

Sandwell MBC

TSM Survey 2024-25 Presentation – 13th December 2024

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Session Outline

Introduction & Overall Satisfaction

TSM Metrics

Further insight

Summary & Recommendations

Q&A



2024-25 TSM Survey

Acuity

- Market research company specialising in the social housing sector
- Acuity have carried out over 5,000 surveys across the last 26 years
- Acuity carry out online, postal, telephone, face-to-face surveys for landlords across England, Ireland & Wales.

TSM Survey Aims:

- Capture 12 TSMs and report to the Regulator
- Provide up-to-date information on tenants' perceptions of current services
- Compare results with other landlords

Methodology

- One-off sample survey of 2,475 LCRA (rented) properties
- Mixed-mode: 20% online survey and 80% telephone (as in 2023/24)
- Quotas set on tenure, area and age – to ensure representative
- 21 Questions (TSM questions plus 3 additional questions, 4 probes/open-ended)
- Fieldwork period: 20 September to 11 November 2024

Response

- 2,475 LCRA responses
 - 529 online (21%) and 1946 telephone (79%) interviews
 - $\pm 1.88\%$ margin of error at the 95% confidence level (target: $\pm 2\%$)
- Note - 2,294 complete and 181 incomplete responses
- 72% gave permission to be identified and of these, 92% are happy to be contacted by Sandwell MBC



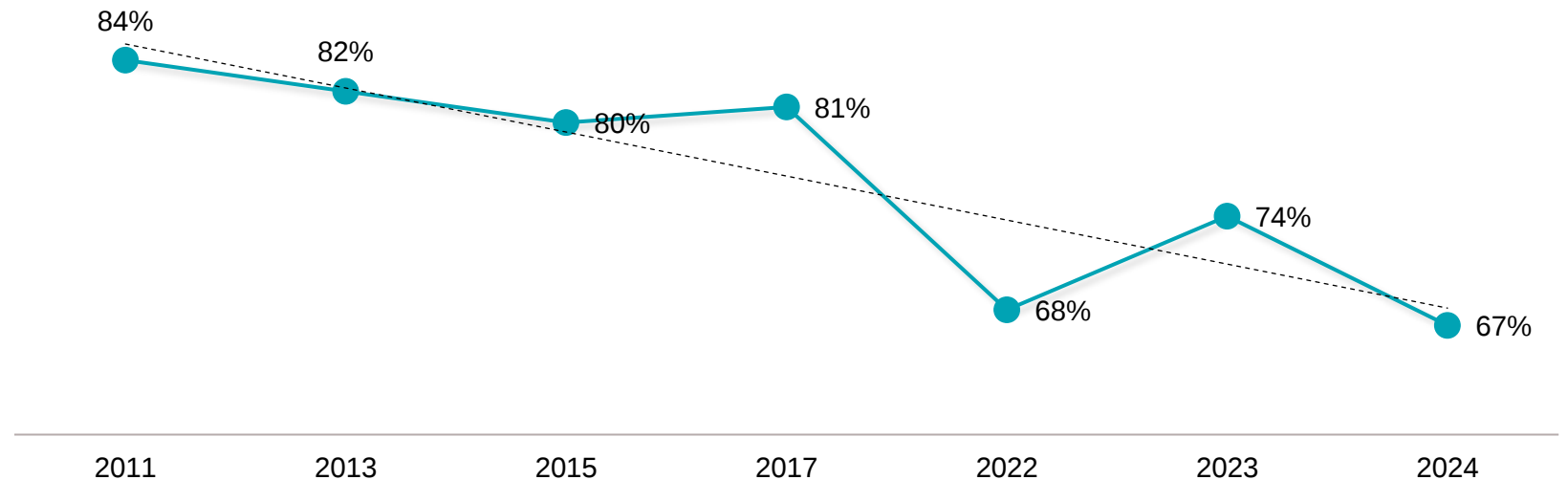
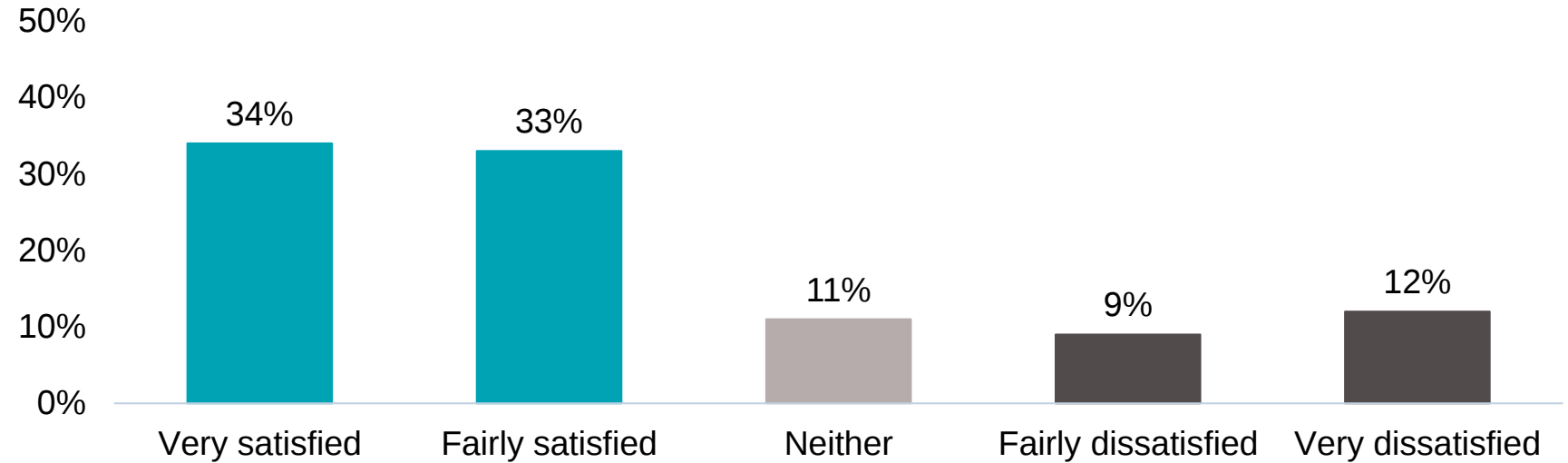
Results include PFI tenants (not included in previous presentation)



Tenants were asked, “Taking everything into account, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the service provided by Sandwell Council’s Housing Services?” This is the key metric in any perception survey.

- **67% satisfied** (down 7p.p) from 74% in 2023
- **22% dissatisfied** (up 7p.p) – Why? Who are they? Where do they live?
- **11% neither satisfied nor dissatisfied** (no change) – what would make them satisfied?

Overall Satisfaction





When considering the results, it is important to consider the national context and external factors.

For example:

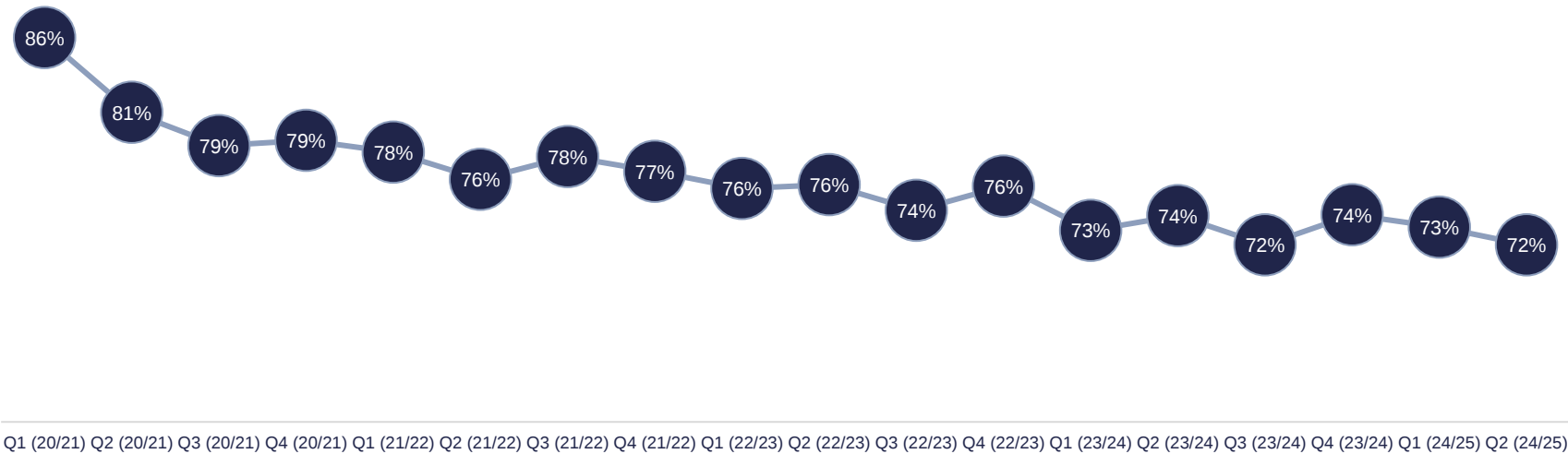
- The Cost of Living Crisis, increase in poverty and pressure on local authority funding
- Government & Political Changes
- Uncertainty about the Future
- Brexit and the economy

Satisfaction is based on perception rather than specific values so can be affected by these factors and how positive people feel about their lives. External factors such as those above, as well as the recent Covid pandemic, could have impacted the way that many social landlords operate.

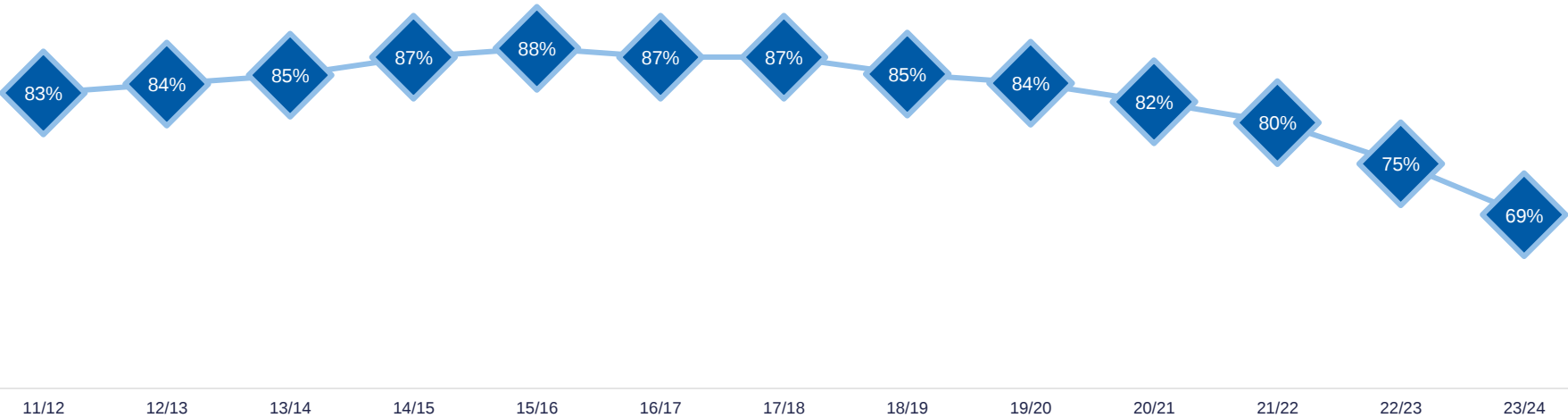
The top graph demonstrates how overall satisfaction has changed over time (tracker only) up until Q2 of 2024/25 - the trendline is downward, although has levelled out since Q1 of 23/24. The lower chart shows the results from Housemark members with a peak in 2015/16 but a steepening decline in more recent years

