



East Devon District Council

TSM LCRA Tracker Q4 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 started 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 Q4 24/25, although it is the third for EDDC conducted by Acuity.

The fieldwork began on 17 February for the online survey, and this was followed by the telephone interviews starting on 3 March, with the survey eventually closing on 15 March. 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 third of the series of surveys for the year, this report now also includes comparisons with the previous quarters.

The survey is confidential, and the results are sent back to EDDC anonymised unless tenants give their permission to be identified. 78% of tenants gave permission to share their responses with their details attached, and 93% 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 with the previous quarterly surveys
- Inform decisions regarding future service development
- Report to the Regulator from April 2025 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 $\pm 7.27\%$ 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

60%

Overall Satisfaction

Satisfaction with the overall service provided by East Devon District Council has risen in Q4 compared with the Q3 results, and there are now 60% of tenants satisfied, up 3 percentage points (p.p).

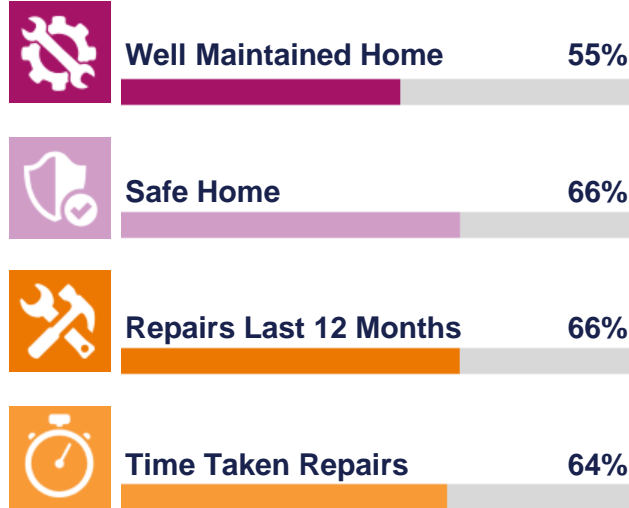
The highest scores for measures in Q4 are for being kept informed (70%), repairs over the past 12 months and the provision of a safe home (both 66%).

However, two measures fall below 50% satisfaction, these being the way the Council listens to tenants' views and acts upon them (43%), down 1p.p since Q3 and just 16% are satisfied with the handling of complaints, down 5p.p on last quarter.

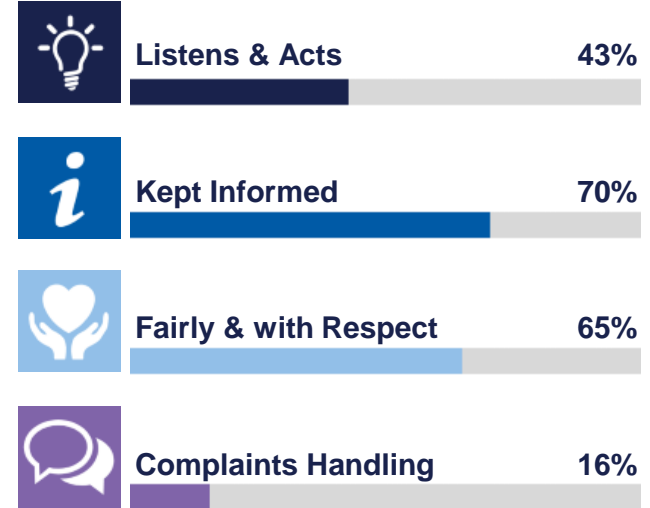
The report focuses on the headline figures but also includes comments from the tenants to help understand the reasons behind the scores.

TSM Key Metrics

Keeping Properties in Good Repair



Respectful & Helpful Engagement



Responsible Neighbourhood Management





Overall Satisfaction



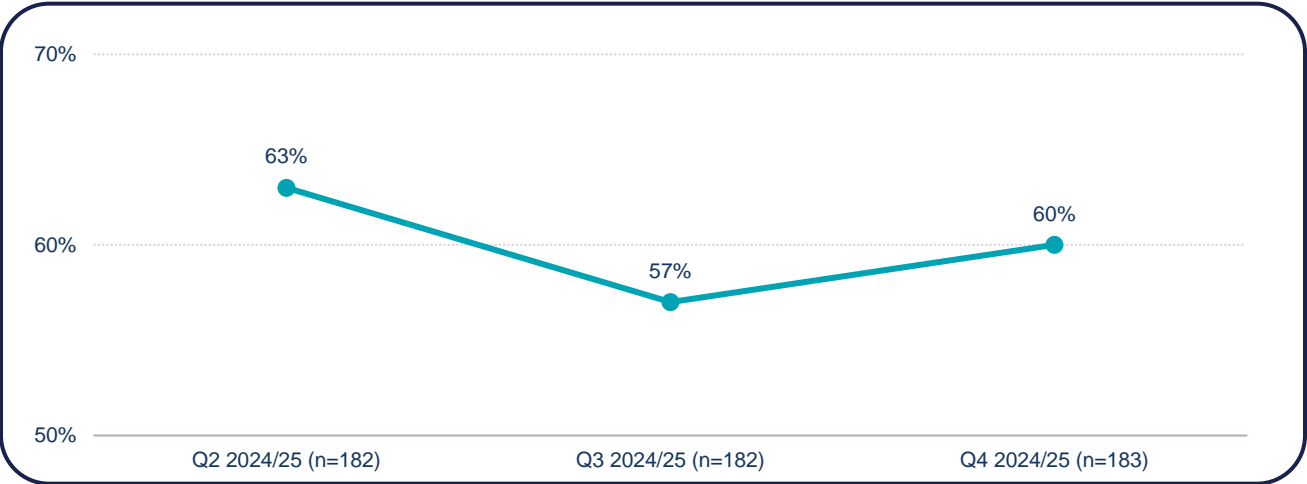
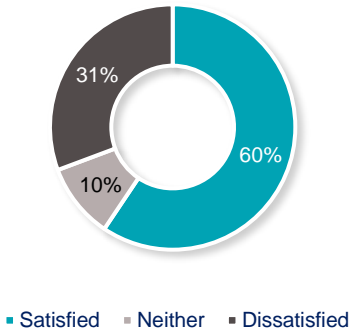
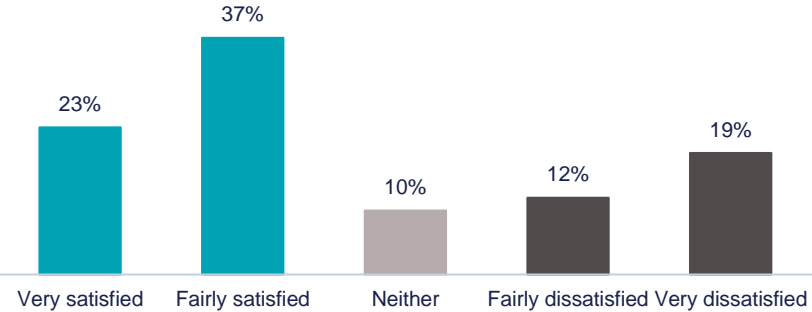
Overall Satisfaction

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 risen in Q4 compared with the Q3 results, and there are now 60% of tenants satisfied, up 3p.p from 57% in Q3. However, there are still fewer very satisfied (23%) than fairly satisfied (37%); ideally, this should be the other way around.

Around a third of tenants are dissatisfied with the overall service (31%), with 19% very dissatisfied and 12% fairly dissatisfied. Additionally, 10% are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.

