Leaseholder Satisfaction Survey 2007
Somer Community Housing Trust
July 2007

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Somer Community Housing Trust

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Because people matter.

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1.1 Introduction and methodology

1.1.1 As part of its ongoing commitment to seek the views of its leaseholders, in February 2007, Somer Community Housing Trust (hereafter known as Somer CHT) commissioned BMG Research Ltd (BMG) to carry out a postal survey amongst its leaseholders. The overall objective of the survey was to gain levels of customer satisfaction with Somer CHT in key service areas.

1.1.2 A postal customer satisfaction survey of Somer CHT leaseholders was carried out between April and June in 2007. In total, 828 questionnaires were mailed out to all leaseholders, with 2 reminder mailings going out to those leaseholders who did not or could not respond to prior mailings. Overall, 275 questionnaires were completed; thus the response rate was 33%.

1.1.3 As 275 questionnaires were completed, the Somer CHT leaseholder sample is subject to a maximum standard error of ±5.9% at the 95% confidence level on an observed statistic of 50%. Therefore, we can be 95% confident that responses are representative of those that would be given by the leaseholder population, if a census had been conducted, to within 5.9% of the percentages reported.

1.2 General information

1.2.1 The majority of leaseholders live in their property (87%), whereas 13% rent theirs out.

1.2.2 In the event that leaseholders require advice regarding their rights and responsibilities, the majority (66%) would contact Somer Leasehold Services first, followed by a fifth (21%) who would contact the Citizens Advice Bureau.

1.2.3 The majority (85%) of leaseholders are not thinking about selling their property in the next 12 months, however 15% are thinking of selling. The reasons given for considering selling their property are: personal circumstances (63%); the service provided by Somer (22%); and the neighbourhood in which they live (20%).

1.2.4 Around a fifth (22%) bought their property from Bath City Council and a similar proportion (19%) procured theirs from Somer Community Housing Group.

1.2.5 Leaseholders mainly sought advice from conveyancing solicitors prior to purchase (62%), and, at lower levels, Bath City Council (17%); and Somer CHG (12%).

1.3 Contact with Somer CHT

1.3.1 Three quarters of leaseholders (74%) have contacted Somer CHT in the last 12 months.

1.3.2 When contacting Somer, seven in ten leaseholders (72%) used the telephone. Other forms of contact mentioned, but at significantly lower levels, are in writing (12%), email (8%) and visits to the office (6%).

1.3.3 Leaseholders who had contacted Somer CHT in the last 12 months did so primarily to ask about repairs (41%), service charges (23%) and about their neighbours (12%).

1.3.4 Approaching two thirds (63%) of leaseholders who had contacted Somer CHT in the last 12 months indicated it was easy to get hold of the right person, whilst 22% said it was difficult. Approaching three quarters (73%) indicated staff were helpful, whilst just 11% thought they were unhelpful.

1.3.5 Three fifths (60%) of leaseholders contacting Somer CHT indicated the Trust was able to deal with their problem. Approaching half of leaseholders (48%) were satisfied with the final outcome of their last contact, whilst around one fifth (33%) were dissatisfied.

1.3.6 The majority of leaseholders (68%) did not make a complaint in the last 12 months, whereas 32% did.

1.3.7 Over half (57%) were satisfied with the way staff took responsibility for their query; but 59% were dissatisfied with the way they were kept informed about the progress of their query.

1.3.8 Two fifths (41%) were satisfied with the way their complaint was handled and 59% were dissatisfied.

1.3.9 Over four fifths (81%) found the overall contact experience to be satisfactory, and one fifth (19%) stated that it was unsatisfactory.

1.4 Satisfaction with home and neighbourhood

1.4.1 Over half of leaseholders (53%) consider the condition of their property to be good, including 12% going as far as to describe it as very good. However, just over a third (36%) of leaseholders describe their service charge as good value for money and the same proportion (36%) said the opposite.

1.4.2 Three quarters of leaseholders (76%) are satisfied with the area in which they live, including one third (34%) who are very satisfied.

1.4.3 Overall, the top issues that are causing most problems in leaseholders' neighbourhoods are parking problems (33%); litter and rubbish in the street (23%); cleaning/caretaking of communal areas (17%).

1.4.4 The majority (53%) of leaseholders are satisfied with the cleanliness of communal areas and a slightly higher proportion (57%) are satisfied with the cleanliness of the areas surrounding the property.

1.4.5 Three quarters (76%) of respondents agree that people from different backgrounds get on well in their local area, whereas just 8% disagree.

1.5 Repairs and maintenance

1.5.1 Two fifths of leaseholders (41%) have reported repairs in the last 12 months.

1.5.2 Over two fifths (45%) indicated they are satisfied with the way Somer CHT deals with repairs and maintenance. Conversely, just under one third of leaseholders (32%) are dissatisfied with the repairs and maintenance service and a further quarter (23%) remain ambivalent.

1.6 Communicating with Somer CHT

1.6.1 In terms of leaseholders' views on whether Somer CHT keeps them well informed about things that might affect them, the majority (66%) indicated that the Trust is good at doing so. Just 15% of leaseholders feel Somer CHT is poor at keeping them informed about things that might affect them, whilst 20% remain indifferent.

1.6.2 Approaching two thirds of leaseholders (65%) believe Somer CHT, to some extent, takes into account their views when making decisions, with 35% citing that their views are not taken into account.

1.6.3 Over two fifths (44%) are satisfied with the opportunities for participation in management and decision-making, whereas only 16% are dissatisfied. The remainder are ambivalent (40%).

1.7 Overall satisfaction with Somer CHT

1.7.1 Around half (49%) are satisfied with the service provided by Somer CHT, including 8% who are very satisfied. Over a quarter (27%) are dissatisfied and 24% are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied

1.7.2 The largest proportion of respondents cited value for money for their service charge as the most important service provided by Somer CHT (74%). Around half (52%) of respondents stated that keeping them informed was most important, followed by 46% who cited communal cleaning as the most important service.

1.7.3 Around two fifths (41%) stated that the overall quality of the home was most important and one in three (32%) chose having their views taken into account.

1.7.4 The highest proportion of leaseholders stated that the value for money for their service charge is the service most in need of improvement (83%; also identified as the most important service). This is followed by taking the views of leaseholders into account, as 81% said that this needs some (54%) or much (27%) improvement. The third service cited as being most in need of improvement is ground maintenance (78% think this needs improving).

2 Introduction

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 As part of its ongoing commitment to seek the views of its leaseholders, in February 2007, Somer CHT commissioned BMG Research Ltd (BMG) to carry out a postal survey amongst its leaseholders. The overall objective of the survey was to gain levels of customer satisfaction with Somer CHT in key service areas. More specifically, however, the objectives of the research are outlined below:

- To assess levels of satisfaction with the housing services offered to Somer CHT leaseholders;
- To identify areas of the service which require improvement and examine the future needs and aspirations of leaseholders;
- To enable Somer CHT to benchmark the results of the survey against national statistics;
- To continue to provide baseline data to inform the organisation’s approach to Best Value; and
- To establish the socio-economic and demographic profile of leaseholders.

2.1.2 This report presents the findings of the survey for Somer CHT.

2.1.3 The data was collected in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and National Housing Federation (NHF) guidance.

2.1.4 The survey was carried out using a questionnaire designed jointly by Somer CHT and BMG Research. The questionnaire incorporated questions from the Housing Corporation and National Housing Federation's Standardised Tenant Satisfaction questionnaire, known as STATUS. The use of STATUS allows comparison with the performance of other social housing providers. In addition to the STATUS questions, localised question areas were also included.

2.1.5 In order to ensure that the survey results reflect the views of all leaseholders, the data was weighted prior to analysis by Rural and Urban. The data used in this report is rounded up or down to the nearest whole percentage. It is for this reason that, on occasions, tables or charts may add up to 99% or 101%. Where tables and graphics do not match exactly the text in the report this occurs due to the way in which figures are rounded up (or down) when responses are combined. Results that do differ in this way should not have a variance which is any larger than 1%.

2.1.6 In addition to this written report, data tabulations have also been produced which present the data as a whole, and includes data broken down by the following groups:

- Housing Type; rural/urban;
- Household composition, gender, age, disability and ethnicity;
- Satisfaction with landlord, repairs service, home, value for money of rent; and
- General needs and sheltered housing type.

2.2 Methodology

2.2.1 A postal customer satisfaction survey of Somer CHT leaseholders was carried out between April and June 2007. In total, 828 questionnaires were mailed out to all leaseholders with 2 reminder mailings going out to those leaseholders who did not or could not respond to prior mailings. Overall, 275 questionnaires were completed; thus the response rate was 33%.

2.2.2 As 275 questionnaires were completed, the Somer CHT sample is subject to a maximum standard error of ±5.9% at the 95% confidence level on an observed statistic of 50%. Therefore, we can be 95% confident that responses are representative of those that would be given by the tenant population, if a census had been conducted, to within 5.9% of the percentages reported.

3 General information

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 This section will look at general information regarding the properties owned by leaseholders. This will inform on the choices made by leaseholders when purchasing a property and also give some background regarding sources of advice and information for leaseholders prior to purchasing their property.

3.2 Characteristics of the property

3.2.1 The majority of leaseholders (87%) live in their property, whereas 13% rent theirs out.

3.2.2 When describing their property, proportions of residents are distributed fairly evenly across the different property types (see table 1).