National Context

Overall Services (Acuity Clients)



Satisfaction with services provided (Housemark median - general needs)





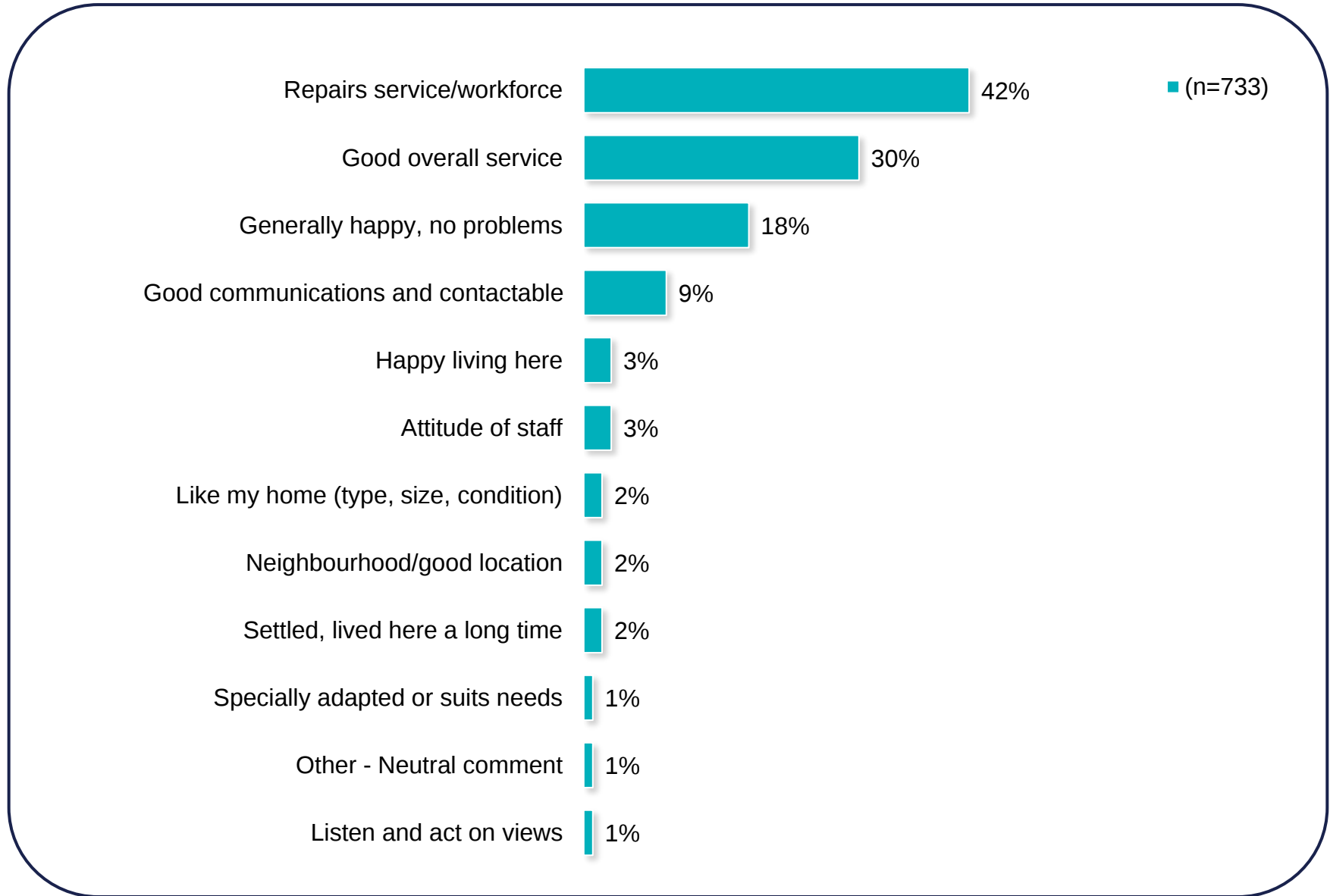
Why tenants are very satisfied
(733 tenants)

The survey responses indicate a **high level of satisfaction with the council's repair services**, with many tenants **praising the promptness and efficiency of responses to maintenance requests**. Common themes include **quick response times, helpful staff, and effective communication**.

However, some respondents noted delays in specific repairs, such as window replacements and ongoing issues with dampness. Recommendations for improvement include enhancing communication regarding repair timelines and addressing outstanding maintenance issues more swiftly.

Overall, maintaining the current service quality while addressing these concerns could further strengthen tenant satisfaction and loyalty.

Comments - Very Satisfied





Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with services overall (121 comments)

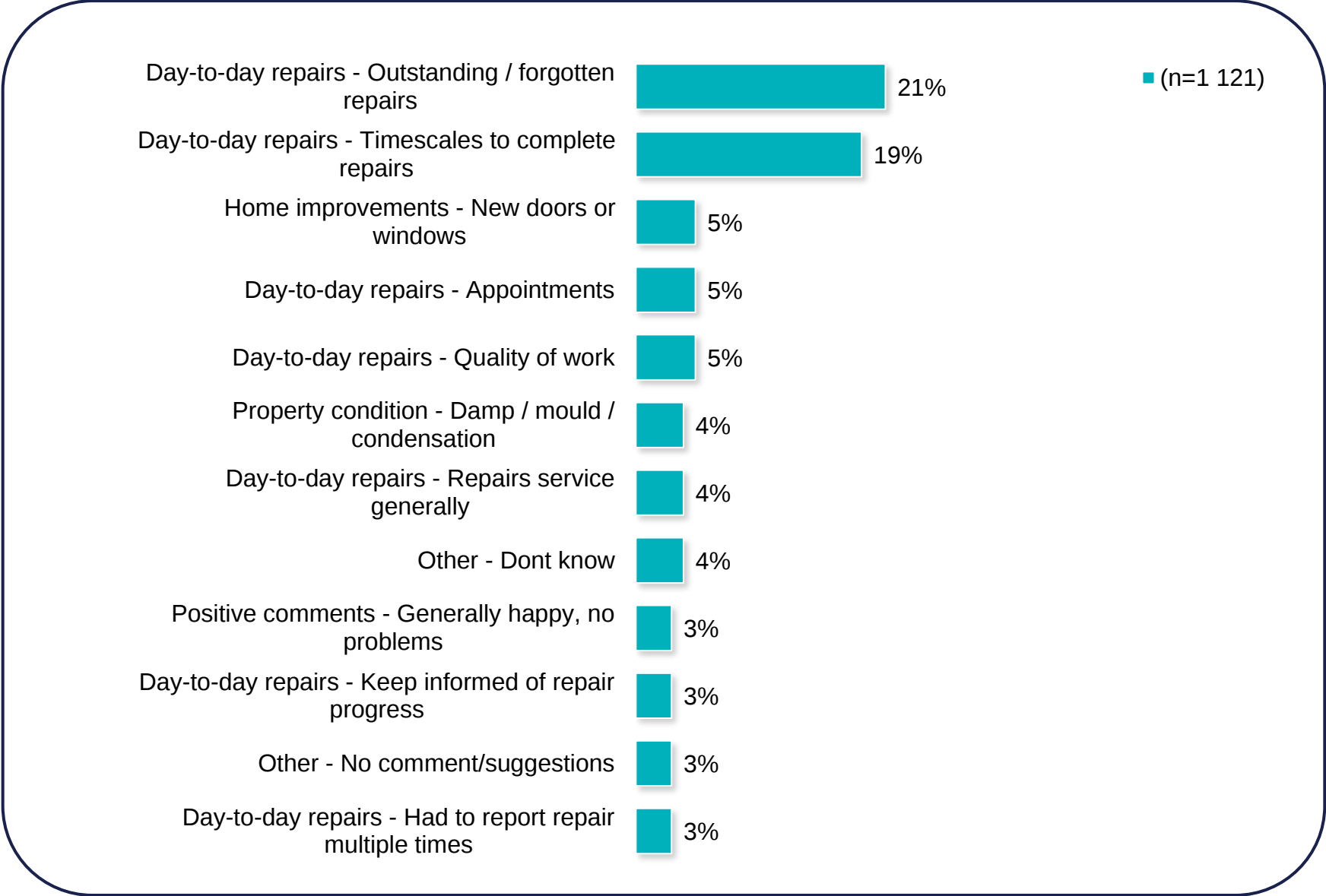
Most comments referred to aspects of the repairs service, with 40% mentioning outstanding repairs and the time taken to complete repairs.

The survey responses indicate significant dissatisfaction with the repair services provided by Sandwell Council, particularly regarding long wait times, poor communication, and incomplete jobs.

Many tenants reported ongoing issues with damp, mould, and inadequate maintenance, often waiting months or even years for repairs.

Recommendations include improving response times, enhancing communication about repair statuses, and ensuring that jobs are completed to a satisfactory standard. Addressing these concerns could lead to increased tenant satisfaction and trust, ultimately enhancing the council's reputation and service quality. Prioritizing repairs, especially for vulnerable tenants, is crucial for effective service delivery.