There are often fluctuations in satisfaction within the year, as is shown here with a fall in Q3 to 57% and a rise in Q4 to 60%.





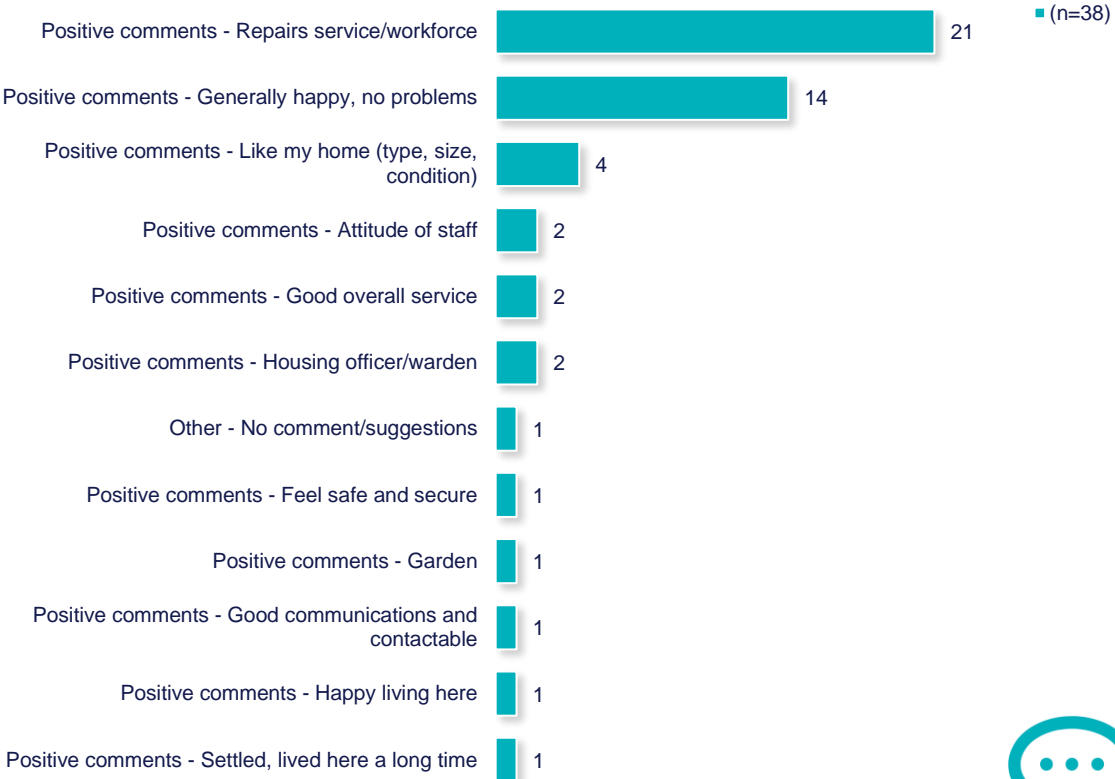
Comments - Very Satisfied

Tenants were asked to explain their reasons behind their responses to the overall service question. Here shows those giving a 'very satisfied' answer; 38 left comments.

The survey responses indicate a generally positive sentiment towards the service provided by EDDC, particularly in relation to repairs and support. Many respondents highlight the promptness and efficiency of the repair services, with several noting that issues are addressed quickly and effectively. Comments such as *"they do the repair quickly"* and *"they come when they say they will"* reflect a strong appreciation for the reliability of the service.

Long-term tenants express satisfaction with their homes, stating they feel safe and well looked after, with one respondent mentioning 23 years of positive experiences. The support provided during personal hardships, such as financial struggles, is also acknowledged, indicating a compassionate approach from the Council. Communication appears to be a strong point, with many respondents praising the helpfulness and politeness of staff, both on the phone and in person.

Overall, the feedback suggests that the Council is meeting the needs of its tenants effectively, fostering a sense of community and trust.





Comments - Neutral

Those giving a neutral response (93) highlight some dissatisfaction with the current repair and maintenance services provided. Key issues include poor communication, with some respondents expressing frustration over delays in responses and a lack of follow-up on reported problems.

Several individuals report waiting extended periods, some up to 18 months, for repairs, particularly for urgent issues like damp, broken windows, and heating problems. There is a theme of contractors not being specialists for specific jobs, leading to inadequate repairs. Respondents also note that the quality of work is often below par, with many feeling that their concerns are ignored or inadequately addressed.

The need for better coordination among departments and improved communication with tenants is emphasised, as many feel left in the dark regarding the status of their requests.

Overall, the feedback indicates a need for improved service delivery, timely repairs, and a more responsive approach to tenant concerns to improve satisfaction levels.





Comments - Very Dissatisfied

For those who are 'very dissatisfied', 33 tenants gave comments.

These survey responses reveal some dissatisfaction regarding the management of repairs and maintenance. Common themes include poor communication, delays in addressing reported issues, and inadequate follow-up on repairs; 11 of the 33 respondents have experienced ongoing problems with damp, mould, and structural issues, often waiting years for resolution. For instance, one tenant reported a mould problem persisting for seven years, while another mentioned waiting over two years for repairs.

Several respondents highlight the lack of responsiveness from the Council, with some stating they struggle to get through to staff or receive timely updates on their requests. Complaints about the quality of work performed by contractors are also prevalent, with reports of incomplete jobs and damage left behind. Additionally, some tenants express frustration over the disorganisation in handling their cases, leading to a sense of neglect and unaddressed safety concerns.

Overall, the feedback indicates a need for improved communication, timely repairs, and better management of tenants' concerns.





