



Knowsley Consultation concerning Station Mergers – results from Feedback Surveys

This is an unpublished work, the Copyright in which vests in Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service. All rights reserved. The information contained herein is the property of Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service, and is supplied without liability for errors or omissions. No part may be reproduced or used except as authorised by Contract or other written permission. The Copyright and the foregoing restriction on reproduction and use extend to all media in which information may be embodied ©

STRATEGY & PERFORMANCE

Date work received: 17/07/2014
Date work completed: 05/08/2014

Page 1 of 13

c:\moderngov\data\published\Internet\C00000142\M00000562\A100001337\Suzenrjj.docx

Document Control

Amendment History

| Version / Issue No. | Date | Author | Remarks / Reason for Change |
|---------------------|------------|------------|-----------------------------|
| 1.0 | 05/08/2014 | J Fielding | |
| 1.1 | 05/08/2014 | J Fielding | Amends as per D Appleton |

Sign-Off List

| Name | Position |
|--------------|---|
| Deb Appleton | Director of Strategy & Performance |
| Wendy Kenyon | Equality & Diversity Manager |
| Paul Terry | Corporate Information & Systems Manager |
| | |
| | |

Distribution List

| Name | Position | I / R |
|------|----------|-------|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

Related Documents

| Reference No. | Title | Author | Version & Date |
|---------------|-------|--------|----------------|
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

Ownership

Has it been agreed with the client that this is a publicly owned document?
Yes/No

If Yes please state URL:

If No please state reason why:

| | | |
|------------|---------------------------------------|-----------|
| 1. | AGREEMENT | 4 |
| 2. | SUMMARY | 5 |
| 3. | INTRODUCTION | 5 |
| 4. | METHODOLOGY | 6 |
| 5. | RESULTS | 7 |
| 5.1 | Responding to the Survey | 7 |
| 5.2 | Monitoring Information | 9 |
| 6. | APPENDICES | 12 |

1. Agreement

For the purpose of this report the following agreement was made between the client and the Strategy & Performance Function.

This work was requested by Deb Appleton, Director of Strategy & Performance and received on 17/07/2014.

The Manager¹ has approved this report/ piece of work can be undertaken by the Strategy & Performance Function.

If the scope of the work changes, authorisation must be again obtained and would be noted within the version control document sheet.

It was agreed that this report would be produced in draft format by 08/08/2014, and would be sent electronically to the Director of Strategy & Performance and Client for comment.

The Manager / Client agreed that their comments would be received back by 08/08/2014.

The final report, which will always be in PDF format, would be produced by August 2014, subject to receiving comments.

¹ Deb Appleton

2. Summary

The purpose of this report is to provide high level analysis of feedback following community consultation within Knowsley regarding the potential mergers of the Whiston and Huyton stations.

In summary the report presents the following high level findings:

- In total there were 93 responses to the survey
- The majority of respondents (79.6%, 74 from 93) to the survey felt of that proposals put forward by Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority (MFRA) were reasonable, 17.2% (16 from 93) felt proposals were unreasonable and 3.2% (3 from 93) were undecided.
- Concerning comments submitted, many local partners were broadly in favour of the merger proposals. Though there were some members of the public who were in favour, there were comments about the impact of Governmental cuts as well as concerns about the proposed location on Manchester Road given its proximity to the Cables Retail Park.
- Based on the postcode submitted by 50 respondents, the vast majority of people that responded to the consultation survey were from the areas which will be most affected by the mergers; specifically the L34, L35 and L36 areas.
- Concerning **age** and **gender** 86 valid responses were analysed with 45 (52.3%) male respondents with 41 female (47.7%). Concerning age there was a wide distribution of ages to have responded to the survey with the 40-49 and 50-59 age groups being most common with 20 responses each.
- Of the 85 valid responses to the question concerning **disability**, 10 of the 85 (11.8%) declared they were disabled.
- Concerning ethnicity in combination 95.4% (82 from 86) of respondents were White with 2.4% being from a BME background.

3. Introduction

Background²

Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority (MFRA) are responsible for providing fire and rescue services for Merseyside's 1.4 million people. This currently includes delivering fire and rescue services from three community stations in Knowsley located at Kirkby, Huyton and Whiston.

