

Midlothian Council Tenant Satisfaction Survey 2014

Report by Eibhlin McHugh, Joint Director, Health & Social Care

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1** This Report details the key findings of the Tenant Satisfaction Survey which was undertaken during 2014. The Survey data forms part of the data requirements for the Annual Return of the Charter, which is submitted to the Scottish Housing Regulator and made available for all tenants. Survey results also assist in the identification of areas where the Housing Service could be further improved.
- 1.2** All council tenants were sent a survey form to complete asking them their views on a number of areas including satisfaction with their home, the repairs service, their neighbourhood and the overall level of satisfaction with the Housing Service that they received. Survey results are also compared with that of previous years and benchmarked against other local authority landlord results.

2. Methodology

- 2.1** As part of Midlothian Council's Tenant Participation and Customer Engagement Strategy 2012 – 2015 it was agreed to undertake a Tenant Satisfaction Survey in 2014 to seek the views of tenants on key issues that affect them and their tenancy. Of the 6,662 surveys sent out, 1,125 were returned representing a response rate of 17%. The majority of surveys (1,090) were returned by post, while 35 surveys were completed online.
- 2.2** 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 allows comparison with other peers groups. 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
- 2.3** This Survey Report usually groups responses together, for example, very satisfied and quite satisfied grouped together provides a percentage for the total proportion of satisfied respondents.

3 About the Household

The profile of respondents by gender shows a greater percentage of respondents were female (59%) compared to 41% being male which matched the overall gender split of lead council tenants in Midlothian. Most respondents (49%) were aged 65+, whilst only a small proportion of respondents were among the younger age categories with 10% of respondents being aged between 16 and 34. A relatively small proportion of those who responded had children in their household under the age of 16 (15%). Almost half the respondents (49%) stated that they had a disability. In terms of the length of tenancy, the most common group of respondents were those who had lived in their property for between 2 and 5 years (26%) of respondents. However a significant number of respondents had lived in their tenancy for more than 20 years (21% of respondents).

4 Satisfaction with Home and Neighbourhood

The majority of respondents (85%) stated that they were satisfied with the overall quality of their home, compared to 7% who stated they were dissatisfied. There was some variation depending on what house type a respondent lived in. For example, respondents living in semi detached and detached properties were most satisfied (90%) while those living in flats indicated a lower level of satisfaction (71%). In terms of satisfaction with the neighbourhood as a place to live, the majority of respondents expressed satisfaction (80%) with a small proportion reporting that they were dissatisfied. In terms of neighbourhood management, 67% of respondents were satisfied with the council's management, 10% expressed dissatisfaction. The remaining proportion of respondents stated they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. Tenants were also given a list of nuisances in their neighbourhood and were asked to consider the extent to which each was a 'major problem', 'minor problem' or 'not a problem'. The most common problems reported in the neighbourhood were:

- Dog fouling (40%)
- Car parking (26%)
- Litter (17%).
- Drugs/ Alcohol (12%)
- Noisy neighbours (11%)
- Disruptive children (10%)

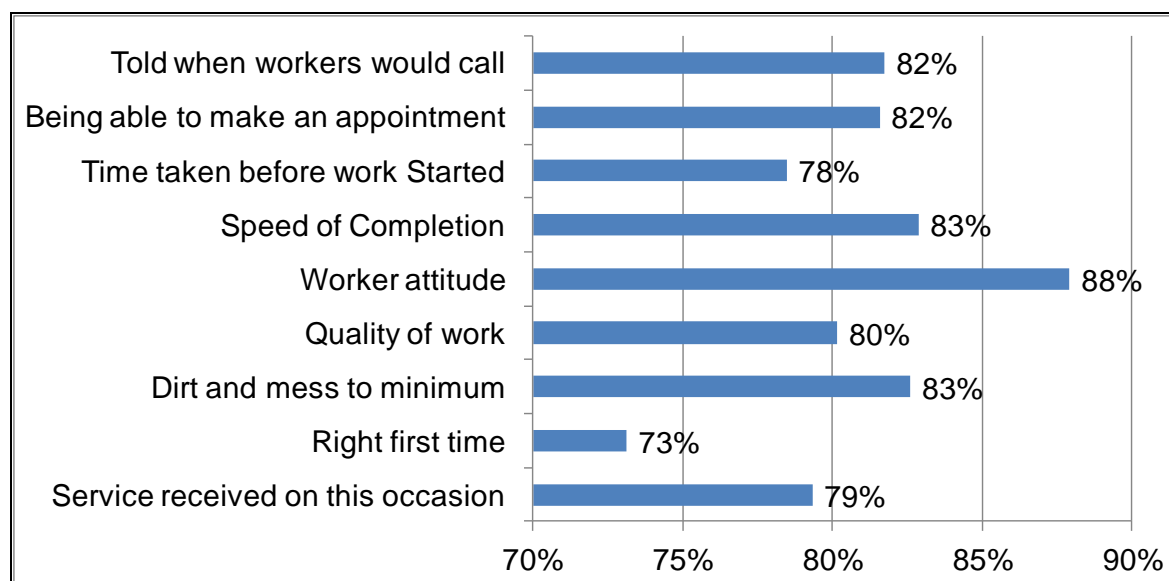
5 Satisfaction that Rent provides Value for Money

The majority of respondents (73%) were satisfied their rent provided good value for money compared to 9% who were dissatisfied. Additionally, older respondents were more satisfied that their rent provided good value for money than younger households. For example, 86% of those aged 75+ were satisfied compared to 44% of those aged 24-35.