Table 1

How would you best describe your property? (All respondents, where provided a valid response)	
	%
A ground floor flat	25
A first floor flat	27
A second floor flat (or above)	21
A maisonette	26
Sample base	**267**

3.2.3 Somer CHT are also interested in examining external characteristics of the property and the communal areas.

3.2.4 Respondents were asked whether or not their property had a number of features including double glazing, a door entry system etc. (see the table below).

Table 2

Does your property have? (All respondents, where provided a valid response)	
	%
Double glazing	70
Door entry system	53
Communal areas	63
Active smoke alarms in communal areas	41
Communal door entry system	54
Sample base	**267**

3.3 Advice on rights and responsibilities

3.3.1 Leaseholders were asked whom they would contact first if they required advice on their rights and responsibilities as a leaseholder. They were given a list from which they were asked to choose.

3.3.2 The majority (66%) of leaseholders would contact Somer Leasehold Services first. Around a fifth (21%) would contact Citizens Advice Bureau first and just 2% would contact a Leaseholder Forum Member.

3.3.3 One in ten (11%) would contact elsewhere first.

3.4 Selling and purchasing the lease

3.4.1 Respondents were initially asked if they are thinking about selling their lease in the next 12 months.

3.4.2 The majority (85%) are not thinking about selling their lease in the next twelve months, however just over one in seven (15%) are thinking of selling.

3.4.3 Respondents more likely to be thinking of selling in the next 12 months are those aged 25 – 44 years (21%); the economically active (17%); and those who are dissatisfied with the overall service provided (23%).

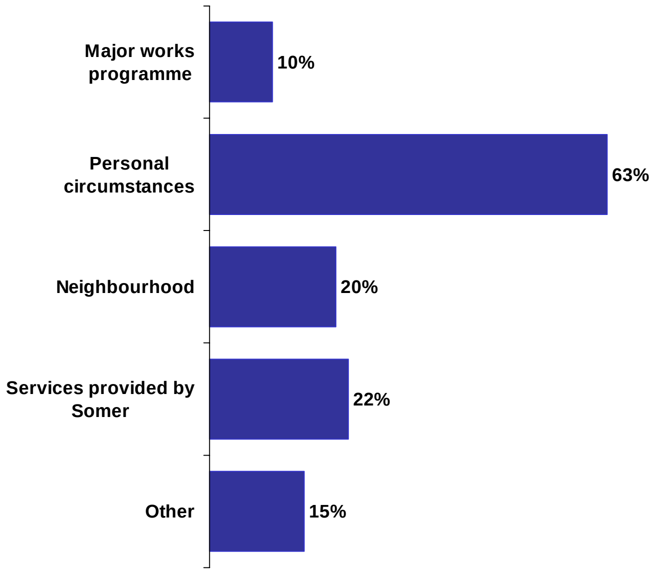
3.4.4 Respondents who stated that they are thinking about selling their lease in the next 12 months were then asked what the reasons are for this.

3.4.5 The majority (63%) of leaseholders who are considering selling their lease in the next 12 months cited personal circumstances as the reason. Around a fifth cited the neighbourhood (20%) and the service provided by Somer (22%).

3.4.6 Just one in ten (10%) indicated that this was due to a Major Works programme and 15% had other reasons.

Figure 1

What are your reasons?
(All leaseholders are thinking of selling their lease in the next 12 months, where provided a valid response)



Sample base: 41

3.4.7 All leaseholders were then asked to state from where they had purchased the property. Respondents were given a list of options from which to choose.

3.4.8 Results for this question were fairly mixed, with the largest proportion (46%) stating that they purchased their property from somewhere not on the list.

Table 3

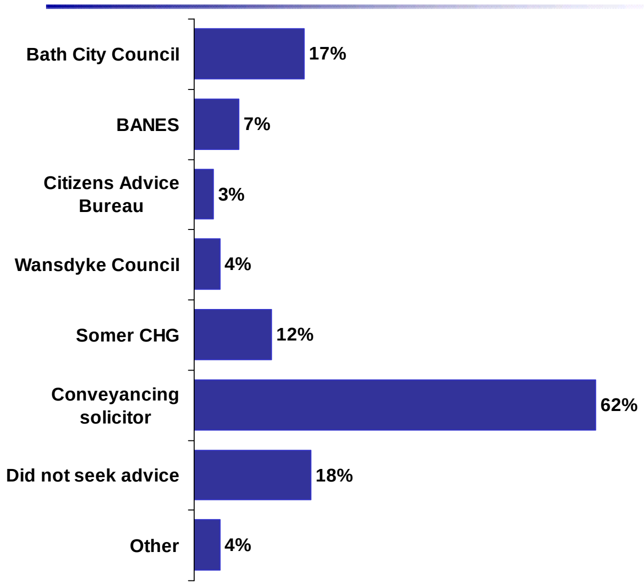
From where did you purchase this property? (All respondents, where provided a valid response)	
	%
Bath City Council	22
BANES	7
Wansdyke Council	7
Somer Community Housing Group	19
Other	46
Sample base	**270**

3.4.9 Further to this, leaseholders were also asked from where, if at all, they sought advice prior to purchasing the property. Respondents were given a list from which they could choose as many as applied.

3.4.10 The most popular choice by far for advice-seeking was a conveyancing solicitor (62%), followed by Bath City Council (17%) and Somer Community Housing Group (12%). Around a fifth (18%) did not seek advice.

Figure 2

Prior to purchase, which of the following did you seek advice from?
(All leaseholders, where provided a valid response)



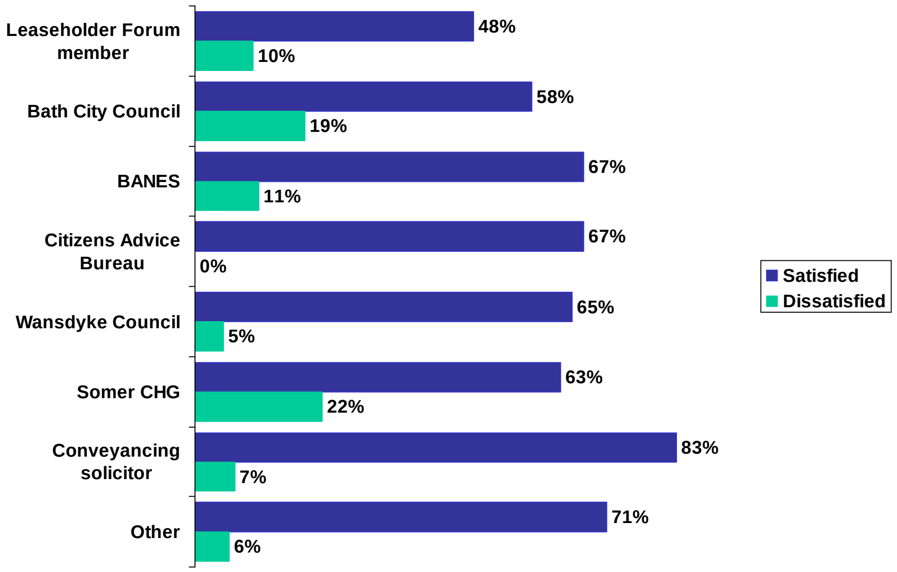
Sample base: 271

3.4.11 Those respondents who did seek advice were asked how satisfied or dissatisfied they were with the advice they received.

3.4.12 Interestingly, the majority of respondents were satisfied with the various sources from which they received advice, with the exception of a Leaseholder Forum Member (48% satisfied). In addition, 22% of those that sought advice from Somer were dissatisfied.

Figure 3

How satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the advice you received from the following?(All leaseholders, who sought advice prior to purchase, where provided a valid response)



Base sizes vary

3.4.13 Following on from this, all leaseholders were asked, with hindsight, whether or not they would still have purchased the property. The majority (89%) of leaseholders would, whereas 11% stated that with hindsight, they would not have purchased the property.

3.4.14 Those respondents who indicated that they would not have bought the property were asked to explain the reasons behind this.

3.4.15 The most commonly cited explanation is that the service charge is too high (43%). One in seven (14%) gave Somer CHT being slow or reluctant to carry out repairs as a reason. Around one in ten (11%) stated that in hindsight, they think that the property was too expensive and 11% stated that there was too much noise.

3.4.16 At lower levels, 7% stated that the area is rife with anti-social behaviour, staff are dismissive of them and do not act on problems and that the last repair they had completed was very bad.

3.4.17 All respondents were then asked whether or not they thought there was any more information that could have been provided to them prior to purchase. Again, this question was an open-response question, where respondents provide their own answer.

3.4.18 The highest proportion (35%) stated that a list of what can be done inside/to the property would have been helpful prior to purchase. Around three in ten (28%) would have liked more reliable information about the service charge.

3.4.19 At lower levels, respondents would have liked more information on repairs and more information about the sinking fund (both 18%). Around one in ten (13%) would have liked information on planned works.

3.4.20 Further to this, respondents were then asked whether or not they were aware of various rights and responsibilities they have as a leaseholder. They were presented with a list and asked to indicate how knowledgeable they felt about the various aspects.

3.4.21 Leaseholders seem to be most aware of their own responsibilities (61% very good/good knowledge of their responsibility under the Lease Agreement ; 62% very good/good knowledge of own repair obligations) in comparison with the responsibilities of Somer CHT (52% very good/good knowledge of Somer's repair obligations).

3.4.22 The proportions of respondents who have good/very good knowledge is lower for the calculation of the service charge and maintenance (40%) and for the sinking fund (36%).

