



# East Devon District Council

## TSM LCRA Tracker Q3 2024/25 Report

Prepared by: Acuity Research & Practice



# Introduction

Three councils in Devon, Exeter City Council, Mid Devon District Council, and East Devon District Council have joined together to form the Devon Consortium, and this has commissioned Acuity to carry out regular satisfaction surveys of the tenants of the three Councils during 2024/25.

This report is based on the findings from the East Devon DC (EDDC) survey with separate reports for Exeter CC and Mid Devon DC. The aim for East Devon is to complete 522 surveys for the year using a mixture of online surveys and telephone interviews on a 20/80 split. As the surveys start in the second quarter of the year, the target is to complete a minimum of 175 per quarter to achieve the desired number at year-end. This report is, therefore, labeled as Q3 24/25, although it is the second for EDDC conducted by Acuity.

The fieldwork began on 18 November for the online survey, and this was followed by the telephone interviews starting on 2 December with the survey eventually closing on 14 December. At the close of the survey, 175 completed surveys were received plus a further eight incomplete surveys which are required to be included by the Regulator. The split of 20/80 was also achieved, with 35 completed online and 140 by telephone interview. As this is the second of the series of surveys for the year, this report now also includes comparisons with the previous quarter.

The survey is confidential, and the results are sent back to EDDC anonymised unless tenants give their permission to be identified – 77% of tenants did give permission to share their responses with their details attached and 90% of these tenants are happy for EDDC to contact them to discuss any information they provided.

This survey aims to provide data on tenants’ satisfaction, which will allow EDDC to:

- Provide information on tenants’ perceptions of current services
- Compare the results against the previous survey of Q2 24/25
- Inform decisions regarding future service development
- Report to the Regulator from April 2024 onwards.

For the overall results, Acuity and the Regulator of Social Housing recommend that landlords with over 2,500 but under 10,000 properties achieve a sampling error of at least  $\pm 4\%$  at the 95% confidence level. For EDDC, 175 completed responses were received this quarter. This response is high enough to conclude that the findings are accurate to within  $\pm 7.25\%$  for the quarter and  $\pm 4.0\%$  annually; therefore, meeting 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 results file to the nearest whole number, and for this reason, may not in all cases add up to 100%. Rounding can also cause percentages described in the supporting text to differ from the percentages in the charts by 1% when two percentages are added together. Base numbers are shown against the charts as n=...

Key TSM Metrics

Overall Satisfaction

Good Repair

Building Safety

Neighbourhood

Engagement

Complaints

Wellbeing

Trends

Summary

Demographics

57%



## Overall Satisfaction

Satisfaction with the overall service has fallen in Q3 compared with the Q2 results and there are now 57% of tenants satisfied.

There have also been changes to the other measures, with most showing increases despite the fall in overall satisfaction.

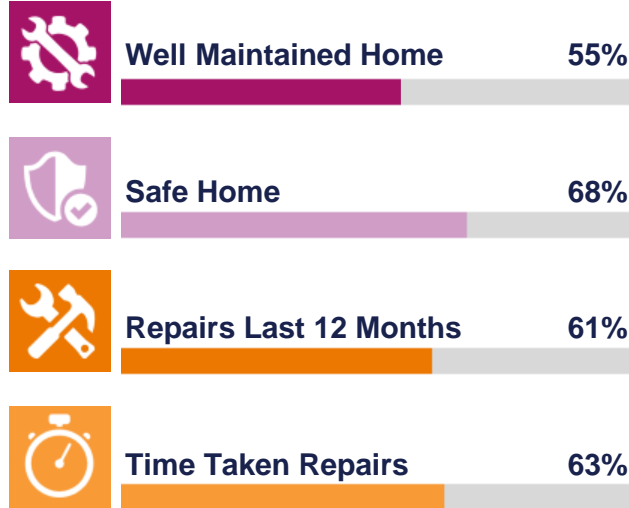
The highest ratings in Q3 are for the provision of a safe home (68%), how the Council treats its tenants fairly and with respect (64%) and the time taken to complete repairs (63%).

However, two measures fall below 50% satisfaction, these being the way the Council listens to tenants' views and acts upon them (44%), and just 21% are satisfied with the handling of complaints.

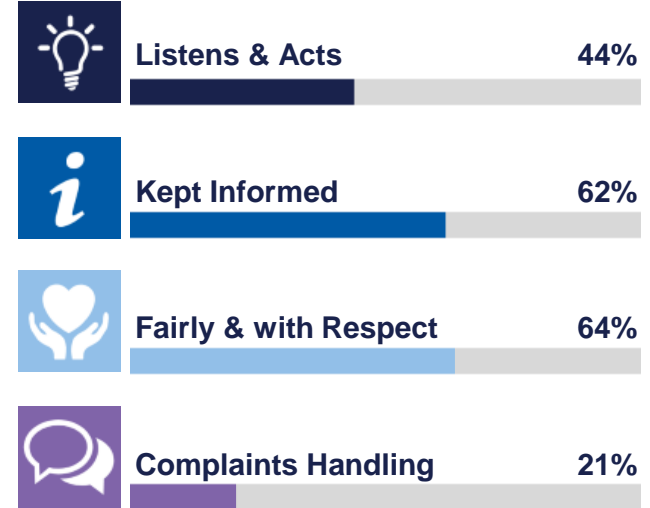
The report focuses on the headline figures but also includes comments from the tenants to help understand the reasons behind the scores and a breakdown of the results by different subgroups.

## TSM Key Metrics

### Keeping Properties in Good Repair



### Respectful & Helpful Engagement



### Responsible Neighbourhood Management





**Overall Satisfaction**



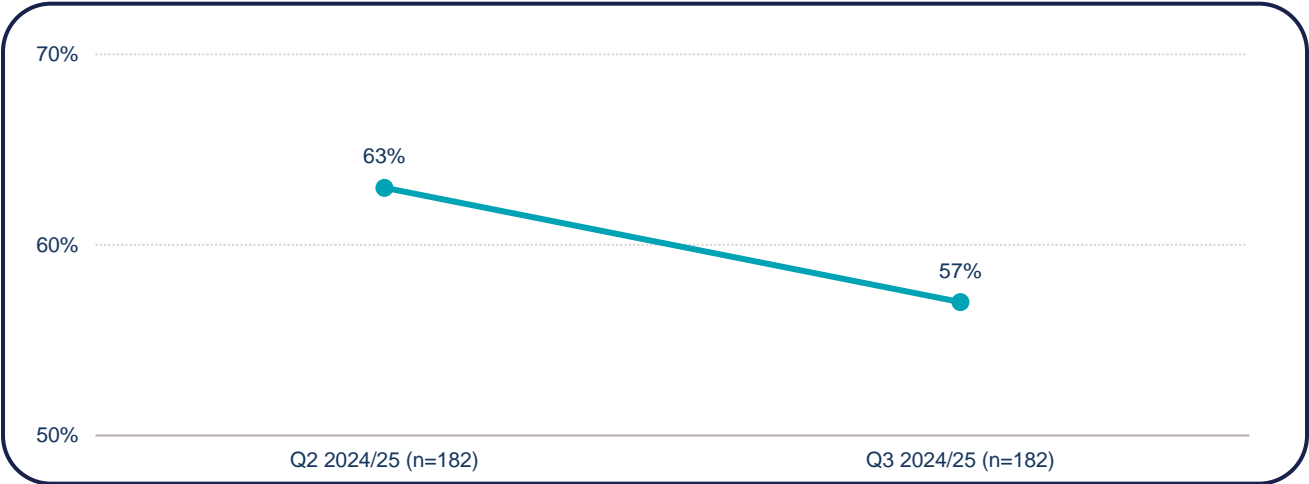
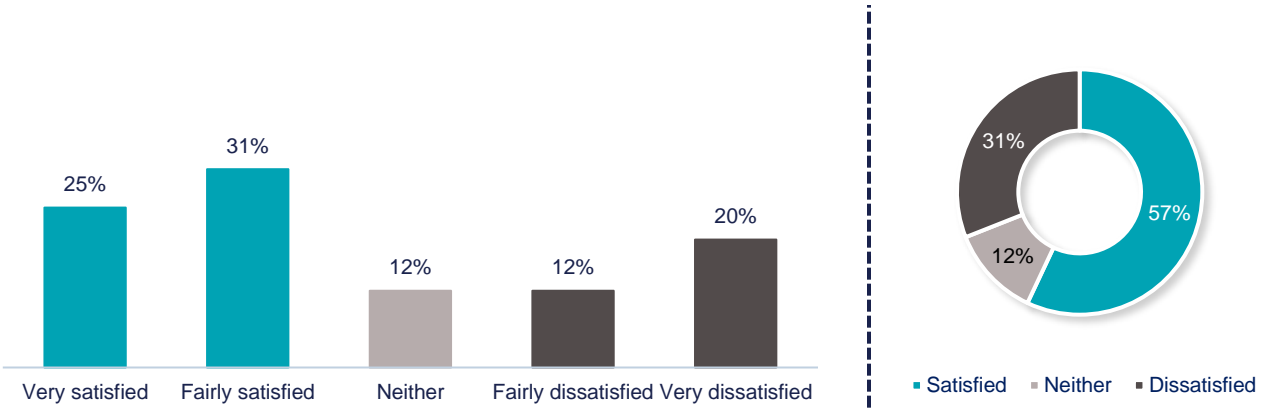
# Overall Satisfaction

