

Exe Estuary Management Partnership & South East Devon Habitat Regulations Partnership Voluntary Exclusion Zones Consultation April 2017

How we did the consultation

A formal online questionnaire was devised. The intention of the questionnaire is to gather in people's text comments in a more structured way, rather than to find out percentages of people that would be affected by the proposals.

The questionnaire was publicised widely using press releases, social media publicity and was sent out to those on the Exe Estuary Management Partnership database. Paper copies of the questionnaire were made available on request.

We received 222 completed questionnaires.

Summary of results

222 completed questionnaires were returned. The following needs bearing in mind when looking at the results:

- At least 59% were from people who were predominantly sailors, canoers, stand up paddleboarders, kayakers, wind surfers and kite surfers, and gig rowers – non-engine powered activities on the water.
- 10% were from people who were predominantly birdwatchers and conservationists.
- Only 1% were from people who were predominantly fishermen, bait collectors, shellfish collectors, sandeel fishermen, crab tilers, wildfowlers.

In the last 12 months this is how respondents had used the Exe Estuary:

- 59% for sailing
- 46% for walking / jogging / running
- 35% for birdwatching
- 35% for canoeing / kayaking / stand up paddleboarding
- 24% for dog walking
- 24% as a visitor to or customer of an Exe Estuary business

Exmouth Voluntary Exclusion Zone Benefits

12% of respondents stated the proposed Voluntary Exclusion Zone at Exmouth would have benefits for them or their organisation. Of those that said it would be of benefit:

- The benefits were mainly because it would minimise disturbance to very important roosting and feeding sites for birds and people would get more enjoyment from bird and wildlife watching.
- When asked how the proposals could be improved to provide more benefits the two most common answers were that the VEZ should be enforced, and that it should apply for longer periods of time.

Exmouth Voluntary Exclusion Zone Problems

73% of respondents stated the proposed Voluntary Exclusion Zone at Exmouth would have problems for them or their organisation. The comments below are from those who felt it would cause them problems.

Of those that said it would be a problem, by far the most common comment was that it would make it far too dangerous for them as they'd have to use the narrow main channel with fast flowing currents, stronger winds, more and larger water traffic. Most talked about it being too dangerous for kayaks, gigs, canoes, small sailcraft, dinghies in the fast flowing currents.

The other most common comments were, in order, with the most common comment at the top:

- There will be less space and freedom to do my on water based activities.
- We don't really disturb birds and wildlife with our non-engine powered activity based on the water (most talked about small sailcraft, dinghies, canoes and kayaks).
- There'll be nowhere for novices and beginners to train and practice their chosen activity on the water.
- There is no / very little credible evidence for the reasons behind the proposals.

When asked how the proposals could be improved to decrease the problems the most common comments, in order, with the most common comment at the top:

- Abandon your proposals.
- Allow non-engine powered craft into the Voluntary Exclusion Zone (as they don't have much / any effect on wildlife).
- Have the Voluntary Exclusion Zone in place only when the tide is low.
- Ensure there's enough safe, usable area outside the Voluntary Exclusion Zone / reduce the proposed size (some commented that the Southernmost area should be removed from the proposals).

Dawlish Warren Voluntary Exclusion Zone Benefits

11% of respondents stated the proposed Voluntary Exclusion Zone at Dawlish Warren would have benefits for them or their organisation. Of those that said it would be of benefit they said that was mainly because it would minimise disturbance to very important roosting and feeding sites for birds and people would get more enjoyment from bird and wildlife watching.

Dawlish Warren Voluntary Exclusion Zone Problems

70% of respondents stated the proposed Voluntary Exclusion Zone at Dawlish Warren would have problems for them or their organisation. The comments below are from those who felt it would cause them problems.

Of those that said it would be a problem, most said it will make it too dangerous for them as they'll have to use the small main channel with fast flowing currents / stronger winds / more traffic / with the wake of powered craft / won't be able to get out the way of larger craft. Most talked about small sailcraft, dinghies, canoes, kayaks and many mentioned it would be impossible to go against the current in the main channel.

The other most common comments were, in order, with the most common comment at the top:

- There will be less space and freedom to do my on water based activities.
- We don't really disturb birds and wildlife with our non-engine powered activity based on the water (most talked about small sailcraft, dinghies, canoes and kayaks).
- There is no / very little credible evidence for the reasons behind the proposals.
- There'll be less safe spaces for people doing on water activities to go if they're in trouble or need a rest.