Table 4

Please indicate your level of knowledge and understanding of the following…? (All respondents, where provided a valid response)

	Very good/good knowledge	Some knowledge	Little/no knowledge
Your responsibility under the Lease Agreement	61	33	7
Your own repair obligations	62	30	7
Somer's repair obligations	52	32	16
The calculation of your service charge and maintenance	40	34	27
Your sinking fund (where applicable)	36	33	31

Bases vary

4 Contact with Somer Community Housing Trust

4.1.1 This section includes details as to whether and how leaseholders have contacted Somer CHT and whether they were satisfied with the final outcome of their last contact experience. Leaseholders were also asked about a set of issues regarding that contact experience.

4.2 Contact in the last 12 months

4.2.1 Three quarters (74%) of leaseholders who provided a valid response have contacted Somer CHT in the last 12 months, whereas 26% have not.

4.2.2 Unsurprisingly, respondents who have purchased their home from Somer CH Group are significantly more likely to have contacted Somer (84%) in comparison with those who have purchased their home from Bath City Council (64%).

4.2.3 Respondents who live in their property are more likely to have contacted Somer CHT in comparison with those who rent out their property (77% in comparison with 57%).

4.2.4 Leaseholders who are dissatisfied with repairs and maintenance to communal areas are significantly more likely to have contacted Somer CHT in comparison with those who are satisfied (88% and 68% respectively).

4.2.5 Furthermore, of those leaseholders who are dissatisfied with Somer CHT overall, 83% had contacted the Trust in the last 12 months compared with 73% of those who are satisfied overall.

4.3 Method of contact

4.3.1 Respondents were also asked by which method they last contacted Somer CHT. When contacting their landlord, the vast majority do so via the telephone (72%). Other forms of contact mentioned, but at significantly lower levels, are in writing (12%), email (8%) and visits to the office (6%).

Table 5

How did you last contact Somer CHT?
(All respondents who have contacted Somer CHT in the last 12 months, where provided a valid response)

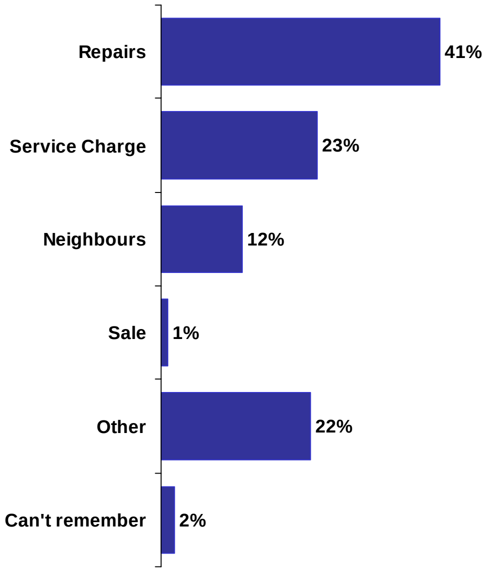
	All leaseholders **%**
Phoned	72
Wrote	12
Email	8
Visited office	6
Other	1
Sample base	**182**

4.4 Reason for last contact

4.4.1 Leaseholders who had contacted Somer CHT in the last 12 months were asked what they last had contact about. The largest proportion (41%) of leaseholders last contacted Somer CHT to ask about repairs. At lower levels leaseholders last contacted the Trust regarding service charges (23%); neighbours (12%); and sales (1%). Around a fifth (22%) contacted Somer CHT for other reasons.

Figure 4

What did you last have contact about?
(All leaseholders who have contacted Somer CHT in the past 12 months, where provided a valid response)



Sample base: 180

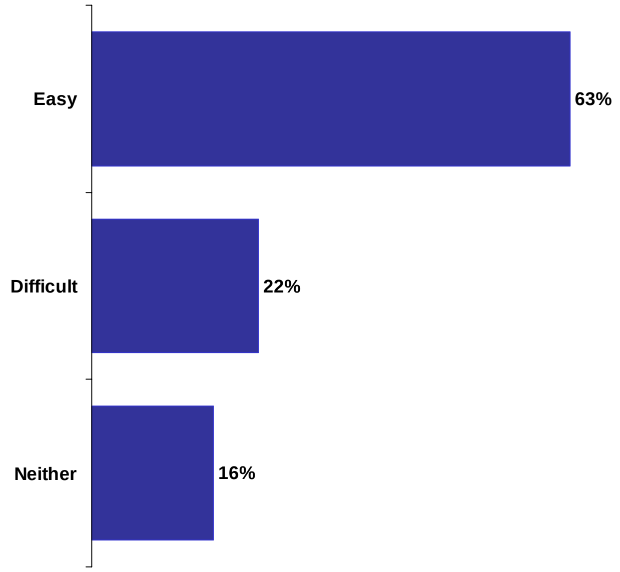
4.4.2 Interestingly, 55% of those who are satisfied with repairs and maintenance of communal areas have been in touch with Somer CHT regarding repairs, whereas of those who are dissatisfied with repairs and maintenance, just 39% have been in contact regarding repairs.

4.5 Ease of getting hold of the right person

4.5.1 Leaseholders who had contacted Somer CHT were asked whether getting hold of the right person was easy or difficult. Approximately three fifths (63%) indicated that it was easy to get hold of the right person, whilst around a fifth (22%) indicated that it was difficult and 16% were indifferent.

Figure 5

When leaseholders last had contact, was getting hold of the right person…? (All respondents who have contacted Somer CHT in the last 12 months where provided a valid response)



Sample base = 193

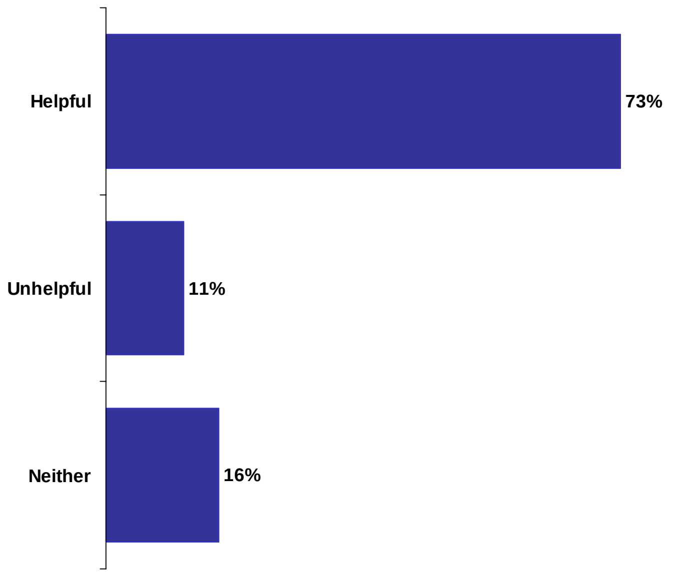
4.5.2 Respondents who are dissatisfied with the overall service provided by Somer CHT are more likely to have found it difficult to get in touch with Somer CHT (35%) in comparison with those who are satisfied (14%).

4.6 Helpfulness of staff

4.6.1 Leaseholders who had contacted Somer CHT in the last 12 months were asked whether or not they found the staff helpful. Approaching three quarters (73%) indicated staff were helpful, whilst just one in ten (11%) said they were unhelpful.

Figure 6

When you last had contact, did you find the staff …?
(All respondents who have contacted Somer CHT in the past 12 months, where provided a valid response)



Sample base = 194

4.6.2 Of leaseholders who are dissatisfied with the overall service, 26% indicated staff are unhelpful compared with just 4% of those who are satisfied overall.

4.6.3 Those leaseholders who had contacted Somer CHT in the last 12 months were then asked whether the staff / Trust was able to deal with their problem. Three fifths (60%) indicated that the Trust *was* able to deal with their problem.

4.6.4 A quarter of leaseholders (26%) however, indicated that their problem was not dealt with, whilst just 14% said the Trust was neither able nor unable to deal with their problem.

4.6.5 Of leaseholders who are dissatisfied with repairs and maintenance, 36% indicated staff were unable to deal with their problem compared with 24% of those who are satisfied with repairs.

4.6.6 Of leaseholders who are dissatisfied with the overall service provided, 45% indicated staff were unable to deal with their problem compared with just 15% of those who are satisfied with repairs.

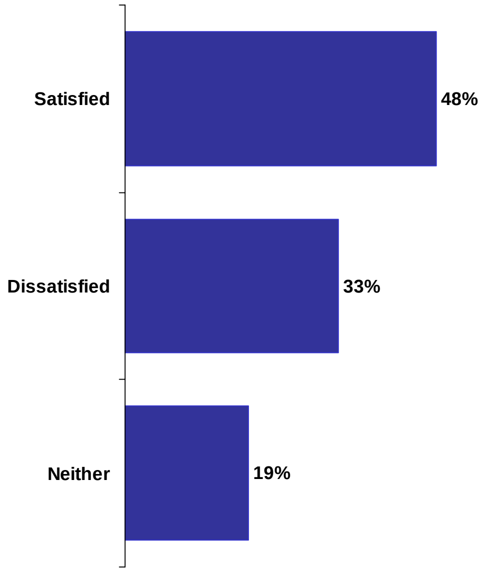
4.7 Satisfaction with the final outcome

4.7.1 Finally, leaseholders who contacted the Trust were asked whether they were satisfied or dissatisfied with the final outcome of their last contact.

4.7.2 Approaching half of leaseholders (48%) are satisfied with the overall experience of their last contact with the Trust contrasting with one third (33%) who are dissatisfied. One fifth (19%) are ambivalent.