Tenants were asked, “Taking everything into account, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the service provided by East Devon District Council?” This is the key metric in any tenant perception survey.

Satisfaction with the overall service has fallen in Q3 compared with Q2 from 63% to 57% and there are still fewer very satisfied (25%) than fairly satisfied (31%).

There are now almost a third of tenants dissatisfied with the overall service (31%), this having increased by 2 percentage points (p.p.) since the previous survey. In addition, there are 12% who are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.

There are often fluctuations in satisfaction within the year so it remains to be seen whether satisfaction levels recover at the end of the year.



# Comments - Very Satisfied



The survey included some follow-up questions to find out more about the reasons for the satisfaction scores given.

This chart shows the responses from those giving a 'very satisfied' response to the overall satisfaction question; 42 tenants left comments from the 175 responding, although this is fewer than in Q2 when 50 provided comments.

The good overall service receives the most praise, with comments such as, *"Been here 25 years. Every issue has been sorted out quickly. I am happy."* However, the repairs service also receives a number of positive comments; *"Well any problems we have had with the property it's sorted out more or less straight away."*

Other positive areas for the tenants include good communication and ease of contact, the positive attitude of the staff and some said they specifically like their home or have been settled for some time.





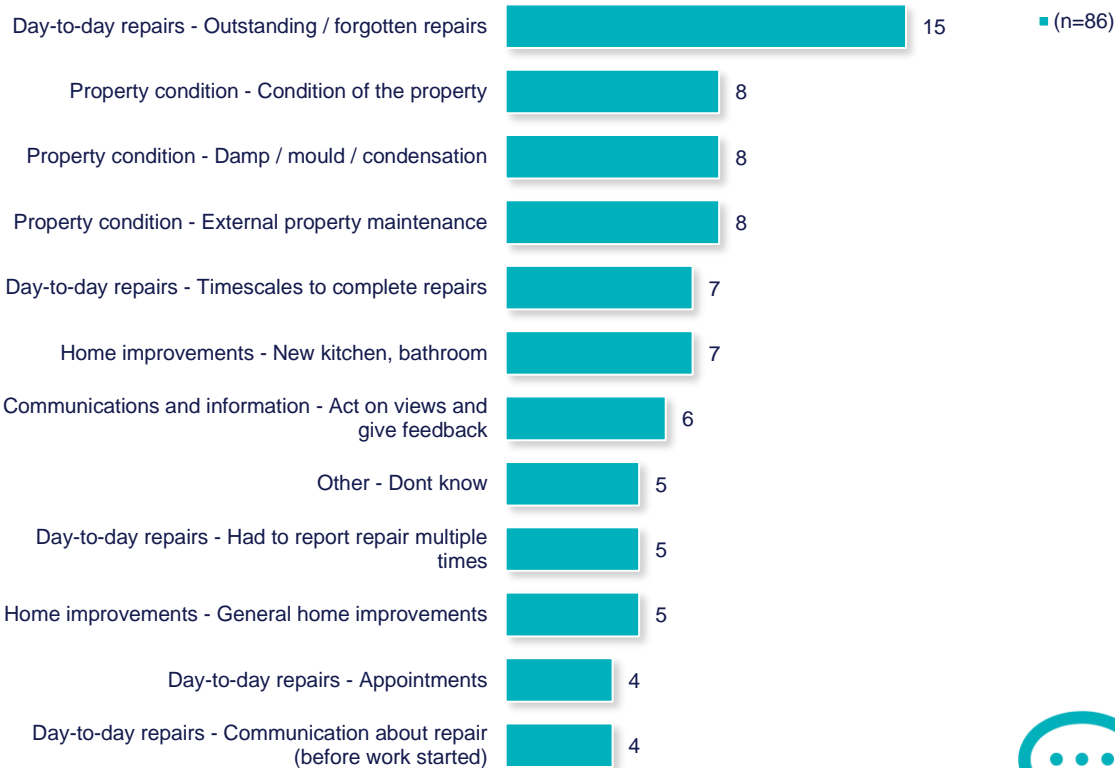
# Comments - Neutral

This chart shows the comments made by those giving a more neutral response, neither very satisfied nor very dissatisfied; 86 tenants left comments, an increase of nine compared to Q2.

Despite the praise given by some for the repairs service, the issue of those repairs which remain outstanding or appear to have been forgotten attracts the most of these comments; *"Basically - make sure that work gets done. There is a lot of work outstanding on our house."*

Some tenants have issues with the condition of their homes including having damp and mould in their homes, as well as some problems with the exterior of their properties; the time to complete repairs is also mentioned.

Some tenants would like to see some improvements to their homes and better appointments and communication about their repairs.