Keeping Properties in Good Repair

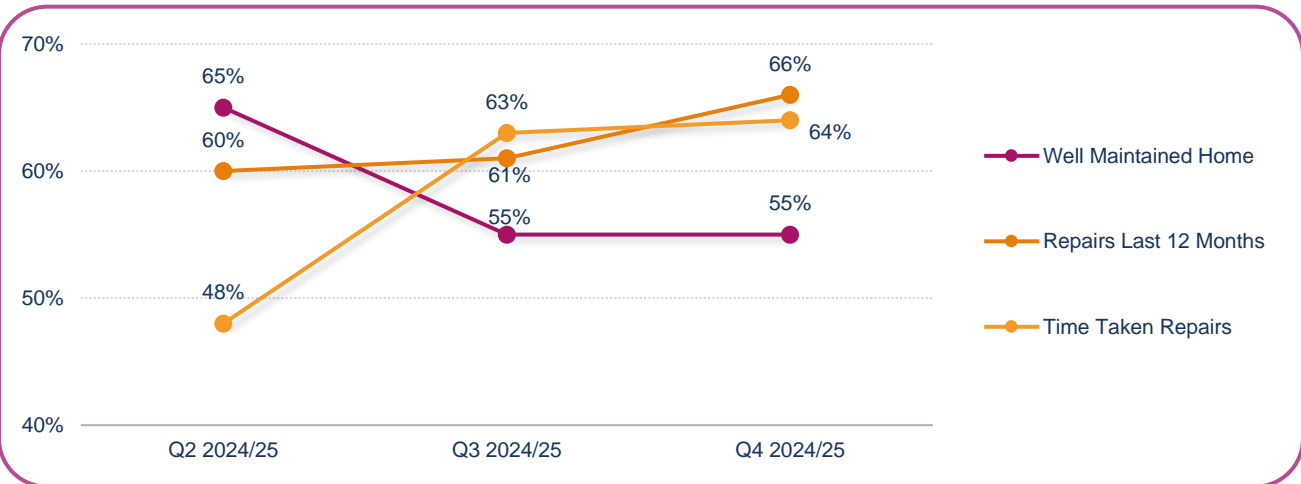
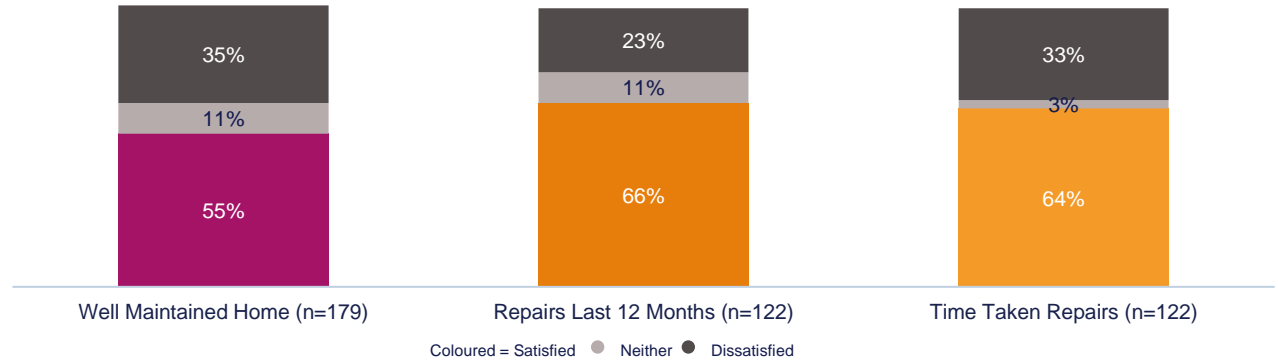


Keeping Properties in Good Repair

Just over half the tenants are satisfied that their home is well maintained (55%), the same as in Q3. However, there are 35% of respondents dissatisfied, and a further 11% are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.

Of the 122 tenants (69%) who said they had a repair completed in the last 12 months, 66% are satisfied with the repair service during this period, a rise of 5p.p. Some 23% reported being dissatisfied.

For the time taken to complete the repair, 64% are satisfied, a rise of 3p.p on the last quarter. However, a third of respondents are dissatisfied with the service, and 3% are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.



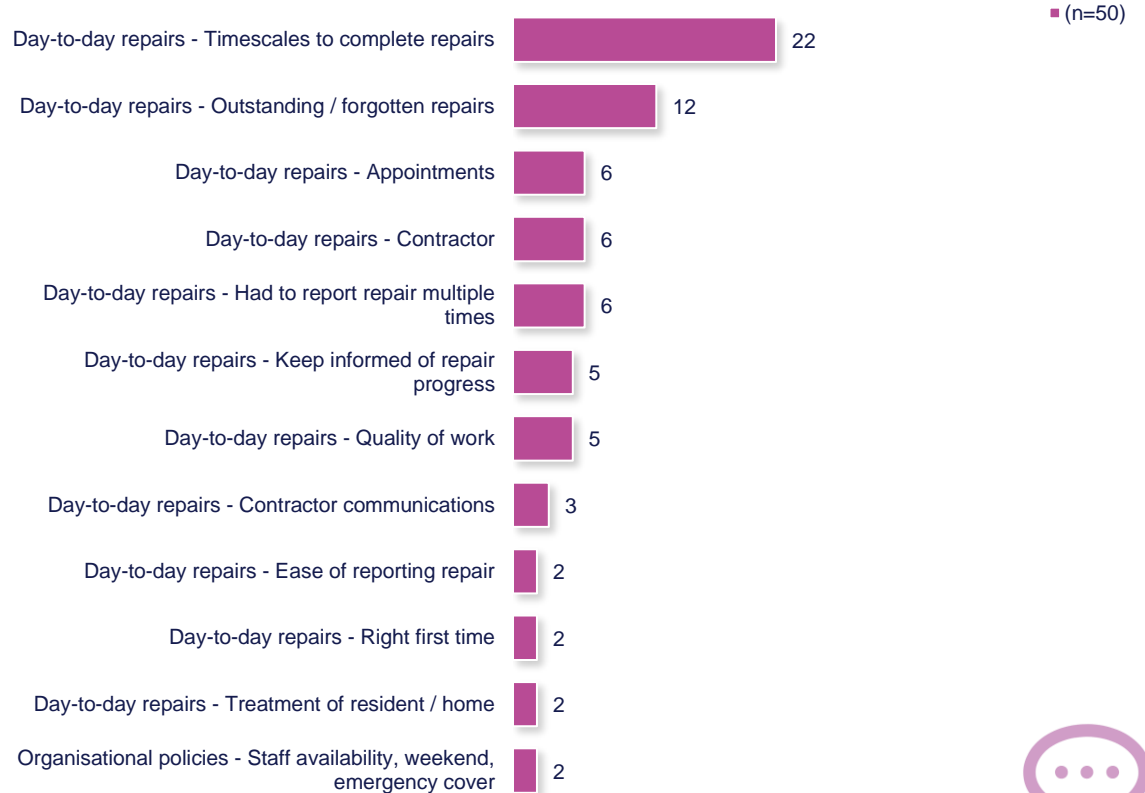


Comments - Dissatisfaction with Repairs

When asked about their dissatisfaction with the repairs service, 50 tenants commented, and these responses highlight issues such as long wait times, poor communication, and inadequate follow-up.

Some respondents report delays in addressing urgent repairs, with some waiting years for resolution. There are complaints about the professionalism of contractors, with several respondents noting that workers often lack the necessary skills or qualifications for the tasks at hand. Communication breakdowns between the Council and contractors are also mentioned, leading to repeated reporting of unresolved issues. Respondents express frustration over the need to chase up repairs and the lack of timely updates on progress. Additionally, there are concerns about the quality of work completed, with many stating that repairs are not done to a satisfactory standard.

Overall, the feedback indicates a need for improved responsiveness, better communication, and enhanced training for contractors to ensure repairs are completed efficiently and effectively.





