



**Midlothian Council
Tenant Satisfaction Survey 2016/17**

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Introduction

As part of Midlothian Council's Tenant Participation and Customer Engagement Strategy, Midlothian Council undertake periodic surveys to determine the level of tenant satisfaction with Housing Services provided by the Council. In September 2016, Midlothian Council's Housing Services carried out a face-to-face tenant satisfaction survey.

The overall objectives of the survey were to:

- Gain an understanding of the level of customer satisfaction with the housing service.
- Identify areas of strength and weakness in relation to specific service areas.
- Provide evidence on performance to the Scottish Housing Regulator.
- Undertake comparative analysis with previous surveys and other local authority landlords.

This report contains key information derived from the Survey, including:

- Information about Council tenants and their tenancies.
- Satisfaction levels with the quality of homes and neighbourhoods.
- Satisfaction with the repairs service.
- How tenants communicate with the Council.
- Overall level of satisfaction with service provided.

Methodology

All Registered Social Landlords in Scotland need to ask tenants some specific questions the results of which are reported on an annual basis as part of the Annual Return on the Social Housing Charter. This enables comparison between Registered Social Landlords on a range of indicators of performance. In addition to this, further questions were asked which were judged to be useful in finding out more about our tenants and their priorities. Council Officers consulted Midlothian Tenants Panel and tenants groups to consider their views about the questions being asked in the Survey prior to the final questions being agreed.

The survey was carried out by Knowledge Partnership - an experienced research company who have undertaken Tenant Satisfaction Surveys for a significant number of Scottish Councils and Registered Social Landlords.

In previous years the Survey method used was a postal/online Survey Form which was sent to all Midlothian Council tenants. However, recent research undertaken on behalf of the Scottish Housing Regulator suggests that face to face surveys are the most appropriate method of obtaining information about tenant satisfaction:

*"Face-to-face surveys are considered best at obtaining representative samples and have the fewest constraints in relation to the length and complexity of the questionnaire."*¹

In total 617 interviews were conducted; approximately a 10% sample of Midlothian Council tenants. To increase participation the incentive of a prize draw of a £50 shopping voucher was used. In order to assess how accurate the results are in

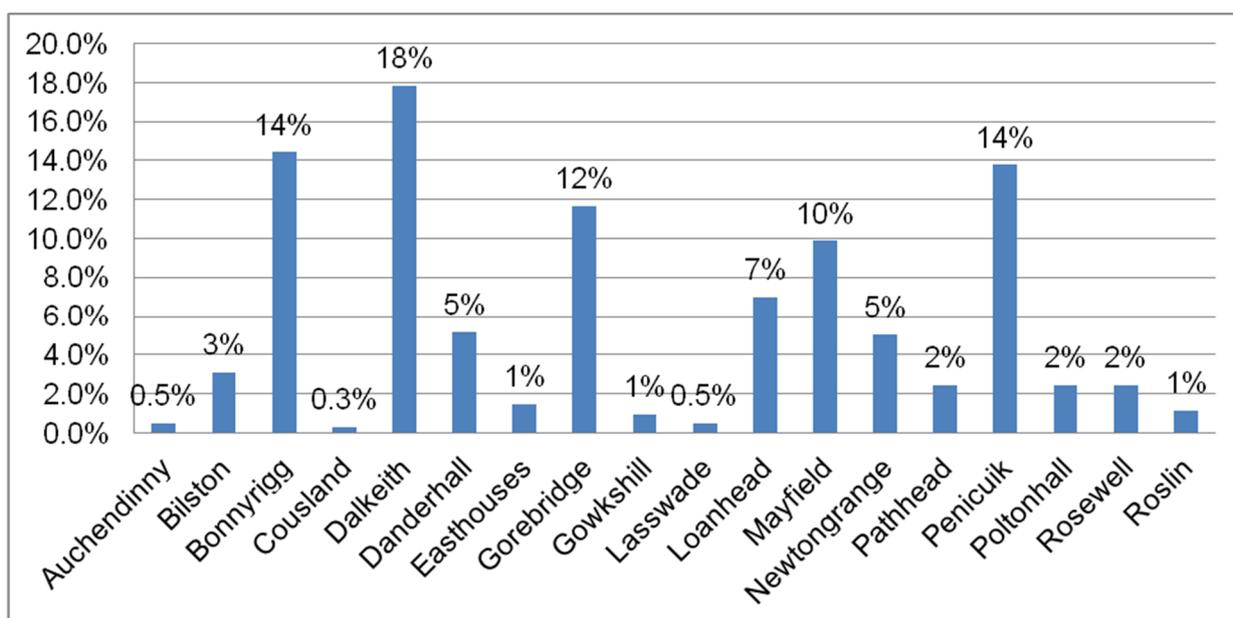
¹ Conducting Surveys of Tenants and Service Users – A Guide, Scottish Housing Regulator, May 2016

representing the views of all tenants, statistical analysis is used. An example of the need for this can be explained as: if all tenants returned their surveys you would be completely sure that the results obtained reflected that of your tenants. On the other hand, if only 100 replied out of 6,662 tenants there would be little certainty.

From the Survey returns received we are able to say that we are confident that our results have a margin of error no greater than +/-3.7%.

The Chart below shows the percentage of respondents by each area. The sample was drawn to be representative of the number of council properties in each area whilst also ensuring that the views of tenants in some of the smaller settlements were also represented.

Chart 1: Survey Respondents by Area



Some settlements incorporate survey responses from nearby smaller settlements to make results more useful for comparison between areas, these are:

- Bonnyrigg includes Bonnyrigg, Lasswade, Poltonhall and Loanhead
- Dalkeith includes Danderhall and Cousland
- Gorebridge includes Gowkshill, Pathhead and Rosewell
- Mayfield includes Newtongrange and Easthouses

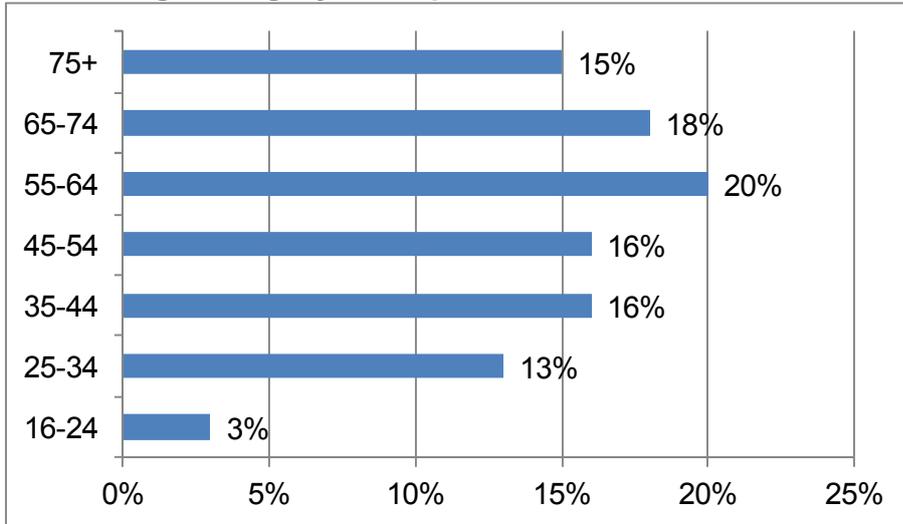
There are instances where respondents have chosen not to answer a specific question – these ‘non responses’ have not been included in the analysis of the Survey.

Section 1: Respondent profile

Age category

Chart 1 below shows the age category of the respondents. Overall, 52% of older tenants aged 55+ years were surveyed compared to 48% of those aged under 55. The largest age group of respondents were aged 55-64 (20%), followed by those aged 65-74 with 18% of respondents. Only 3% of respondents were aged 16-24 and 13% were aged 25-34 indicating that a lower proportion of younger people participated in the survey - although this reflects the fact that fewer younger people are council tenants.

Chart 1: Age category of respondents



Ethnicity

The vast majority of tenants responding to the survey were White Scottish (95%). The next most common ethnic groups were 'Other White British' (3.4%), followed by 'Other White Ethnic Group' (0.6%) and Irish (0.2%). Consequently 99% of respondents were of white ethnicity. Responses from non white ethnic groups accounted for less than 1% of respondents. This is similar to the 2011 Census² which showed that fewer than 2% of the Midlothian population were from a non white ethnic group. There were no respondents from other ethnic groups such as Black, Chinese and Gypsy/Traveller.

Table 3: Survey response by ethnic breakdown

Ethnicity	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
White Scottish	585	95%
Other White British	21	3.4%
Other White Ethnic Group	4	0.6%
Polish	3	0.5%
Irish	1	0.2%
Pakistani, Pakistani Scottish or Pakistani British	1	0.2%
Arab, Arab Scottish or Arab British	1	0.2%
Indian, Indian Scottish or Indian British	1	0.2%

² Scotland's Census 2011: <http://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk/ods-analyser/jsf/tableView/tableView.xhtml>

Total number of people in household

Households with two persons (35%) were the most common household size among respondents followed by single person households (31%).

Table 4: Total number of people in household

	1 Person	2 Persons	3 Persons	4 Persons	5 Persons	6 Persons	7+	Total
No	192	213	100	68	31	10	3	617
%	31.1%	34.5%	16.2%	11.0%	5.0%	1.6%	0.5%	100%

Tenants with Children under the age of 16

Analysis of households with children shows that most households (71%) indicated that they did not have any children aged 16 or less compared to 29% of households with children.

