



East Devon District Council

TSM LCRA Tracker Q2 2024/25 Report

Prepared by: Acuity Research & Practice



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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 they have 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, labelled as Q2 24/25, although it is the first for EDDC conducted by Acuity.

The fieldwork began on 19 August for the online survey and ran through until 31 August. This was followed by the telephone interviews between 2 September and 14 September with the survey eventually closing on 16 September. 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.

The survey is confidential, and the results are sent back to EDDC anonymised unless tenants give their permission to be identified – 66% of tenants did give permission to share their responses with their details attached and 94% of these tenants are happy for EDDC to contact them to discuss any information they provided.

The aim of this survey is to provide data on tenants' satisfaction, which will allow EDDC to:

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

63%

Overall Satisfaction

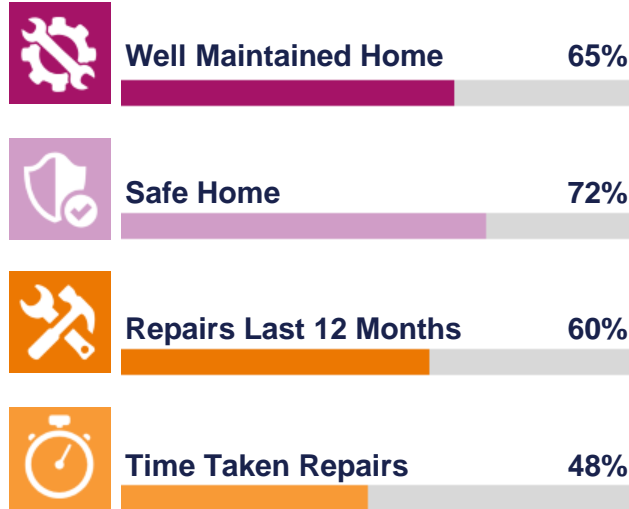
Just under two-thirds of tenants (63%) are satisfied with the overall services provided by East Devon District Council.

There are four measures receiving satisfaction levels above this, how the Council treats its tenants fairly and with respect, keeps the homes well-maintained and keeps tenants informed about things that matter to them; the highest satisfaction is for the provision of a safe home with 72% satisfied.

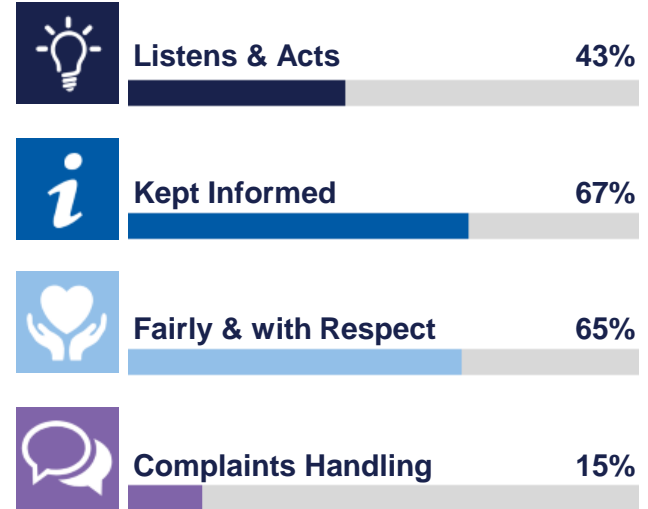
However, six measures have less than half the tenants satisfied with the lowest ratings for the way the Council listens to its tenants' views and acts upon them (43%) with just 15% satisfied with the handling of complaints, considerably more being dissatisfied (71%).

TSM Key Metrics

Keeping Properties in Good Repair



Respectful & Helpful Engagement



Responsible Neighbourhood Management





Overall Satisfaction



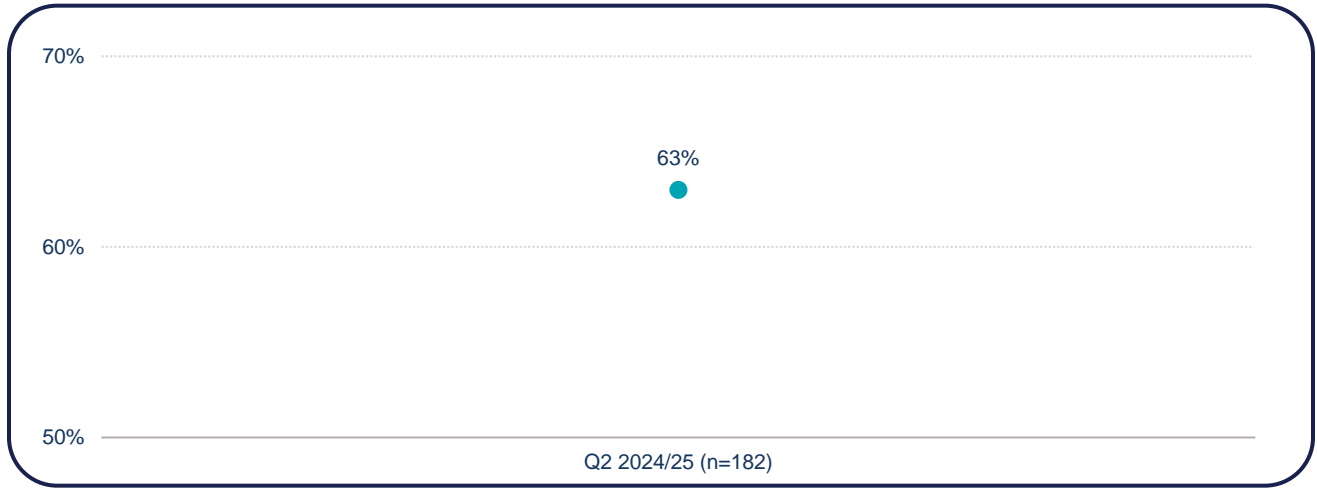
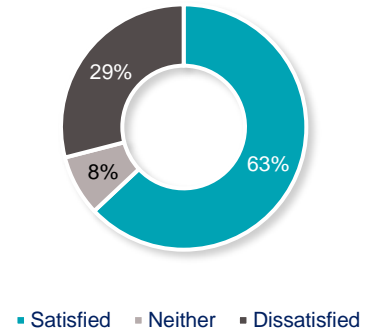
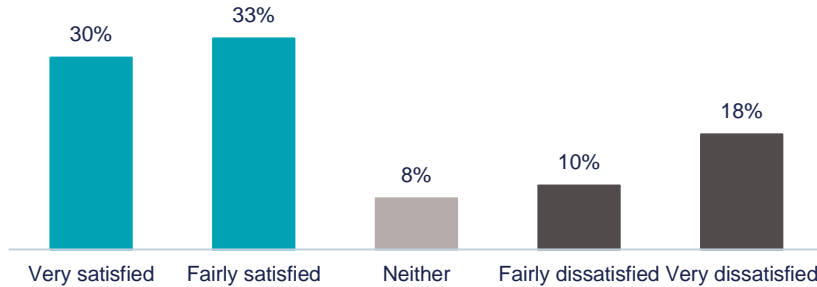
Overall Satisfaction

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

Almost two-thirds of tenants are satisfied with the overall services, but fewer are very satisfied (30%) than fairly satisfied (33%); ideally this should be the other way around.