Maintaining Building Safety



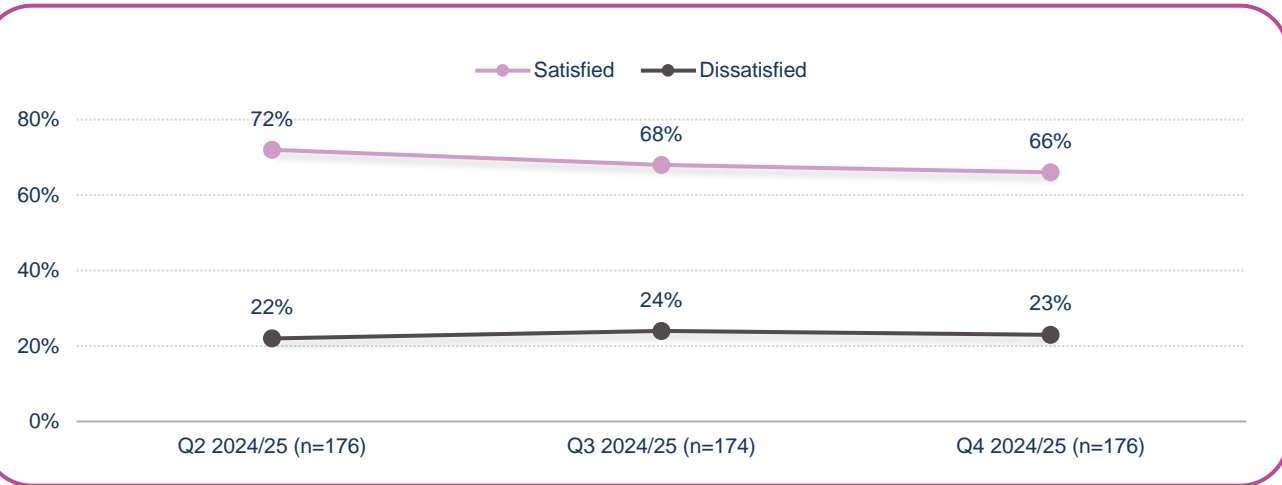
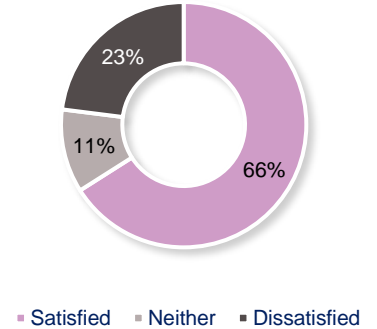
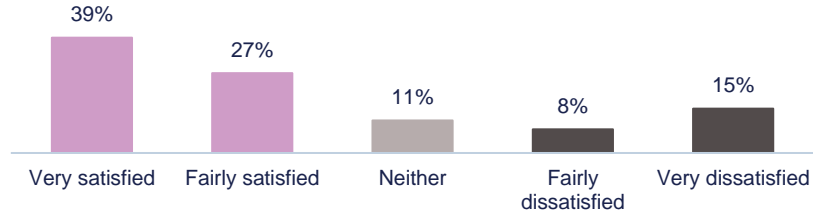
Maintaining Building Safety

Satisfaction with the safety of the home has seen a small decrease in Q4 from 68% to 66%, although it remains one of the highest-scoring metrics in the survey. There are more very satisfied than fairly satisfied, 39% and 27% respectively.

However, 23% are dissatisfied, with 15% of respondents very dissatisfied and another 8% fairly dissatisfied

Commonly, more tenants are satisfied with the safety of their home than with its maintenance, and this is the case here, 66% compared with 55%.

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.



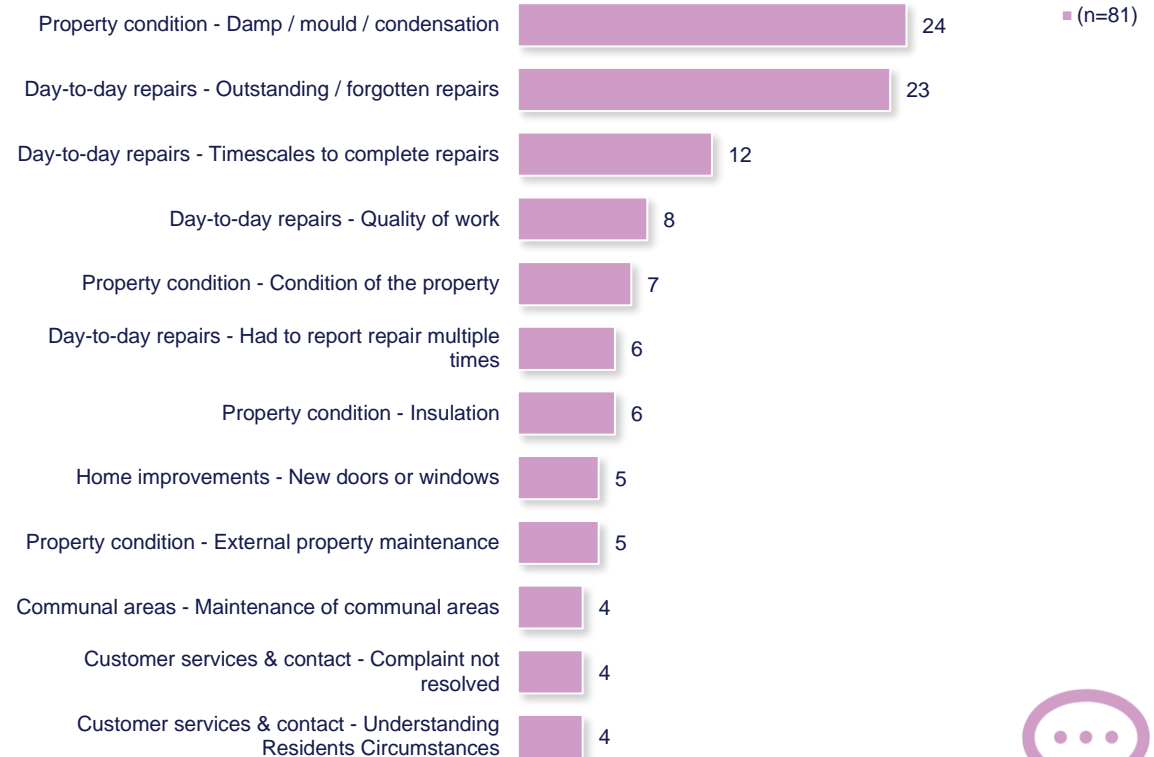


Comments - Home or Communal Areas not Well Maintained or Safe

Some of the 81 responses reveal dissatisfaction regarding property maintenance and communication with the Council. Some 24 respondents report ongoing issues with damp, mould, and general disrepair, with some stating that their properties have been in poor condition for years. Tenants express frustration over the slow response times to repair requests, often having to chase for updates or repeat their complaints multiple times.

There are concerns about the quality of work performed by contractors, with claims that repairs are often incomplete or poorly executed. Additionally, communal areas are frequently neglected, leading to safety hazards and unsightly conditions. Communication is highlighted as a major issue, with tenants feeling ignored or uninformed about the status of their requests. Some respondents also mention the need for more frequent inspections and proactive maintenance to prevent issues from escalating.

Overall, the feedback indicates a need for improved maintenance practices, better communication, and a more responsive approach to tenant concerns.