When asked how the proposals could be improved to decrease the problems, the most common comments were, in order, with the most common comment at the top:

- Ensure there's enough safe, usable area outside the Voluntary Exclusion Zone / reduce the proposed size (some gave specific comments about which areas should be removed and how much buffer there should be).
- Abandon your proposals.
- Allow non-engine powered craft into the Voluntary Exclusion Zone (as they don't have much / any effect on wildlife).
- Have the Voluntary Exclusion Zone in place only when the tide is low.

Other comments

There were a wide variety of comments. The three most common comments were, in order, with the most common comment at the top:

- The research provided doesn't support the proposals / there is no evidence for the proposals / the research provided is flawed.
- Engage with all estuary users more openly and effectively / we have the knowledge that you don't have, so involve users / information given as part of the consultation was inadequate or misleading.
- Most non-engine powered craft shouldn't be included in the exclusion zone, we have no impact on birds (canoes, kayaks, dinghies).

Full results

1. Which one of the following best describes the capacity in which you are completing the questionnaire:

Capacity	Percentage of respondents - %
A sailor	36
A canoer / kayaker / stand up paddleboarder	15
Other	10
A local resident	9
A birdwatcher	7
A powerboat user / waterskier	5
A kitesurfer / windsurfer	4
Rower / gig rower	4
A conservationist	3
An organiser of watersports or the official representative of an organisation that includes water users.	1
A fisherman	1
A local dog walker	1
A walker / jogger / runner	1
A visitor to East Devon / Exeter / Teignbridge	1
A local business with premises next to the Exe Estuary	1
The official representative of an organisation such as a town council.	0
A crab tiler	0
A bait collector	0
A shellfish collector	0
A sandeel fisherman	0
A wildfowler	0

Of the 10% of respondents that said they were completing the questionnaire in an other capacity 17 of the 22 respondents stated they used the Exe estuary in multiple ways equally and couldn't pick just one.

Organisations

If you are completing this questionnaire as either of the following, please tell us the name of your organisation:

- An organiser of water users or the official representative of an organisation that includes water users.
- The official representative of an organisation, such as a town council.
-

There were 3 respondents:

- British canoeing
- Exeter Canoe Club Sea Kayakers
- Starcross Yacht Club

Local business

Please tell us what sort of business you have and where it is located.

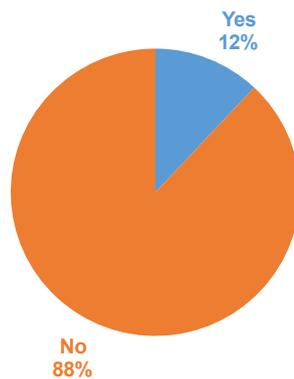
There was one respondent:

- Kitesurfing school
- Retail shop, tuition, hire

The proposed Voluntary Exclusion Zone in Exmouth

2. If the suggested Voluntary Exclusion Zone at Exmouth was implemented, would this have any benefits for you or your organisation?

There were 204 respondents to this question.



Please explain what the benefits for you or your organisation would be, and why you think these benefits will happen:

20 respondents commented. The comments were categorised and most common comments (mentioned by two or more people) are shown in the table below. Full lists of verbatim comments are available on request and have been presented to the SEDHRP.

Most common comment (mentioned by two or more people)	Number of respondents making that comment.
It would minimise disturbance to very important roosting and feeding sites for birds.	13
People will get more enjoyment from birdwatching / wildlife watching.	7
It will protect and enhance the biodiversity and wildlife of the area.	2
The area should be protected anyway under the SSI / SPA / RAMSAR status.	2

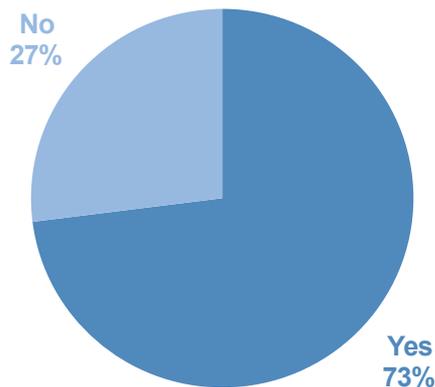
Please tell us about any suggestions you have for how we could improve our proposal to increase the benefit to you or your organisation, and explain how this would increase the benefit:

9 respondents commented. The comments were categorised and most common comments (mentioned by two or more people) are shown in the table below. Full lists of verbatim comments are available on request and have been presented to the SEDHRP.