Over the last four years MFRA has had to make savings of £20 million as a result of Government cuts. MFRA is required to make a further £6.3 million savings in 2015/16. It is possible that future savings required as a result of ongoing Government cuts might reach £9.1 million in 2016/17 and up to £20 million in total by 2020. We now need to make more changes to meet this new financial challenge.

² Taken from the MF&RS website:

<http://www.merseyfire.gov.uk/aspix/pages/LatestNews/NewsDetail.aspx?id=624>

MFRA has already had to make significant reductions in its support services and back office staff and the number of firefighters it employs has reduced from 1,400 to 764 with fire appliances reducing from 42 to 28. What has not changed in more than 20 years is the number of community fire stations (26) and this cannot continue in the future.

Mergers

To save £6.3 million the Authority has assumed it will be able to deliver £2.9 million from support services such as Finance, Human Resources and Estates management as well as technical areas such as debt financing. The remaining £3.4 million will have to come from our emergency response and this will require at least four station mergers or outright closures.

Three proposed mergers have been identified which offer an opportunity to replace old buildings with new facilities in locations which offer better incident coverage: 1. Huyton/Whiston at Prescott; 2. Upton/West Kirby at Greasby; 3. Eccleston/St Helens at St Helens Town Centre. The fourth merger would be in Liverpool but hasn't been identified yet.

In Knowsley, the proposal is to close Huyton and Whiston fire stations and build a new station at a site on Manchester Road, Prescott.

As part of this consideration twelve weeks public consultation took place from 6th May to the end of July 2014. From 9th May to 31st July a survey was available on the Merseyfire website and also in paper format at consultation events³. This report analyses feedback to provide an understanding of any issues identified by members of the public as well as a demographical analysis of who responded as a means of diversity monitoring.

The survey closed with a total of 93 responses.

4. Methodology

For the purpose of analysing the public's feedback and opinions on the merger of the Huyton and Whiston Station Grounds the following method was applied:

- An electronic survey was created using Snap 10 Survey Software which can be viewed in Appendix A
- The online survey was live: between the 9th May 2014 to 31st July 2014.
- Microsoft Excel 2010 was used to interpret results
- MapInfo 10.5 was used to provide an understanding of where respondents reside – based on postcodes submitted when the survey was completed.

³ <http://www.merseyfire.gov.uk/surveys/knowsleymerger.htm>

- Concerning comments, minor changes to spelling and grammar have been used for the sake of legibility. Otherwise comments are verbatim.
- Only valid (complete) responses are analysed within this report.

5. Results

5.1 Responding to the Survey

Question 1: Do you think the proposed merger of Huyton and Whiston fire stations at a new community fire and rescue station in Prescot is reasonable given the financial challenges faced by the Authority?

Table 1: Response to whether the planned merger is reasonable or not

| Response | Count | % |
|-------------|-------|-------|
| Yes | 74 | 79.6% |
| No | 16 | 17.2% |
| Don't Know | 3 | 3.2% |
| Grand Total | 93 | |

Table 1 identifies that the vast majority of respondents (79.6% or 74 from 93) felt that it was reasonable for Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority to merge the stations of Huyton and Whiston.

Question 2: If you answered "No", please use the box below to explain why you do not think the proposal is reasonable?

The following comments have been submitted by respondents who stated "No" in the previous question. The comments have been grouped by organisation i.e.: members of the public, MFRA staff, and external partners. Though 16 respondents stated "No" in the previous question, only 13 actual comments were submitted.

Table 2: Comments submitted by respondents

| Comments from MFRA Staff |
|---|
| Because you will cut the number of fire engines in half |
| Response times will be greater especially with the other 2 stations merging as well, if it had 2 machines at each station then yes it would probably be better due to them being new stations |
| Comments from members of the public |
| Because it will probably slow down responses on the long run |
| Every second counts when fire breaks out - says it all really stupid idea who ever thought of that life's more important than cash |
| I do not believe that there should be a reduction in the number of firefighters and a loss of jobs albeit by not replacing retiring staff. I also do not agree with the loss of stations in the Whiston area as this fire station has provided a vital service to the community over the years. How can the average response time be less if the fire station is further away and has more areas to cover? This does not make sense. |
| I do not think this proposal is reasonable in view of the way other cuts are being made and then money being found to build a Town Hall, expenses of local MP's etc. The money is in the budget but it is being unwisely spent. |
| Much too big an area to cover with one fire appliance. It is plainly obvious to anyone that the standard of fire cover will be a lot worse than present. The fire cover in Merseyside has already been drastically reduced; this plan will make matters worse for the residents of this area of Knowsley. Maybe alternative ways of saving money could be considered, such as a review of the management structure of the fire brigade. We are paying for fire engines, not managers. |
| People with be put out of work if the stations merge and that is not a good thing in this current climate. I am sure the decisions have already been made anyway. And people's opinions won't make any difference just like everything else. Prescot is the forgotten town anyway everything gets closed here baths leisure centre etc etc |

