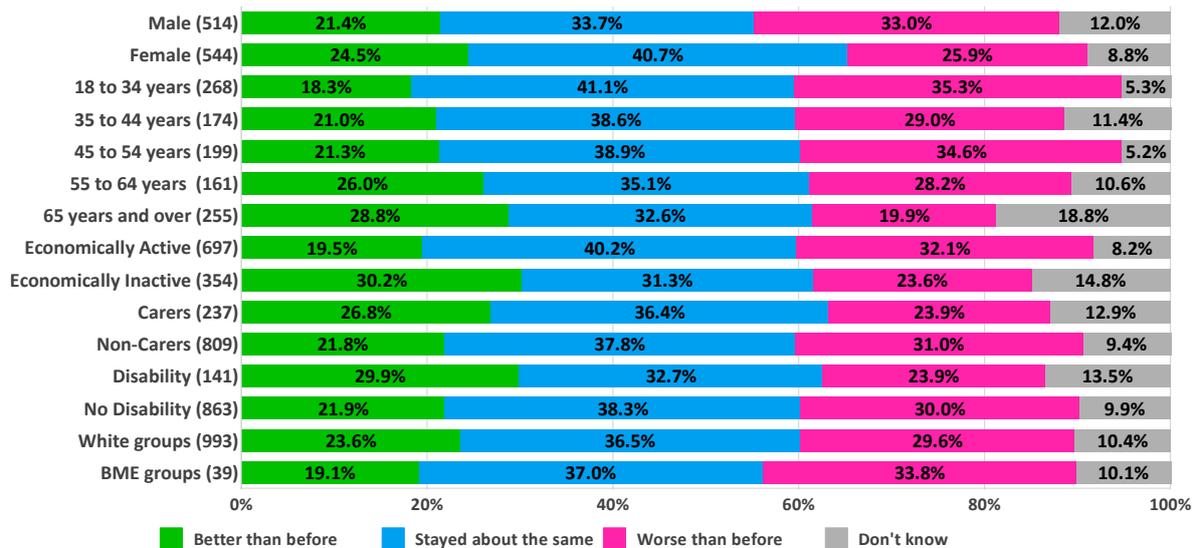
'Stayed about the same' was the most common response across all demographic groups.

Economically Active and Economically Inactive respondents had very different levels of response. Economically Active respondents had a greater proportion responding 'Worse than before' and 'Stayed about the same' at 32.1% and 40.2% respectively compared to the Economically Inactive who had 23.6% stating this behaviour was worse and 31.1% stating it was mostly unchanged. Economically Inactive respondents were more likely than Economically Inactive respondents to stay 'Don't know' and 'Better than before'.

Male respondents had a greater proportion stating 'worse than before', with a third answering this way compared to a quarter of female respondents. Whereas 40.7% females stated that this behaviour had 'Stayed about the same' compared to 33.7% of male respondents answering the same way.

Respondents age 18 to 34 years had the greatest proportion stating that this behaviour has gotten worse in the last three years at 35.3%. Respondents aged 65 years and over had the lowest proportion across the age groups responding this way, significantly so compared to the other age groups.

Respondents with a disability were more positive than their counterparts, 29.9% of respondents with a disability answered 'Better than before' compared to 21.9% of respondents without a disability.



Other behaviours witnessed in Maidstone Town Centre

There was a total of 516 unique comments submitted by respondents in relation to behaviours they have witnessed in Maidstone Town Centre.

Alcohol & Drinking

“Drunk and rowdy behaviour in the day and at night.”

A total of 211 respondents commented that they had witnessed drunk people swearing and being rowdy and loud. They also commented that they had witnessed drunk people exhibiting aggressive and abusive behaviour, as well as fighting and violence.

Some people stated that they felt intimidated and unsafe due to people drinking or being drunk in public. Several commenters mentioned seeing drunk people sleeping outside, and others mentioned seeing a lot of rough sleepers and homeless people drinking alcohol or appearing drunk. There were also mentions of having witnessed drunk people begging.

“Groups loitering drinking alcohol and smoking in public parks.”

Respondents mentioned that they had witnessed people drinking in parks. Many commenters referred to Brenchley Gardens, Jubilee Square, Week Street and Archbishops Palace Gardens as being areas that were particularly affected by drinking/drunkenness.

