



# Gravesham Borough Council

## TSM Report 2024/25

Prepared by: Acuity Research & Practice



# Introduction

Acuity has been commissioned to undertake an independent satisfaction survey of the tenants of Gravesham Borough Council during 2024/25 to collect data on their opinions of, and attitudes towards, their landlord and the services provided to comply with the requirements of the Regulator, as well as to act as a baseline to compare future surveys against.

The survey was conducted primarily by telephone interview but also allowed tenants to complete the survey online if they so wished. However, the Council also wanted to carry out some face-to-face surveys to increase the take up on the survey. The process started in November 2024 but was finally completed in February 2025 when all the responses were combined. At the close of the survey, 742 completed responses had been received, together with a further 29 incomplete responses, which are also required to be included by the Regulator. Of the total of 771 responses, 571 were by telephone interview and 200 by face-to-face interviews.

The survey is confidential, and the results were sent back to the Council anonymised unless tenants gave their permission to be identified – 71% of tenants did give permission to share their responses with their details attached, and 92% of these tenants are happy for the Council to contact them to discuss any information they provided.

This survey aims to provide data on tenants' satisfaction, which will allow Gravesham Borough Council to:

- Provide information on tenants' perceptions of current services
- Act as a baseline to compare future surveys against
- Inform decisions regarding future service development
- Report to the Regulator annually.

For the overall results, Acuity and the Regulator of Social Housing recommend that landlords with under 10,000 properties achieve a sampling error of at least  $\pm 4\%$  at the 95% confidence level. For the Council, 742 completed responses were received, and this response is high enough to conclude that the findings are accurate to within  $\pm 3.4\%$ ; well within the required margin of error.

The majority of figures throughout the report show the results as percentages. The percentages are rounded up or down from two decimal places in the data files to the nearest whole number, and for this reason, they may not always add up to 100%. Rounding can also cause percentages described in the supporting text to differ from those in the charts by 1% when two percentages are added together. The charts also include the base numbers of responses to the particular questions.

Key TSM Metrics

Overall Satisfaction

Good Repair

Building Safety

Neighbourhood

Engagement

Complaints

Damp & Mould

Improvements

Understanding Satisfaction

Summary

Demographics

71%



## Overall Satisfaction

This page shows the results from the 12 TSMs required by the Regulator, with satisfaction for overall service at 71%.

However, higher satisfaction is shown for the provision of a safe home and the repairs service in the last 12 months, both 77% whilst 78% agree that the Council treats them fairly and with respect.

Two measures have satisfaction levels below 60%, these being the handling of ASB (50%) and the way complaints are handled (31%). These measures are often the lowest scoring in surveys of this type and generally only affect a relatively small proportion of the tenant population.

The bulk of the report focuses on the main headline figures, but towards the end, the results are compared with other landlords and split down by different subgroups to give a better understanding of what is driving satisfaction at Gravesham BC.

## TSM Key Metrics

### Keeping Properties in Good Repair



Well Maintained Home

70%



Safe Home

77%



Repairs Last 12 Months

77%



Time Taken Repairs

75%

### Respectful & Helpful Engagement



Listens & Acts

63%



Kept Informed

75%



Fairly & with Respect

78%



Complaints Handling

31%

### Responsible Neighbourhood Management



Communal Areas

73%



Neighbourhood Contribution

66%



Approach to ASB

50%



**Overall Satisfaction**



Tenants were asked, *“Taking everything into account, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the service provided by Gravesham Borough Council?”* This is the key metric in any tenant perception survey and is often quoted as the main headline figure.

Seven out of ten tenants (71%) are satisfied with the overall service provided by the Council, with a few more very satisfied than fairly satisfied, 37% compared with 34%.

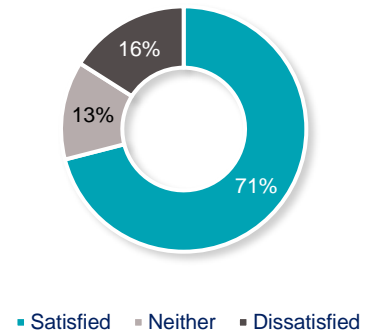
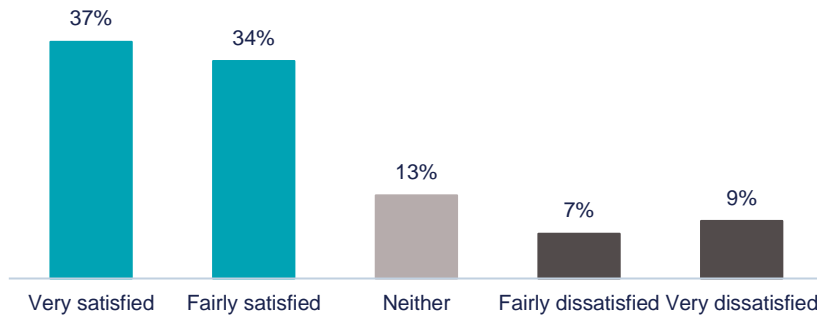
There are 16% of tenants dissatisfied with the service and a further 13% are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.

Currently, there are no previous results to show whether satisfaction is increasing or decreasing, but trend information will build up as these TSM-based surveys are repeated.

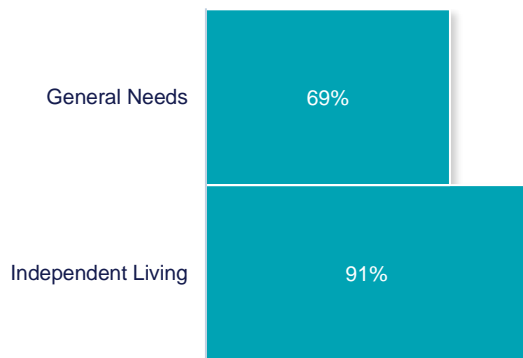
As expected, those in the Independent Living accommodation are more satisfied than their general needs counterparts, 91% compared with 69%; although it should be noted that around ten times as many general needs tenants responded.

Overall satisfaction does appear to increase with age; a pattern seen at many other social landlords. The most satisfied age group is those in 85+, although it is those aged between 45 and 54 who are the least satisfied.

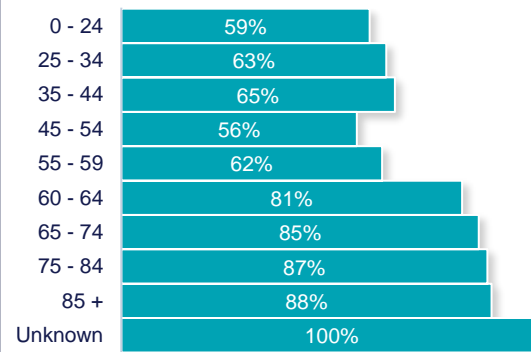
# Overall Satisfaction



## Satisfaction by Tenure Type



## Satisfaction by Age Group







**Keeping Properties in Good Repair**



# Keeping Properties in Good Repair

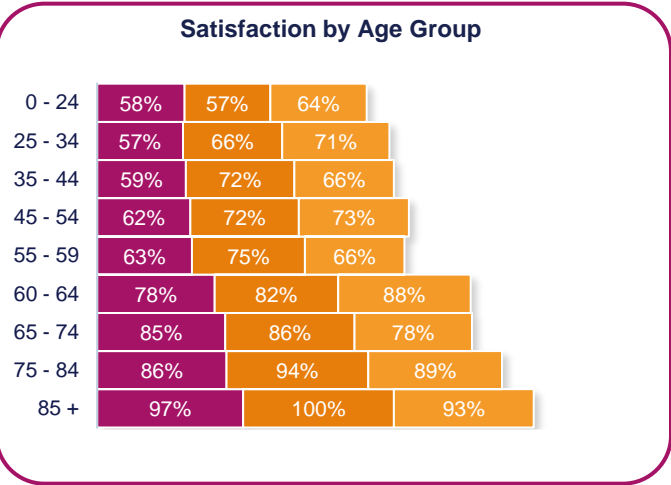
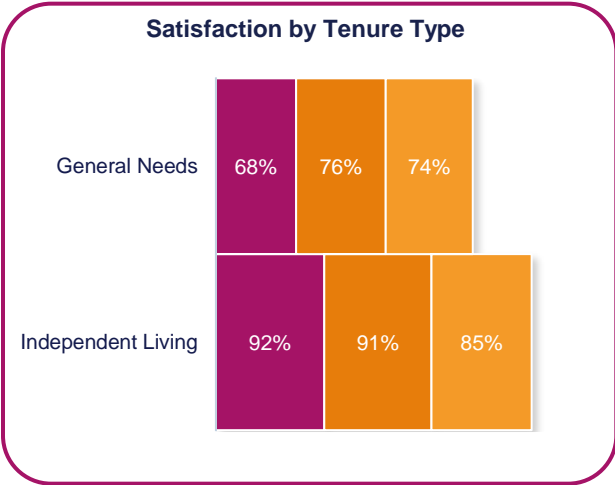
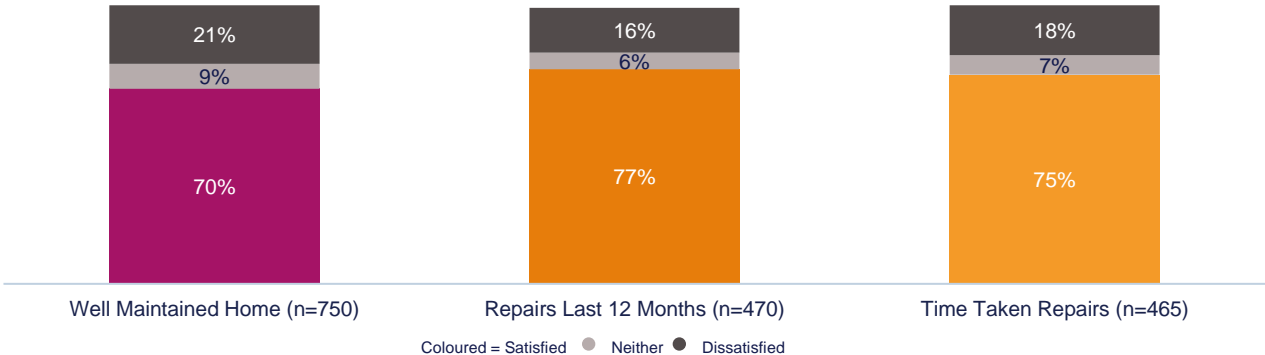
Seven out of ten tenants (70%) are satisfied that the Council provides them with a well-maintained home, although a fifth of tenants are dissatisfied.

Again, those in Independent Living are the most satisfied, 92% compared to 68% of general needs tenants.

Three-fifths of tenants (62%) said they had a repair completed in the last 12 months, and of these 77% are satisfied with the repairs service over this period, with 16% dissatisfied. Again, there is quite a difference between the general needs and Independent Living tenants.

Commonly, fewer are satisfied with the time to complete repairs, and that is the case here, although satisfaction is still at 75% just below that for the service itself; as shown below, this is often the source of some dissatisfaction with the repairs process.

Satisfaction again increases with age, helping to explain the difference between the tenure types.