There are 29% of tenants dissatisfied with the services they receive and a further 8% are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.

As this is the first of these TSM-based surveys to be completed in 24/25 for EDDC there is currently no trend information but as the surveys progress throughout the year this chart will start to show the changes that occur from quarter to quarter and will plot the direction of travel. In the meantime, this will act as a baseline to compare the future surveys against.





Comments - Very Satisfied

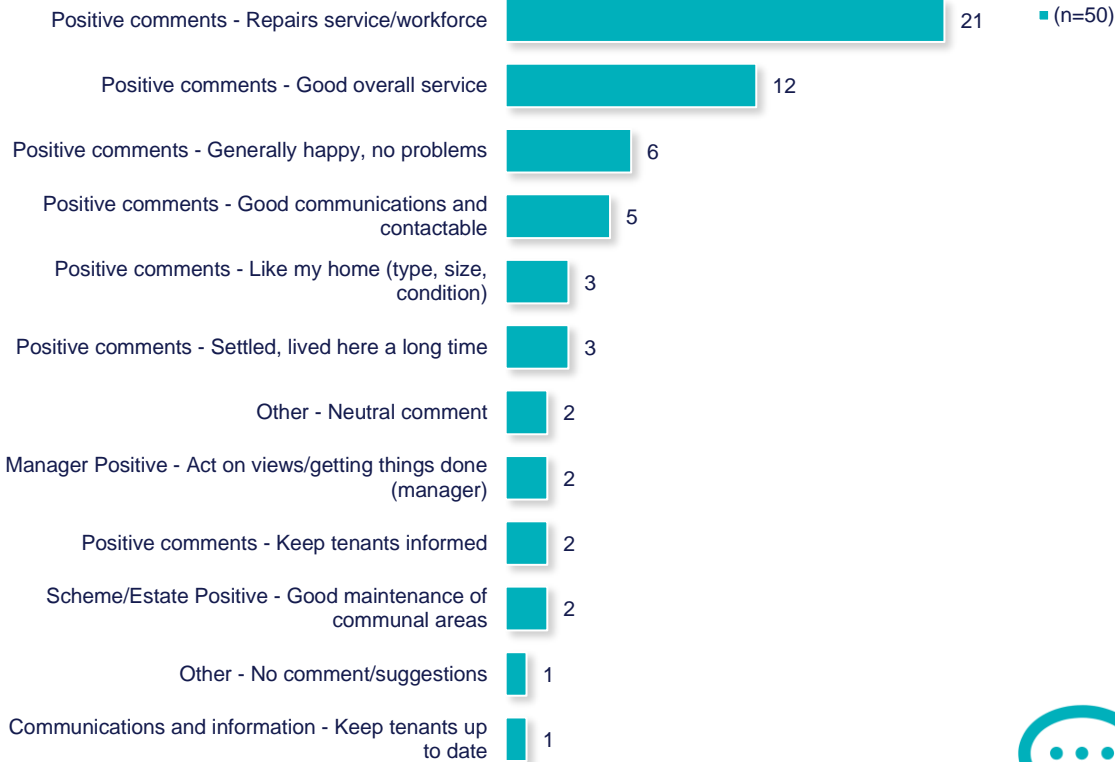
The survey included some follow up questions to find out more about the reasons for the satisfaction scores given.

This chart shows the responses from those giving a 'very satisfied' response to the overall satisfaction question; 50 tenants left comments from the 175 responding.

The repairs service receives the most comments; *"Well if anything goes wrong such as the central heating they are here straight away."*

Several tenants also refer to the good overall service and that they are happy generally with no problems.

Others specifically like their home, and some say they have been settled for a long time.





Comments - Neutral

This chart shows the comments made by those giving a more neutral response, neither very satisfied or very dissatisfied; 77 tenants left comments.

Despite the high praise of the repairs service given by those very satisfied overall, the service receives some criticism here, particularly in relation to the time taken to complete repairs and dealing with those repairs which appear to be outstanding or forgotten; *"Get repairs done and don't build up people's hopes about having things done."*

Apart from these two main issues, the quality of work is mentioned by some, as is communication about the repair and more generally.

It is these issues which, if sorted out, could help some tenants move into the very satisfied category.