Comments - Neutral





Very dissatisfied (284 tenants)

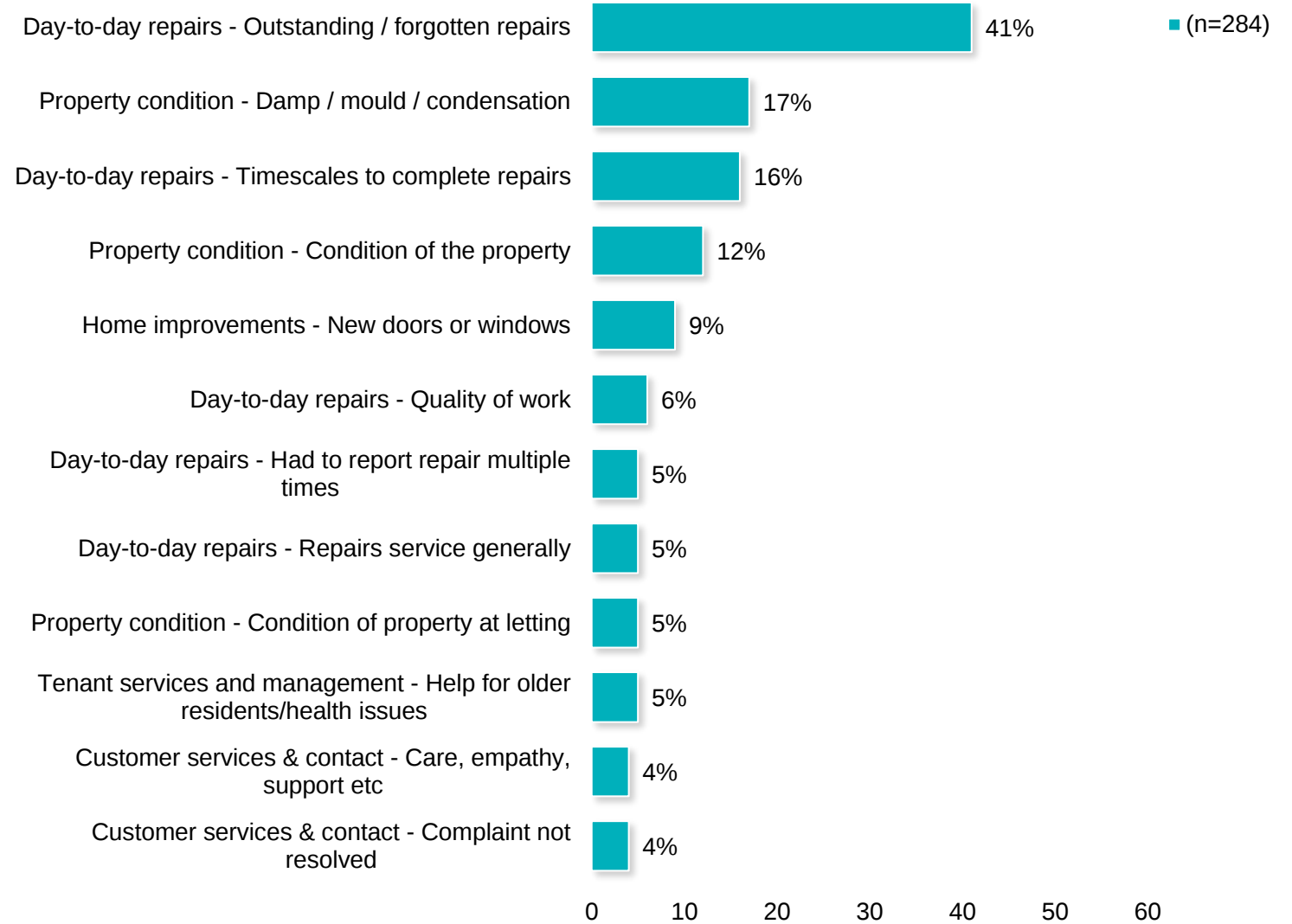
The survey responses reveal significant dissatisfaction with Sandwell Council's repair services, with many tenants reporting **long wait times, incomplete repairs, and poor communication**.

Common issues include **damp and mold, broken doors and windows, and inadequate responses to urgent repairs**.

Tenants express frustration over the **lack of accountability and responsiveness from the council**, with many **feeling ignored despite repeated requests for assistance**.

Recommendations include improving communication channels, expediting repair processes, and ensuring that contractors are held accountable for their work. Addressing these concerns could enhance tenant satisfaction and foster a more positive relationship between the council and its residents.

Comments - Very Dissatisfied



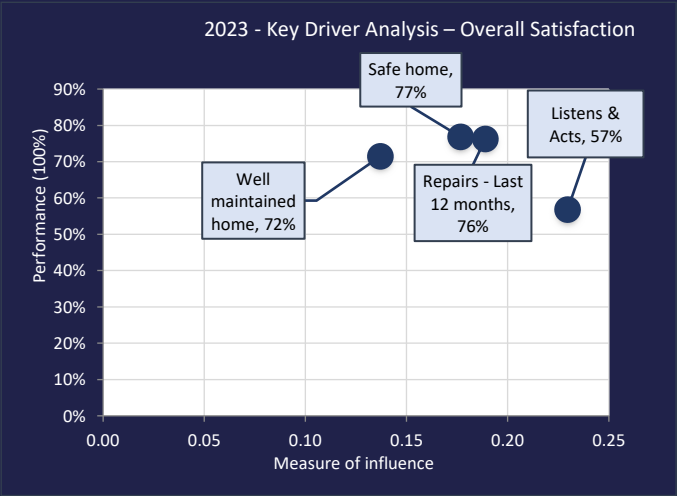


Key driver analysis looks at what drives overall satisfaction, which can help with service improvements. Each landlord has its own unique pattern

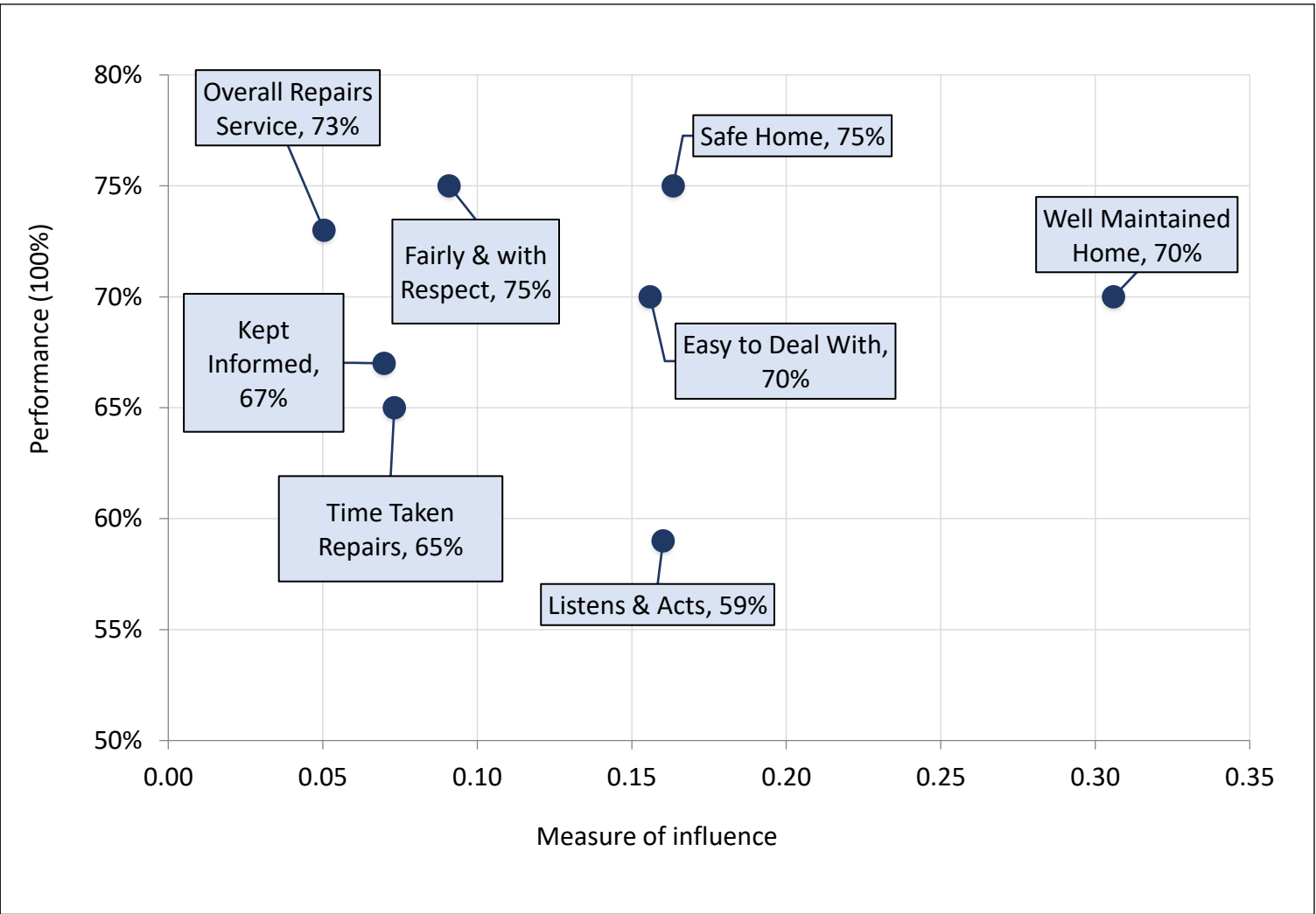
The most important driver for tenants' satisfaction with the overall services is a well-maintained home.

Also important are having a safe home, being easy to deal and listening and action on views.

Having a well-maintained home is now more important to tenants.