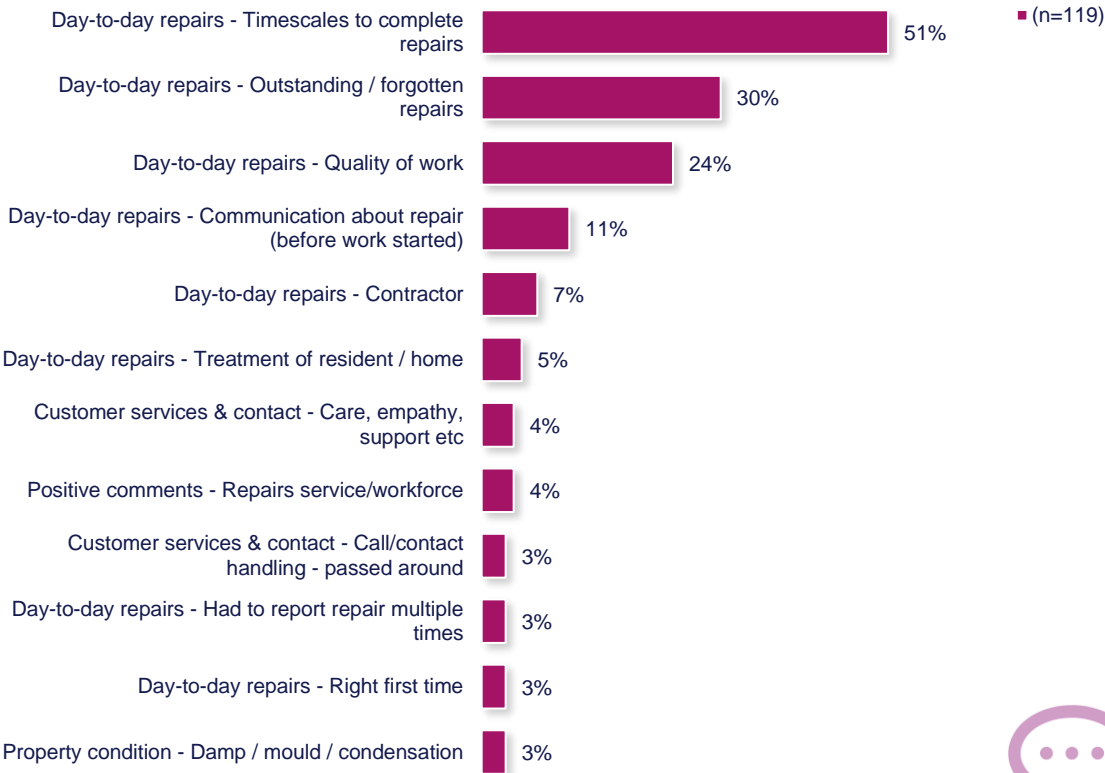




There are comments from 119 tenants and the responses reveal highest level of dissatisfaction with the repair service provided, primarily due to long wait times, poor communication, and inadequate follow-up on reported issues. Many tenants reported waiting months or even years for repairs, with some expressing frustration over incomplete jobs and the need for repeat visits. A recurring theme is the lack of accountability, as tenants often feel they must chase up their requests without receiving timely updates. Additionally, there are concerns about the quality of work, with several tenants noting that repairs were done hastily or poorly, leading to further issues.

To improve service delivery, it is recommended that the Council enhance communication, review the repairs process and ensure that qualified personnel are assigned to jobs. Implementing a tracking system for reported issues could also help manage expectations and improve customer satisfaction. Addressing these concerns could improve the overall perception of the service and foster greater trust among tenants. However, it should be noted that many had repairs completed without fuss and are happy with the results.

# Comments - Dissatisfaction with Repairs







# Dissatisfaction with Repairs - Example Comments

Time to complete repairs	Outstanding repairs	Quality of work	Other matters
<p>"Took a long time to get here, had no electricity &amp; heating."</p> <p>"Reported a leak that was coming through the roof three times until they came. In the end, it took over two years to be fixed."</p> <p>"I get they are busy but sometimes it takes a long time to get repairs done."</p> <p>"Simply because I reported the issues with my bathroom at the start of Covid, it took four years for it to get to the satisfactory state it's in today."</p> <p>"Getting them to repair my windows took quite a while. This was an inconvenience as it was during the winter months."</p> <p>"Some repairs are done more quickly, and some take a long time."</p> <p>"The time it takes not the actual repair, but the time taken."</p>	<p>"They were supposed to come out yesterday to fix smoke alarms that have been going off, but they did not come out. It is a safety issue."</p> <p>"I have asked them to do the lights and nothing has been done."</p> <p>"Still waiting for our mould and damp issue to be resolved."</p> <p>"Because I had a leak in my bathroom, and I called them, and they said it was still with the management team, and it's been a few months now."</p> <p>"The issue with my front door and it doesn't close properly, and this is a major safety concern. It isn't safe and anyone could let themselves into my home from the outside."</p> <p>"Been without hot water in the kitchen for some time."</p> <p>"So many issues in this house, they are never repaired first time."</p>	<p>"It is a quick and shoddy repair, and no effort is put into it. They do it as quickly as they can. It's just a makeshift repair."</p> <p>"They've done half the job until the next person comes out."</p> <p>"Very minimal work has taken place, one recent repair was a leak, and they came in and did a slap job and that was it."</p> <p>"The flooring was left with stains that will not come out. In the wet room itself the tiles were not done properly, they do not look too good. There is damp and mould in the bathroom, they are coming on the 25th of November."</p> <p>"The problem was the amount of time that it took to come out. I think they just need to consider replacing the window, as it keeps blowing after they replace a pane."</p>	<p>"It was all about miscommunication. It was outsourced. When they came to do the electrics, they said they needed a new fuse put in and then we had an issue with the fuse."</p> <p>"They painted over the mould in my bathroom and bedroom and all around the front door."</p> <p>"I reported two repairs- and I have not had a response in a month."</p> <p>"Several appointments have been cancelled."</p> <p>"They can't seem to decide who is responsible for what. Again no one takes responsibility. When it gets complicated things seem to get left."</p> <p>The simple stuff is OK."</p> <p>"The repairs are not done to a good standard. The call centre staff are not knowledgeable enough and show little empathy for our situation."</p>



**Maintaining Building Safety**



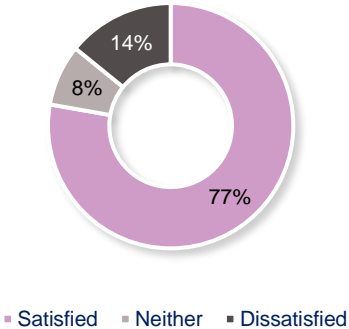
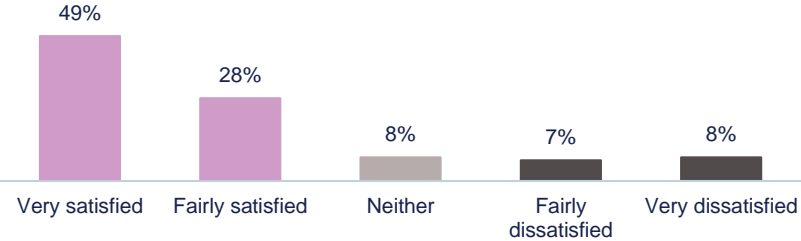
# Maintaining Building Safety

Over three-quarters of tenants (77%) are satisfied that the Council provides them with a safe home, with far more very satisfied (49%) than fairly satisfied (28%).

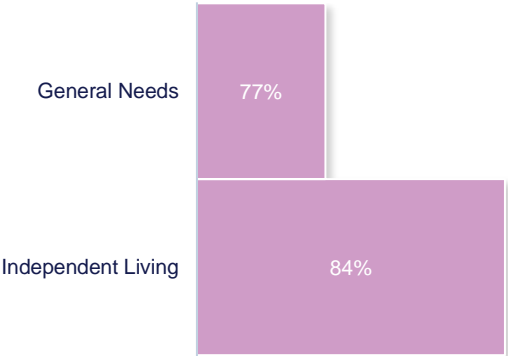
However, 14% of tenants are dissatisfied with the safety of their home, and a further 8% are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.

Again, the Independent Living tenants are more satisfied, 84% compared with 77%, and satisfaction with the safety of the home also appears to increase with the age of the tenant, with all those 85 and over being satisfied.

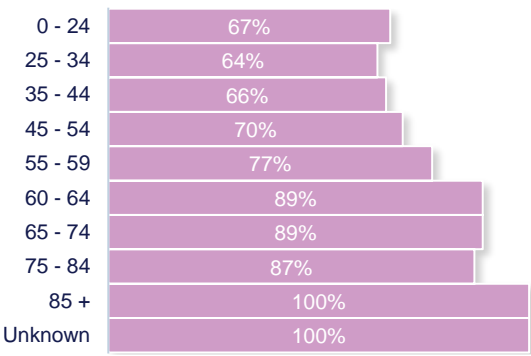
Whilst this indicator is primarily about the structure and repair of the property, tenants seem to take a wider view of safety, as shown in the comments made and illustrated overleaf.



Satisfaction by Tenure Type



Satisfaction by Age Group



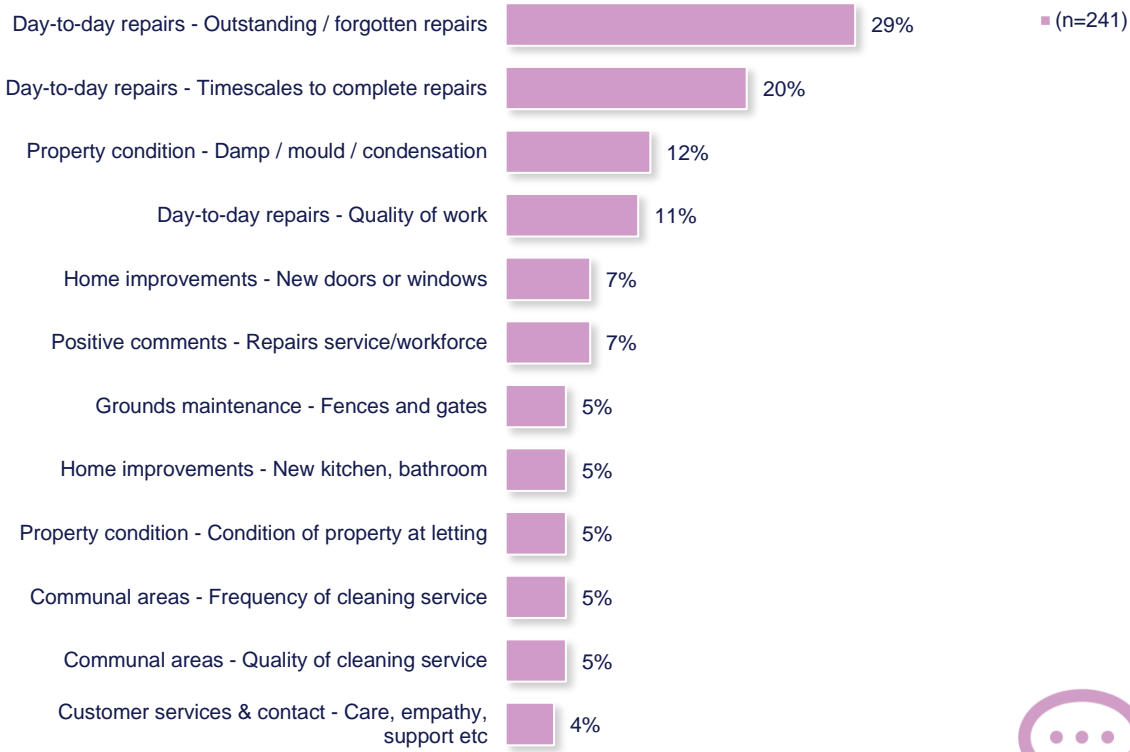


From the 241 comments made, the issues raised are focused on property maintenance and cleanliness. Some report persistent mould and damp problems, inadequate cleaning of communal areas, and delayed repairs again. Many tenants reported that maintenance requests often go unaddressed for extended periods, leading to frustration and safety concerns, particularly for vulnerable tenants.

