

Department of Regeneration Housing

Report of Customer Satisfaction April 2009 to March 2010

1. Introduction

This report outlines feedback on the performance/perceived performance of the Housing Service (for the services formally known as Private Sector Housing) for the financial year 2009/2010. The results have been collated from postal customer satisfaction surveys carried out for many of the frontline services namely; enforcement (Housing Standards & empty homes work) including Landlord feedback, Adaptations, Assistance with Health and Safety, Housing for Health and the Facelift Scheme.

2. Method

All service users (including those landlords with whom we directly enforce housing standards in their properties) are sent a customer satisfaction survey form after their enquiry has been closed or the works have been completed. For this period 1,985 were sent out. Each month the responses are inputted and linked to the customers APP database information.

Any particularly adverse comments are investigated individually. In these circumstances, following receipt of the form it is copied and passed to the relevant manager to action. Feedback is provided to the enquirer directly if requested or necessary. Where a specific comment, which relates to the case or an officer, is such that a formal complaint needs to be made, this is logged and investigated through the appropriate procedure. It is possible to exclude adverse responses which clearly do not relate to any of the services provided by Housing from the analysis at the manager's request, however no such exclusions were made for this period.

3. Analysis for 2009/10

3.1. Adaptations (121 responses – 40% response rate)

The overwhelming majority (over 90%) of clients told us that they were satisfied (most being very satisfied) with;

- how well we explained the process and likely timescale for obtaining an Adaptation and the Disabled Facilities Grant;
- how good the officers were at visiting when they said they would;
- how useful the information pack was;

- how clear the letters and forms that we sent to the client were;
- how easy it was for clients to return forms etc. within the time limits given.

This year, only 16% of clients were dissatisfied with how long it took overall to complete the works as demonstrated by **chart 1**

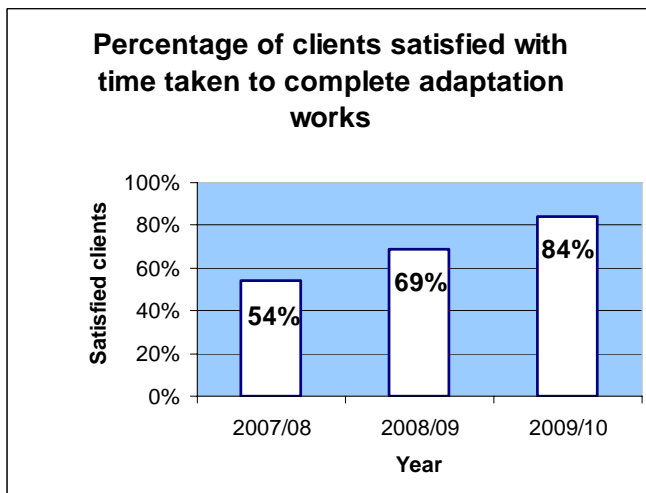
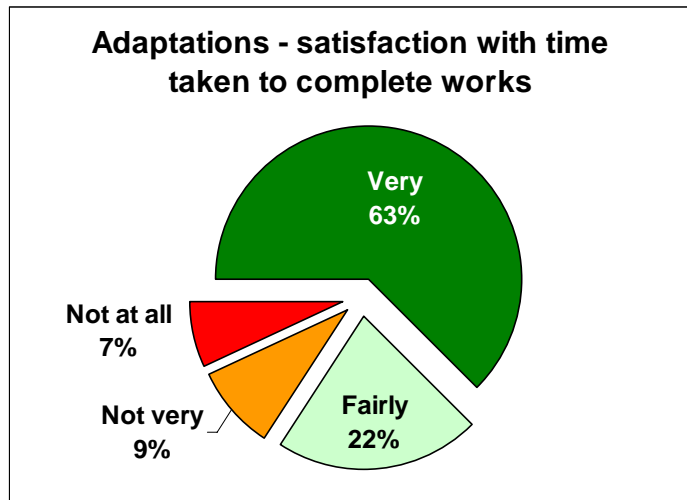


Chart 2 shows how the changes made to speed up the process over the past three years have created an improved satisfaction with the time taken to complete an adaptation.