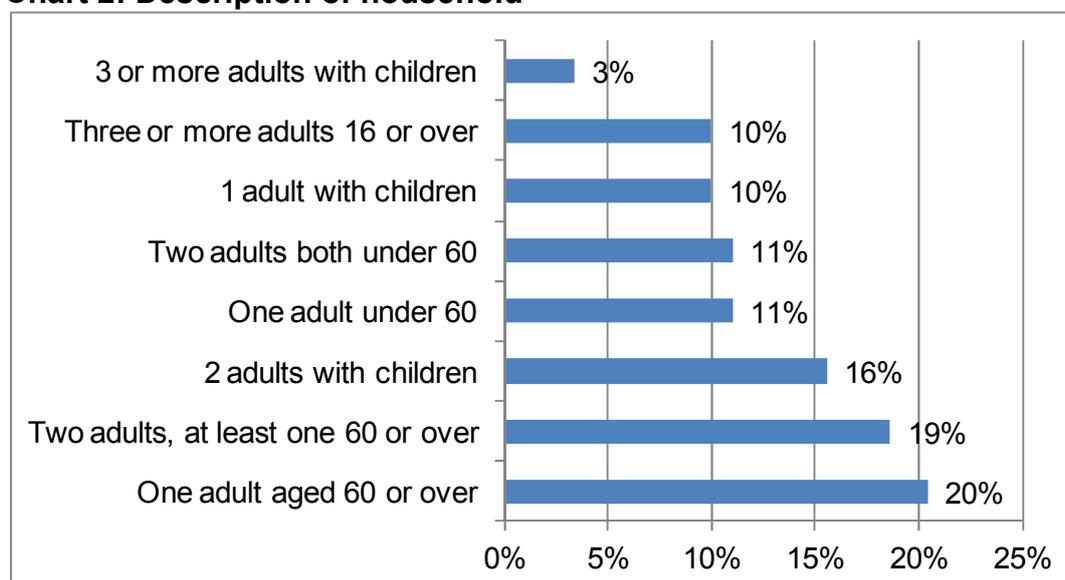
Table 5: Tenants with children

	No Child	1 Child	2 Children	3 Children	4 Children	5 Children	Total
No	436	73	67	31	7	3	617
%	71%	12%	11%	5%	1%	>1%	100%

Household Characteristics

Chart 2 is a breakdown of respondents by household size and composition. The most common households were 'one adult aged 60 or over' with 20% and 'two adults, at least one 60 or over' with 19%. Larger households with children were among the lowest proportion of respondents.

Chart 2: Description of household

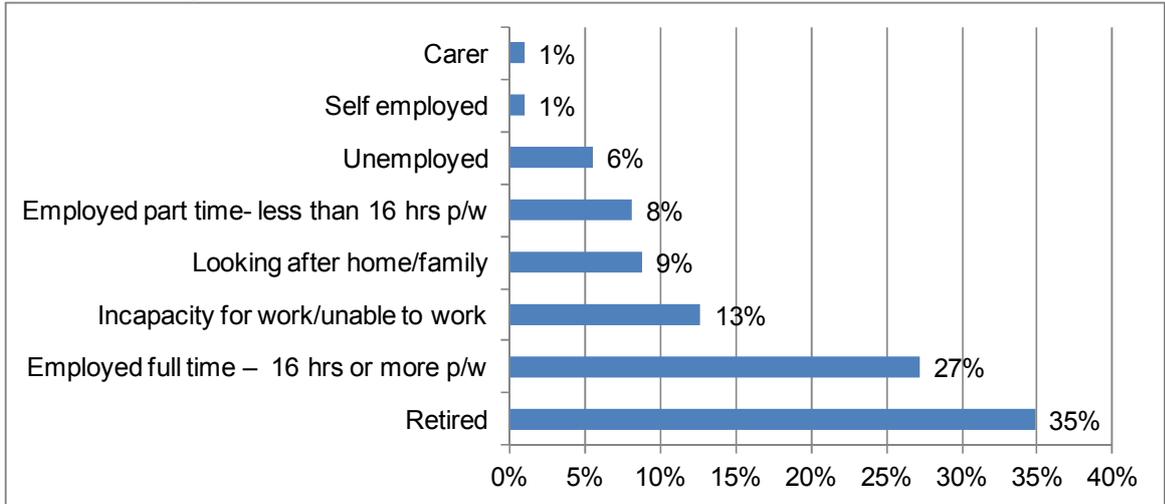


Economic status

Chart 3 sets out the economic status of respondents. Most common were respondents who were retired (35%) or in full time employment, working 16 or more hours per week (27%). Carers and the self employed had the lowest representation among the respondents. Overall, 56% of all respondents stated that no household member received any Housing Benefit. Of those tenants who received Housing Benefit, 33%

said all housing costs were covered through Housing Benefit while 11% said part of housing costs were covered through Housing Benefit.

Chart 3: Respondents' economic status

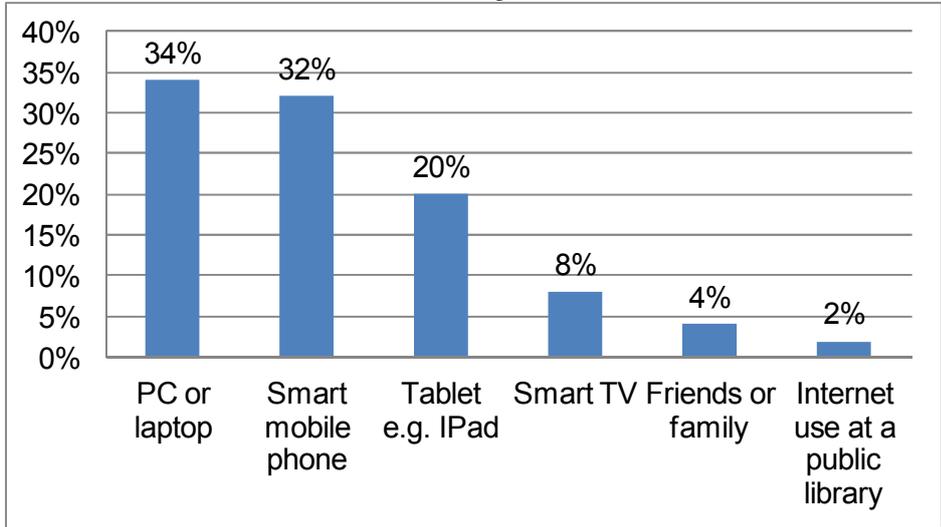


Access to the internet

Respondents were asked if they had access to the internet for personal use. A total of 67% of respondents indicated they had access to the internet while 31% said they did not and 2% planned to get access to the internet within the next 12 months.

A further analysis of access to the internet shows that 34% access was through PC or laptop followed by 32% through smart mobile phone. Access through a public library had the lowest rate with 2%.

Chart 4: Access to the Internet by Method

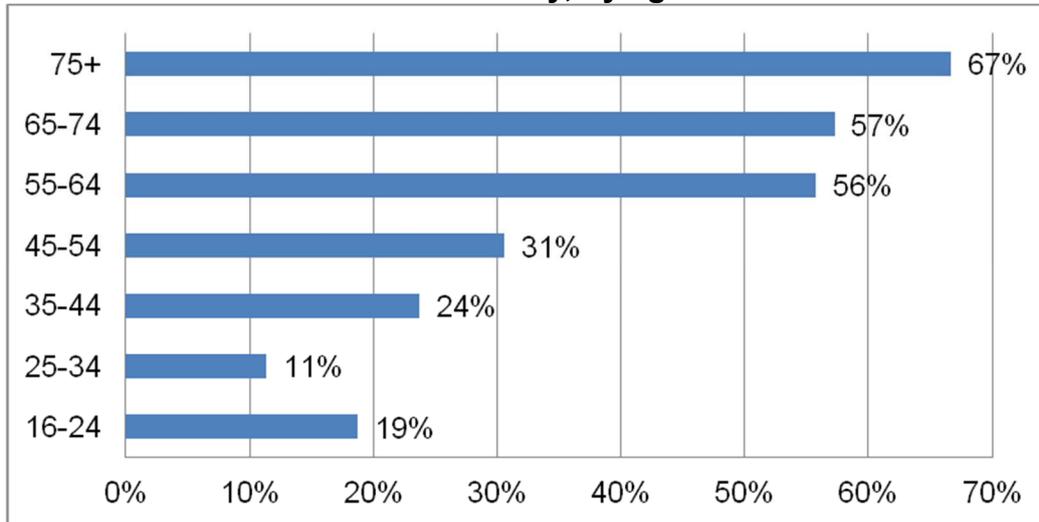


Disability

Overall, of the 617 respondents, 257 (42%) indicated that they had a disability or health condition which limited their daily activities or the work they could do. In addition, Chart 5 illustrates that disability in households was higher for older tenants. Those aged 75 or more recorded the highest level of disability or health condition

(67%) followed by those aged 65-74 with 57%. Younger households had the lower levels of households stating that they had a disability or health condition.

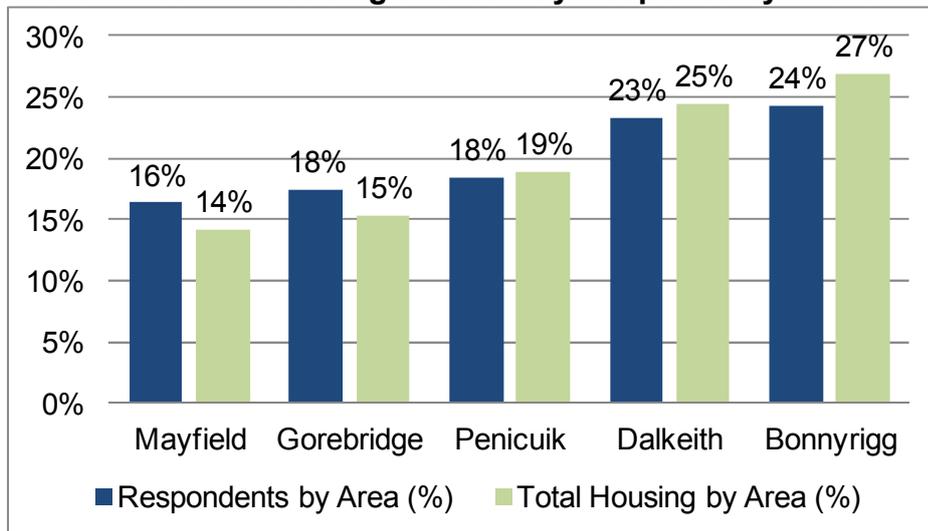
Chart 5: Households with a disability, by age



Housing and respondents distribution by Letting Area

Chart 6 below shows the distribution of housing and respondents across major areas in Midlothian (see Page 5 for a breakdown on areas). The Bonnyrigg area with approximately 27% of total Council housing had the highest proportion of Survey respondents at 24%. This was followed by Dalkeith with 25% of total Council housing and 23% of respondents. The lowest response rate (16%) was from Mayfield with 14% of total Council housing.