Key Driver Analysis



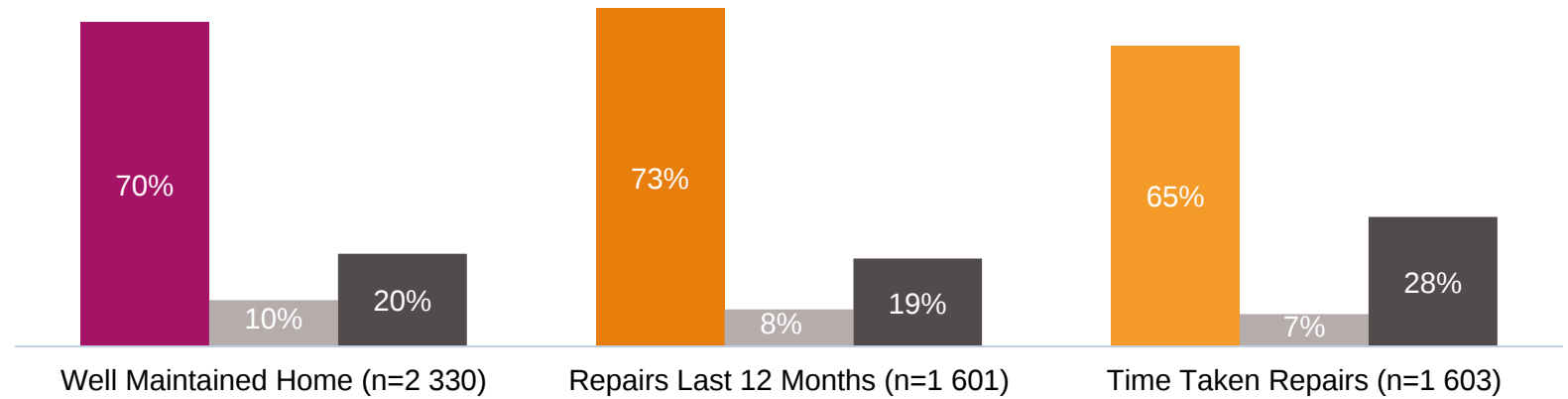


TSM Themes & Metrics



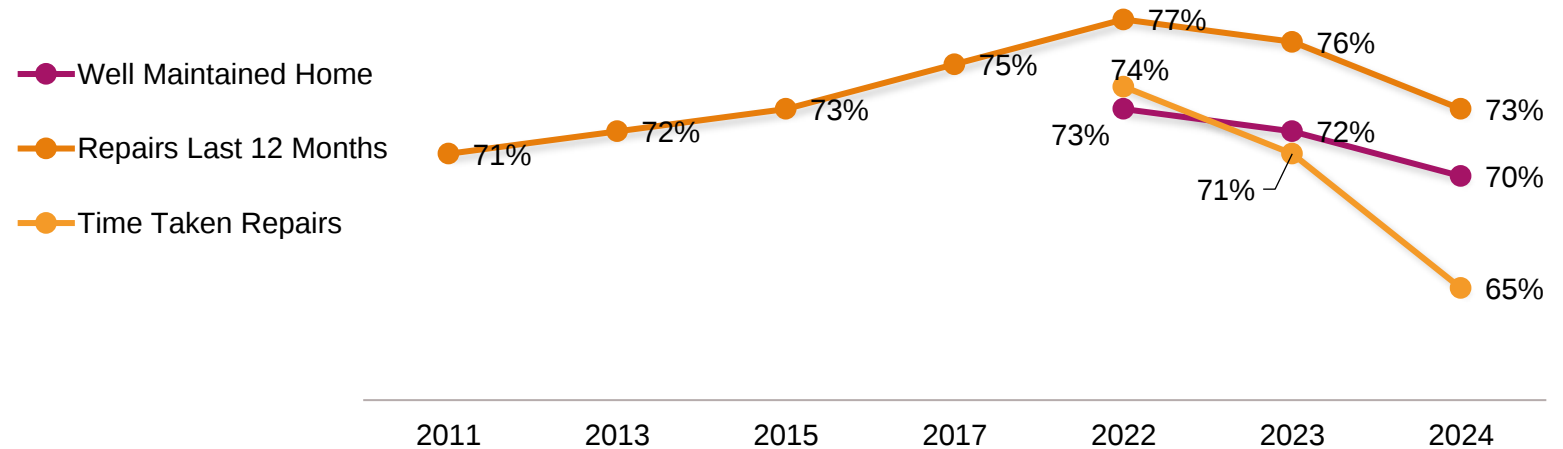
- 70% of tenants felt their home was well-maintained (down 2p.p) 20% dissatisfied
- 68% of tenants had a repair in last 12 months
 - 73% satisfied with service (down 3p.p)
 - 65% time taken (down 6p.p)

Keeping Properties in Good Repair



What is driving falling satisfaction?

Does this match what the Council are seeing?



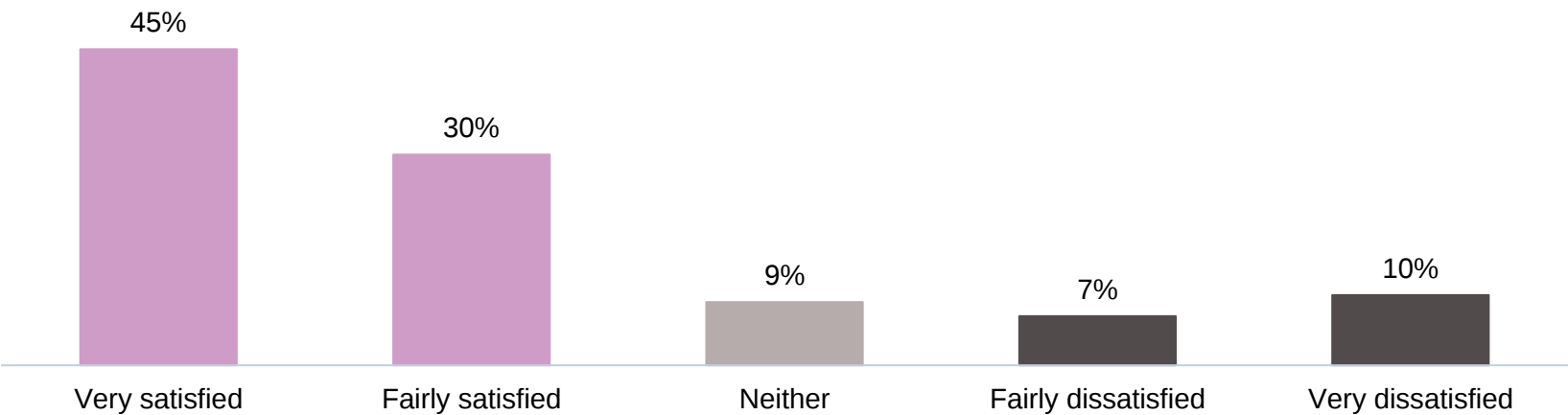
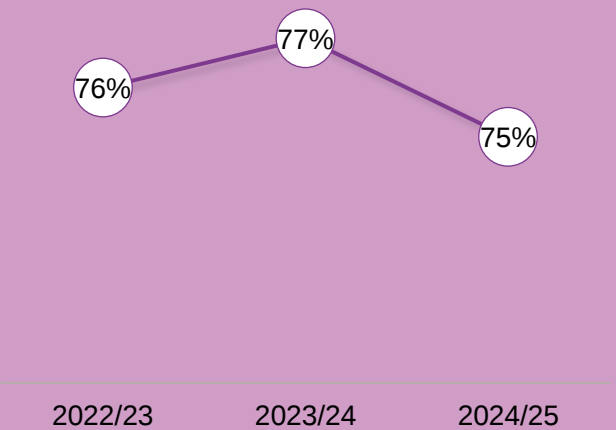


Maintaining Building Safety

Thinking about the condition of the property or building you live in, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you that Sandwell Council's Housing Services provides a home that is safe?

75% of tenants are satisfied that their home is safe (down 2p.p)

16% of tenants are dissatisfied with the safety of their home (no change).





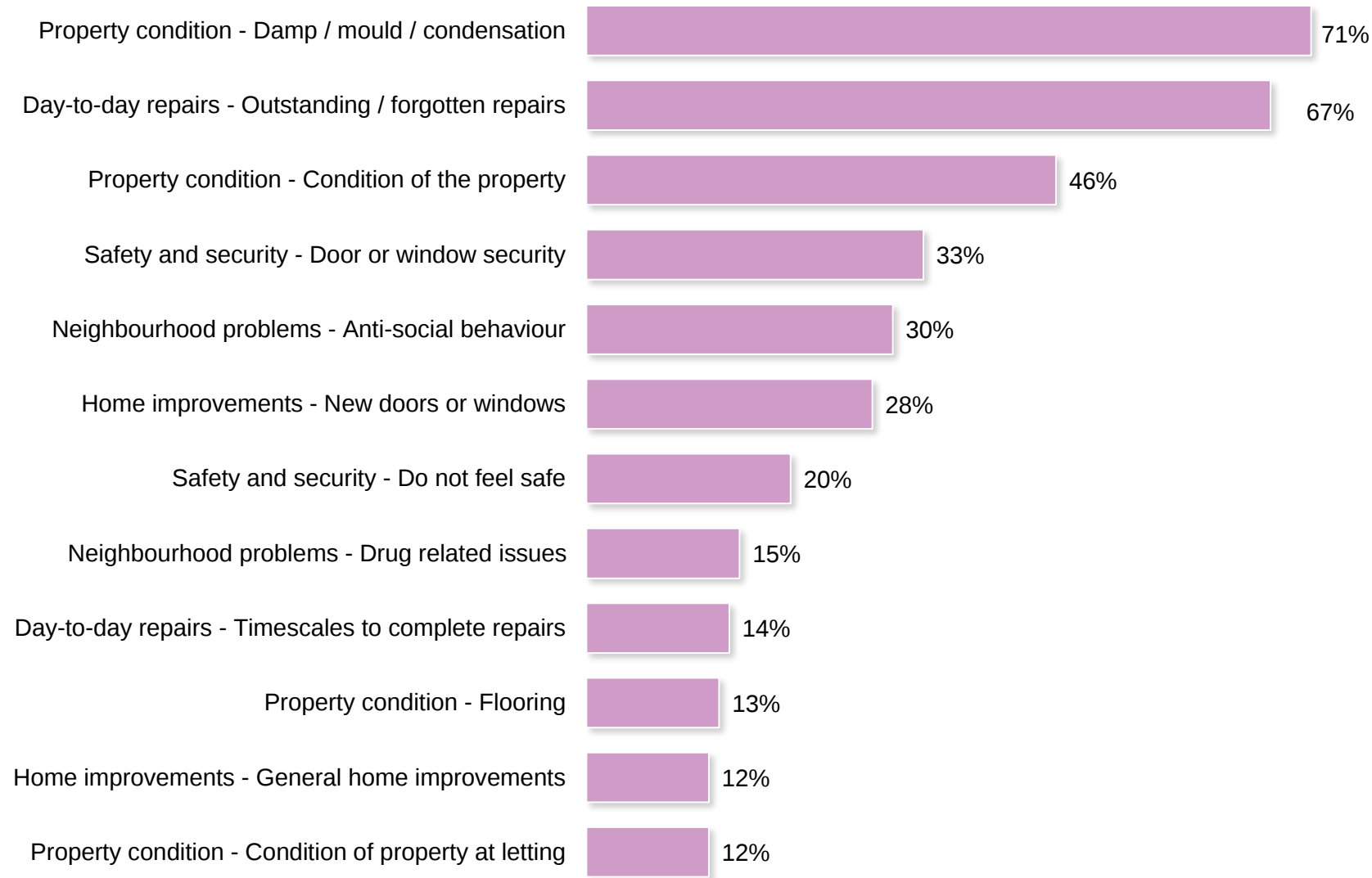
If you do not feel that your home is safe, please can you explain why and suggest what could be improved?
(342 tenants provided comments)

The survey responses reveal **significant concerns regarding safety, maintenance, and living conditions among tenants.**

Key issues include persistent **damp and mould, inadequate repairs, and security vulnerabilities**, such as broken doors and windows. Many residents express **frustration over slow response times to repair requests and a lack of follow-up on reported issues.**

Recommendations include prioritising urgent repairs, enhancing security measures, and improving communication with tenants. Addressing these concerns could lead to increased tenant satisfaction, improved living conditions, and a stronger community perception of the housing authority's commitment to resident welfare.