The total process time (how long it takes to acquire an adaptation from enquiry stage to final completion) does still remain the one element of the process which is the most difficult to show quick results with regard to the sustained improvements being achieved through Process Improvement. However, only 16% of clients were dissatisfied with how long it took to complete their adaptation this year compared to 31% in 2008/9, which conclusively demonstrates the positive impact of the process changes introduced in the latter part of 2007. A current enhancement of the initial project is ongoing specifically targeted to the Adaptation Agency. The changes are due to be piloted late August and it is anticipated that further benefits will result.

A significant majority of clients (83%) were satisfied with how well we kept them informed about the progress of their enquiry, however this has seen a drop since Q4 2008/9 from almost all clients being satisfied. This is perhaps

an unfair true comparison due to being based on fewer results. It may be prudent to revisit this element of the process within the CPI framework.

Nearly all clients told us that they were satisfied (most being very satisfied) with;

- how suitable the finished works are for their needs;
- how beneficial the work has been to their quality of life.

92% of clients were satisfied with our service overall.

Almost three quarters (71%) of clients who responded used the Agency Service to engage a contractor and oversee the work.

Of these, 90% were satisfied with how well the Agency Service managed the project to complete the works and how beneficial the Agency Service was to them.

86% would recommend the Agency Service to a friend/relative if they needed an adaptation.

The Contractor

Just over 90% of clients were satisfied with;

- the attitude of the contractor's staff;
- how good the contractor's staff were at visiting when they said they would;
- how long it took them to complete the work
- consideration towards their home and possessions;
- the quality of their workmanship.

This is a slight improvement on the response for last year.

Overall, 93% were satisfied with the contractor.

3.2. Enforcement (Housing Standards and empty homes/insecure properties)
(93 responses – 7% response rate)

The advice / information initially provided to the customer by the enforcement teams was satisfactory for almost 9 out of 10 people responding (89%). Over 80% thought that we fully explained how their enquiry would be dealt with, provided clear correspondence and were satisfied with the response time for their initial enquiry.

Three quarters (74%) confirmed that they were given contact details for the person that was dealing with their enquiry.

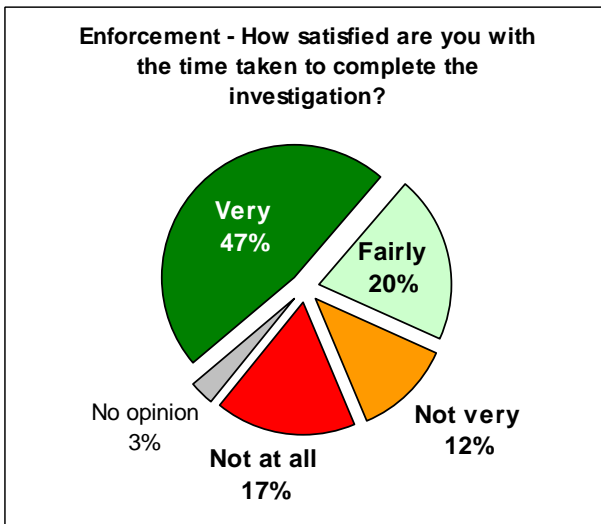


Chart 3 shows satisfaction with how long it took overall to complete the investigation. Two thirds (67%) were satisfied with this duration.

Chart 4 shows 70% were satisfied with the outcome of the investigation.