Chart 6: Council Housing and Survey Response by Areas

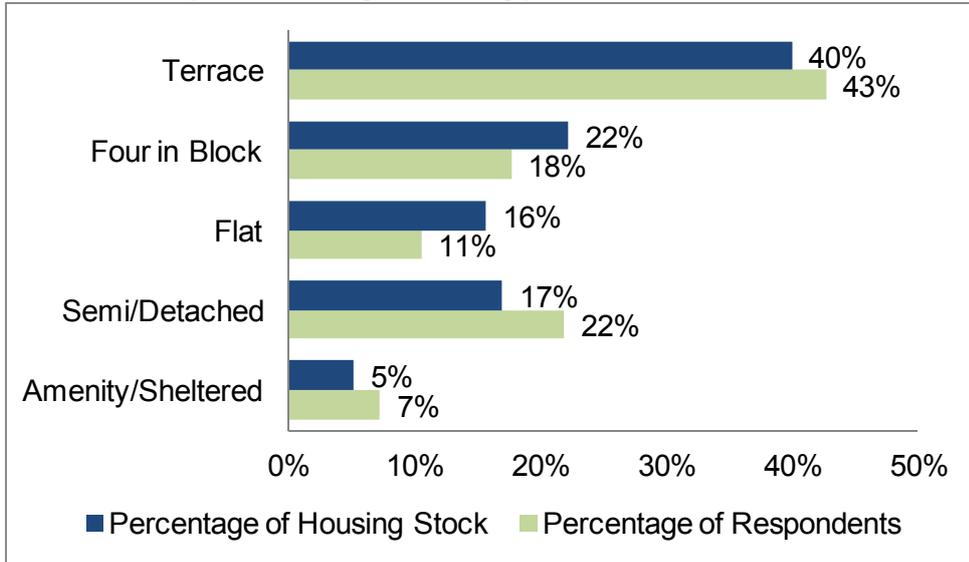


House types

Survey results indicate that 18% of surveyed tenants lived in new build housing. In terms of the type of housing, the highest response rate was from tenants living in terraced housing (43%). This was unsurprising because terraced housing was the

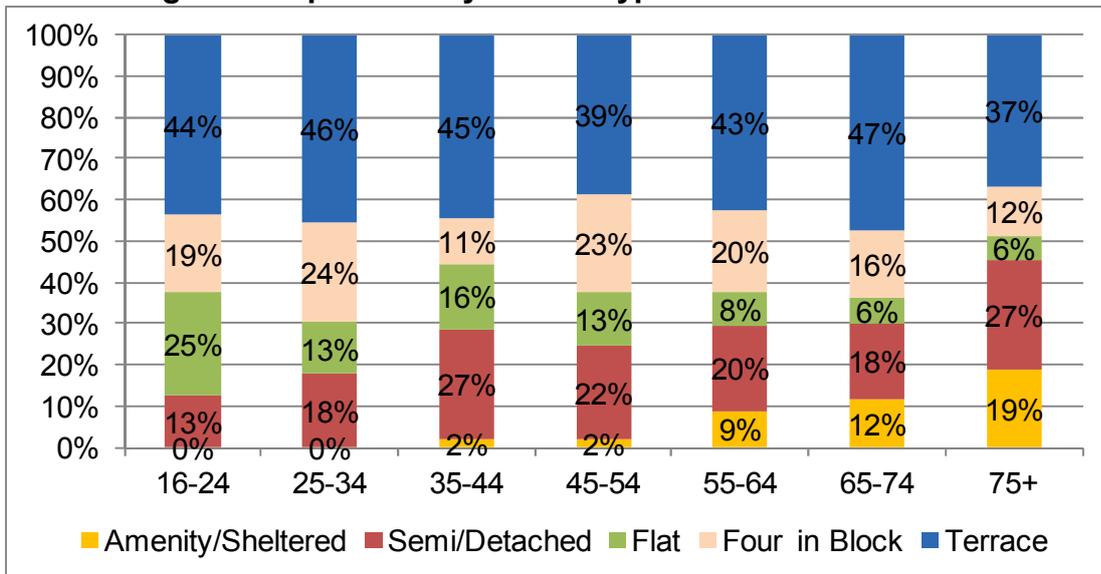
most common housing type representing 40% of the total Council housing stock. The next most common were 'Four in a Block' flats with 18%.

Chart 7: Respondents by house types



Analysis of the age of respondents by house type in Chart 8 shows most age groups lived in terraced housing (46% of 25-34 year olds; 44% of 16-24 year olds and 37% of 75+ year olds). It is evident that, younger tenants were more likely to live in flatted properties. For example, 44% of those aged 16-24 years lived in flats (including four in a block flats) followed by 37% of those aged 25-34 years.

Chart 8: Age of Respondent by House Types

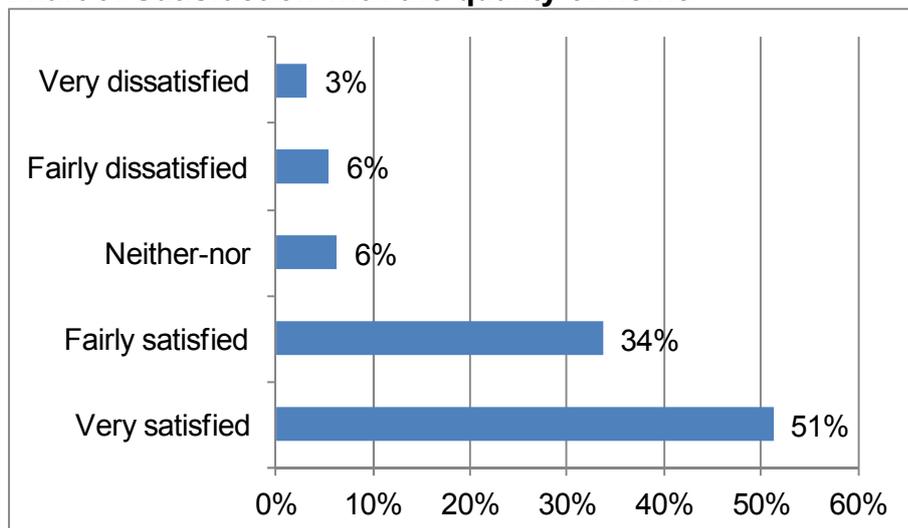


Section 2: Home and neighbourhood

Quality of home

Respondents were asked of how satisfied or dissatisfied they were with the quality of their home. Chart 9 indicates that most respondents (85%) said they were satisfied compared to 9% who were dissatisfied.

Chart 9: Satisfaction with the quality of home



Further analysis shows that the level of satisfaction varied according to age, house type and location:

- Those aged 75+ were the most satisfied with the quality of their home with a 94% satisfaction rate, followed by those aged 55-64 with 92% and those aged 65-74 with 89%.
- Those aged 25-34 were the least satisfied with the quality of their home with a 69% satisfaction rate.
- Respondents in amenity/sheltered/wheelchair and semi/detached properties were the most satisfied with the quality of their homes (91% and 90% respectively) followed by respondents in terraced properties (86%).
- Those in flats were the least satisfied with the quality of their homes with a 77% satisfaction rate.
- Respondents in Bonnyrigg were most likely to be satisfied with the quality of their homes (89%) while those in Penicuik recorded a lower level of satisfaction with quality of their home (77%).
- 79% of respondents living in homes built in the last 10 years were satisfied with the quality of compared to 86% living in older homes. It is surprising to see lower levels of satisfaction recorded with recently built properties. This may be due to 'snagging' required in new properties or may reflect the number of flatted properties built which tenants tend to be less satisfied with.

For tenants who moved into their property within the last year, 79% were satisfied with the standard of their home when they moved in compared to 12% who were dissatisfied.

Respondents were asked if their current home met their needs. While 87% felt their current home met their needs, 13% felt otherwise. Some of the main reasons given for their home not meeting their needs included:

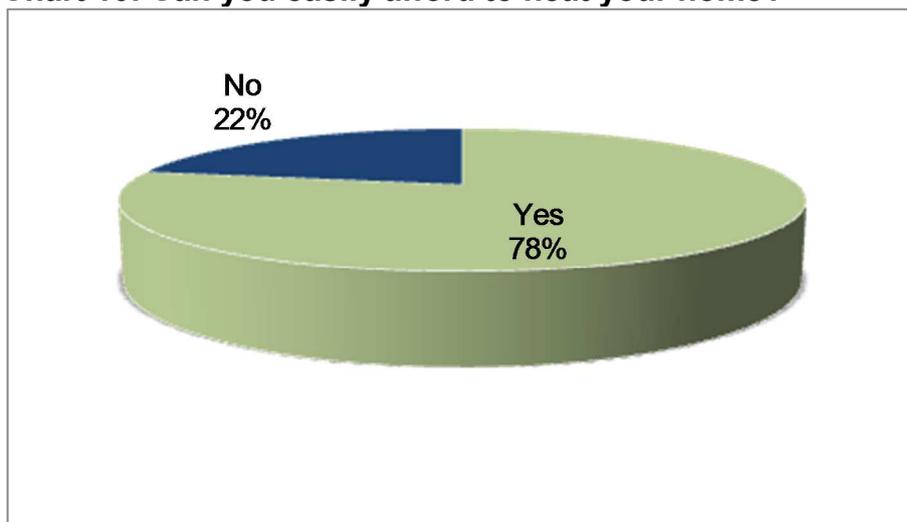
- Energy Efficiency/Fuel Poverty e.g. “House is freezing.”
- Disability e.g. “Apart from the shower being in the bath - both disabled and find this difficult.”
- Quality of House e.g. “It’s damp and cold and the boiler needs servicing a lot.”
- Overcrowding/Undercrowding e.g. “Not enough bedrooms for us” and “Too big, only two in a three bed house”

Heat and Fuel Costs

Respondents were asked if they felt their home was easy to heat. 74% of respondents felt that their home was easy to heat compared to 26% who disagreed.