Figure 7

Were leaseholders satisfied or dissatisfied with the final outcome?
(All respondents who have contacted Somer CHT in the past 12 months, where provided a valid response)



Sample base : 188

4.7.3 Respondents who are dissatisfied with repairs and maintenance are significantly more likely to be dissatisfied with the final outcome, compared with those who are satisfied with repairs and maintenance (53% and 18% respectively).

4.7.4 A similar pattern applies for those who are dissatisfied with the overall service provided by Somer CHT (61% dissatisfied compared with 18% dissatisfied who are satisfied with the overall service).

4.8 Complaints management

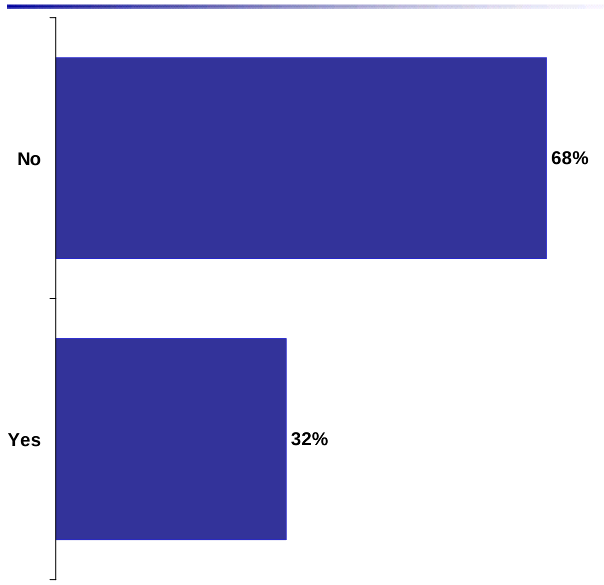
4.8.1 Somer CHT is interested in gauging its customers' views on how the complaints process is handled by its staff. Once those respondents who had made a complaint in the last 12 months were identified, questions were asked about how staff took responsibility for the respondent's query and whether the respondent was kept informed during the complaints process.

Making a complaint

4.8.2 Respondents were initially asked whether or not they had had to make a complaint to Somer CHT over the last 12 months. The majority (68%) of all leaseholders had not made a complaint over the last 12 months, however around one third (32%) had.

Figure 8

Have you had to make a complaint to Somer CHT over the last 12 months? (All respondents, where provided a valid response)



Sample base: 262

4.8.3 Respondents significantly more likely to have had to make a complaint are:

- Leaseholders with a disability (40%);
- Leaseholders who think the value for money of their service charge is poor (47%);
- Leaseholders who are dissatisfied with the overall service (54%); and
- Leaseholders who are dissatisfied with repairs and maintenance to communal areas (55%).

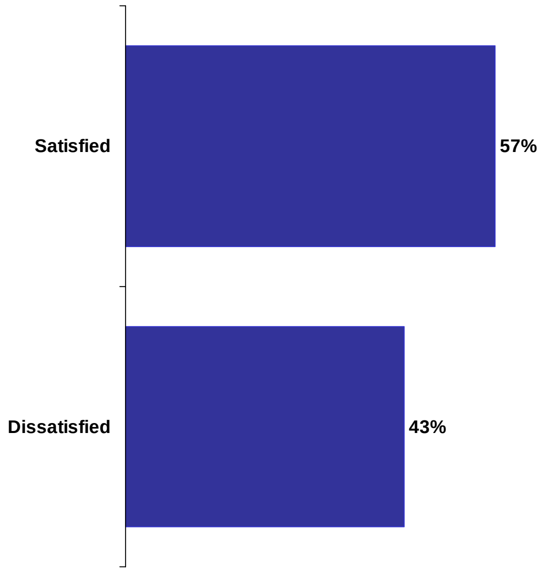
Responsibility of staff

4.8.4 Respondents who had had to make a complaint were asked to comment on how satisfied or dissatisfied they are with the way staff took responsibility for their query.

4.8.5 The majority of leaseholders (57%) were satisfied with the way staff took responsibility for their query. However, two fifths (43%) were dissatisfied.

Figure 9

How satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the way staff took responsibility for your query? (All respondents who made a complaint in the last 12 months, where provided a valid response)



Sample base: 84

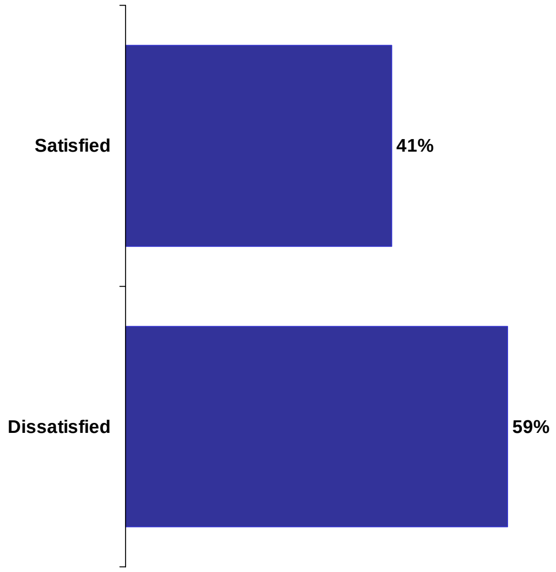
Keeping residents informed about the progress of complaints

4.8.6 Respondents who had had to make a complaint were asked to comment on how satisfied or dissatisfied they are with how staff kept them informed about the progress of the complaint.

4.8.7 The majority of leaseholders (59%) were dissatisfied with the way staff kept them informed and two fifths (41%) were satisfied.

Figure 10

How satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the way staff kept you informed of progress of the complaint? (All respondents who made a complaint in the last 12 months, where provided a valid response)



Sample base: 83

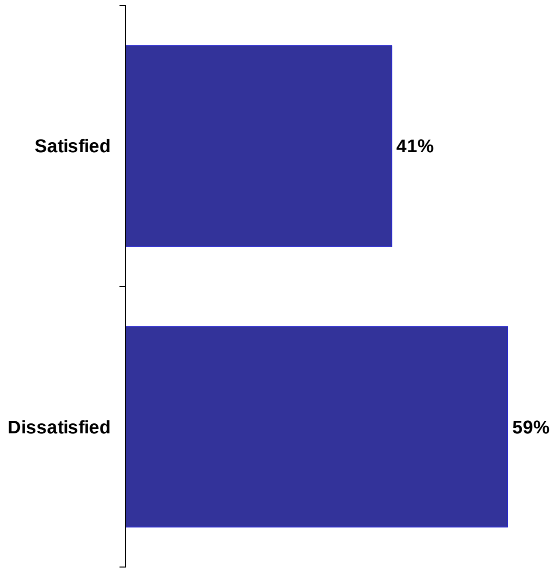
Complaints handling

4.8.8 Respondents who had had to make a complaint were asked to comment on how satisfied or dissatisfied they are with the way their complaint was handled.

4.8.9 The slight majority of leaseholders (59%) were dissatisfied with the way their complaint was handled. Conversely, two fifths (41%) were satisfied.

Figure 11

How satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the way your complaint was handled? (All respondents who made a complaint in the last 12 months, where provided a valid response)



Sample base: 85

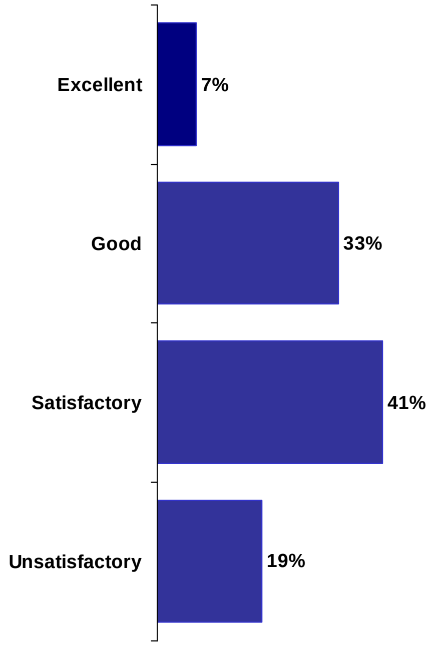
4.9 Overall satisfaction with customer service experience

4.9.1 Leaseholders were asked to take everything into account and state how satisfied they are with the overall customer service provided by Somer CHT.

4.9.2 Over four fifths (81%) find the overall customer service provided satisfactory, including 7% who consider it to be excellent. Just one fifth (19%) stated that the service was unsatisfactory.

Figure 12

How would you rate your level of satisfaction with the overall customer service provided by Somer CHT?
(All respondents where provided a valid response)



Sample base: 258

4.10 Possible contact reasons

4.10.1 Leaseholders were asked whether or not they would contact Somer Leasehold Services when facing a variety of situations.

4.10.2 Over four fifths (82%) of leaseholders would contact Somer Leasehold Services if there were cracks in the external walls of the property. Around two thirds would contact if they had problems with the neighbours or there was rubbish in the communal areas (67% and 66% respectively).

4.10.3 Around half would contact should they wish to extend or improve their property and if they want to sell their property (49% and 48% respectively).

4.10.4 At lower proportions, leaseholders would contact Somer if they wanted to paint their front door (35%) and if they wanted to rent our their property (29%).