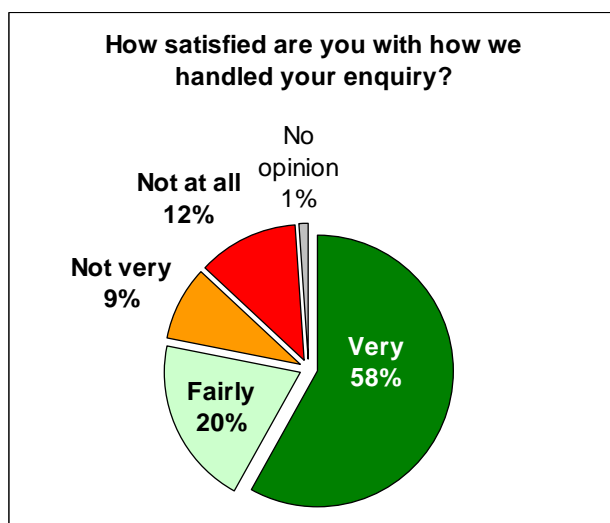
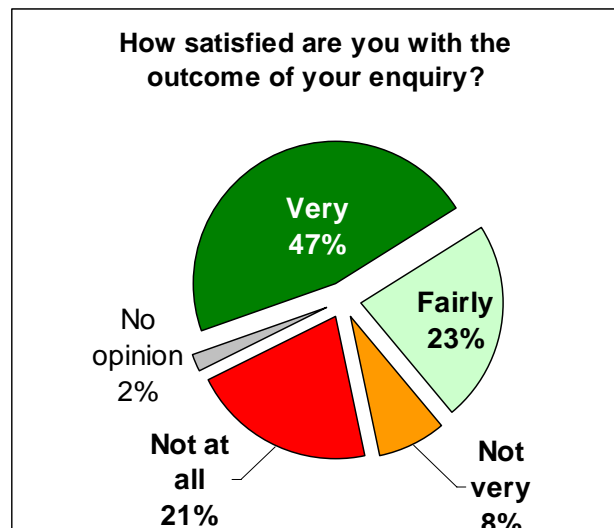


Chart 5 shows 78% were satisfied with how we handled their enquiry.

Empty Homes

Of the total number of surveys received for enforcement, 13 (14%), related to long term empty homes and insecure properties.

All 13 (**100%**) were satisfied with;

- The advice / information initially provided to the customer;
- The response time for their initial enquiry;
- How we explained how their enquiry would be dealt with;
- Clarity of the correspondence;
- How long it took overall to complete the investigation

Over three quarters (77%) confirmed that they were given contact details for the person that was dealing with their enquiry.

- 75% were satisfied with the outcome of their enquiry (25% were not at all satisfied);
- 93% were satisfied with how we handled their enquiry, (85% being very satisfied)

3.3. Landlord Satisfaction (16 responses – 11% response rate)

In order to enhance the range and quality of information that the service receives about the functions that it performs, all landlords that were recipients of enforcement action taken by Housing standards were also sent a customer satisfaction survey (this is also a National Indicator).

Approximately 80% thought that their business was treated fairly and that the contact was helpful.

Two thirds indicated that the visits / meetings helped them to better understand their responsibilities. All commented that the officer arrived for the inspections / visits on time, identified themselves when they arrived and were polite and professional.

86% were satisfied with how the officer pointed out any problems / defects and explained the way to rectify any problems / defects found.

79% responded that they were satisfied with how reasonable and in proportion to the risk / problem, the work requested by the officer was and the timescales given to complete the work.

The officer's explanation of what would happen after the visit (e.g. no further action, letter, Notice) and how any letter or notice sent matched what the officer had discussed at the time of the inspection / visit was good in all cases.

The letter or notice sent was clear and informative and it was made clear (verbally or in writing) which improvements were legal requirements and which were recommendations for over 80%.

The type of action taken was appropriate in relation to the risks / problems found for 77%.

Overall satisfaction with the way we dealt with the case (irrespective of resulting action) was 79%

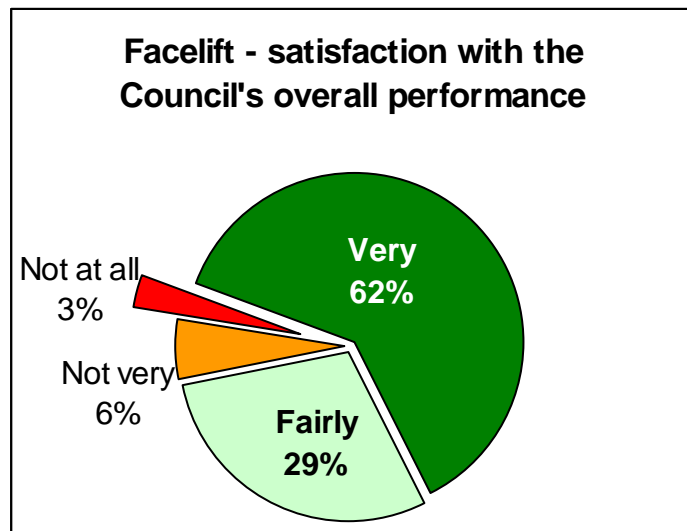
3.4. Facelift (38 responses - 30% response rate)