All respondents were asked if they could easily afford to heat their home (Chart 10) 482 (78%) of the respondents stated they could easily afford to heat their home while 135 (22%) said ‘No’.

Chart 10: Can you easily afford to heat your home?



Further analysis of ability to heat home shows that:

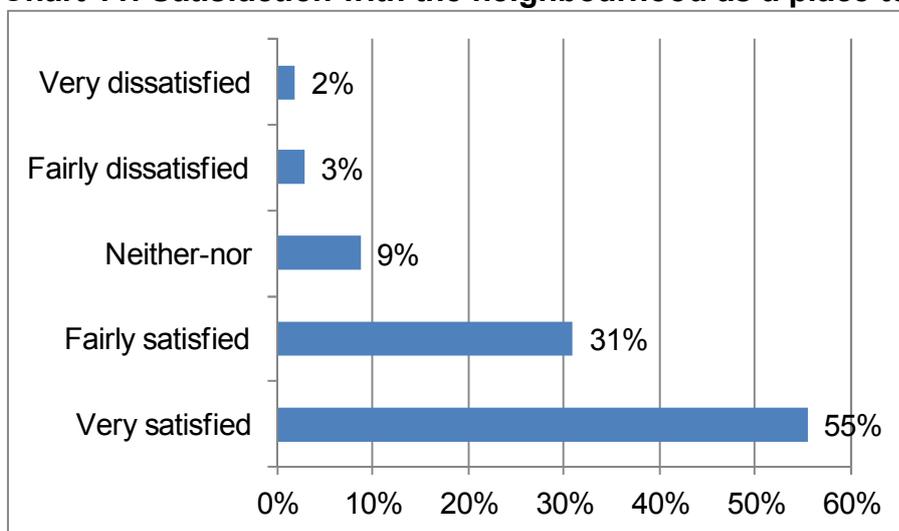
- Respondents from Gorebridge and Mayfield had the highest levels of respondents saying they could easily afford to heat their home, each with 81%. This was followed by respondents from Bonnyrigg with 80%.
- Respondents from Penicuik (31%) had the highest levels of respondents saying they could not easily afford to heat their home.
- 23% of respondents with a disability said they could not afford to heat their home compared to 21% without a disability.
- Households living in a Semi-detached or Detached property (83%) had the highest rate of respondents who stated they could easily afford to heat their property (83%).
- Respondents in new build properties did not have a significantly improved likelihood of being able to afford heating bills despite their property being more energy efficient than an older property.

- The ability to afford the cost of heating their home tends to affect the level of overall satisfaction with the overall service provided by the Council’s Housing Service. Of the 482 respondents who said they could easily afford to heat their home, 87% were satisfied with the overall service provided by Midlothian Council’s Housing Service compared to 7% who were not satisfied. Of the 135 respondents who said they could not easily afford to heat their home, a lower proportion (70%) were satisfied with the overall service provided by the Council’s Housing Service compared to 24% who were not satisfied.

Satisfaction with neighbourhood as a place to live

Chart 11 shows that the majority of respondents were satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live (86%) compared to 5% who expressed dissatisfaction.

Chart 11: Satisfaction with the neighbourhood as a place to live



Respondents aged 25-34 recorded the highest level (94%) of satisfaction with neighbourhood as a place to live followed by those aged 75+ (93%), while those aged 35-44 had the lowest level of satisfaction with neighbourhood (74%). Respondents living in amenity/sheltered/wheelchair and semi/detached properties were the most satisfied with their neighbourhood (96% and 89% respectively) followed by those in terraced properties (87%). Those in flats (four-in-a-block) were the least satisfied with their neighbourhood (78%).

Respondents in Bonnyrigg (89%) and Dalkeith (88%) were more likely to be satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live than respondents in other areas. Respondents in Penicuik (77%) recorded the lowest level of satisfaction with their neighbourhood as a place to live.

Tenants were asked if they felt their neighbourhood had improved or declined in the past three years. Chart 12 shows that 66% of respondents felt their neighbourhood had remained unchanged in the last three years. A slightly larger proportion of respondents (19%) felt that their neighbourhood had declined in the last three years compared to 14% that stated that their neighbourhood had improved.

Chart 12: Has neighbourhood improved or declined in the last three years?

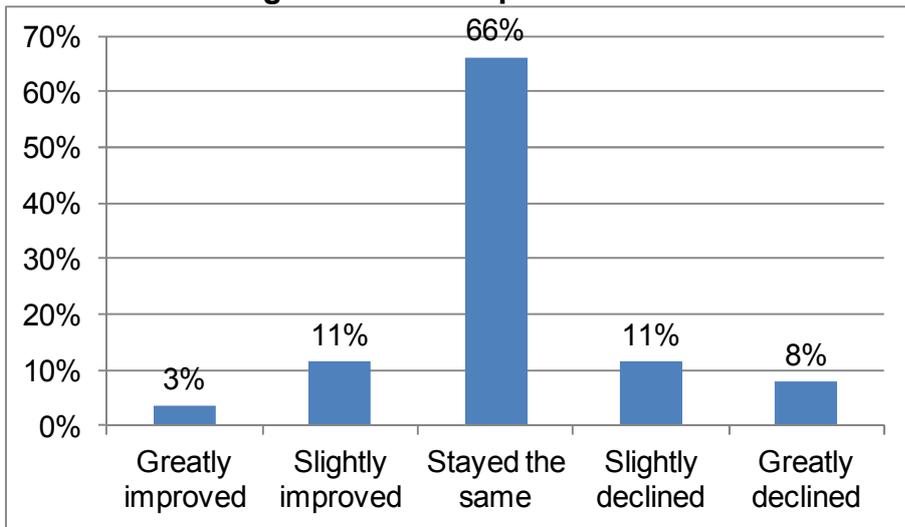
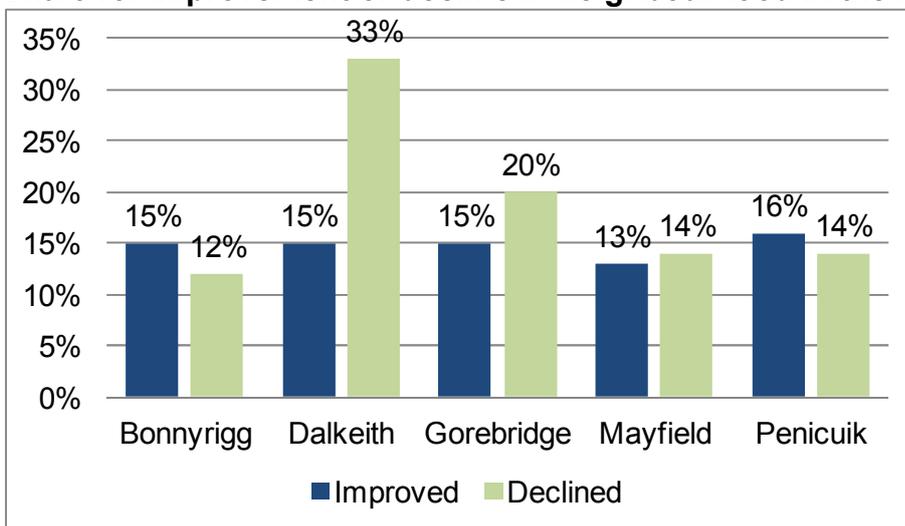


Chart 13 shows the percentage of respondents who stated their neighbourhood had either improved or declined in the last three years. Dalkeith, with 33%, had the highest percentage of respondents who stated that their neighbourhood had declined in the last three years. This was followed by Gorebridge with 20%.

In general, the percentages of respondents who felt their neighbourhoods had improved over the past three years were similar across all areas, ranging from 13% in Gorebridge to 16% in Penicuik.

