

Midlothian Council Tenant Satisfaction Survey 2012**Report by Eibhlin McHugh, Acting Director, Communities and Wellbeing****1 Purpose of Report**

This report conveys the key findings of the Tenant Satisfaction Survey which was undertaken between April and May 2012. All council tenants were sent a survey form to complete asking them their views on a number of areas including their satisfaction with their home, the repairs service, their neighbourhood and their overall level of satisfaction with the Council's Housing Service. The full report has been placed in the Members Library. Actions have also been identified to focus on areas for improvement.

2 Background

2.1 Methodology: As part of the Midlothian Council's Tenant Participation and Customer Engagement Strategy 2012 – 2015 it was agreed to undertake a Tenant Satisfaction Survey in 2012 to seek the views of tenants on key issues that affect them and their tenancy. The Survey was developed using the STAR (Survey of Tenants and Residents) Format which is considered to be the industry standard for Surveys of this type. Using this widely used format enables Midlothian Council to compare its findings with other local authority landlords in Scotland. Most questions ask the tenant to tick one option from the following choices:

- Very Satisfied
- Quite Satisfied
- Neither Satisfied or Dissatisfied
- Quite Dissatisfied
- Very Dissatisfied

This Report will usually group together responses, for example, very satisfied and quite satisfied together provides a percentage for the total proportion of satisfied respondents.

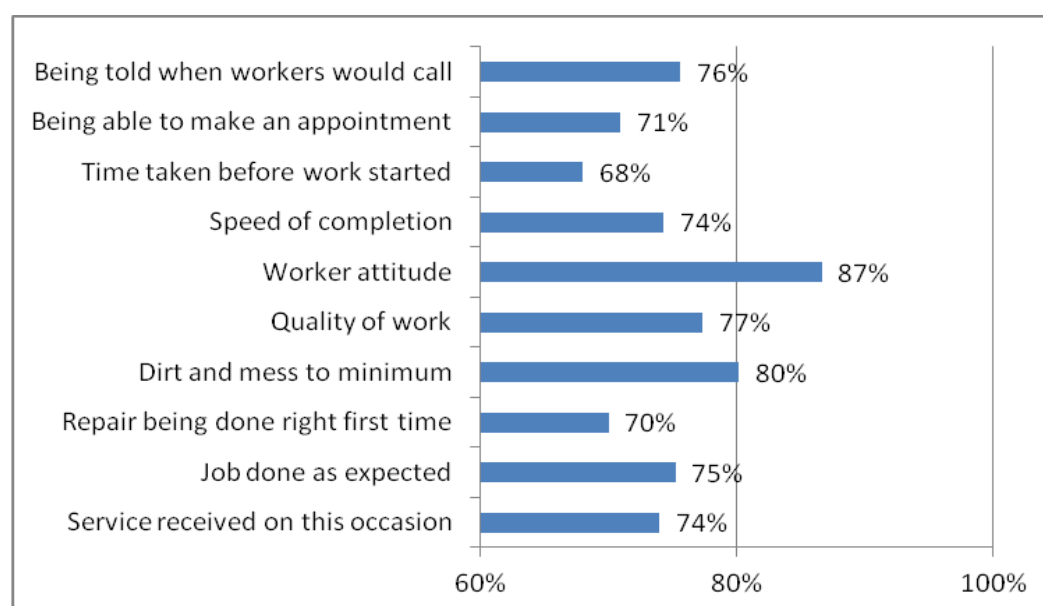
2.2 The Survey data will help to determine future service priorities and is also useful evidence for the Scottish Housing Regulator in terms of how the Council is performing as a landlord. In total, 6,402 surveys were posted out to all permanent Council tenants. To increase the number of respondents, tenants were also able to undertake the survey online. Of the 6,402 surveys sent out, 1,797 were returned representing a response rate of 28%.

2.3 About the Household: In terms of the gender of respondents, 61% were female compared to 39% being male, not dissimilar to the overall gender split of lead council tenants. Most respondents (43%) were aged 60+, followed by respondents aged 55-64 (20%), only a small

proportion of respondents were young people – 3% of respondents were aged between 18 and 24. A relatively small proportion of those who responded had children in their household under the age of 16. Almost half the respondents (47%) stated that they had a disability. Most respondents lived in semi detached/detached housing (36% of respondents) followed by terraced housing (32%).