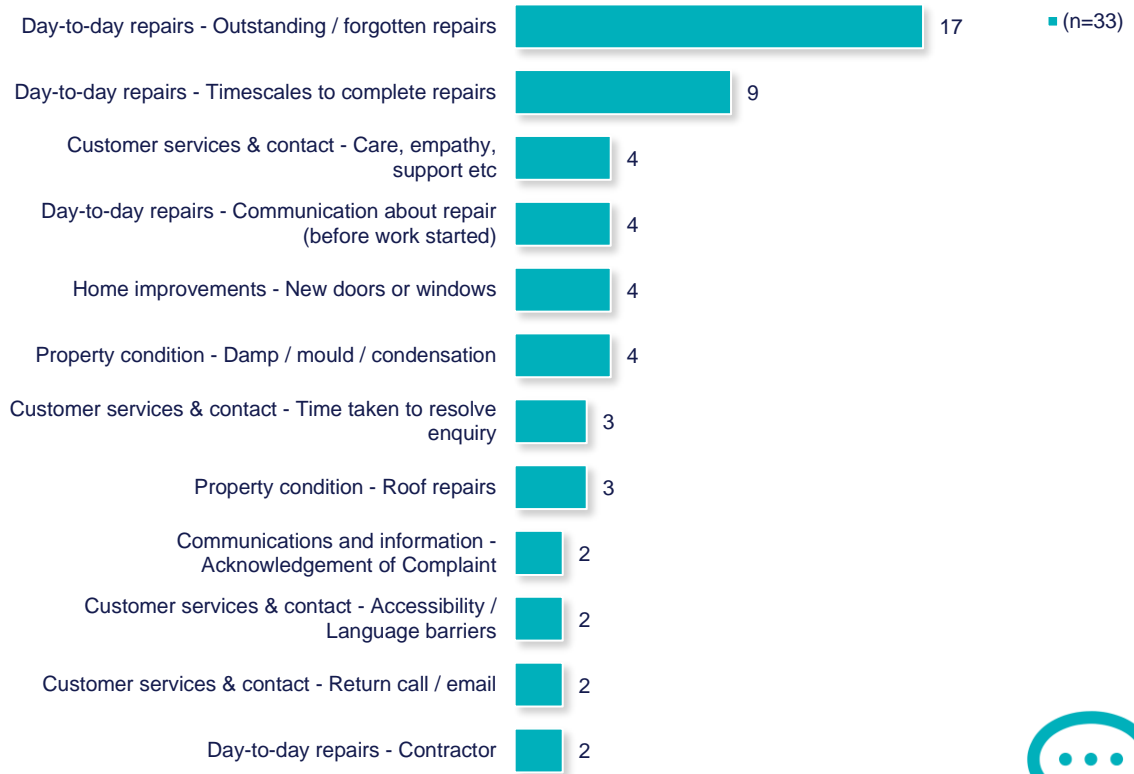
Comments - Very Dissatisfied

Finally in this section, those tenants who are very dissatisfied with the service were asked why and 33 tenants gave a response.

Again, it is the two main repair issues, outstanding repairs and the time taken to complete works. Some appear to have waited for a long time for works to be done and this clearly affect the way they feel about the Council's service; *"We reported our roof about 3-4 months ago and it's still not repaired, it's still leaking, and the damp is still coming through. Toilet still hasn't been repaired."*

Some tenants feel that the staff could show them a little more care and support when they make contact, a few have problems with damp & mould, and some would like to have some improvements to their homes.

It is interesting that the repairs service attracts both the most positive and negative comments and this shows the importance of the service and how this operates often is how the Council is judged. Most repairs go off without a hitch but for some delays can cause some frustration.





Keeping Properties in Good Repair

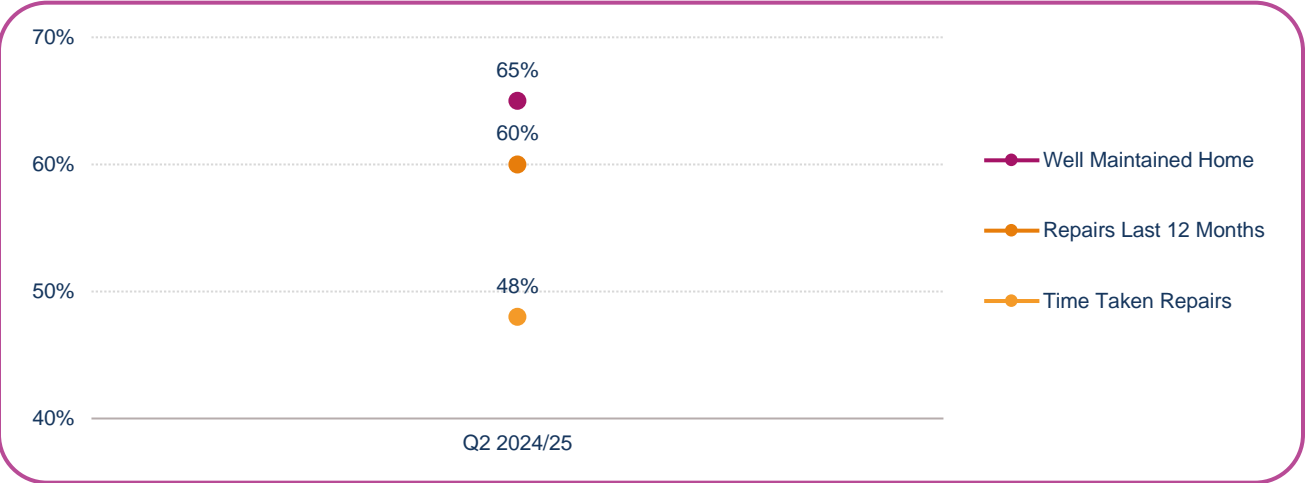
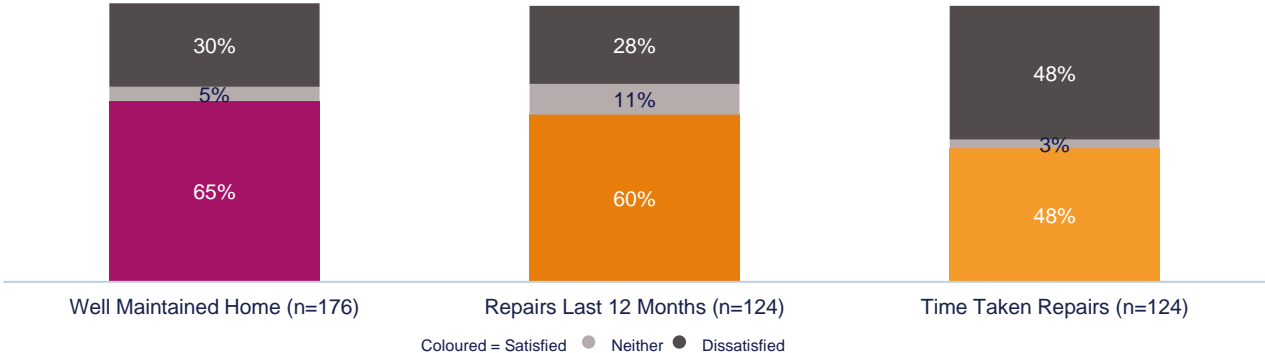


Keeping Properties in Good Repair

Two-thirds of tenants (65%) are satisfied that the Council keeps their homes well-maintained, however, almost a third are dissatisfied, possibly linked back to some of the issues raised in the open questions shown above.

Nearly seven out of ten tenants had a repair completed in the last 12 months (69%) and 60% of these are satisfied with the repairs service during this period, although 28% are dissatisfied with the service they received.

It is common that the time to complete repairs scores lower than that of the service itself, and this is the case here with just 48% satisfied with the time to complete their most recent repair. Unfortunately, the same number are dissatisfied with the time taken (48%); this largely supporting the comments made by some about the delays in works being finished.





Comments - Dissatisfaction with Repairs

Tenants not satisfied specifically with the repairs and maintenance service were asked to explain why and 63 tenants gave comments; a reflection of the level of dissatisfaction shown.