Chart 13: Improvement or decline in neighbourhood in the last three years



Improvement within neighbourhood

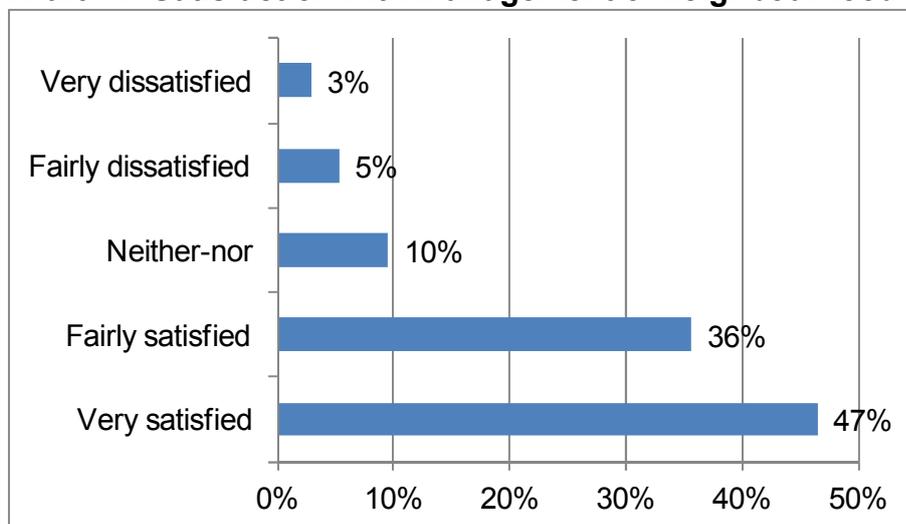
Respondents were asked if there was anything that they would like to see improved within their neighbourhood. The improvements respondents would like to see in their neighbourhood included:

- Car Parking: "Parking insufficient - more marked bays needed."
- Street Lighting: "More street lighting required."
- Drug/Alcohol Abuse: "Remove drug users from flats."
- Dog Fouling: "Dog dirt to be cleaned-up or owners taught how to do it; have lots of bins."
- Who We Allocate Housing to: "Stop dumping bad people in area."
- Address Crime: "Need more safety / Police presence."
- Housing Quality: "provide better housing."
- Better Facilities: "Playground area needed for young children."

Satisfaction with the Council's management of neighbourhood

Respondents were asked how satisfied or dissatisfied they were with Midlothian Council's management of the neighbourhood they live in. The majority (83%) of respondents were satisfied with Council's management of their neighbourhood. A smaller proportion (8%) of respondents expressed dissatisfaction while 10% were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the Council's management of the local area.

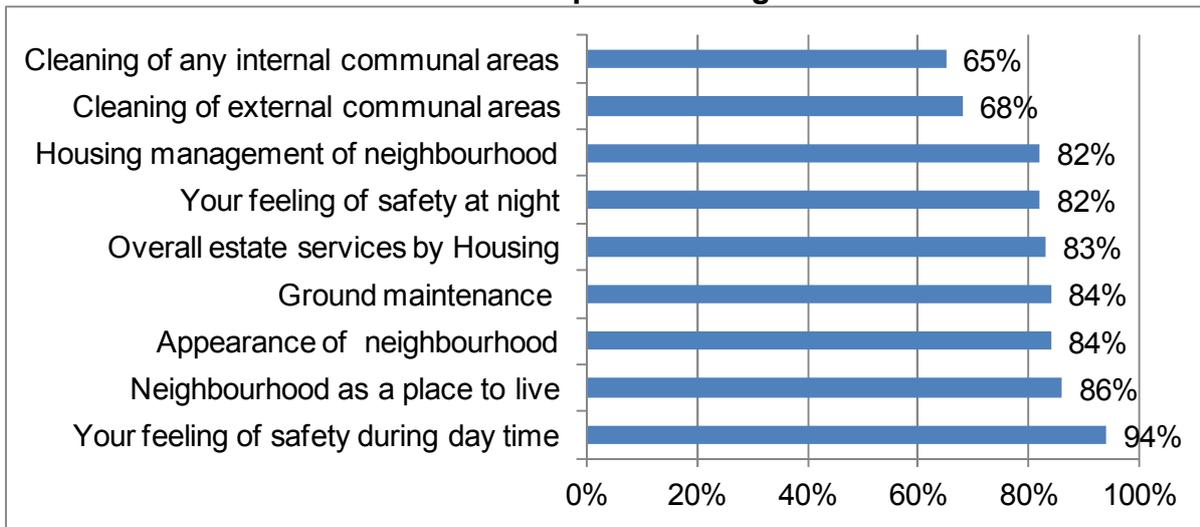
Chart 14: Satisfaction with management of neighbourhood



Satisfaction with aspects of the neighbourhood

Respondents were asked about their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with certain aspects of their neighbourhood (Chart 15). The aspects of neighbourhood with the most satisfaction levels were 'feeling safe during day time' (94%) and satisfaction with 'neighbourhood as a place to live' with 86%. Lower satisfaction levels were recorded for 'cleaning of internal communal areas' (65%) and 'cleaning of external communal areas' (68%). It should be pointed out that cleaning of communal areas is mainly applicable to flatted properties and further evidence indicates that these were less of an issue to most tenants in other house types.

Chart 15: Overall satisfaction with aspects of neighbourhood



Dissatisfaction with aspects of neighbourhood by area

Table 8 shows a breakdown of the varying levels of dissatisfaction with aspects of neighbourhood by areas in Midlothian.

- In Bonnyrigg, dissatisfaction levels across all aspects of the neighbourhood were generally low. For instance, dissatisfaction levels with management of neighbourhood’ was 6% and 5% for the ‘appearance of neighbourhood’.
- In Dalkeith and Mayfield dissatisfaction levels were higher. For instance, 21% of respondents in Dalkeith and 18% of respondents in Mayfield did not feel safe at night.

Table 8: Dissatisfaction with aspects of neighbourhood by area

	Appearance of your neighbourhood	Ground maintenance	Cleaning of any internal communal areas	Cleaning of external communal areas	Overall estate services provided by Housing Service	Your feeling of safety during day time	Your feeling of safety at night	Housing Service's management of your neighbourhood	Neighbourhood as a place to live?
Bonnyrigg	5%	5%	3%	4%	1%	1%	1%	6%	2%
Dalkeith	20%	15%	7%	6%	13%	5%	21%	15%	10%
Gorebridge	11%	7%	4%	5%	7%	6%	9%	13%	9%
Mayfield	16%	5%	4%	8%	6%	5%	18%	7%	2%
Penicuik	4%	5%	8%	8%	4%	1%	11%	0%	0%

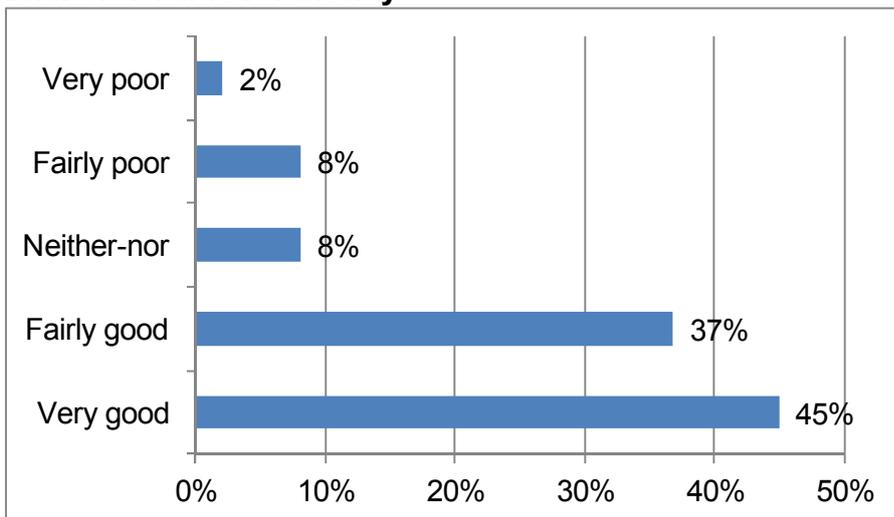
Satisfaction that rent provides value for money

Respondents were asked whether they considered that the rent they paid was lower, about the same, or higher than other Council or housing association landlords. 45% said rent was ‘about the same’ and 7% indicated their rent was higher while 19% said rent was lower. A significant proportion (29%) said they did not know.

In addition, Chart 16 below shows the majority of respondents (82%) thought their rent provided good value for money. 10% of respondents felt that the rent they paid was not good value for money.

Respondents living in Semi detached or detached (88%) and Terraced housing (84%) were more likely to feel their rent provided good value for money while those in flats were less likely to state a positive response (69%). Additionally, older respondents were more likely to feel their rent provided good value for money than younger respondents. For example, 92% of those aged 75+ thought their rent provided good value for money compared to 71% of those aged 35-44.

Chart 16: Value for money



Respondents who felt they did not receive value for money were asked what they thought would have to happen for them to say rent represented good value for money. Table 9 shows that the most common responses indicated they wanted ‘Rent levels reduced or smaller rent increases’ (35%), followed by 32% who wanted ‘Houses improved’ (Table 9).

Table 9: Things to happen for rent to be good value for money

Rent levels reduced/smaller increases	Houses improved	Improve the repair service	Improve customer service overall	Better neighbours/ neighbourhood	Total
35%	32%	15%	11%	7%	100%

Section 3: Repairs and maintenance service

Around half of total respondents (52%) said they had a repair or maintenance carried out in the last 12 months prior to the survey.