“Violent teenagers as a result of drinking alcohol on the streets.”

Some people highlighted that litter was produced by people drinking in public, while others mentioned that they had seen public urination. Multiple respondents stated that large groups of people drink in public. Some people commented that they had seen young people and teenagers drink in public.

Shouting and Rowdy behaviour

There were 150 commenters that stated they had witnessed rowdiness and antisocial behaviour, such as shouting, swearing and arguments in public. Many of these attributed this behaviour to alcohol consumption. Here commenters described witnessing random people being shouted at in public or verbal altercations they have experienced when visiting the Town Centre.

"Groups of people gathering early evening in the town Centre being rowdy and disrespectful"

Illegal Substances (Drugs)

"People dealing drugs, syringes in doorways"

There were 131 comments that mentioned illegal substances. Here many respondents commented that they could regularly smell drugs being used and multiple people stated that drugs were openly being used and sold.

Commenters mentioned having witnessed fighting and swearing among drug users and that there were mentions of Jubilee Square and Brenchley Gardens being hotspots for drug use. Other people mentioned that they had witnessed people using drugs in car parks.

"Jubilee Square has become the place the drug addicts and drunks frequent, this area is intimidating when children are present"

Two people mentioned that they had seen drug paraphernalia in the street.

Intimidating groups

119 People made comments about intimidating groups. Here people mentioned several different demographic groups including men, teenagers, rough sleepers, immigrants, drunken people and middle-aged people.

Several places were mentioned in the Town Centre where 'intimidating groups' gather, including Brenchley Gardens, Week Street and Jubilee Square

Begging

There were 95 comments that mentioned begging. Here some mentioned they believe begging in the Town Centre is increasing. Some mentioned that they had witnessed people begging in aggressive and intimidating ways.

"Different men begging outside and to the side of Sainsbury's. Is very of putting and intimidating"

In terms of locations multiple people mentioned having seen begging occurring outside Sainsbury's and in the bus station.

"I have seen more homeless persons and beggars in the last 3 years than the 3 years prior to that"

There were also a couple of comments about professional or fake beggars, who were making an income from this activity and several people concerned about the welfare of those begging on the streets.

Rough Sleeping

71 people made comments referring to rough sleepers in the Town Centre. Here many commenters mentioned that they had witnessed rough sleepers and homeless people begging, some mentioned that they had seen rough sleepers and homeless people being aggressive and arguing or fighting and some respondents mentioned having witnessed rough sleepers and homeless people sleeping in shop entrances and doorways. There were also comments that referred rough sleepers drinking or appearing drunk.

"Arguing/fighting among obviously drunk rough sleepers near queen's monument"

"There still appears to be lots of rough sleeps in the town Centre, around near Sainsburys and around where Santander is"

Commenters referred to Brenchley Gardens, outside Sainsbury's, Jubilee Square and by the river as particular hotspots for rough sleepers.

There were conflicting comments about the numbers of people sleeping rough in Maidstone with some stating it had increased and other stating it had decreased. There were also several comments that expressed concern for the welfare of rough sleepers querying what support was provided.

Violent/aggressive/threatening behaviours (69 comments in total)

There were 69 comments that referred to violent or aggressive behaviour. Here commenters mentioned that they had seen people being aggressive and engaging in arguments and fights. Some commenters stated they had seen people exhibiting abusive, harassing and threatening behaviours. Many of these commenters linked this behaviour with alcohol consumption.

gangs, attacks & stabbings & anti-social behaviour

Areas of concern that were mentioned included Brenchley Gardens, Jubilee Square, Marsham Street, by Maidstone East and at the junction of Week Street and Brewer Street.

Other behaviours

There were also people that mentioned other behaviours they have witnessed in the Town Centre including:

- 28 comments highlighted littering levels
- 28 comments mentioned cyclists (mostly young people riding dangerously)
- 15 comments mentioned charity collectors (chuggers) acting in a harassing manner
- 13 comments mentioned spitting

There were also 67 other comments about behaviours witnessed. These included mentions of people carrying knives, theft and pick pocketing, dog control issues, buskers and anti-social music as well as public urination, smoking, unauthorised angling and cars in pedestrian areas.