Responsible Neighbourhood Management

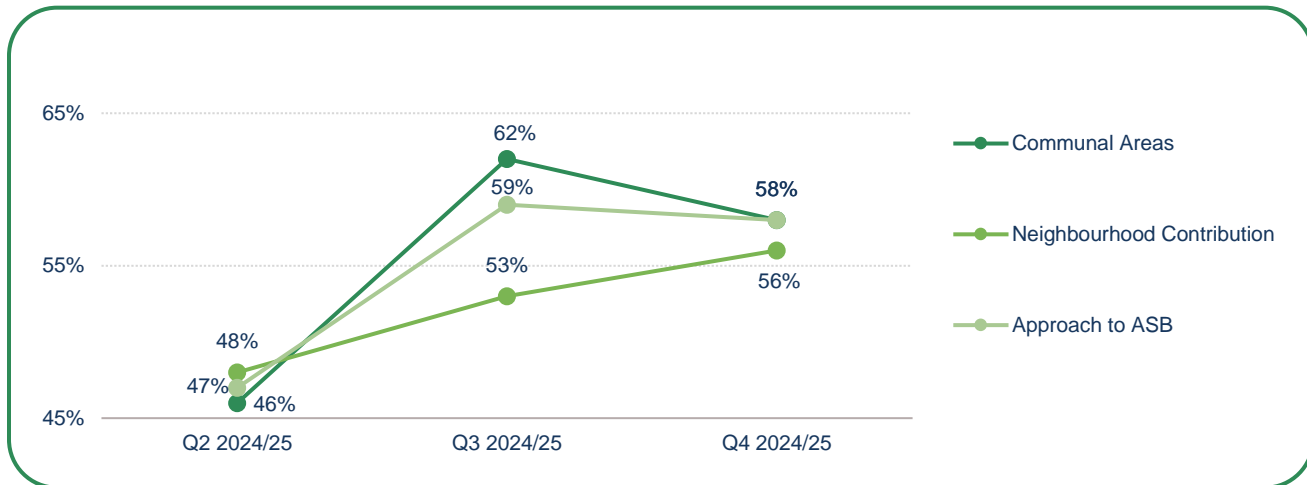
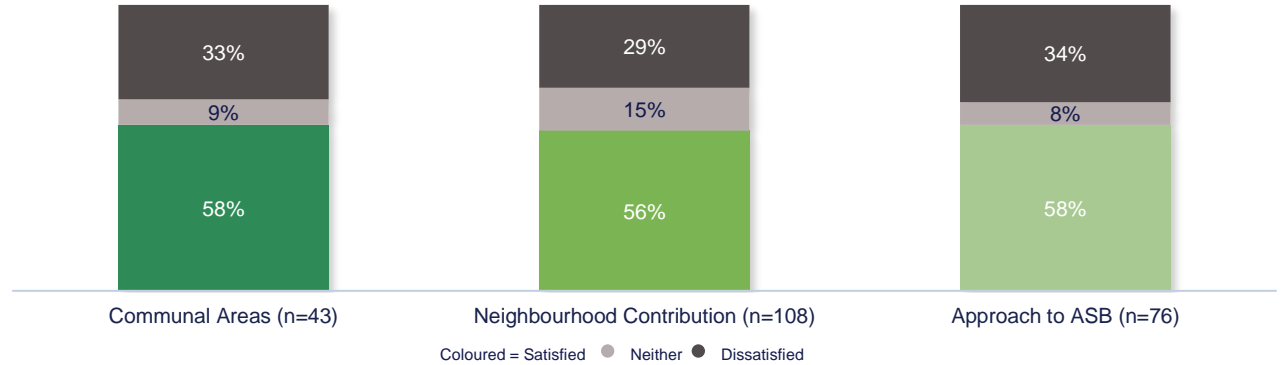


Responsible Neighbourhood Management

Only 43 tenants said they live in a building with communal areas that EDDC is responsible for maintaining. Satisfaction with this aspect of neighbourhood management has seen a slight decrease in Q4 from 63% to 58%. There are now a third of tenants who are dissatisfied and 9% who are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.

Fewer tenants are satisfied with the positive contribution made by the Council to their neighbourhood (56%), although this is a rise of 3p.p since Q3. However, almost a third remain dissatisfied, and 15% are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. In future surveys, EDDC might wish to probe this question further to understand what a 'positive contribution' means to tenants.

Finally, in this section, tenants were asked about the approach taken by the Council to handle anti-social behaviour; 58% said they are satisfied, a fall of 4p.p. There are 34% who are dissatisfied and 8% remain neutral.





Respectful & Helpful Engagement

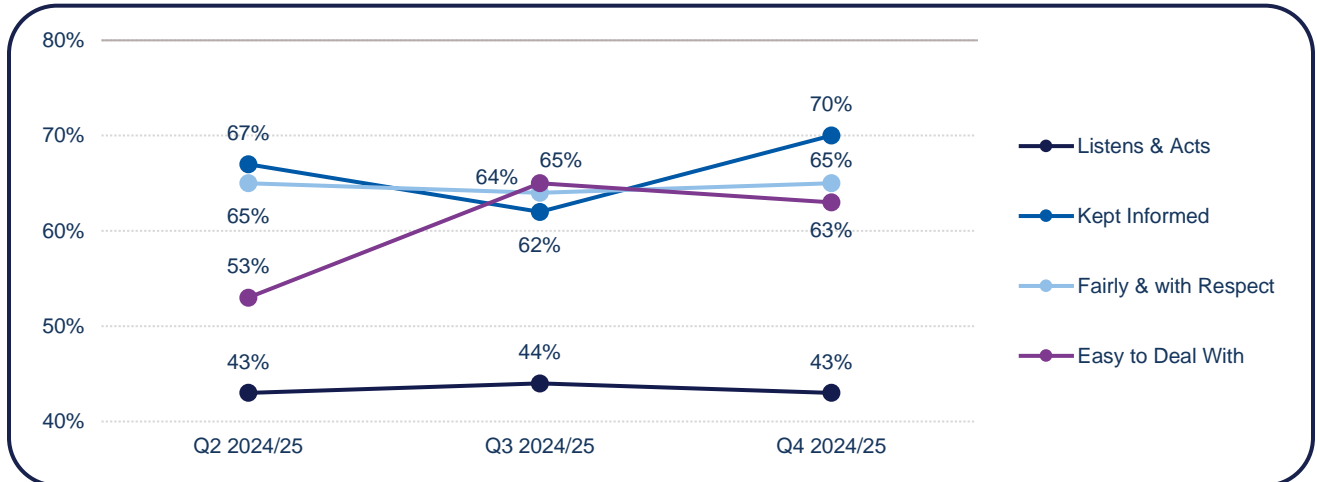
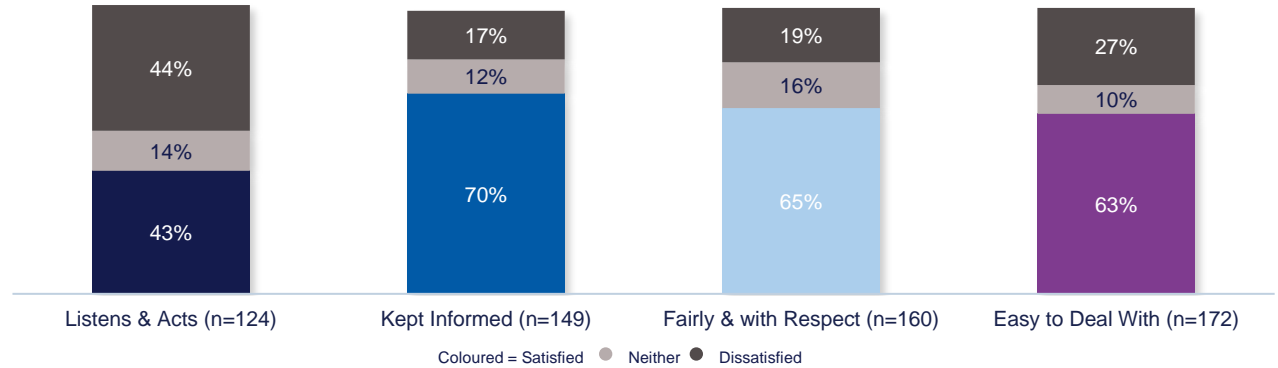


Respectful & Helpful Engagement

Nearly two-thirds of tenants (63%) find dealing with EDDC easy, this having fallen by 1p.p since Q3. However, there are 27% who find it difficult.

Similar numbers (65%) agree that the Council treats them fairly and with respect (up 1p.p), and 70% are satisfied that they are kept informed about things that matter to them. Just 17% are dissatisfied with this metric, and 12% are neutral. Satisfaction with being kept informed has risen by 8p.p.