Comments – Safe Home





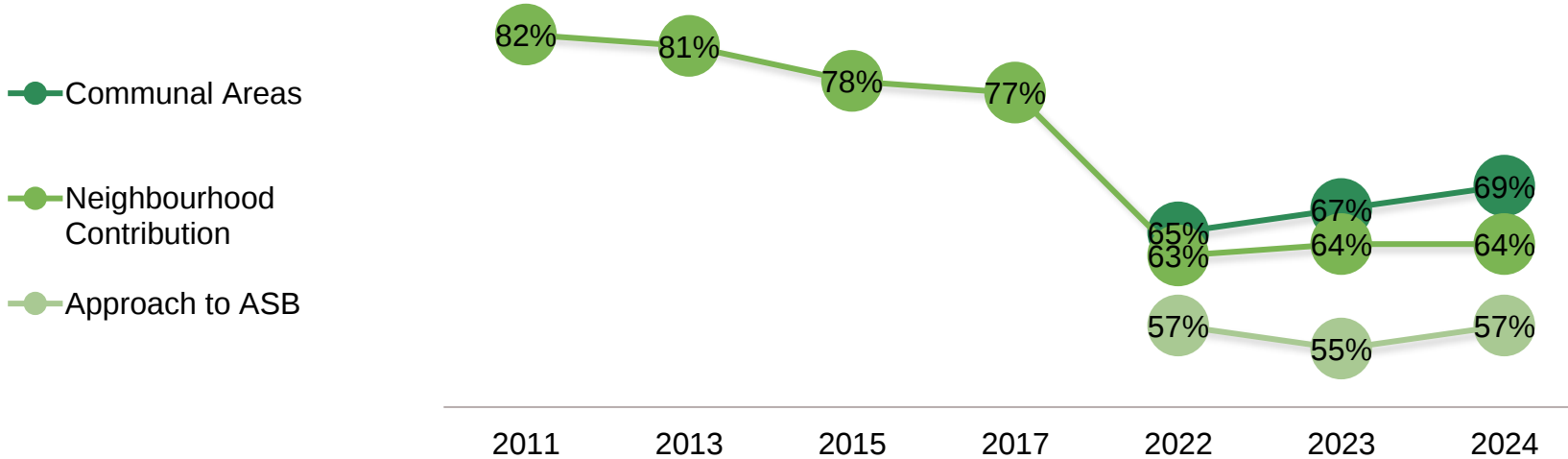
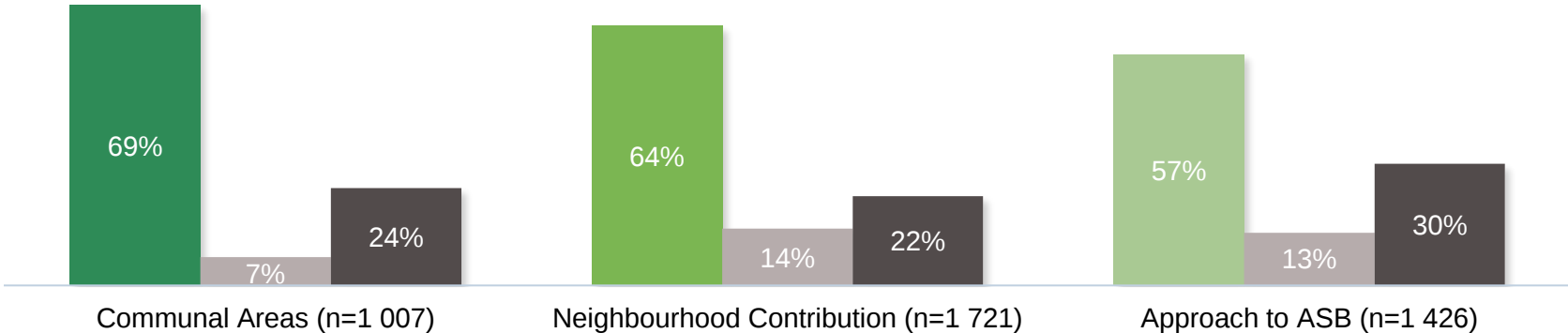
Responsible Neighbourhood Management

Communal areas:

- 45% of tenants stated that they live in a building with communal areas that Sandwell MBC is responsible for maintaining
- 69% satisfied communal areas are kept clean and well maintained (up 2p.p)

Neighbourhood and ASB

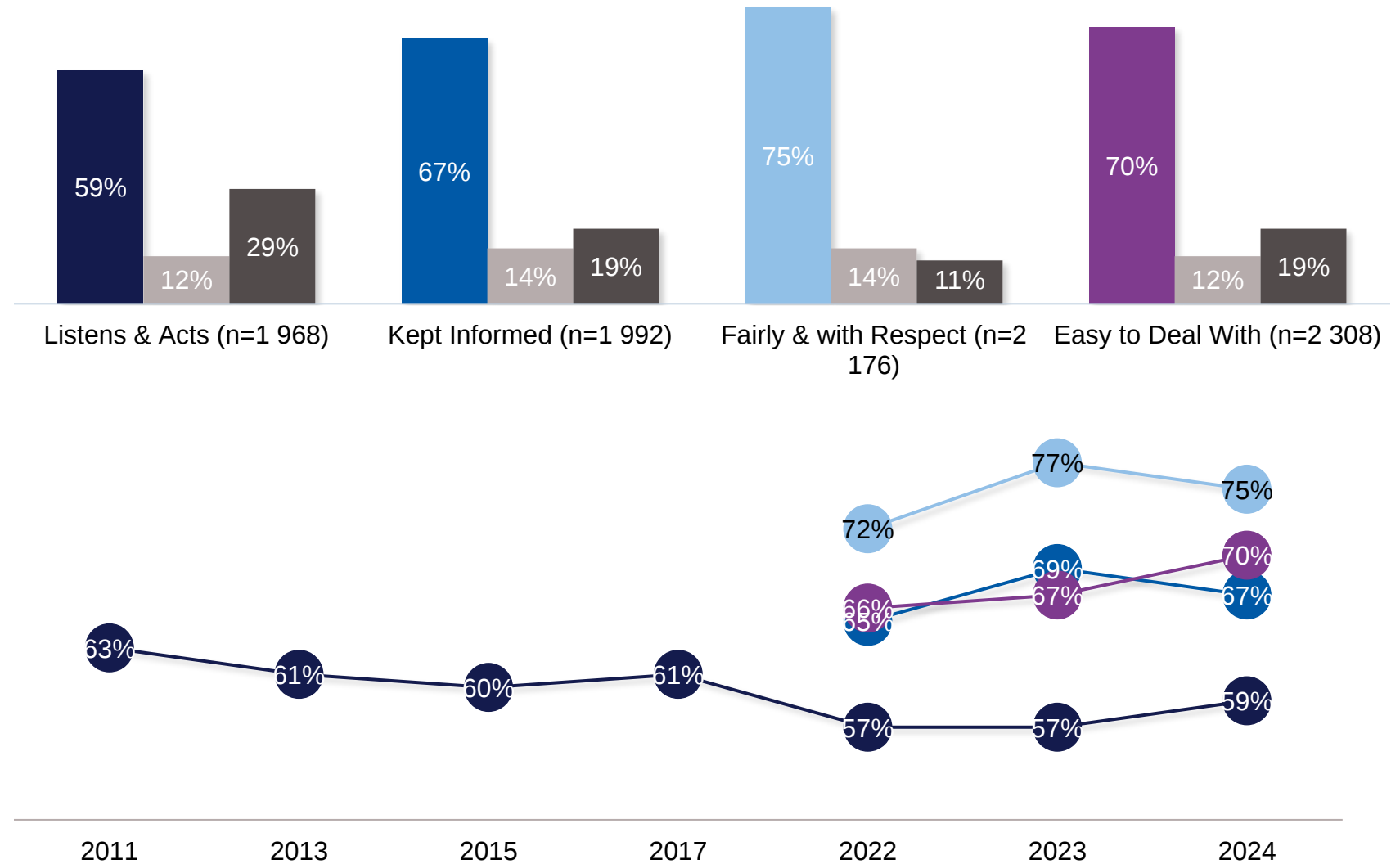
- 64% satisfied Sandwell MBC makes a positive contribution to their neighbourhood (up 1p.p)
- 57% satisfied with approach to ASB (up 2p.p)





Respectful & Helpful Engagement

- 75% treated fairly and with respect (down by 2p.p)
- 67% kept informed (down 2p.p)
- 70% easy to deal with (up 3p.p)
- 59% satisfied that Sandwell MBC listens to their views and acts on them (up 2p.p)





Why tenants are not satisfied that Sandwell MBC's Housing Services listens to their views and acts upon them (525 tenants provided comments)

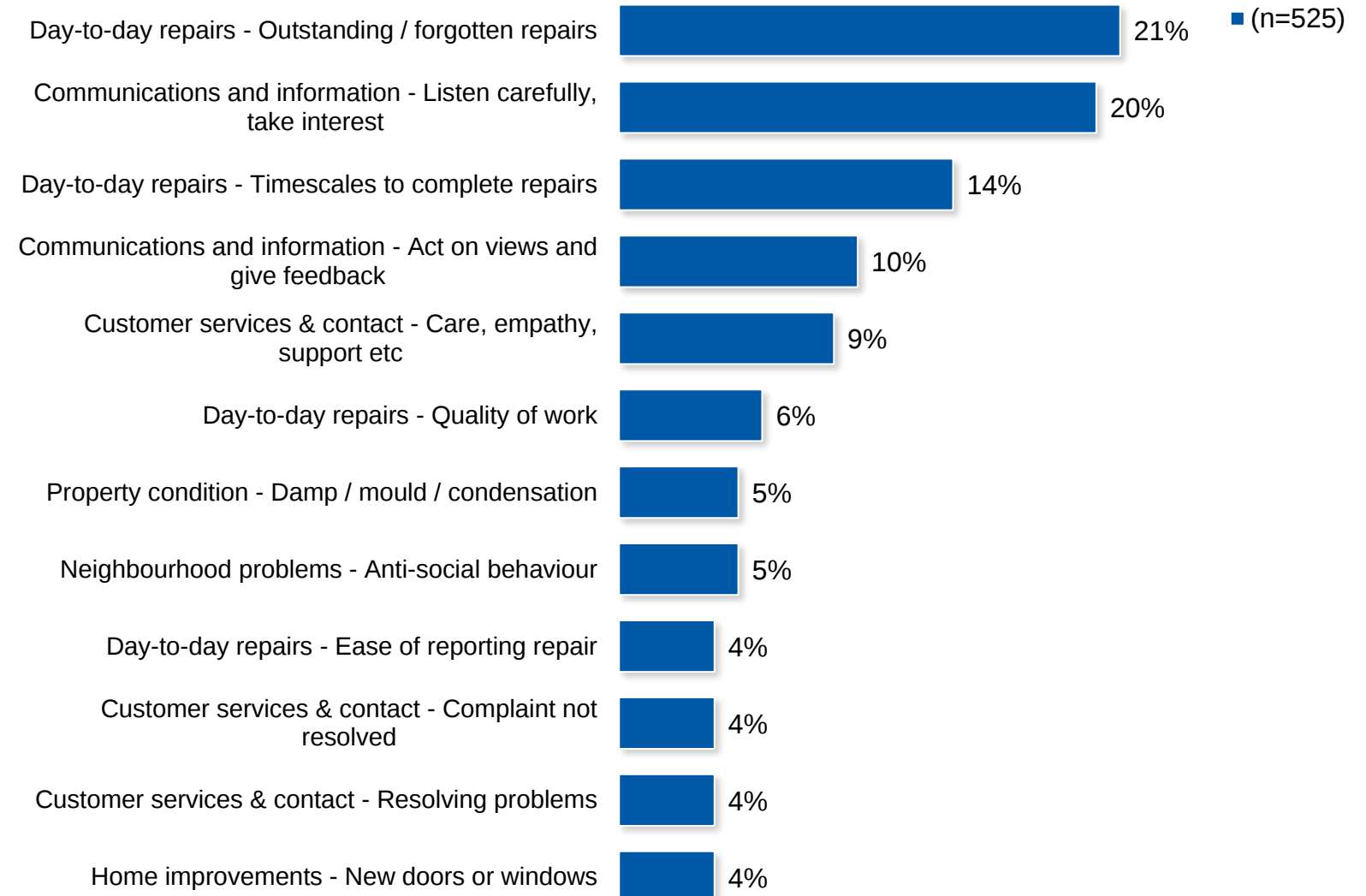
- Repairs (45% tenants)
- Communications, customer service & contact (47% tenants)

The survey responses reveal significant dissatisfaction with Sandwell Council's housing services, particularly regarding **communication, responsiveness, and repair timeliness**.