Table 6

Would you contact Somer Leasehold Services if you…?
(All leaseholders, where provided a valid response)

		Would contact Somer Leasehold Services	Sample base
Have cracks in the external walls	(%)	**82**	216
Have problems with neighbours	(%)	**67**	178
Have rubbish in the communal areas	(%)	**66**	174
Wanted to extend/improve the property	(%)	**49**	130
Wanted to sell your property	(%)	**48**	128
Have a broken glass pane	(%)	**41**	108
Wanted to paint the front door	(%)	**35**	92
Wanted to rent out the property	(%)	**29**	78

5 Satisfaction with home and neighbourhood

5.1 Introduction

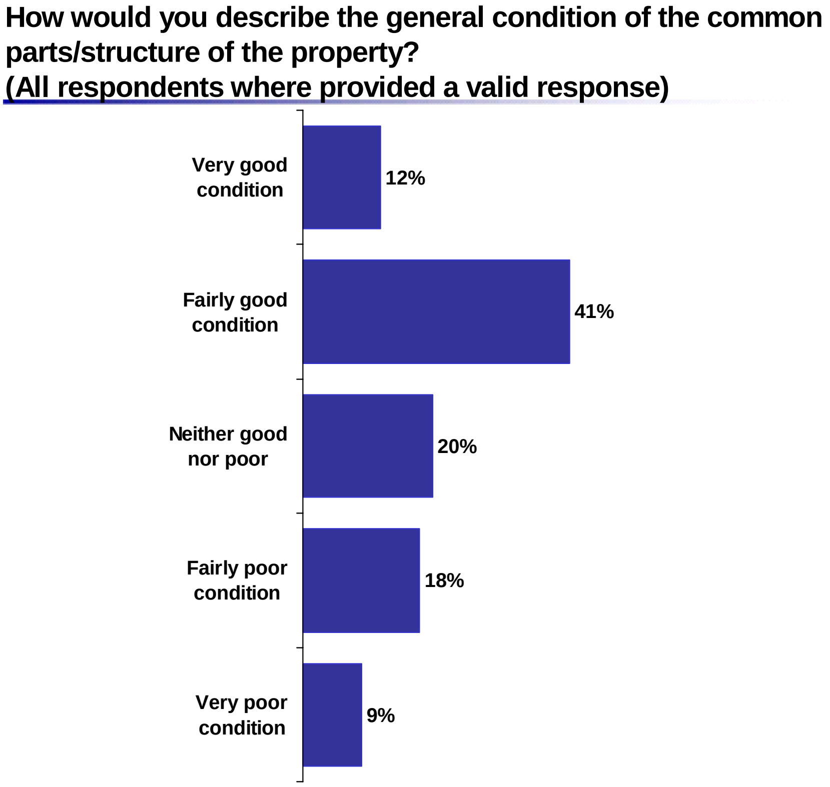
5.1.1 This section looks at leaseholders' homes and surrounding areas. It investigates attitudes towards the condition of their property and those neighbourhood issues likely to be seen as problems.

5.2 General condition of homes

5.2.1 Looking further into this key issue, leaseholders were asked to rate the general condition of the common parts and structure of the property.

5.2.2 Just over half (53%) of leaseholders would describe the general condition of the common parts and structure of the property as good, whereas over a quarter (27%) would describe this as poor. One fifth (20%) describe it as neither good nor poor.

Figure 13



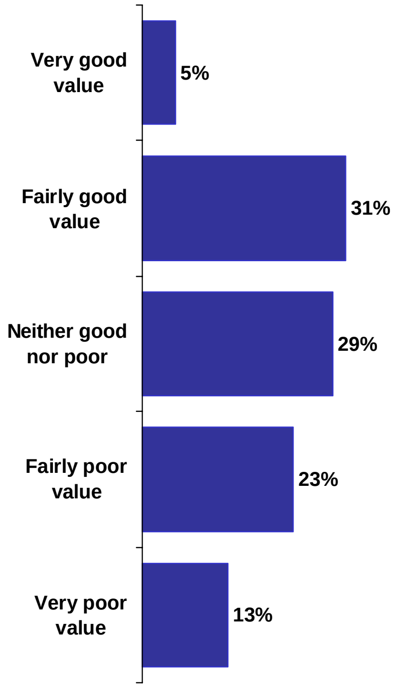
Sample base: 269

5.3 Value for money

5.3.1 Respondents were asked to rate whether their service charge reflected good or poor value for their money. Over a third (36%) of leaseholders described their service charge as good value for money; 29% were indifferent; and 36% described it as poor value for money.

Figure 14

Do you think that the service charge for this property represents good or poor value for money?
(All respondents where provided a valid response)



Sample base: 267

5.3.2 Interestingly, the proportion of respondents who think their property is good value for money is higher for respondents who are economically inactive (53%) than for economically active leaseholders (28%).

5.3.3 Axiomatically, respondents who are satisfied with the way Somer CHT deals with repairs and maintenance tend to be significantly more satisfied with value for money than those who are dissatisfied with repairs and maintenance (57% and 14% respectively).

5.4 Local neighbourhoods and the communities in which leaseholders live

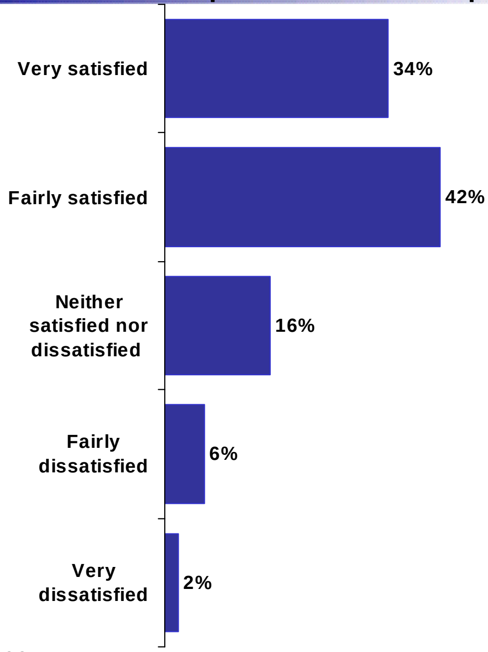
5.4.1 Thinking about the neighbourhood in which they reside, leaseholders were asked about their satisfaction with their neighbourhood and whether, from a list of issues, serious or slight problems were felt to exist.

Satisfaction with the neighbourhoods in which leaseholders live

5.4.2 Three quarters of leaseholders (76%) are satisfied with the area in which they live, including one third (34%) who are very satisfied. Conversely, just 8% are currently dissatisfied.

Figure 15

Overall how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your neighbourhood as a place to live?
(All respondents where provided a valid response)



Sample base: 269

5.4.3 Leaseholders with a disability are more likely to be satisfied with the neighbourhood in which they live in comparison with those without a disability (88% and 75% respectively).

5.4.4 Respondents who are economically inactive are also more likely to be satisfied in comparison with economically active leaseholders (88% and 69% respectively).

5.4.5 Unsurprisingly, leaseholders who are satisfied with their accommodation, the overall service provided by Somer CHT, and repairs are more likely than their direct opposite to indicate that they are satisfied with their neighbourhood.

Issues that impact on local neighbourhoods

5.4.6 Leaseholders were presented with a list of 16 issues and were asked whether they thought each item was not a problem, a slight problem or a serious problem within their neighbourhood.

5.4.7 Overall, the top issues that are causing most problems in leaseholders' neighbourhoods are parking problems (33%); litter and rubbish in the street (23%); cleaning and caretaking of the communal areas (17%); problems with neighbours (13%); and noise from people (12%).

5.4.8 Just 1% of respondents believe that racial harassment is a serious problem.

Table 8

Do you think that each of these is a serious, slight or not a problem in your neighbourhood?
(All leaseholders, where provided a valid response)

		Serious problem	Slight problem	No problem	Sample base
Parking problems	(%)	**33**	30	38	254
Litter and rubbish in the street	(%)	**23**	48	29	258
Cleaning/caretaking of communal areas	(%)	**17**	33	51	245
Problems with neighbours	(%)	**13**	21	66	261
Noise from people	(%)	**12**	34	53	258
Dog excrement	(%)	**11**	37	53	255
Noise from traffic	(%)	**9**	27	65	254
Behaviour of children/young adults	(%)	**8**	27	65	258
Access to adequate recycling facilities	(%)	**8**	22	70	255
Vandalism	(%)	**7**	37	57	261
Dogs	(%)	**7**	25	68	252
Other crime	(%)	**3**	18	79	246
Graffiti	(%)	**3**	29	67	258
Abandoned vehicles	(%)	**4**	13	84	253
Drug use/prostitution	(%)	**2**	18	80	257
People causing damage to your home	(%)	**2**	10	88	256
Racial harassment	(%)	**1**	2	97	253

5.4.9 The table overleaf looks at leaseholders who are currently dissatisfied with their neighbourhood, the aim being to establish whether focusing on any particular issue is likely to change attitudes and, ultimately, levels of satisfaction.

5.4.10 At the outset, it is important to note that the proportion of leaseholders citing any of the issues as a serious (or slight) problem rises considerably when they have expressed some degree of dissatisfaction with their neighbourhood.

5.4.11 Noteworthy, 65% of those dissatisfied with their neighbourhood cited both noise from people and problems with neighbours as serious problems.

5.4.12 It is also important to note the high proportion of leaseholders dissatisfied with their neighbourhood (55%) who cite litter and rubbish in the street as a serious problem.

5.4.13 Another interesting point to consider is that the behaviour of children and young people is considered to be a serious problem by a high proportion of leaseholders dissatisfied with their neighbourhood (47%).