Commonly, 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 43%, down just a little by 1p.p. since the last quarter. However, it is of some concern that more tenants are dissatisfied than satisfied (44%) with another 14% neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.



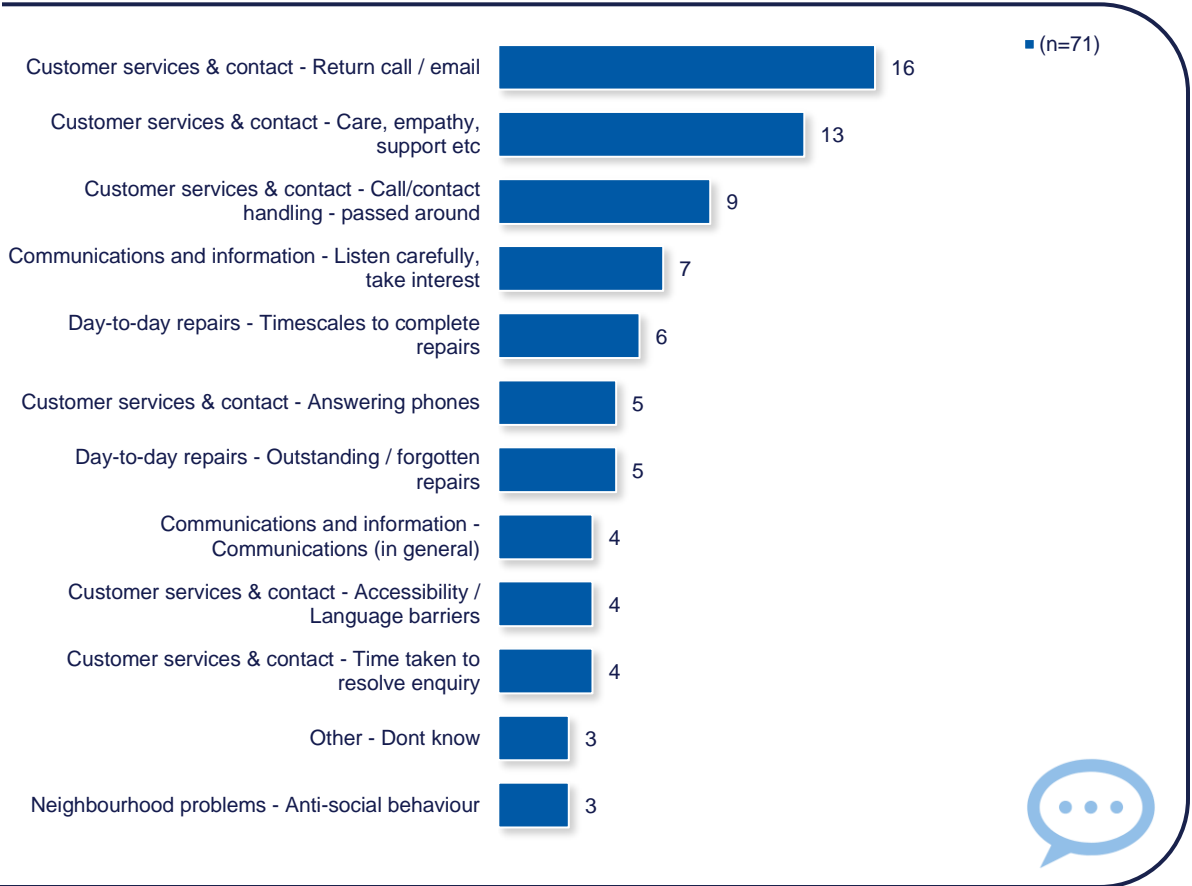


Comments - Customer Service

The survey responses highlight some dissatisfaction with communication and responsiveness from EDDC. 16 out of 71 respondents report difficulties in reaching staff, with calls often going unanswered and messages left without follow-up. Issues with repairs are mentioned, with tenants expressing frustration over delays and a lack of action on reported problems, such as broken pipes and mould.

Several respondents note that communication about ongoing work and tenant concerns is inadequate, leading to feelings of being ignored or fobbed off. There are also complaints about the quality of service from contractors, with reports of unqualified personnel attending jobs. Additionally, some respondents feel that their concerns, particularly regarding anti-social behaviour and property maintenance, are not taken seriously.

Overall, the feedback indicates a need for improved communication, more efficient repair processes, and better customer service training for staff to enhance tenant satisfaction and trust.





Effective Handling of Complaints



Effective Handling of Complaints

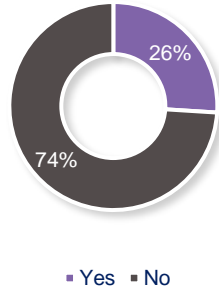
Just over a quarter of tenants (26%) said they had made a complaint to the Council in the last 12 months, which equates to around 45 tenants who had responded to the survey. However, it is impossible to say how many of these are formal or genuine complaints rather than service requests that have yet to be fully actioned.

Just 16% of these tenants are satisfied with the handling of these complaints, with considerably more dissatisfied (76%).

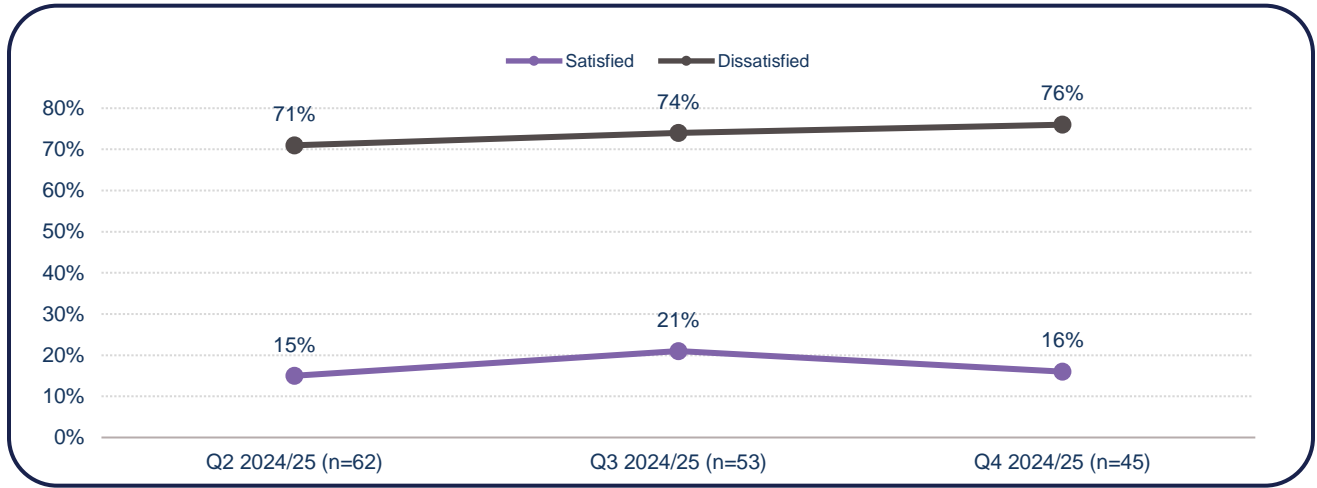
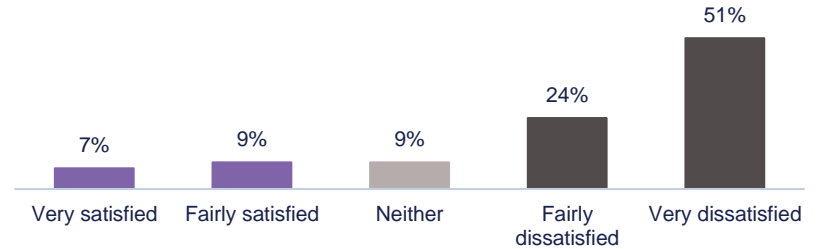
This is, again, the lowest-ranked service in the survey, but this is generally the case as complaints handling has scored poorly ever since the question was included in the suite of TSM questions. However, the low level of satisfaction should still be a cause for concern for EDDC.

