



Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council

**TSM Report
2025/26**

January 2026

Prepared by: Acuity Research & Practice



Introduction

Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council owns around 28,000 homes in the West Midlands and also has around 1,300 leaseholders. The Council commissioned Acuity to undertake annual, independent satisfaction surveys of the tenants of Sandwell MBC to collect data on their opinions of, and attitudes towards, their landlord and the services provided. In addition, the Council's leaseholders will be surveyed biannually, and these will be reported separately. The survey was designed using the Tenant Satisfaction Measures from the Regulator of Social Housing, which became mandatory in April 2023 and are reported annually. To be compliant with the requirements of the Regulator, the survey aimed to achieve a minimum response from 2,212 tenants. The survey also includes the properties in the Sandwell PFI scheme, which are managed by Riverside. A breakdown of results by management area, including PFI, is included where relevant.

The survey aimed to complete 20% of the responses online and 80% by telephone interview. The fieldwork for the online survey began in late October, when all those with an email address received a message with a link to the survey. From early November, all those who did not respond or had no email address were included in the telephone survey. Quotas were used based on tenure, area and age to ensure the sample represents the whole tenant population. The survey was completed on 8 December 2025. A total of 2,394 responses were received, 2,209 complete and 185 incomplete, 483 online (20%) and 1,911 by phone (80%). This includes 78 responses from the PFI properties.

This is the first time the report has used sentiment analysis to better understand tenants' comments and why they responded to the satisfaction questions the way they did. Information about how this works is presented at the end of the report. It adds an extra layer of focused insight to the results, helping the Council better understand what is driving satisfaction, what tenants are most concerned about, and what, as a consequence, could be improved.

The survey is confidential, and the results are sent back to Sandwell MBC anonymised unless tenants give their permission to be identified. 72% of tenants gave permission to share their name, and 89% of these tenants are happy for Sandwell MBC to contact them to discuss any issues they raised.

This survey aims to provide data on tenants' satisfaction, which will allow Sandwell MBC to:

- Provide information on tenants' perceptions of current services
- Compare the results with previous surveys
- Compare the results with other council landlords
- Report on the Sandwell PFI separately
- Report to the Regulator as required.

For the overall results, the Regulator of Social Housing requires landlords with over 25,000 properties achieve a sampling error of at least $\pm 2\%$ at the 95% confidence level. For Sandwell MBC, 2,387 responses were received for the overall service question, and this response is high enough to conclude that the findings are accurate to within $\pm 1.92\%$, meeting the requirement and providing good accuracy of results.

The majority of figures throughout the report show the results as percentages. The percentages are rounded up or down 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.

Key TSM Metrics

Overall Satisfaction

The Home

Repairs

Neighbourhood

ASB

Engagement

Complaints

NPS

Further Insight

Summary

Demographics

66% 

Overall Satisfaction

Two-thirds of tenants are satisfied with the overall service provided by Sandwell MBC, although this is down slightly from last year's survey.

Four measures exceed 70% satisfaction, with the highest level for the way the Council treats its tenants fairly and with respect (75%).

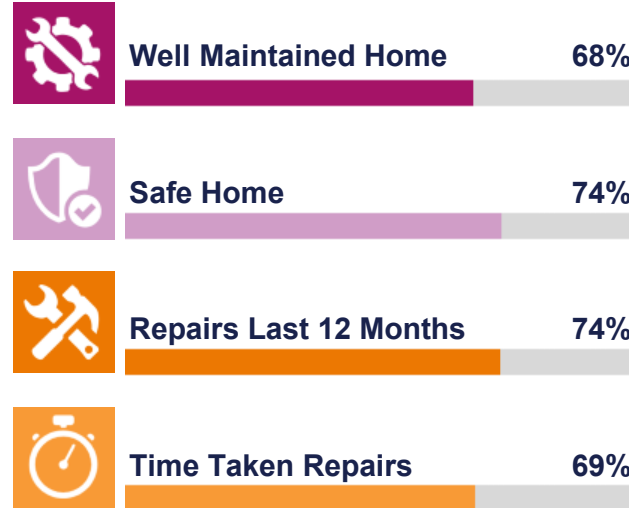
Just one measure falls below 60% satisfaction: handling complaints, where just 30% of tenants are satisfied.

In addition, 41% of tenants would recommend the Council to other people, with a positive Net Promoter Score of +6.