Table 9

Top three issues for those who are dissatisfied with their neighbourhood			
Dissatisfied with neighbourhood	Noise from people and problems with neighbours (both 65%)	Litter and rubbish in the street (55%)	Behaviour of children/young adults (47%)

5.5 Satisfaction with cleanliness

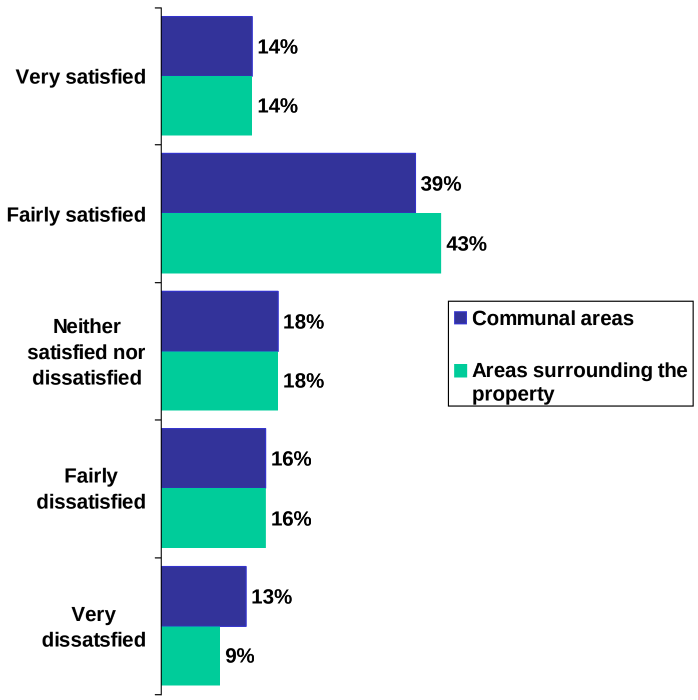
5.5.1 Respondents were asked how satisfied or dissatisfied they are with the cleanliness of firstly, the communal areas and secondly, areas surrounding the property.

5.5.2 The majority (53%) of leaseholders are satisfied with the level of cleanliness of the communal areas, whereas three in ten (29%) are dissatisfied. Around a fifth (18%) are indifferent.

5.5.3 A slightly higher proportion (57%) are satisfied with the cleanliness of the areas surrounding the property and a quarter (25%) are dissatisfied. Around a fifth (18%) are ambivalent.

Figure 16

How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the level of cleanliness in each of the following?
(All respondents, where provided a valid response)



Sample base: Communal areas:244; Area surrounding property:262

5.5.4 Unsurprisingly, respondents who consider the value for money of their service charge to be good are more likely to be satisfied with the cleanliness of communal areas than those who consider value for money to be poor (76% and 33% respectively).

5.5.5 Satisfaction with the areas surrounding the property follows a similar pattern, with a higher proportion who think the value for money is good satisfied in comparison with those who think value for money is poor (75% and 37% respectively).

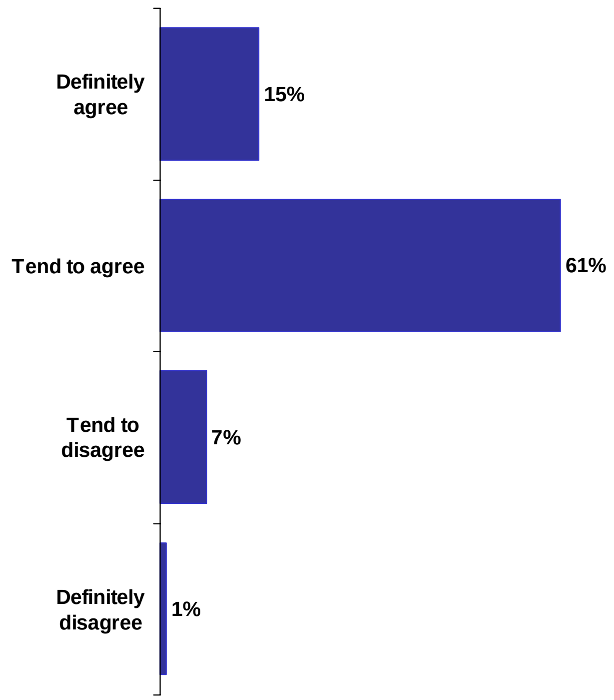
5.6 Community Cohesion

5.6.1 Respondents were asked how far they agree or disagree that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together.

5.6.2 The majority (76%) agree that people from different backgrounds get on well in their area, with just one in ten (8%) who disagree.

Figure 17

To what extent do you agree or disagree that your local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together?
(All respondents, where provided a valid response)



Sample base: 203

5.6.3 Respondents who are satisfied with their neighbourhood are more likely to agree that people from different backgrounds get on well in comparison with those who are dissatisfied with their neighbourhood (76% and 50% respectively).

6 Repairs and maintenance

6.1 Introduction

6.1.1 This section will look at the repairs service provided by Somer CHT, focusing on satisfaction not only with the service overall, but also various aspects of the service.

6.2 Reporting a repair

6.2.1 Two fifths (41%) have requested repairs to communal areas in the last 12 months, whereas 59% have not.

6.2.2 Leaseholders who are dissatisfied with the overall service provided are more likely to have requested repairs to communal areas over the last 12 months.

6.2.3 For those who are dissatisfied with repairs and maintenance to communal areas, leaseholders are more likely to have reported repairs than those satisfied (68% and 40% respectively).

6.3 Overall satisfaction with repairs and maintenance

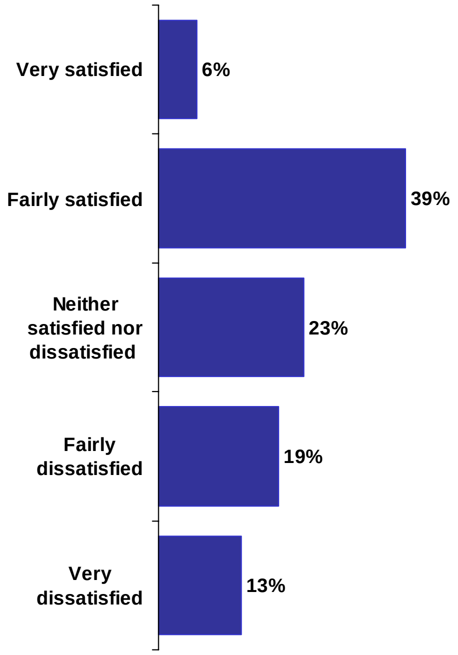
6.3.1 Leaseholders were asked how satisfied or dissatisfied they are with the way their landlord deals with repairs and maintenance.

6.3.2 Over two fifths (45%) indicated they are satisfied with the way Somer CHT deals with repairs and maintenance to communal areas.

6.3.3 Conversely, just under a third of leaseholders (32%) are dissatisfied with the repairs and maintenance to communal areas, whilst the proportion of ambivalent respondents was 23%.

Figure 18

Overall how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way Somer CHT deals with repairs and maintenance in communal areas?
(All respondents where provided a valid response)



Sample base: 231

6.3.4 Leaseholders who are satisfied with the overall service are significantly more likely to be satisfied with the repairs and maintenance services (68% compared with 17% dissatisfied with overall service).

7 Communicating with Somer CHT

7.1 Introduction

7.1.1 This section looks at leaseholders' perceptions of how well they feel they are kept informed by Somer CHT about things that may affect them, how much account is taken of their views when decisions are made, and the opportunities for participation in management and decision-making. Overall, we are aiming to understand the level at which leaseholders would like to be involved in improvements to services.

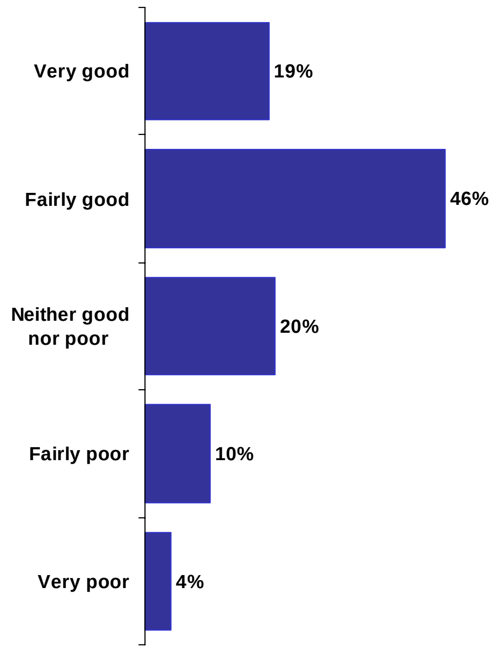
7.2 Keeping leaseholders informed

7.2.1 Leaseholders were asked how good or poor they feel Somer CHT is at keeping them informed about things that might affect them.

7.2.2 The majority of leaseholders (66%) feel Somer CHT is good at keeping them informed about things that might affect them. In contrast, just 15% feel Somer CHT is poor at keeping them informed about things that might affect them, while 20% remain indifferent.

Figure 19

Generally, how good or poor do you feel your Somer CHT is at keeping you informed about things that might affect you as a leaseholder?
(All respondents where provided a valid response)



Sample base: 273

7.2.3 Interestingly, economically inactive respondents are significantly more likely than economically active respondents to say that Somer CHT is good (very/fairly) at keeping them informed (75% and 62% respectively).

7.2.4 Unsurprisingly, respondents who are satisfied with the overall service provided by Somer are more likely to state that Somer CHT is good at keeping them informed in comparison with those who are dissatisfied (88% and 31% respectively).