- 2.4 Satisfaction with Home and Neighbourhood:** The majority of respondents (85%) stated were satisfied with the overall quality of their home, compared to 7% who stated they were dissatisfied. The majority of tenants were also satisfied with the condition of their home (79%, compared to 10% being dissatisfied). In terms of their satisfaction with their neighbourhood as a place to live, most respondents were satisfied (80%), with 11% being dissatisfied. Satisfaction with their neighbourhood varied considerably according to house type. For example, a lower proportion of tenants living in flats (59%) were satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live. A total of 66% of respondents felt their neighbourhood had either greatly improved, slightly improved or stayed the same over the previous three years, whilst 23% felt it had either slightly declined or greatly declined. The two most commonly reported reasons for a respondent stating that their neighbourhood had declined was dog fouling and litter.
- 2.5 Satisfaction with Repairs Service:** A total of 74% of respondents expressed satisfaction with the repairs service they received for the last repair they requested from the Council. In terms of specific questions in relation to the repairs service, tenants expressed a high level of satisfaction with the attitude of the worker (87%) and also their ability to keep dirt and mess to a minimum whilst carrying out a repair (80%). The lowest level of satisfaction was with the time taken before work started (68%), followed by the repair being done right the first time (70%). The Survey indicated a higher level of satisfaction with the repairs service among older people and households with a disability.

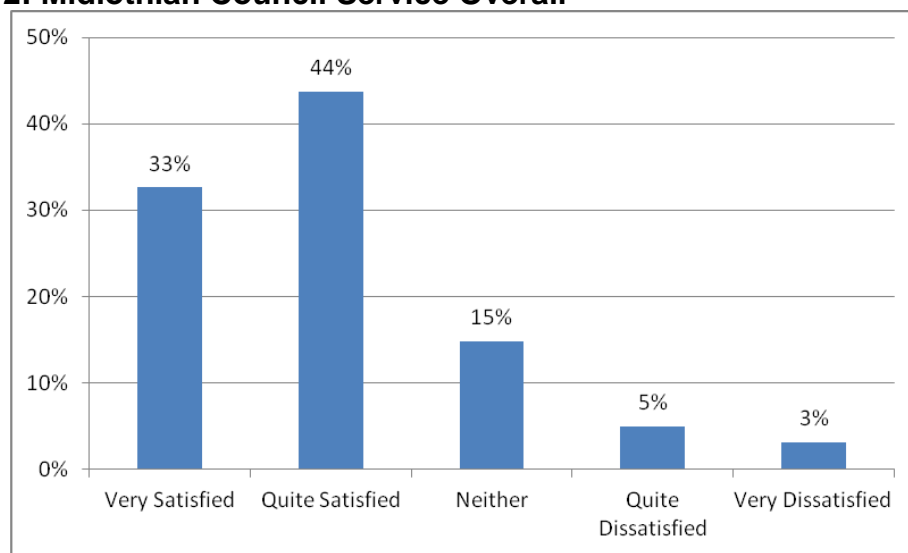
Chart 1: Level of satisfaction with Repair Service



2.6 Getting in touch with the Council: The most popular method of contacting the Council was via the telephone (76%), whilst a far lower proportion contacted the Council through an office visit (17%), and contact via correspondence (4%) and e-mail (2%) was low. In addition, 63% of respondents said they had found it easy to get hold of the right person compared to 20% who said it was difficult. Overall, 86% of respondents found staff to be helpful when contacting the Council. In response to the question: 'How satisfied or dissatisfied are you that Midlothian Council gives you the opportunity to make your views known?' 67% noted that they were satisfied with this, while only 7% said they were dissatisfied. A significant proportion (26%) were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. Younger respondents were less likely to say that the Council gave them the opportunity to make their views known; in particular only 45% of those aged 25-34 said they were satisfied. Also, three quarters of respondents felt the Council was either very good or fairly good with keeping them informed about things that might affect them as a resident.

2.7 Overall Level of Satisfaction with Housing Service: More than three quarters (77%) of respondents were satisfied with the overall housing service provided by the Council. Notably, the level of dissatisfaction was low (8%), with a further 15% respondents stating that they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the housing service provided. Younger tenants expressed lower levels of satisfaction and it was felt that this was at least partly due to them living in less desirable housing compared to tenants who had lived in their home for many years.

Chart 2: Midlothian Council Service Overall



2.8 Comparison with 2009 Tenant Satisfaction Survey: There are some differences between the results of the Tenant Satisfaction undertaken in 2009 and 2012. Firstly, there was a significantly lower response rate in 2009, with only 6% of tenants responding in 2009 compared with 28% in 2012. One reason for the increased response rate was the prize draw offered to encourage responses. This means the Survey findings in 2012 are more robust, due to a larger sample of tenants. In

2009, 79.8% of tenants were satisfied compared to 76.6% of tenants in 2012 – a minor reduction in the level of satisfaction. Conversely, the level of dissatisfaction has decreased during the same period, from 13.2% of tenants in 2009 to 8.7% in 2012. What is also notable is that the proportion of tenants with neutral views had more than doubled from 7% in 2009 to 14.7% in 2012.