The timescales for repairs to be completed received the most comments. This is followed by outstanding or forgotten repairs and the quality of work; *"It takes a while to actually send someone to come and do it, and then actually send the job out to the company to fit them."*

The time taken to complete repairs is a theme across the sector, with landlords being impacted by the wider context, such as issues around the cost and availability of labour and materials. Additionally, tenants can sometimes have high expectations around timescales. Therefore, it is important that EDDC clearly communicates with tenants about when they can expect repairs to be completed and keeps them updated throughout the process.

Other issues raised include communications about the repairs, the contractor, appointments and returning calls when promised.





Maintaining Building Safety



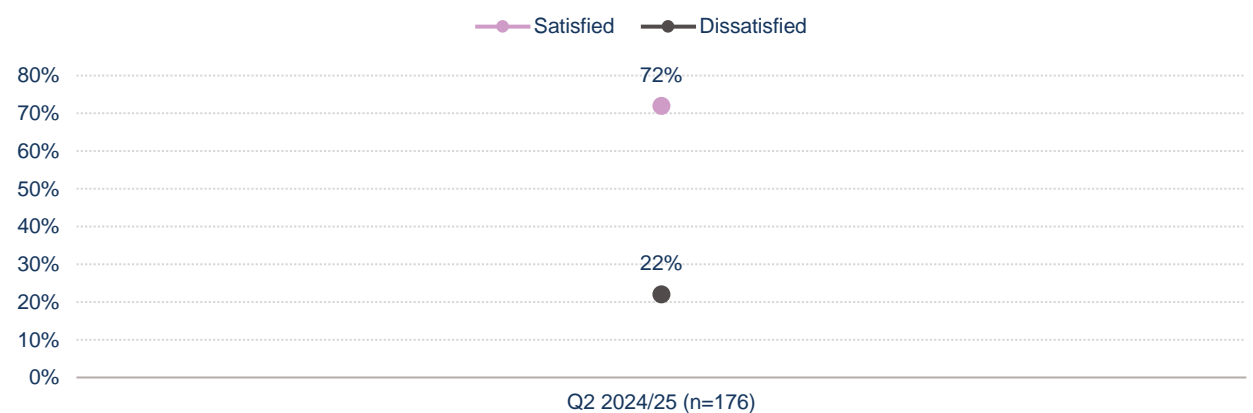
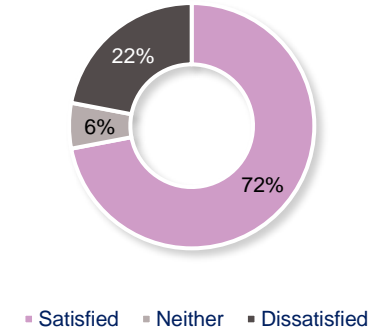
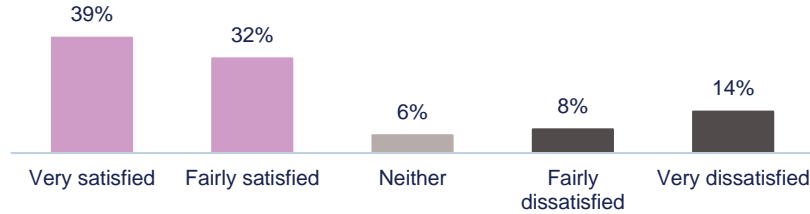
Maintaining Building Safety

Whilst satisfaction with the safety of the home is often high, the Council should be pleased that over seven out of ten (72%) are satisfied that their homes are safe. Of these more are very satisfied than fairly satisfied. This is the highest rated measure in the survey.

However, 22% of tenants are dissatisfied with their home's safety with a further 6% neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.

It is also common that more are satisfied with the safety of their home than its maintenance, and this is the case here, 72% compared with 65%.

As is shown below, when asked about the safety of their home, tenants tend to take a wider view than just issues linked to the structure or condition of their property, they will also consider repairs issues and problems in the area and with the communal spaces.





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, and 69 tenants made comments.

Outstanding repairs again tops the list of comments, but some do have comments about the upkeep of the communal areas, including the grass cutting, cleaning, clearing of rubbish and the general grounds maintenance, such as, *"Only cut the grass and don't do anything out the back and believe they should kill the ivy as growing through the panels."* With regards to the cleaning services, *"Sometimes the areas are cleaned but not always and some rubbish is left there until someone complains."*

Whilst the maintenance of the communal areas doesn't affect all, it is clearly important to some, and the comments suggest it is a little inconsistent; this shows areas which could be in need of improvement.





Responsible Neighbourhood Management

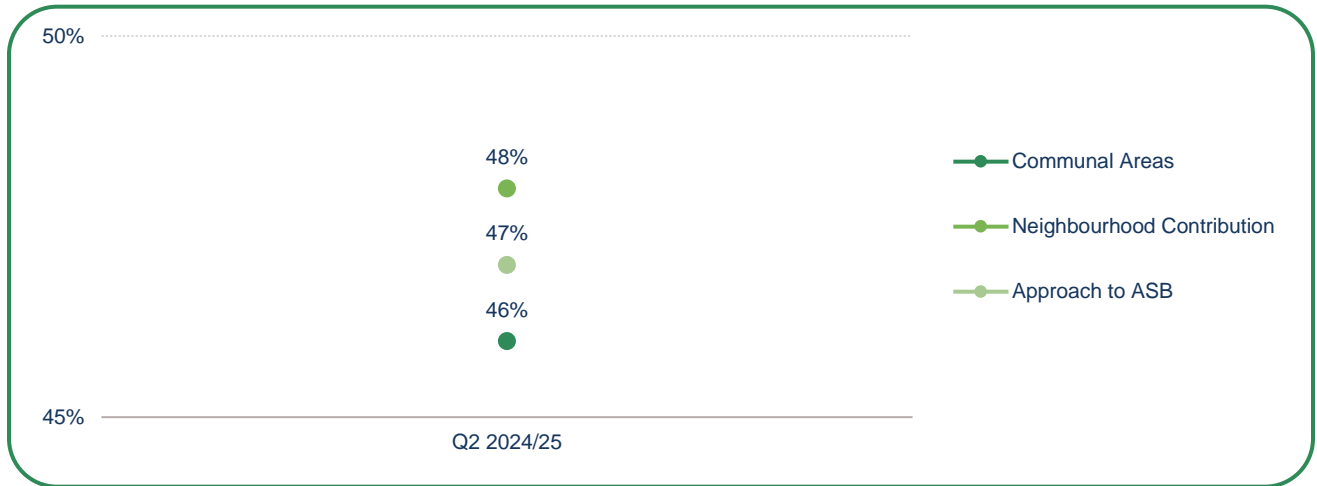
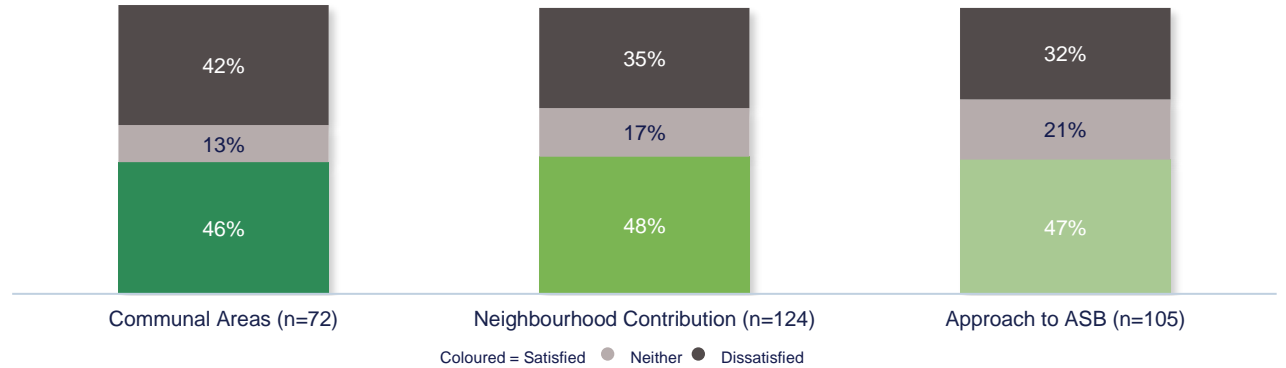