Common complaints highlight the need for more frequent cleaning of communal spaces, better management of litter and rubbish, and timely repairs to essential facilities like doors and windows. Tenants expressed a desire for improved communication from the Council regarding maintenance schedules and updates on reported issues.

To enhance tenant satisfaction, it is recommended that the Council prioritise regular maintenance and cleaning, and improve communication channels. Addressing these concerns could enhance the living conditions for tenants, foster a sense of community, and may lead to increased tenant retention and a more positive living environment.

# Comments - Home or Communal Areas not Well Maintained or Safe



# Home or Communal Areas not Well Maintained or Safe - Example Comments



## Outstanding repairs

*"All the plaster is shot on the walls. The whole estate needs new plastering."*

*"We need new windows, but they will only supply hinges. They're refusing to replace windows and doors and I've been reporting it for a few years now, so I don't feel safe in my property."*

*"Insulation does not take a priority. No one ever came to do the solar panels."*

*"The windows are not secure, been here 12 years and they don't do anything to the property."*

*"It is maintained it is just when they changed the radiators, they only did half the property, like the windows."*

*"The fencing for the communal area is not maintained. Damage caused by weather has not been rectified and is not safe."*

## Time to complete repairs

*"It is meant to be a secure gate on the entrance where I live, and it's been broken for a year and not been repaired."*

*"It is just that they take so long like my back door and window are broken and I have been left for over a year, it is only because I was nearly robbed the other day that they are coming to fix them."*

*"When we moved in there was so much that needed repairing that it wasn't safe. some of it was sorted by Gravesham but I had to fight for it and the repairs took 6 months. I've done a lot myself."*

*"I have been waiting for years for a new door."*

*"It takes a long time to get any maintenance done. The time keeping could be improved."*

## Damp & mould

*"Suffer with mould in bathroom, bedrooms and kitchen. Could be improved by the mould being taken seriously."*

*"Damp and mould in the kids' room on the windows."*

*"I'm not happy with the maintenance as I have damp and mould in my home it is affecting my front room, my bedroom and children's bedroom."*

*"I made an appt for them to come and look at the mould in our bedrooms which has become bad and is spreading across the room. I have asthma."*

*"We had a damp issue which we had to fix ourselves. Our back fence was broken, and we were told it would take months to fix."*

*"Damp issues need sorting and the way they treat people."*

## Other matters

*"The garden area is untidy. The path is uneven and unsafe for the elderly."*

*"They should do more lighting at night it's very dangerous. My husband has fallen over so many times because the lighting is bad."*

*"A new door in the main building security, anyone can push the door and get in it's not secure."*

*"The caretakers do as much as they can, however with the amount of drugs around people do not show respect to the tenants and the premises."*

*"They don't clean the rubbish that gets put in the stairwell."*

*"Have been told that there are cleaners for the communal areas but that never get done and always left down to the tenants, as it gets that bad."*





**Responsible Neighbourhood Management**



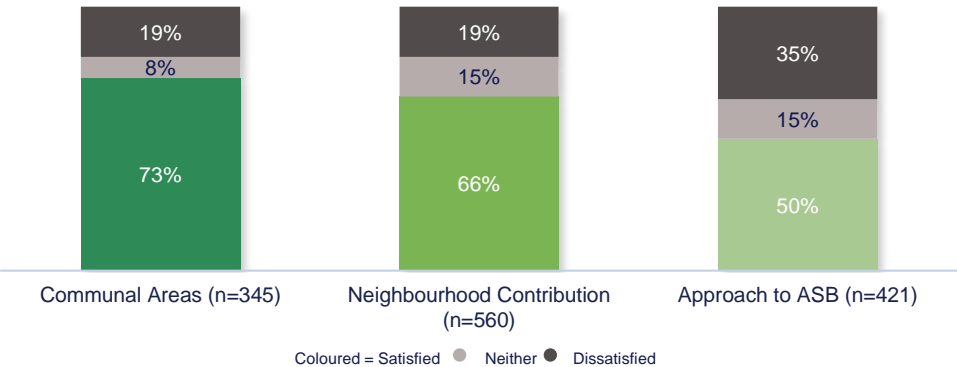
# Responsible Neighbourhood Management

Half the tenants stated that they live in a building with communal areas that the Council is responsible for maintaining (48%), and almost three-quarters of these are satisfied that the Council keeps their communal areas clean and well maintained (73%), although 19% are dissatisfied. Most Independent Living tenants are satisfied with the upkeep of the communal areas in their schemes, but this falls to 70% for the general needs tenants.

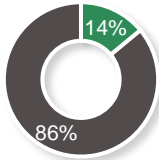
Two-thirds of tenants are satisfied that the Council makes a positive contribution to their neighbourhood (66%), with 19% dissatisfied; again, satisfaction is higher among the Independent Living tenants

Just 14% of tenants said they had ever experienced anti-social behaviour, and of these, just 50% are satisfied with the Council's approach to handling this, with over a third being dissatisfied. Tenure again makes a difference to the response.

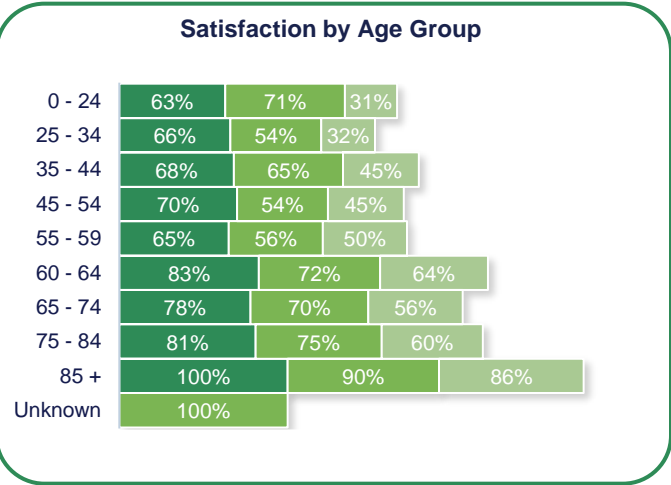
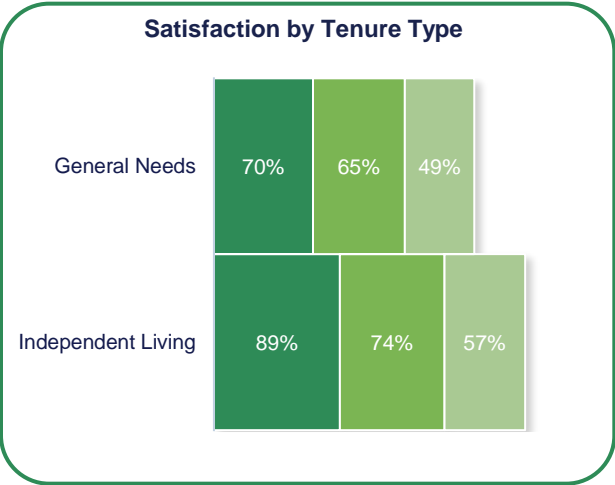
There is less of a pattern against these measures in terms of the age ranges, although the 85-and-over group is again the most satisfied.



## Ever ASB?



■ Yes    ■ No





**Respectful & Helpful Engagement**



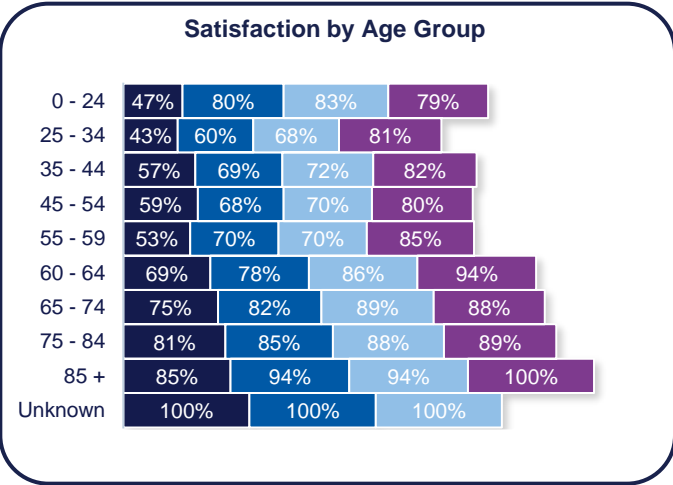
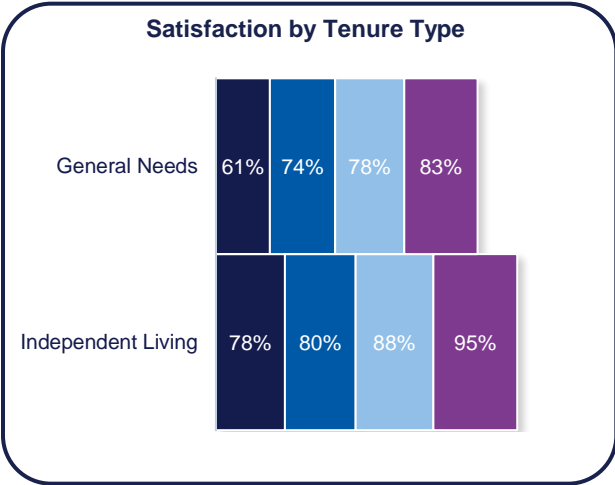
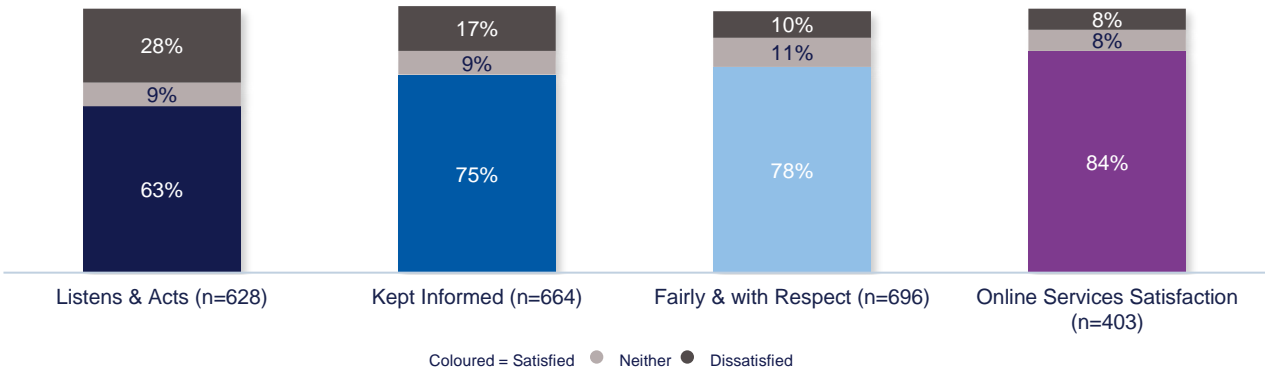
# Respectful & Helpful Engagement

Three-quarters of tenants (75%) are satisfied that the Council keeps them informed about things that matter to them, with slightly more (78%) agreeing that they are treated fairly and with respect; just 10% disagree with this.