Tenants frequently report **unaddressed repairs, poor follow-up, and a lack of empathy from staff**. Many express **frustration over long wait times for essential repairs, inadequate handling of anti-social behavior, and insufficient support for vulnerable residents**.

Recommendations include improving communication channels, ensuring timely repairs, and enhancing staff training to foster empathy and responsiveness. Addressing these issues could significantly improve tenant satisfaction and trust in the council's services, ultimately leading to a more positive community environment.

Comments - Listens & Acts





Tenants not satisfied with Sandwell MBC's customer service and communications were asked to provide more information and to say what could be improved (528 tenants made comments)

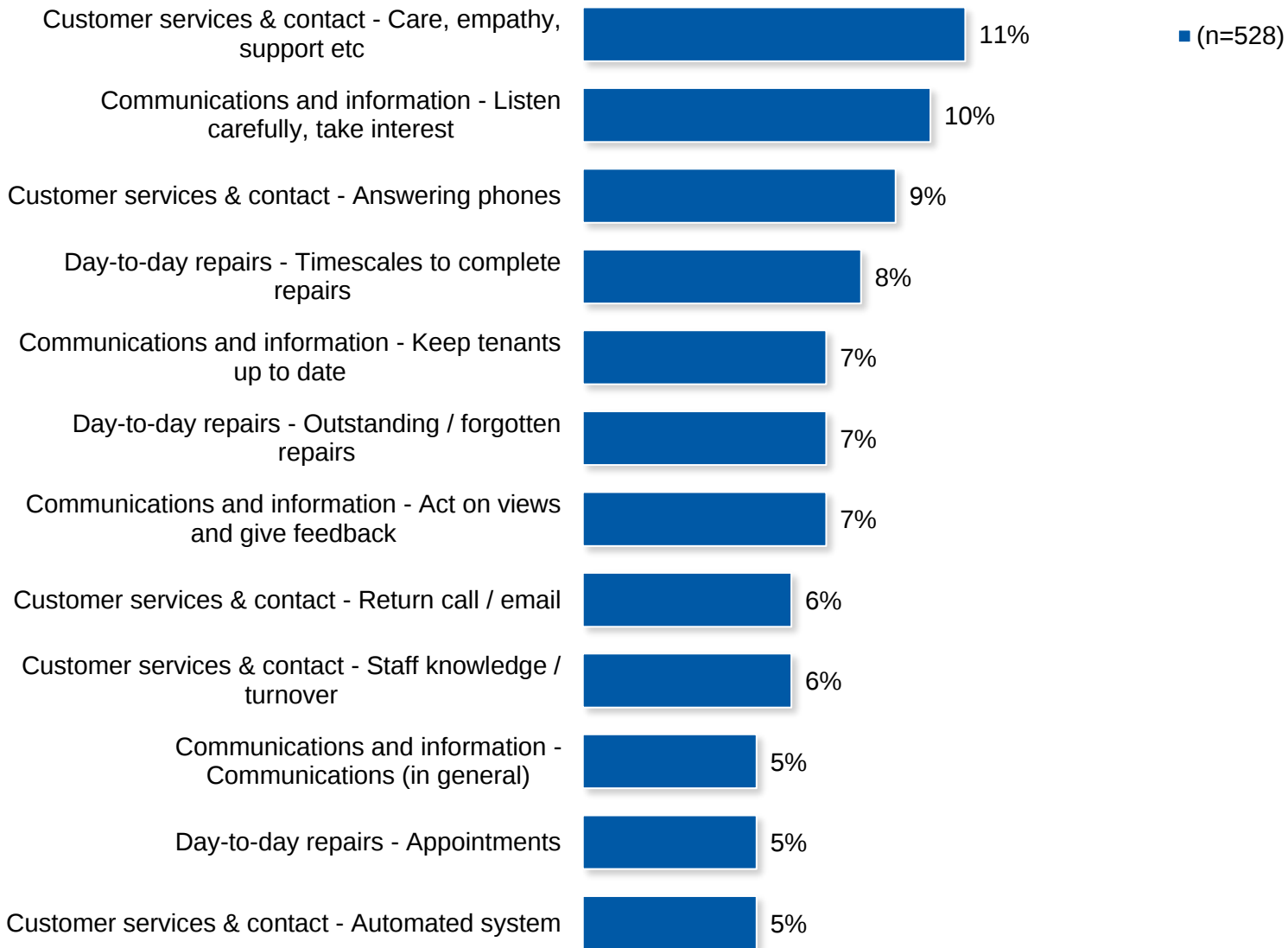
The survey responses reveal significant **dissatisfaction with communication and repair services from Sandwell Council.**

Tenants frequently report **long wait times to reach customer service, inadequate follow-up on repairs, and a lack of responsiveness to enquiries.**

Many expressed **frustration over the automated phone system and the difficulty in obtaining timely updates on repair statuses.**

Recommendations include improving communication channels, providing clearer timelines for repairs, and ensuring staff are trained to handle tenant concerns with empathy.

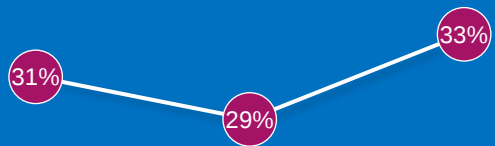
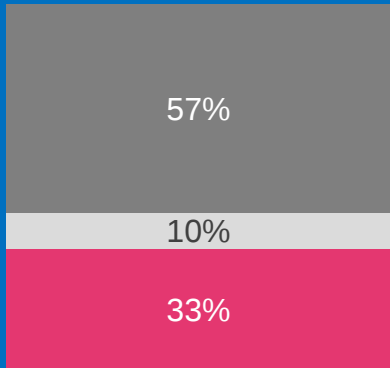
Comments - Customer Service





26% of tenants surveyed said that they had made a complaint to Sandwell MBC in the last 12 months (same as last year)

- 33% satisfied with the way that their complaint was handled (up 4p.p)
- 57% dissatisfied (no change)



2022/23

2023/24

2024/25

Effective Handling of Complaints

Takeaways from Acuity's Additional Research TSM Surveys - Complaints :

- Does not measure satisfaction with a landlord's formal complaints handling process, measures satisfaction from tenants who believe they have made a complaint to their landlord in the last 12 months view the handling of their "complaint".
- The fact that a tenant believes they have made a complaint to their landlord is irrefutable.
- Debate is around the difference between a service request, a service request failure, and a formal complaint.
- Highest percentage of complaints often linked to repairs, but also many landlords' scores included a high percentage of ASB reports (20% - 35%).
- Small but significant number of tenants had to raise their "complaint" through more than one channel to get their landlord's attention (up to 40% of respondents).
- Anywhere between 74% and 83% of tenants were service requests/service request failures and not a Stage 1 or Stage 2 complaint.
- Around half of the tenants said that their complaint was still ongoing.
- Improved communications in addition to resolving the "complaint" were the top two improvements landlords could make.
- Landlords should look to improve how they handle the full range of complaints regardless of how they are defined.

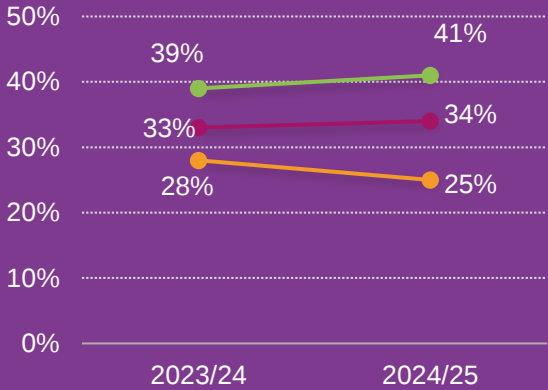


Further insight

Tenants were asked, “How likely would you be to recommend Sandwell MBC to other people on a scale of 10 to 0, where 10 is extremely likely and 0 is not at all likely?”

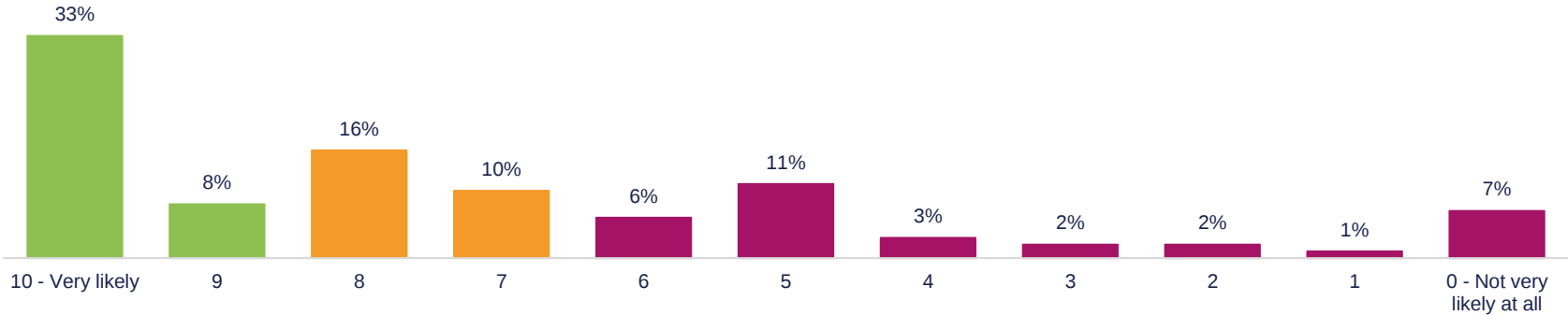
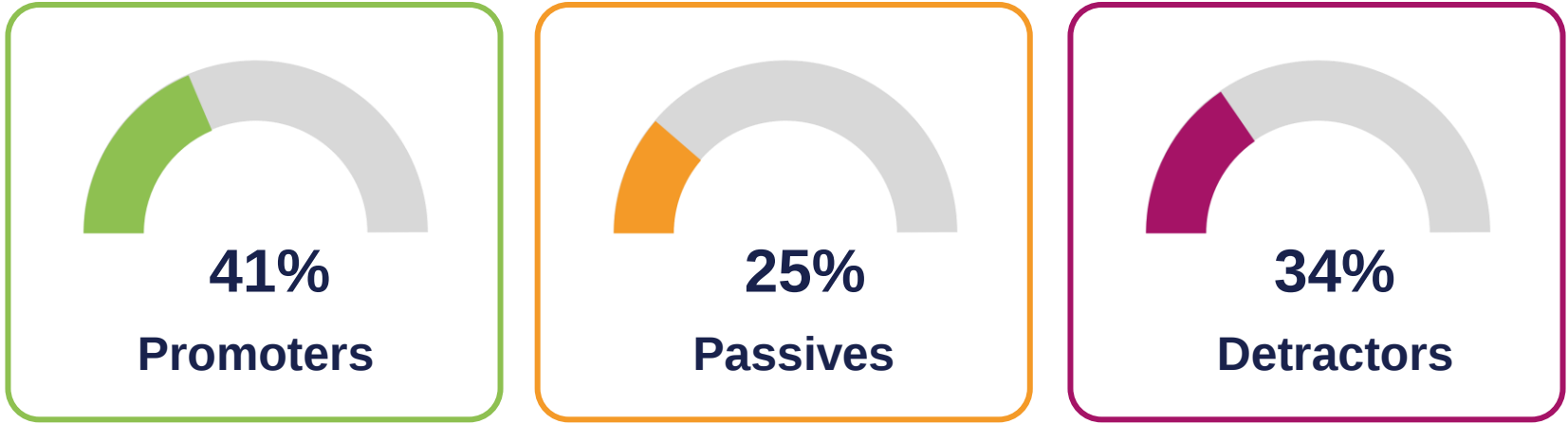
The Net Promoter Score (promoters minus detractors) is +7, which up by 1p.p since last year’s survey.