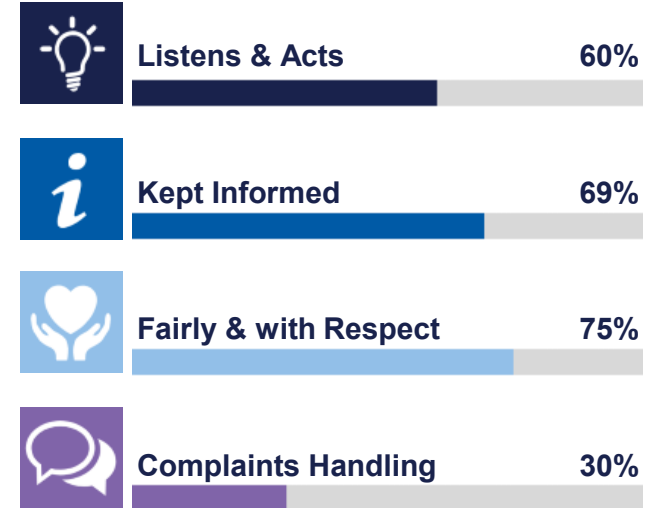
The report focuses on the headline figures, shows how satisfaction has changed over time, provides a breakdown of results by different subgroups, and analyses the open comments tenants made about the services they receive.

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 Sandwell MBC?" This is the key metric in any tenant perception survey.

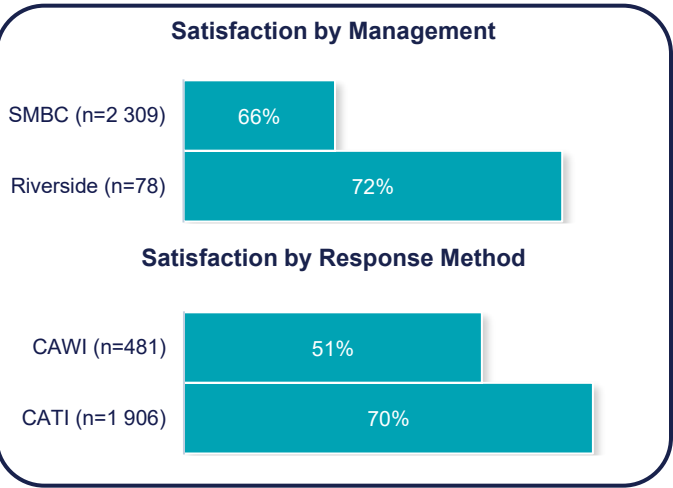
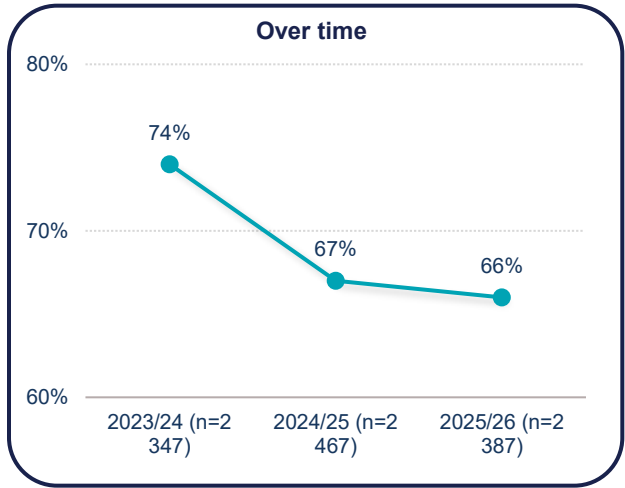
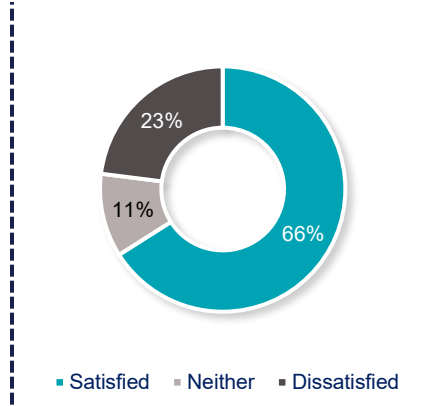
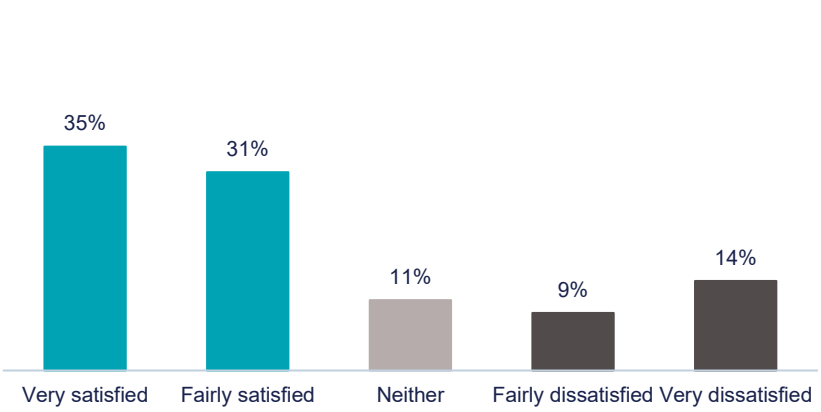
Two-thirds of tenants are satisfied with the overall service provided by the Council, with a few more very satisfied than fairly satisfied. However, 23% of tenants are dissatisfied with the service, and a further 11% are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.