With one exception, all found that the information pack given to all residents directly involved in the Facelift scheme useful, clear and easy to understand. Only one quarter of those responding attended a residents meeting, however, almost all were satisfied with the meeting venue and the arrangements. It must be noted that the low meeting attendance is predominantly due to schemes operating within the Girdlington area not having a residents meeting due to prior work and the high level of existing knowledge within this area.

92% thought that the list of works to be carried out was explained well, whilst over 80% judged that they were satisfied with;

- how well we explained how long everything would take;
- How well we explained the conditions of the contract;
- How useful the 'Important Notes for Residents' leaflet was;
- How well we kept the client informed about the scheme's progress;
- How well we dealt with any issues the client may have raised;

Chart 6 shows 91% were satisfied with the Council's overall performance.



The Contractor

Again, in general, over 80% of clients were satisfied with the elements of the work which included the contractor, although only two thirds were happy with the professionalism of the contractor's staff. 94% considered that the quality of the workmanship was good and 92% were satisfied with the contractor overall.

During the works, accidental damage was caused to 41% of the properties from which a survey was completed but this damage was resolved to the owner's satisfaction for two thirds (64%) of those.

3.5. Assistance with Health and Safety (4 responses / 22 cases – 18%) and Housing for Health (2 responses / 15 cases – 13%)

All responses showed satisfaction with all aspects of the services provided.

4. Year on year comparative analysis

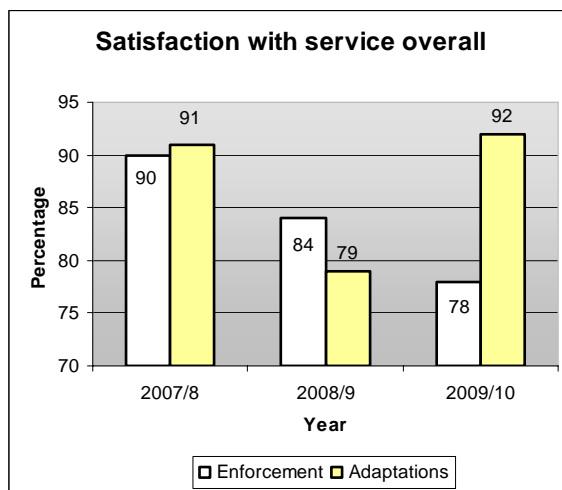


Chart 7 demonstrates the changes over time for the customer's overall satisfaction with the service received.

Adaptations have shown an improvement on last years results and a return to excellent customer satisfaction, whilst satisfaction for the enforcement areas of the service has gradually reduced over time.

No Facelift work was undertaken in 2008/9, therefore there is no comparative data available.

5. Suggestions/comments made by respondents.

5.1. Adaptations

38% (46) of those who returned a completed survey also added individual comments. Exactly half were extremely positive expressing genuine appreciation of the staff, both of the Council and contractor and gratitude for the work completed.

Other clients however were concerned and complained about the quality of workmanship, and many found the time taken to deliver the adaptation excessive. Only two made mention of any concern linked directly to the process, one related to not being kept sufficiently informed and the other highlighted that in their opinion "the goalposts kept being changed".

Those surveys which contained adverse comments have been investigated by the Adaptations Manager to ensure that any failures have been addressed.

5.2. Enforcement

57% (53) of those who returned a completed survey also added individual comments.

Many comments were positive and genuinely appreciative of the assistance received and specifically mentioned excellent, efficient service and being kept well informed throughout the investigation. A number did however indicate that they were unaware that the case had been closed and signed off or resolved. Some of these originated from complaints made to Environmental Health and may be subject to some degree of blurring of responsibilities between Services.

