# General needs

## STAR Tenant Satisfaction Survey 2015

STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Report by Scott Rumley & Adam Payne
scott.rumley@arp-research.co.uk
adam.payne@arp-research.co.uk

(t) 0844 272 6004
(w) www.arp-research.co.uk

# Contents

# 1. Introduction

## Background

This report details the results of Stroud District Council's 2015 tenant satisfaction survey, delivered by ARP Research. This is the first such survey for the Council using the HouseMark STAR survey methodology. This main body of the report covers the survey results for general needs tenants. A second report is also available containing the survey results for those in sheltered housing.

This survey uses HouseMark's STAR model which is the standardised methodology for tenant and resident surveys. Benchmark data for the 'core' questions is provided by HouseMark. www.housemark.co.uk/star

Throughout the report the survey data has been broken down and analysed by various categories, including by area and various equality groups. Where applicable the current survey results have also been compared against the 2011 STATUS survey, including tests to check if any of the changes are *statistically significant*. Finally, the results have also been benchmarked against the HouseMark STAR database for the core satisfaction questions, supplemented by ARP Research's own database for ancillary questions.

## About the survey

The survey was carried out between October and December 2015. A random selection of general needs tenants were sent a postal self completion questionnaire (1,500). This was followed by reminder where a new questionnaire was sent to every non respondent. A free prize draw was used to encourage response, and the survey was also available online.

In total 485 tenants took part in the survey, which represented a 32% response rate overall. This was lower than the typical 40% normally achieved in similar surveys, but this may in part be explained by significant disruptions to the postal service in the Stroud area during the fieldwork period. A sample of this size has a theoretical error margin of +/- 4.2% overall. The survey results were broadly representative by area and property type, so did not require further weighting.

## Understanding the results

Most of the results are given as percentages, which may not always add up to 100% because of rounding and/or multiple responses. It is also important to take care when considering the results for groups where the sample size is small. In addition, some of the results quoted for previous surveys may be different from those previously published due to changes in how these are now calculated in STAR.

Where there are differences in the results over time, or between groups, these are subjected to testing to discover if these differences are *statistically significant* . This tells us that we can by confident that the differences are real and not likely to be down to natural variation or chance.

For detailed information on the survey response rates, methodology, data analysis and benchmarking, please see appendix A.

# 2. Executive summary

| bench mark | 2011 result | change over time (colour if statistically significant) | proportion of tenants | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 84% | 83% | ↑ | 86% | satisfaction overall |
| 79% | 81% | ↑ | 83% | quality of home |
| 63% | 67% | ↓ | 64% | listens & takes account of views |
| 77% | 79% | ↑ | 80% | kept informed |
| 79% | 75% | ↑ | 78% | dealing with enquiries generally |
| 77% | N.A. | N.A. | 79% | repairs & maintenance overall |
| 86% | 87% | ↔ | 87% | neighbourhood as a place to live |

## Overall satisfaction

1. Overall, the general needs tenant satisfaction survey results in 2015 were a little better in comparison to the previous survey, with satisfaction scores up by one or two percentage points on the majority of core questions compared to 2011. Furthermore, for those areas where benchmark information is available the vast majority of results were generally at or above average when compared with other Councils and ALMOs.

2. This is epitomised by the overall satisfaction rating of 86%, which had improved by a statistically significant margin being three points higher than the previous score of 83%. I was now also two points above the median for the Council's peer group within the HouseMark benchmark database (section 3).

3. Areas where the scores seemed particularly positive included the repairs and maintenance service, where many scores were above average (section 5). Others included an increase in rating for the quality of the home (section 4), and customer services, with a three-point increase in satisfaction with how enquiries are dealt with generally (section 6).

4. Conversely, satisfaction that the Council listened to tenants' views was lower than in 2011, albeit still it remained in line with other similar housing providers (section 8). The way ASB was handled was also a probable area for improvement, as the results compared unfavourably against the Council's peers (section 9).

5. A 'key driver' analysis is a statistical test to check which other results in the survey are best at predicting overall satisfaction. In descending order of strength, the top four key drivers for tenants are listed below.

   - Repairs and maintenance overall (79% satisfied, section 5)
   - Quality of the home (83%, section 4)

## Repairs and maintenance

6. Overall satisfaction with the repairs and maintenance service was rated slightly above the level one would expect based upon the Council's peers, with 79% of the sample being satisfied compared to a HouseMark median benchmark target score of 77%. This is particularly important as repairs and maintenance was the clear number one key driver of overall satisfaction ahead of the quality of the home (section 5).

7. In June this year, Stroud DC brought in-house the responsibility for gas servicing, and when asked it was very pleasing to find the vast majority of respondents were satisfied with this service (89%), with the majority being 'very satisfied' (56%).

8. When tenants were asked about their most recent repair, it was positive to find levels of satisfaction generally compared well against the benchmark levels.

9. The best predictors of satisfaction with the repairs service were whether contractors did the job expected (81% satisfied, 12% dissatisfied) and the quality of work (83% satisfied, 11% dissatisfied). There was also a very strong relationship between whether workers showed proof of identity (83% satisfied) or not (66%) and overall satisfaction with the service.

## The home

10. Since 2008 satisfaction with the headline score for the quality of the home had remained broadly the same with four out of five tenants satisfied overall (83%). Whilst slightly more were satisfied this year than in 2011 (was 81%), the slight increase was not statistically significant. Nevertheless, satisfaction was now four points above the HouseMark benchmark median (section 4)

11. Around two thirds of respondents were satisfied with the cleaning of communal areas with scores slightly higher for the external rather than internal service (68% v 66%). In both cases around one in five remain dissatisfied, including 10% who were 'very dissatisfied' with the cleaning of external communal areas. However, both results compare favourably to other similar housing providers, particularly the external cleaning service where satisfaction is seven points above the ARP benchmark median.

## Customer services

12. The overall perception for the manner in which Stroud District Council deals with enquires had improved slightly, albeit not significantly since 2011, with 78% satisfied (was 75%). Whilst not a key driver of overall satisfaction for the current sample, the customer experience is nevertheless an important aspect of service provision and will inevitably impact how tenants perceive their landlord (section 6).

13. Satisfaction remains high with being able to get hold of the right person (72%, was 73%), with the score four points above the benchmark with Stroud DC appearing in the second quartile of scores.

14. The majority of the sample remain satisfied with the helpfulness of staff (79%), with this result identical to the benchmark median. Nevertheless, there was a slight increase in satisfaction with the ability of staff to deal with queries (80%, was 77%). What was particularly pleasing in the latter case was that the score was six points above the benchmark median, appearing in the top quartile of providers.

15. Taking all this into account, one in five were dissatisfied with the final outcome of their last query (19%), compared to almost two thirds who satisfied (64%).This was comparable with the benchmark median.

## Information and resident involvement

16. The majority of survey respondents thought that the Council were good at keeping them informed about the things that affected them as residents (80%), and it is pleasing to find this has improved slightly since 2011 when 78% were satisfied. Consequently, the result was three points above the ARP benchmark median of 77% (section 7).

17. However, it is also important to place this result in the context of the further comments provided by respondents, with the need for improved communication a common theme, particularly with regards to the repairs and maintenance service, ASB and complaints.

18. Indeed, the extent to which respondents felt that Stroud District Council listens to their views and acts upon them remains had fallen slightly since 2011 (64%, down from 67%). Nevertheless, this result remained broadly in line with the HouseMark benchmark median (63%), putting the Council in the second quartile of landlords.

## Welfare benefit advice and support

19. It is particularly important in the context of welfare benefit reforms that when tenants were asked to give their views on the help and support services that Stroud District Council provide in order to help customers manage their tenancies, the majority were satisfied with the advice that they received on paying rent (82%, section 11)

20. A fifth of respondents (21%) had actually required some form of advice and support about welfare benefits in the previous year. It was pleasing to find in the vast majority of cases the advice and support received was rated positively, with 84% satisfied, including 49% who were ‘very satisfied’.

21. Nevertheless, one in five of the sample (21%) would like more information regarding the introduction of Universal Credit and how it will affect them.

## Local neighbourhoods

22. The majority of respondents were satisfied with their neighbourhood as a safe place to live (87%), which is identical to that reported in 2011, although there was a slight increase in the proportion who were ‘very satisfied’ (50%, up from 48%). This result obviously varied by patch with those living in patch 9 significantly more satisfied than average, whereas respondents in patch 5 and 3 were less satisfied (section 8).

23. Respondents were also generally satisfied with the grounds maintenance service (81%). Whilst one in ten remained dissatisfied, it is pleasing to find levels of satisfaction were actually ten points higher than the level expected with a benchmark median of 71%.

24. The most common problems in the neighbourhood were dog mess (41%) and litter (26%), although the best predictors of overall satisfaction were actually the levels of neighbour nuisance (15%) and vandalism (6%).

## Anti-social behaviour

25. Dealing with anti-social behaviour (ASB) was quite important to tenants, with around over half of respondents listing this as one of the top five priority services they received from Stroud District Council (section 3)

26. Unfortunately, the way ASB reports were dealt with was one of the few areas where the Council's performance was somewhat lower than average, to the extent that on some measures it was in the fourth quartile compared to other landlords, in particular keeping tenants informed about progress during their ASB complaint (section 9)

27. Taking these facts together, it is clear that this is probably a priority area for the Council to target service improvements.

# 3. Services overall

86 %

tenants satisfied overall

repairs

quality of the home

. . .are the key drivers

Overall, the general needs tenant satisfaction survey results in 2015 were a little better in comparison to the previous survey, with satisfaction scores up by one or two percentage points on the majority of core questions compared to 2011. Furthermore, for those areas where benchmark information is available the vast majority of results were generally at or above average when compared with other Councils and ALMOs.

This is epitomised by the overall satisfaction rating of 86%, which was three points higher than the previous score of 83% and was two points greater than the benchmark average resulting in a second quartile placement. Furthermore, this rating had increased sufficiently that the change was considered to be statistically significant, which is a standard threshold after which a result is considered unlikely to be due to chance.

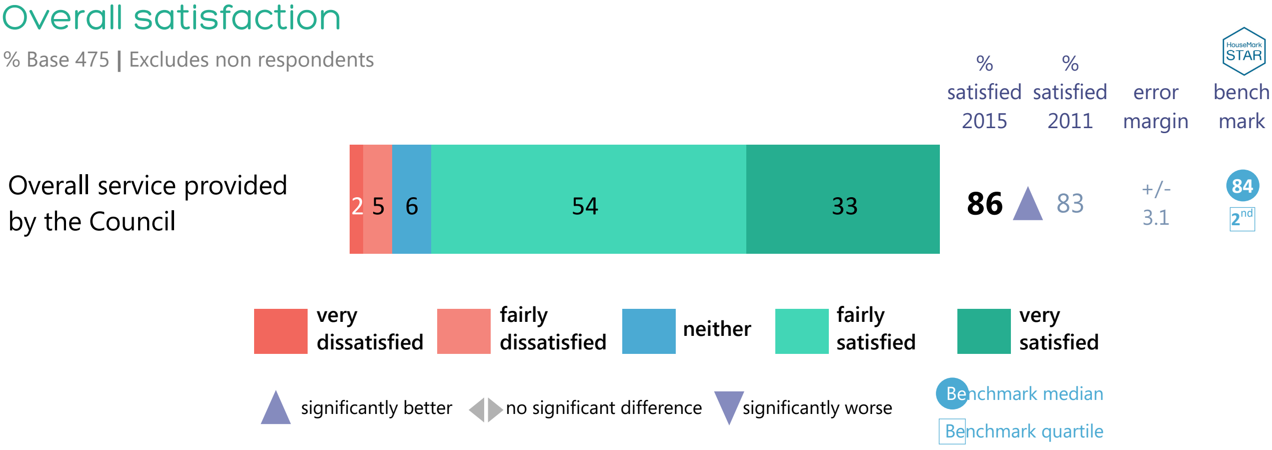
Areas where the scores seemed particularly positive included the repairs and maintenance service, including above average scores for being told when workers would call and being able to make an appointment (section 5). Others included an increase in rating for the quality of the home (section 4), and customer services, with a three-point increase in satisfaction with how enquiries are dealt with generally (section 6).

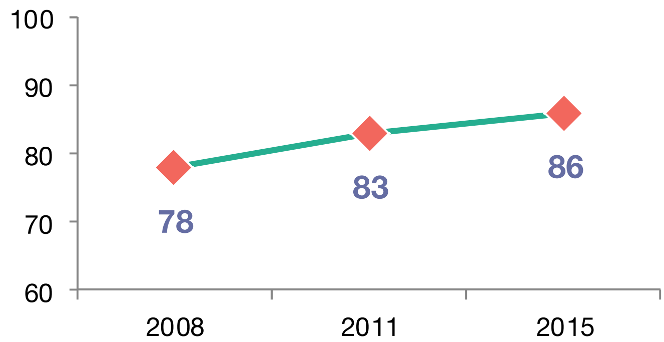
Conversely, satisfaction that the Council listened to tenants' views was lower than in 2011, albeit it remained in line with other similar housing providers (section 8). The way ASB was handled was also a probable area for improvement, as the results compared unfavourably against the Council's peers (section 9).

Benchmark data accompanied by the STAR logo is drawn from HouseMark data, the remainder from ARP Research's database. See Appendix A for details.

## 3.1 Overall satisfaction

% Base 475 | Excludes non respondents




To help try and distinguish which issues were the most instrumental, a 'key driver' analysis was carried out on the overall satisfaction score. This analysis uses a statistics test known as a 'regression' in order to determine which opinion rating statements in the questionnaires were most closely associated with overall satisfaction. This test does not necessarily suggest a causal link (although there may be one), but it does highlight the combination of opinion rating statements that are the best predictors of overall satisfaction. The analysis identified two key drivers as presented in chart 3.2.

The most obvious finding was that perceptions of the repairs and maintenance service had the clearest predictive value when understanding overall satisfaction with the Council. As this question was not asked previously it is impossible to tell if satisfaction has changed, however the 79% who responded positively to this aspect of the service is slightly above the benchmark median for other similar landlords (section 5).

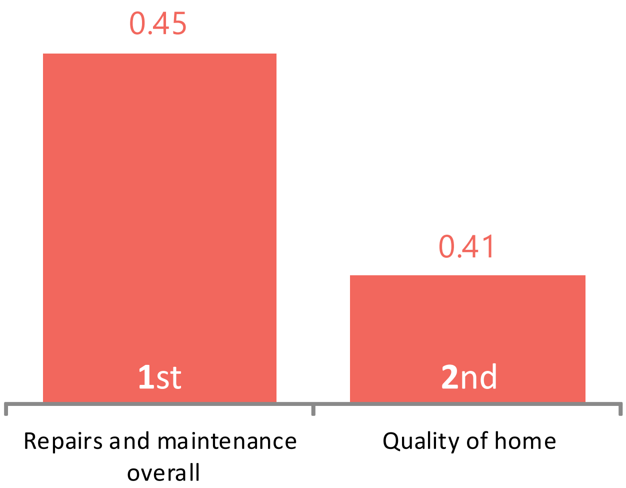
Whilst not as closely associated with overall satisfaction, it still remains clear that for the Council's tenants, bricks and mortar issues remain central to how they perceive the services they receive. As such it is positive to find a slight increase in satisfaction with the quality of the home (83%, was 81%), however the increase was not statistically significant.

These two key drivers were supported by the results when tenants were asked which were their most important services (graph 3.4) – whilst tenants were more likely to say that the quality of the home was their number one priority compared to repairs (36% v 26%), slightly fewer actually put it in their top five (86% v 96%).

The results were also comprehensively analysed by other sub-groups in order to identify those tenants who might differ from the norm in how they felt about Stroud DC's services. The first notable finding confirmed a pattern common across resident surveys - older respondents claimed to be more satisfied than those who were younger. This meant that tenants aged 65+ had a significantly higher level of satisfaction than anyone else (92%), and this compares to 77% of those aged 34 or less, and as chart 12.12 clearly shows the wide variation in scores between the youngest and the oldest respondents continued across a wide range of core questions.

## 3.2 Key drivers - overall satisfaction

R Square = 0.578 | Note that values are not percentages but are results of the statistics test. See Appendix A for more details.




A 'key driver' analysis uses a regression test to check which other results in the survey are best at predicting overall satisfaction. For a more detailed explanation of key drivers please see Appendix A.

There were some significant variations in overall satisfaction by patch but only at the 90% level of confidence, with respondents in patch 5 significantly less satisfied than average (80%), whereas those in patch 9 were significantly more satisfied (92%).

Experience of anti-social behaviour (ASB) has also affected the overall score, with those who had experienced such an incident significantly less satisfied overall than those who have not (76% v 88%). Similarly, whether or not a tenant had a query responded to within the ten working days as set out in the customer service standard also affects this score, with those who have being significantly more satisfied than those who have not (91% and 60% respectively).

Finally, those who were dissatisfied were asked to provide further information explaining why they felt this way. Unsurprisingly, the majority of comments related to repairs, more specifically outstanding or the general standard of them. However, a notable proportion were themed around communication and tenant involvement, which ties in with the fact that slightly fewer tenants than before felt that the Council listened to their views (see above), and that being informed were notable areas of dissatisfaction with both the ASB and complaints services (see section 9 and 10). Some general examples of these comments were:

"Listen to suggestions from tenants."

"Listen to what I am saying and answer me."

"Lack of proactive interaction on part of council. Putting up rent above rate of inflation. Seeming lack of interest."

"By training your staff to communicate without having to feel they are judging you by your situation."

"Better communication between departments."

"Come through with promises. Communicate with each other and the tenant."