6 Satisfaction with Repairs and Maintenance Service

The majority of respondents had a repair or maintenance carried out to their home over the previous 12 months (72%). Of those who had a repair carried out, 79% expressed satisfaction with the service that they had received. Chart 1, below shows the level of satisfaction with several aspects of the repairs service. The highest level of satisfaction was with the attitude of workers (88%), and the lowest level of satisfaction was to the question of whether the repair was completed right first time (73%).

Chart 1: Level of Satisfaction with Repair Service Measures



7 Getting in touch with the Council

The majority of respondents contacted the Housing Service via telephone (77%) with lower proportions visiting the Housing Office (15%) or writing via email (4%) or letter (3%). Most respondents found it easy to get hold of the right person (69%), while 16% said it was difficult. In terms of the helpfulness of staff, 86% of respondents found staff to be helpful and felt their query had been answered to in a reasonable time.

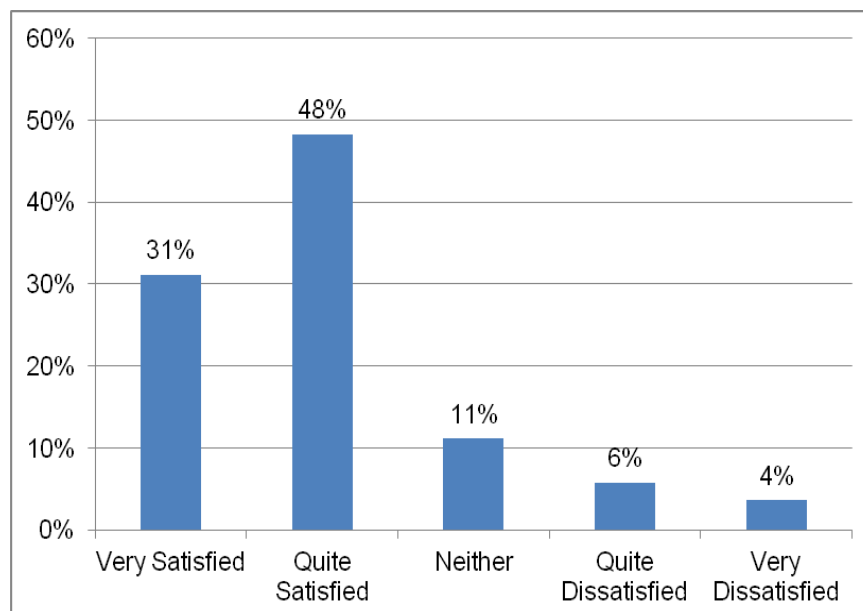
8 Opportunity to Participate and Keeping Tenants Informed

A total of 62% of respondents were satisfied that the Council gave them the opportunity to participate in the Housing Services decision making process while 8% said they were dissatisfied. A significant proportion (30%) said they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with opportunity to participate. In response to being asked how good the Council is at keeping tenants informed, 82% of respondents felt the Council was very good or fairly good at doing so.

9 Overall Satisfaction with Housing Service

Chart 2, below, shows that 79% of respondents expressed satisfaction with the Housing Service being provided by Midlothian Council, with 10% expressing dissatisfaction. Further analysis indicated that there was a higher level of satisfaction from tenants who lived in houses compared to flats and also higher satisfaction levels among older tenants. However, it should be noted that there was a lower response rate from younger people. Also a higher proportion of younger tenants lived in flatted properties which may have affected their level of satisfaction. In addition, households with children were less likely to be satisfied with overall service (67%) compared to those without children (81%).

Chart 2: Midlothian Council Housing Service Overall



10 Comparative Analysis

In 2009, 80% of tenants were satisfied compared to 77% of tenants in 2012 – a minor reduction in the level of satisfaction. This increased to 79% in 2014. It's worth noting that there was also a lower level of dissatisfaction in 2014, with 10% of tenants being dissatisfied in 2014, compared to 14% in 2009. It is evident that there is significant increases in tenant satisfaction in several areas of the Service, for example, satisfaction with being kept informed by the Council had improved from 66% in 2009 to 82% in 2014. There was also significant increases in satisfaction with aspects of the Repairs Service. This included the measure which received the lowest level of satisfaction in 2012, time taken before work started, which increased from 68% of respondents expressing satisfaction in 2012 to 78% in 2014.