5.3. Assistance with Health & Safety

One client found that their research into what assistance was available was a long stop/start process. This client commented that she was required to find the title for "Assistance with Health & Safety" before they were able to get anywhere.

5.4. Facelift

55% (21) of those who returned a completed survey also added individual comments.

Half were totally appreciative and pleased with both the Council and the contractors and satisfied with how, and the speed with which, problems were rectified. Other comments related to the poor quality of workmanship, duration of the works and outstanding issues which had not been resolved. One customer was unhappy with the height of boundary walls being too low and encouraging burglaries in the area. Another raised inadequate communication as an issue.

6. Conclusion

In general, Housing still continues to provide a good degree of satisfaction for its users and, for the assistance based services, this is more strongly demonstrated. There are still issues with regard to timescales within Adaptations, although this is becoming much less of an issue for most since the CPI improvements have now worked through the system and the majority of clients have benefited from beginning and finishing their journey under the new, more streamlined process. The change to the recipient's quality of life after the works have been completed is still dramatic for virtually all respondents. Overall, satisfaction has improved significantly.

It was again particularly disappointing to discover the very low response rate for Assistance with Health and Safety and Housing for Health this year.

This year's response from customers of Housing Standards in particular, showed another slight decrease in satisfaction with the service overall and therefore some intervention is required to address this steady decline over the last few years. In contrast, many responses from landlords were good and go some way to demonstrate that the procedure carried out by officers, in the main, is working well for those landlords who responded. The low response from landlords is unlikely to provide a true reflection of performance and therefore the analysis should be read with caution.

It must be borne in mind that responses are generally incentivised due to perceived good or poor service/contact with the organisation as a whole and do not always represent an accurate snapshot of the experience of all.

Whilst compiling this report it became obvious that there have been small procedural failures within administration teams throughout the period, namely;

- Five Facelift returns had the APP number omitted and therefore they were unable to be entered up. These responses had to be calculated manually,
- Four Enforcement returns had not been entered onto APP,
- One Housing for Health return had been entered as Health & Safety Assistance.

Appendix 1 - Data

ADAPTATIONS	Very	Fairly	Not very	Not at all	No opinion / NA
How well did we explain the process and likely timescale for obtaining an Adaptation and the Disabled Facilities Grant?	64%	28%	8%		
How good were the officers at visiting when they said they would?	83%	14%	3%		
How useful was the information pack you received?	61%	35%	3%	1%	
How clear were the letters and forms that we sent to you?	67%	26%	6%	2%	
How easy was it for you to return forms etc. within the time limits we gave you?	71%	24%	2%	2%	1%
How well did we keep you informed about the progress of your enquiry?	58%	25%	14%	3%	
How satisfied are you with how long it took overall to complete the works?	63%	22%	9%	7%	
How suitable are the finished works for your needs?	85%	9%	4%	2%	
How beneficial has the work been to your quality of your life?	90%	7%	2%	1%	
How satisfied are you with our service overall?	78%	14%	5%	3%	
71% used the Agency Service to engage a contractor and oversee the work					
How well did the Agency Service manage the project to complete the works?	72%	19%	10%		
How beneficial was the Agency Service to you?	76%	15%	6%	3%	
How likely would you be to recommend the Agency Service to a friend/relative if they needed an adaptation?	72%	14%	8%	6%	
How satisfied are you with the attitude of the contractor's staff?	84%	11%	4%	1%	
How good were the contractor's staff at visiting when they said they would?	80%	14%	3%	2%	1%
How considerate were they towards your home and possessions?	88%	4%	5%	3%	
How good was the quality of their workmanship?	81%	11%	1%	5%	1%
How satisfied are you with how long it took them to complete the work?	72%	19%	6%	3%	
How satisfied are you with the contractor overall?	83%	10%	2%	5%	