## 3.3 Overall satisfaction by patch

| | Sample size | % positive: Overall satisfaction with the service provided |
|---|---|---|
| **Overall** | *485* | **86** |
| Housing 1 | *57* | 86 |
| Housing 2 | *44* | 93 |
| Housing 3 | *62* | 84 |
| Housing 4 | *46* | 84 |
| Housing 5 | *53* | 80 |

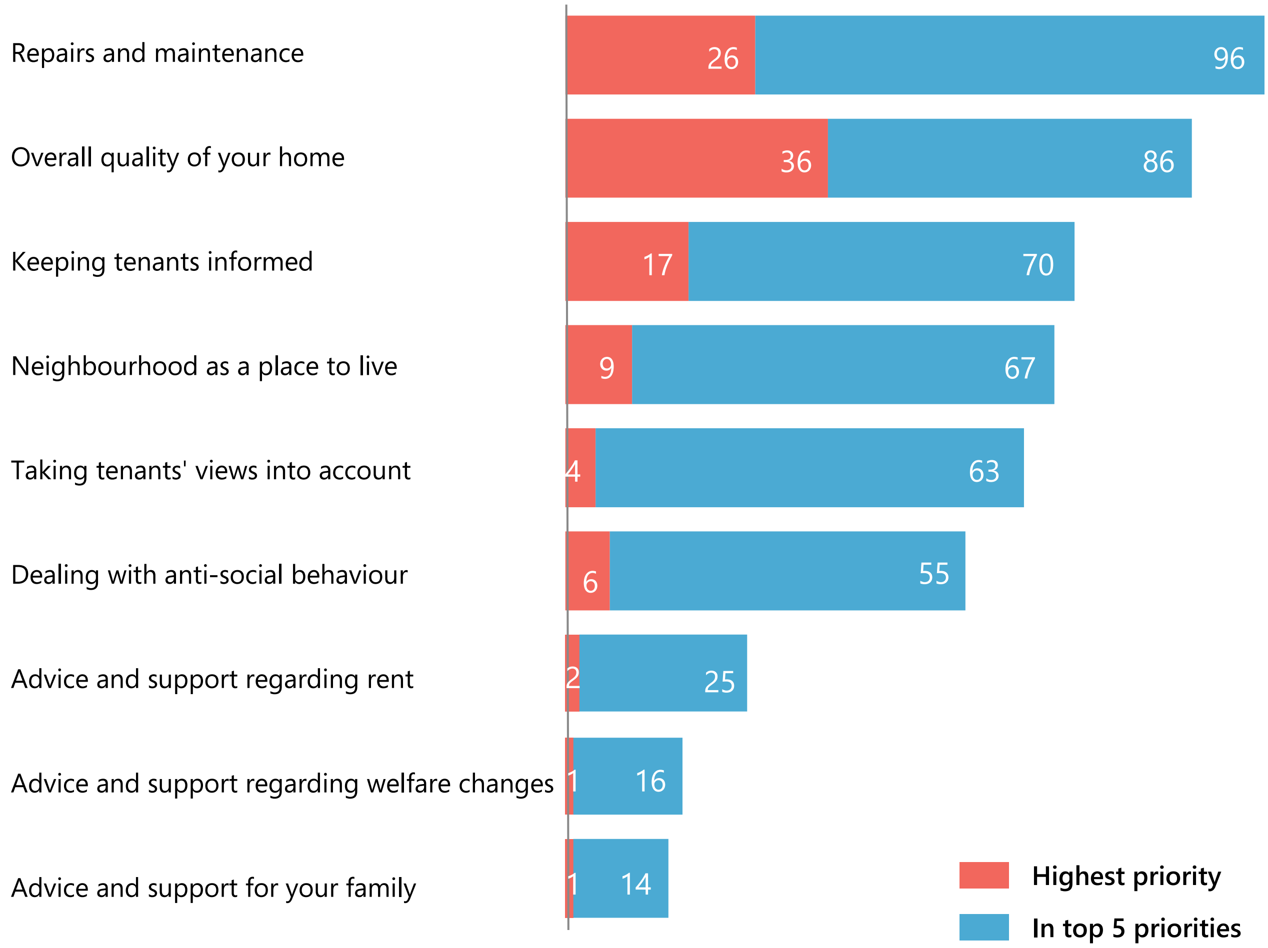
| | Sample size | % positive: Overall satisfaction with the service provided |
|---|---|---|
| **Overall** | *485* | **86** |
| Housing 6 | *74* | 84 |
| Housing 7 | *53* | 86 |
| Housing 8 | *47* | 91 |
| Housing 9 | *49* | 92 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Significantly **worse** than average (95% confidence*) | Significantly **better** than average (95% confidence*) |
| Significantly **worse** than average (90% confidence*) | Significantly **better** than average (90% confidence*) |

* See appendix A for further information on statistical tests and confidence levels

## 3.4 Five most important services

% Base 340 | More than one answer allowed. Excludes non respondents



# 4. The home

**83%** satisfied with the quality of the home

**66%** satisfied with the cleaning of internal communal areas

The quality and condition of the home itself is obviously central to residents' perceptions of the wider services that they receive through Stroud DC. Indeed, the quality of the home was considered to be a key driver that best predicted overall satisfaction, being second only to the repairs and maintenance service (chart 3.2). It was also the aspect of the service that was most commonly cited as being the top priority for tenants (chart 3.4).

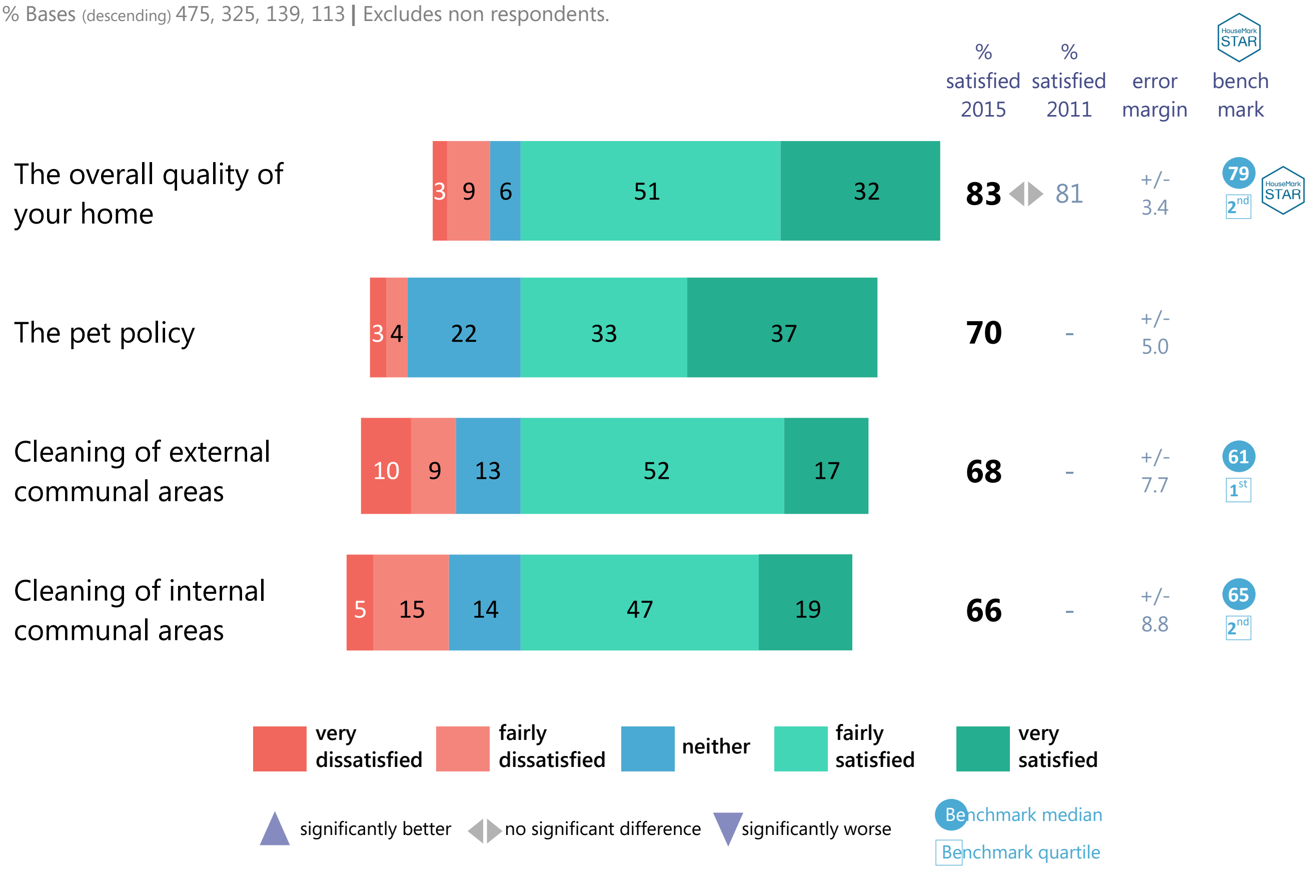
Since 2008 satisfaction with the headline score for the quality of the home had remained broadly the same with four out of five tenants satisfied overall (83%). Whilst slightly more were satisfied this year than in 2011 (was 81%), the slight increase was not statistically significant. Nevertheless, satisfaction was now four points above the benchmark median with Stroud's score in the second quartile for comparable landlords.

There was one significant difference in this measure by patch, with respondents in patch 8 significantly more satisfied with quality of their home but only at the 90% confidence level (85%). Whilst no patch rated their homes significantly lower than average, satisfaction was notably lowest in patch 1 and 3 (78% and 79% respectively, table 4.2).

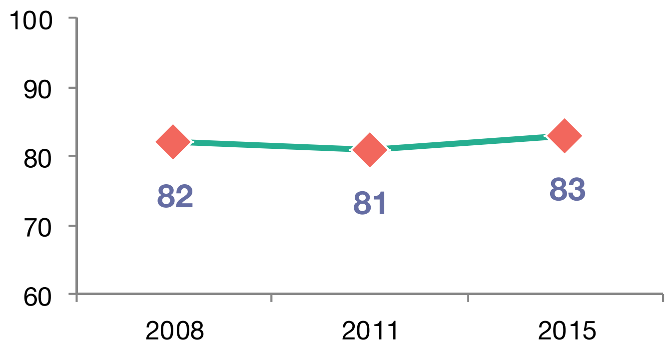
Satisfaction did vary by property type, although this was heavily linked to the age profile of tenants, with significantly higher than average levels amongst those living in bungalows (91%, satisfied), at the 95% confidence level. In contrast, satisfaction was significantly lower amongst respondents living in flats (74%).

## 4.1 Satisfaction with the home

% Bases (descending) 475, 325, 139, 113 | Excludes non respondents.




### Quality of home




In terms of demographic groups, there was the usual pattern of results by age group, being particularly low for the under 35's (66%), with those aged 65 or over significantly more satisfied (93%). Interestingly, satisfaction was significantly lower than average for all general needs tenants aged 64 or under.

Around two thirds of respondents were satisfied with the cleaning of communal areas with scores slightly higher for the external rather than internal service (68% v 66%). In both cases around one in five remain dissatisfied, including 10% who were 'very dissatisfied' with the cleaning of external communal areas. However, both results compare favourably to other similar housing providers, particularly the external cleaning service where satisfaction is seven points above the benchmark median with Stroud appearing in the top quartile of landlords.

Both aspects of the service were rated significantly higher by respondents in patch 9 where satisfaction for both was 100%. The rating for the external communal cleaning service was also significantly higher than average for those in patch 8, but only at the 90% confidence level (79%).

## 4.2 Satisfaction with the home by patch

% positive

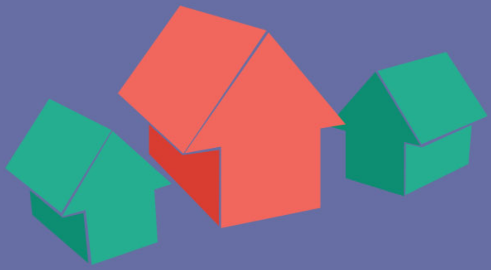
| | Sample size | Quality of the home | Cleaning of internal communal areas | Cleaning of external communal areas | The pet policy |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Overall** | 485 | **83** | **66** | **68** | **70** |
| Housing 1 | 57 | 78 | 64 | 57 | 72 |
| Housing 2 | 44 | 84 | 60 | 57 | 59 |
| Housing 3 | 62 | 79 | 58 | 62 | 69 |
| Housing 4 | 46 | 80 | 57 | 73 | 63 |
| Housing 5 | 53 | 83 | 53 | 65 | 59 |
| Housing 6 | 74 | 82 | 71 | 72 | 70 |
| Housing 7 | 53 | 87 | 75 | 68 | 70 |
| Housing 8 | 47 | 85 | 67 | 79 | 74 |
| Housing 9 | 49 | 90 | 100 | 100 | 94 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Significantly **worse** than average (95% confidence*) | Significantly **better** than average (95% confidence*) |
| Significantly **worse** than average (90% confidence*) | Significantly **better** than average (90% confidence*) |

* See appendix A for further information on statistical tests and confidence levels

Other than this there was little of note from further sub-group analysis including no significant variations in scores by property type. That said, satisfaction was lowest for both amongst respondents living in flats (61% satisfied for both the 'internal' and 'external' service).

Finally, seven out of ten in the sample were satisfied with the pet policy, including more than a third that were 'very satisfied' (37%). On the opposite end of the scale only 7% expressed any dissatisfaction with this. Once again those in patch 9 were significantly more satisfied than average (94%), and whilst not significant, satisfaction was lowest in patch 2 and 5 (both 59%). Those living in flats were also significantly less satisfied than average with the pet policy, but only when the analysis was run at the 90% confidence level (57%). Satisfaction was also significantly below average for the small group of BME respondents (47%).



# 5. Repairs and maintenance

79 %

of tenants were satisfied with repairs overall

doing the job expected

quality of work

. . .are the top two key drivers

The repairs and maintenance service is typically amongst the most important aspects of service provision for tenants, which reflected in the fact that this was the clear primary key driver of satisfaction overall for the current sample (chart 3.2). In addition, the repairs and maintenance service was in the top five most important part of the service for virtually all of the sample (chart 3.4). It is therefore positive to find four out of five respondents were satisfied with this aspect of the service (79%), which puts the Council above the benchmark median (77%) with the organisation appearing in the second quartile of providers.

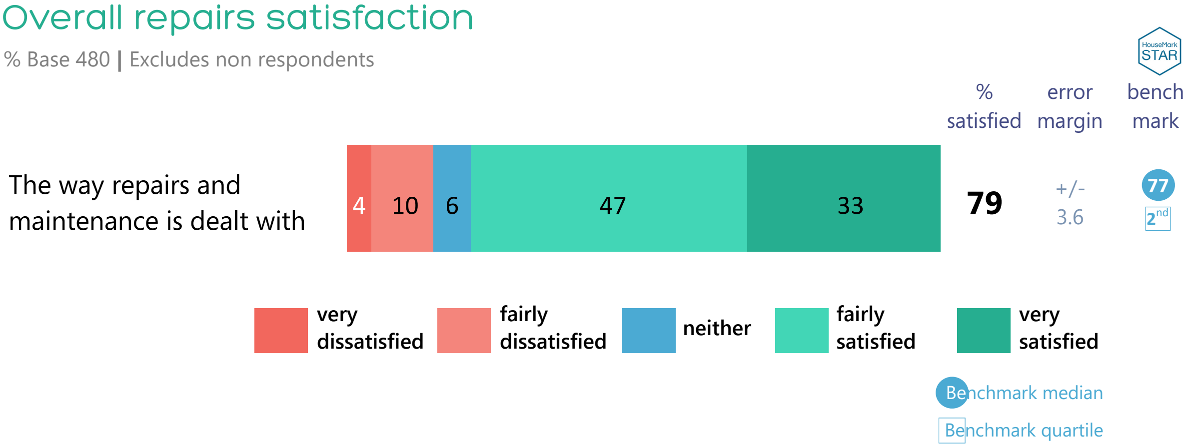
To understand more, there were a further set of detailed questions asked about respondents' last completed repair if they had one within the last twelve months (72% of the sample). Unfortunately, no previous data exists with which to compare the current findings with. However, it is positive to find in the majority of cases scores were typically above the benchmark median with scores typically appearing in the second quartile when compared to other similar landlords.

72% of tenants had a repair in **the last year**

. . . and 88% had an **appointment** that was kept

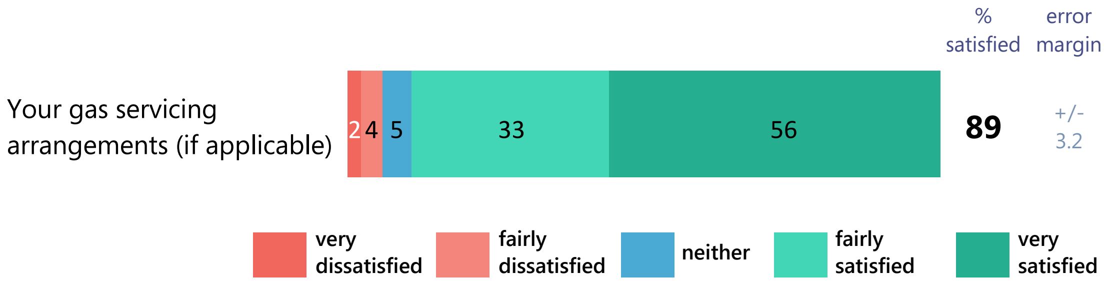
## 5.1 Overall repairs satisfaction

% Base 480 | Excludes non respondents




## 5.2 Gas servicing arrangements

% Base 361 | Excludes non respondents




Contractors showed proof of identity in around seven out of ten jobs, which had a remarkable relationship with how tenants perceived the service overall, with 83% of those where ID was shown significantly more satisfied with the service overall, compared to only 66% of those where no ID was presented. This pattern was also evident throughout the more detailed questions regarding the last completed repair (chart 5.4). It was also interesting that when asked how the service could be improved, a number of respondents did suggest contractors should show proof of identity more often.

Another way to shed further light on these results was to run a key driver analysis which to remind the reader is a statistical analysis called a regression that identifies the detailed rating statements that were the best predictors of satisfaction of an overall score. The result of this analysis is shown in chart 5.2.