Most common comment (mentioned by two or more people)	Number of respondents making that comment.
Make sure the Voluntary Exclusion Zone is enforced as much as possible.	3
The Voluntary Exclusion Zone should apply for a longer period of time than proposed.	2

3. If the suggested Voluntary Exclusion Zone in Exmouth was implemented, would this cause any problems for you or your organisation?

There were 194 respondents to this question.



Please explain what the problems for you or your organisation would be, and why you think these problems will happen:

129 respondents commented. The comments were categorised and most common comments (mentioned by two or more people) are shown in the table below. Full lists of verbatim comments are available on request and have been presented to the SEDHRP.

Most common comment (mentioned by two or more people)	Number of respondents making that comment.
It will make it too dangerous for us as we'll have to use the small main channel with fast flowing currents, stronger winds, more traffic / with the wake of powered craft. (Most talked about small sailcraft, dinghies, canoes, kayaks and fast flowing currents)	53
There will be less space and freedom to do my on-water based activity.	30
We don't really disturb birds and wildlife with our non-engine powered water activity. (Most talked about small sailcraft, dinghies, canoes, kayaks)	21
There'll be nowhere for novices and beginners to train and practice in their chosen on-water activity.	17
There is no / very little credible evidence for the reasons for the proposals.	16
There'll be less safe spaces for on-water users to go in if they're in trouble or need a rest.	11
There's no need for the Voluntary Exclusion Zone to apply to high tide when birds are off the area.	7
We need access to sail at lower tides so smaller boats can leave and return to the estuary.	6
Everyone will be using a smaller part of the estuary so it'll be more congested and so more dangerous.	5
I won't be able to launch / recover safely.	5
Sometimes water users would be going into the Voluntary Exclusion Zone by accident, it's unavoidable.	5
Sailing / kayaking would be restricted too much.	4
There is a legal right of way / right of navigation down the estuary. This proposal can't happen.	4
It will be too expensive to enforce.	3
There'll be less safe angling spots.	3
Need more allowances for racing / sailing events. Can't all take place at high tide.	3

Please tell us how we could improve our proposals so they would cause fewer problems for you or your organisation, and explain how this would decrease the problems caused:

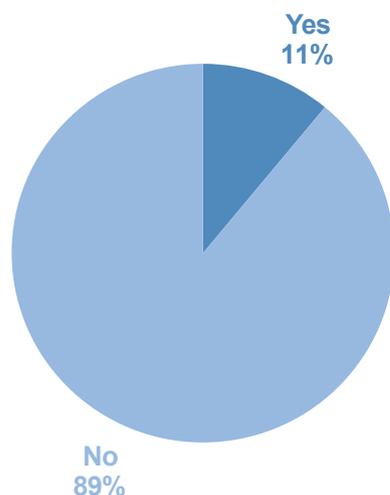
114 respondents commented. The comments were categorised and most common comments (mentioned by two or more people) are shown in the table below. Full lists of verbatim comments are available on request and have been presented to the SEDHRP.

Most common comment (mentioned by two or more people)	Number of respondents making that comment.
Abandon your proposals.	39
Allow non-engine powered craft in the Voluntary Exclusion Zone (as they don't have much / any effect on wildlife).	19
Have the Voluntary Exclusion Zone at lower tides only.	16
Ensure there's enough safe, usable area outside the Voluntary Exclusion Zone for smaller craft / reduce the proposed size. (Some commented that the southern most area should be removed from the proposals.)	15
Present evidence to support your proposals.	11
Just ask people to keep clear of feeding / roosting birds, give out guidance and educate people.	8
Listen to and work with water users.	8
Allow non-engine powered craft to use the Voluntary Exclusion Zone at higher tides.	6
Restrict access to dog walkers mainly as evidence shows they cause most issues.	6
Ban powerboats, overturn their byelaw that allows them to use this area, as they cause the most issues.	4
Allow water based events at lower tides, not just high tide.	2
Reduce the use of powered craft in the area, rather than ban it.	2
Find ways to allow water activities and also improve wildlife habitats at the same time.	2

The proposed Voluntary Exclusion Zone at Dawlish Warren

4. If the suggested Voluntary Exclusion Zone at Dawlish Warren was implemented, would this have any benefits for you or your organisation?

There were 197 respondents to this question.