Responsible Neighbourhood Management

Two-fifths of tenants stated that they live in a building with communal areas that EDDC is responsible for maintaining (42%). However, less than half of these tenants are satisfied that the Council keeps their communal areas clean and well maintained (46%), with almost as many dissatisfied (42%). This dissatisfaction could be driven by some issues with the communal cleaning and grounds maintenance which have been highlighted in the tenants' comments.

Around half the tenants are satisfied that EDDC makes a positive contribution to their neighbourhood (48%), but a third are dissatisfied. There are also 17% neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, and it could be that at least some of these are unaware of the impact the Council has in their area.

There are 13% of those responding to the survey who said they had experienced anti-social behaviour in the last 12 months, this equating to around 23 tenants completing the survey. Of these, just 47% are satisfied with the way the problem was handled, whilst a third are dissatisfied. Whilst this could clearly be better, it does only affect a relatively small number of tenants which suggests ASB is not a major problem for the Council.





Respectful & Helpful Engagement

Respectful & Helpful Engagement

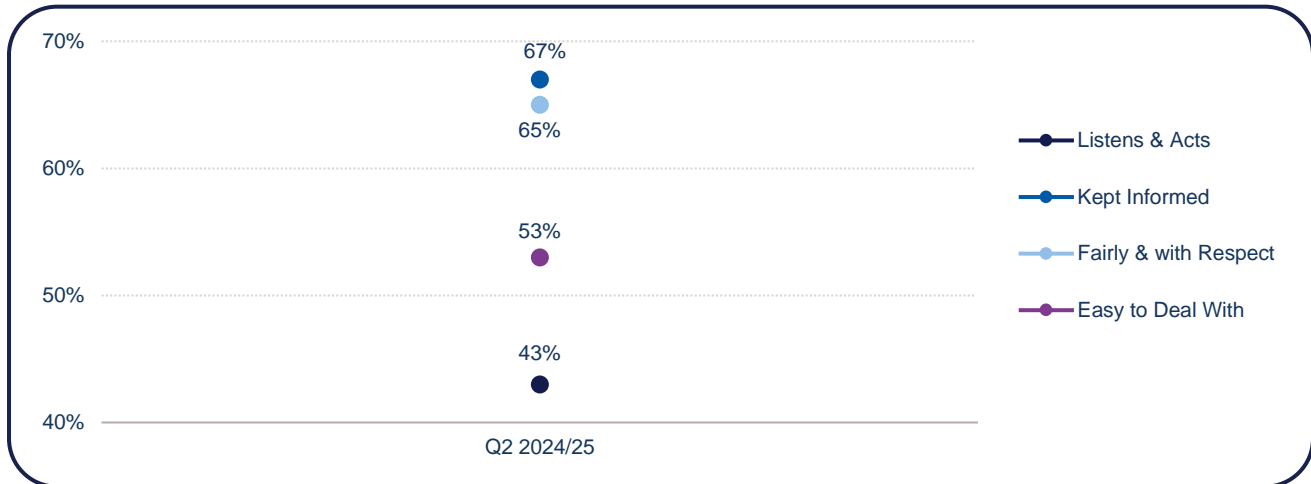
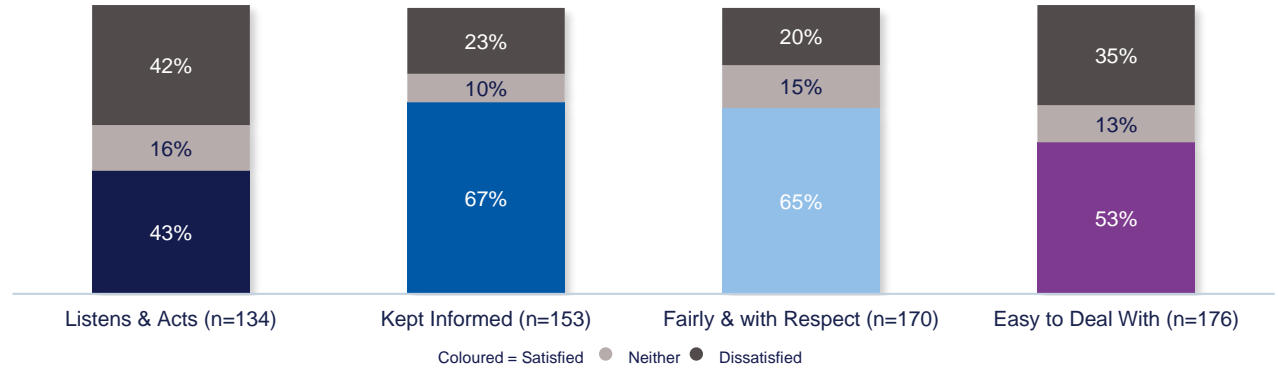


Two-thirds of tenants are satisfied with both the way the Council keeps them informed about things that matter to them (67%) and for the way they are treated fairly and with respect (65%); similar numbers are dissatisfied, 23% and 20% respectively.

However, fewer are satisfied with the way the Council listens to their tenants' views or acts upon them (43%) and almost as many are dissatisfied (42%). This measure often is among one of the lower scoring measures in similar surveys, and this continues to be the case for EDDC.