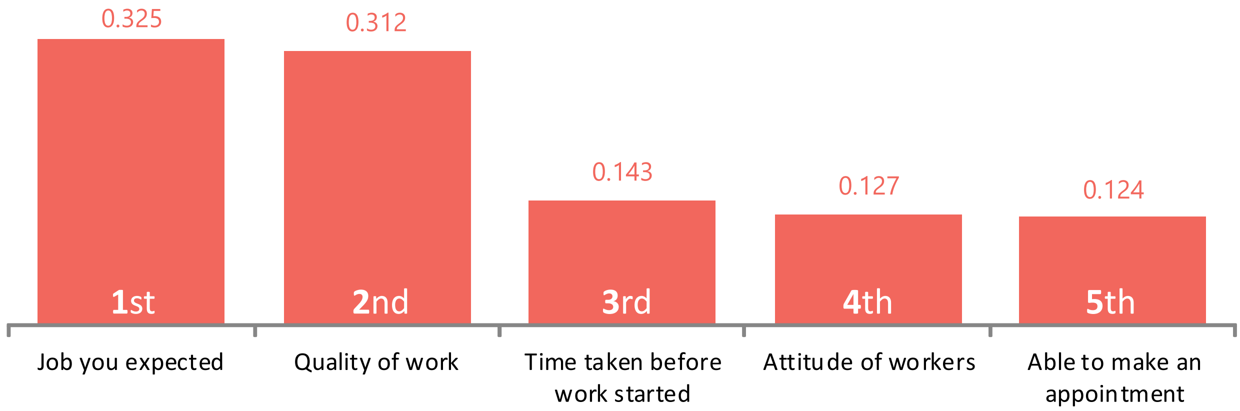
This analysis reveals five key drivers, with the top two clearly more influential, namely contractors knowing about and doing the job expected (81% satisfied, 12% dissatisfied) and the quality of work (83% satisfied, 11% dissatisfied). This pattern is not especially unique to Stroud District Council, as it is common to see these also appear as key drivers in surveys for other landlords, however it is interesting that the top three key drivers were all rated below the equivalent benchmark scores with Stroud appearing in the third quartile of providers for these aspects of the service.

18% were asked to give feedback via a handheld device

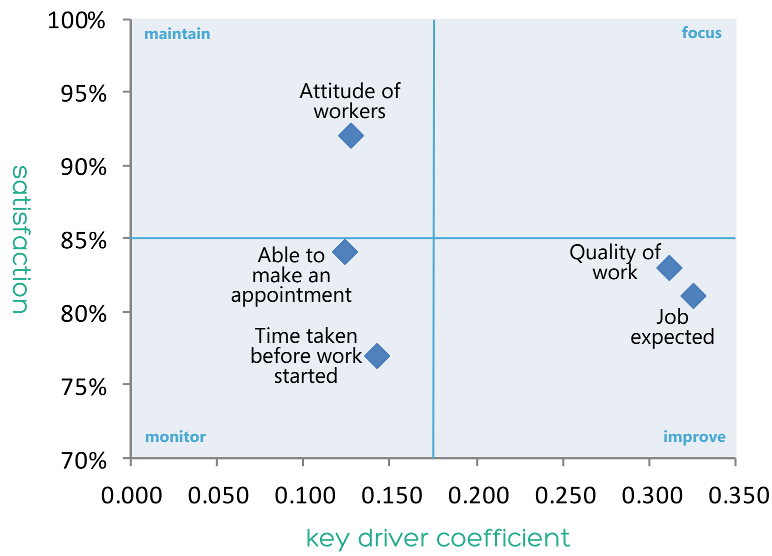
. . . and 19% were given the choice to give feedback using a paper form

## 5.3 Key drivers - satisfaction with the repairs service overall

R Square = 0.438 | Note that values are not percentages but are results of the statistics test. See Appendix A for more details.




## 5.4 Key drivers v satisfaction




A 'key driver' analysis uses a regression test to check which other results in the survey are best at predicting overall satisfaction. For a more detailed explanation of key drivers please see Appendix A.

Similar to other findings throughout this report, older residents, aged 65 or over were vastly more satisfied with the repairs service overall than the rest, particularly compared to those aged under 35 (93% v 57%). This pattern was also evident across the detailed questions in this section. Only one patch rated this service significantly better than average and that was patch 9 where satisfaction was 92%. In contrast, the service overall was rated lowest by respondents in patch 3 (74%, table 5.5). Respondents in patch 9 were also significantly more satisfied than average with other aspects of the service including being told when workers would call (94%, satisfied), the overall quality (91%) and contractors knowing about and doing the job expected (90%).

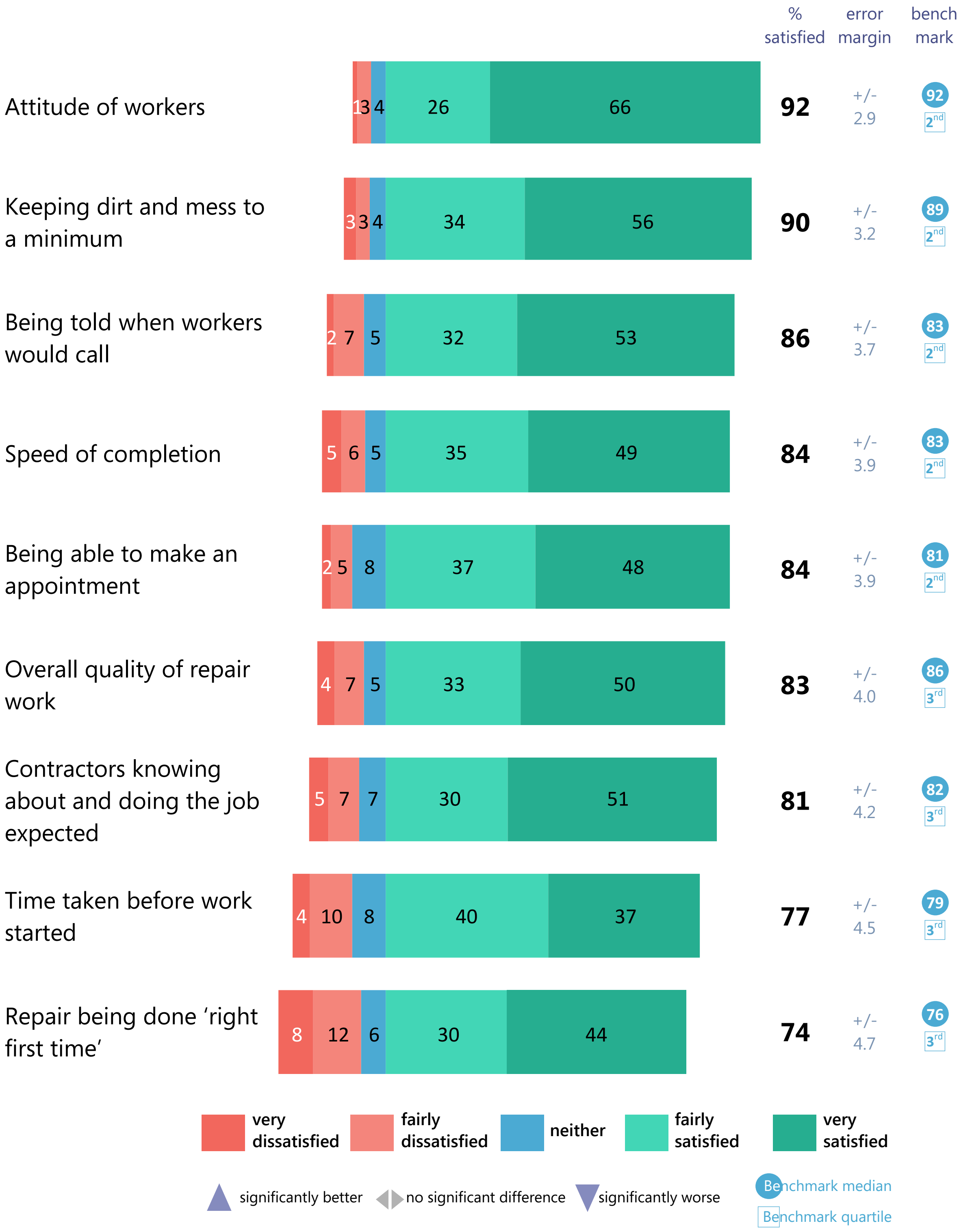
A number of patches rated certain aspects of the service significantly lower than average including:

- Being able to make an appointment in patch 2 (69%, satisfied)
- Keeping dirt and mess to a minimum, patch 7 (88%)
- Contractors knowing about and doing the job expected, patch 4 (73%).

Around a fifth of respondents were asked to give feedback via a handheld device after their repair (18%), with a similar proportion given the opportunity to do the same via a paper form (19%). In total, just over a quarter (27%) were asked to give feedback in some way. Requests for feedback via both methods was notably low amongst respondents in patch 9 (handheld device – 6%, paper form – 8%).

## 5.5 Last completed repair

% Bases (descending) 335,334,341,334,327,335,337,328,332 | Repair in last 12months. Excludes non respondents.




69% said the contractor showed **proof of identity**

In June this year, Stroud DC brought in-house the responsibility for gas servicing, and when asked it was very pleasing to find the vast majority of respondents were satisfied with this service (89%), with the majority being 'very satisfied' (56%).

Respondents in patch 8 were significantly more satisfied than average but only at the 90% confidence level (95%). Once again, older tenants (aged 65 or over) were significantly more satisfied than their younger peers (94% v 70% for the under 35's). A similar pattern emerges for property type, which will again be related to the age profile within each, with respondents in bungalows significantly more satisfied with the gas servicing arrangements than those living in flats (94% and 76% respectively).

Respondents were also asked to give their suggestions for how the service could be improved. Whilst there were those that took the opportunity to raise an issue about a particular outstanding repair, or the quality of work being done a number of comments did prove insightful.  Once again, the need for improved communication was raised, with a selection of comments on this theme highlighted below.

"When the contractor repeatedly says they will report that a gas boiler is on its last legs and ought to be replaced, it would be good if we had a response from the council"

"When asked to call before a certain time and told by office that will be ok and then the message is not posted on to the engineer. Therefore calling at a unsuitable time."

"The whole procedure takes far too long -longer than it used to mainly because a lot of the work is now sub-contracted and not always are instructions translated correctly."

"Being kept in touch about when work should begin and an idea of how long it should be. Have had scaffolding up since end of August & don't see anyone for weeks and no information of when."

"Better communication - several times there has been mis-communication between council & contractors."

"When problems arise better communication between tenants and council would be beneficial."

"We would like a personal phone call from the council to check if the work has been completed. Then this would keep the contractors on their toes."

"Respond to concerns better instead of fobbing people off time after time."

"Making contractor admin staff aware that some tenants require help from their support staff in order to respond to contractors letters etc. thus causing delay in response to letters received."

Not all comments were negative, a number were positive in nature, typical examples include:

"The repair service is very good. The contractors are kind and efficient."

"I am happy with the service generally"

"Very pleased with all repairs - no improvement needed."

"I have always been satisfied. Service is fine."

"It's first class."

## 5.6 Satisfaction with repairs and maintenance by patch

% satisfied

| | Sample size | The we deal with repairs and maintenance | Gas servicing arrangements (if applicable) | Told when workers would call | Being able to make an appointment | Time taken before work started | Speed of completion | Attitude of workers | Overall quality of work | Keeping dirt and mess to a minimum | Repair being done 'right first time' | Contractors knowing about and doing the job expected |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Overall** | *485* | **79** | **89** | **86** | **84** | **77** | **84** | **92** | **83** | **90** | **74** | **81** |
| Housing 1 | *57* | 79 | 88 | 83 | 84 | 83 | 90 | 95 | 78 | 98 | 65 | 83 |
| Housing 2 | *44* | 84 | 81 | 79 | 69 | 77 | 83 | 91 | 81 | 87 | 74 | 81 |
| Housing 3 | *62* | 74 | 86 | 90 | 90 | 77 | 82 | 90 | 83 | 88 | 73 | 83 |
| Housing 4 | *46* | 76 | 96 | 87 | 80 | 71 | 87 | 87 | 81 | 97 | 70 | 73 |
| Housing 5 | *53* | 69 | 87 | 85 | 84 | 70 | 88 | 91 | 82 | 82 | 70 | 91 |
| Housing 6 | *74* | 79 | 87 | 80 | 85 | 74 | 80 | 93 | 89 | 94 | 70 | 76 |
| Housing 7 | *53* | 81 | 88 | 85 | 94 | 79 | 79 | 88 | 85 | 88 | 76 | 79 |
| Housing 8 | *47* | 81 | 95 | 92 | 86 | 82 | 89 | 97 | 79 | 86 | 83 | 78 |
| Housing 9 | *49* | 92 | 97 | 94 | 83 | 82 | 87 | 97 | 91 | 87 | 87 | 90 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Significantly **worse** than average (95% confidence*) | Significantly **better** than average (95% confidence*) |
| Significantly **worse** than average (90% confidence*) | Significantly **better** than average (90% confidence*) |

* See appendix A for further information on statistical tests and confidence levels

# 6. Customer service

**72%** of tenants found it easy to get hold of the right person

**78%** satisfied with how enquiries dealt with generally

Similar to other topics covered in the survey, the overall perception for the manner in which Stroud District Council deals with enquires had improved slightly, albeit not significantly since 2011, with 78% satisfied (was 75%). Whilst not a key driver of overall satisfaction for the current sample, the customer experience is nevertheless an important aspect of service provision and will inevitably impact how tenants perceive their landlord.

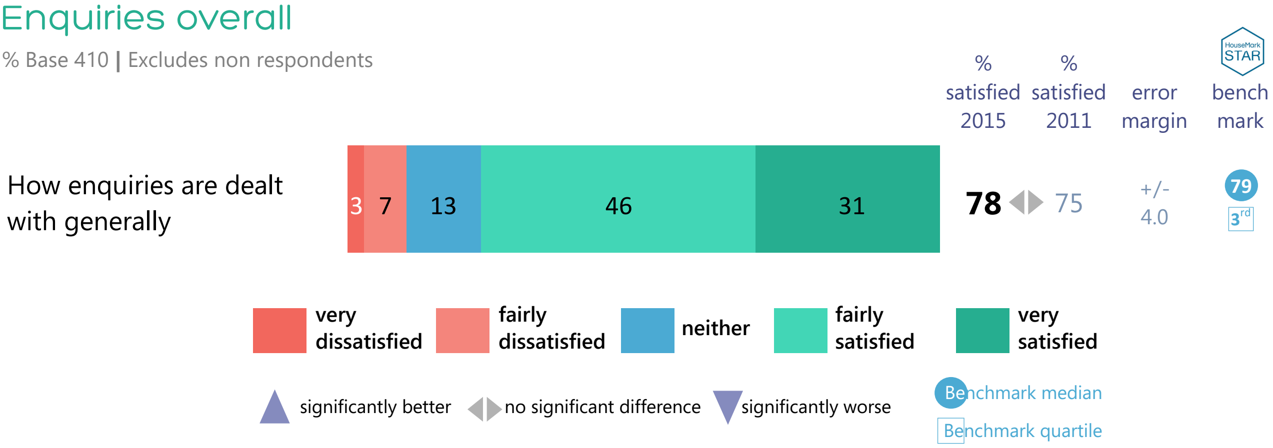
**77%** had made contact in the last year

Interestingly, there was no significant difference in this score depending on whether a tenant had or had not made contact in the last year (78% and 76% respectively), however this score was significantly lower for the small group of tenants who had made a complaint to the Council in the previous twelve months (57%). In contrast, satisfaction was significantly higher amongst those who had not had cause to complain (79%).

Around three quarters of the sample had made contact with the Council in the previous year (77%), the vast majority doing so by telephone (88%, chart 6.2) with the need to report a repair the primary reason for the contact (76%, chart 6.3).

## 6.1 Enquiries overall

% Base 410 | Excludes non respondents




More of the current sample were less inclined to visit the office than in 2011 (3%, was 6%) however contact via email was now more popular (5%, was 3%).

Satisfaction remains high with being able to get hold of the right person (72%, was 73%), with the score four points above the benchmark with Stroud DC appearing in the second quartile of scores. However, significantly lower than average scores were posted by those who made contact to make a complaint (55%) and was also low for those who did not have the outcome of their query fully explained (44%).

The majority of the sample remain satisfied with the helpfulness of staff (79%), with this result identical to the benchmark median. Once again whether or not a tenant had made a complaint or not had the outcome of their query fully explained affected this score in an adverse way (53% and 43% respectively).

As the rating for staff helpfulness remains broadly the same as before, it is surprising to find there was a slight increase in satisfaction with the ability of staff to deal with queries (80%, was 77%). What was particularly pleasing in this instance was that the score was six points above the benchmark median, appearing in the top quartile of providers.

Three quarters of all contacts resulted in queries being answered within 10 working days (73%), however one in eight occurrences did not (13%). This had a notable impact on all the customer service results within this section with significantly higher scores reported by those whose query was answered in this timeframe compared to those that were not. There was no clear distinction in the answers to this question by either method or reason for contact.

As already discussed, whether or not the final outcome of the query was fully explained also had an effect, with those not having a full explanation significantly less satisfied with every aspect of the customer service experience. With that in mind it is disappointing to find in a quarter of cases, a full explanation was not provided (24%). The great majority of this queries were still repairs, but it was also interesting that only two out of the six people who said they had made contact about ASB believed that the outcome had been fully explained.

Taking all this into account, one in five were dissatisfied with the final outcome of their last query (19%), compared to almost two thirds who satisfied (64%).This was comparable with the benchmark median.