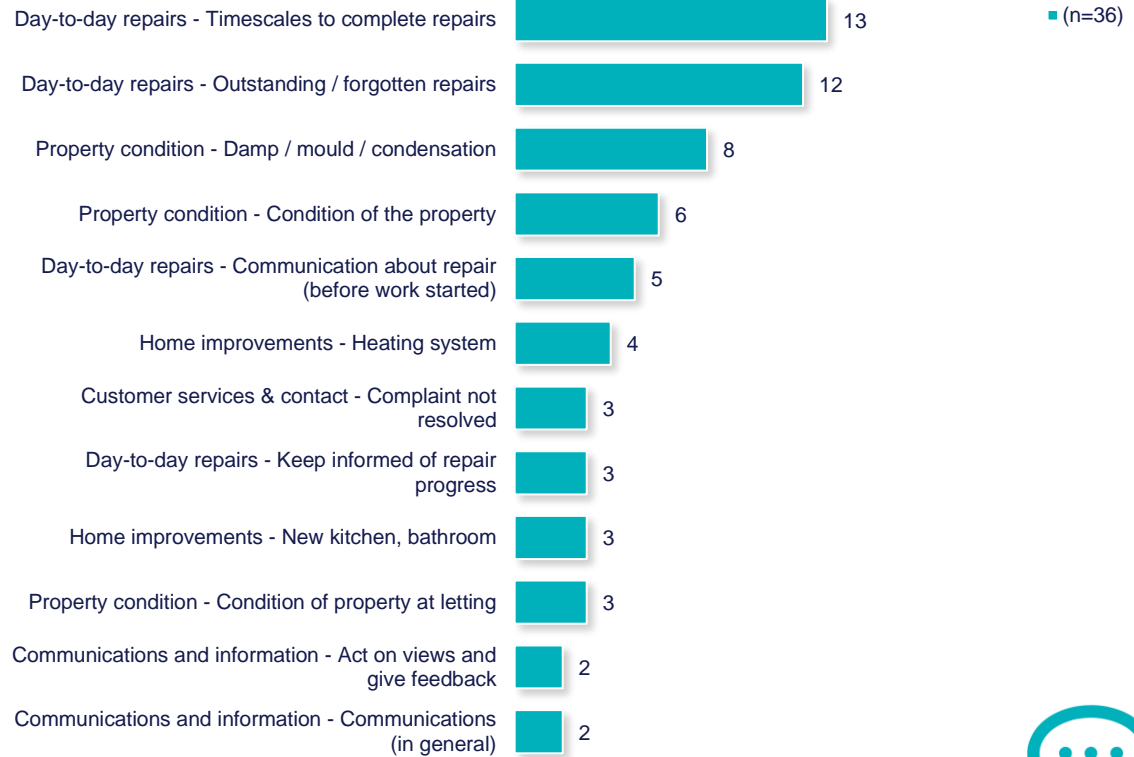
# Comments - Very Dissatisfied

Finally in this section, those tenants who are very dissatisfied with the service were asked why, and 36 tenants gave a response, an increase of three since Q2.

The common issues of the timescales to complete repairs and dealing with outstanding repairs attract the most comments from those very dissatisfied with the service. One comment is typical of the thoughts of many who responded, *"Repairs taking too long to get done, every time I report a repair that needs doing I'm constantly having to chase up for an update. They need to improve the communication and the speed of getting jobs done."*

The issue of damp and mould is also mentioned again and dealing with such issues can then add to the delays in completing less urgent works. Communication also appears to be a theme in those dissatisfied.

These comments, both positive and negative help to provide more insight into the experiences of the tenants of EDDC and will help the Council target those areas in need of improvement.





**Keeping Properties in Good Repair**



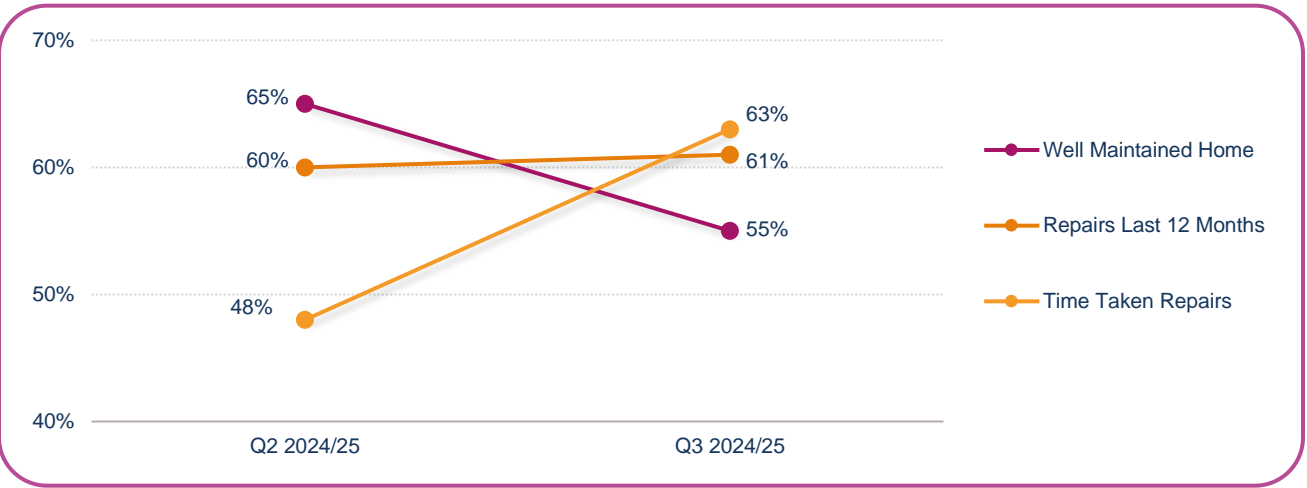
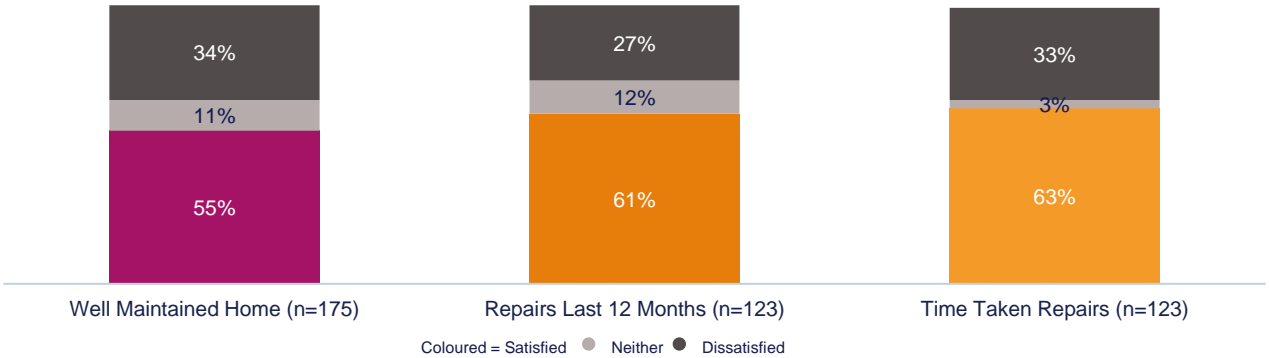
# Keeping Properties in Good Repair

Just over half of those tenants surveyed are satisfied that their home is well maintained, although this is down by 10 percentage points (p.p) since Q2. There are now a third of tenants dissatisfied (34%).

Seven out of ten tenants said they had a repair completed in the last 12 months and of these 61% are satisfied with the repairs service during this period, although 27% remain dissatisfied.

It is somewhat unusual that satisfaction is a little higher for the time taken to complete repairs at 63%, although more are dissatisfied at 33%.

However, both these repair measures show small increases in satisfaction in Q3, up 1p.p for the service and up 15p.p for the time taken. The latter increase is particularly encouraging.





# Comments - Dissatisfaction with Repairs

Tenants not satisfied with the repairs and maintenance service were asked to explain why and 60 tenants gave comments. This reflects the level of dissatisfaction articulated.

As with the last quarter, the main issues for tenants are the time to complete repairs and dealing with those that remain outstanding. For example, one tenant commented, *"Because it can take a long time for them to actually come out and do the repairs."*

Whilst these issues are common to other landlords, they are notoriously difficult to resolve to everyone's expectations, which are sometimes high and difficult to fulfil. However, it will be a constant effort from the Council to undertake work quickly, although it should be remembered that most repairs do are completed without issue.

Other issues with the repairs service mentioned include the quality of work, reporting, and the appointment system.

The Council is aware of all these issues and will be working to improve them and the increase in satisfaction for the time to complete repairs is encouraging.