- Promoters up 2p.p, detractors up 1p.p and passives down 3p.p



7
NPS ↑ 1

Recommending Sandwell MBC



Customer Recovery

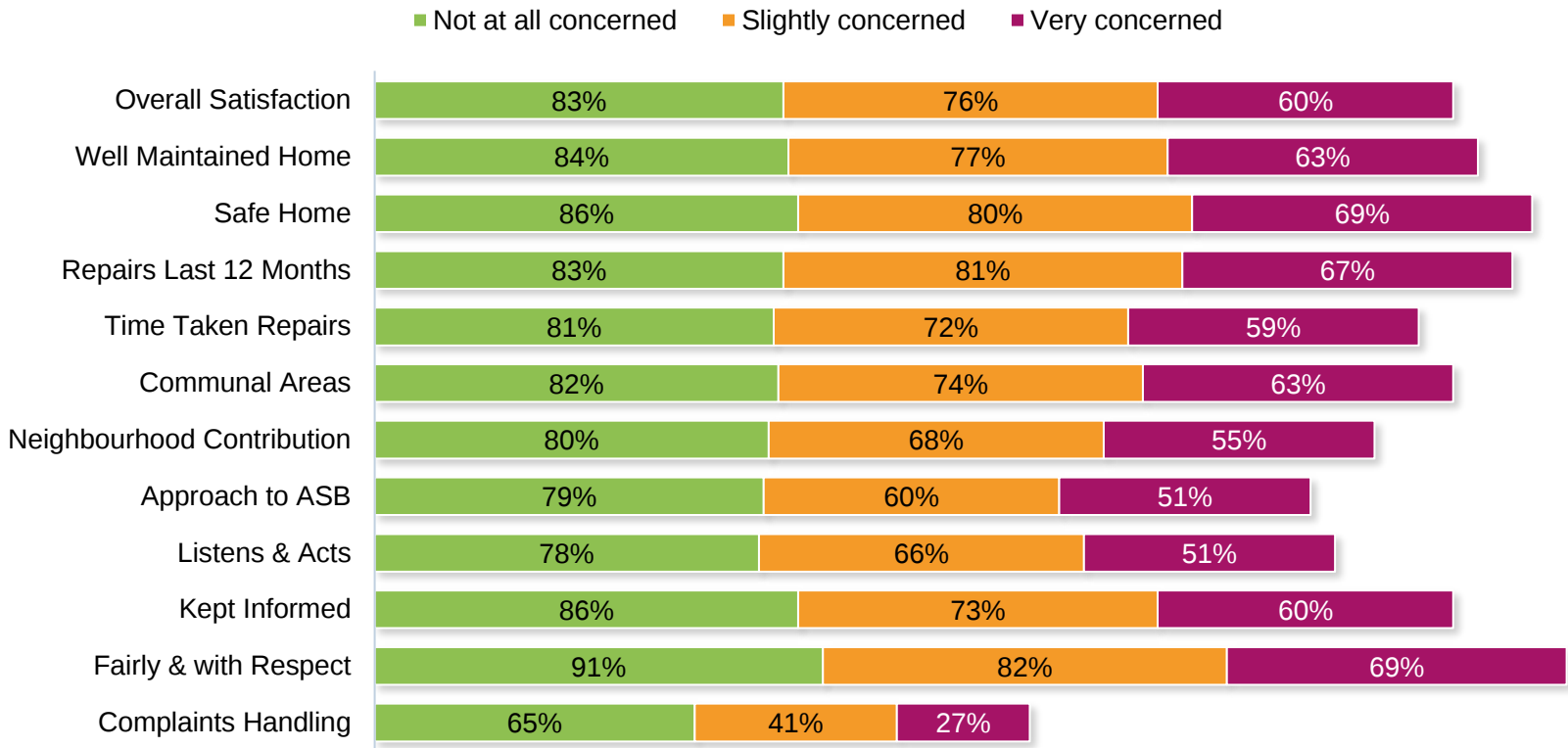
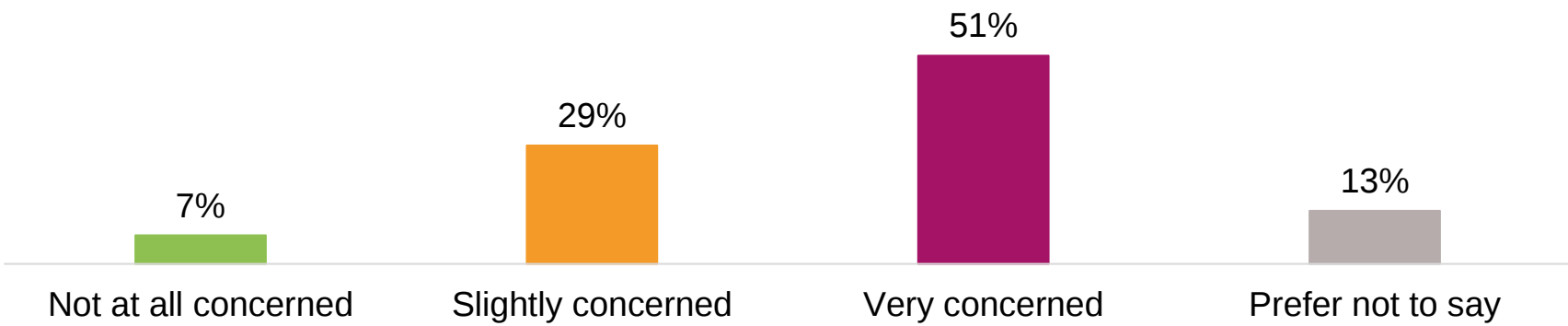
0 - Not likely at all = 169 LCRA tenants
111 made a complaint in last 12 months & 101 dissatisfied with the way it was handled.
133 happy to be identified and 126 can be re-contacted.

“How concerned are you about the cost-of-living crisis for you personally?”

80% concerned

Tenants who are very concerned with the cost of living awarded ratings in the survey on average 24p.p lower than those who are not concern at all.

Cost of Living





Year-on-Year Change

Falling satisfaction

Overall satisfaction has fallen the most (7p.p lower), followed closely by satisfaction with the time taken to complete repairs (6p.p lower) – both statistically significant.

Possibly small falls elsewhere – well-maintained home, safe home, repairs in last 12 months, being kept informed.

Rising satisfaction

Complaint handling - 5p.p higher.

Potentially increased satisfaction - communal areas, ASB, being easy to deal with, NPS.

Note: To be statistically significant, changes need to exceed the combined margins of error for the last two surveys, in this case around 4p.p.

	2023/24	2024/25	Change (p.p)
Overall Satisfaction	74%	67%	-7 ↓
Well Maintained Home	72%	70%	-2 ↓
Safe Home	77%	75%	-2 ↓
Communal Areas	67%	69%	+3 ↑
Repairs Last 12 Months	76%	73%	-3 ↓
Time Taken Repairs	71%	65%	-6 ↓
Neighbourhood Contribution	64%	64%	0 =
Approach to ASB	55%	57%	+2 ↑
Listens & Acts	57%	59%	+1 ↑
Fairly & with Respect	77%	75%	-1 ↓
Kept Informed	69%	67%	-2 ↓
Easy to Deal With	67%	70%	+2 ↑
Complaints Handling	29%	33%	+5 ↑
NPS (Promoters)	39%	41%	+2 ↑

Further insight

STRONG

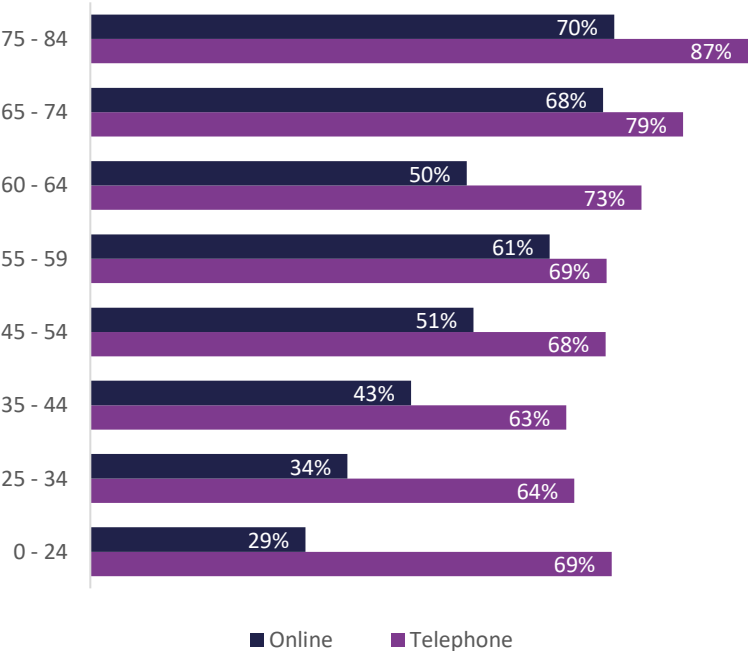
Higher satisfaction		Lower satisfaction
Older tenants	Age	Tenants under 35 years old
Male	Gender	Female tenants
Tenants with a disability	Disability	No disability
Vulnerable tenants	Vulnerability	No vulnerability
Asian or Asian Bangladeshi, Asian or Asian British Other, Black or Black British African	Ethnicity	Black or Black Caribbean tenants
Less than one year Over 20 years	Length of tenancy	4 – 5 years
Bedsits	Property type	4+ bedrooms
PFI managed by Riverside	Management arrangement	Sandwell MBC

Response method

Satisfaction rates are considerably higher among those responding by telephone – on average 19p.p higher

It is possible that tenants may be more reluctant to express dissatisfaction when talking to a researcher directly, rather than when answering survey questions online