| |
|---|
| The more stations the better |
| The additional ATTENDANCE TIME is a dangerous prelude which can NOT be ignored. The mere fact that Whiston has a MAJOR HOSPITAL with a four figure sum of people at that location (More of in daytime with clinics), will have potential consequences should ALL of these mergers take effect. There will be a perceived increase in risk to life & property from the additional time because of the extra distance involved, which would also be further increased if either appliance is already in attendance elsewhere. |
| There will be costs involved in the building of new facilities and also cost for the loss of jobs which make me wonder how cost effective the proposals are. Whiston fire station has served the people well and I see no reason to justify the proposals. |
| We need more engines not less |
| We pay tax for proper fire cover. I do not agree with these cuts. |
| Why spend money on a new building when you're proposing "cutbacks" - I do believe this is an exercise to generate money profit from the sale because of the property location of the present station. The present fire station also has excellent main road links - unlike the speed humps/traffic calming at the proposed site at Manchester Road. With the present station near to the Ambulance Station at Whiston Hospital, emergency vehicles can be used in "Tandem" to manoeuvre through stationary traffic easier - instead of possibly all arriving in the same place in different directions. |
| I do not think that the proposal is reasonable in trying to save money due to the health and safety aspect in moving a few miles away will impede on travelling to any incidents will result in lives being lost. Closing two fire stations to open one station and the increases in additional housing being built in Huyton, Prescot and Whiston. I do not agree with Huyton or Whiston fire stations being closed. |

Question 3: If you would like to give us any more information:

The comments have been grouped by organisation i.e.: Members of the public, MFRA staff, and external partners. In total there were 30 additional comments made by respondents.

Table 3: Comments submitted by respondents

| Comments from Partner Organisations |
|---|
| in light of the financial position the Authority is working under, I believe we are getting a better service than we have today |
| Informative Clear Presentation - Thank you! |
| Sounds sensible solution as it retains adequate provision and response times. Merged stations provide opportunities for co-location/joint working. Against joint closing a station. Invest now into state of the art facilities for long term sustainability! Future proofing the system, essential |
| The Consultation attendance levels are irrelevant, given the comprehensive media coverage |
| Think it's acceptable regarding the cuts |

| Comments from members of the public |
|--|
| I don't think you can run two sites with only a few miles apart it is not cost effective! |
| I think the proposal will be an advantage, as long as we see the same level of response from the fire service. The "Merge" should be reviewed after a few years to make sure it was the best option for our community |
| I think this was very helpful and I learnt a lot |
| Makes sense to merge and have a central location in Prescot. Glad there are no compulsory redundancies for the well valued and appreciated service. This is definitely the best option under the circumstances. Important to keep the preventative side going. |
| Nice to see cuts sensibly made |
| Obviously the best option. Merseyside has a lot of stations within close vicinity. It makes sense to merger instead of just closing stations. MFRS should also make more use of cross border services. The government have messed about with the emergency services enough now time to stop. |
| Proposed merger beneficial due to current buildings at Whiston & Huyton - Whiston no room to redevelop but priority is protecting lives |
| Seems like a fair and reasonable proposal under prevailing circumstances. Would also suggest that nearby Cables Way would be a better location rather than the busy Hall Lane/Manchester Road junction. |
| Just that if incident rates would either stabilise or continue to decrease through one station compared to two and whether risk would be greater to have just one station |
| The site is perfect and the whole idea of the merge is an excellent idea, the roads of the proposal site will not be a problem with the response times. |
| The location of the station would disrupt local traffic too much. It is already busy, especially the police station end of Manchester Road. |
| Other Sites should be considered |