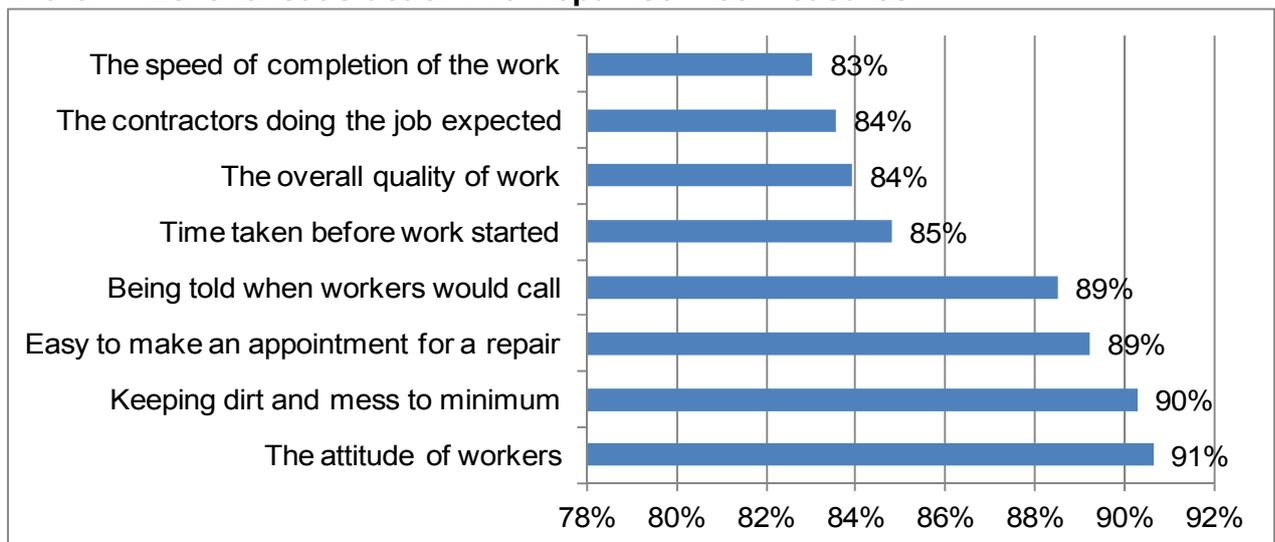
Respondents were asked how satisfied or dissatisfied they were with the repairs and maintenance service provided by the Housing Service. The majority of respondents (81%) were satisfied with the repairs and maintenance service provided by the Council.

Repair service measures

Chart 17, below, shows the level of satisfaction with specific elements of the repairs service by those who said they had a repair in the last 12 months.

- 'The attitude of workers' had the highest satisfaction level (91%), followed by 'Keeping dirt and mess to minimum' (90%) then "Easy to make an appointment for a repair" (89%)
- The element with the lowest level of satisfaction was 'the speed of completion of the work' with 83% - although this is still a high level of satisfaction overall.

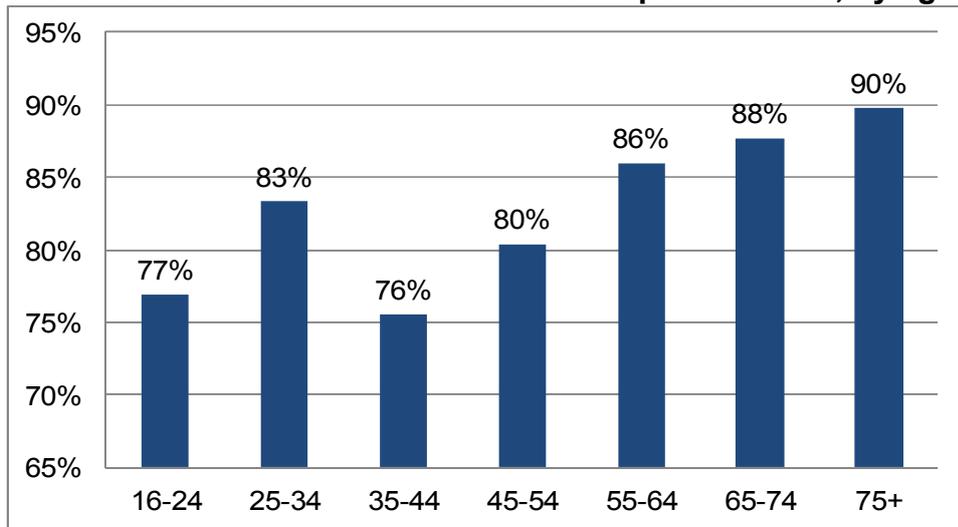
Chart 17: Level of satisfaction with repair service measures



Overall repairs service by age group

Chart 18, below, shows the level of satisfaction generally increased with the age group of the tenant. Older tenants were generally more satisfied with the overall repair service than younger tenants. On average, 90% of respondents aged 75+ expressed satisfaction with the repairs service followed by respondents aged 65-74 with 88%. Those aged 35-44 years were the least satisfied age group with an average score of 76%.

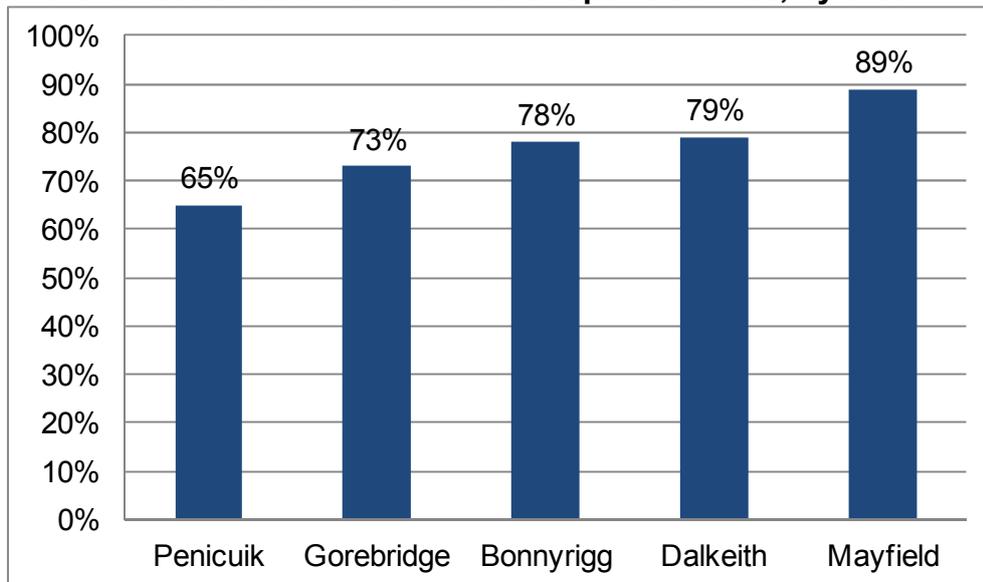
Chart 18: Satisfaction level with overall repairs service, by age group



Overall repairs service by area

Chart 19 shows the overall satisfaction levels for the repairs service across all areas in Midlothian, indicating a variation in satisfaction from one area to the other. The most satisfied tenants with repairs were in Mayfield (89%), Dalkeith (79%), Bonnyrigg (78%) and Gorebridge (73%). Penicuik had the lowest level of satisfaction of with repairs (65%). However, it should be recognised that a small sample of tenants were interviewed in each area and, as a result, there is less statistical certainty in results broken down into smaller areas as they can be influenced by a small number of respondents.

Chart 19: Satisfaction level with the repairs service, by area



Repair rating

Respondents who stated they were dissatisfied with the service they received were asked to explain the reason for this. Reasons given included:

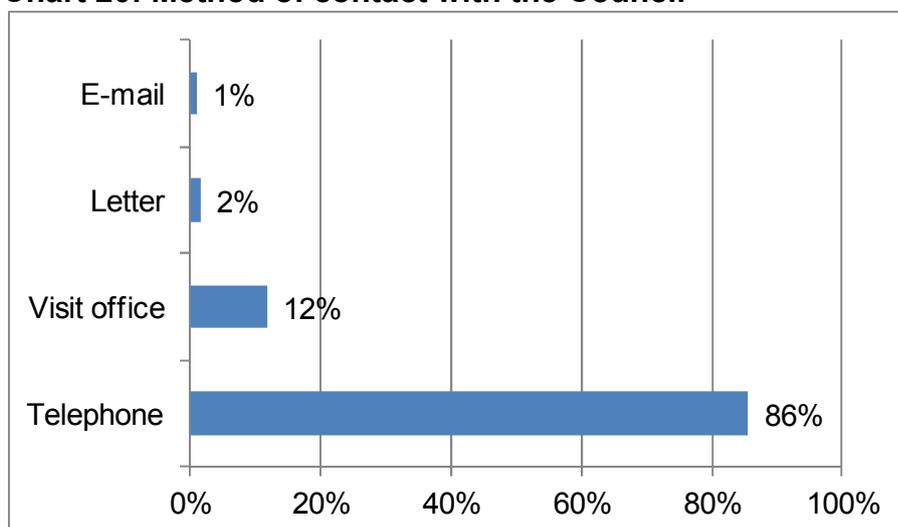
- Quality of work e.g. “Repairs longevity poor - work requires repeated action.”
- Time taken to complete work e.g. “Repairs service poor/slow/unresponsive.”
- Repairs not done e.g. “They did not do it at all.”

Section 4: Getting in touch with the Council

Almost half of all respondents (304) representing 49%, had been in contact with the Council in the last 12 months, compared to 307 respondents (50%) who had not.

Chart 20 shows that the most popular method of contacting the Council was by the telephone (86%), whilst, a far lower proportion contacted the Council through a visit to the Council’s housing office (12%), letter (2%) and by e-mail (1%). The only area which had a significant variation in the method of contact was Dalkeith, where 33% of respondents had visited the office, possibly due to the convenience of the Housing Office being close to their home. A total of 82% of respondents stated that they felt it was easy getting hold of the right person to deal with their enquiry.

Chart 20: Method of contact with the Council



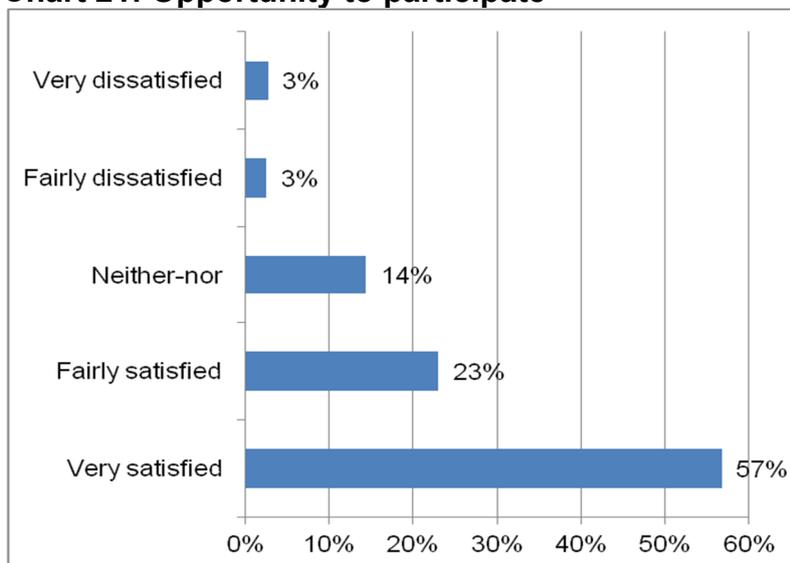
Those contacting the Council by telephone (83%) and office visits (81%) said they were able to get hold of the right person while those contacting via email (67%) and letter (20%) recorded the least satisfaction with getting hold of the right person. Additionally, older people found it was easier to get hold of the right person than younger people with 89% of those aged 75+ and 87% of those aged 65-74 saying they found it easy to get hold of the right person compared to 60% of 16-24 year olds.