**Maintaining Building Safety**

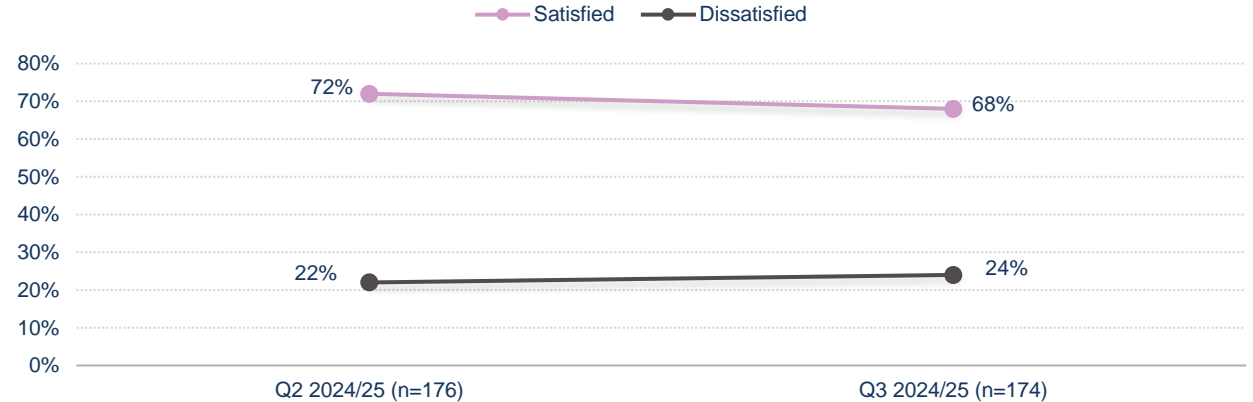
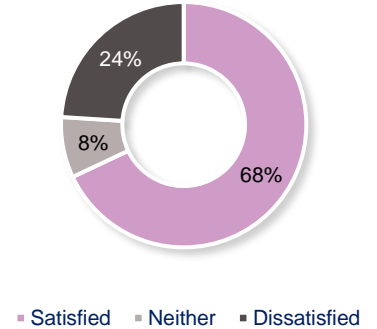
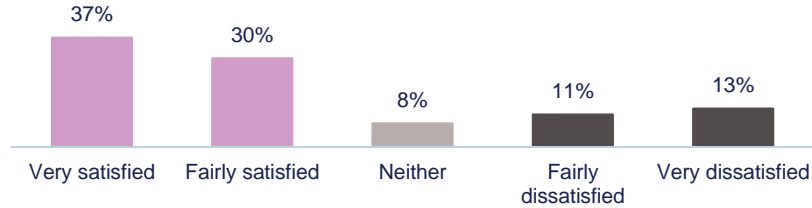


# Maintaining Building Safety

Satisfaction with the safety of the home has experienced a small decrease in Q3 from 72% to 68%, although it remains the highest rated of the measures in this TSM-based survey.

There are more very satisfied (37%) than fairly satisfied (30%). However, a quarter of tenants remain dissatisfied, which has increased by 2p.p since Q2.

The comments shown overleaf help to explain some of the reasons given for this dissatisfaction and the full text is available to view on the Acuity dashboard. It is worth reviewing these comments for a deeper understanding.





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

Tenants not satisfied with their homes or communal areas were asked to provide more information and suggest what EDDC could improve. 80 tenants provided comments here.

Although outstanding repairs top the list of comments the condition of the properties is a concern to some of those who responded, including problems with damp and mould. For example, one tenant responded, *"There is damp and mould under the chimney as it is not capped. The window seals have gone and need to be done - they are not soundproof."*

Other tenants refer to issues with the maintenance of the communal areas, such as the cleaning service, safety and security issues, and grounds maintenance, particularly the grass cutting.

Again, many of these issues have been raised before; the grounds maintenance will be less of an issue during the winter, but tenants want their communal areas to be kept clean and safe.





**Responsible Neighbourhood Management**

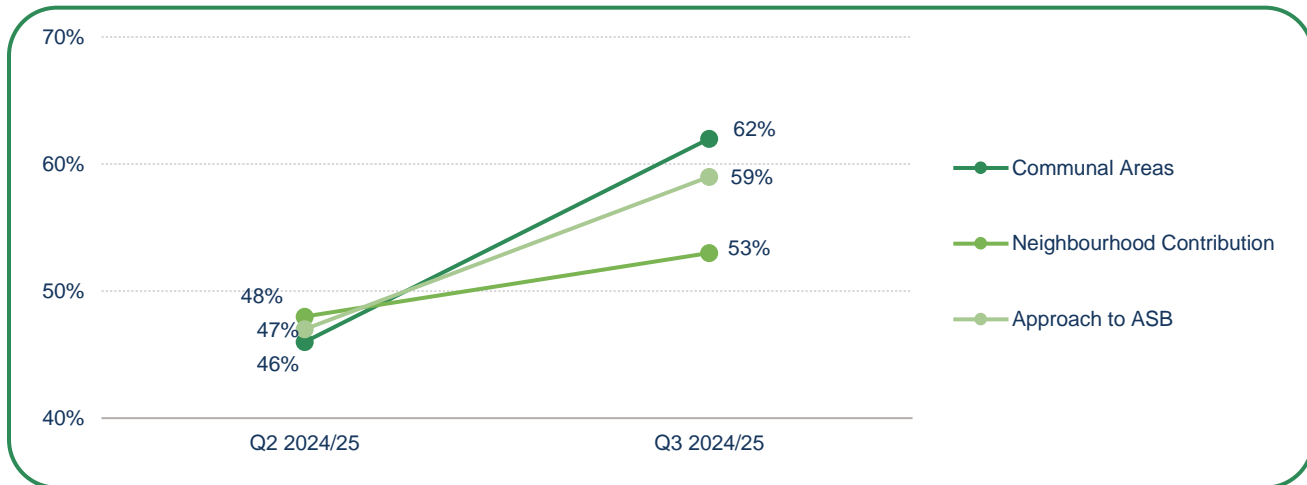
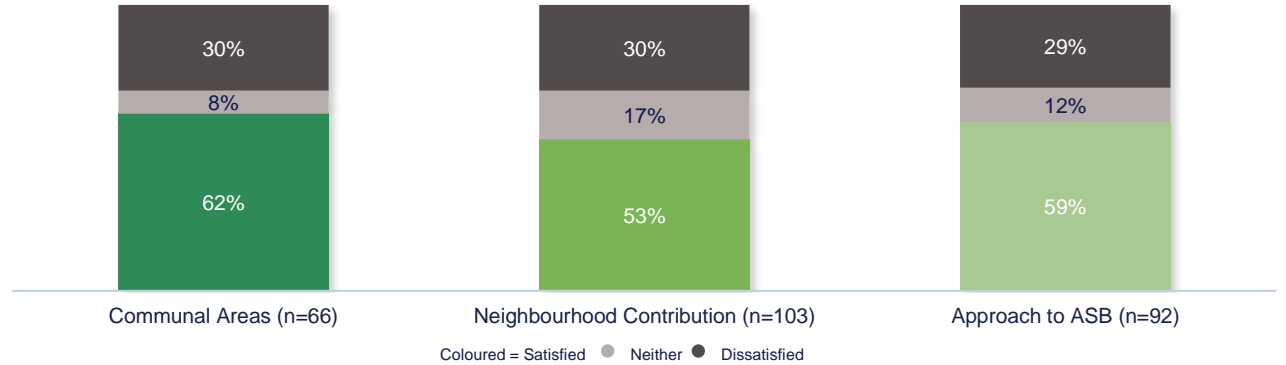
# Responsible Neighbourhood Management



Two-fifths of tenants stated that they live in a building with communal areas that EDDC is responsible for maintaining (39%). Satisfaction with these aspects of neighbourhood management have all seen substantial increases in satisfaction in Q3 which is encouraging. There are now 62% satisfied with the maintenance of the communal areas, up by 16p.p since Q2. There are 30% dissatisfied, although this is down by 8p.p since the previous quarter.

Fewer tenants are satisfied with the positive contribution made by the Council to their neighbourhood (53%), although this is also up from Q2, this time by 5p.p, but 30% remain dissatisfied. One action the Council may wish to consider here is whether it could do more to promote what it achieves locally and the impact its actions have.

Finally in this section, tenants were asked about the approach taken by the Council to handling anti-social behaviour. 59% said they are satisfied and 29% are dissatisfied. This has also seen an increase in satisfaction, up 12p.p, with dissatisfaction falling by 3p.p over the same period.