| |
|--|
| Location of proposed site is a concern. Emergency response from station is close to retail park and future proposal developments i.e. Home Bargains. |
| Assuming after the completion of the mergers has taken place; Both the Full time and retained appliance from 'PRESCOT' are attending an incident on the M57 in the early hours and St.Helen's also already attending a shout in the town (Not major incidents), should there be a 'PERSON'S REPORTED CALL' anywhere in the borough of St.Helen's or the south part of Knowsley (L34 & L35), we are looking at woefully inadequate RESPONSE TIMES with the limited resources available from the adjacent stations, namely OLD SWAN, KIRKBY, BELLE VALE & NEWTON LE WILLOWS. They are quite simply TOO FAR AWAY. |
| I am concerned about the impact of road alterations in connection with a new fire station on cyclists and pedestrians. The roundabout near to the Tesco petrol station is a nightmare to negotiate on a cycle and not easy for pedestrians and I would not like to see more cases of road layouts unfavourable to cyclists and pedestrians. |
| Unsure of the proposal of the second engine at Prescott being of a retained service. Would it give the same service that is given today? |
| Typing error should be number 2 not 3. Will the new fire station have also a police station? |
| Would like to come to St Helens event as postcode is Rainhill not Knowsley District |
| Fire and ambulance services should be merged like in the USA |
| Safety must come first |
| Paperwork that has been sent out had wrong information about percentages on it. I myself have seen no widespread correction of those misleading percentages. A disgraceful and underhand tactic. |
| How will this benefit anyone? We need businesses to boost Prescott not fire stations. Leave them where they are |
| Yet another vital Public Sector Service being attacked by the Coalition with its crazy cuts to the public Sector. I think under the huge financial struggle the service faces what alternative does the area have. |
| I would want the presentation [<i>prevention</i>] side of the fire service to be as protected as possible, due to the clear decrease in the number of incidents. I am worried also what action would be/could be taken if the number of incidents increases (in regards to property damage and RTC). |

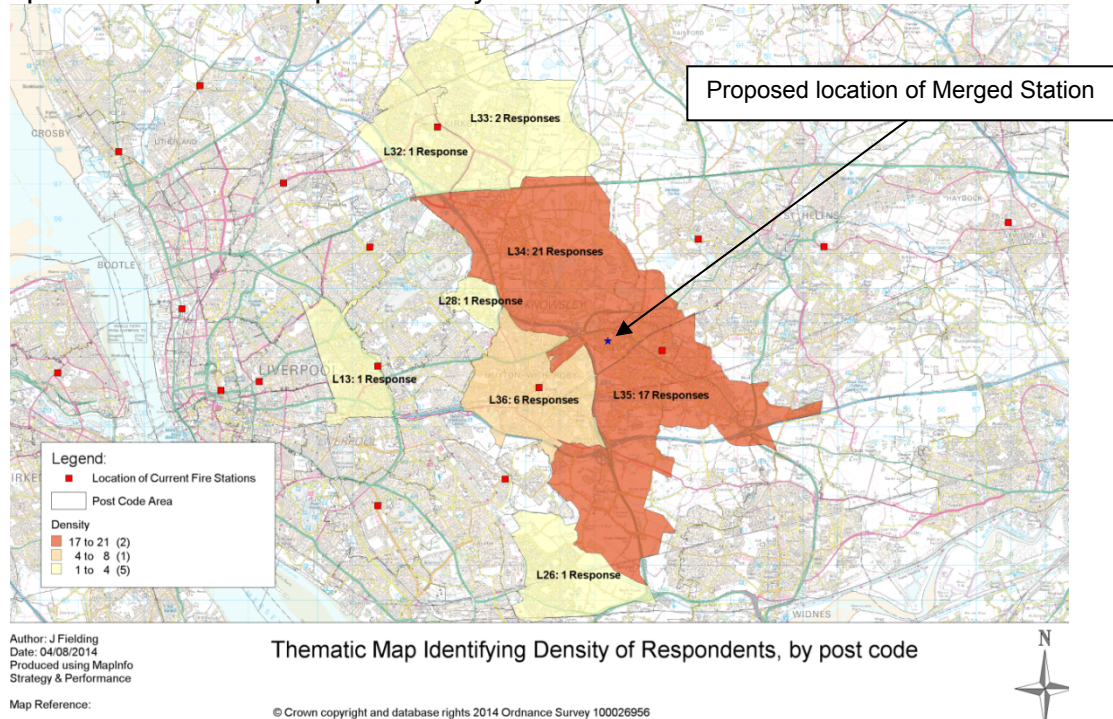
| |
|----------------------------|
| Unattached Comments |
| Site is wrong |

In summary there are several comments looking favourably at the proposed site and concept of the mergers, especially External Partners and some of the comments made by the public. There does appear to be some concern regarding the proposed location identifying the nearby Cables Retail Park as an area of possible conflict. Other comments range from merging the fire and ambulance services to criticising the national government regarding the level of public sector cuts.