## 6.2 Ease of getting hold of the right person

% Base 370 | Been in contact in last 12 months. Excludes non respondents

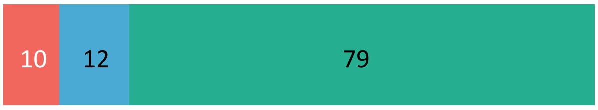

| | % easy 2015 | % easy 2011 | error margin | bench mark |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Getting hold of the right person | **72** ◀▶ | 73 | +/- 4.6 | 68 2nd |

Benchmark median
Benchmark quartile

▲ significantly better ◀▶ no significant difference ▼ significantly worse

## 6.3 Helpfulness of staff

% Base 370 | Been in contact in last 12 months. Excludes non respondents




| | % helpful 2015 | % helpful 2011 | error margin | bench mark |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Helpfulness of staff | **79** ◀▶ | 81 | +/- 4.2 | 79 2nd |

Benchmark median
Benchmark quartile

▲ significantly better ◀▶ no significant difference ▼ significantly worse

## 6.4 Dealing with last query

% Base 366 | Been in contact in last 12 months. Excludes non respondents

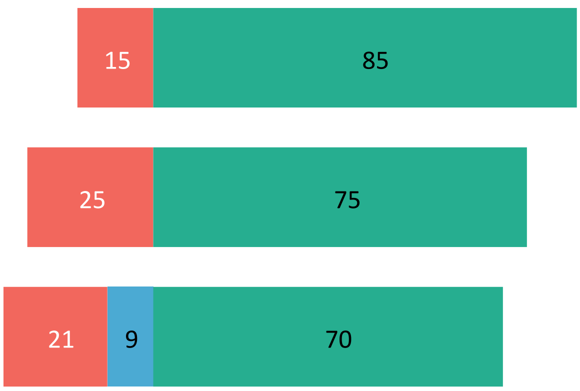

| | % able 2015 | % able 2011 | error margin | bench mark |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ability of staff to deal with query | **80** ◀▶ | 77 | +/- 4.1 | 74 1st |

Benchmark median
Benchmark quartile

▲ significantly better ◀▶ no significant difference ▼ significantly worse

## 6.5 Last contact

% Bases 320,347,340 | Been in contact in last 12 months. Excludes non respondents



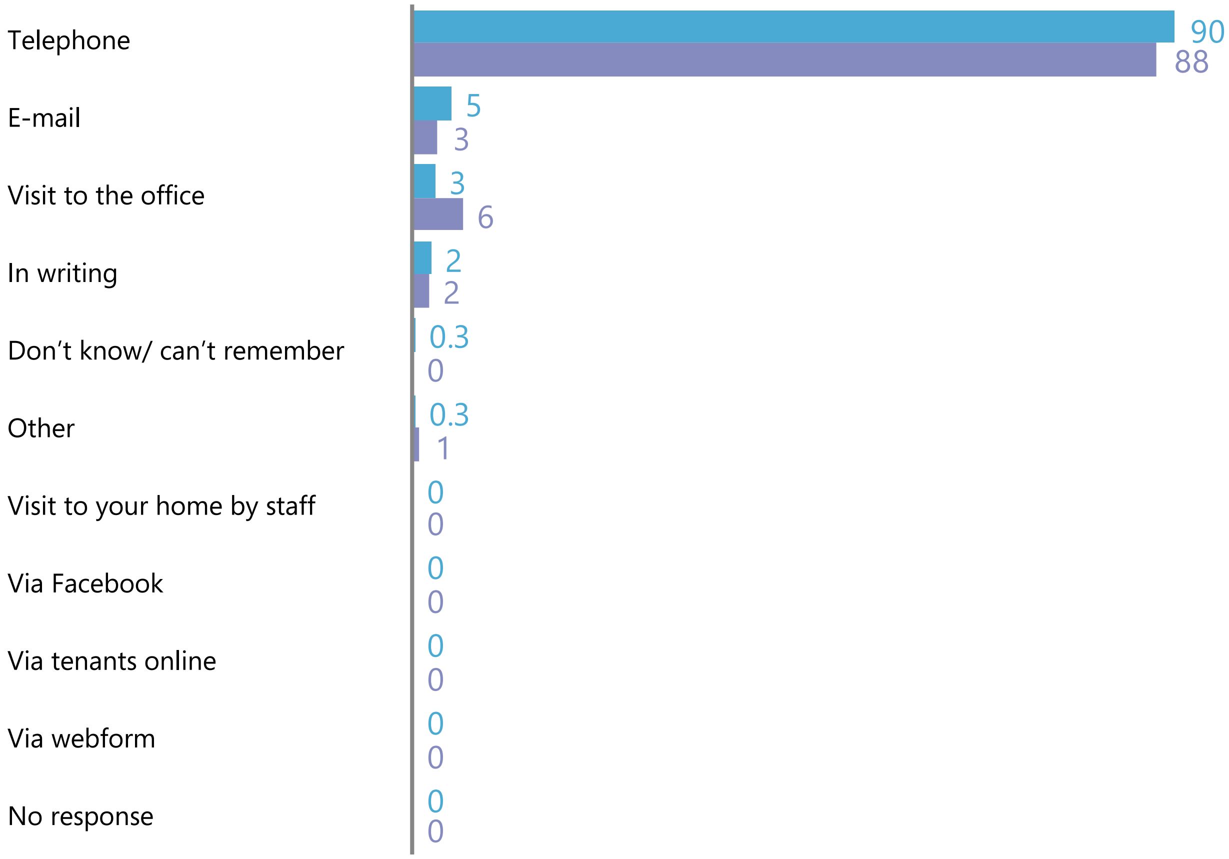

| | % yes 2015 | % yes 2011 | error margin | bench mark |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Answered in 10 working days | **85** | - | +/- 3.9 | |
| Explained final outcome fully | **75** | - | +/- 4.5 | |
| Satisfied with final outcome | **70** ◀▶ | 67 | +/- 4.9 | 69 2nd |

Benchmark median
Benchmark quartile

▲ significantly better ◀▶ no significant difference ▼ significantly worse

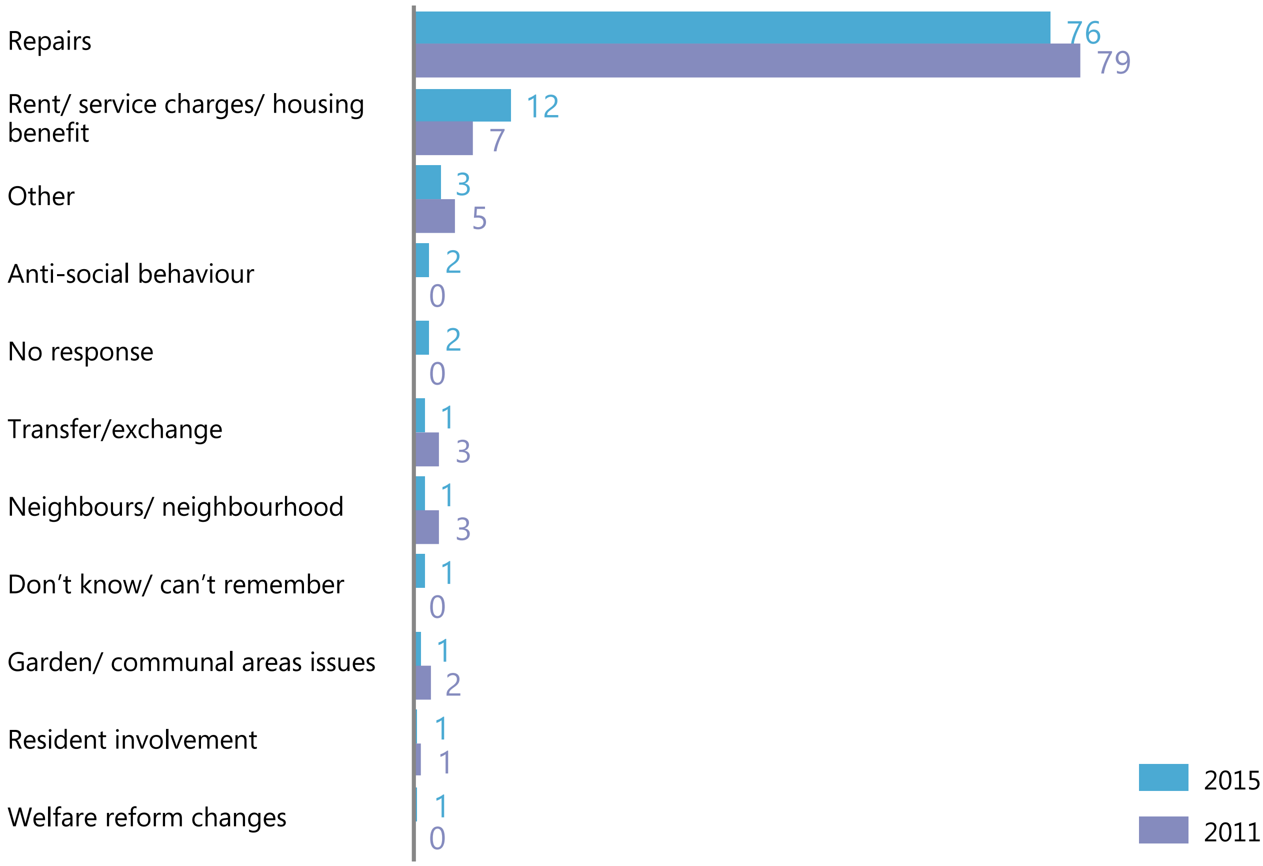
## 6.6 Method of contact

% Base 371 | Respondents who have been in contact in the last 12 months.



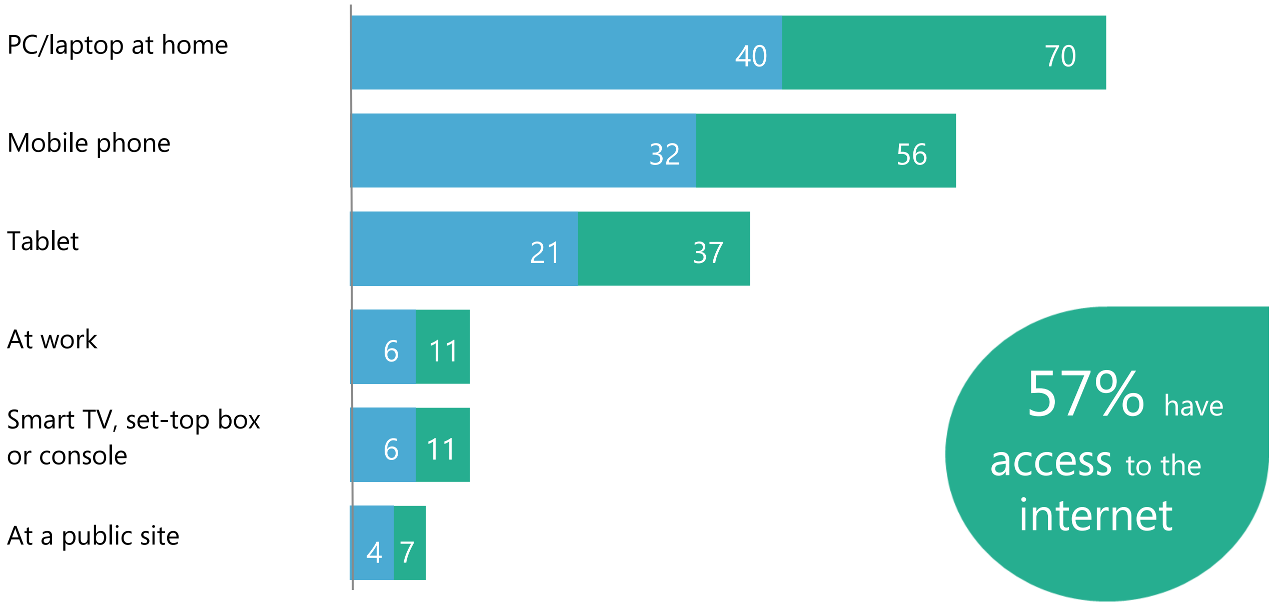

## 6.7 Reason for last contact

% Base 371 | Respondents who have been in contact in the last 12 months.



## 6.8 Method of accessing the internet

% Bases 485, 274 | More than one answer allowed.




In terms of the communication channels that tenants preferred Stroud DC to use to communicate with them, written communication remained the most valued (64% top preference), followed by telephone (23% top preference). Around a quarter also expressed a preference for staff visits somewhere in their top three (23%, chart 6.10).

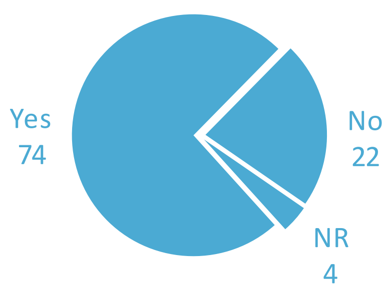
Three quarters of all respondents read Keynotes (74%), however one in five did not (22%). Only 39% of the under 35s read the newsletter, however this increases to 71% for the next age group (35-49 year olds) and is higher still amongst the over 65s (86%).

Electronic communication was fairly popular amongst the sample, with email being in the top three preferences for over a third of the sample (36%) and text/SMS in the top three for 16%. Unsurprisingly both methods were more popular amongst younger tenants, for example for the under 50s these two figures were 64% and 24% respectively.

Indeed, with the pressures to move more services online, both in terms of cost savings and customer demand, it is also important to understand the levels of digital inclusion amongst tenants. When asked, around three out of five respondents said they have access to the internet (57%). The majority had access at home (40%, 70% of internet users), but it is notable that around three fifths of those who used the internet did so via smartphone, which encompassed around a third of all respondents (32%). Tablets were also popular, being used by 37% of all those with internet. Internet use was of course age dependant, with only 36% of those aged 65+ having access to the internet compared to 91% of the under 35s.

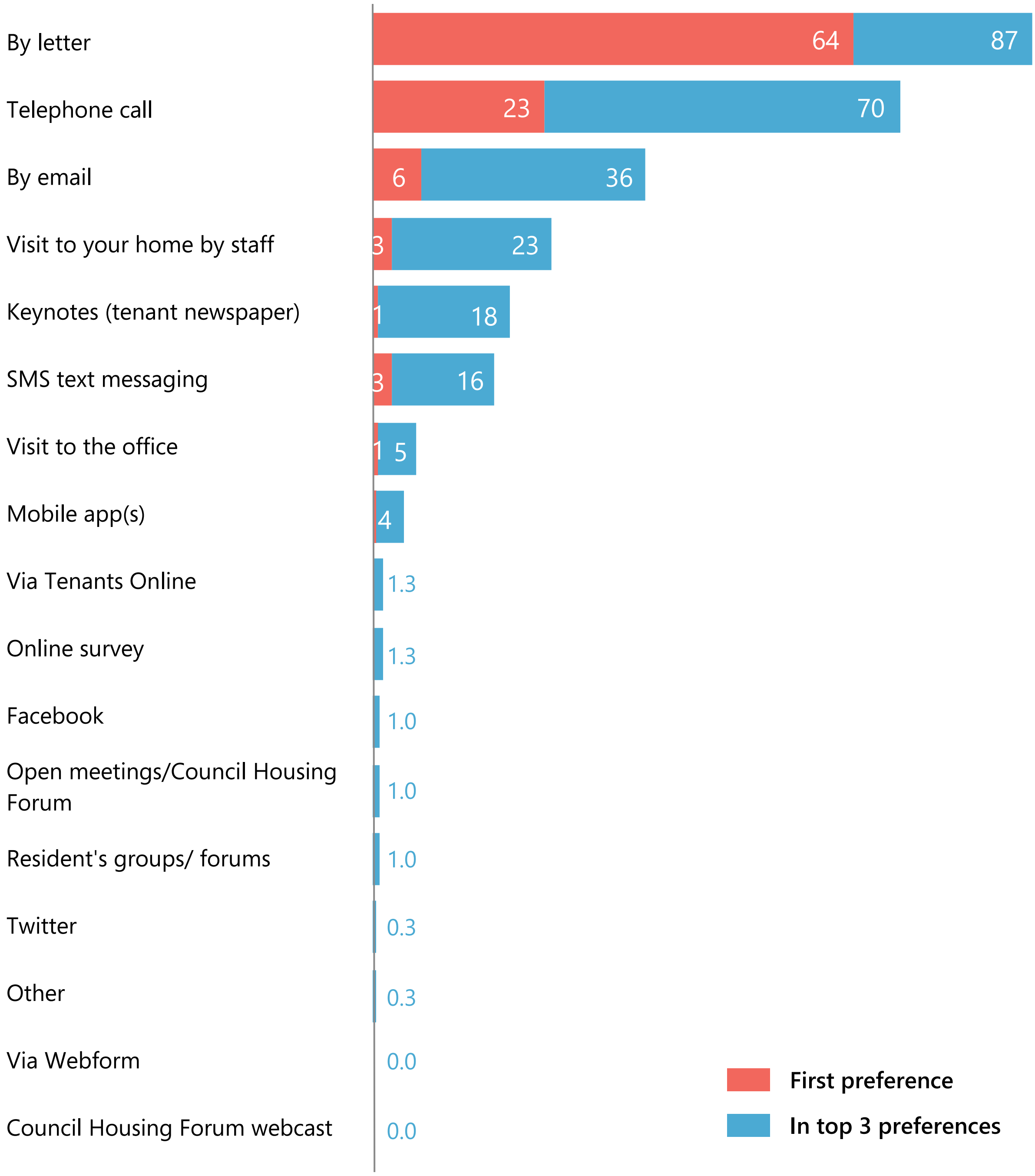
## 6.9 Do you read keynotes?

% Base 485



## 6.10 Top three preferred methods of communication from the council

% Base 314 | More than one answer allowed. Excludes non respondents



# 7. Information and resident involvement

**64%** felt the Council listened and took their views into account

**80%** said the Council were good at keeping them informed

The majority of survey respondents thought that the Council were good at keeping them informed about the things that affected them as residents (80%), and it is pleasing to find this has improved slightly since 2011 when 78% were satisfied. Consequently, the result was three points above the benchmark median of 77% placing Stroud DC in the top quartile of scores. As with many of the other survey results younger tenants aged 34 or under were far less satisfied than the over 65s (61% v 90%).

However, it is also important to place this result in the context of the further comments provided by respondents, with the need for improved communication a common theme, particularly with regards to the repairs and maintenance service (section 5), ASB (section 9) and complaints (section 10).