**Respectful & Helpful Engagement**

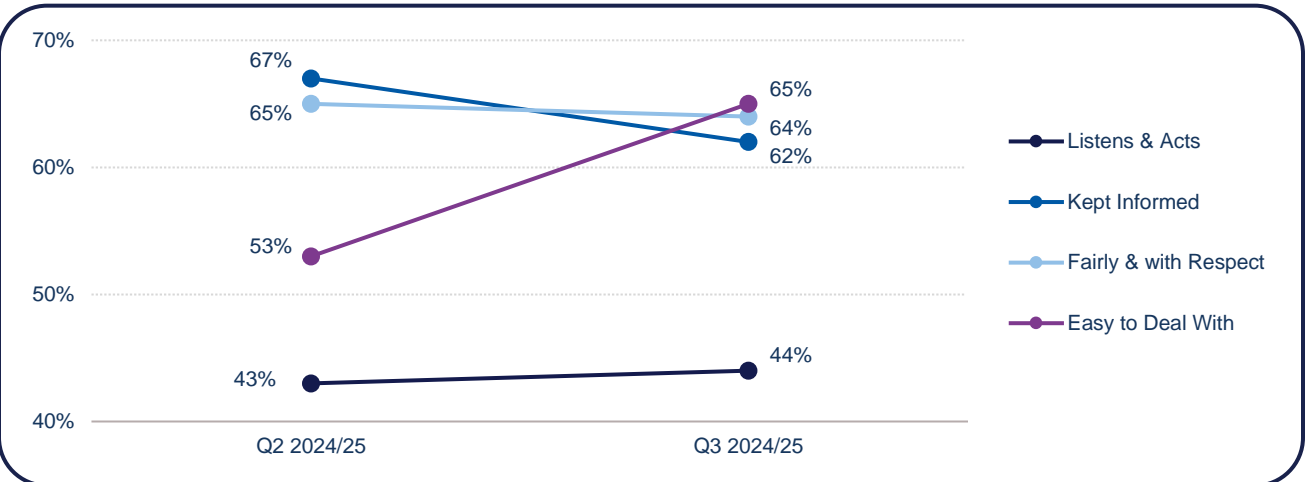
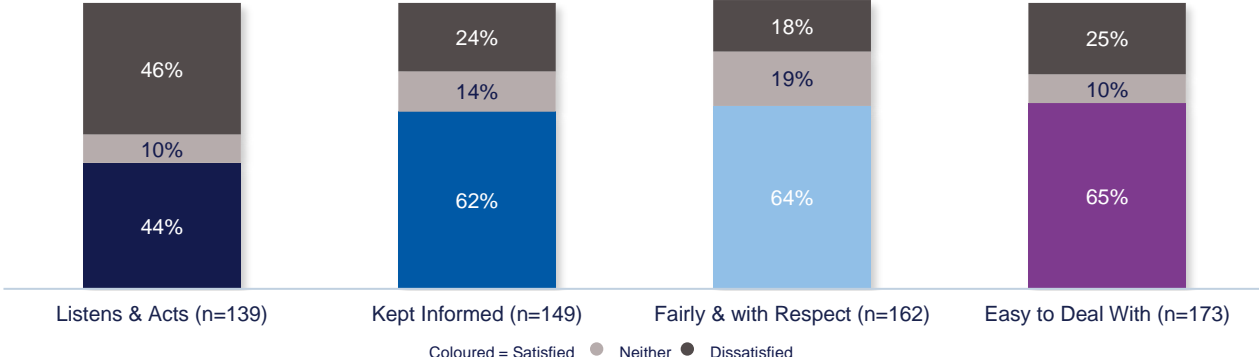
# Respectful & Helpful Engagement



Two-thirds of tenants find dealing with EDDC easy. This is an increase of 12p.p since Q2. 25% still find it difficult, but this has fallen by 10p.p. since the previous quarter.

Similar numbers (64%) agree that the Council treats them fairly and with respect (down 2p.p) and 62% are satisfied that they are kept informed about things that matter to them, although a quarter remain dissatisfied. Satisfaction with being kept informed is also down by 5p.p this quarter.

It is common that satisfaction with how their landlord listens to their views and acts upon them is lower than the other engagement measures, and this is the case here with 44% satisfied although this is up just a little (by 1p.p) since the last quarter. However, it is of some concern that more tenants are dissatisfied than satisfied, dissatisfaction having risen by 4p.p since Q2.



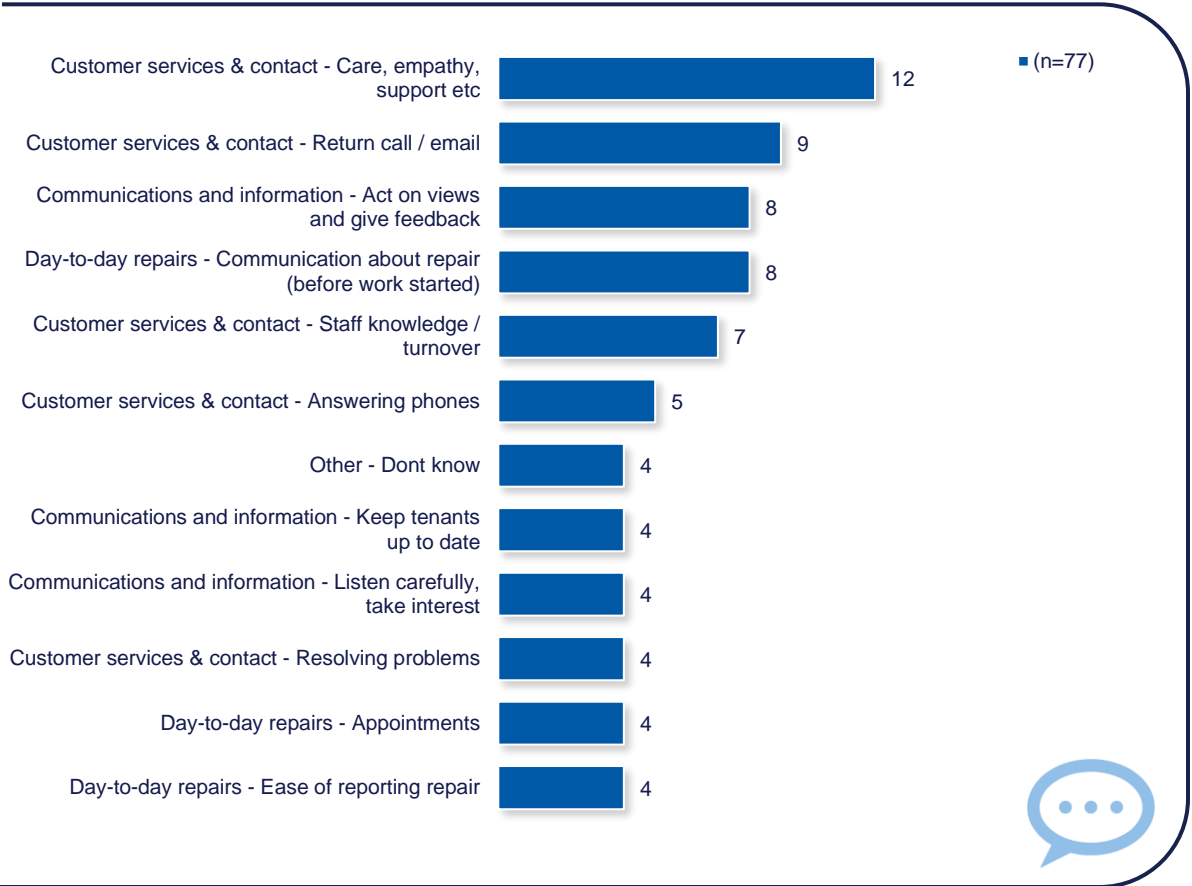


# Comments - Customer Service

Tenants who stated that they are not satisfied with the Council's customer service and communications were asked to explain why and suggest what could be improved; 77 tenants gave comments.