Commonly in surveys of this type, satisfaction with the way the landlord listens to tenants' views and acts upon them is lower, and that is the case here with 63% satisfied but 28% dissatisfied. Overleaf may help to explain why this measure scores lower than others in this section.

Although nearly half of the tenants (46%) said they don't use the online services, satisfaction among those that do is high at 84%, with just 8% dissatisfied.

There is a familiar pattern in satisfaction based on tenure and age and, interestingly, satisfaction with the online services is very high for the older tenants, who perhaps, are less used to using this type of technology.



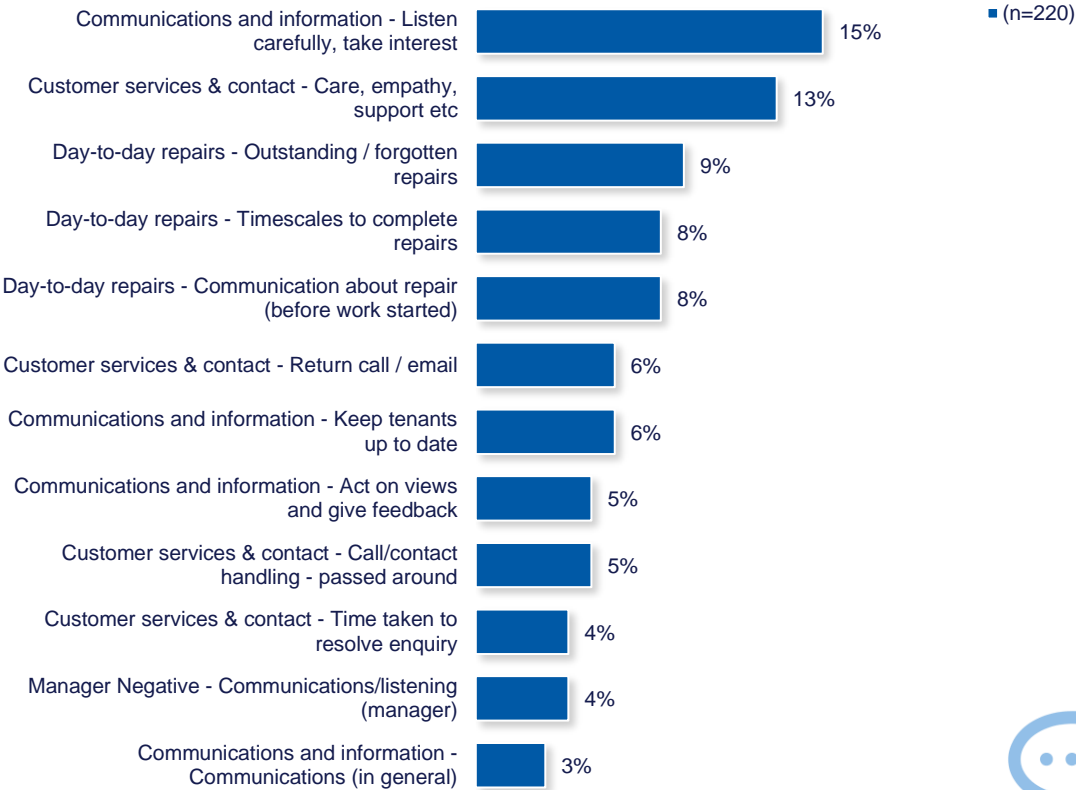




The survey responses reveal dissatisfaction among tenants regarding communication, responsiveness, and again repair services. Many tenants expressed frustration over long wait times for repairs, lack of follow-up, and inadequate communication from housing officers all affecting their customer experience when making contact. A recurring theme is the perception that staff do not listen to tenant concerns, leading to unresolved issues and feelings of neglect. Tenants also highlighted the need for more consistent and knowledgeable staff, as frequent changes in housing officers contribute to confusion and dissatisfaction.

Recommendations for improvement include enhancing communication channels, ensuring timely responses to tenant enquiries and providing regular updates on repair statuses. Additionally, implementing a more structured approach to repairs and maintenance, along with increased visibility of housing officers in the community, could foster better relationships with tenants. Addressing these concerns could improve tenant satisfaction, reduce complaints, and enhance the overall reputation of the housing service, ultimately leading to a more engaged and content tenant base.

# Comments - Customer Service







# Customer Service - Example Comments

## Listening to views

*"They could improve on listening to what tenants are saying. I cannot have adaptations in the house for my disability, so I am confined to one room. I have to go up lots of stairs."*

*"Listen to the tenant. They keep changing staff and I don't know who I am dealing with."*

*"Listen to the tenant more and take into consideration their request. I would say put more cameras in the building."*

*"They should listen to their tenants. I had social services involved because of abuse and the housing officer was useless and she did not turn up despite prior notice etc etc. They do not care."*

*"To listen to the tenants' problem, they don't care about the tenant, and they don't listen at all."*

## Customer contact

*"Takes far too long to get through to anyone on the phone."*

*"Customer service is good when you phone them but is hard and it takes long on the phone waiting to reach them."*

*"We complained about the parking as there are never any spaces. Nothing was done."*

*"I was treated unfairly after I fell on my path. The council just wanted to make sure I wouldn't sue them rather than fix the issue."*

*"Employ more friendly and nicer people who want to talk and listen. Some of the contractors also need to be more friendly."*

*"They're not disrespectful but they don't take people's real needs into consideration."*

*"More people in the call centre to improve waiting times. Face-to-face option would be great at the civic centre."*

## Repairs

*"Repairs take too long."*

*"Need to be quicker to respond and fix issues like no hot water. Need to have a priority list."*

*"The maintenance side needs improvements it took over a year for them to agree to do work then they decided not to go ahead."*

*"Improve repairs and maintenance and when the work was done the workmanship was shoddy."*

*"Needs follow-up for repair issues."*

*"I have had repairmen come and I was waiting but they didn't come. They have a bad attitude."*

*"Well, we do get a newsletter but that's it. They don't respond when you report a repair, you have to chase them."*

*"We have to chase them a lot to get anything done otherwise they just forget."*

## Other matters

*"Falling to keep me and my kids safe and to make us feel safe in our home."*

*"They try to help you, but it falls through, they're never rude though."*

*"Since the Housing Officer has been helping communication has now improved, I didn't have a housing officer for a long time."*

*"There's no one to talk to, you can do a phone consult when you need repairs done, but we used to be able to go down and explain issues, you can't do that anymore, it's like you're fighting an endless battle with them, not all of us use the internet."*

*"If you bring up an issue, they don't always deal with it. I brought up an issue with the bins with my housing officer and nothing was done about it."*

*"Improve the flats and houses."*



## Effective Handling of Complaints



# Effective Handling of Complaints

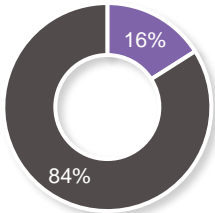
Just 16% of tenants said they had made a complaint to the Council in the last 12 months, although it is not clear how many are genuine complaints following a failure of service or service requests yet to be fully actioned, this being an issue across the whole housing sector. Proportionally, similar numbers from each tenure type made complaints.

Just 31% of these tenants are satisfied with the handling of the complaints, in a change to the general pattern, satisfaction is a little higher for the general needs tenants than the Independent Living tenants.

Dissatisfaction is high (57%), with most of these very dissatisfied.

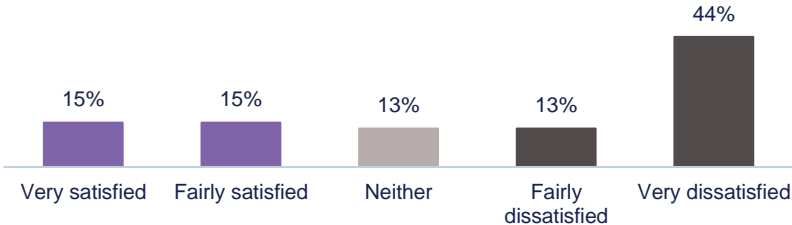
The age of the tenants seems to make less of a difference in terms of satisfaction, although those aged 75 to 84 are more satisfied than those of different age ranges.