7.2.5 Respondents who are satisfied with the opportunities for participation in management and decision-making are more likely to say that they are kept well informed in comparison with dissatisfied leaseholders (82% and 32% respectively).

7.3 Taking into account leaseholders' views

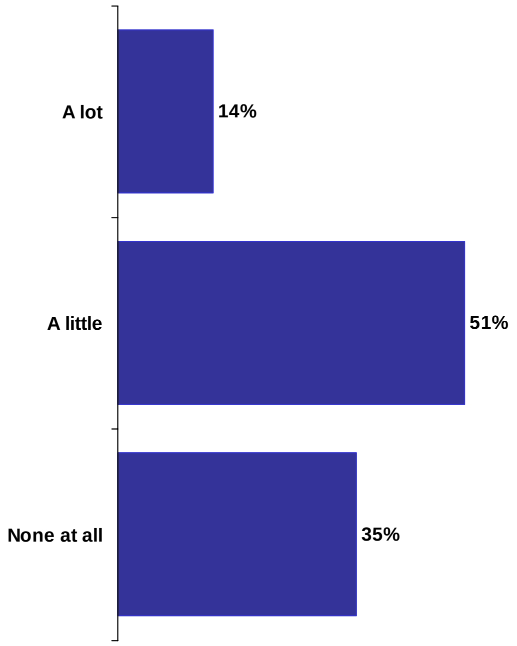
7.3.1 Leaseholders were asked how much account they feel Somer CHT takes of their views when it makes decisions.

7.3.2 Two thirds (65%) believe that Somer CHT, to some extent, takes into account their views when making decisions, with 14% citing that the Trust takes their views into account a lot.

7.3.3 Conversely, over a third (35%) believes that Somer CHT does not take into account their views when making decisions.

Figure 20

How much account do you feel Somer CHT takes of leaseholders' views when making decisions?
(All respondents where provided a valid response)



Sample base: 208

7.3.4 Unsurprisingly, leaseholders who are most likely to say that Somer CHT does not take any of their views into account are those who are dissatisfied with repairs and maintenance, and believe that the rent they pay represents poor value for money.

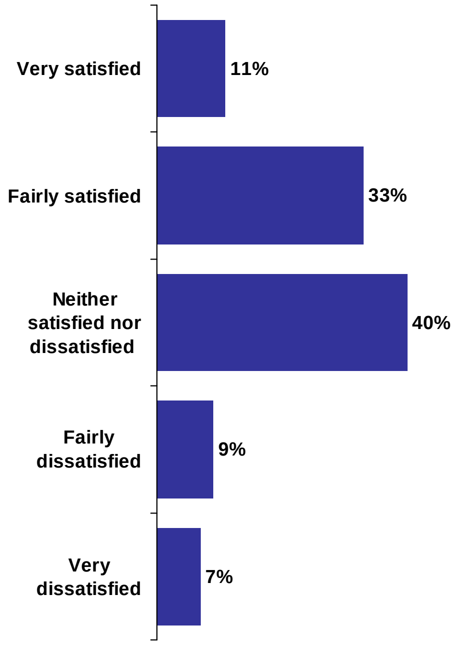
7.4 Opportunities for participation in management and decision-making

7.4.1 Leaseholders were then asked how satisfied they are with the opportunities for participation in management and decision-making.

7.4.2 Over two fifths (44%) of leaseholders who provided a valid response are satisfied with the opportunities for participation in management and decision-making. Conversely, only 16% are dissatisfied, and two fifths (40%) are ambivalent.

Figure 21

How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the opportunities for participation in management and decision-making?
(All respondents where provided a valid response)



Sample base: 216

7.4.3 There is a slight difference in satisfaction levels between BME and non-BME leaseholders (56% and 43% respectively), although the base size for BME is too small to analyse confidently.

7.4.4 Respondents satisfied with the overall service are more likely to be satisfied with the opportunities for participation in management and decision-making in comparison with those dissatisfied with the overall service (60% and 18% respectively).

7.5 Preferences for being kept informed

7.5.1 Leaseholders were then asked how they would like to be informed by Somer about any particular issues to do with their housing. Respondents were given a list of options and the opportunity to provide their own.

7.5.2 The majority (58%) of respondents would like to be informed of any issues in a personal letter. Around a quarter (24%) would like to be informed in a newsletter and 15% prefer email. Just 3% would like to be kept informed via the telephone.

Table 10

How would you want Somer to keep you informed of any issues? (All respondents, where provided a valid response)

	%
Individual letters	58
Email	15
Newsletter	24
Phone	3
Other	*
Sample base	248

* denotes <0.5%

7.5.3 Further to this, leaseholders were asked if they had a Somer Leasehold Handbook or any leaflets that help them understand their rights and responsibilities and those of Somer.

7.5.4 The majority (61%) do have some sort of literature that relates to their rights and responsibilities and those of Somer, whereas 39% do not.

7.5.5 Of those who responded in the negative to the previous question, the question of whether or not they would like a handbook was posed. Unsurprisingly, the vast majority (91%) agreed that they would like a handbook and just 9% said that they would not.

7.6 Resident Leaseholder Forums

7.6.1 All leaseholders were asked if they had attended any of the recent Resident Leaseholder Forum meetings.

7.6.2 Approaching nine in ten (87%) of leaseholders have not attended any of the meetings, whereas 13% have.

7.6.3 Interestingly, the proportion of respondents who have attended the meetings increases dramatically for the over 75s (25% have attended); and also those with a disability (22% have attended).

7.6.4 Those respondents who indicated that they had not been to any of the recent meetings were asked what would make it easier for them to attend.

7.6.5 The most popular reason was if the meeting was about specific issues relevant to the leaseholder (69%); followed by holding the meetings in the evening (44%).

7.6.6 At lower proportions, three in ten (30%) stated that if the meetings were held at flexible locations it would be easier for them to attend; one quarter (25%) said they would attend if the meetings were about more general issues, and 15% stated they would rather the meetings were held during the day.

7.6.7 One in ten (10%) would attend if the meeting was about producing a leaseholder newsletter.

7.6.8 In relation to the Forums, leaseholders were asked whether or not they would be happy for another leaseholder to represent their views during discussions with Somer.

7.6.9 The majority (68%) stated that yes, they would be happy to have their views represented by another leaseholder, whereas around a third (32%) disagreed that they would be happy about this.

7.6.10 Following this, leaseholders were asked whether or not Somer should do more to encourage the development of the Residents Leaseholders Forum.

7.6.11 Interestingly, over four fifths (82%) of respondents agree that Somer should do more to encourage the Residents Leaseholders Forum, in comparison with 18% who think Somer do not need to do more.

7.6.12 Of those respondents who agreed that Somer should do more, the question was posed about what Somer could do to encourage the Residents Leaseholders Forum (RLF). The most commonly cited response was to hold regular meetings for residents to air their views (41%); followed by more communication by letter/newsletter (28%); and achieving/promoting individual engagement with leaseholders (19%).

7.6.13 At lower levels, respondents stated that Somer should encourage and allow participation from all leaseholders and that they should advertise the leaseholders' forums (both 12%).

8 Overall satisfaction with Somer Community Housing Trust

8.1 Introduction

8.1.1 This section presents overall satisfaction with Somer CHT and looks at some of the drivers of satisfaction.

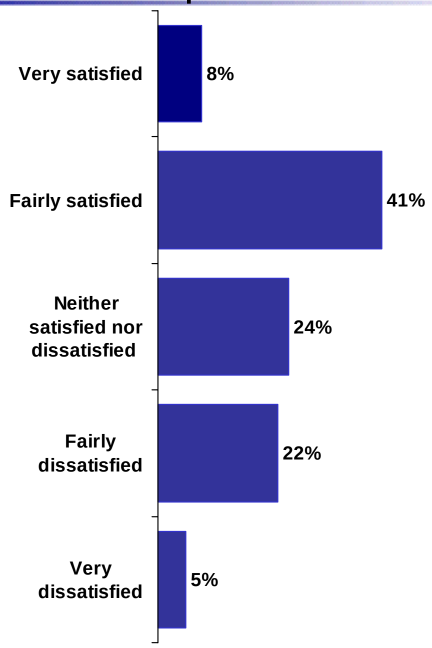
8.2 Overall satisfaction

8.2.1 Leaseholders were asked to take everything into account and state how satisfied or dissatisfied they are with the overall service provided by Somer CHT.

8.2.2 Around half (49%) are satisfied with the overall service provided, including 8% who are very satisfied. Over a quarter (27%) are dissatisfied and a similar proportion (24%) are ambivalent.

Figure 22

Taking everything into account how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the overall service provided by Somer Community Housing Trust?
(All respondents where provided a valid response)



Sample base: 268

8.2.3 Interestingly, respondents with a disability are significantly more likely to be satisfied in comparison with those without a disability (57% and 46% respectively).

8.2.4 Economically inactive respondents are also more likely to be satisfied with the overall service provided by Somer CHT in comparison with economically active respondents (61% and 44% respectively).

8.2.5 Looking at this by ethnicity, BME and non-BME leaseholders appear to have similar views on satisfaction (50% and 49% respectively), although caution must be exercised in this case, as the base size for BME is too small to provide robust results.

8.2.6 Overall satisfaction appears to be linked with satisfaction with repairs and maintenance, as respondents satisfied with repairs and maintenance are significantly more satisfied with the overall service provided (75% satisfied with overall service in comparison with those dissatisfied with repairs and maintenance – just 15% satisfied with the overall service provided).