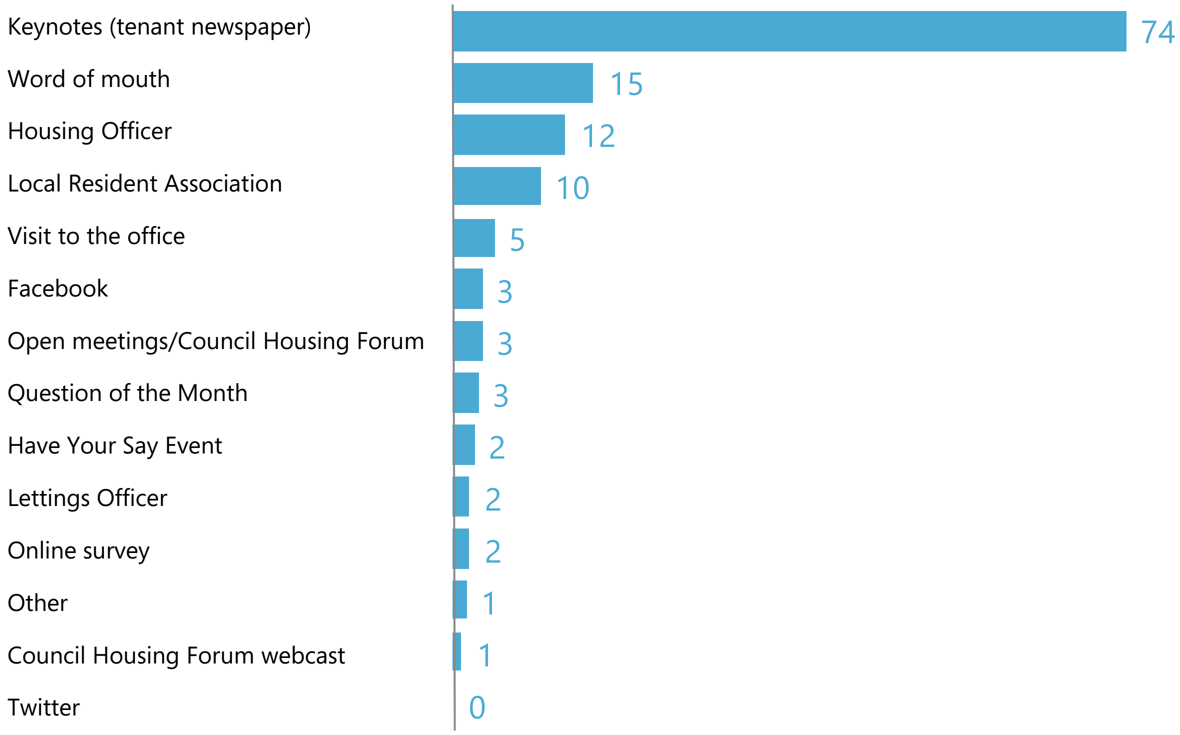
Indeed, the extent to which respondents felt that Stroud District Council listens to their views and acts upon them remains had fallen slightly since 2011 (64%, down from 67%).  Nevertheless, this result remained broadly in line with the benchmark average (63%), putting the Council in the second quartile of providers.

46% were aware of opportunities to **feedback** and get **involved** with helping improve services

. . . and 14% would **like** to get **involved** with **helping** to improve services

## 7.1 How did you find out about opportunities to feedback and get involved?

% Base 221 | If aware of opportunities to give feedback and get involved. More than one answer allowed.




Whilst around a quarter of the sample in this case said that they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied (27%), which suggests either equivocation or more likely lack of awareness, it is notable one in ten were actively dissatisfied (10%) which is around the level typically seen in other similar surveys. In terms of what this results means, it is quite likely that it is more closely related to day to day customer transactions than it is to wider tenant involvement, indeed satisfaction was lower for those who had made contact in the last year (61%) than those who had not (75%). It was also notable that respondents who had reported an incident of ASB to the Council were significantly less satisfied that they were listened to and had their views acted upon (44%).

Three fifths of the sample were also satisfied with opportunities they had to make their views known (61%). Once again, a sizeable proportion were ambivalent with 33% responding ‘neither’ and only 7% actively dissatisfied. Unfortunately, in this case levels of satisfaction were somewhat below the expected target, with a benchmark median of 65%, resulting in a third quartile standing for Stroud DC.

Unsurprisingly, those respondents who were asked for feedback after a repair either via a handheld device or paper form were significantly more satisfied than average with this question (73% and 75% respectively).

Finally, it was positive to see that around half of tenants were aware of opportunities to provide feedback and get involved, the vast majority finding out about this from the newsletter (74%). As previously discussed, readership of Keynotes is lowest amongst the under 35s which explains why this group were less aware of the opportunities to provide feedback and get involved with helping to improve services than any other age group (30%).

One in seven of the sample expressed an interest in providing feedback and getting involved (14%), and despite being less aware of such opportunities, the under 35’s were most likely to want to partake (25%) with interest falling as age increases, with only 10% of the over 65s expressing any interest.

## 7.2 Information

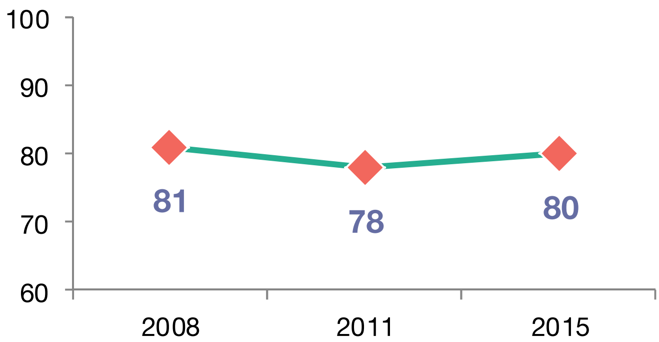
% Base 477 | Excludes non respondents


| | % good 2015 | | % good 2011 | error margin | bench mark |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Kept informed about things that affect you | **80** | ◆ | 78 | +/- 3.6 | 77 1st |

very poor | fairly poor | neither | fairly good | very good

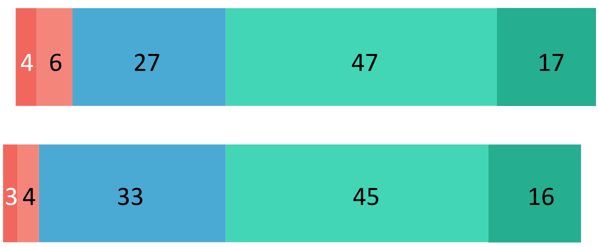
▲ significantly better ◆ no significant difference ▼ significantly worse

Benchmark median
Benchmark quartile




## 7.3 Resident involvement

% Base 447, 416 | Excludes non respondents



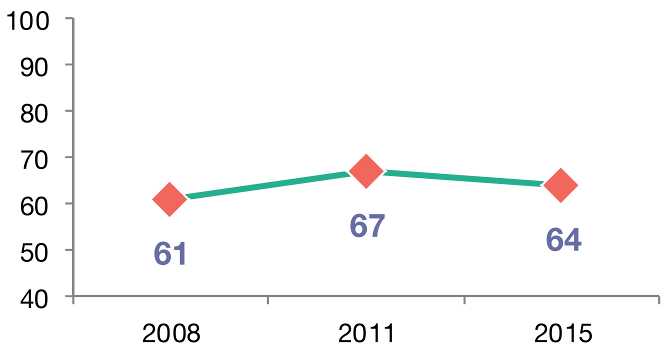

| | % satisfied 2015 | | % satisfied 2011 | error margin | bench mark |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| We listen to your views and act upon them | **64** | ◆ | 67 | +/- 4.5 | 63 2nd |
| Opportunities to make views known about services | **61** | | - | +/- 4.7 | 65 3rd |

very dissatisfied | fairly dissatisfied | neither | fairly satisfied | very satisfied

▲ significantly better ◆ no significant difference ▼ significantly worse

Benchmark median
Benchmark quartile

### Listen to views



# 8. Neighbourhood services

**87%** satisfied with neighbourhood as a place to live

**81%** satisfied with the grounds maintenance

People's perceptions of their neighbourhood overall are typically one of the more stable measures in tenant surveys, and so it transpired here with 87% of the current sample satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live which is identical to that reported in 2011, although there was a slight increase in the proportion who were 'very satisfied' (50%, up from 48%). On the opposite end of the scale only 7% were dissatisfied. As such, satisfaction remains slightly above the HouseMark median (86%) with Stroud DC appearing in the second quartile of providers.

This result obviously varied by patch with those living in patch 9 significantly more satisfied than average (96%), whereas respondents in patch 5 and 3 were less satisfied (75% and 79% respectively, chart 8.5). As seen elsewhere in the results, older tenants had significantly higher levels of satisfaction (93% of those aged 65 or over) compared to the youngest age group (75% of those aged under 35).

Whether a tenant has experienced anti-social behaviour will obviously impact upon how they view their neighbourhood, but even so it is important to note how big an influence it has on tenants' views. Those who had experienced a problem with ASB in the last year were significantly less satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live than those who had not (66% v 92%).

When asked to rate the appearance of their neighbourhood the pattern of responses was slightly different from the overall measure, but still compared favourably to the equivalent benchmark score. Four out of five respondents were satisfied with the overall appearance of their neighbourhood (79%), which is also one point above the level expected (median 78%). However, more respondents were dissatisfied with this (14%).

A similar pattern emerges when rating the general condition of the estate/ neighbourhood, with 77% satisfied and 13% dissatisfied.

In both instances, respondents in patch 9 were significantly more satisfied than average (91% and 86% respectively, however, satisfaction was significantly lower than average for both the overall appearance (63%) and general condition (65%) of the estate/ neighbourhood for respondents in patch 5 (table 8.5). By property type, both the appearance and condition as well as the neighbourhood as a place to live were rated significantly lower than average by respondents in flats.

One way of improving the appearance and general condition of the neighbourhood is obviously through the grounds maintenance service, something which four fifths of the sample were satisfied with (81%). Whilst one in ten remained dissatisfied, it is pleasing to find levels of satisfaction were actually ten points higher than the level expected with a benchmark median of 71%. As such it is no surprise to again find Stroud in the top quartile amongst similar providers.

Although satisfaction did not vary significantly by patch at the 95% confidence level, there were some significant variations at the 90% level. Once again respondents in patch 9 were significantly more satisfied than average with this service (79%) and they were joined by respondents from patch 2 (91%). In contrast, satisfaction was significantly lower than average in patch 6 (79%), table 8.5).

Moving on to consider the specific problems that residents might be facing in their neighbourhoods, the most common were:

- Dog fouling/ dog mess (41% problem)
- Rubbish or litter (26%)
- Other problems with pets and animals (17%)
- Noisy neighbours (15%)
- Drug use or dealing (15%)

Further analysis of neighbourhood issues was carried out by patch with the results summarised in table 8.6, including an indication of which area differed significantly from the norm. Some of the other analyses of note include:

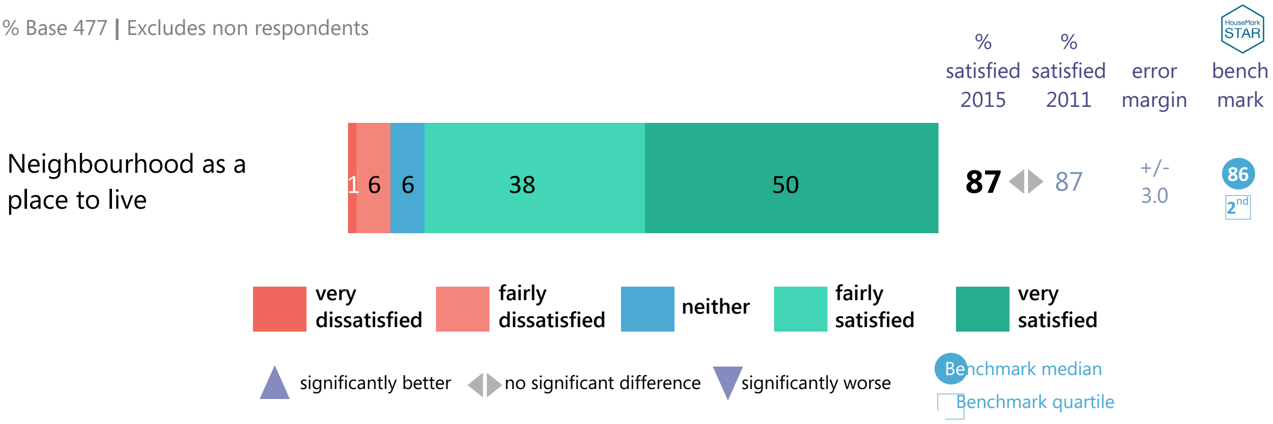
- The majority of neighbourhood issues were significantly more of a problem in patch 5.
- In contrast, a number of neighbourhood issues were significantly less problematic in patch 6.
- Car parking was significantly less of a problem in in patch 4 and 9 (7% and 12% problem, respectively).
- Noisy neighbours were significantly more of a problem in patch 5 (35%).
- Dog fouling was significantly less of an issue in patch 9 (19%).
- Rubbish or litter was significantly more of a problem in patch 5 (35%), but less so in patch 4 (7%) and 9 (12%).
- Drug use or dealing was significantly more of a problem in patch 5 (25%), but less so in patch 6 (9%).
- Similarly, drunk or rowdy behaviour was significantly more problematic in patch 5 (21%) than patch 6 (2%).

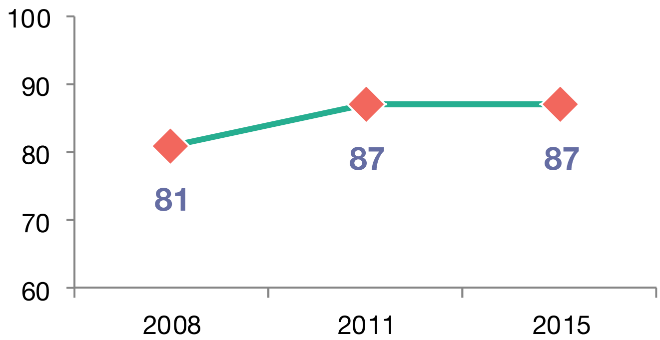
A key driver analysis was again used on the overall satisfaction score to determine which problems were the most influential (chart 8.2). As is typical, ASB is a key component of this. In descending order of strength, the key drivers were:

- Noisy neighbours (15% problem)
- Vandalism and graffiti (6%)
- Rubbish or litter (26%)

## 8.1 Overall satisfaction

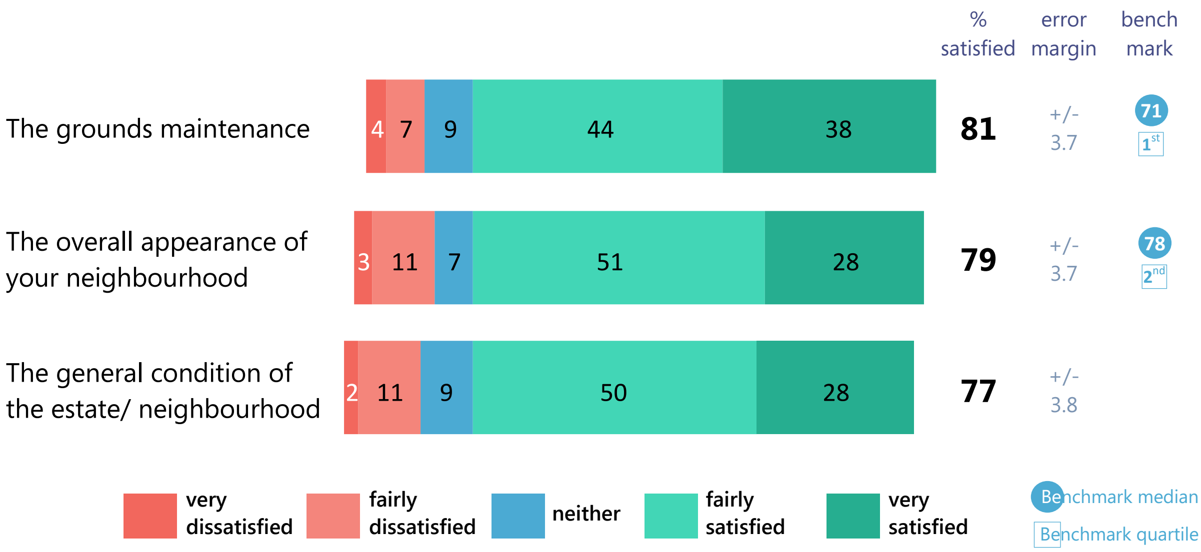
% Base 477 | Excludes non respondents




## 8.2 Neighbourhood services

% Bases (descending) 429, 464, 461 | Excludes non respondents.

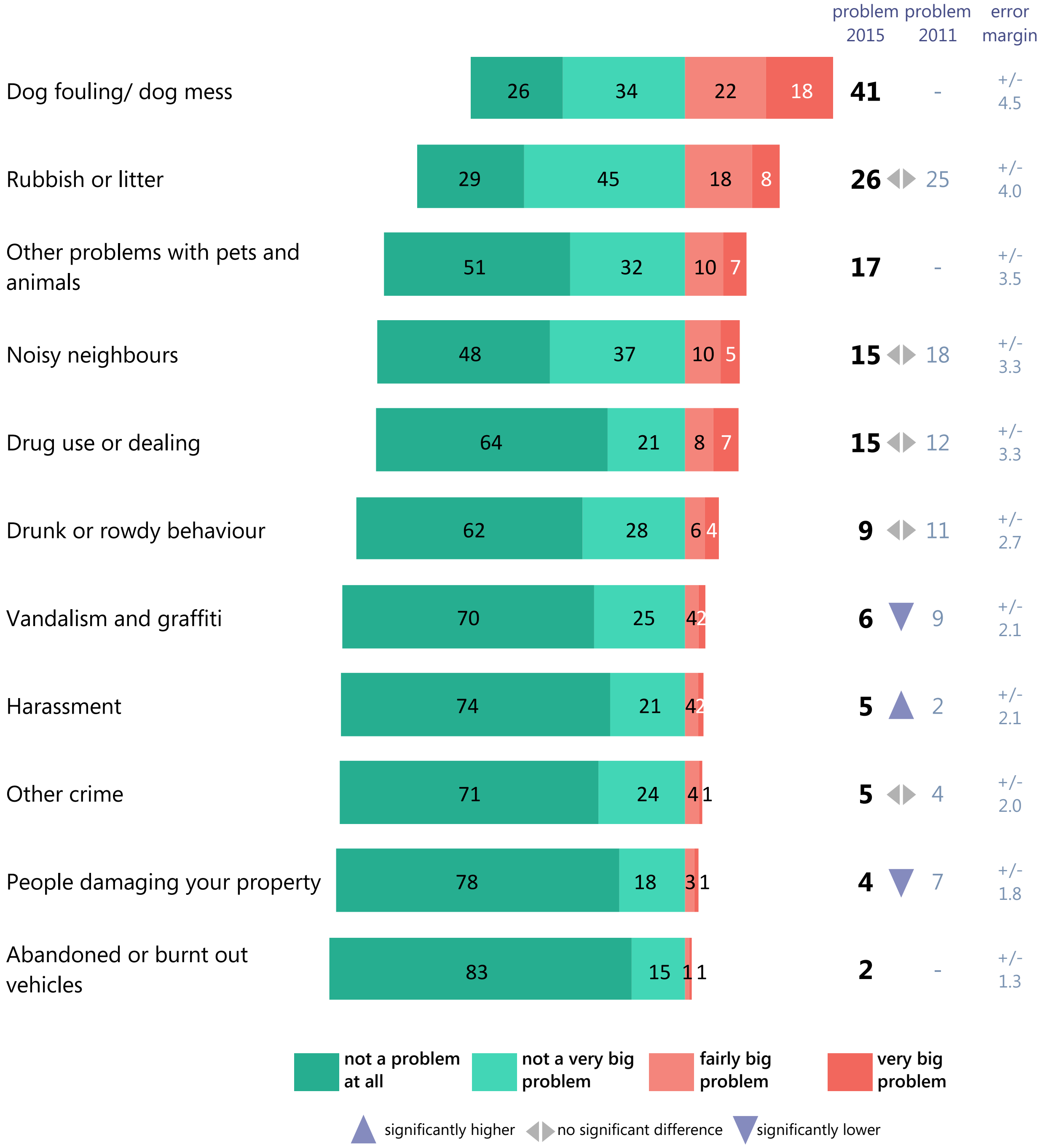



Interestingly, when asked whether their neighbourhood had improved or declined in the last three years, a quarter of the sample said it had improved (24%), with one in ten saying it had 'greatly improved' (9%). The fact the majority of responses were ambivalent (61% 'neither') coupled with the fact satisfaction with the neighbourhood as a place to live has not altered, suggests there has been no notable changes in neighbourhoods.