Just over half the tenants find dealing with the Council easy, although 35% find it difficult.

Overleaf shows a breakdown of comments made about the customer contact with the Council to help better understand the root of some of the dissatisfaction shown.





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; 86 tenants gave comments.

Nothing stands out particularly from the rest, but the handling of calls does receive the most comments, and in connection to this, some say phones are not answered and when they are, calls are not returned when promised; *"I spend hours on the phone on hold and nobody seems to know what they are doing."*

When tenants do make contact, they would like the staff to listen to their needs a little more carefully and to show them more care and support with their problems. A few issues again refer to the repairs service but many of these customer service and communication issues are common for whatever reason contact is made.





Effective Handling of Complaints



Effective Handling of Complaints

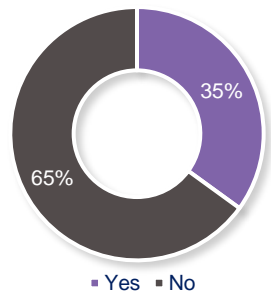
Over a third of tenants (35%) said they had made a complaint to the Council in the last 12 months, this equating to around 60 tenants who had responded to the survey. However, it is impossible to say how many of these are formal or genuine complaints rather than service requests that have yet to be fully actioned.

Nevertheless, just 15% of these tenants are satisfied with the handling of these complaints with considerably more dissatisfied (71%).

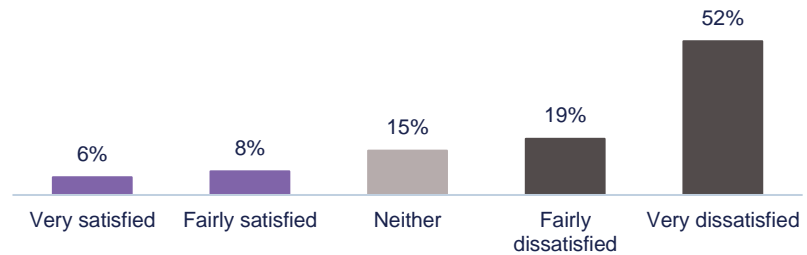
This is the lowest rated service in the survey, but this is generally the case as complaints handling has scored poorly ever since the question was included in the suite of TSM questions. However, the low level of satisfaction should be a cause for concern for the Council.

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



Satisfaction with Complaints Handling





Wellbeing



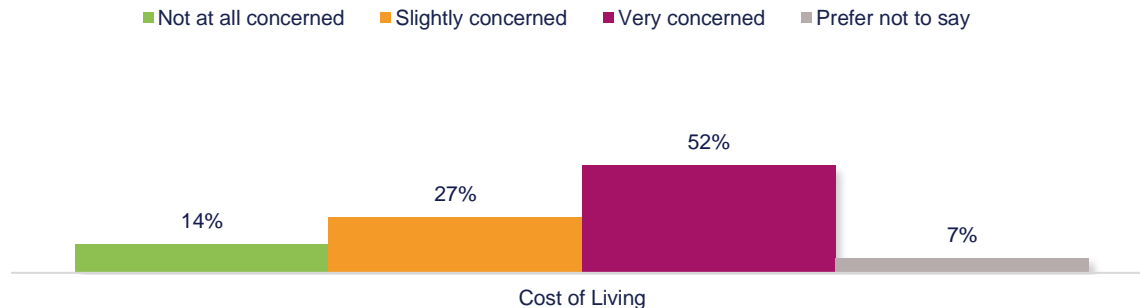
Cost of Living

Nearly eight out of ten tenants say they are concerned about the cost-of-living, 52% are very concerned and a further 27% are slightly concerned. There are 14% of tenants who are not concerned at all with a further 7% preferring not to say.

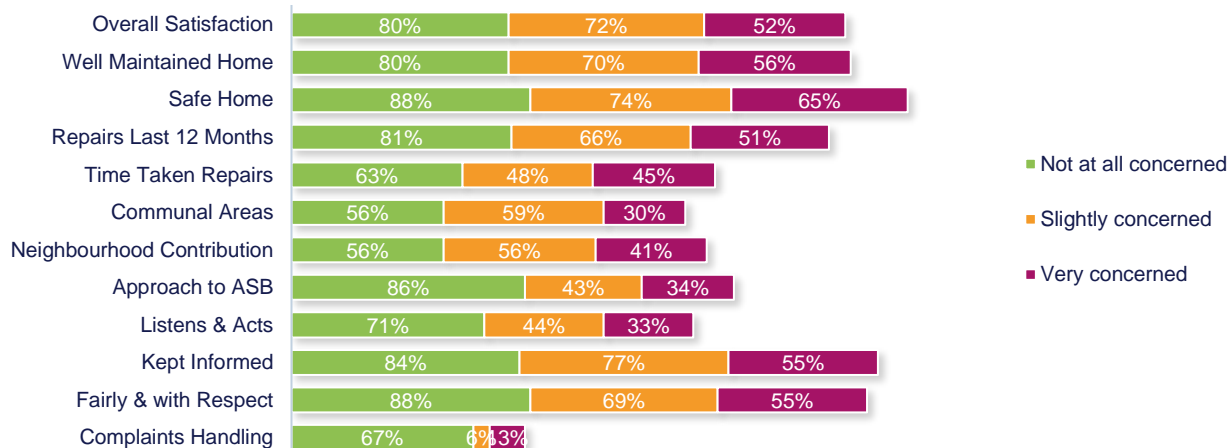
There is a theory that those struggling financially are often less satisfied with the services they receive, and this does appear to be the case here. On the overall services there are 80% of those not concerned satisfied and this compares with 72% of those slightly concerned satisfied and just 52% of those very concerned satisfied.

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 etc, it could bring some increase in satisfaction.