General Comments

There were 62 general comments. Respondents did not provide details of a specific behaviour but expressed about how they felt about the Town Centre. Many comments mentioned avoiding coming to the Town Centre and other mentioned feeling unsafe. There were also some comments about the amount of drinking establishments.

"The above behaviours need to be restricted and policed to make people feel safe when in the Centre and not intimidated!"

Several respondents said that the Council should be addressing the underlying issues while on the other hand, some respondents felt that these behaviours needed to be policed and that more police officers are needed.

Comments about visiting Maidstone Town Centre

There were 516 unique comments from respondents regarding visiting Maidstone Town Centre.

"The town should be improved for all people. It has a feeling of withering on the vine."

There were 91 general negative comments, these commenters expressed they thought that Maidstone was deteriorating, needed improvement or that it was not a place that they enjoyed visiting. Other shopping areas such as Ashford, Bluewater and Canterbury were also mentioned as being more preferable to visit. There were also some comments that were negative about specific areas of the Town Centre including Brenchley Gardens and the junction of Brewer Street and Week Street.

There were also 86 comments from people stating that they avoided visiting Maidstone Town Centre, or tried not to go there unless necessary. Many of these referred to rowdy behaviour as putting them off, some stated that it was not a family friendly place.

There were 67 comments that mentioned feeling unsafe.

In terms of reasons for these feeling:

- 48 mentioned alcohol and drunkenness
- 40 mentioned drug taking or dealing
- 35 mentioned cleanliness (dirty/litter)
- 34 mentioned the shopping offer in Maidstone
- 33 mentioned begging
- 31 mentioned ASB (shouting, fighting, harassment, intimidation)
- 31 mentioned parking and 15 mentioned traffic e.g congestion
- 25 mention homelessness or rough sleeping
- 21 mentioned groups of people (gangs)
- 19 mention charity collectors (Chuggers)
- 9 mention cyclists (riding dangerously)
- 7 mention facilities e.g toilets
- 5 mention buskers

There were 10 comments that mentioned the need for more policing in the Town Centre or commented that they had never seen this enforced.

There were 60 generally positive comments about visiting the Town Centre. Here respondents stated they thought it was a good place to visit, that they haven't seen or experience any poor behaviour when visiting and that it was showing signs of improvement.

Generally, I have seen an improvement in street cleanliness and general behaviour in the town.

There were 23 comments that have been categorised as 'other'. Here respondents said that there should be more support for individuals to prevent these types of behaviours, other considered that Maidstone was no different from other similar sized towns. There were also several comments about the Town Centre not having a community feel. There were also a

few comments on investment in the Town Centre with one stating there should be more and the other stating the resurfacing project should have considered the river.

In this section there was also mention of some other behaviours with people mentioning graffiti increasing, illegal cars using the High Street and spitting.

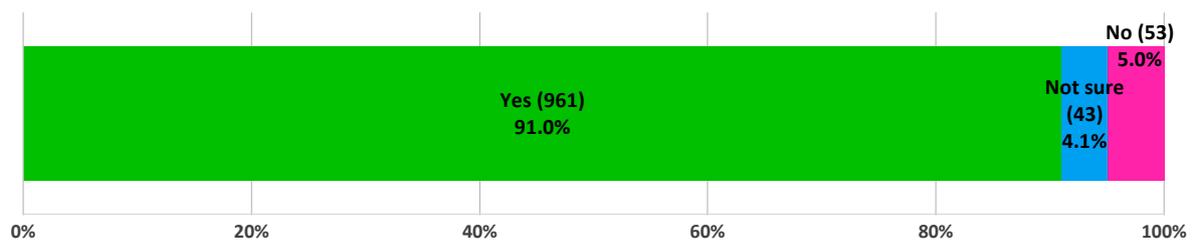
Measure 1 – Street drinking in an anti-social manner.

The current PSPO prohibits the drinking of alcohol within the specified area, where their behaviour as a result of consuming alcohol, affects the quality of life to those who live, work in or visit the area, other than within the curtilage of public houses or licensed premises. The area covered includes streets, green spaces and other public areas in the Town Centre PSPO area.