As a number of neighbourhood issues were significantly more problematic in patch 5 (table 8.6), it is perhaps unsurprising to find respondents in this area were significantly less likely to say their area had improved (20%) than any other area. Indeed 27% of respondents from this area said it had actually declined. Perceived improvement was highest in patch 6 and 3 (30% and 28% respectively).

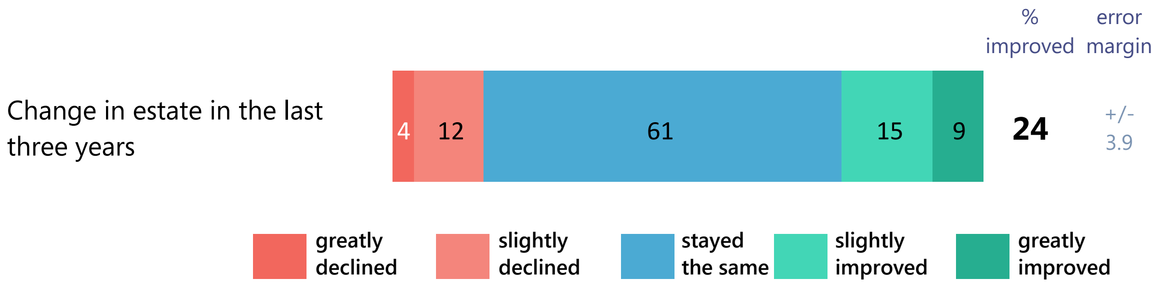
## 8.3 Neighbourhood problems

% Bases (descending) 451,452,431,431,439,443,440,439,433,422,436,434 | Excludes non respondents.




## 8.4 Estate has improved or declined

% Base xxx | Excludes non respondents



## 8.5 Neighbourhood services by patch

| | Sample size | % positive: Neighbourhood as a place to live | Estate has improved or declined in the last three years | The overall appearance of your estate | The grounds maintenance | The general condition of the estate/ neighbourhood |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Overall** | *485* | **87** | **24** | **79** | **81** | **77** |
| Housing 1 | *57* | 86 | 24 | 79 | 81 | 76 |
| Housing 2 | *44* | 98 | 20 | 84 | 91 | 79 |
| Housing 3 | *62* | 79 | 28 | 75 | 74 | 67 |
| Housing 4 | *46* | 87 | 21 | 91 | 86 | 86 |
| Housing 5 | *53* | 75 | 20 | 63 | 82 | 65 |
| Housing 6 | *74* | 89 | 30 | 75 | 79 | 75 |
| Housing 7 | *53* | 91 | 24 | 85 | 88 | 86 |
| Housing 8 | *47* | 89 | 24 | 74 | 74 | 83 |
| Housing 9 | *49* | 96 | 19 | 91 | 79 | 86 |

## 8.6 Neighbourhood problems by patch

| | Sample size | % problem: Rubbish or litter | Noisy neighbours | Dog fouling/ dog mess | Other problems with pets and animals | Harassment | Drunk or rowdy behaviour | Vandalism and graffiti | People damaging your property | Drug use or dealing | Abandoned or burnt out vehicles | Other crime |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Overall** | *485* | **26** | **15** | **41** | **17** | **5** | **9** | **6** | **4** | **15** | **2** | **5** |
| Housing 1 | *57* | 25 | 12 | 40 | 10 | 6 | 6 | 4 | 4 | 20 | 2 | 6 |
| Housing 2 | *44* | 32 | 0 | 46 | 13 | 0 | 7 | 2 | 0 | 7 | 0 | 2 |
| Housing 3 | *62* | 33 | 27 | 38 | 17 | 8 | 10 | 2 | 5 | 20 | 0 | 9 |
| Housing 4 | *46* | 7 | 11 | 37 | 18 | 5 | 9 | 5 | 0 | 9 | 0 | 0 |
| Housing 5 | *53* | 35 | 35 | 45 | 13 | 11 | 21 | 15 | 9 | 25 | 2 | 9 |
| Housing 6 | *74* | 26 | 8 | 44 | 22 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 9 | 2 | 5 |
| Housing 7 | *53* | 32 | 13 | 45 | 23 | 4 | 14 | 9 | 4 | 20 | 9 | 2 |
| Housing 8 | *47* | 31 | 19 | 51 | 16 | 5 | 9 | 7 | 5 | 16 | 2 | 5 |
| Housing 9 | *49* | 12 | 7 | 19 | 19 | 5 | 7 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 3 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Significantly **worse** than average (95% confidence*) | Significantly **better** than average (95% confidence*) |
| Significantly **worse** than average (90% confidence*) | Significantly **better** than average (90% confidence*) |

* See appendix A for further information on statistical tests and confidence levels

# 9. Anti-social behaviour

40 %

of tenants found staff to be helpful when they reported ASB

38 %

who reported ASB satisfied with the response overall

Dealing with anti-social behaviour (ASB) was quite important to tenants, with around over half of respondents listing this as one of the top five priority services they received from Stroud District Council (chart 3.4). Unfortunately, the way ASB reports were dealt with was one of the few areas where the Council's performance was somewhat lower than average, to the extent that on some measures it was in the fourth quartile compared to other landlords (see below). Taking those two facts together, it is clear that this is probably a priority area for the Council to target service improvements.

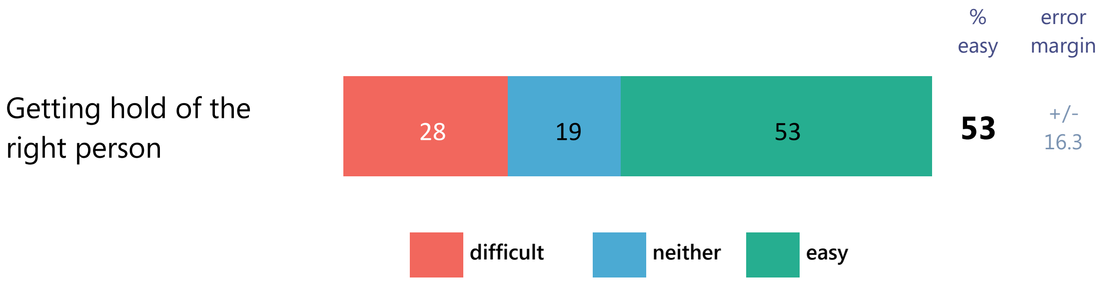
Unfortunately, around one in six respondents had experienced an incident of ASB in the previous year (17%), with more than two fifths going on to report it direct to the Council (44%). Experience of ASB obviously varied by area and was higher than average for tenants living in patch 1 (25%), patch 5 (23%), patch 4 (22%), patch 3 (21%) and patch 7 (19%). There was also a notable variation by property type, with tenants in flats twice as likely as those in houses to experience ASB (30% v 15%) and three times more likely than those in bungalows (11%). There was also a correlation with age, with experience of ASB falling with age – 27% of under 35s said they had experienced ASB compared to 11% of those aged 65 or over.

17% of had **experienced ASB** in the **last 12 months**

. . . and 44% **reported** it to the **Council**

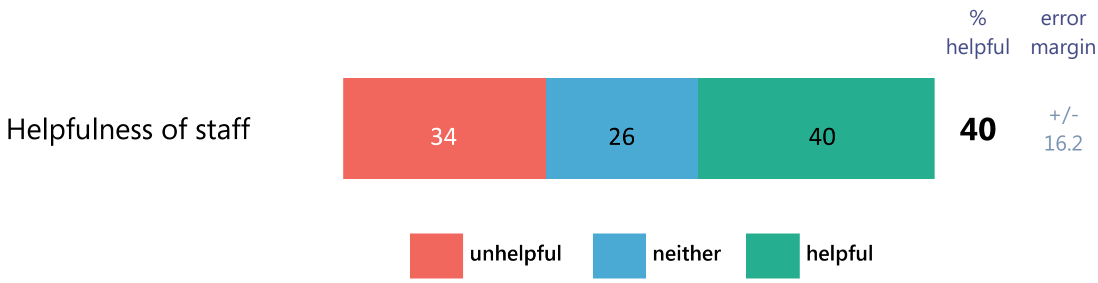
## 9.1 Ease of getting hold of the right person

% Base 36 | Reported ASB to the Council in last 12 months. Excludes non respondents



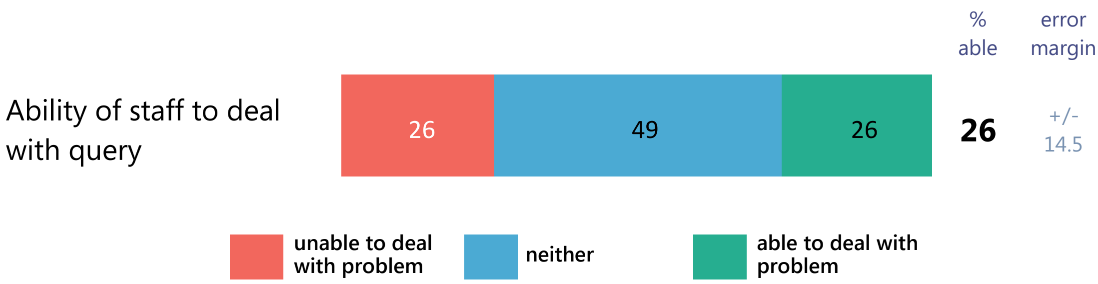

## 9.2 Helpfulness of staff

% Base 35 | Reported ASB to the Council in last 12 months. Excludes non respondents




## 9.3 Able to deal with query

% Base 35 | Reported ASB to the Council in last 12 months. Excludes non respondents

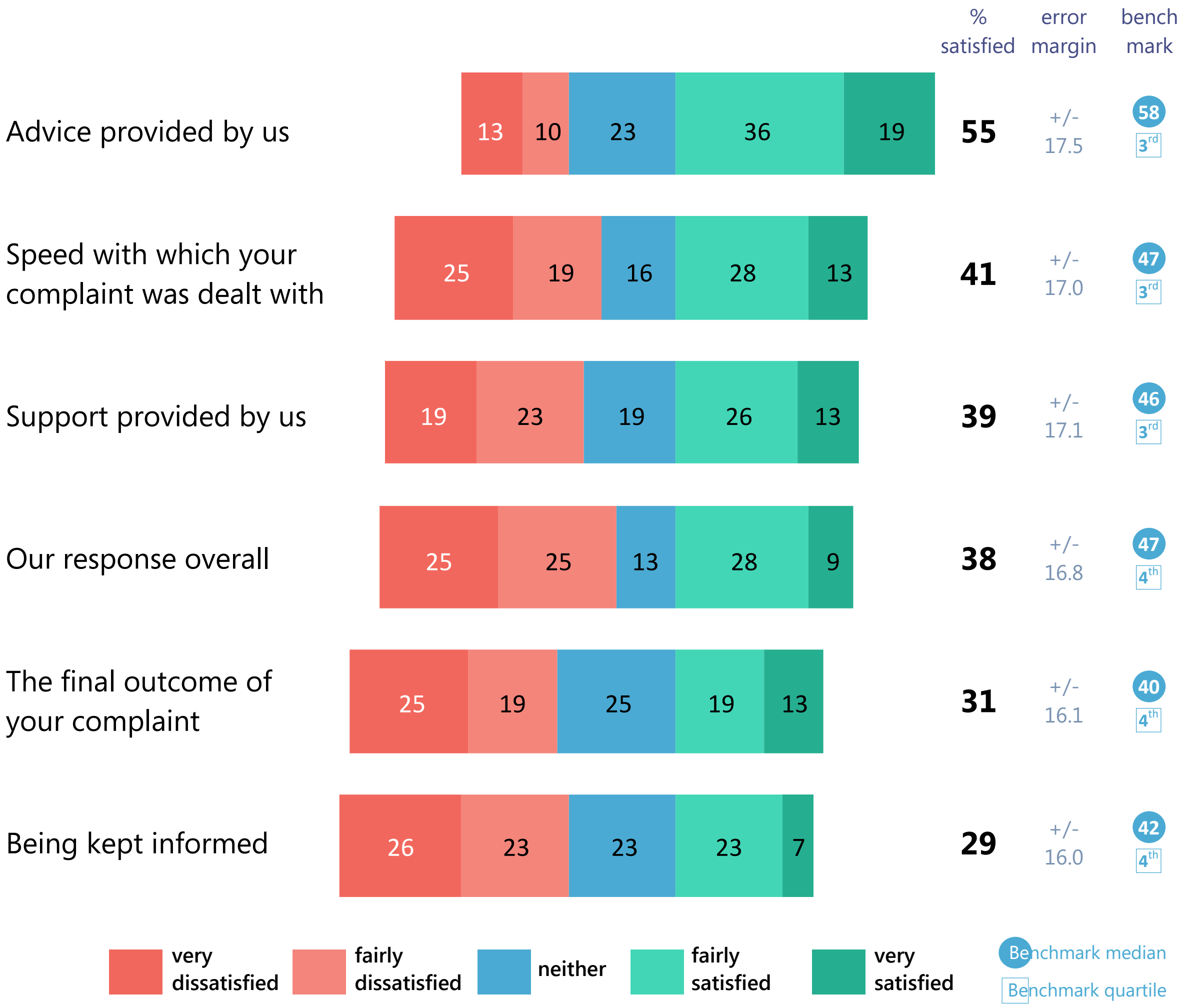



Respondents were next asked about their experience when reporting an incident of ASB. At this point it should be noted by the reader that due to the complexities of dealing with ASB, questions that ask how reports are handled typically receive lower ratings than many others in tenant surveys. Furthermore, due to the small sample sizes involved throughout, care should be taken when interpreting results throughout this section.

More than half of those who reported and incident of ASB to the Council found it easy to get hold of the right person (53%), however just over a quarter had some difficulty (28%). However, once they were through to the right person the opinion of the service is almost evenly split. Whilst 40% found staff to be helpful, a similar proportion said the opposite (34%). As such, only a quarter of those reporting ASB confirmed staff were able to deal with their query, however an identical proportion said they were unable to deal with their problem (26%).

## 9.4 Last ASB report

% Bases (descending) 31,32,31,32,32,31 | Reported ASB to the Council in last 12 months. Excludes non respondents.




Only two out of five deemed the speed they were initially interviewed to be good (41%, chart 9.4), with slightly more saying it was poor (44%). Whilst just over a half were satisfied with the advice provided by staff (55%), somewhat fewer were satisfied with the actual support they provided (39%), indeed more were actually dissatisfied with the level of support (42%). Furthermore, after running another key driver analysis to determine which aspect of the service was most influential, the support provide by Stroud DC throughout the ASB case was the only aspect of the service to emerge from this test.

The sample as a whole felt slightly more informed overall (see section 7) but it appears this in not the case when it comes to reports of ASB as only 29% were satisfied that they were kept informed whereas a half were dissatisfied (49%), the majority of whom were 'very dissatisfied'. This compares particularly poorly against the ARP benchmark of 42%, and as such it was no surprise to find more respondents were dissatisfied than satisfied with both the final outcome of their complaint (44% v 31%) and the response overall (50% v 38%). Indeed, both overall ratings were also considerably lower than the ARP median, to the extent that they were in the fourth quartile.