Satisfaction fell between 2023/24 and 2024/25 and is down a further 1 percentage point (p.p) in 2025/26.

The results include responses from the PFI properties managed by Riverside, and this shows that although there are relatively few of these, they are slightly more satisfied than the majority of Sandwell tenants. As is common with other similar surveys, those responding online are less satisfied than those using other methods.

Acuity's monitoring of its clients' data suggests that overall satisfaction is continuing to improve within the sector, up by a further 5p.p to 78% satisfied, the highest position in three years. This means Sandwell's result remains a little below the sector median.

Recent reports from the Regulator suggest that tenant age, landlord size, their gender, landlord location and whether or not they have a disability all have an impact on overall satisfaction. Of those characteristics, tenant age is the most influential.



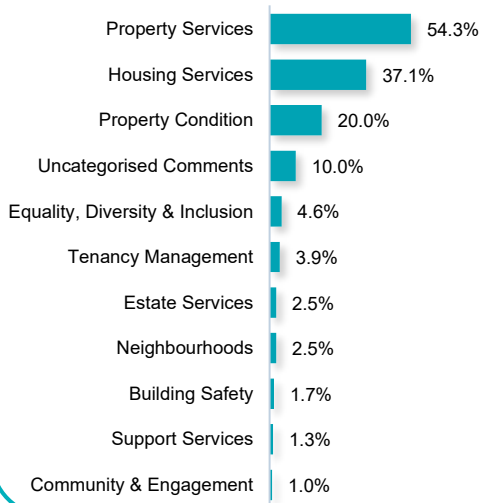
Overall Satisfaction

Please describe your specific experiences that have shaped your view of Sandwell MBC's service.

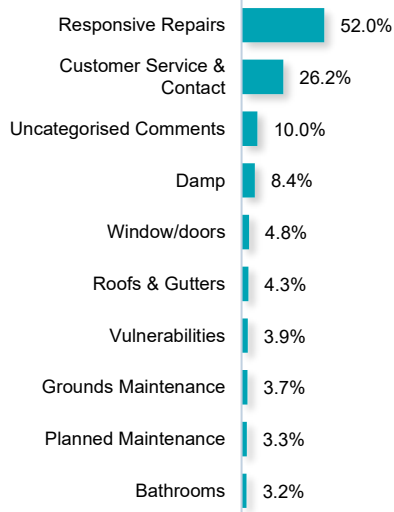
Base Size: 2,070



Categories

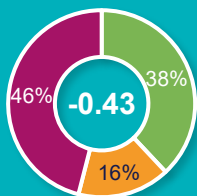


Top 10 Subcategories



Attribute

Attribute	Count	%	Sentiment Score
Timeliness & Responsiveness	849	48.1%	-1.46
Subcategory, no attribute (yet)	298	16.9%	-0.61
Resolution	290	16.4%	-2.65
Satisfaction	288	16.3%	+3.49
Quality of Work / Service	206	11.7%	-0.69
Communication / Transparency	138	7.8%	-1.96
Appointments / Convenience	90	5.1%	-2.38
Listening / Acting	73	4.1%	-2.63
No Comments	68	3.9%	-0.34
Effort	64	3.6%	-2.44
Staff Conduct	51	2.9%	+2.76
Safety	31	1.8%	-2.77
Trust	23	1.3%	-2.43
Worker Conduct	22	1.2%	-0.23
Empathy	19	1.1%	-1.79
Accountability	14	0.8%	-4.86
Consistency	9	0.5%	-2.22
Fairness	9	0.5%	-3.00
Accessibility	4	0.2%	-5.00



Tenants were asked to, "Please describe your specific experiences that have shaped your view of Sandwell MBC's service," and 2,070 left comments. These responses reveal a mixed sentiment towards Sandwell Council's housing services, particularly regarding repairs and maintenance. While some tenants appreciate the prompt response to emergency repairs, many express frustration over long wait times for non-urgent issues, with reports of repairs taking months or even years to complete. Specific complaints include unresolved damp and mould issues, delays in responding to repair requests, and dissatisfaction with communication and accountability from the Council.