A person seen to be consuming alcohol in this area is in breach of the Order. An authorised officer will in the first instance explain to them that they are in a No Alcohol Zone and request them to stop drinking the alcohol and/or ask them to surrender alcohol in open containers. If the same person is seen consuming alcohol again within a reasonable time in a No Alcohol Zone after having already been advised and warned, a Fixed Penalty Notice will be issued to them.

Survey respondents were asked if they were in favour of renewing measure 1 as described above.

Overall, there were 1056 weighted responses to this question. The most common response was 'Yes' with 961 responding this way.

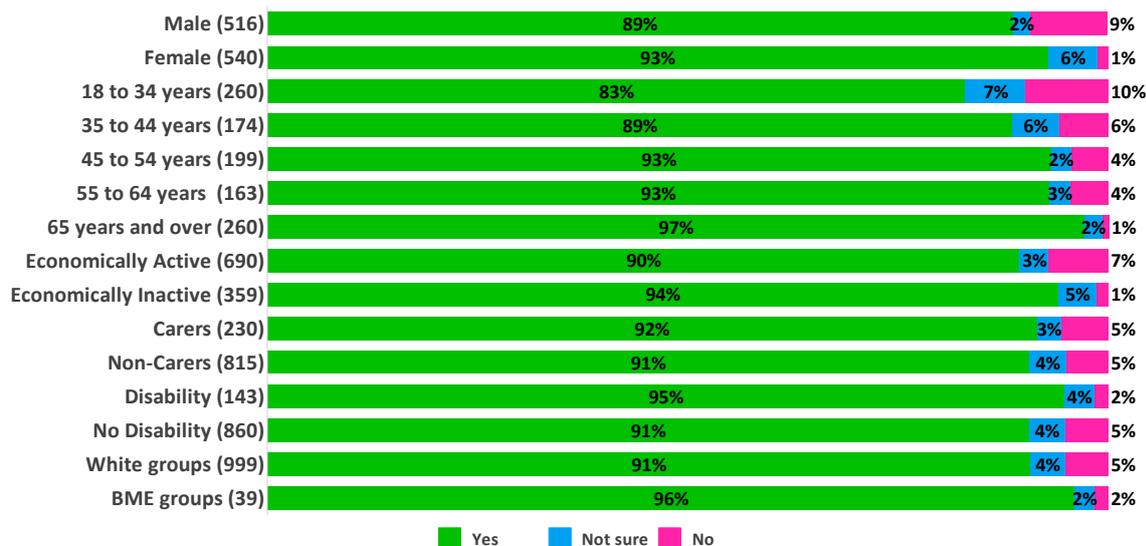


The majority of respondents across all demographic groups were in favour of renewing measure 1, street drinking in an anti-social manner. However, there are some differences in the way some groups responded.

Male respondents had a lower level of agreement compared to female respondents with 88.8% agreeing to renew this measure compared to 93.0% female respondents. Female respondents had a greater proportion responding 'Don't know' at 5.9% compared to 2.1% of male respondents.

The data suggests that agreement with this measure increases with age. The 18 to 34 years group had the lowest proportion agreeing to renew this measure at 83.1% and the 65 years over group had the greatest level of agreement at 97.3%.

Economically Inactive respondents had a greater proportion agreeing that this measure should be renewed with 94.2% responding this way compared to 89.6% of Economically Active respondents.



Measure 1 Comments

A total of 307 unique comments were submitted in relation to measure 1.

Enforcement

There were 62 comments that mentioned enforcement. Here some people felt that the police were needed to enforce the rules, and others felt that there are not enough personnel or resources to enforce the rules.

“The restrictions need to be enforced more strictly otherwise what is the point of having them”

Some respondents were concerned that it would be difficult to enforce and others wondered who would enforce it. Additionally, some commenters stated that they had never seen it enforced. Many people commented that it should be enforced more strictly and some respondents felt that a zero-tolerance approach should be applied.

Go further

There were 62 comments that suggested that this measure should go further or have a wider scope.

Some people commented that the Council should issue stricter penalties/punishments and one respondent said people should be arrested rather than issued an FPN. Additionally, some commenters felt that the Council should apply a zero-tolerance policy.