Complaint in last 12 months

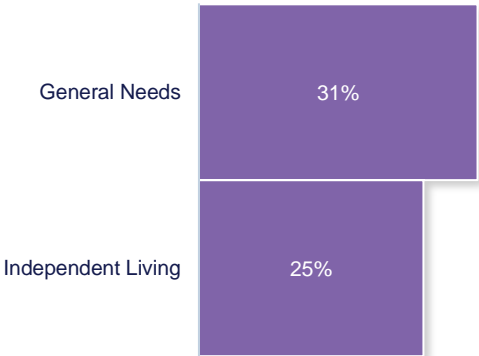


■ Yes ■ No

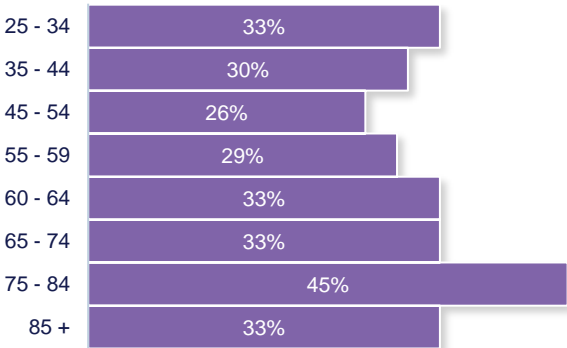
Satisfaction with Complaints Handling



Satisfaction by Tenure Type



Satisfaction by Age Group



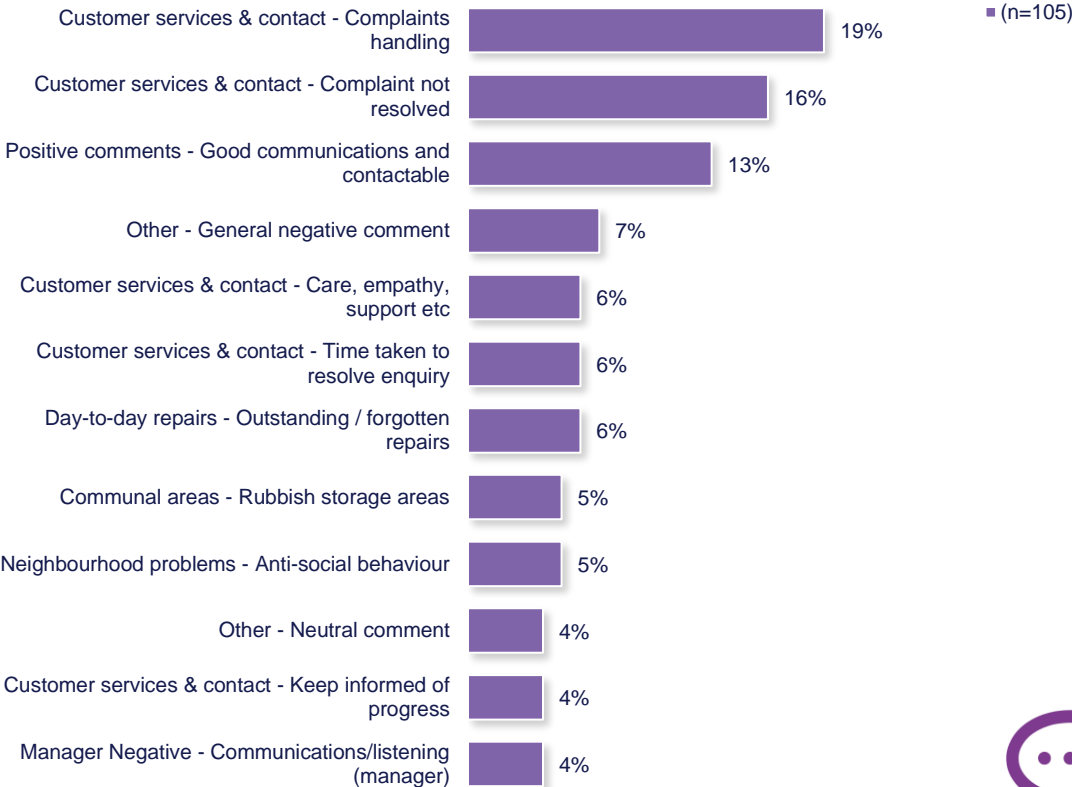


# Comments - Complaints

The survey responses from the 105 tenants leaving comments reveal a divide in customer satisfaction regarding Council services, particularly in handling complaints and addressing issues like anti-social behaviour (ASB) and maintenance requests, which are the main causes of complaints. While some respondents expressed satisfaction with prompt resolutions and effective communication, many others reported frustration with delays, lack of follow-up, and inadequate responses to serious concerns, such as safety and health hazards.

Key issues include poor communication, perceived indifference from housing officers, and a lack of accountability in addressing complaints. Respondents highlighted the need for better coordination among departments and more proactive engagement, especially for vulnerable individuals.

Training for staff on empathy and customer service could foster a more supportive environment. Addressing these concerns could improve public perception and trust in Council services.





# Complaints Trial

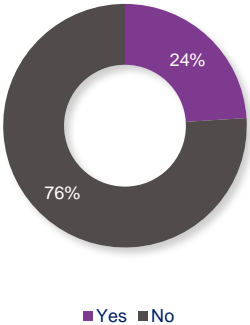
The Council took the opportunity to ask some further questions about the complaints process and the comments suggest that a lack of response is at the root of some dissatisfaction together with not being kept informed about progress.

When asked what could be improved, it is this communication that attracts the most support and over half of those affected say they want the Council to be more proactive in dealing with the problems and to listen to their concerns more carefully, points emphasised in the comments shown above.

Satisfaction with complaints is generally the lowest scoring measure in these TSM-based surveys with many landlords struggling to provide a strong response to complaints and following the Ombudsman's code of practice. However, where landlords do well, it is often linked to good, timely communication, as suggested here, and this is the area the Council may need to focus on to achieve better satisfaction.

The good news is that a quarter of those responding would be happy to be more involved in the management of services and working with tenants could help with this area of work as well as others.

## Getting Involved?



## Improvement Suggestions



### Reason for score?

*You end up making the same phone call over and over or nothing happens.*

*When you looked in to my case you never contacted me back or informed me of what you were doing. No response.*

*When people call me names and say i am not allowed near the pond, I complain to you about it. I do not know if you have dealt with it or not as there is no follow up. No report. As the situation remains the same, I can only presume that nothing has been done about it.*

*When I have made ASB complaints regarding 2 neighbours on my estate, and police were involved, the neighbours have then*

### Other (please specify)

*Act upon complaints*

*I am Dyslexic and you make no compromise for that.  
more active housing officers*

*Sort the complaints out about ASB bikes driving around on the bikes, they are young children riding up and down at night and it has been reported to the police.*

*bad neighbor*

*Complaint was about the loft insulation,*

*Listen and have compassion*





**Damp & Mould**

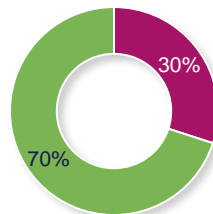
# Damp and Mould

It is of some concern that 30% of tenants say they have problems with damp and mould in their homes, although it is not clear how serious these are. Just over two-thirds of these have been reported to the Council but the remainder haven't. This tends to confirm the comments made by some pointing out these types of issues in their homes.

In light of the changes to timescales and processes following the introduction of Awaab's Law, the Council will need to act on these quickly and Acuity has sent through the names and addresses of those affected to follow up on. This is a potentially serious issue affecting the Council's housing stock and this may be hiding an even wider problem, which needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency to prevent health issues and deterioration of the properties.

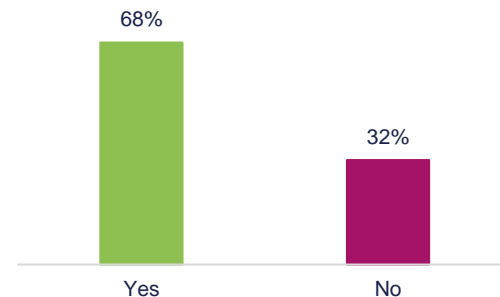
The majority of cases appear to be in the general needs properties; maisonettes being particularly affected.

## Currently Suffer from Damp & Mould

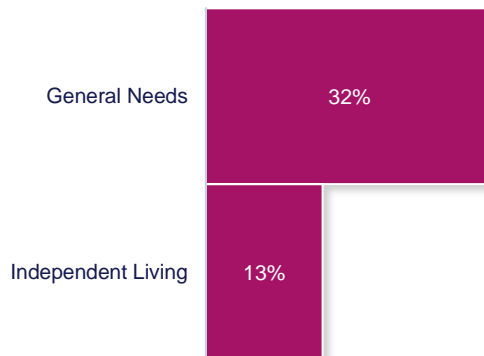


■ Yes ■ No

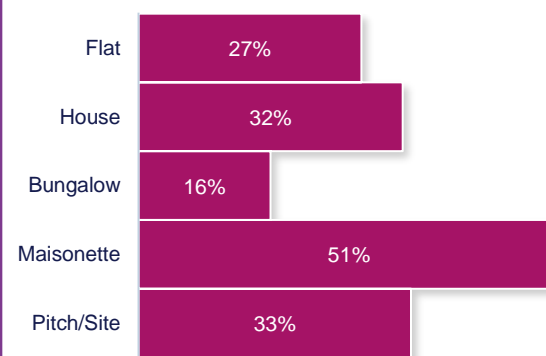
## Reported Damp & Mould



## Damp & Mould by Tenure Type



## Damp & Mould by Property Type





**Improvements**

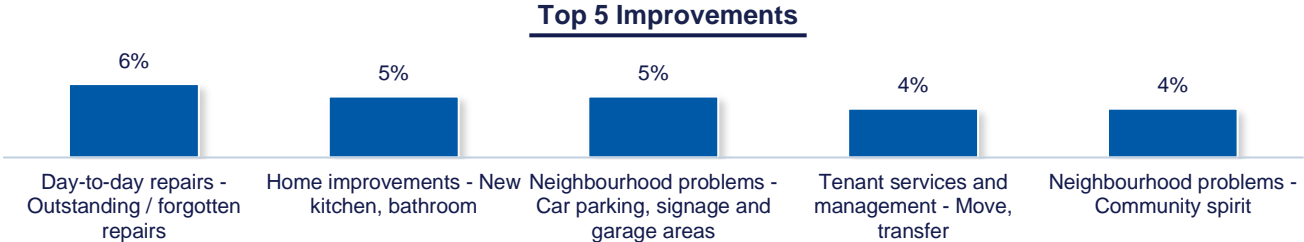
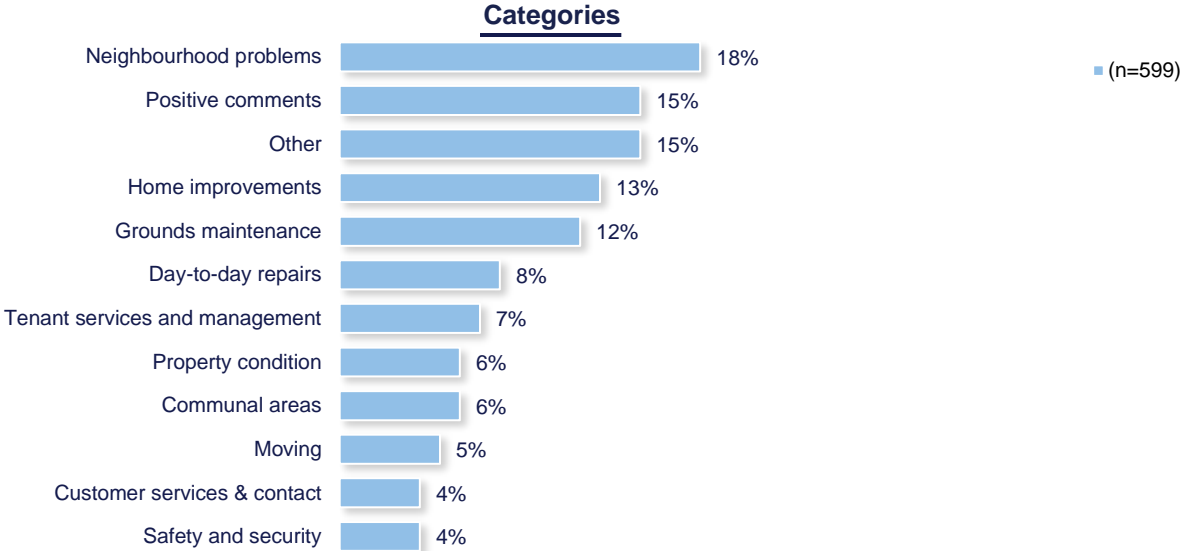


# Improvement Suggestions

A good number of the 599 tenants leaving comments expressed contentment with their current living situations, citing good neighbours and a peaceful environment. However, common concerns include the need for better maintenance, particularly regarding repairs, cleanliness, and safety in communal areas. Many tenants wish for improved facilities, such as new kitchens, bathrooms, and doors and windows, as well as enhanced parking solutions and community engagement initiatives.

Addressing issues of anti-social behaviour and dealing with the build-up of rubbish emerged as a priority, with calls for increased action and community involvement. Additionally, several respondents expressed a desire for more accessible housing options, particularly for those with disabilities or families needing more space.

There appears to be an appetite for further involvement and by harnessing this, the Council could work with the tenants to improve service outcomes and ultimately, satisfaction.





# Improvements - Example Comments

## Positive comments

"I am in a new build, what more can I want? The communal garden is lovely, we are allowed to water the flowers and given raised flower beds to grow our flowers, so they can't offer me anything on top of what I have got."

"It's pretty good I'm content it's a nice place to live."

"Everyone is happy, and everyone gets on - my neighbourhood is fine."

"Don't know really, I love the place I live in."

"I am so happy with where I live. I have lovely neighbours, and I love my house. I wouldn't change anything."

"I can't think of anything. I am very happy as things are."