Table 1, below, shows satisfaction levels with other local authority landlords in Scotland (2013/14 data). 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 satisfaction to that of tenants of other local authority landlords in Scotland. For instance, satisfaction with rent providing value for money and overall satisfaction was 2% lower than the local authority average. Satisfaction with opportunities to participate was 3% lower than the local authority average. Satisfaction scores for the quality of home and with being kept informed were both higher than the local authority average (4% and 5% higher respectively). Two areas had a significantly lower level of satisfaction: management of neighbourhood (-12%) and satisfaction with the repairs service (-7%). In the case of the repairs service, satisfaction with this service has increased significantly since the previous Survey in 2012. Benchmarking with other landlords should be treated with caution as not all landlords have been able to report satisfaction levels for 2013/14. In addition, Councils do not always conduct their Surveys using a standard method.

Table 1: Benchmarking Satisfaction Scores with Other Landlords in Scotland¹

Measure	MLC % Satisfaction	LA Average	Difference	Highest LA	Lowest LA
Satisfaction with Management of Neighbourhood	67%	79%	-12%	93%	67%
Satisfaction with Rent providing Value for Money	73%	75%	-2%	89%	63%
Satisfaction with Repairs Service	79%	86%	-7%	97%	62%
Satisfaction with Quality of Home	85%	81%	+4%	92%	69%
Satisfaction with Keeping Tenants Informed	83%	78%	+5%	89%	58%
Satisfaction with Opportunities to Participate	62%	65%	-3%	89%	42%
Satisfaction with Service Overall	79%	81%	-2%	91%	65%

11 Report Implications

11.1 Resource

There are no additional direct resource implications arising from this Report.

11.2 Risk

There is a risk that failure to implement effective responses to issues identified within the Report could result in a reduced level of tenant satisfaction in future Surveys.

¹ Information on 26 out of 32 local authorities was available for this comparison. One housing association, Glasgow Housing Association, was included in the comparison.

11.3 Single Midlothian Plan and Business Transformation

Themes addressed in this report:

- X Community safety
- ☐ Adult health, care
- ☐ Getting it right for every Midlothian child
- ☐ Improving opportunities in Midlothian
- X Sustainable growth and housing
- ☐ Business transformation and Best Value
- ☐ None of the above

This Strategy aligns with Midlothian's Single Outcome Agreement and with corporate and divisional priorities within Midlothian's Health & Social Care Division.

11.4 Impact on Performance and Outcomes

This Strategy aligns with Midlothian's Single Outcome Agreement and with corporate and divisional priorities within Midlothian's Health & Social Care Division.

The Tenant Survey 2014 supports the following Local Housing Strategy Actions:

- Support the involvement of tenants and residents in housing services in Midlothian.
- Implement the Estate Management Strategy to ensure that neighbourhoods are in good condition.
- Implement the Anti Social Behaviour Strategy to ensure that Anti Social Behaviour is effectively tackled.
- Ensure Council staff and partner organisations understand the needs of all equality strands through working with partner organisations and undertaking appropriate training to improve customer service.

11.5 Adopting a Preventative Approach

Regular surveys of Council Tenants ensures that Housing Services understand the key priorities for tenants which should result in an increase in the level of tenant satisfaction to ensure sustainable communities, reduce void properties and associated costs.

11.6 Involving Communities and Other Stakeholders

All Council tenants were sent the Survey form to complete and will also be invited to scrutinise the report findings which will be published and made widely available. This will help shape recommendations to improve services and tenant satisfaction.

11.7 Ensuring Equalities

An equalities impact assessment is not required for this Report. The Report will help to inform future equalities impact assessment as it provides useful inform on tenants in terms of gender, age, disability and ethnicity.

11.8 Sustainability

High levels of tenant satisfaction and participation help to ensure strong, attractive sustainable communities in Midlothian.

11.9 IT Issues

None

12 Recommendations

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- a) Note the contents of this Report, and
- b) agree for the Report to be made available for feedback to tenants to consider actions to be developed to further improve tenant satisfaction amongst council tenants in Midlothian.

Date: 22 April 2015

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Instructions: This box must be completed by the author of the report. The box will be copied and saved by the Council Secretariat who will delete it from the report prior to photocopying the agenda.

Title of Report: Midlothian Council Tenant Satisfaction Survey 2014

Meeting Presented to: Cabinet- May 2015

Author of Report: Kevin Anderson

I confirm that I have undertaken the following actions before submitting this report to the Council Secretariat (Check boxes to confirm):-

- x All resource implications have been addressed. Any financial and HR implications have been approved by the Head of Finance and Human Resources.***
- x All risk implications have been addressed.***
- x All other report implications have been addressed.***
- x My Director has endorsed the report for submission to the Council Secretariat.***

For Cabinet reports, please advise the Council Secretariat if the report has an education interest. This will allow the report to be located on the Cabinet agenda among the items in which the Religious Representatives are entitled to participate.

Likewise, please advise the Council Secretariat if any report for Midlothian Council has an education interest. The Religious Representatives are currently entitled to attend meetings of the Council in a non-voting observer capacity, but with the right to speak (but not vote) on any education matter under consideration, subject always to observing the authority of the Chair