“We need a zero tolerance to trouble makers and banning orders for persistent antisocial behaviour”

Many people commented that the No Alcohol Zone should be extended to other areas, while some people said that there should be a complete ban on drinking alcohol anywhere outside. One person stated that the No Alcohol Zone should apply to drugs and legal highs as well.

Another commenter felt that the Council should start taking action against pubs that serve people who are already drunk.

In favour of measure 1

There were 47 comments that were positive about or in favour of renewing measure 1. Some respondents said that the measure was fair and sensible, others stated that it would improve the Town Centre in the following ways:

- It would become open to more people
- It would be safer
- People would feel less intimidated
- The environment would be better
- The atmosphere would be better
- There would be less crime

"This will make Maidstone a better place to live and visit"

Query impact

There were 38 comments that queried the impact of measure 1. Multiple respondents doubted whether No Alcohol Zones have any impact or queried the effectiveness of the measure. Some respondents commented that we should not issue FPNs because they do not work citing other social issues are being a barrier.

"I don't think fixed penalty notices help anyone. By all means have a no alcohol zone, but there must be a more enlightened way of policing it"

Some of the commenters felt that the Council should tackle the underlying problem and provide support to people, rather than penalise them.

"The problem is pushed outwards into local parks"

Ten of the comments in this category mentioned displacement of the issue, concerned that the measure would just move the issue elsewhere and that once intoxicated, the person could still move back into the Town Centre and cause problems.

General comments

There were 33 general comments that stated that the problem was worse at night and early in the morning.

Some people stated that more signage or advertising of the zones was needed, some commenters didn't know there was a No Alcohol Zone.

"More people need to be made aware that this exists and enforced better - as a young adult in Maidstone I have never heard of this or seen it enforced"

Alcohol as a catalyst for poor behaviour

There were 28 comments where respondents suggested said that drinking alcohol lead to poor behaviours like:

- Begging
- Fighting and violence
- Littering
- Verbal abuse
- Loitering
- Noise

Problems in specific locations (19 comments in total)

There were 19 respondents that highlighted particular locations as being hotspots for this type of behaviour. These included:

- Trinity Park
- Brenchley Gardens
- Week Street
- Whatman Park
- Archbishop's Palace
- By the river
- Jubilee Square

Measure 2: Deterring unauthorised collections of money on the street or loitering for such purpose (persistent begging)

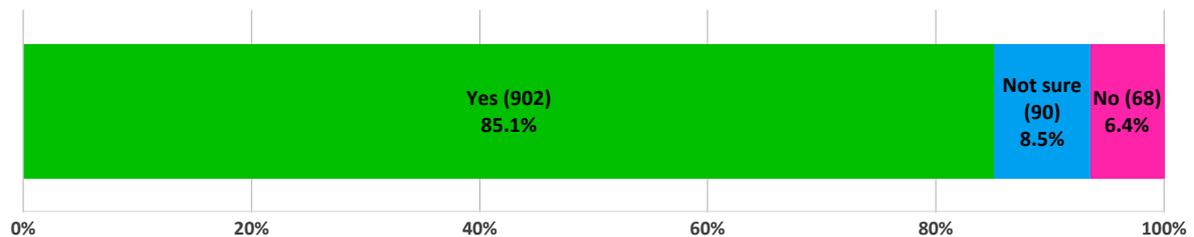
The current PSPO means that no one is able to make verbal, non-verbal or written requests for money or financial donations unless they are authorised e.g. authorised charity collections, within the Town Centre PSPO area.

We try to avoid giving fines for begging to those who are genuinely homeless and instead offer support.

Action will be taken against persons found begging who are in accommodation and in receipt of benefits and in breach of the Town Centre PSPO or where the measure is persistently breached. FPNs are only considered where they are appropriate, and most discharges will be through the Magistrate's Courts where further requirements will be requested to support the individual.

Survey respondents were asked if they were in favour of renewing measure 2 as described above.

Overall, there were 1060 weighted responses to this question, the most common response was 'Yes' with 902 responding this way.