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 EDDC may wish to consider in future surveys.

Complaint in last 12 months



Satisfaction with Complaints Handling





Wellbeing



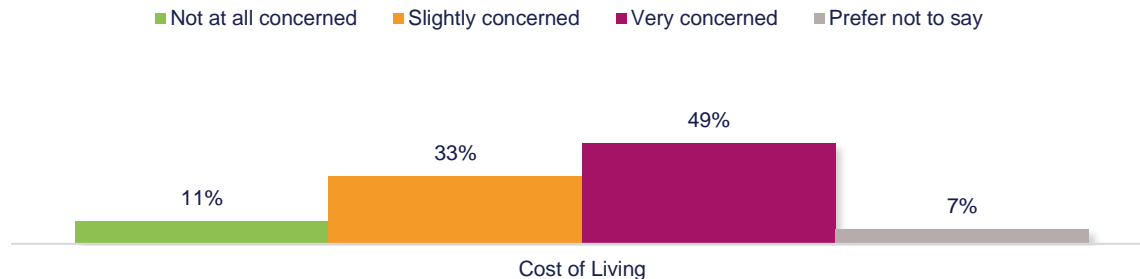
Cost of Living

Over eight out of ten tenants say they are concerned about the cost of living, 49% are very concerned, and a further 33% are slightly concerned. There are just 11% of tenants who are not concerned at all, with a further 7% preferring not to say.

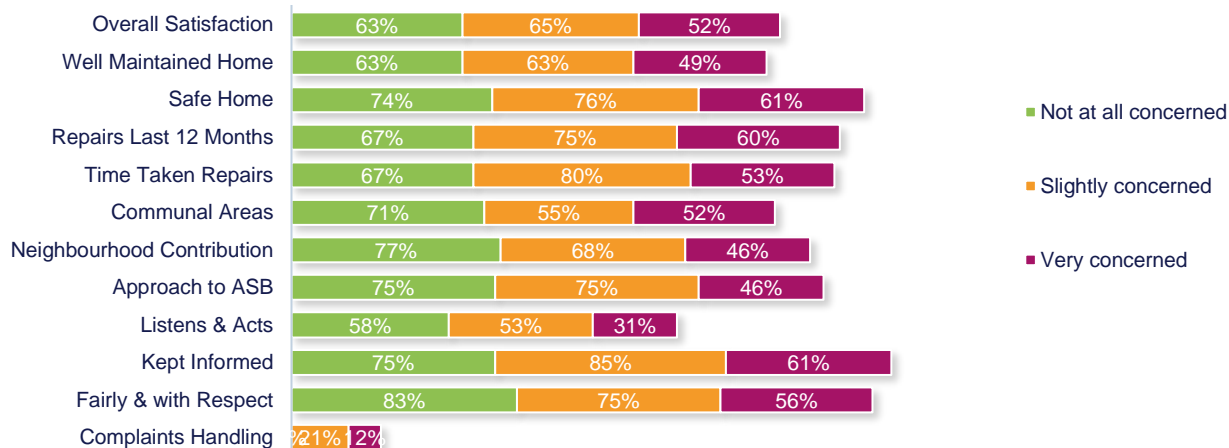
There is a theory that those struggling financially are often less satisfied with the services they receive, and this does appear to be the case here. However, those who are slightly concerned are roughly on a par with those who are not concerned at all. For example, while 52% of those who are very concerned about the cost of living are satisfied overall, 63% of those not concerned and 65% of those who are slightly concerned are satisfied overall.

This pattern continues across the range of measures and tends to support this theory about those who are very concerned. 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



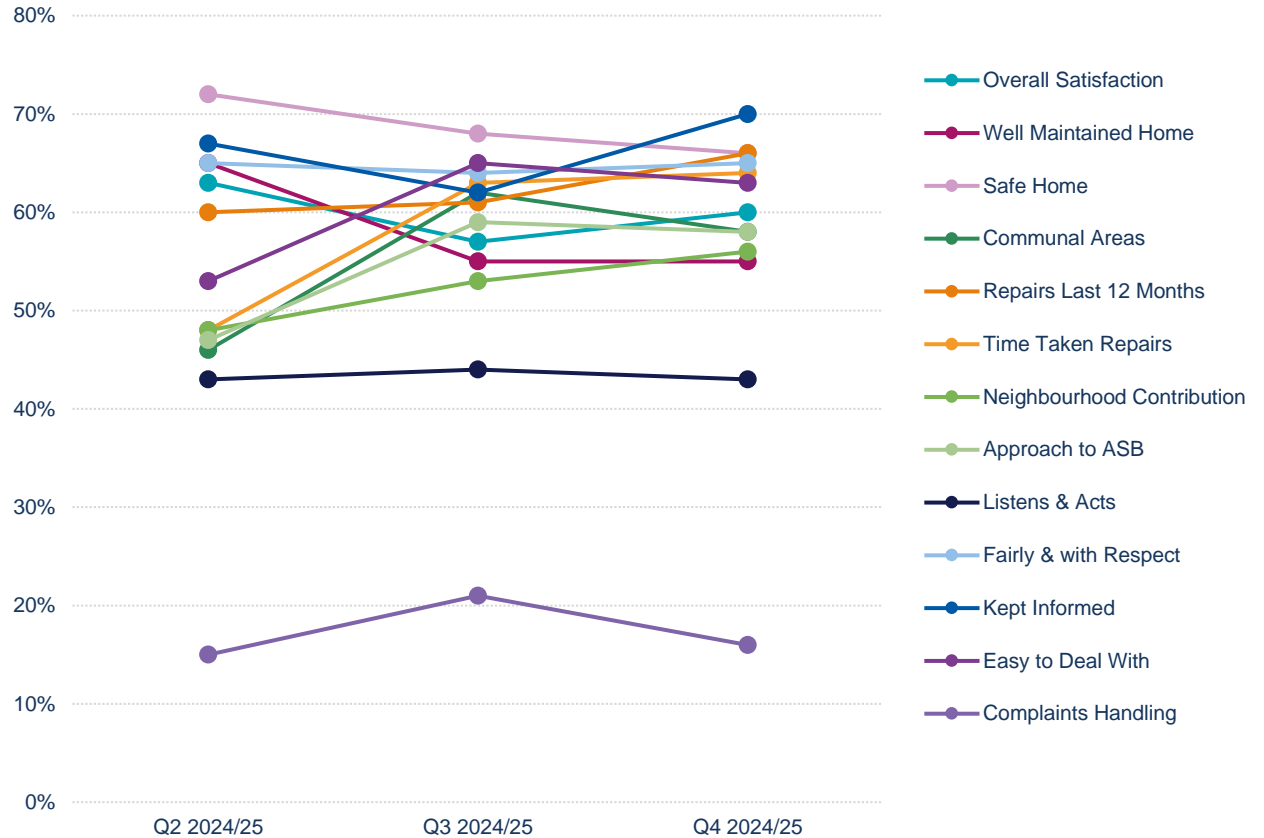
Trends Over Time

Now that the third survey of the year has been completed, it is possible to compare the results from all three surveys.