Please explain what the benefit for you or your organisation would be, and why you think these benefits will happen:

19 respondents commented. The comments were categorised and most common comments (mentioned by two or more people) are shown in the table below. Full lists of verbatim comments are available on request and have been presented to the SEDHRP.

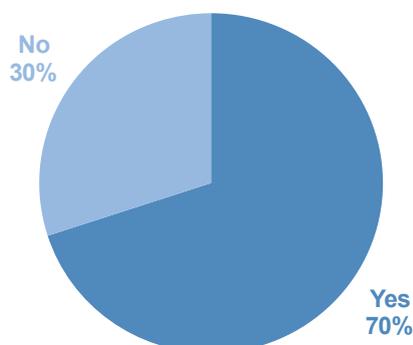
Most common comment (mentioned by two or more people)	Number of respondents making that comment.
It would minimise disturbance to very important roosting and feeding sites for birds.	9
People will get more enjoyment from birdwatching / wildlife watching.	8
It will protect and enhance the biodiversity and wildlife of the area.	4
It will conserve these important habitats.	3

Please tell us about any suggestions you have for how we could improve our proposal to increase the benefit to you or your organisation, and explain how this would increase the benefit:

4 respondents commented. The only comment mentioned by more than one person was mentioned by two people and said that there should be effective education about and monitoring of the Voluntary Exclusion Zone.

5. If the suggested Voluntary Exclusion Zone at Dawlish Warren was implemented, would this cause any problems for you or your organisation?

192 respondents answered this question.



Please explain what the problems for you or your organisation would be, and why you think these problems will happen:

120 respondents commented. The comments were categorised and most common comments (mentioned by two or more people) are shown in the table below. Full lists of verbatim comments are available on request and have been presented to the SEDHRP.

Most common comment (mentioned by two or more people)	Number of respondents making that comment.
It will make it too dangerous for us as we'll have to use the small main channel with fast flowing currents / stronger winds / more traffic / with the wake of powered craft / won't be able to get out the way of larger craft. (Most talked about small sailcraft, dinghies, canoes, kayaks and many mentioned it would be impossible to go against the current in the main channel)	50
There will be less space and freedom to do my on-water based activity.	26
We don't really disturb birds and wildlife with our water activity. (Most talked about small sailcraft, dinghies, canoes, kayaks)	18
There is no / very little credible evidence for the reasons for these proposals.	18
There'll be less safe spaces for on-water users to go in if they're in trouble or need a rest.	18
There'll be nowhere for novices and beginners to train and practice in their chosen on-water activity.	8
We need access through the Voluntary Exclusion Zone to get into the estuary / access moored boats.	8
There's no need for the Voluntary Exclusion Zone to apply to high tide when birds are off the area.	6
There'll be less angling spots / won't be able to go fishing or bait digging.	6
This is creeping regulation, too bureaucratic.	5
We need access to sail at lower tides so smaller boats can leave and return to the estuary.	4
Sometimes water users would be going into the Voluntary Exclusion Zone by accident, it's unavoidable.	4

There is a legal right of way / right of navigation down the estuary. This proposal can't happen.	4
Need more allowances for racing / sailing events. Can't all take place at high tide.	3
It will be bad for tourism / the economy.	3
It will severely restrict access to the area.	2
It will be too expensive to enforce.	2

Please tell us how we could improve our proposals so they would cause fewer problems for you or your organisation, and explain how this would decrease the problems caused:

93 respondents commented. The comments were categorised and most common comments (mentioned by two or more people) are shown in the table below. Full lists of verbatim comments are available on request and have been presented to the SEDHRP.

Most common comment (mentioned by two or more people)	Number of respondents making that comment.
Ensure there's enough safe, usable area outside the Voluntary Exclusion Zone for smaller craft / reduce the proposed size of the VEZ / reduce the buffer zone. (Some gave specific comments about which areas should be removed and how much buffer there should be)	25
Abandon your proposals.	20
Allow non-engine powered craft in the Voluntary Exclusion Zone (as they don't have much / any effect on wildlife).	18
Present evidence to support your proposals.	9
Just ask people to keep clear of feeding / roosting birds, give out guidance and educate people.	9
Listen to and work with water users.	9
Have the Voluntary Exclusion Zone at lower tides only.	6
The Voluntary Exclusion Zone shouldn't apply all year round.	3
Restrict access to dog walkers mainly as evidence shows they cause most issues.	3
Emergency access should be allowed.	3
Allow water based events at lower tides, not just high tide.	2

Any other comments

6. Please tell us about any other comments you have on our proposals, and any other suggestions you have for improving our proposals that you haven't already mentioned:

140 respondents commented. The comments were categorised and most common comments (mentioned by three or more people) are shown in the table below. Full lists of verbatim comments are available on request and have been presented to the SEDHRP.