Cost of Living Concern



Cost of Living Concern & Satisfaction





Trends

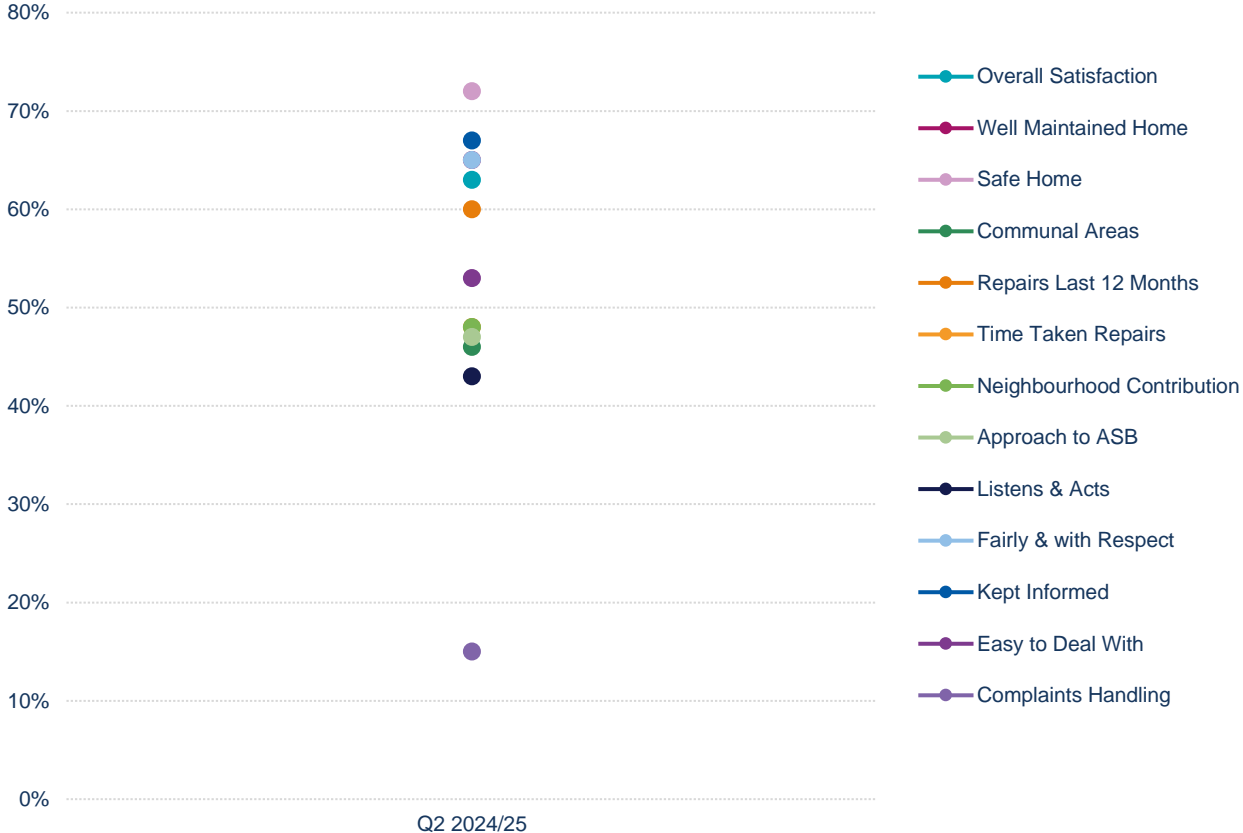


Trends Over Time

Whilst this chart is shown here, it currently doesn't show any trend information as this is the first TSM-based survey completed for the Council in 24/25.

However, as the remaining quarterly surveys in the year are completed this will start to build up and will show the direction of travel for satisfaction at EDDC.

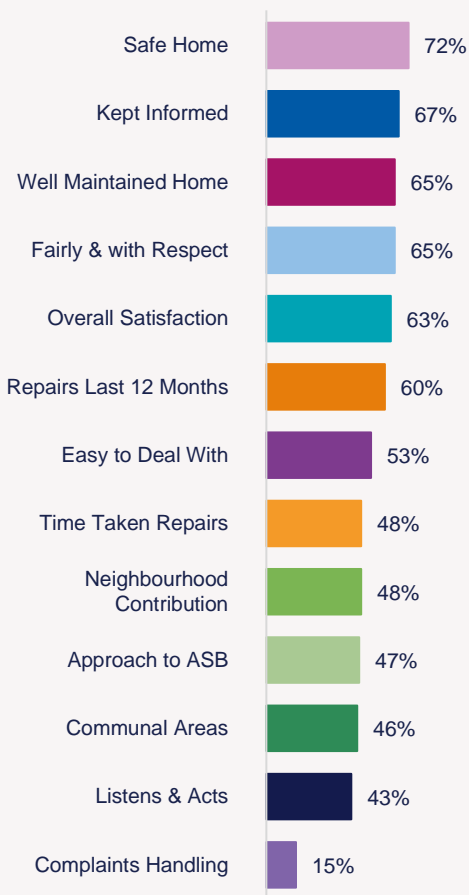
In the meantime, the results will act as a baseline to compare future surveys against and will start to show the Council the levels of satisfaction its tenants show and will help identify those areas which could improve.





Summary

Satisfaction with Measures



Summary



Three Devon councils have formed a consortium that has commissioned Acuity to carry out a series of satisfaction surveys on their tenants during 2024/25. The quarterly surveys are based on the Tenant Satisfaction Measures from the Regulator of Social Housing, which all registered landlords must collect. This report is based on the first of these for East Devon District Council with separate reports for Exeter City Council and Mid Devon District Council.

The survey was conducted both online and by telephone interview with the aim of completing a 20%/80% split. At the close of the survey on 16 September 2024, 175 completed responses had been received, 35 online and 140 by telephone interview.

Satisfaction is moderate across the range of the survey measures and the Council has the lowest satisfaction of the three Councils in the consortium. There are 63% of tenants satisfied with the overall services provided, whilst the highest satisfaction is for the way tenants are kept informed about things that matter to them and the safety of the home. However, on six of the survey measures, fewer than half the tenants are satisfied, with the lowest ratings for the way the Council listens to tenants' views and acts upon them at 43% and just 15% are satisfied with the way complaints are handled, considerably more (71%) being dissatisfied.

As this is the first survey of this series for EDDC, although it is in Q2 24/25, there is currently no trend information available. The survey will, therefore, act as a baseline to compare future services against as well as setting the satisfaction of tenants into some context.

The survey also included open-ended questions allowing the tenants to explain the reasons for their scores and suggest ways the Council could improve its services. Whilst a number of tenants praised the performance of the teams, this is the area also attracting the most negative comments. In particular, the Council appears to have an issue with outstanding repairs and the time taken to complete works. However, the upkeep of the communal areas, including cleaning and grounds maintenance also attracts some criticism and some have difficulty making contact, being passed around departments and some calls are not returned when promised.