Some tenants say they want the staff to show them more care, empathy, and support when they make contact and to return calls when promised; *"They could have polite staff and staff that actually call you back, everything is a battle with them, I can't reach the tap, they say you need a surveyor to authorise it and then nobody calls you back."*

Call handling is an issue for some tenants, with calls not answered at times. In addition, tenants want the staff to listen to them more carefully and to keep them up to date with the progress of queries. This reiterates the importance of regular communication even when a service matter is still being resolved.





## Effective Handling of Complaints



# Effective Handling of Complaints

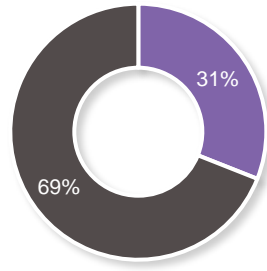
Around a third of tenants (31%) said they had made a complaint to the council in the last 12 months, this equates to around 54 tenants who had responded to the survey. However, it is not possible to say how many of these are formal or genuine complaints rather than service requests that have yet to be fully actioned.

Just 21% of these tenants are satisfied with the handling of these complaints with considerably more dissatisfied (74%). Happily, satisfaction with the complaint handling is up in Q3 by 6p.p, although dissatisfaction has also increased (by 3p.p).

This is, again, the lowest-rated service in the survey, but this is generally the case as complaints handling has scored poorly for most landlords since the question was included in the suite of TSM questions. However, the low level of satisfaction should still be a cause for concern for the Council despite the small increase in satisfaction.

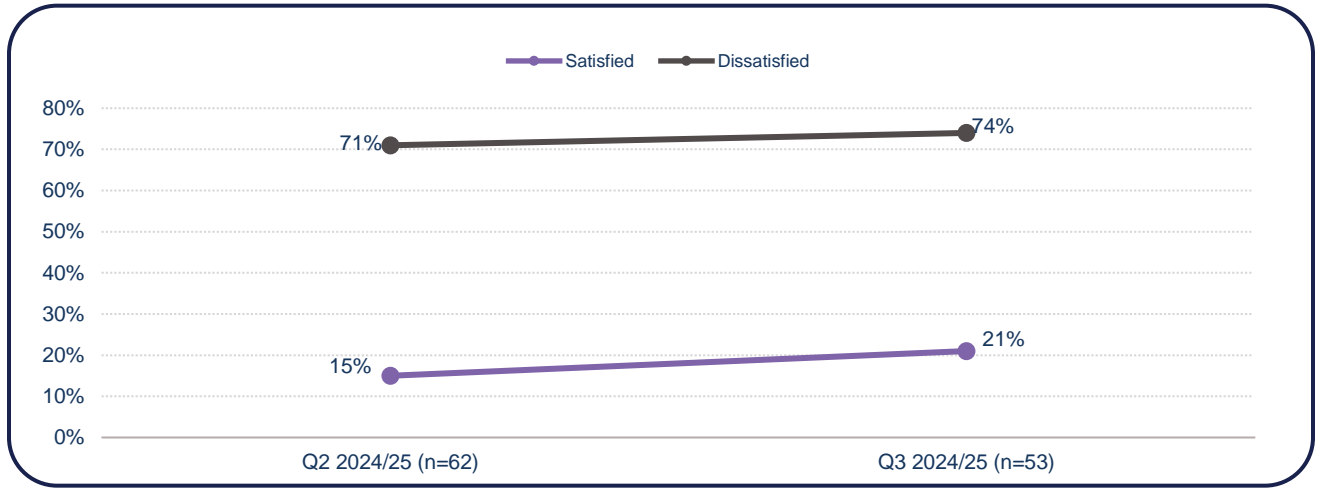
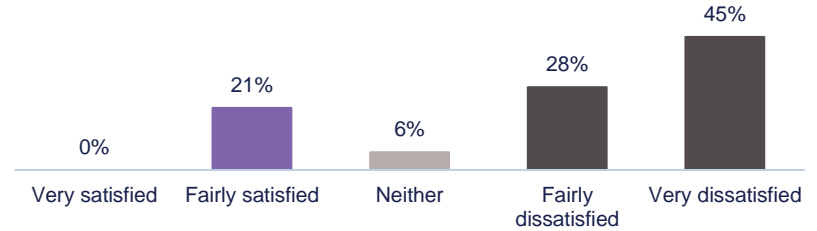
It is also not clear whether the dissatisfaction is driven by the outcome of the complaint, its handling, or a combination of both. For this reason, some landlords have started to include additional questions in their surveys to find out more, or to monitor complaints separately; this is something the Council may wish to consider in future surveys.

### Complaint in last 12 months



■ Yes ■ No

### Satisfaction with Complaints Handling





**Wellbeing**



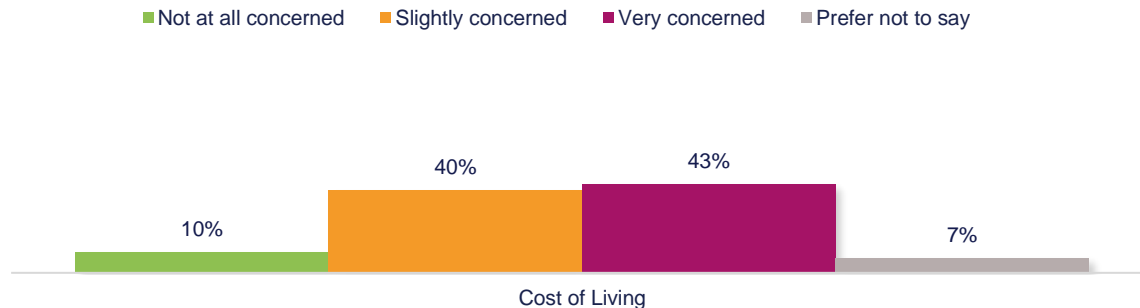
# Cost of Living

Over eight out of ten tenants say they are concerned about the cost of living (83%). Of these, 43% reported being very concerned, with a further 40% being slightly concerned. There are just 10% of tenants who are not concerned at all with a further 7% preferring not to say.

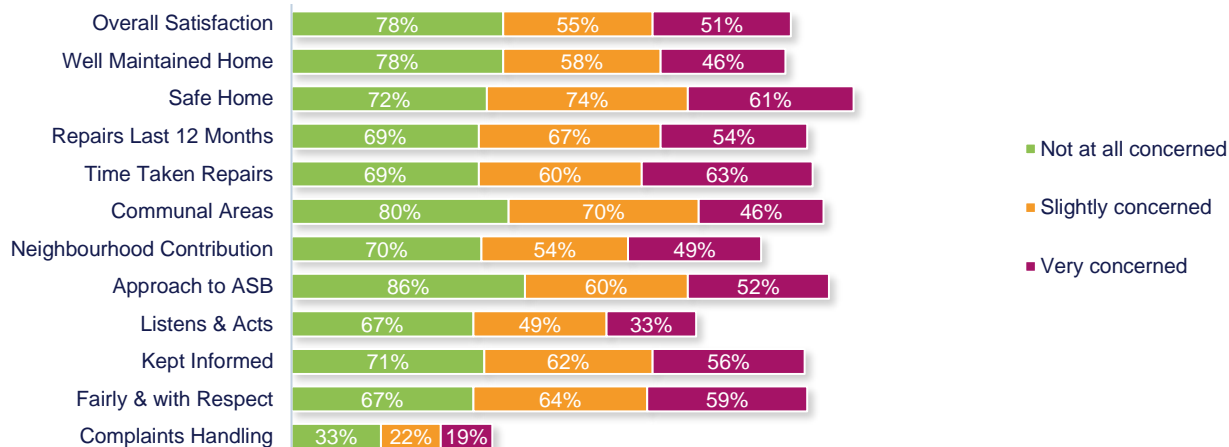
There is a theory that those struggling financially are often less satisfied with the services they receive, and this does appear to be the case here. Those not at all concerned about the cost of living are 78% satisfied with the overall service provided compared to just 51% of those who were very concerned. This highlights the impact of financial health on overall wellbeing and satisfaction.