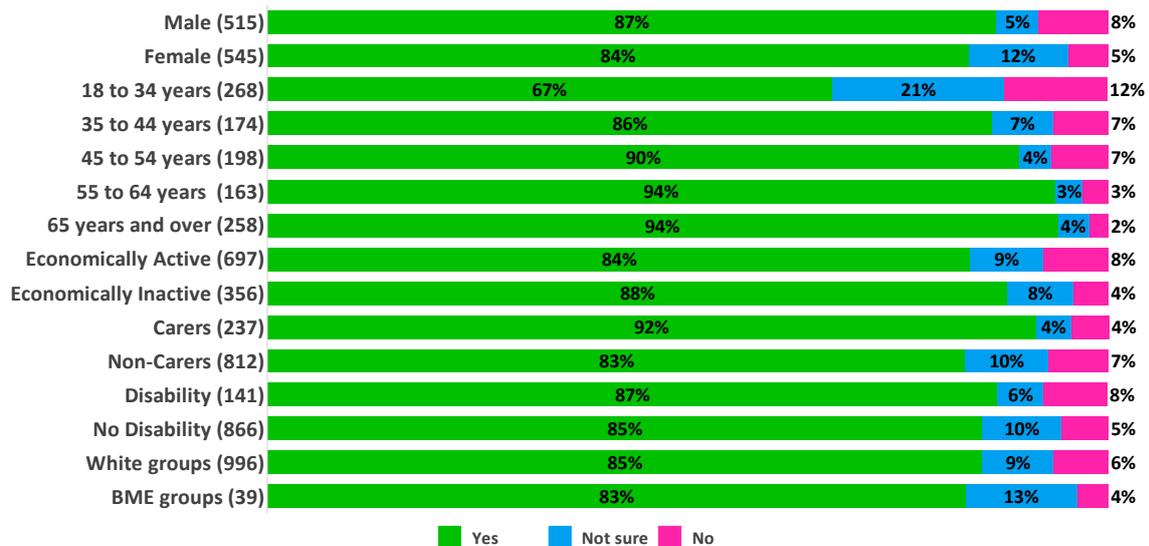


Just over one in ten female respondents were uncertain about renewing this measure compared to one in twenty male respondents, this is a significant difference in response levels between these two groups.

Agreement with this measure increases with age. While the proportion responding, 'Not sure' and 'No' for the age groups 35 years and over is consistent with the overall result, one in five respondents, aged 18 to 34 years, responded 'Not sure', significantly greater than the other age groups. More than one in ten answered 'No' also significantly greater than the overall result.

Carer respondents had a greater proportion answering 'Yes' at 91.5% compared to non-carers with 83.1%. Almost one in ten non-carers answered 'Not sure' compared to one in twenty respondents that identified themselves as carers.

Measure 2 by demographic group



Measure 2 Comments

A total of 311 unique comments were submitted in relation to measure 2.

Provide support

There were 64 comments from respondents that expressed that the Council should provide more support to those who were homeless, sleeping rough, have no income, or have addiction issues or have mental health issues. This was the most common theme for the comments relating to this measure.

"If people have no income and no place to live they need help, not to be publicly humiliated or treated as a nuisance"

Some commenters felt that we should invest money in services and charities that can provide people with support.

Charity Collectors / Chuggers

"I find the charity collectors are the worst offenders in this, they are very persistent often rude and will follow you down the street! I would like to see these removed from town!"

There were 51 comments that mentioned charity collectors or chuggers. Many respondents commented that the measure should include "chuggers" because they were rude, persistent, intimidating and a nuisance, and they used aggressive, intrusive, harassing, and high-pressure techniques.

Some people stated that they found "chuggers" annoying and off-putting and they make them feel uncomfortable.

Multiple people commented that Week Street is a particular hotspot for "chuggers", however one person felt that the number of "chuggers" has been reduced.

In favour of the measure 2

I agree that this measure is useful for tackling 'professional beggars' that are not homeless. I fully support longer term resolution and support for those genuinely in need and the Street Population team have taken good steps towards this.

There were 31 comments in which people expressed support for measure 2, stating that it was acceptable, useful, reasonable and needed. Some people said that aggressive begging needs to be addressed, while one commenter said that this measure would be

useful for addressing issue of professional beggars. One respondent stated that all begging and money collections should be stopped.