"I am quite happy where I am. I have no complaints. It is quiet with nice neighbours."

## Neighbourhood problems

"Install a communal door that the tenants can unlock from their flats (intercom system). Some kids can enter the building and sometimes cause noises."

"I think there should be CCTV around the main area. It is the young children and their bikes."

"To have a garden on the ground floor, people's gardens are such messes."

"Stop drink and drug usage on the estate and smoking in the lift."

"Kids smoking weed should be stopped from doing this in built-up areas and communal areas."

"Peace and quiet and be friendly & caring about our neighbours."

"Sort parking out - Parking across railings as it's a disabled bay and he can't get out of his home."

"Park more easily."

## Condition and improvements

"That my flat would get warm when the heating is on. It makes one wonder if there is any insulation."

"Start again. These homes are so old and no longer fit for purpose."

"The design of the building. You can hear everything upstairs such as people walking around etc. So, I would suggest trying to improve the privacy in the home to reduce this issue."

"Breakdown all these high-rise buildings just to make it safe, these buildings are a hazard."

"I would like them to refurbish the kitchen in my house."

"I would like a new bathroom as ours was fitted in 1947."

"They finally resolved the damp and mould issues in my home and replaced my windows."

## Other matters

"To reduce the rent."

"Better lighting in the car parks."

"Put more CCTV cameras for safety."

"To have an eco-friendlier house."

"More community and services for children."

"Make everything more child-friendly, e.g. communal play area is not safe for younger children due to teenagers."

"I'd like it to be a lot cleaner. There are rubbish bins, but people don't use them. We like a clean area."

"Repair services need to be improved."

"To handle the complaints better."

"Just that they make life easier for tenants instead of making things difficult."

"Better roads. The potholes and all that."





## Understanding Satisfaction



# Annual Satisfaction & Dissatisfaction

The charts shown here summarise the key results from 2024/25 for both satisfaction and dissatisfaction

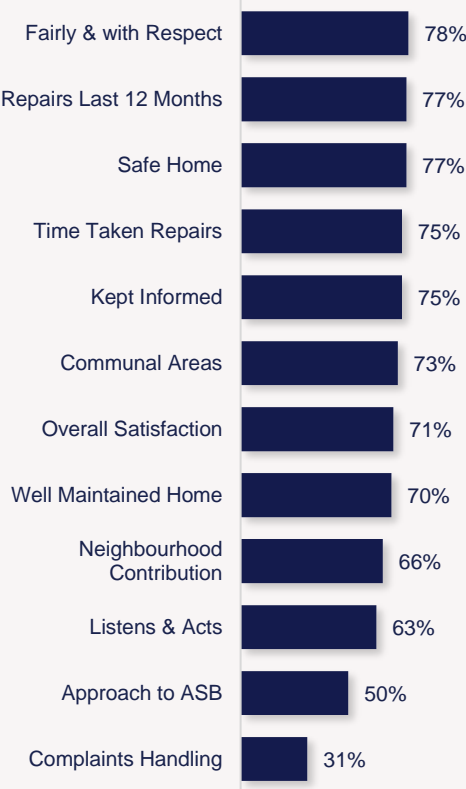
Sometimes, where satisfaction is low, the remaining tenants can be split between those who fall into the neutral middle ground and those who are actually dissatisfied. This difference can signal areas where tenants do not have strong opinions or areas where a high percentage of tenants are actually dissatisfied.

For Gravesham BC it generally follows that measures with high satisfaction also have low dissatisfaction, and vice versa.

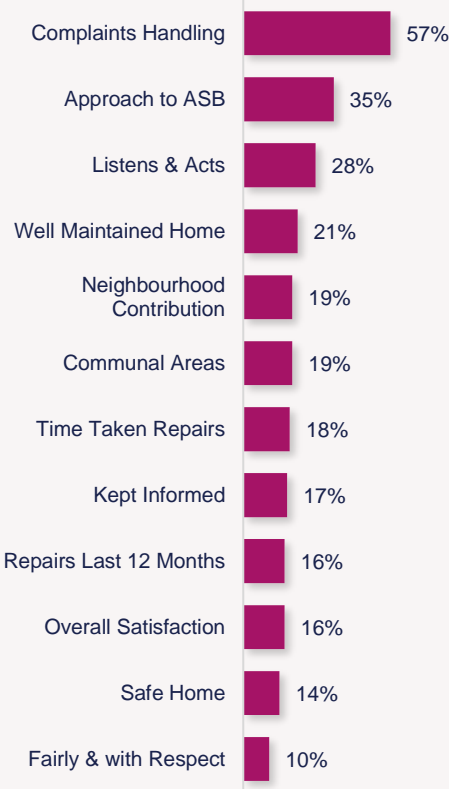
Just one measure has more dissatisfied tenants than satisfied, and that is the handling of complaints. Otherwise, just 16% are dissatisfied with the overall service.

Most measures have satisfaction levels above 70%, which is good for a council landlord, and as will be shown below, this compares well with other councils.

## Satisfaction with Measures 2024/25



## Dissatisfaction with Measures 2024/25





# Key Driver Analysis

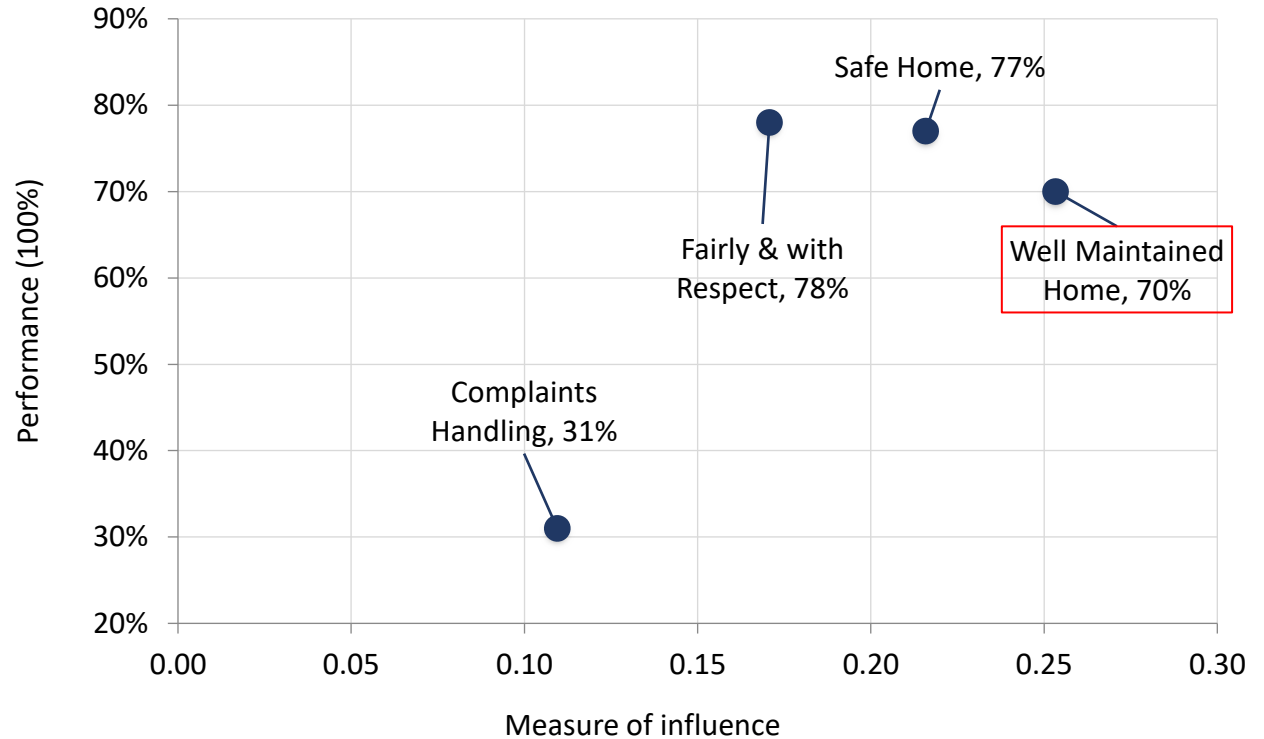
Key driver analysis is used to examine the relationship between the different variables (the questions asked in the survey) and determine which elements of the service are the key drivers for tenants' overall satisfaction.

Each landlord has its own unique pattern of influence, and when considering the results for 2024/25, the most important driver for tenants' satisfaction with the overall services is that the Council provides a well-maintained home followed quite closely by the provision of a safe home. Also important but not as influential is the way the Council treats its tenants fairly and with respect and handles complaints.

Many of the comments made refer to the condition of their homes, damp issues and the need for improvements and this analysis reflects that, making the property-based measures the most influential.

This analysis implies that if improvements around the most influential measures can be achieved, it is more likely to lead to increased satisfaction with the overall services provided.

## Annual Key Driver Analysis – Overall Satisfaction



# Benchmarking – RSH (LCRA - All landlords)

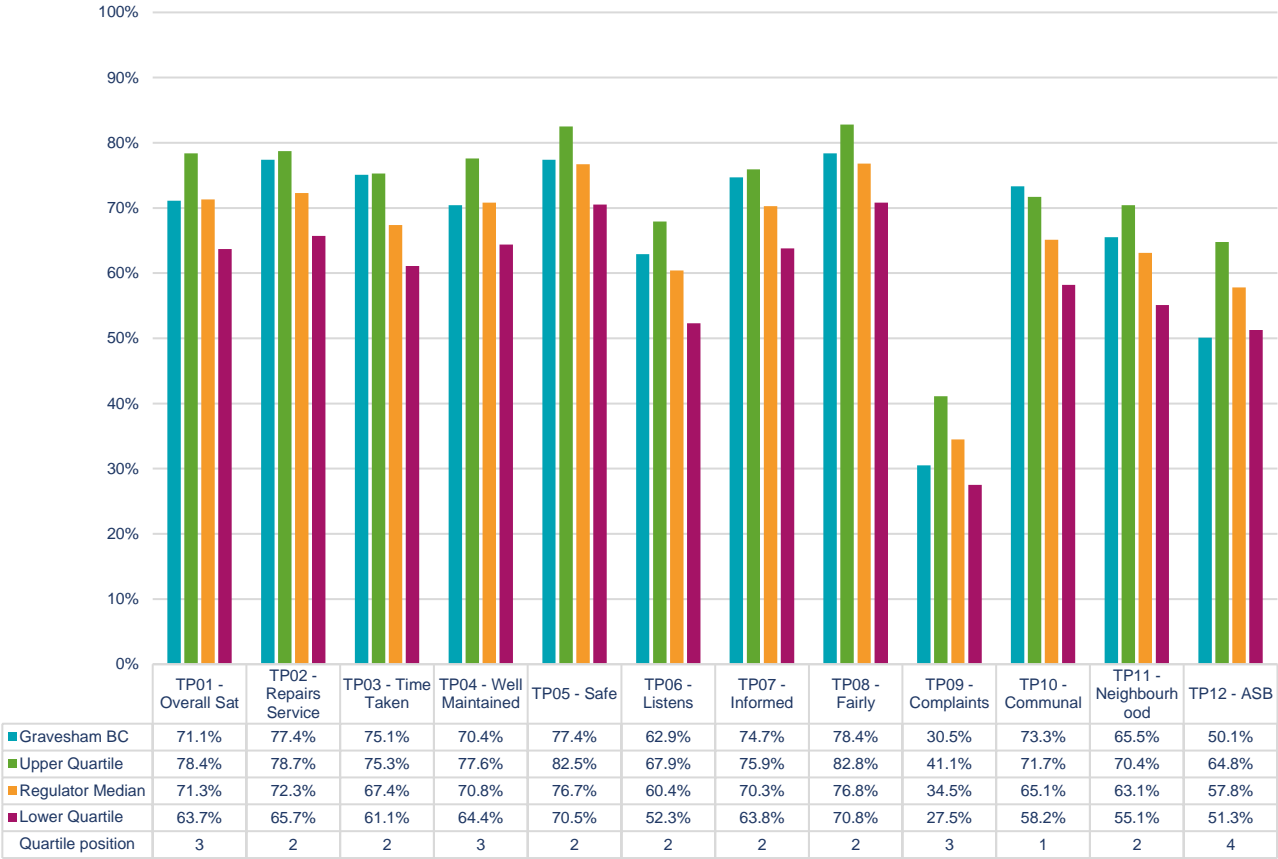


Now the Regulator has issued the results from all landlords completing their TSM returns, it is possible to compare the results from the Gravesham BC survey against these.