2.9 Comparison with other Scottish Local Authorities: The following Councils have recently undertaken Tenant Satisfaction Surveys and published their results:

- Dundee City Council
- West Dunbartonshire Council
- Perth and Kinross Council
- East Dunbartonshire Council

Whilst not all Surveys asked the same questions, the Table below compares the findings for the most commonly used questions among local authorities. Results for each landlord have been made anonymous. It is notable that the response rate for the Midlothian Council Survey was much higher than all of the other Council's being benchmarked against. The Table below shows that compared to the other Councils, Midlothian Council tenants expressed the highest satisfaction with the condition of their home, the quality of their home, and having their views being taken into account compared with the other Council areas. The overall level of satisfaction for Midlothian was 76%, which was significantly higher than Council B (of which 65% of respondents responded as either very satisfied or satisfied, but significantly lower than Council D, 87% of whom stated they were satisfied or very satisfied.

**Table 1: Percentage of Respondents stating that they were Satisfied/
Very Satisfied**

Subject	Midlothian	Council A	Council B	Council C	Council D
Response Rate	28%	9%	16%	n/a	17%
Satisfaction with condition of home	79%	72%	61%	68%	n/a
Satisfaction with overall quality of your home	85%	78%	70%	78%	n/a
Satisfaction with neighbourhood as a place to live	80%	80%	71%	85%	87%
Satisfaction with the Council taking account of tenants views	67%	59%	50%	n/a	64%
Taking everything into account, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the overall service provided	76%	77%	65%	78%	87%

3 Report Implications

3.1 Resource

There are no resource implications within this Report.

3.2 Risk

Failure to implement effective responses to issues identified within the Report could result in a reduced level of tenant satisfaction in future Surveys.

3.3 Policy

Strategy

The proposal in this report meets the council's strategic aim:

Our Community and Society

We will strive to ensure that all Midlothian people have a home that meets their needs.

Our Council

We will provide excellent customer service.

We will make the best use of our resources.

Consultation

There has been no specific consultation in relation to this Report.

Equalities

An Equalities Impact Assessment has not been undertaken in relation to this Report.

Sustainability

Providing services which receive a high level of tenant satisfaction will help to ensure sustainable communities within Midlothian.

4 Recommendations

It is recommended that Cabinet note the contents of the Report and agree to:

- a) The implementation of recommendations proposed in Appendix 1 of this Report.

Date 30 July 2012

Report Contact: Kevin Anderson
Name Tel No 0131 271 3225 E-mail
kevin.anderson@midlothian.gov.uk

Appendix 1

Tenant Satisfaction Improvement Action Plan

Subject Area	Recommendation
General Feedback	1. Publicise the findings of the Tenants Survey by publishing key points in the Tenant Newsletter. 2. Publicise the findings of the Tenants Survey by providing a leaflet summarising the key findings and make available in the Housing Reception. 3. Provide a summary version of the Tenants Survey on the Housing page of the Council Website. 4. Present the Survey findings to relevant housing, customer contact and repairs service staff to raise awareness of tenant views towards the Service. 5. Present the Survey findings to the two Registered Tenants Organisations in Midlothian and discuss potential recommendations. 6. Consider inviting a proportion of tenants who were dissatisfied to further elaborate on their views as part of a focus group or tenant scrutiny panel to address specific issues. 7. Email summary of findings to those on the Register of Interested Tenants who have provided their email address.
Satisfaction with Home and Neighbourhood	8. Undertake further analysis of Survey findings to determine specific areas which have a high level of complaints in terms of litter, dog fouling, noise etc and share findings with the relevant Service. Ask for any updates or action taken on a periodic basis. 9. Use Tenants Survey data to develop an area profile prior to Estate Walkabouts to highlight areas of concern in specific areas.
Satisfaction with Repairs Service	10. Consider developing Customer Feedback Surveys, similar to those presently undertaken for Allocations, and Homelessness. 11. Develop advice leaflet on the repairs service and make available in the Housing Office. 12. Consider if Repairs Teams should provide a signed sheet explaining if further work is required and when this will be carried out. 13. Consider ways of increasing flexibility for choosing a repairs appointment and tracking the response time or where the client is in the 'queue'. 14. Publicise to tenant's performance of the Repairs Service in meeting repairs target timescales. 15. Consider development of online repairs request form.
	16. Increase use of on line forms as a means of contact and investigate potential for interactive form

Getting in touch with the Council	<p>information, e.g. providing waiting list points information etc.</p> <p>17. Promote the use of the website and tenants handbook in answering common queries.</p> <p>18. Continue to promote the Register of Interested Tenants as a means of providing information and advice for tenants who wish to engage with the Council.</p> <p>19. Consider how appropriate the current method of contacting the Council is in relation to a housing enquiry.</p>
Overall Level of Satisfaction	<p>20. Address the lower level of satisfaction expressed by younger age groups by improving methods of engagement e.g. use of social networking sites and online forums and engaging with young people through specific groups, including Midlothian Youth Platform.</p> <p>21. Undertake a Tenant Scrutiny/Shadowing Exercise to increase the understanding of the Service by Tenants.</p> <p>22. Undertake Peer Review with high performing Local Authority landlords to consider opportunities for service improvement.</p> <p>23. Monitor future Tenant Satisfaction Survey results undertaken by other Registered Social Landlords in Scotland for future comparative analysis.</p>