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 tends to be highest in Exeter and Mid Devon, whilst the tenants of EDDC are consistently less satisfied than those of the other two Councils in the consortium. 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

Whilst a number of tenants praise the performance of the repairs teams, this is also the source of much of the dissatisfaction shown. Tenants mention the issue of outstanding repairs and the time to complete repairs, in particular. It does appear that the Council does have a problem with repairs which remain outstanding or are taking a long time to get around to. This is supported by the fact that as many tenants are dissatisfied with the time to complete repairs as are satisfied and 28% are dissatisfied with the repairs service in the last 12 months. There doesn't appear to be a major problem with damp & mould, which can delay other less urgent works, and this suggests that the operation of the repairs service could be tightened up. EDDC should look at the comments around outstanding works and put in a programme to complete these, or at least communicate fully with its tenants over what can be done and what can't, and the likely timescales involved. Whilst this won't please everyone it could help appease some who currently feel frustrated and unhappy.

Handling of complaints

The handling of complaints stands out from the other measures with just 15% satisfied and considerably more (71%) dissatisfied, and this will be disappointing to the Council. Whilst this measure consistently scores low in other similar surveys, and there is still an issue of 'what is a complaint?', tenants still need to be made fully aware of the complaints process and what they can expect in terms of the standards of service. Some landlords have started to include further questions to find out more about these complaints and to help target areas for improvement; something EDDC may wish to consider in the future. In the meantime, again, communication is key, setting out the process and likely response and the possible timescales involved in resolving issues. Furthermore, tenants want to be constantly updated on the progress of their complaints, even when there is little happening.

Communal area maintenance

Although fewer than half the tenants live in a building with communal areas which are the responsibility of EDDC to maintain, their upkeep is important to these, and some suggest the services are not as good as they could be. There are 42% of tenants dissatisfied with the communal maintenance and the main reasons given are to do with the grounds maintenance, in particular the grass cutting, and the cleaning of the internal areas, some complaining about its quality and frequency. The comments suggest that the service is a little inconsistent, so the Council should review the delivery of these estate-based services to ensure they meet a consistent standard and provide value for money for the charges tenants pay.



Demographics

Council



When looking at the results from the three Councils in the consortium, the tenants of Exeter CC are the most satisfied overall and with eight of the remaining survey measures, with those in Mid Devon the most satisfied on five.

However, those in East Devon are consistently the least satisfied of the three, just 63% are satisfied with the overall services and only 15% are satisfied with the handling of complaints.

	Mid Devon DC	Exeter CC	East Devon DC
Overall Satisfaction	70%	74%	63%
Well Maintained Home	73%	77%	65%
Safe Home	83%	81%	72%
Repairs Last 12 Months	73%	76%	61%
Time Taken Repairs	71%	78%	48%
Communal Areas	64%	56%	46%
Neighbourhood Contribution	61%	64%	48%
Approach to ASB	53%	55%	47%
Listens & Acts	54%	54%	43%
Kept Informed	75%	70%	67%
Fairly & with Respect	75%	80%	65%
Easy to Deal With	70%	72%	53%
Complaints Handling	33%	32%	15%



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 very 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 those of 4 to 5 years the least satisfied. However, those with tenancies of 20 years or over are also highly satisfied with 75% satisfied with the maintenance of their home and 84% with its safety.

	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	63%	75%	59%	50%	60%	60%	73%
Well Maintained Home	65%	70%	64%	67%	61%	59%	75%
Safe Home	72%	45%	70%	50%	70%	75%	84%
Repairs Last 12 Months	60%	67% *	68%	62%	48%	48%	71%
Time Taken Repairs	48%	50% *	55%	46%	32%	52%	54%
Communal Areas	46%	22% *	53%	20% *	45%	53%	67% *
Neighbourhood Contribution	48%	75% *	55%	40%	41%	39%	61%
Approach to ASB	47%	40% *	44%	33% *	48%	35%	70%
Listens & Acts	43%	25% *	43%	29%	42%	42%	56%
Kept Informed	67%	50% *	58%	57%	58%	69%	83%
Fairly & with Respect	65%	64%	62%	64%	69%	56%	74%
Easy to Deal With	53%	60%	52%	40%	57%	40%	64%
Complaints Handling	15%	33% *	11% *	30%	14%	0%	22% *

*Base below 10



Age Group

It is 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 (87%) followed by those aged 60 to 64 (85%).

The older aged groups are generally the most satisfied across the range of measures whilst those aged 25 to 34 are the least satisfied overall (27%) and with seven of the other measures.

	All Residents	0 - 24	25 - 34	35 - 44	45 - 54	55 - 59	60 - 64	65 - 74	75 - 84	85 +
Overall Satisfaction	63%	100% *	27%	50%	58%	50%	85%	65%	87%	75% *
Well Maintained Home	65%	100% *	43%	63%	58%	53%	77%	59%	82%	80% *
Safe Home	72%	100% *	29%	67%	72%	53%	77%	57%	95%	100% *
Repairs Last 12 Months	60%	100% *	44% *	75%	63%	20%	56% *	47%	69%	100% *
Time Taken Repairs	48%	100% *	44% *	58%	37%	10%	78% *	47%	46%	67% *
Communal Areas	46%	0% *	38% *	57% *	50%	25% *	33% *	45%	50%	0% *
Neighbourhood Contribution	48%	100% *	30%	36%	47%	42%	70%	47%	57%	80% *
Approach to ASB	47%	100% *	40%	27%	40%	27%	67% *	33%	73%	0% *
Listens & Acts	43%	100% *	27%	31%	50%	27%	57% *	35%	61%	25% *
Kept Informed	67%	100% *	45%	58%	58%	60%	90%	52%	74%	80% *
Fairly & with Respect	65%	100% *	47%	60%	65%	53%	83%	55%	91%	60% *
Easy to Deal With	53%	100% *	33%	53%	40%	35%	75%	55%	67%	60% *
Complaints Handling	15%	- *	13% *	0% *	22% *	11% *	0% *	9%	29% *	0% *

*Base below 10



Gender

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

On the overall services received from the Council, 60% of female tenants are satisfied compared with 68% male, and male tenants are more satisfied with the maintenance and safety of their homes, the upkeep of the communal areas and how they are kept informed.

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

	All Residents	F	M
Overall Satisfaction	63%	60%	68%
Well Maintained Home	65%	63%	69%
Safe Home	72%	71%	73%
Had repair in Past 12 months? (Y/N)	69%	70%	68%
Repairs Last 12 Months	60%	62%	58%
Time Taken Repairs	48%	53%	42%
Has Communal Areas? (Y/N)	42%	33%	53%
Communal Areas	46%	38%	53%
Neighbourhood Contribution	48%	44%	55%
Approach to ASB	47%	48%	45%
Listens & Acts	43%	37%	51%
Kept Informed	67%	66%	68%
Fairly & with Respect	65%	61%	71%
Easy to Deal With	53%	52%	53%
Complaint in last 12 months? (Y/N)	35%	34%	36%
Complaints Handling	15%	14%	15%



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

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