The chart opposite shows the Council's results against all social landlords submitting data and is based on LCRA results only.

This shows that the Council compares well with all but four measures above the group medians including seven in the second quartile and one, the upkeep of the communal areas, in the top quartile.

However, satisfaction with the overall service falls into the third quartile and the handling of ASB is in the lower quartile.



# Benchmarking – RSH (LCRA - Councils)

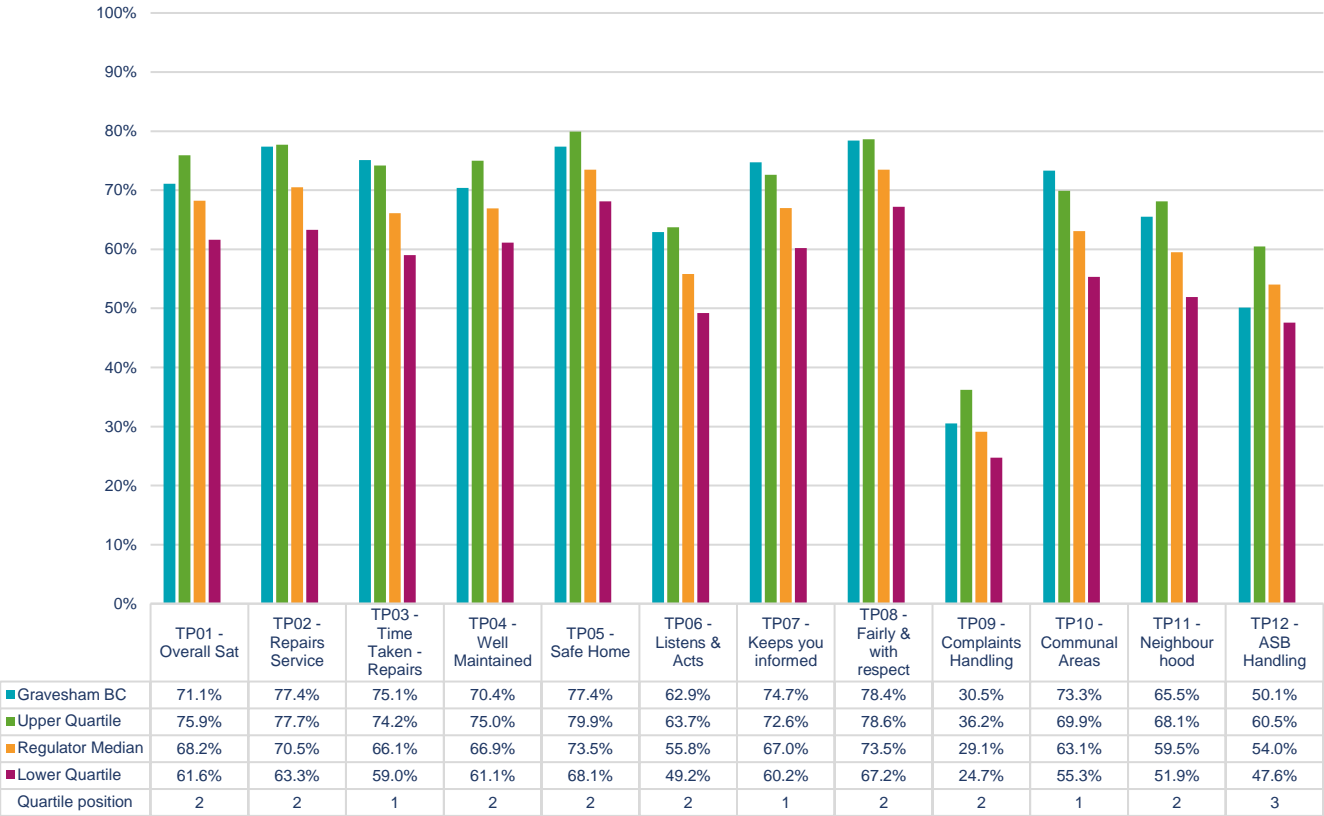


Given that Gravesham BC is a local authority, it is perhaps, more relevant to compare the results against other councils only; the chart opposite shows this.

Against this group, the Council compares better, with all but one above the group medians, with the time to complete repairs, keeping tenants informed and the upkeep of the communal areas in the top quartile and the overall satisfaction falling into the second.

Just one measure is below the median, that being the handling of ASB.

This is an encouraging set of results showing the Council is performing well against its peers.





# National Context

When considering the results, it is important to consider the national context and external factors.

For example:

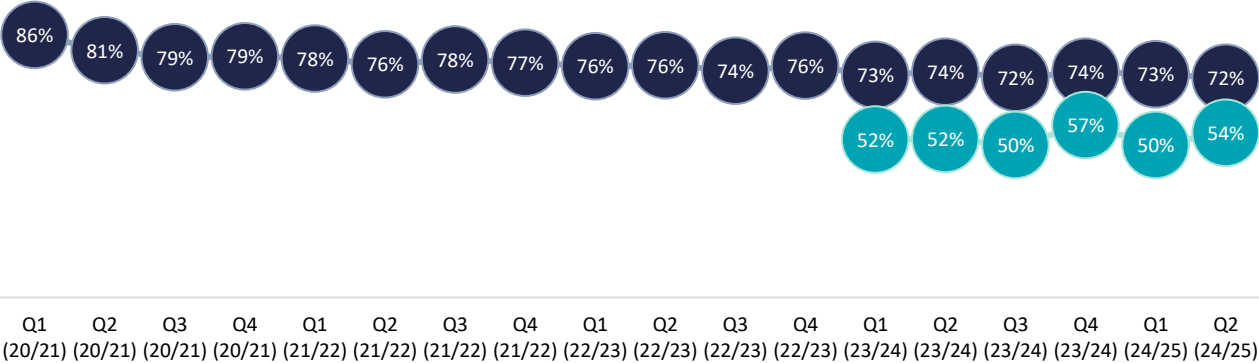
- The Cost-of-Living Crisis, increase in poverty and pressure on local authority funding
- Government & Political Changes
- Uncertainty about the Future
- The economy

Satisfaction is based on perception rather than specific values so can be affected by these factors and how positive people feel about their lives. External factors such as those above, as well as the recent Covid pandemic, could have impacted the way that many social landlords operate.

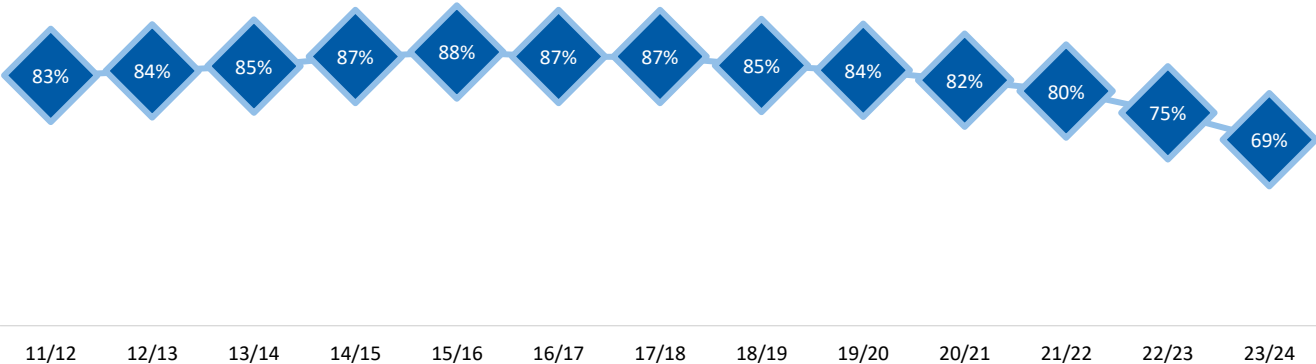
The top graph demonstrates how overall satisfaction has changed over time (tracker only) up until Q2 of 2024/25 - the trendline is downward, although has levelled out since Q1 of 23/34. The lower chart shows the results from Housemark with a peak in 2015/16 but a steepening decline in more recent years.

At 71%, the overall satisfaction rate for Gravesham BC for the 2024/25 year is just below the Acuity average for LCRA.

Overall Services (Acuity Clients)



Satisfaction with services provided (Housemark median - general needs)

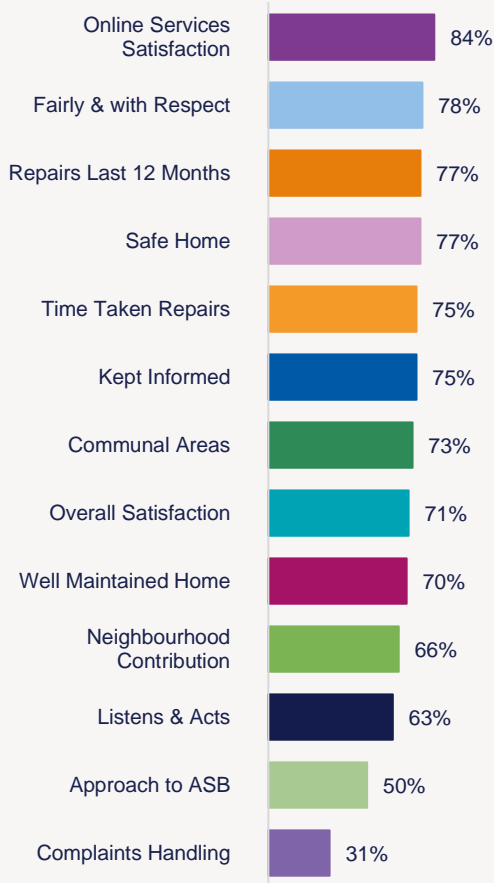






# Summary

## Satisfaction with Measures



## Summary



Gravesham BC commissioned Acuity to undertake a one-off survey of its tenants in 2024/25 to comply with the requirements of the Regulator of Social Housing. The survey was conducted primarily by telephone interview, but tenants were also given the opportunity to complete the survey online. The Council also wanted to carry out some face-to-face interviews to help boost the response. At the close of the survey in February 2025, a total of 742 completed responses had been received, sufficient to give a margin of error of  $\pm 3.4\%$ , within that required by the Regulator.