This pattern continues across the range of measures and tends to support this theory. It also implies that if the council can help relieve the pressure on household finances, perhaps by helping with benefits or helping with or signposting to third-party support mechanisms, it could bring some increase in satisfaction.

## Cost of Living Concern



## Cost of Living Concern & Satisfaction





**Trends**



## Trends Over Time

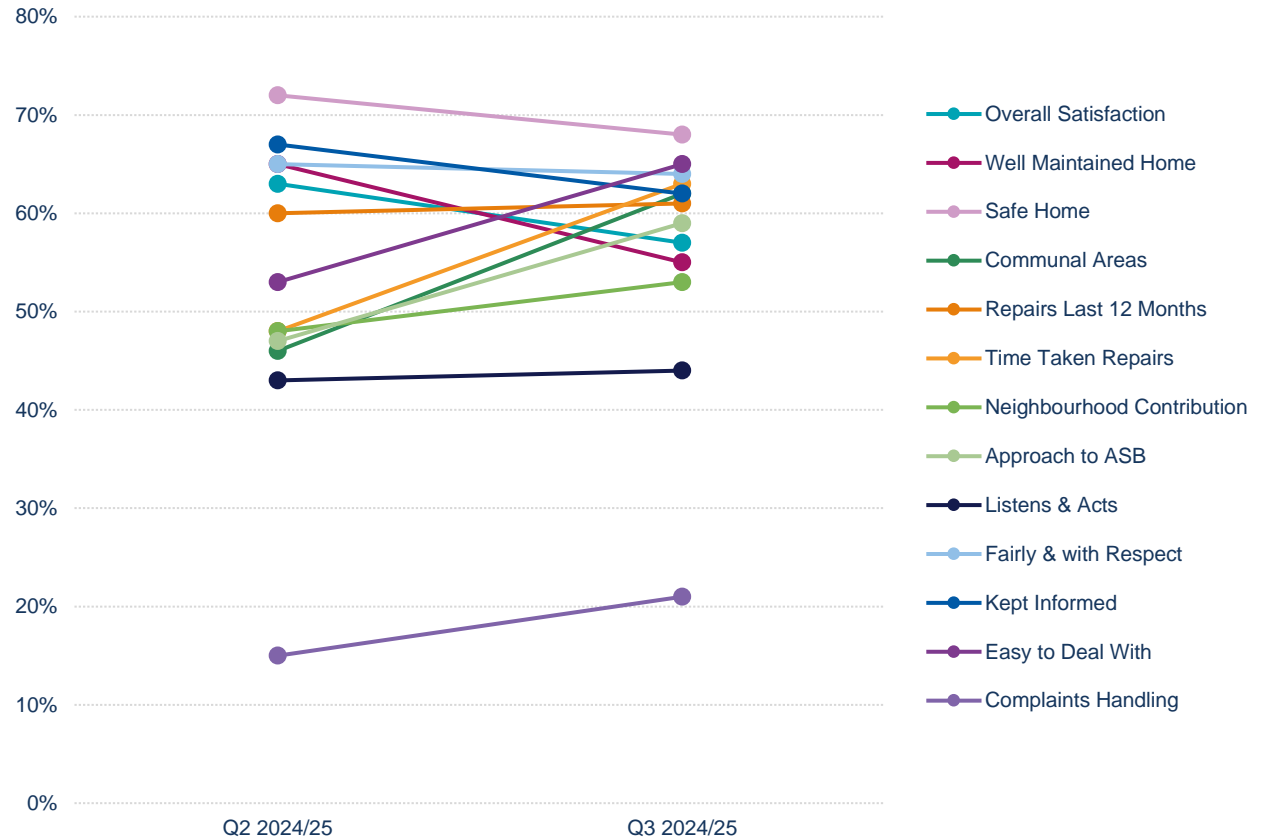
Now that the second survey of the year has been completed, it is possible to compare the results from the two surveys.

This comparison demonstrates some change, with some measures falling in satisfaction but some increasing.

To be statistically significant, changes need to exceed the combined margins of error for both surveys, around 14.5p.p. There are two measures that exceed this figure: the upkeep of the communal areas, which has increased by 16p.p, and the time taken to complete repairs, which is up by 15p.p. In addition, satisfaction with the handling of ASB and the Council being easy to deal with are both up by 12p.p.

However, despite these positive changes, overall satisfaction has decreased by 7p.p and 10p.p fewer are satisfied that their home is well maintained.

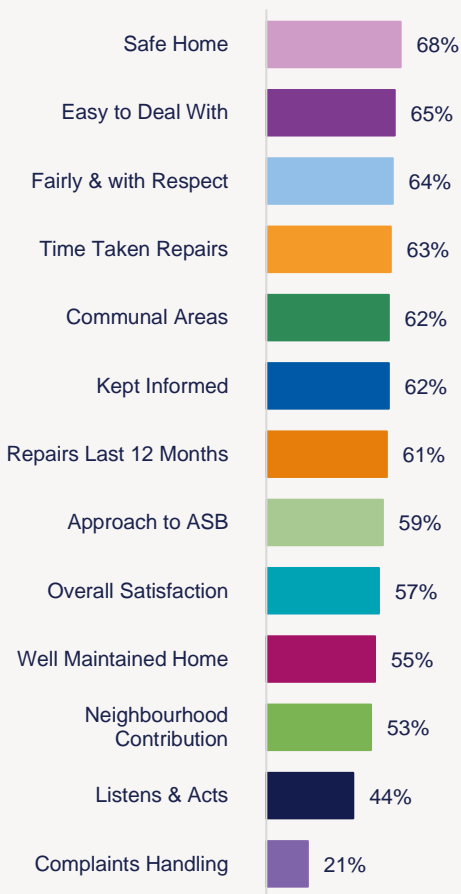
There are often fluctuations in satisfaction throughout the year, so it will be interesting to see a fuller direction of travel in the end-of-year survey.





# Summary

## Satisfaction with Measures



## Summary

Satisfaction is moderate across the range of the survey measures and the council has the lowest satisfaction of the three councils in the consortium. However, there have been some changes in satisfaction since the Q2 survey, many of these positive.

Overall satisfaction is at 57%, sitting in the lower middle of the range of measures with the highest satisfaction for the provision of a safe home (68%) and the Council being easy to deal with. Seven measures have satisfaction over 60%. However, six further measures have satisfaction less than 60%, with just 44% satisfied with the way the Council listens to tenants' views and acts upon them and 21% with the handling of complaints; for both of these measures, there are more tenants dissatisfied than satisfied.

As this is the second survey of this series for EDDC, it has been possible to plot the changes in satisfaction between Q2 and Q3. This shows that overall satisfaction is down by 7p.p with falls in satisfaction for being kept informed and 10p.p fewer are satisfied with the maintenance of their home. However, seven measures show increases in satisfaction, including the time to complete repairs (up 15p.p) and the upkeep of the communal areas (up 16p.p), both these being statistically significant. It is common to see fluctuations in satisfaction throughout the year, so it remains to be seen if this continues into Q4.

The survey also included a number of open-ended questions allowing the tenants to explain the reasons for their scores and suggest ways the council could improve its services. Again, the repairs service attracted the majority of comments, both positive and negative, showing how it works well for some but not for others. The main areas of negative comments relate to the time to complete repairs, despite the significant improvement in satisfaction, dealing with outstanding repairs, the quality of work, and some tenants experiencing problems with damp and mould in their homes. In addition to this, some tenants have problems making contact with the Council and some want the staff to listen to them better and show more care, empathy, and support when they do make contact.