- Helpfulness of staff: Respondents were asked if the staff they dealt with were helpful or unhelpful when contacting the Council. 86% of respondents found staff to be helpful, compared to 6% who found them unhelpful.
- Query answered in acceptable time frame: Overall, 80% of respondents said their query was answered in a time frame that was acceptable to them compared to 18% who indicated otherwise.

Opportunity to participate

Chart 21 shows that 80% of respondents were satisfied that the Council gave them the opportunity to participate in the Housing Services decision-making process while 6% said they were dissatisfied. 14% of respondents said they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with opportunities to participate. Younger respondents were less likely to express satisfaction. For instance, while 86% of 75+ year olds said they were satisfied with the opportunities to participate, a lower proportion of 16-24 year olds (69%) said they were satisfied.

Chart 21: Opportunity to participate



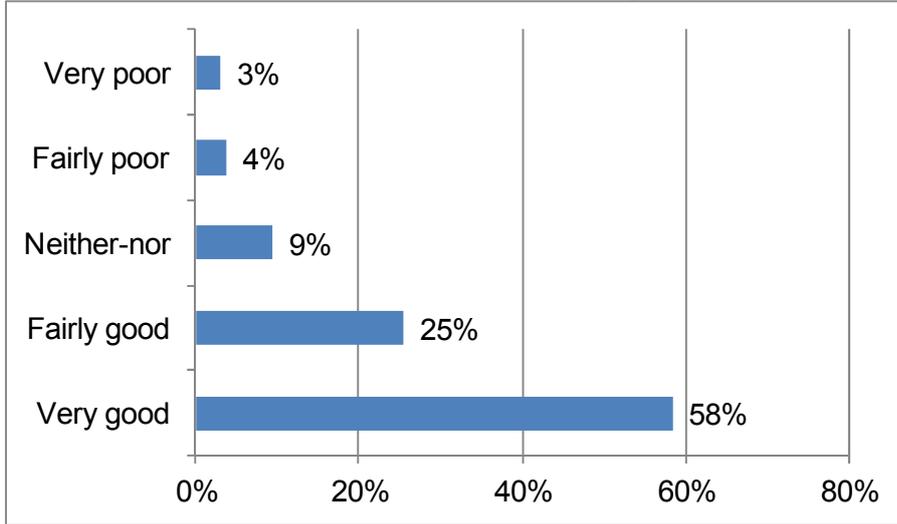
Furthermore, satisfaction with the 'opportunity to participate' in the decision making process was quite high across Midlothian with Mayfield (87%) and Dalkeith (85%) having the highest levels of respondents who said they were given the opportunity to participate. Penicuik had the lowest level of satisfaction with 71%.

Also, a higher percentage of respondents who indicated their ethnic origin as 'Scottish' were more satisfied with being given the opportunity by the Council to participate in the decision making process. This is in comparison to 62% of 'White Other' and 67% of 'Other' ethnic backgrounds. However, response for the other ethnic groups could be skewed because tenants from these backgrounds represent a very small number of total Council tenants.

Keeping tenants informed

Chart 22 shows the vast majority of tenants (83%) felt satisfied the Council kept them informed about services and decisions while 7% expressed dissatisfaction. Older respondents were more likely to be satisfied the Council kept them informed: 89% of 75+ year olds, followed by 87% of 65-74 year olds.

Chart 22: Levels of satisfaction with being kept informed



Tenants Views on housing priorities

Respondents were given a list of topical issues and were asked to identify three items from the list which they thought were the most important to them in relation to housing provision in Midlothian, as shown in the table below. The three most important issues to respondents were:

- Maintain affordable rents (56% of all tenants stated this as one of their three priorities).
- Build more affordable homes (48% of respondents stated this as a priority)
- Improve the condition of existing housing (36% of respondents stated this as a priority)

Table 1: Tenants views on housing priorities in Midlothian

Housing Priorities	% Of Respondents who indicated this was a priority for them
Maintaining affordable rents	56%
Build more affordable homes	48%
Improve the condition of existing housing	36%
Supporting older people to live independently	31%
Increasing housing options for older people	30%
Making homes more accessible for people with disabilities	29%
Bringing empty homes back into use	27%
Tackling homelessness	22%
Improving town centres	10%
Improving housing information and advice	10%

Most important areas of housing service

Respondents were presented with a list of services undertaken by the Council’s housing service and were asked to pick the three services of which they considered as most important to them (Table 2). The most important areas to respondents were ‘Keeping tenants informed’ (with 48% of respondents stating this as important to them) and ‘Taking tenants’ views into account’ (46%) followed by; ‘Providing an effective repairs and maintenance service’ and ‘Dealing with anti-social behaviour’ (both 45%).

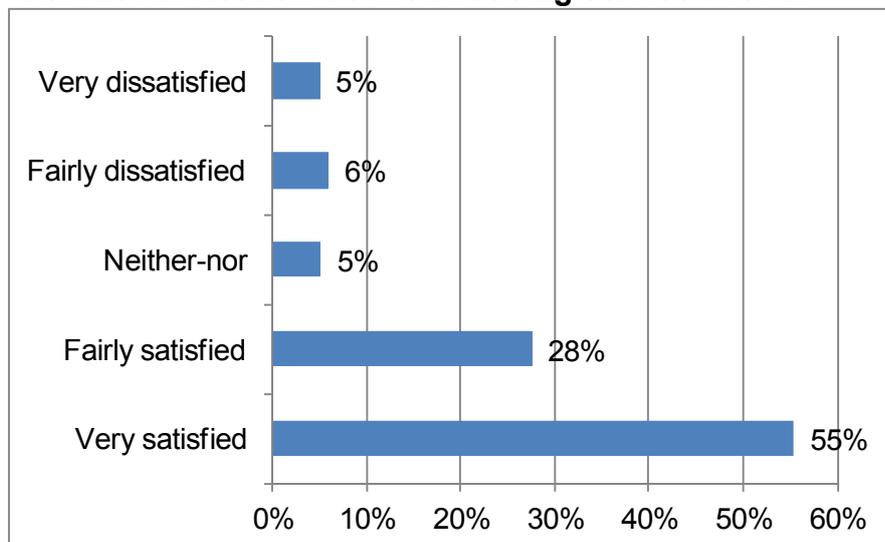
Table 2: Housing services by importance

Housing Services	% Of Respondents who indicated this was a priority for them
Keeping tenants informed	48%
Taking tenants' views into account	46%
Providing an effective repairs and maintenance service	45%
Dealing with anti-social behaviour	45%
Dealing with complaints effectively	36%
Providing good customer service	35%
Providing more opportunities to move home	21%
Providing accurate housing information and advice	12%
Enforcing tenancy conditions	11%

Section 5: Overall Satisfaction with housing service

Chart 23 illustrates that 83% of respondents were satisfied with the overall housing service provided by the Council. A low proportion of respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the housing service provided (11%) by the Council. In addition, 5% of respondents stated that they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the housing service provided by the Council.

Chart 23: Midlothian Council housing service overall



Satisfaction with overall housing service by area

Table 3, below, shows the level of satisfaction with the housing service by areas of Midlothian. The highest level of satisfaction was in Bonnyrigg (93%) followed by Mayfield (86%) while the area with the lowest satisfaction rate was Penicuik (68%).

Table 3: Overall satisfaction with Council service

Area	Very/Fairly Satisfied	
	No	%
Bonnyrigg	140	93%
Dalkeith	118	82%
Gorebridge	90	83%
Mayfield	87	86%
Penicuik	77	68%

*Some areas have been merged due to the small number of respondents.

Among other factors, the house type that a tenant lives in may contribute to their level of satisfaction. For instance, Table 4, below, shows respondents living in flats were more likely to have lower levels of satisfaction than those in other house types. This is because most tenants tend to prefer houses to flats and as such tend to be less satisfied with living in flats. Consequently, areas with a higher proportion of respondents living in flats were more likely to record a higher level of dissatisfaction with the housing service.

Table 4: Satisfaction levels by house type

	Satisfaction with overall service	Overall satisfaction with quality of home	Satisfaction with neighbourhood as a place to live
Amenity/Sheltered	89%	91%	96%
Semi/Detached	89%	90%	89%
Flat	72%	77%	86%
Four in Block	83%	79%	78%
Terrace	81%	86%	87%

Satisfaction with the overall housing service by age

Older people were more satisfied with the overall housing service with 89% of those aged 75+ saying they were satisfied, followed by 85% of 65-74 year olds (Table 5). On the other hand, younger people (16-24) recorded the lowest level of satisfaction with overall service (69%) – although only small number of young people were surveyed. Also a higher proportion of younger tenants lived in flatted properties which may have affected their level of satisfaction.