5.2 Monitoring Information

Locality of Respondents

Map 1: Locations of respondents by Post Code area



Map 1 identifies where respondents to the consultation survey live. The map identifies that of the 50 people to have responded to this question the majority live in the neighbouring postcodes of L34 (21 responses) and L35 (17 responses) as well as L36 (6 responses). Therefore 44 of the 50 responses (88%) to this question hail from the areas primarily affected by the station mergers.

Disability and Age

Table 4: Disability against age

| Age Grouping | Yes | No | Prefer not to Say | Grand Total |
|--------------------|-----------|-----------|-------------------|-------------|
| 19 or younger | | 5 | | 5 |
| 20 - 29 | | 13 | | 13 |
| 30 - 39 | 2 | 11 | | 13 |
| 40 - 49 | | 16 | 2 | 18 |
| 50 - 59 | 2 | 17 | | 19 |
| 60 - 69 | 4 | 8 | | 12 |
| 70 - 79 | 2 | 2 | | 4 |
| Greater than 80 | | 1 | | 1 |
| Grand Total | 10 | 73 | 2 | 85 |

Table 4 contrasts the age of a respondent to whether they classified themselves as being disabled. The table identifies that of the 85 valid responses to this question; 10 (11.8%) considered themselves to be disabled with 73 (85.9%) not being disabled.

When broken down further it is apparent that the majority of respondents (8 of the 10) who consider themselves disabled are above the age 50. There were 2 respondents who recorded themselves as being disabled within the 30-39 age group.

When disability and gender are taken into consideration: 8 were male, 1 female and 1 where the respondent did not respond to the gender question.

Age and Gender

Chart 1: Respondents by Age and Gender

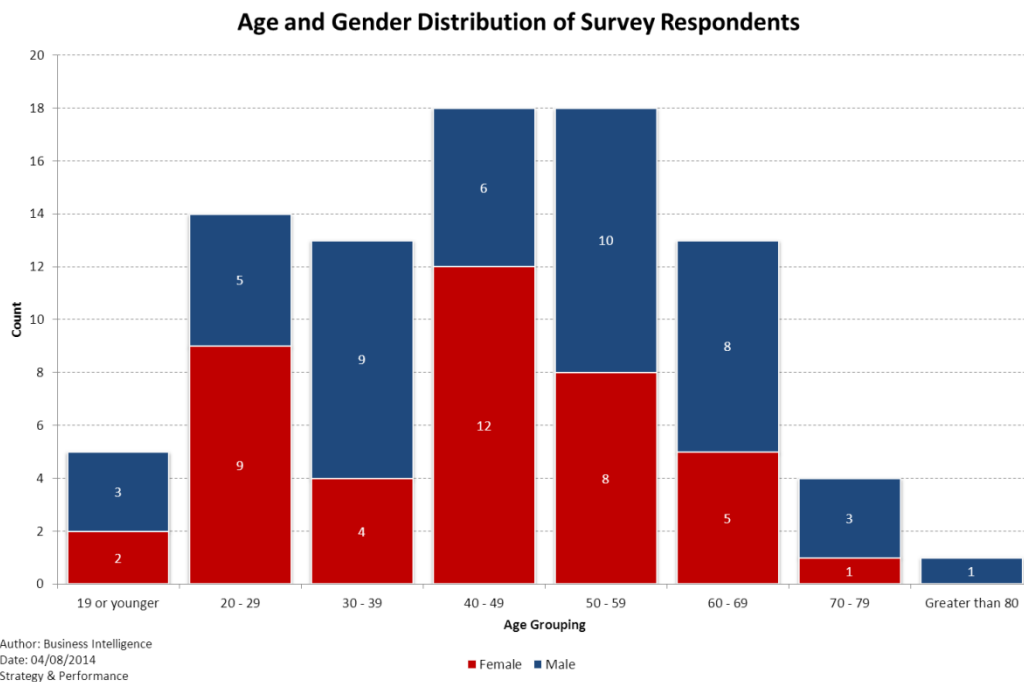


Chart 1 provides a breakdown of the ages and genders of people to have responded to the consultation Survey. Taking the responses into account there were 45 male responses and 41 female responses' equating to 52.3% of responses being from males and 47.7% being female.