# 10. Complaints

**41%** who made a complaint were satisfied with the response overall

**74%** who made a complaint would be willing to do so again in the future

**9%**
**claimed** they had made **a complaint** in the last **12 months**

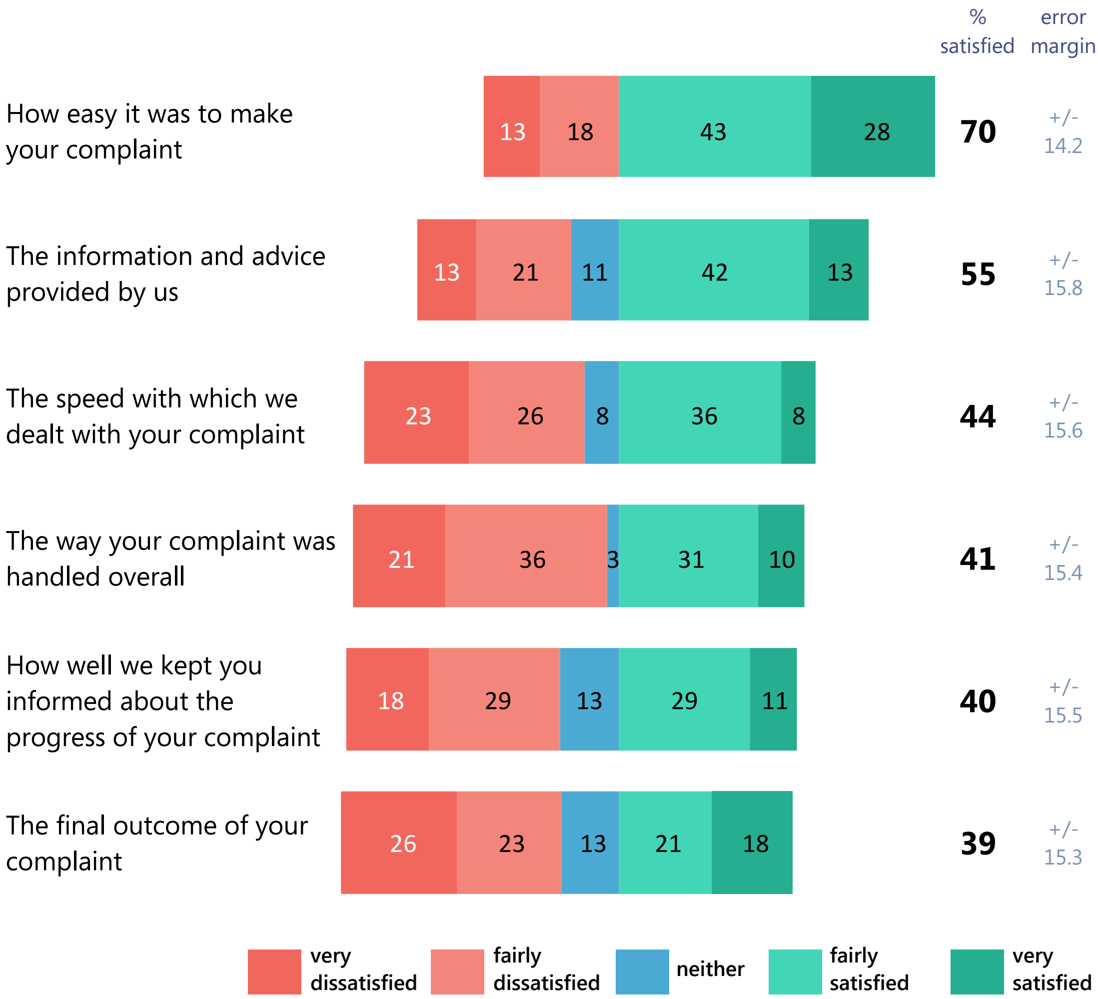
Around one in ten respondents claimed to have made a complaint to the Council in the previous year (9%), with this higher than average for those living in patch 7 and 8 (both 13%). Whilst the youngest tenants aged 16-34 were more likely than average to complain (11%) it was actually respondents aged 35-49 who were the most likely to have complained (14%). It was also notable that unemployed respondents had the highest levels of complaints, with nearly a quarter of this group doing so (24%) compared to only 10% of those in employment.

All tenants who claimed to have made a complaint were asked about their experience when doing so, the results of which are displayed in chart 10.1. The findings here were slightly better than those results seen for in the ASB section with the same considerations needed when looking at the results in context with the other survey findings. Similar to the results for ASB reporting, results in this section are based on small sample sizes, so again it is advised to take care when interpreting findings in this section. It is also important to bear in mind that, despite making the survey questions as clear as possible, experience in other surveys has shown that many of these respondents will not actually have used the formal complaints system.

Similar to how ASB reports are handled, the majority of respondents were satisfied with how easy it was to make a complaint (70%) and the information and advice provided by staff (55%). Following this, the remaining aspects of the complaints procedure was rated more negative than positive including the speed it was dealt with (49% dissatisfied v 44% satisfied) and the response overall (55% dissatisfied v 41% satisfied).

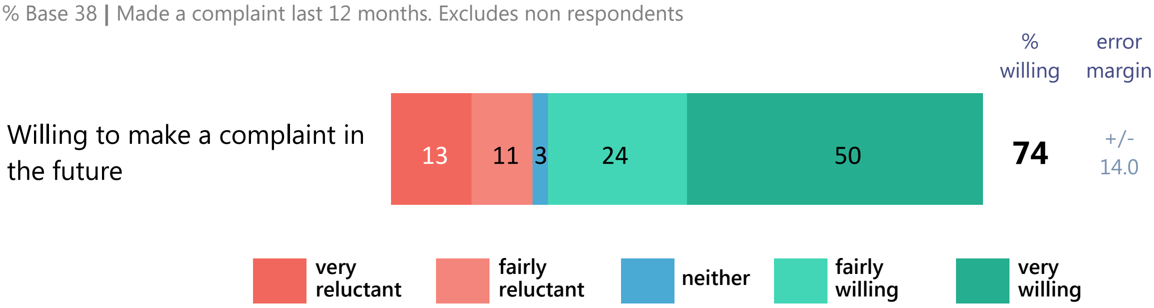
## 10.1 Complaints service

% Bases (descending) 40,38,39,39,38,39 | Made a complaint last 12 months. Excludes non respondents.




## 10.2 Willingness to make a complaint in the future

% Base 38 | Made a complaint last 12 months. Excludes non respondents




How well respondents were kept informed was again an issue with 57% dissatisfied this was the case and only 40% satisfied, which does appear to be a theme. As such, it was no surprise to find the majority of those making a complaint were dissatisfied with the final outcome (49%) compared to only 39% who were satisfied.

Unfortunately, because of the low sample sizes involved there was little of note revealed by further sub-group analysis of any aspect of the complaints procedure.

Finally, it was positive to find three quarters of those who had made complaint would be willing to do so again should the need arise, however as a quarter remain reluctant, including 13% who were 'very reluctant'.

# 11. Advice and support

**82%** of tenants satisfied advice and support on rent payments

**69%** satisfied with support for new customers

It is particularly important in the context of welfare benefit reforms that when tenants were asked to give their views on the help and support services that Stroud District Council provide in order to help customers manage their tenancies, the majority were satisfied with the advice that they received on paying rent (82%) and the remainder were almost all equivocal.

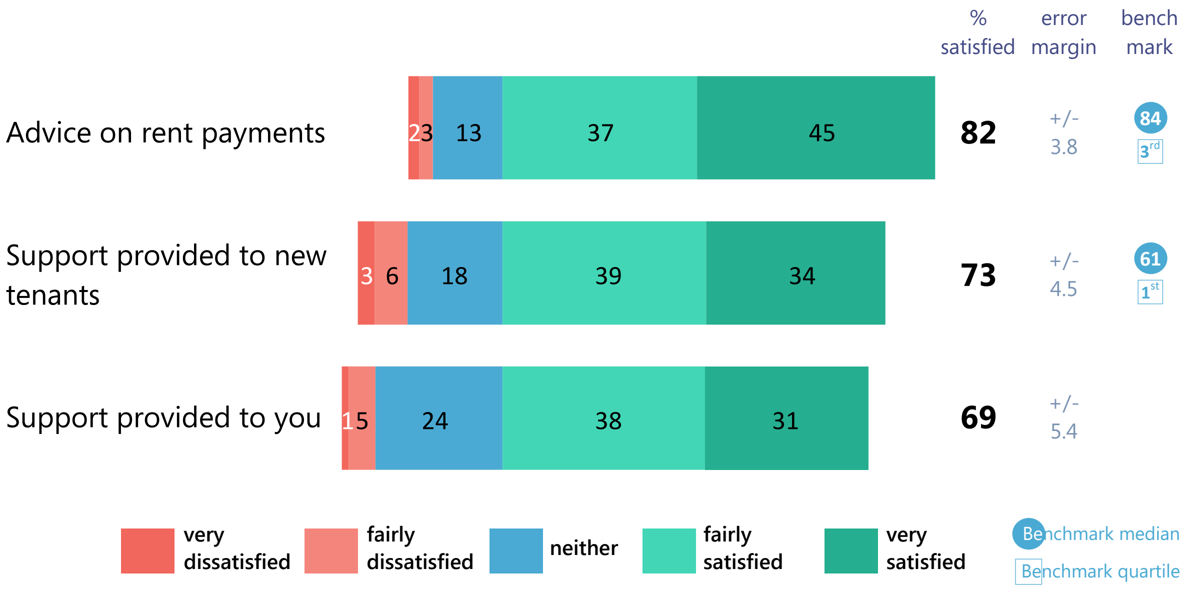
The age of the respondents was again a differentiator, with satisfaction lowest amongst the under 35s (70%), but significantly higher than average amongst the over 65s (85%).

Slightly fewer tenants were satisfied with the advice and support provided to new tenants (73% satisfied), however, this was twelve points above the benchmark median of 61% with Stroud DC appearing in the top quartile. Respondents in patch 5, were significantly less satisfied with the support provided to new tenants (44%) and were the only area to vary significantly from the norm.

Around seven out of ten respondents in the sample were satisfied with the general support provided to them as an individual (69%), with the majority of the others ambivalent (24% 'neither') and only 6% actively dissatisfied. Satisfaction was again significantly higher amongst the over 65s (82%) with patch 7 the only area to vary significantly from the average (85%). This score was notably lower for those who had made a complaint to the Council in the previous year (44%).

## 11.1 Advice and support

% Bases (descending) 385, 386, 281 | Excludes non respondents.




A fifth of respondents (21%) had actually required some form of advice and support about welfare benefits in the previous year, with younger tenants (aged under 35) nearly three times more likely to need this service than those aged 65 or over (32% v 12%). Unsurprisingly, this was higher still for those in receipt of housing benefit (35%) compared to those who did not receive the benefit (5%).

As such, it was no surprise to find nearly all of the requests for advice and support were related to housing benefit/council tax (92%), with one in ten requests for help with bedroom tax and pensions.

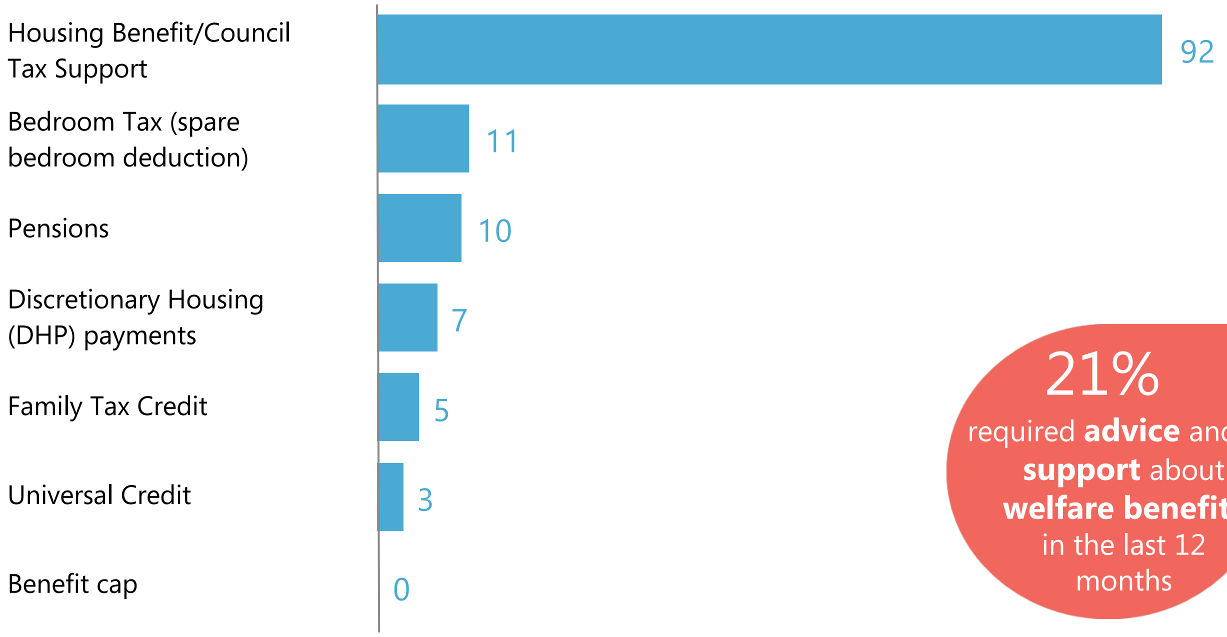
It was pleasing to find in the vast majority of cases the advice and support received was rated positively, with 84% satisfied, including 49% who were 'very satisfied'. Once again, the over 65s were significantly more satisfied than the under 35s (95% v 71%).

Finally, when asked, one in five of the sample (21%) would like more information regarding the introduction of Universal Credit and how it will affect them. Whilst this figure was broadly the same amongst the over 35s, the younger tenants (aged under 35) were more interested in receiving this information (27%). There were also some interesting variations by patch more than a third of respondents in patch 5 wanting to know more (36%), whereas only 13% of tenants in patch 4 would like the same information. Again, those receiving housing benefit were more interested in knowing about Universal Credit than those who do not (39% v 4%).

Clearly, this change will impact those on lower incomes with more than two fifths of those respondents with a household income of £99 or less per week requiring further information (44%). Similarly, nearly half of unemployed respondents and more than half of those who were permanently sick/disabled need to know more about how the introduction of Universal Credit will affect them (46% and 54% respectively).

## 11.2 Reason for seeking welfare benefit advice

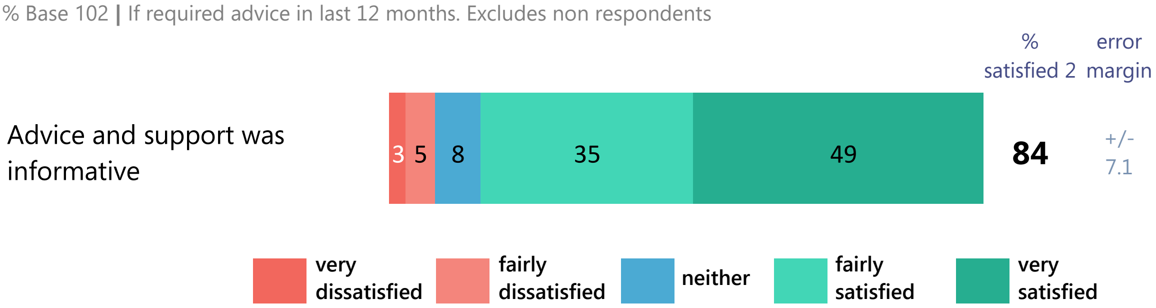
% Base 102 | If required advice in last 12 months. More than one answer allowed.




**21%** required **advice** and **support** about **welfare benefits** in the last 12 months

## 11.3 Satisfaction that welfare benefit advice

% Base 102 | If required advice in last 12 months. Excludes non respondents




When specifically asked what information is required and how the Council could improve the information that is provided, the majority of responses were simply asking what it was and when it was likely to be introduced:

"When UC is due to be introduced and how it is to be calculated."

"When it will come into effect & how that will affect payments e.g. when and how much?"

"What's included, how does it work and when will it be introduced?"

"What are the changes, how will they affect me and when do they happen?"

"What exactly is universal credit, does it involve us, our situation with housing benefit and tax credits."

However, a number of further comments provided did specify the need for the information in a clear and easily understood format:

"We don't know very much about it so all info you could provide. Saw some info in keynotes but didn't find it very clear."

"Make your letters etc. easy for other people to understand what you are saying."

"I would like to know all about it plainly and clearly as I know nothing about it at all. Thank you."

"I want to know everything in an easily understandable format, without being patronising."

# 12. Respondent profile

In addition to documenting the demographic profile of the sample, tables 12.12 to 12.14 in this section also display the core survey questions according to the main property and equality groups. When considering these tables it is important to bear in mind that some of the sub groups are small, so many observed differences may simply be down to chance. To help navigate these results they have been subjected to statistical tests, with those that can be confidently said to differ from the average score being highlighted in the tables.

## 12.1 Town and patch

% Base 485

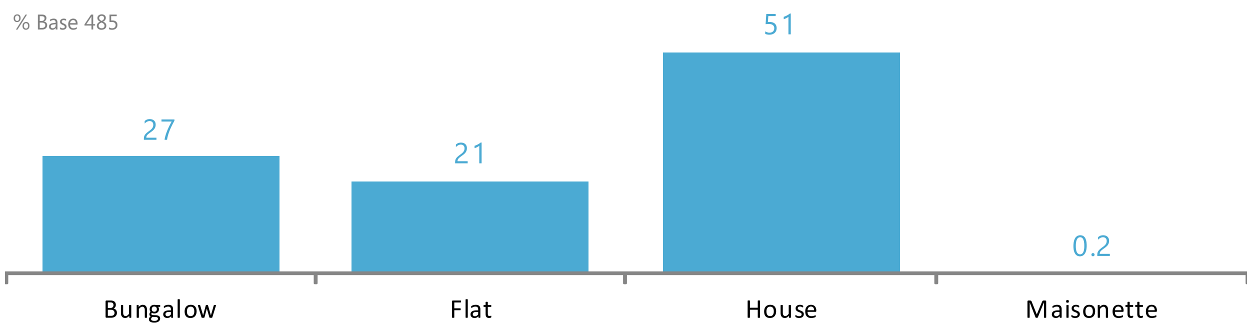
| | Total | % |
|---|---|---|
| Berkeley | 25 | 5.2 |
| Dursley | 108 | 22.3 |
| Gloucester | 26 | 5.4 |
| Stonehouse | 70 | 14.4 |
| Stroud | 215 | 44.3 |
| Wotton-Under-Edge | 41 | 8.5 |

| | Total | % |
|---|---|---|
| Housing 1 | 57 | 11.8 |
| Housing 2 | 44 | 9.1 |
| Housing 3 | 62 | 12.8 |
| Housing 4 | 46 | 9.5 |
| Housing 5 | 53 | 10.9 |
| Housing 6 | 74 | 15.3 |
| Housing 7 | 53 | 10.9 |
| Housing 8 | 47 | 9.7 |
| Housing 9 | 49 | 10.1 |