Satisfaction is generally good and compares well with other social landlords. Satisfaction with the overall service stands at 71%, with 84% satisfied with the Council's online services, 78% feel they are treated fairly and with respect, and 77% are satisfied with both the repairs service in the last 12 months and the safety of their home. However, just half the tenants are satisfied with how the Council handles instances of ASB and even fewer (31%) with the handling of complaints, although this is the only measure where dissatisfaction (57%) outstrips satisfaction.

This is the first survey of its kind for the Council so there are currently no previous results to compare with, so it can not be seen whether satisfaction is increasing or decreasing, although a trend will build up over time when these surveys are repeated.

However, the results compare well against other social landlords that have submitted data to the Regulator for 2023/24 and even better against other council landlords. Against this group all but one measure is above the group medians with three measures in the top quartile and eight in the second quartile, including the overall satisfaction.

The survey included some probing questions to find out why they had given the score they had, and this revealed that common themes are the time to complete repairs, the upkeep of the communal areas and communication, particularly the way staff listen to tenants' concerns and show empathy when they make contact. In addition, almost a third of those responding said they had problems with damp and mould in their homes, mainly in the general needs accommodation, maisonettes in particular. This is clearly causing problems for some and causing frustration in dealing with the problems and the knock-on effect it can have on less urgent work.

The key driver for overall satisfaction is property-based, with the most influential aspects being the maintenance of the home and its safety; this links into many of the comments made suggesting that repairs need improvement, and some homes have reached that point requiring further improvement and investment.

The results are broken down further by different subgroups and revealed that satisfaction does increase with age and as a result, those in Independent Living homes are more satisfied than their general needs counterparts. Those in maisonettes are less satisfied than in other property types and, perhaps a little unusually, those completing the survey by telephone interview are less satisfied than those using other methods.



# Recommendations

Gravesham Borough Council is based in Kent in the southeast of England and has around 5,600 properties. The survey has helped the Council comply with its requirements to complete the TSMs annually as well as giving good insight into the satisfaction of its tenants and highlighting areas which could be in need of improvement.

Satisfaction is generally good and compares well with other council landlords but there is still room for further improvement and the recommendations shown opposite could help achieve this.

## Repairs service

Satisfaction with the repairs service is generally good and compares well with other council landlords. However, the key driver for overall satisfaction is having a well-maintained and safe home, emphasising the importance of this aspect of the service. When asked what might be causing dissatisfaction with the service provided, the delay in completing repairs is often cited as is the poor communication on some repairs and poor-quality work. In addition, some say their properties are nearing the end of their useful lives and are in need of improvement and investment, particularly for new windows and doors and updated kitchens and bathrooms.

In addition, almost a third of those responding said they had problems with damp and mould in their homes and given the impending introduction of Awaab's Law, the Council needs to respond to these quickly and effectively to ensure the health of its tenants is not unduly affected, and the properties do not deteriorate further. The problems are not confined to particular properties although the maisonettes seem to suffer disproportionately. Whilst addressing the damp problems, the Council could also look at better scheduling of repairs and improving the communications with tenants, so they are kept informed about progress and advised if there are delays or other problems so improving trust and ultimately leading to further increases in satisfaction.

## Handling of complaints

Although the number making complaints is relatively small (16%), dissatisfaction with the way they are handled exceeds satisfaction but almost two to one. Tenants do seem to be divided between those who found a good experience and those where things didn't work out as planned, citing problems with getting complaints resolved, lack of suitable communication and acknowledgements and little empathy for the problems experienced. Those unhappy with the process want the Council to be more proactive in dealing with problems, to be kept up to date and for staff to listen better to their concerns. Some suggest that staff training in empathy and customer service could enhance the experience of those making complaints. However, the good news is that 29% of those responding said they would be interested in further involvement and whilst this is not restricted to complaints, involving tenants more in the complaints process could help iron out those areas which need work and help provide a tenant perspective to the problems presented.



# Recommendations

This page continues with recommendations to help the Council improve its service further.

## **Communications and engagement**

How the Council listens to its tenants' views and acts upon them is among the lowest rating in the survey with 63% satisfied but 28% dissatisfied, although most are happy with the way they are kept informed about things that matter to them. As with dealing with complaints, some cite problems with customer service, communications and empathy of staff to the problems they are presented with. Some also have problems getting in touch and having calls returned when promised. A theme among the comments is that of constant changing to staff leading to some confusion in who tenants should deal with. Whilst this is largely outside the control of the Council, it should aim to provide as much consistency as possible to create more trust among the tenants. There does appear to be an appetite for involvement, which the Council needs to foster. Whilst satisfaction with the online services is high, almost half the tenants don't use these suggesting that a range of approaches is needed to satisfy all rather than pushing all services online.

## **Maintenance of communal areas and damp issues**

Finally, the upkeep of the communal areas compares well with other council landlords, but despite this, some complain about poor quality of cleaning and rubbish management. In addition, on some sites, car parking is an issue causing frustration for those unable to park near their homes. Also, some complain that these areas can be poorly lit adding to a lack of safety in some areas. Given that many estates were built before the increase in car ownership, solving these problems can be difficult, but the Council should recognise that it can be a source of anger and frustration, which in turn can lead to ASB. The survey provides a wealth of information, and the Council should analyse this further to identify hot spots of problems and then lead to targeted resolutions.



# Demographics





## Tenure

The Council has around 600 Independent Living homes and 65 tenants from these responded to the survey, compared with 706 general needs.

Because of the age of the tenants in this type of accommodation, satisfaction is often higher; this is true here.

In fact, satisfaction is higher among the Independent Living tenants on all the measures in the survey bar one, that being the handling of complaints, although just eight of these tenants responded to this question.

The age range of the tenants is often a deciding factor in determining satisfaction and this is summarised below; although the additional facilities offered at the schemes can also be a factor in this higher level of satisfaction.

	All Residents	General Needs	Independent Living
Overall Satisfaction	71%	69%	91%
Well Maintained Home	70%	68%	92%
Safe Home	77%	77%	84%
Repairs Last 12 Months	77%	76%	91%
Time Taken Repairs	75%	74%	85%
Communal Areas	73%	70%	89%
Neighbourhood Contribution	66%	65%	74%
Approach to ASB	50%	49%	57%
Listens & Acts	63%	61%	78%
Kept Informed	75%	74%	80%
Fairly & with Respect	78%	78%	88%
Online Services Satisfaction	84%	83%	95%
Complaints Handling	31%	31%	25% *

\*Base below 10





## Property Type

Satisfaction is shown here by the main property types and those in bungalows are the most satisfied, with 95% of these satisfied with the overall service and having the most satisfied on a further ten measures. This is likely to be driven by the age factor again, as older tenants will likely occupy bungalows.

Those in maisonettes are the least satisfied, just 58% satisfied with the overall service. These properties are often seen to be of poorer quality, with more restricted space and access and a lack of outside areas and gardens for children to play.

The dashboard and results files contain further information broken down to floor level as well as the general property types and this will help the Council gain a better understanding of where satisfaction is highest and lowest.

	All Residents	Flat	House	Bungalow	Maisonette	Pitch/Site
Overall Satisfaction	71%	70%	72%	95%	58%	22% *
Well Maintained Home	70%	73%	70%	89%	49%	20% *
Safe Home	77%	77%	78%	86%	65%	100% *
Repairs Last 12 Months	77%	79%	77%	92%	68%	- *
Time Taken Repairs	75%	77%	72%	91%	76%	- *
Communal Areas	73%	76%	63%	81%	72%	67% *
Neighbourhood Contribution	66%	68%	64%	87%	53%	33% *
Approach to ASB	50%	51%	51%	69%	33%	33% *
Listens & Acts	63%	62%	63%	82%	55%	40% *
Kept Informed	75%	76%	76%	81%	55%	60% *
Fairly & with Respect	78%	81%	77%	86%	65%	60% *
Online Services Satisfaction	84%	88%	84%	81%	73%	0% *
Complaints Handling	31%	30%	29%	50% *	44% *	0% *

\*Base below 10



## Methodology

In similar surveys the method of response can make a difference to satisfaction with those participating over the phone being less satisfied than those who completed the survey in-person with a member of staff from Gravesham Borough Council.

For most measures, those who completed the survey in-person are at least 8p.p more satisfied than those who took part over the phone.

However, an exception to this is for satisfaction with online services where levels are 7p.p lower face-to-face than telephone.

Satisfaction with the measures relating to repairs and communal maintenance are similar across both methodologies.

	All Residents	Telephone	Face-to-face
Overall Satisfaction	71%	69%	77%
Well Maintained Home	70%	68%	76%
Safe Home	77%	73%	88%
Repairs Last 12 Months	77%	77%	80%
Time Taken Repairs	75%	75%	75%
Communal Areas	73%	73%	75%
Neighbourhood Contribution	66%	63%	71%
Approach to ASB	50%	46%	60%
Listens & Acts	63%	60%	70%
Kept Informed	75%	72%	81%
Fairly & with Respect	78%	75%	87%
Online Services Satisfaction	84%	86%	79%
Complaints Handling	31%	29%	39%



# Age Group

Throughout the report, it has been shown that satisfaction tends to increase with age, and this table summarises the results by age range.

Tenants aged over 85 are the most satisfied overall and on nine of the remaining survey measures, whilst it is those aged under 25 who are the least satisfied overall, and those under 35 are generally the least satisfied across the board.

The general trend is consistent with many other surveys and means that the age profile of different landlords will be a major factor in determining satisfaction levels.

It is not entirely clear why this is, but it could be that older people are generally less likely to complain and, perhaps, put up with lower service standards, whereas younger tenants can have higher expectations of what they feel services should look like.

	All Residents	0 - 24	25 - 34	35 - 44	45 - 54	55 - 59	60 - 64	65 - 74	75 - 84	85 +
Overall Satisfaction	71%	59%	63%	65%	56%	62%	81%	85%	87%	88%
Well Maintained Home	70%	58%	57%	59%	62%	63%	78%	85%	86%	97%
Safe Home	77%	67%	64%	66%	70%	77%	89%	89%	87%	100%
Repairs Last 12 Months	77%	57%	66%	72%	72%	75%	82%	86%	94%	100%
Time Taken Repairs	75%	64%	71%	66%	73%	66%	88%	78%	89%	93%
Communal Areas	73%	63% *	66%	68%	70%	65%	83%	78%	81%	100% *
Neighbourhood Contribution	66%	71%	54%	65%	54%	56%	72%	70%	75%	90%
Approach to ASB	50%	31%	32%	45%	45%	50%	64%	56%	60%	86%
Listens & Acts	63%	47%	43%	57%	59%	53%	69%	75%	81%	85%
Kept Informed	75%	80%	60%	69%	68%	70%	78%	82%	85%	94%
Fairly & with Respect	78%	83%	68%	72%	70%	70%	86%	89%	88%	94%
Online Services Satisfaction	84%	79%	81%	82%	80%	85%	94%	88%	89%	100% *
Complaints Handling	31%	0% *	33%	30%	26%	29%	33% *	33%	45%	33% *

\*Base below 10



This research project was carried out to conform with ISO20252:2019 and the MRS Code of Conduct.

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