When analysed by age group the most populous groups are the 40-49 and 50-59 age groups; with the 40-49 group having the highest single count of any gender with 12 female responses. In general the trend is that above the age group of 50-59 males tend to respond more, while the opposite is true for females.

In the case of the gender and age group questions there were a total of 86 valid responses this equates to 92.5% of the total potential responses to the survey.

Ethnic Background

Table 5: Ethnicity of respondents

| Ethnicity | Count | % |
|--|-----------|-------|
| White: English | 79 | 91.9% |
| White: Other White Background | 2 | 2.3% |
| White: Welsh | 1 | 1.2% |
| Asian or Asian British: Chinese | 1 | 1.2% |
| Asian or Asian British: Other Asian Background | 1 | 1.2% |
| Prefer not to say | 2 | 2.3% |
| Grand Total | 86 | |

Table 5 identifies that the majority of people who responded to the survey were from a white background with 95.4% (82 from 86 valid responses).

6. Appendices

Appendix A: Copy of the Survey Published on the Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service website

Huyton & Whiston Station Merger Public Consultation Questions

Our consultation newsletter outlines Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority's proposals to close Huyton and Whiston fire stations and replace them with a new community fire station at Prescot. The newsletter explains why we are proposing this change and how we would do it.

We are planning public meetings and other events during the twelve week consultation beginning on 7th May in order to fully understand the views of the public, stakeholders and other interested parties.

There is an opportunity for you to comment on the proposed changes online. The Fire and Rescue Authority will consider all the comments it receives before it makes any final decisions.

Please note this survey should take no longer than 5 minutes to complete.

1. Do you think the proposed merger of Huyton and Whiston fire stations at a new community fire and rescue station in Prescot is reasonable given the financial challenges faced by the Authority?
 Yes
 No
 Don't Know
2. If you answered "No", please use the box below to explain why you do not think the proposal is reasonable:

3. If you would like to give us any more information, please use the box below:

Monitoring Information

Please note that information collected within this section is for monitoring purposes - no personal identifiable information will be collated.

Are you a member of: Please tick the appropriate box

- Public
- Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service Staff
- Partner Organisation

What is the first part of your post code: (for example L34)

Your Gender:

- Male
- Female

Your Age: Please tick the appropriate box

- 19 or younger
- 20 - 29
- 30 - 39
- 40 - 49
- 50 - 59
- 60 - 69
- 70 - 79
- Greater than 80

Do you consider yourself to have a disability? Please tick the appropriate box

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to Say

How would you describe your ethnic origin?

Please tick the appropriate box

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> White: English | <input type="checkbox"/> Mixed / Multiple Ethnic Background: Other Mixed / multiple background |
| <input type="checkbox"/> White: Welsh | <input type="checkbox"/> Asian or Asian British: Indian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> White: Scottish | <input type="checkbox"/> Asian or Asian British: Pakistani |
| <input type="checkbox"/> White: Northern Irish | <input type="checkbox"/> Asian or Asian British: Bangladeshi |
| <input type="checkbox"/> White: Irish | <input type="checkbox"/> Asian or Asian British: Chinese |
| <input type="checkbox"/> White: Gypsy or Traveller | <input type="checkbox"/> Asian or Asian British: Other Asian Background |
| <input type="checkbox"/> White: Other White Background | <input type="checkbox"/> Black or Black British: Caribbean |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mixed / Multiple Ethnic Background: White & Black Caribbean | <input type="checkbox"/> Black or Black British: African |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mixed / Multiple Ethnic Background: White & Black African | <input type="checkbox"/> Black or Black British: Other Black Background |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mixed / Multiple Ethnic Background: White & Asian | <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say |

Other ethnic group (please state)

Thank you for Comments, please click submit to continue