"I believe that street musicians, if not included in the order, should be as I see this as a form of begging. If allowed under a license then there should also be a restrictions on the level of sound / decibels"

Intimidated (22 comments in total)

Comments in which people expressed feeling harassed by people begging. Some stated they felt frightened or by people asking for money, while some commenters they had experienced verbal abuse, and aggressive behaviour.

"Beggars are intimidating and often get abusive if you do not give cash"

Queries the impact

"It is hard to know the whole picture, even if someone is in accommodation and receiving benefits. I am unsure on rules such as this as it seems to be a very case by case basis - would anyone really be a 'professional beggar' if they had better alternatives?"

Comments from people querying the impact that this measure would have. Here stated that FPNs wouldn't work because people couldn't afford to pay them, comment felt that, as long as there were homeless people and rough sleepers with issues, begging can never be stopped completely.

that there was no one to enforce the measure. Others commented that it would because it was not easy to determine who was really homeless and in need of to be looked at on a case-by-case basis.

Buskers (14 comments in total)

There were 14 comments relating to street entertainment or buskers. Here some people commented that buskers add to the atmosphere in the Town Centre while others said there were too many or that they were too loud. Some said that they enjoyed listening to buskers and would not want them to be restricted by the measure, other respondents felt that buskers should be included in the measure. Multiple people suggested that buskers should be given licences.

Specific people/incidents (14 comments in total)

There were 14 comments about specific people or incidents. One commenter stated that beggars approached people who looked vulnerable, e.g. older people, younger people, people with children in prams. Some people mentioned that Sainsbury's, the bus station and Week Street were hotspots for beggars.

Off-putting

There were ten comments that mention that

"It can be very off putting visiting the town and trying to avoid these people, some are very persistent and even try to follow you up the road"

being asked for money was off-putting, awkward and makes them feel nervous.

Other themes

- Opposed to renewing measure 2 – 4 comments
- Measure should be harsher – 9 comments
- Begging is increasing – 7 comments
- Spend on alcohol and drugs – 5 comments

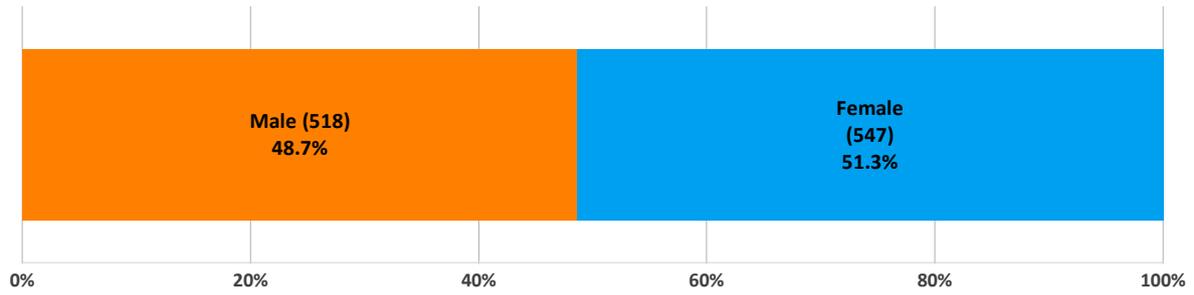
Other Comments (25 comments in total)

25 comments have been categorised as other these included several people who felt that the situation had improved in recent years as well as a number of suggestions including:

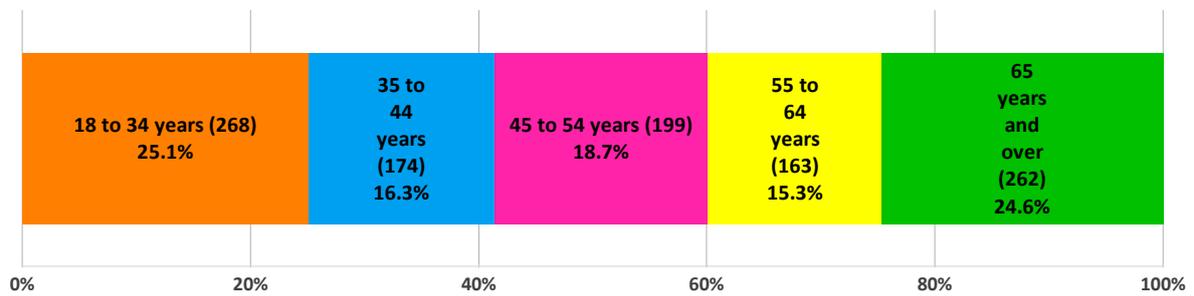
- Tea and coffee vouchers
- Clear signage to inform people
- Extending the measure to outside the Town Centre
- Scheme to give food/money through local business