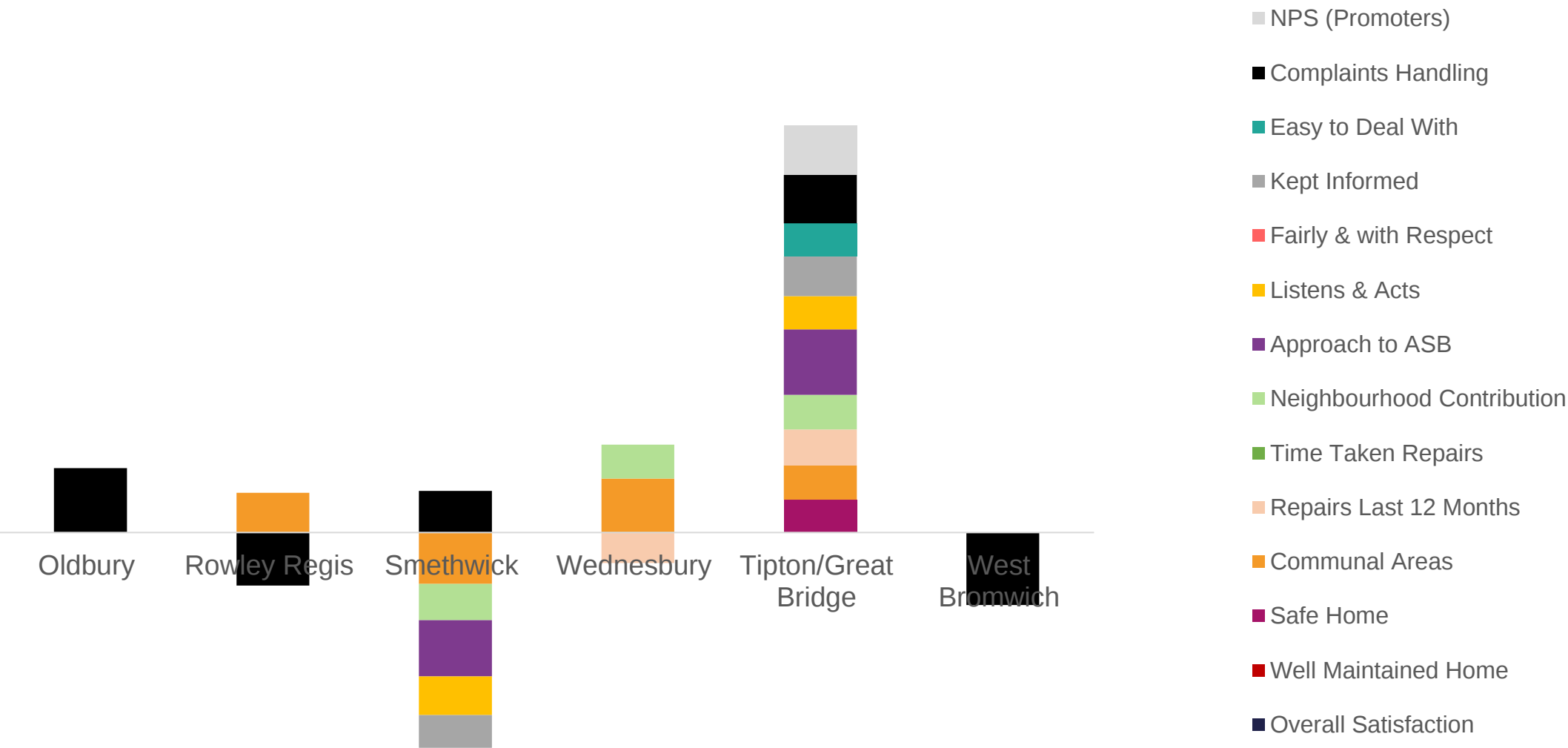
TSM scores would be higher if 100% telephone, which means the Council is at a disadvantage when comparing with other landlords who use 100% telephone



	Online (21%)	Telephone (79%)	Difference
Overall Satisfaction	50%	72%	22%
Well Maintained Home	53%	74%	21%
Safe Home	58%	79%	21%
Repairs Last 12 Months	62%	77%	15%
Time Taken Repairs	56%	68%	12%
Communal Areas	59%	72%	13%
Neighbourhood Contribution	45%	70%	25%
Approach to ASB	43%	62%	19%
Listens & Acts	41%	64%	23%
Kept Informed	45%	73%	28%
Fairly & with Respect	57%	80%	23%
Easy to Deal With	55%	73%	18%
Complaints Handling	24%	36%	12%
NPS (Promoters)	29%	44%	15%

Area Analysis

Difference in satisfaction from average Sandwell rating – where greater or less than >4%





RSH - Local Authorities with over 1,000 properties for low cost rental accommodation (LCRA).

Top Quartile – communal areas

Second Quartile – majority of ratings

Third Quartile – overall services & time taken for repairs (both only around 1p.p lower than the median).

Even handling of complaints which has the lowest satisfaction rating in the survey, is comfortably in the second quartile, almost 4p.p above the median rating.

Compared with LAs over 15k = All above median (second quartile) apart from communal areas and safe home which are top quartile!

Benchmarking – RSH 2023/24 (LA only)

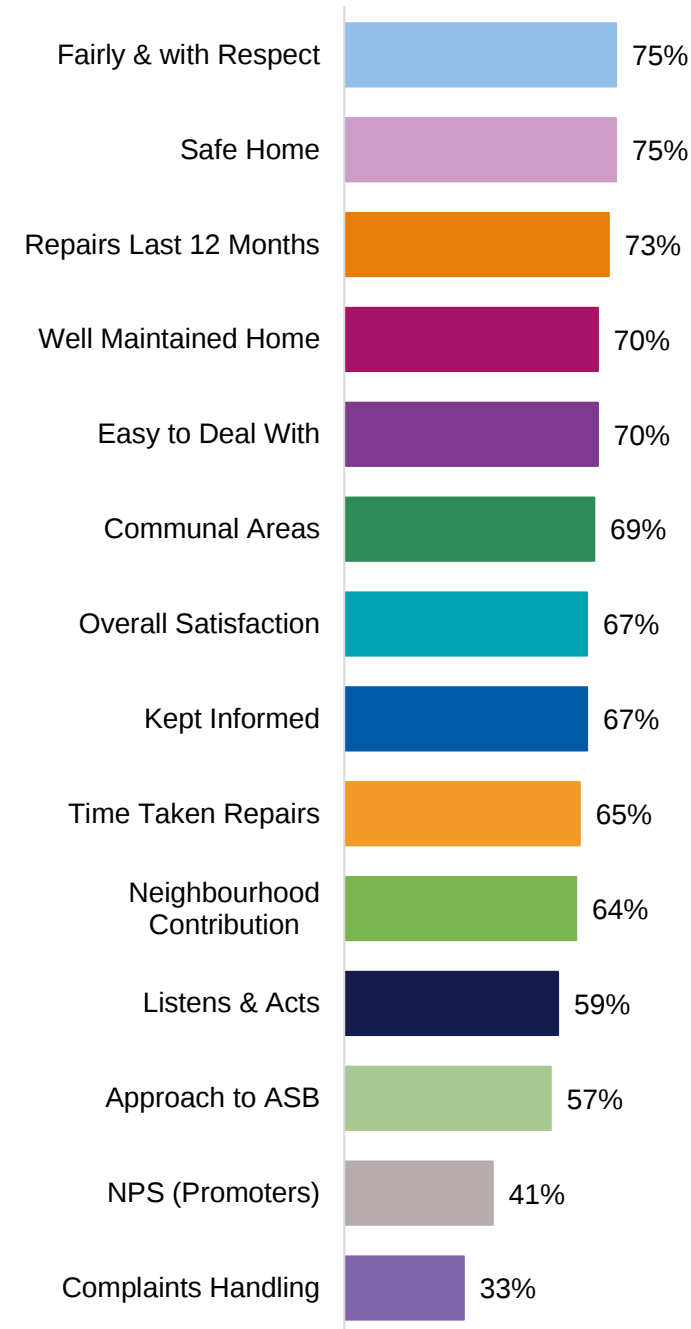




Summary & Recommendations

Conclusion

- High levels of satisfaction for providing a safe home and being treated fairly and with respect
- Two-thirds of tenants are satisfied with the overall services provided by the council. Lower than last year and possibly linked to fall in satisfaction with the time taken to carry out repairs
- Encouragingly more tenants satisfied with how the Council handles complaints
- Strong performance when compared to other Councils
- Problems with the repairs service and communications are mentioned the most by tenants



Recommendations

Repairs and maintenance service

Satisfaction with repairs in last 12 months is one of the highest-rated measures in the survey, however satisfaction with the time taken to make the repairs is much lower, and doesn't benchmark well as other ratings. The survey shows that a well-maintained home is the key driver for overall satisfaction with services.

Timescales to complete repairs and issues with outstanding repairs are commonly highlighted in the open-ended survey questions. May need to investigate causes of dissatisfaction.

Need to improve communication and customer around the repairs service to address long wait times, lack of responsiveness and obtaining updates on repairs status.

Although increasing resources may be difficult, improving the systems and procedures for reporting repairs, providing updates on progress and likely timescales would better manage tenants' expectations and could improve satisfaction with the service.

+

Communications

Damp and mould

Some urgency required in addressing these problems, ways to speed up the process for reporting repairs and prioritising the work required.

Targeting this area for improvement is important for the health of tenants and also the upkeep of the housing stock.

Handling of complaints

Complaints handling, as it often is, was the lowest-performing TSM metric.

Continue the good work being done in this area as tenants have noticed a difference. Clear communications around how to make a complaint and ensure tenants that any complaint made will be taken seriously.

Consider further probing questions in next survey to understand how tenants perceive the complaints process.

67% 

Overall Satisfaction

More than two-thirds of tenants surveyed this year are satisfied with services provided by Sandwell MBC overall. Satisfaction rates are higher for the provision of a home that is safe (75%), and well maintained (70%). Three quarters of tenants agree that they are treated fairly and with respect (75%), while 73% are satisfied with repairs carried out in the last 12 months (73%).

Most other measures have satisfaction rates in the mid to high 60 per cent range. However, satisfaction that tenants' views are listened to and acted upon, and with Sandwell MBC's approach to ASB are at 59% and 57% respectively. Satisfaction with the handling of complaints is the lowest ranked measure once again in 2024/25, with a third of tenants satisfied (33%).

In addition, 41% of tenants would recommend the Council to other people, while 34% wouldn't – a Net Promoter Score (NPS) of 7.

TSM Key Metrics

Keeping Properties in Good Repair



Well Maintained Home

70%



Safe Home

75%



Repairs Last 12 Months

73%



Time Taken Repairs

65%

Respectful & Helpful Engagement



Listens & Acts

59%



Kept Informed

67%



Fairly & with Respect

75%



Complaints Handling

33%

Responsible Neighbourhood Management



Communal Areas

69%



Neighbourhood Contribution

64%



Approach to ASB

57%



Any questions?



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

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