Table 5: Midlothian Council overall service by age group

Age	Very/Fairly Satisfied
16-24	69%
25-34	86%
35-44	76%
45-54	82%
55-64	84%
65-74	85%
75 plus	89%

Households with a disability

Survey analysis illustrates that the views of households living with a disability and those without a disability on key aspects of housing service were similar with little variation (Table 6). 80% of respondents with disability and 85% of respondents without any disability were satisfied with the overall Council service

Table 6: Overall satisfaction with Council service by disability

	Satisfaction with overall service	Overall satisfaction with quality of home	Satisfaction with neighbourhood as a place to live
Disabled- Yes	80%	87%	85%
Disabled- No	85%	84%	87%

Satisfaction based on ethnicity

Respondents from all ethnic groups expressed high levels of satisfaction with the overall service by the Council's Housing Service (Table 7). For instance, all households who identified their ethnic origin as Scottish reported 83% satisfaction level with the overall service. Although other households also recorded significant levels of satisfaction, it should be noted that minority ethnic groups represent very small proportion of Midlothian tenants.

Table 7: Overall satisfaction with Council service by ethnicity

	Very/Fairly Satisfied
Scottish	83%
White Other	72%
Other	100%

Comments from respondents

Tenants were also given the opportunity to comment on the housing service. Respondents provided both positive and negative comments, including:

Positive comments

“I've always been satisfied.”

“Very happy with them.”

“Officers are very efficient and helpful.”

“They are good and keep us informed.”

“They're very helpful and do try to resolve issues.”

“Thankful for a good Council; they're amazing.”

“Always very helpful and accommodating.”

Negative comments

“Undesirable people get houses before decent people.”

“Take more notice of tenants about repairs.”

“Build more Council houses - not enough.”

“Communication poor between individual repair workers & between tenants.”

“Would like repair service to listen to us.”

“Poor at handling anti-social neighbours.”

Section 6: Comparative analysis

The purpose of this section is to compare the 2016/17 survey responses with those of previous surveys and other landlords. This will not only provide the Council with the evidence regarding performance, but also will help the Council in making important decisions on future service priorities.

Chart 24 shows that there has been an increasing level of overall satisfaction with the Housing Service since 2012 – satisfaction in 2016/17 was 6% higher than in 2012 and 4% higher than in 2016/17.

Chart 24: Overall Satisfaction with the Housing Service, 2012, 2014/15 and 2016/17

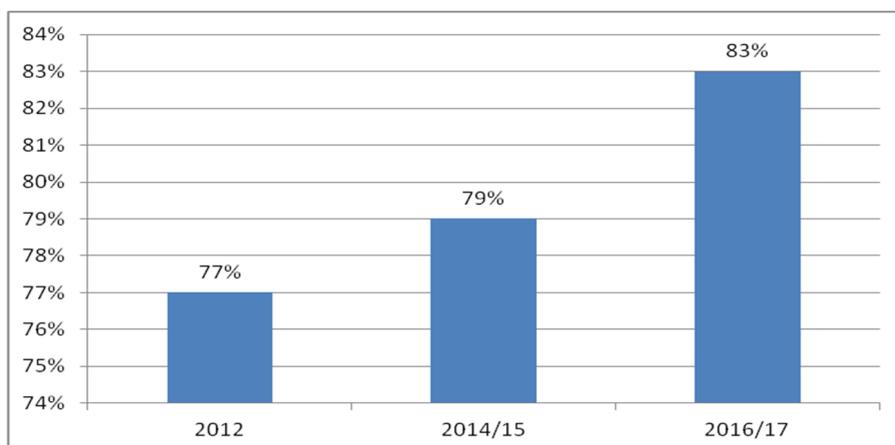


Table 8, shown below, compares the level of satisfaction for key areas of tenant satisfaction for the previous three tenant satisfaction surveys. It shows that the most recent satisfaction survey shows increased satisfaction levels for 5 out of the 6 indicators (with the other indicator showing the same level of satisfaction as the previous survey). Satisfaction levels have significantly increased for three areas since the previous survey – providing opportunities to participate in decision-making and satisfaction with management of the neighbourhood (both 18% increases) and satisfaction with the rent charge providing value for money (9% increase).

Table 8: Satisfaction levels for key questions 2012, 2014/15 & 2016/17

Measure	MLC 2012	MLC 2014/15	MLC 2016/17	Difference between 2014/15 & 2016/17
Satisfaction with Management of Neighbourhood	79%	67%	85%	18%
Satisfaction with Rent providing Value for Money	N/A	73%	82%	9%
Satisfaction with Repairs Service	74%	79%	81%	2%
Satisfaction with Quality of Home	85%	85%	85%	0%
Satisfaction with Keeping Tenants Informed	75%	82%	84%	2%
Satisfaction with Opportunities to Participate	67%	62%	80%	18%

Benchmarking with other landlords in Scotland

Table 9, below, compares Midlothian satisfaction levels with other local authority landlords in Scotland. It also shows the satisfaction results for the highest and lowest satisfaction levels in each category available for comparison.

It shows that respondents in Midlothian had similar levels of overall satisfaction with the Housing Service to that of tenants of other local authority landlords in Scotland – 83% of respondents stated they were satisfied which was the average level of satisfaction for Scottish local authority landlords. This is an improvement since the 2014 Survey when the satisfaction level with the overall service in Midlothian was slightly lower than for other local authority landlords.

In addition, specific service areas in Midlothian had higher than the local authority average satisfaction levels, such as satisfaction with tenants being given the opportunity participate (80% compared to 71%) and satisfaction with management of the neighbourhood (85% compared to 81%). Satisfaction with the repairs service was the only service area with a lower level of satisfaction in Midlothian compared with other local authorities (81% compared to 88%).

Table 9: Benchmarking satisfaction scores with other landlords in Scotland³

Measure	MLC 2016/17	Council Average 2015/16	Difference between MLC & Council Average	Highest Council	Lowest Council
Satisfaction with Management of Neighbourhood	85%	81%	4%	93%	67%
Satisfaction with Rent providing Value for Money	82%	79%	3%	89%	67%
Satisfaction with Repairs Service	81%	88%	-7%	97%	79%
Satisfaction with Quality of Home	85%	84%	1%	90%	69%
Satisfaction with Keeping Tenants Informed	84%	82%	2%	91%	63%
Satisfaction with Opportunities to Participate	80%	71%	9%	87%	46%
Satisfaction with the Housing Service Overall	83%	83%	0%	91%	74%

Conclusion and recommendations

The results of the 2016/17 Tenant Satisfaction Survey provides the Housing Service with detailed information about council tenants and their views on the services provided. The Survey showed an improvement in the level of tenants' satisfaction with the Housing Service since the previous Survey in 2014. There were also significant increases in satisfaction levels relating to tenants being given opportunities to participate in decision-making in relation to the service and the management of neighbourhoods. The Housing Service provided by Midlothian Council has a similar level of satisfaction to that of other local authority landlords in Scotland.

In terms of tenants who were reporting lower levels of satisfaction, it was notable that younger tenants and tenants who live in flats were less likely to be satisfied with the Council's Housing Service. It was also evident that satisfaction levels were lower for tenants in the Penicuik area – although this information should be treated with caution as only a small proportion of tenants in this area were surveyed.

Comparing Midlothian Council's results with that of other local authority landlords shows similar satisfaction levels in most areas.

As a result of this Survey it is recommended that the following recommendations will help to bring about further improvements in the level of tenant satisfaction with Midlothian Council's Housing Service:

1. Publish the results of the Tenant Satisfaction Survey in a range of formats and make tenants and service users aware of the results.

³ Information on 26 out of 32 local authorities was available for this comparison. One housing association, Glasgow Housing Association, was included in the comparison. Data for other Council's for 2016/17 is not yet available so 2015/16 data was used.

2. Share the results with all staff involved in supporting Housing Services and identify key areas for improvement with staff.
3. Organise Tenant Scrutiny Projects for members of Midlothian Tenant Panel for key service areas.
4. Identify good practice examples from other Council landlords with high levels of satisfaction which could be implemented in Midlothian.
5. Undertake a Satisfaction Survey for households living in recently built housing in order that feedback can be taken into account for future housing developments.

Appendix 1: Focus Group Feedback

As part of the Tenant Satisfaction Survey research work carried out by Knowledge Partnership, a series of three follow up focus groups were carried out during March 2017.

Scope

The three focus groups (with a total of 20 tenants) discussed the same set of topics during a meeting lasting 60 minutes. The topics discussed by the two groups were as follows:

- What the Council's Housing Service does well
- The repairs service – areas for improvement
- Neighbourhood issues
- Value for money
- What should be the Service's main priorities?

Summary of Key Issues

- In terms of considering if the rent charged was providing value for money, tenants felt that seeing their property being upgraded was important in justifying rent increases. Some tenants were concerned about high rents being a disincentive to working for some people.
- Mixed views about the repairs service, with some tenants being positive about the service they have received while some tenants expressed dissatisfaction.
- In terms of how tenants consider the attractiveness of their neighbourhood the following issues were important in considering their level of satisfaction:
 - Dog fouling
 - Anti-social behaviour
 - Fly tipping
 - Car parking

Priorities

Tenants were asked what should be the Housing Service's priority areas of service going forward. This list comprised:

- Improving the repairs service, including responsiveness.
- Improving the way in which property improvement is carried out i.e. better quality works, done right first time.
- Improving the approach to dealing with anti-social behaviour
- Heating costs (new build).
- Improving sound insulation.
- A consideration of how decisions around services impact tenants' children. This is a specific point raised by one tenant who requested a garden fence for the safety of her children but was told this was not a priority.
- Tackling drug dealing and anti-social behaviour.
- How properties are allocated. Some tenants in Gorebridge and Penicuik thought that the points based system resulted in 'undesirables' being allocated to schemes which led to the deterioration of an area:
- Continue to have a focus on improving old stock.

- Building more smaller properties.
- Improving parking arrangements.