8.2.7 Unsurprisingly, leaseholders who indicated that they are satisfied with their neighbourhood and believe that their rent represents good value for money are more satisfied with the overall service provided by Somer CHT than those who are dissatisfied or think that the value for money is poor.

9 Improving services

9.1 Introduction

9.1.1 This section presents the views of respondents regarding the services provided by Somer CHT. Included in this section are strategic messages examining the relationship between which services are most important, and which services are most in need of improvement.

9.2 Important Services

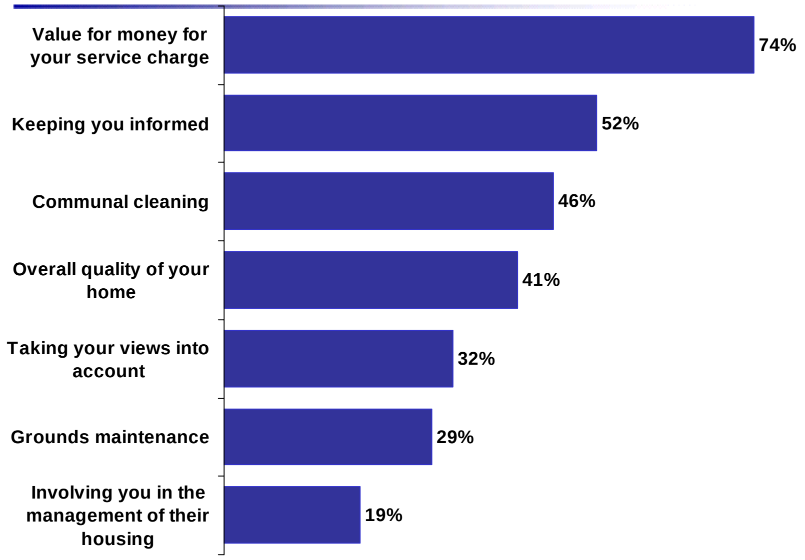
9.2.1 Leaseholders were asked to identify, from a list of 6 options, which services they felt were the most important Somer CHT provides.

9.2.2 The largest proportion of respondents cited value for money for their service charge as the most important service provided by Somer CHT (74%). Around half (52%) of respondents stated that keeping them informed was most important, followed by 46% who cited communal cleaning as the most important service.

9.2.3 Around two fifths (41%) stated that the overall quality of the home was most important and one in three (32%) chose having their views taken into account.

Figure 23

Of the following services, which do you consider to be the three most important? (All leaseholders, valid response)



Sample base: 263
Multi response

9.3 Services most in need of improving

9.3.1 Leaseholders were then asked whether these services need some or much improvement.

9.3.2 The highest proportion of leaseholders stated that the value for money for their service charge is the service most in need of improvement (83%; also identified as the most important service). This is followed by taking the views of leaseholders into account, as 81% said that this needs some (54%) or much (27%) improvement. The third service cited as being most in need of improvement is ground maintenance (78% think this needs improving).

Table 11

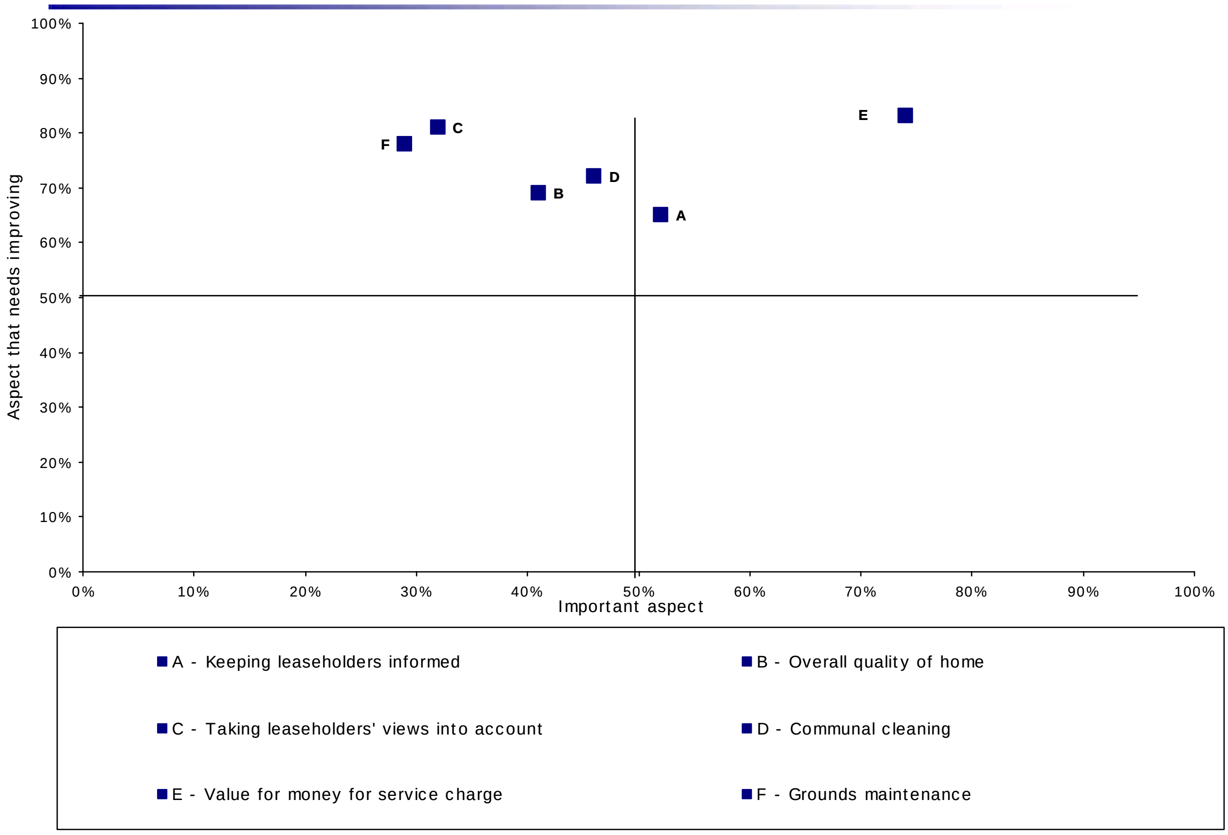
How much do you think each of the following services needs improving: (All leaseholders, where provided a valid response)						
		Need improving overall 2007	**Much IMPRV[1] needed 2007**	**Some IMPRV needed 2007**	**No IMPRV needed 2007**	**Sample base**
Value for money for your service charge	(%)	**83**	38	45	16	222
Taking leaseholders' views into account	(%)	**81**	27	54	18	211
Ground maintenance	(%)	**78**	27	51	22	196
Cleaning of communal areas	(%)	**72**	28	44	27	205
Overall quality of your home	(%)	**69**	11	58	31	209
Keeping leaseholders informed	(%)	**65**	18	47	36	236
Dealing with neighbourhood issues	(%)	**63**	21	42	37	177

[1] IMPRV means improvement

9.4 Priorities for improvement

9.4.1 The priorities for improvement reside in the top right-hand quarter of this graph. As the figure shows, the top priorities for improvement are keeping leaseholders informed and the value for money for their service charge.

Figure 24



10 Sample Profile

10.1 Introduction

10.1.1 The following tables present the key demographics in terms of composition of household, gender, age, ethnicity, disability, and employment status.

10.2 Household information

Table 12

Time with Somer CHT(%)			
Under 1 year	10	6+ years	47
1 – 2 years	14	Can't recall	2
3 – 5 years	23	Not provided	4
Do you live in or rent out your property? (%)			
Live in	82	Rent out	13
Not provided	5		
Household Composition (%)			
One adult under 60	52	One parent family with children	4
One adult aged 60 or over	43	Other/Not provided	1
Ethnicity (%)			
White	90	Asian	*
Mixed	1	Chinese/Other	*
Black	1	Not provided	7
Disability in Household (%)			
Yes	18	No	74
Not provided	8		
Limiting disability in Household (%)			
Yes	72	No	24
Not provided	4		
Wheelchair usage (%)			
Yes	14	No	80
Not provided	6		

10.3 Background information

Table 13

Status (%)			
Leaseholder	85	Shared owner	11
Other household member	*	Not provided	4
Age of respondent (%)			
16-24	3	65 – 74	9
25-44	34	75+	18
45 - 64	30	Not provided	7
Gender (%)			
Male	33	Female	55
Not provided	12		
Employment status (%)			
Full time paid employment	44	Long term health problems	1
Part time paid employment	5	Retired	29
Self employed	9	Looking after home and family	*
Out of work	0	Other	1
Full time education & Government training programme	3	Not provided	8
Streams of income (%)			
Earning from employment or self employment	69	Pension from former employer	22
Child benefits	7	Job Seeker's allowance	*
Income support	2	Other regular allowance from outside the household	3
Disability living allowance/ attendance allowance	7	Interest from savings	18
State pension	31	Other state benefits	2
Working family tax credit	2	Child tax credit	4
Pension tax credit	3	Other sources	6

Income (%)			
Less than £3,120	1	£10,400 - £15,599	14
£3,120 - £5,199	2	£15,600 - £20,799	11
£5,200 - £8,319	7	£20,800 - £25,999	11
£8,320 - £10,399	5	£26,000 or more	26
Not provided	23		
Household receiving benefits (%)			
Yes	37	No	51
Not provided	12		
Bank/building society (%)			
Yes	90	No	*
Nor provided	10		
Insurance cover (%)			
Yes	88	No	5
Not provided	6		