please see Appendix B for a full description of housing patches

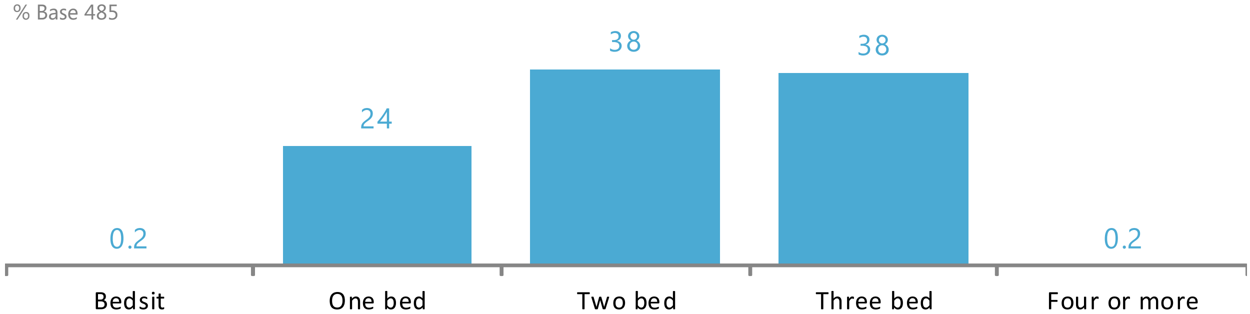
## 12.2 Property type

% Base 485



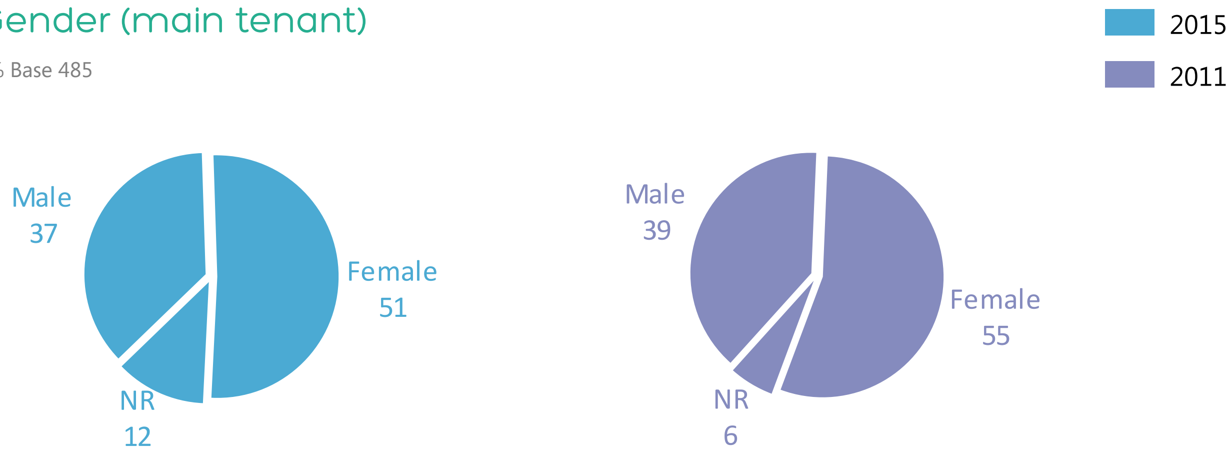

## 12.3 Property size

% Base 485



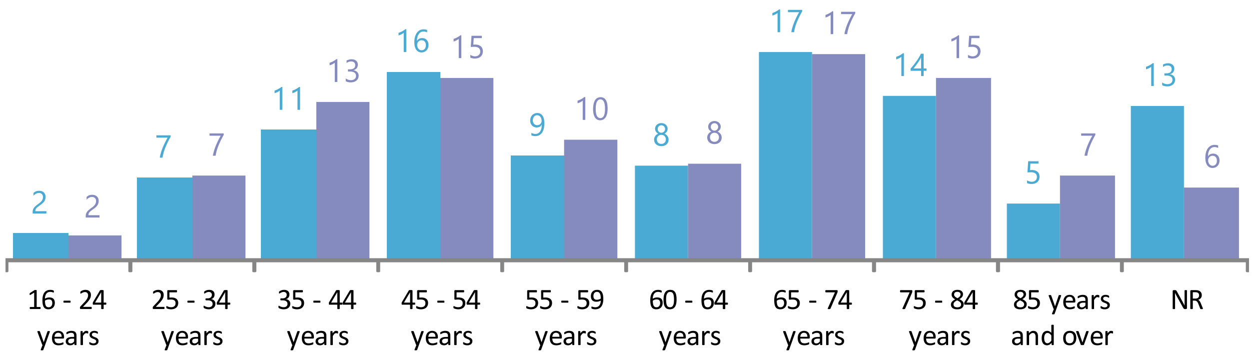
## 12.4 Gender (main tenant)

% Base 485



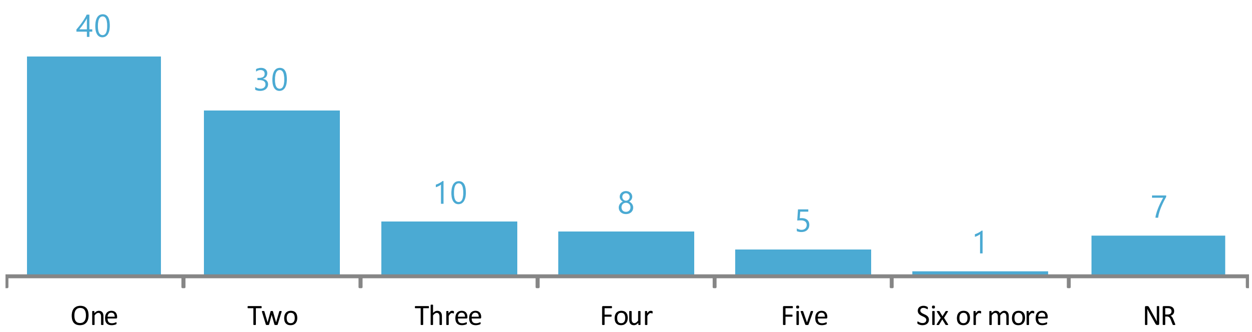

## 12.5 Age (main tenant)

% Base 485



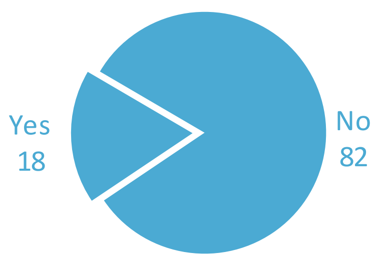

## 12.6 Household size

% Base 485




## 12.7 Children in household aged 16 or under

% Base 485

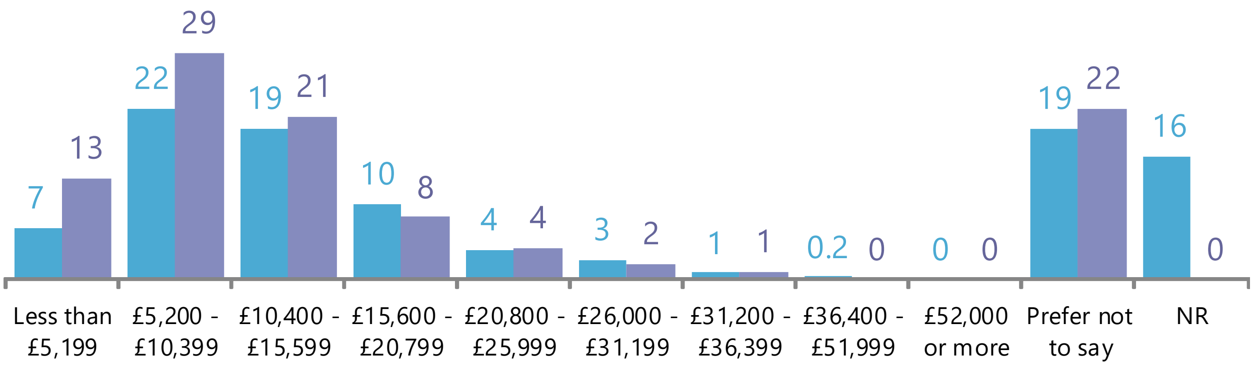


## 12.8 Employment status

% Base 485

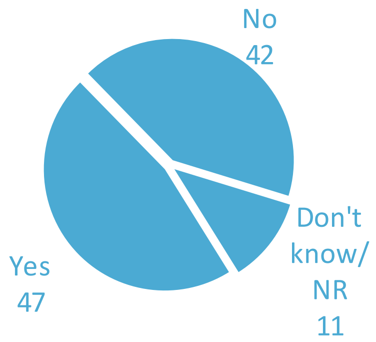

## 12.9 Household net income

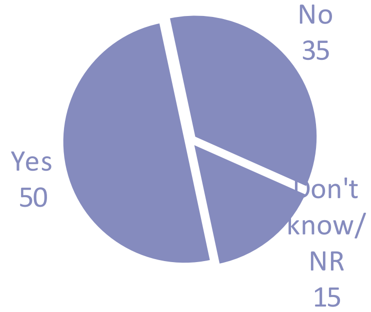
% Base 485




## 12.10 Receive housing benefit

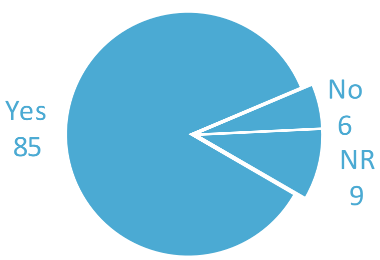
% Base 485




## 12.11 Have a bank account

% Base 485



## 12.12 Core questions by age

| | % positive | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Overall | 16 - 34 | 35 - 49 | 50 - 64 | 65+ |
| **Sample size** | **485** | **44** | **91** | **116** | **172** |
| Service overall | 86 | 77 | 81 | 84 | 92 |
| Quality of home | 83 | 66 | 73 | 81 | 93 |
| Keeping tenants informed | 80 | 61 | 78 | 73 | 90 |
| Listens to views and acts upon them | 64 | 49 | 69 | 56 | 71 |
| Enquiries generally | 78 | 67 | 78 | 70 | 85 |
| Repairs & maintenance service | 79 | 57 | 70 | 75 | 93 |
| Neighbourhood as a place to live | 87 | 75 | 84 | 85 | 93 |

## 12.13 Core questions by gender

| | % positive | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Overall | Male | Female |
| **Sample size** | **485** | **178** | **249** |
| Service overall | 86 | 87 | 85 |
| Quality of home | 83 | 82 | 82 |
| Keeping tenants informed | 80 | 81 | 79 |
| Listens to views and acts upon them | 64 | 62 | 63 |
| Enquiries generally | 78 | 77 | 78 |
| Repairs & maintenance service | 79 | 76 | 80 |
| Neighbourhood as a place to live | 87 | 88 | 86 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Significantly **worse** than average (95% confidence*) | Significantly **better** than average (95% confidence*) |
| Significantly **worse** than average (90% confidence*) | Significantly **better** than average (90% confidence*) |

* See appendix A for further information on statistical tests and confidence levels

## 12.14 Core questions by ethnic background

% positive

| | Overall | White British | BME |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Sample size** | **485** | **407** | **21** |
| Service overall | 86 | 87 | 95 |
| Quality of home | 83 | 83 | 86 |
| Keeping tenants informed | 80 | 80 | 90 |
| Listens to views and acts upon them | 64 | 64 | 74 |
| Enquiries generally | 78 | 78 | 79 |
| Repairs & maintenance service | 79 | 80 | 85 |
| Neighbourhood as a place to live | 87 | 87 | 91 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Significantly **worse** than average (95% confidence*) | Significantly **better** than average (95% confidence*) |
| Significantly **worse** than average (90% confidence*) | Significantly **better** than average (90% confidence*) |

* See appendix A for further information on statistical tests and confidence levels

# Appendix A. Methodology & data analysis

## Questionnaire

The questionnaire was based on the HouseMark STAR survey methodology, with the most appropriate questions for Stroud District Council being selected by them from the STAR questionnaire templates.

The questionnaire was designed to be as clear and legible as possible to make it easy to complete, with options available for large print versions or completion in alternative languages. The questionnaires were printed as A4 booklets.

## Fieldwork

The survey was carried out between October and December 2015. A random selection of general needs tenants were sent a postal self completion questionnaire (1,500). This was followed by reminder where a new questionnaire was sent to every non respondent. A free prize draw was used to encourage response, and the survey was also available online (33 completions)

## Response rate

In total 485 tenants took part in the survey, which represented a 32% response rate overall. This was lower than the typical 40% normally achieved in similar surveys, but this may in part be explained by significant disruptions to the postal service in the Stroud area during the fieldwork period. A sample of this size has a theoretical error margin of +/- 4.2% overall. The survey results were proudly representative by and property type.

## Weighting

The survey results were proudly representative by and property type, so did not require further weighting.

## Data presentation

Readers should take care when considering percentage results from some of the sub groups within the main sample, as the base figures may sometimes be small. Due to rounding some graphs may not add up to 100%. Some historic results may not match those previously published due to changes in the methodology compared to the previous approach. In any instance where this is occurs, the previous results have been recalculated to match the current method. This recalculation typically involves the removal of 'no opinion' or 'can't remember' responses from the final figures, a technique known as 're-basing'.

## Error Margins

Error margins for the sample overall, and for individual questions, are the amount by which a result might vary due to chance. The error margins in the results are quoted at the 95% level, which is the common standard used for error margins. This is a statistical assumption that 95 times out of 100, the true score will fall within the margin. Error margins are determined both by the sample size, and the distribution of the scores. For the sake of simplicity, error margins for historic data are not included, but can typically be assumed to be at least as big as those for the 2011 data. When comparing two sets of scores, it is important to remember that error margins will apply independently to each.

## Tests of statistical significance

When two sets of survey data are compared to one another (e.g. between different years, or demographic sub groups), the observed differences are typically tested for statistical significance. Differences that are significant can be said, with a high degree of confidence, to be real variations that are unlikely to be due to chance. Any differences that are not significant *may* still be real, especially when a number of different questions all demonstrate the same pattern, but this cannot be stated with statistical confidence and may just be due to chance.

Unless otherwise stated, all statistically significant differences are reported at the 95% confidence level. Tests used were the Wilcoxon-Mann-Whitney test (rating scales), Fischer Exact Probability test (small samples) and the Pearson Chi Square test (larger samples) as appropriate for the data being examined. These calculations rely on a number of factors such as the base figure and the level of variance, both within and between sample groups, thereby taking into account more than just the simple difference between the headline percentage scores. This means that some results are reported as significant despite being superficially similar to others that are not. Conversely, some seemingly notable differences in two sets of headline scores are not enough to signal a significant change in the underlying pattern across all points in the scale. For example:

- Two satisfaction ratings might have the same or similar *total* satisfaction score, but be quite different when one considers the detailed results for the proportion *very satisfied* versus *fairly satisfied*.
- There may also be a change in the proportions who were *very* or *fairly* dissatisfied, or ticked the middle point in the scale, which is not apparent from the headline score.
- In rare cases there are complex changes across the scale that are difficult to categorise e.g. in a single question one might simultaneously observe a disappointing shift from *very* to *fairly* satisfied, at the same time as there being a welcome shift from *very dissatisfied* to *neither*.
- If the results included a relatively small number of people then the error margins are bigger. This means that the *combined* error margins for the two ratings being compared might be bigger than the observed difference between them.

## Key driver analysis

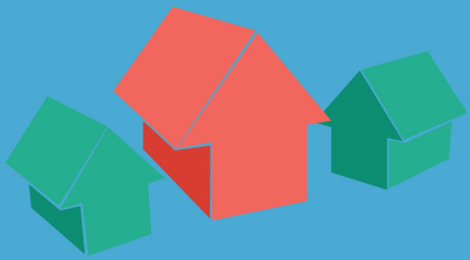
"Key driver analyses" are based on a linear regression model. This is used to investigate the relationship between the overall scores and their various components. The charts illustrate the relative contribution of each item to the overall rating; items which do not reach statistical significance are omitted. The figures on the vertical axis show the standardised beta coefficients from the regression analysis, which vary in absolute size depending on the number of questionnaire items entered into the analysis. The *R Square* value displayed on every key driver chart shows how much of the observed variance is explained by the key driver model e.g. a value of 0.5 shows that the model explains half of the total variation in the overall score.

## Benchmarking

The core STAR questions are benchmarked against the HouseMark STAR database, with the benchmarking group being selected by SDC from councils and ALMOs in the South West, South East and East who had completed a STAR survey in the last year. For the overall satisfaction score this included 12 organisations. HouseMark benchmark scores are supplemented for the remaining questions with benchmark data from ARP Research clients who have carried out surveys in the last 3 years using the STAR questionnaire. The group selection has been verified against the core HouseMark data to ensure that both benchmark groups are closely matched on their scores across the core questions. This supplementary group includes 10 organisations.

The organisations included in the HouseMark benchmark peer group were:

- Adur DC
- Cambridge City Council
- Castle Point BC
- Cheltenham Borough Homes
- Colchester Borough Homes
- East Devon DC
- Exeter City Council
- Homes in Sedgemoor
- Oxford City Council
- Poole Housing Partnership
- South Essex Homes
- Waverley BC



# Appendix B. Housing patch descriptions

## Housing 1

- Hillesley & Tresham
- Horsley
- Kingswood
- North Nibley
- Rodborough
- Thrupp
- Woodchester
- Wotton-under-Edge

## Housing 2

- Cam
- Stinchcombe

## Housing 3

- Coaley
- Dursley
- Uley

## Housing 4

- Alkington
- Arlingham
- Berkeley
- Eastington
- Elmore
- Frampton-on-Severn
- Fretherne-with-Saul
- Frocester
- Hamfallow
- Ham & Stone
- Hardwicke
- Haresfield
- Hinton
- Sharpness
- Slimbridge
- Whitminster

## Housing 5

- Stroud
- Uplands

## Housing 6

- Chalford
- Minchinhampton
- Nailsworth
- Nympsfield

## Housing 7

- Cashes Green
- Paganhill
- Whiteshill

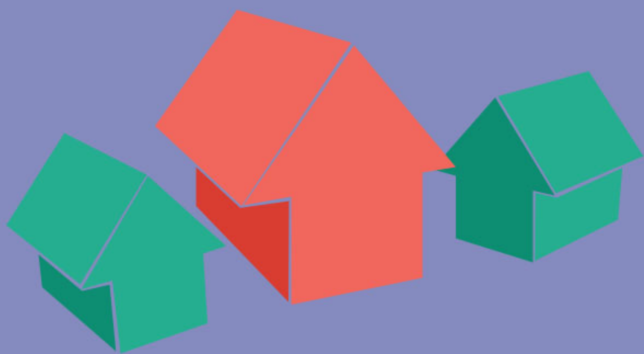
## Housing 8

- Bridgend
- Stonehouse

## Housing 9

- Bisley
- Brookthorpe
- Cranham
- Ebley
- Haresfield
- Kings Stanley
- Leonard Stanley
- Miserden
- Painswick
- Randwick
- Selsley
- Upton-St-Leonards
- Westrip

this page is intentionally left blank



(t) 0844 272 6004

(w) www.arp-research.co.uk

ARP Research Ltd

1 Dickenson Court, Sheffield, S35 2ZS