Most common comment (mentioned by three or more people)	Number of respondents making that comment.
The research provided doesn't support the proposals / there is no evidence for the proposals / the research provided is flawed.	41
Engage with all estuary users more openly and effectively / we have the knowledge that you don't have, so involve users / information given as part of the consultation was inadequate or misleading.	31
Most non-engine powered craft shouldn't be included in the exclusion zone, we have no impact on birds (canoes, kayaks, dinghies).	24
Don't carry out the proposal.	13
The proposals will be dangerous (most mentioned for canoes, kayaks and dinghies).	12
We want to maintain wildlife and habitats but there needs to be a balance, which there isn't in the proposals.	9
Humans and birds have been co-existing on the estuary for many years to no detrimental effect.	9
I support the proposals.	9
It will be too expensive.	7
Don't make the exclusion zones enforceable or compulsory.	6
Just ask people to keep clear of feeding / roosting birds, give out guidance and educate people.	6
People will just go elsewhere for water activities, leading to a loss to the economy and the reputation of the estuary.	6
Restrict the exclusion zones to dog walkers only as they have the most impact.	5
We need direct access to the SEDHRP committee.	5
Environmental lobby groups are too heavy handed.	5
Where's the consultation on the Codes of Conduct?	5
Extra regulation is unnecessary, the estuary regulates itself as on-water users can only use these areas at certain times of tide.	4
Ban jet skis / speedboats as they have the most detrimental effect.	4
Spend your time and public money doing something more meaningful.	4
Use hydrographics maps rather than OS maps for water users in the consultation.	4
We are active on the water at high tide so have no issues.	3
The consultation period wasn't long enough.	3
We need to have safe areas of the estuary we can go to in an emergency.	3
It limits people's freedoms and rights.	3
Most water users are respectful of birds anyway, without regulation.	3

Enforce speed restrictions along the estuary.	3
Global warming and climate change is more responsible for any decline in bird numbers.	3

D – New codes of conduct

New proposals for codes of conduct are being developed for kitesurfing / windsurfing, jet skiing, sailing, power boating, water skiing, crab tiling, bait collection / shellfishing, and dog walking for the Exe Estuary and offshore area.

7. If you'd like the Exe Estuary Management Partnership to contact you when the proposals for new codes of conduct are available and you can have your say, please put your e-mail address below:

133 respondents gave their contact details, these have been passed onto the Exe Estuary Management Partnership.

E – About you

8. Are you completing this questionnaire as:

98% of the 221 respondents completed the questionnaire as an individual, 2% as the official representative of an organisation.

9. Have you used the Exe Estuary in the last 12 months?

All 221 respondents stated they had used the Estuary in the last 12 months.

10. How have you used the Exe Estuary in the last 12 months?

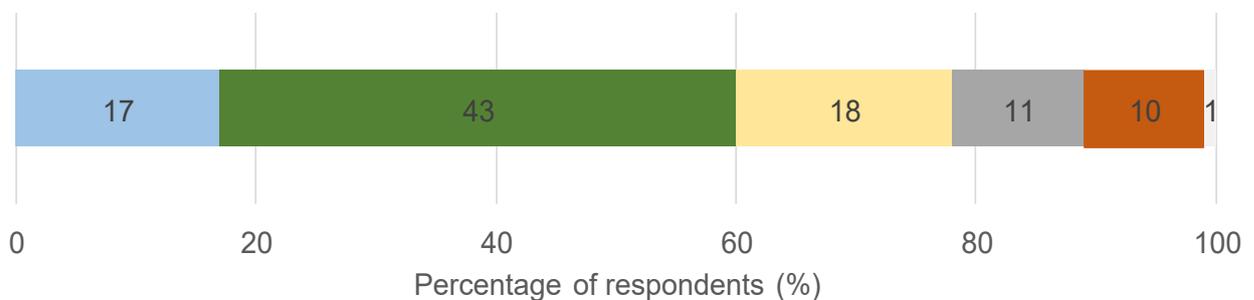
214 people answered this question, giving 615 responses as they could choose all that applied.