Demographics (Weighted)

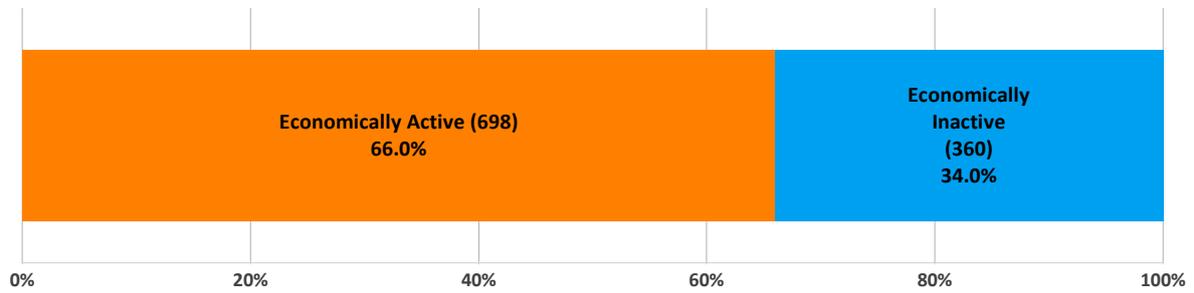
Gender



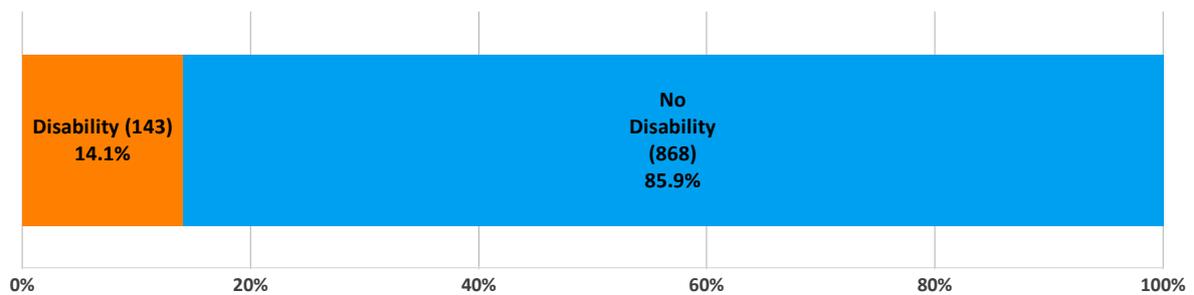
Age



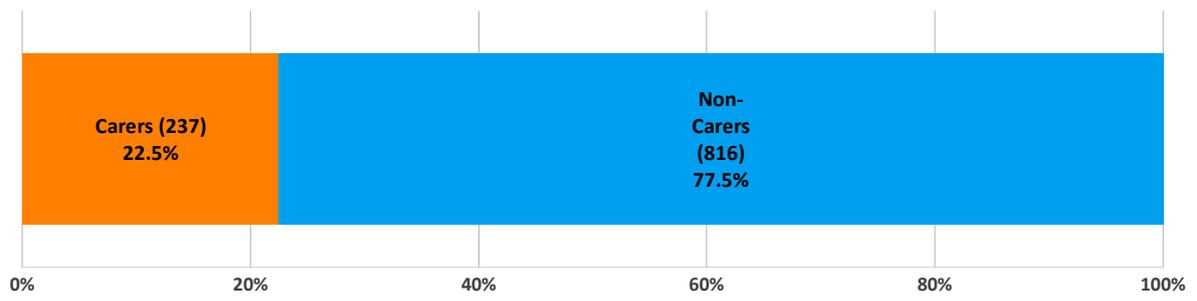
Economic Activity



Disability



Carers



Ethnicity