OPERATIONS	Very	Fairly	Not very	Not at all	No opinion / NA
The advice / information we initially provided.	58%	31%	9%	1%	1%
How long it took for us to respond to your initial enquiry.	57%	25%	9%	9%	%
How well we explained how your enquiry would be dealt with.	64%	21%	5%	9%	1%
74% were given contact details for the person that was dealing with their enquiry					
How clear was the correspondence / information you received?	51%	31%	6%	5%	7%
How satisfied are you with how long it took overall to complete the investigation?	45%	22%	13%	16%	4%
How satisfied are you with the OUTCOME of your enquiry?	46%	22%	9%	21%	2%
How satisfied are you with HOW WE HANDLED your enquiry? (NOT how satisfied you were with the outcome.)	56%	22%	10%	11%	1%

Landlord's Survey	Strongly Agree%	Agree %	Neither agree nor disagree%	Disagree%	Disagree Strongly%	Not Applicable %
My business was treated fairly	14	57	7	7	14	0
The contact was helpful	25	50	6	13	6	0
The visits / meetings helped me to better understand my responsibilities	13	40	13	13	7	13
The officer arrived for the inspections / visits on time	36	29	0	0	0	36
The officer identified themselves when they arrived	27	40	0	0	0	33
How polite the officer was						
	Very Satisfied %	Quite Satisfied %	Neither satisfied/ dissatisfied %	Fairly Dissatisfied %	Very Dissatisfied %	Not Applicable %
How professional the officer was	47	27	0	0	0	27
How the officer pointed out any problems / defects found	33	40	0	0	0	27
How the officer explained the way to rectify any problems / defects found	50	21	0	0	14	14
How reasonable and in proportion to the risk / problem, the work requested by the officer was	43	14	14	0	14	14
The timescales given to complete the work	43	21	0	7	14	14
The officer's explanation of what would happen after the visit (e.g. no further action, letter, Notice)	36	21	0	0	0	43
How clear it was made (verbally or in writing) which improvements were legal requirements and which were recommendations (if appropriate).	33	27	7	0	20	13
How clear and informative any letter or notice sent to you was.	43	36	7	0	14	0
How any letter or notice sent to you matched what the officer had discussed at the time of the inspection / visit	43	36	0	0	0	21
How appropriate in relation to the risks / problems found was the type of action taken, if any.	15	46	8	0	23	8
Your overall satisfaction with the way we dealt with this case (irrespective of resulting action)	43	36	0	0	21	0

FACELIFT SCHEME	Very %	Fairly %	Not very %	Not at all %	No opinion / NA %
How useful was the information pack you received?	50	41	3		6
How clear and easy to understand was the information pack?	59	38			3
24% attended a residents' meeting					
Thinking about the residents' meeting, how satisfied are you with each of the following?					
Where the meeting was held	92			8	
The time the meeting started	91	9			
The information provided at the meeting	84	8		8	
Your satisfaction with the meeting overall	84	8		8	
Thinking about the Council's Officers that dealt with the scheme and your contract,					
How well did they explain the list of works to be carried out?	66	26	8		
How well did they explain how long everything would take?	57	23	14	6	
How well did they explain the conditions of the contract?	59	26	9	6	
How useful was the 'Important Notes for Residents' leaflet?	36	52	9	3	
How well did they keep you informed about the scheme's progress?	43	43	8	6	
How well did they deal with any issues you may have raised?	54	32	11	3	
How satisfied are you with the Council's overall performance?	62	29	6	3	
Thinking about the contractor who carried out the work					
How satisfied were you with the attitude of the contractor's staff?	67	21	9	3	
How professional were the contractor's staff?	44	24	15	14	3
How good were the contractor's staff at visiting when they said they would?	60	29	3	8	
How good were the precautions taken to ensure the safety and well being of yourself and others?	71	14	9	6	
How clean and tidy did they leave things at the end of the day?	57	23	11	9	
How well did they deal with any problems which resulted from the works?	51	29	17	3	
How good was the quality of their workmanship?	62	32	3	3	
How satisfied are you with the contractor overall?	68	24	3	5	
During the works accidental damage was caused to 41 % of properties					
The accidental damage was resolved to the owners satisfaction for 64% of those.					