Activity	Percentage of respondents (%)
Sailing	59
Walking / jogging / running	46
Birdwatching	35
Canoeing / kayaking / stand up paddleboarding	35
Dog walking	24
As a visitor to, or customer of an Exe Estuary business	24
Powerboating	19
Other	16
Kitesurfing / windsurfing	13
Angling or fishing	11
An organiser of activities on the Exe Estuary	7
A local business with premises next to the Exe Estuary	5
Bait collecting	4
Water skiing	4
Shellfishing	3
Crab tiling	1
Wildfowling	1

11. On average, how often have you been to / used the proposed Voluntary Exclusion Zone area near Dawlish Warren in the last 12 months?

212 respondents answered this question.

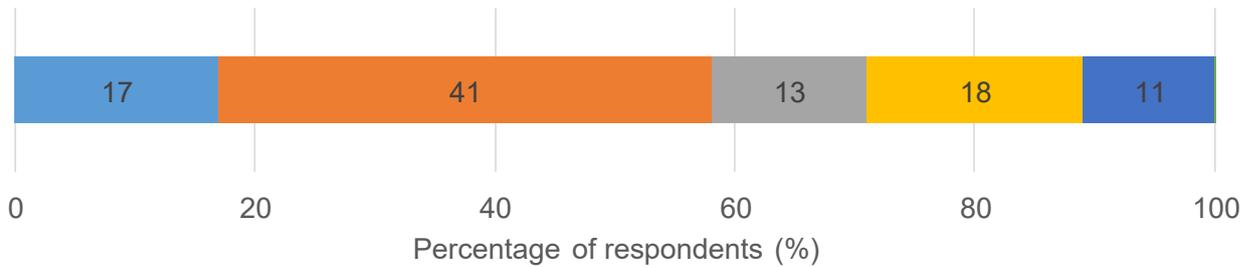
- Not used in the last 12 months
- One to five times in 12 months
- One to three times every couple of months
- One to three times a month
- One to four times a week
- More often



12. On average, how often have you been to / used the proposed Voluntary Exclusion Zone area near Exmouth in the last 12 months?

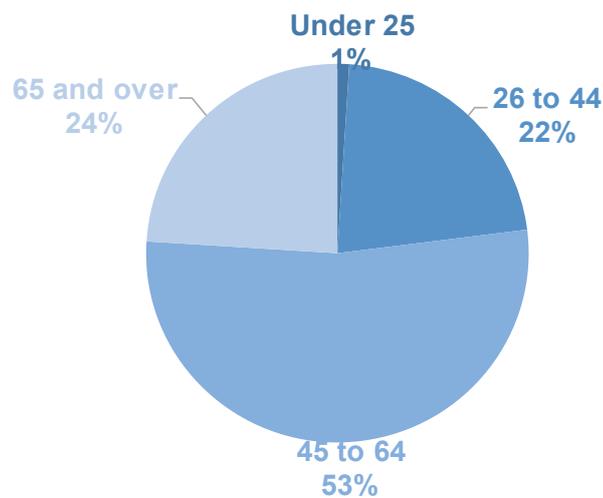
214 respondents answered this question.

- Not used in the last 12 months
- One to five times in 12 months
- One to three times every couple of months
- One to three times a month
- One to four times a week
- More often



13. Which age group are you in?

There were 213 respondents to this question.



14. Which town or village do you live in?

208 respondents commented.

Town or village	Number of respondents
Exmouth	45
Exeter	28
Topsham	6
Budleigh Salterton	5
Honiton	3
Exminster	3
Cockwood	3
Kenton	3
Starcross	3
Lympstone	2
Kennford	2
Dawlish	2
Broadclyst	1
Newton Abbot	1
Teignmouth	1
Bradninch	1
Craddock	1
Woodbury	1
Woodbury Salterton	1
Poole	1
Taunton	1
Ottery St Mary	1
Rugby	1
Clyst St Mary	1
Sidmouth	1
Bournemouth	1
Payhembury	1
Brampford Speke	1
Tiverton	1
Halberton	1
Exton	1
Mamhead	1
Crediton	1
Combe Raleigh	1
Moretonhampstead	1
Bow	1
Potterne	1
Northleigh	1
Doddiscombeleigh	1
Powderham	1

15. Do you have any long standing illness, disability or infirmity that limits your day to day activities in any way?

5% of respondents stated that they did. Those that didn't were asked to move to the end of the questionnaire.

16. If yes, please tell us the nature of your disability:

18 respondents answered, and gave 24 responses as they could select all that applied.