This shows 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 the last two surveys, around 14.5p.p, so no measures exceed this figure.

There are often fluctuations in satisfaction throughout the year, and these are well within the range of 'normal'.





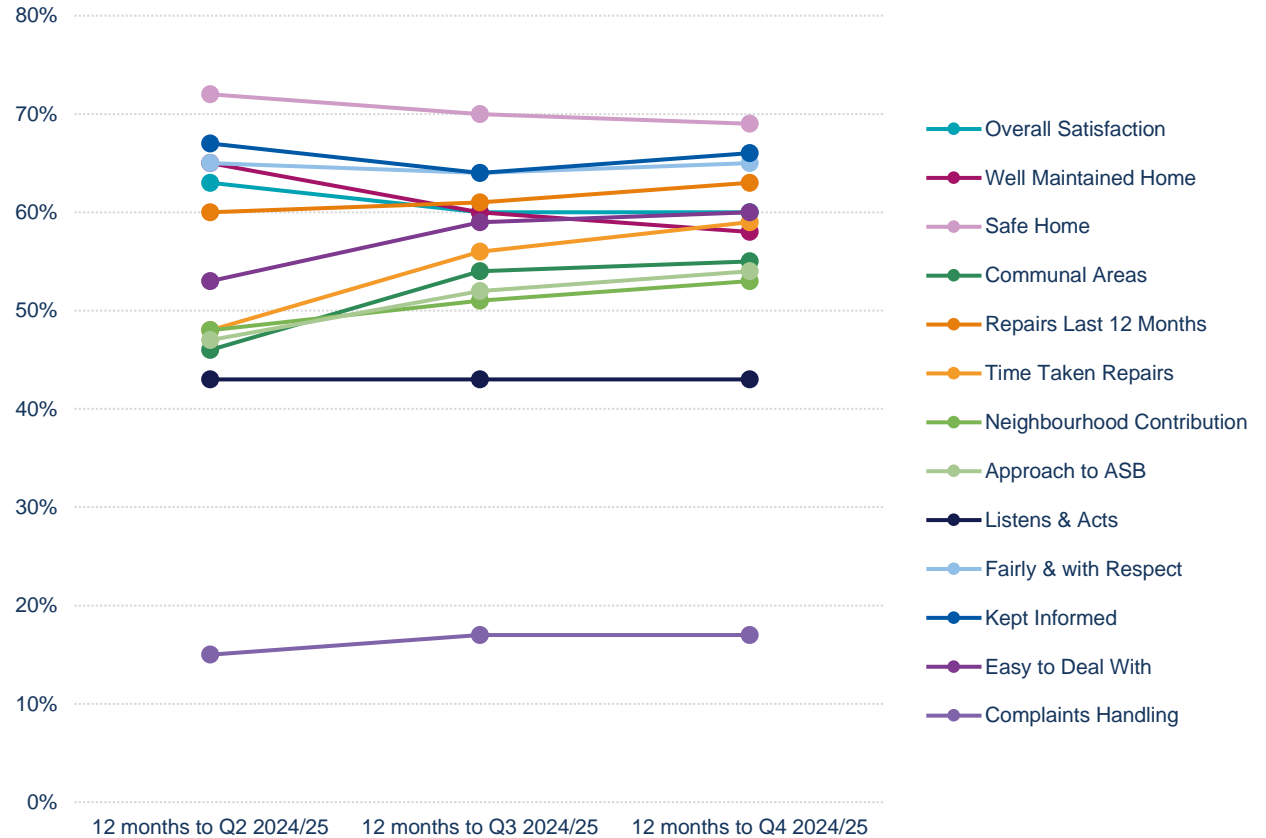
12 Month Rolling Averages

As the surveys progress throughout the year, the 12-month rolling averages are calculated, which gives a more accurate view and are not so subject to the fluctuations between quarters.

As this chart shows, the results are generally more stable. There is an upward trend for repairs over the last 12 months, the neighbourhood contribution and EDDC's approach to anti-social behaviour.

There is a downward trend in the provision of a safe home and a well-maintained home.

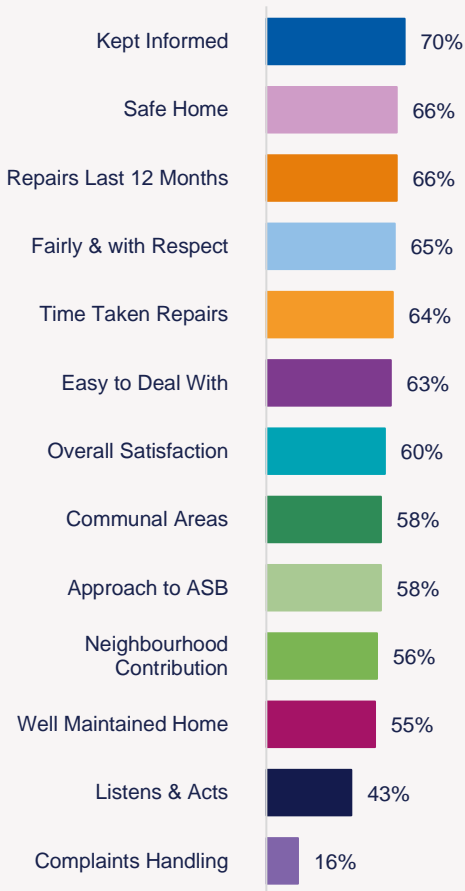
However, there are three surveys for this year and the inclusion of another one next year and as the surveys progress, it will become clearer whether these changes are just normal fluctuations across quarters or part of a longer-term trend.





Summary

Satisfaction with Measures



Summary & Recommendations



Satisfaction is generally good across the range of the survey measures. Overall satisfaction is at 60%, a 3p.p increase on the last quarter, sitting in the middle of the range of measures, with the highest satisfaction for being kept informed (70%), the repairs service in the last 12 months and the provision of a safe home (both 66%).

As this is the third survey of this series for EDDC, it has been possible to plot the changes in satisfaction between Q1, Q2 and Q3. The survey also included some open-ended questions allowing the tenants to explain the reasons for their scores and suggest ways the Council could improve its services. Again, the repair service attracts the majority of comments, both positive and negative, showing how it works well for some but not for others. The main areas of criticism are the time to complete repairs, dealing with outstanding repairs, the quality of work and some have problems with damp and mould in their homes. In addition, some have issues 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.

Listens and Acts

Listening to tenants and acting upon their views is not only one of the lowest-scoring metrics but also a recurring theme in the qualitative feedback provided by tenants. This should be a priority area for EDDC moving forward. Managing tenant expectations is key, along with demonstrating that their voices have been heard. Regular updates and communications with tenants could increase satisfaction significantly.

Handling of Complaints

The handling of complaints is the lowest-performing metric in the survey. It is vital that tenants feel that any complaint they make is taken seriously and acted upon effectively and in good time. Clear communication around what constitutes a complaint and how long it will take to resolve is needed, as well as managing the expectations of the complainant. Perhaps further training for customer service and complaints staff would be appropriate to help manage expectations.



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

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