Around eight out of ten tenants continue to be concerned about the cost-of-living and this tends to affect the way they feel about the services they receive. Satisfaction also tends to increase with the age of the tenants, similar to many other surveys, and those with the longest tenancies are often more satisfied than those with the council for shorter periods; female tenants are a little more satisfied than their male counterparts, but the differences are small.





# Recommendations

East Devon District Council is based in Sidmouth on the south coast of England and have around 4,020 properties across their district, some urban but many rural based. They wish to provide good quality, affordable homes for local people and to support the local communities.

This series of surveys will help the council to see the level of satisfaction that exists for its services and will help to highlight those areas which may be in need of improvement.

Shown here are some suggestions the council may wish to consider to help increase satisfaction among its tenants.

## Repairs service

The repairs service continues to attract the most comments, both positive and negative, with the issues of outstanding repairs and the time to complete repairs again being the most prominent. The good news is that satisfaction with the time to complete repairs is up by a significant 15p.p, suggesting the efforts of the Council are starting to create real improvement. Against this, however, satisfaction with the overall maintenance of the home is down by 10p.p, suggesting more still needs to be done to improve the service here. The Council needs to continue its focus on the service and particularly on how it communicates about improvements to the properties.

## Handling of complaints

The handling of complaints is again the lowest rating of all the measures in the survey and far more are dissatisfied than are satisfied with the service. Around a third of tenants said they had made a complaint, but many will be service requests rather than genuine complaints. The Council needs to monitor these, and perhaps follow up on those agreeing to be contacted to find out about their experiences and how this can be improved. The Council may also want to consider running separate surveys focusing on the complaints process or including additional questions to the existing survey, to gain further insight here. There has been a small increase in satisfaction and whilst this is generally the lowest-rated service, the Council still has a way to go to compete with the highest-rated landlords for this measure.

## Communal area maintenance

The maintenance of the communal areas was highlighted in the previous report as in need of improvement but in Q3 satisfaction has increased by 16p.p, suggesting things are moving in the right direction. Some still have issues with the cleaning of these areas but very few mention problems with grounds maintenance, although this could be more of an issue when the growing season begins again in the spring. This is very positive but could still improve further as how tenants feel about their immediate surroundings is a major factor in how they feel about their home and the wider services they receive.

## Listening to views

It is disappointing that more are dissatisfied with the way the Council listens to their views than are satisfied, 46% compared with 44%. When asked about the customer service they receive, some say they have difficulty making contact, but the other issues are linked to staff listening more carefully to tenants' concerns and showing them more care, empathy, and support when they do make contact. It is hard to tell whether these issues are linked to the training of the front-line staff or are linked to dealing with queries when call volumes are very high. However, the Council needs to be aware of this and, if possible, emphasise to staff that time spent properly listening to queries will pay dividends in the future.



# Demographics



# Length of Tenancy

In this section, the results are broken down by different subgroups to help gain a better understanding of what is driving satisfaction at EDDC.

The table shown here includes the results by the length of tenancy. It is common that those with their landlord for the shortest time are often the most satisfied, possibly as they may have waited for some time for an offer or had come from poor accommodation. Satisfaction then tends to fall a little over time as tenants start to experience issues with their home but then the longest-serving tenants, who are most likely the oldest are also highly satisfied.

For EDDC there is some evidence of this with those with the Council for less than a year the most satisfied overall and with seven other measures, whilst those of 6 to 10 years are the least satisfied.

	All Residents	A. < 1 year	B. 1 - 3 years	C. 4 - 5 years	D. 6 - 10 years	E. 11 - 20 years	F. Over 20 years
Overall Satisfaction	57%	70%	67%	67%	33%	56%	63%
Well Maintained Home	55%	60%	48%	55%	47%	59%	60%
Safe Home	68%	76%	59%	67%	62%	74%	71%
Repairs Last 12 Months	61%	77%	76%	57% *	50%	59%	61%
Time Taken Repairs	63%	85%	76%	71% *	43%	64%	67%
Communal Areas	62%	64%	38%	63% *	62%	77%	75% *
Neighbourhood Contribution	53%	73%	58%	80% *	40%	48%	50%
Approach to ASB	59%	67% *	50%	63% *	41%	38%	82%
Listens & Acts	44%	65%	47%	44% *	30%	36%	51%
Kept Informed	62%	76%	50%	78% *	50%	59%	69%
Fairly & with Respect	64%	55%	61%	80%	56%	64%	72%
Easy to Deal With	65%	65%	61%	82%	57%	63%	71%
Complaints Handling	21%	17% *	36%	100% *	10%	10%	8%

\*Base below 10



# Age Group

It is also often found in surveys of this kind that satisfaction generally increases with age.

For EDDC this tends to be the case, with tenants aged 75 to 84 the most satisfied overall (89%) followed by those aged 65 to 74 (76%).

The older age groups are generally the most satisfied across the range of measures whilst those aged 35 to 44 are the least satisfied overall (30%) and for six other measures.

	All Residents	0 - 24	25 - 34	35 - 44	45 - 54	55 - 59	60 - 64	65 - 74	75 - 84	85 +
Overall Satisfaction	57%	0% *	56%	30%	38%	40%	50%	76%	89%	80% *
Well Maintained Home	55%	0% *	31%	33%	36%	57%	43%	65%	82%	100% *
Safe Home	68%	50% *	57%	48%	58%	64%	57%	81%	88%	100% *
Repairs Last 12 Months	61%	- *	63% *	25%	41%	60%	55%	86%	100%	100% *
Time Taken Repairs	63%	- *	25% *	44%	59%	80%	55%	79%	92%	50% *
Communal Areas	62%	0% *	40% *	56% *	29% *	83% *	60% *	75%	73%	100% *
Neighbourhood Contribution	53%	- *	50% *	31%	42%	42%	40% *	54%	90%	100% *
Approach to ASB	59%	0% *	29% *	54%	22% *	60%	56% *	57%	57% *	100% *
Listens & Acts	44%	0% *	30%	25%	22%	36%	36%	65%	67%	80% *
Kept Informed	62%	0% *	40%	30%	50%	67%	60%	63%	86%	100% *
Fairly & with Respect	64%	0% *	29%	55%	50%	57%	62%	63%	88%	80% *
Easy to Deal With	65%	0% *	43%	43%	50%	67%	38%	76%	100%	80% *
Complaints Handling	21%	0% *	0% *	13% *	30%	25% *	0% *	43% *	33% *	- *

\*Base below 10



# Gender

Female tenants outnumber their male counterparts but are generally less satisfied across the majority of measures, although the difference between the two is generally small.

On the overall services received from the council, 52% of female tenants are satisfied compared with 65% male, and male tenants are more satisfied with nine other measures. The exceptions to this are for the repairs service in the last 12 months, listening to views and complaints handling.

This suggests that the gender of the tenants alone is not a major factor in determining satisfaction.

	All Residents	F	M
Overall Satisfaction	57%	52%	65%
Well Maintained Home	55%	50%	65%
Safe Home	68%	62%	78%
Repairs Last 12 Months	61%	62%	60%
Time Taken Repairs	63%	60%	69%
Communal Areas	62%	56%	70%
Neighbourhood Contribution	53%	51%	58%
Approach to ASB	59%	57%	62%
Listens & Acts	44%	45%	42%
Kept Informed	62%	59%	66%
Fairly & with Respect	64%	60%	69%
Easy to Deal With	65%	63%	68%
Complaints Handling	21%	21%	20%



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

For further information on this report please contact:  
**Denise Raine:** [denise.raine@arap.co.uk](mailto:denise.raine@arap.co.uk)

Acuity  
Tel: 01273 287114  
Email: [acuity@arap.co.uk](mailto:acuity@arap.co.uk)  
Address: PO Box 395, Umberleigh, EX32 2HL



Certificate No:359292021