Several respondents mention feeling overlooked, particularly vulnerable tenants, such as those with disabilities or families facing overcrowding. Positive sentiments focus on the helpfulness of some staff and the quality of emergency service, yet the prevailing theme highlights a backlog in general maintenance, leading to a deterioration in living conditions for some tenants. The overall feedback indicates a need for improved efficiency in repairs, clearer communication, and better prioritisation of tenant needs to enhance tenant satisfaction.



Overall Satisfaction - Example Comments

Positive comments

"If I have any issues, they always deal with them straightaway."

"Whenever I need anything, they come and help me. They refurbished my kitchen nicely."

"Repairs are answered quickly, and customer service is very good with their help."

"I have had some issues with damp over the last few months; they were very fast in coming out to sort it and made follow-up appointments. The workers always arrived on time and were polite."

"The accommodation is perfect. Sometimes, if I report a repair, it takes a while, but it is a good service when they do the repairs."

"Well, anytime I've had a problem, they come through and sort out the problem. I'm very happy with Sandwell Council."

Maintenance issues

"We have issues with damp; they have been out but never dealt with the reason why. It will not go away; it keeps coming back."

"The repairs take a long time, but do eventually get it done."

"Been waiting since 1st July for repairs to floor and walls, and no one has been back since the initial visit to do the work."

"When I call them and let them know about repairs, they sometimes don't turn up and say that I wasn't in."

"The delay in repairs and attitude of repair workers, they come to your house and sit outside, backlog of repairs, no appointments for repair, been waiting for repair on external work, and it hasn't been done, and I've been waiting for repair on the roof, they said contractor came out but there was no confirmation from the Council."

Customer contact

"I have to keep ringing and ringing for a repair as they say they will call back, and they don't."

"As soon as I accepted the house, I was given the keys, so I could come and do things before the tenancy started. They were very helpful with repairs or anything. They were really quick at fixing things."

"Well, I've had problems with contacting them when I had a problem after I called several times."

"It's very efficient and quick to respond to repairs and easy to report and easy to use and easy to report anything."

"It takes so long to get back to you. It takes months to get back to you, and I had to phone them up twice."

"It took a long time to get responses from Sandwell regarding housing. Once he got through it, was sped up, but it was the initial wait."

Other matters

"Well, for example, I have issues with the bin collection; they changed the days to 2 weeks, and it's ridiculous to collect the bins that should be done more often."

"The streets are dirty all the time. There is a lot of rubbish which I see when I go to catch buses. Half the time, the local drains are blocked up. Local residents don't always clear up after their dogs."

"They're terrible. Their service is awful. We have a nightmare neighbour, and the Council doesn't do anything about it. It has been reported no end of times, and they just don't seem to care."

"I had a refurb of my bathroom. Because of our disabilities, I had it turned into a shower room. They were helpful through that process. Other than that, I don't really have much to do with them."

"Problems with the bins not being picked up."



Well Maintained, Safety & Communal Areas



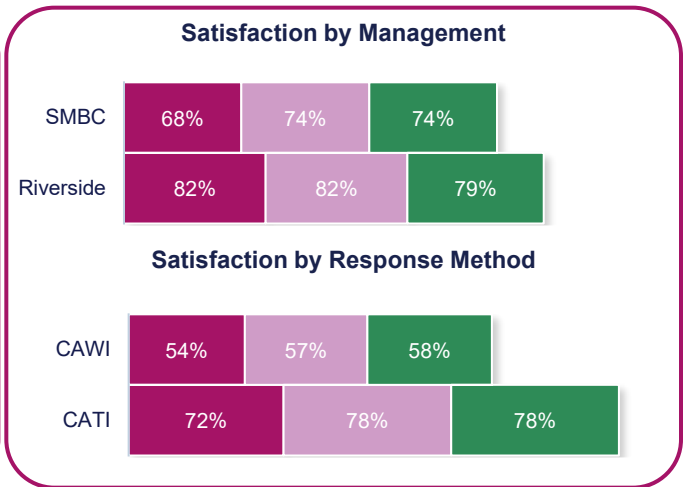
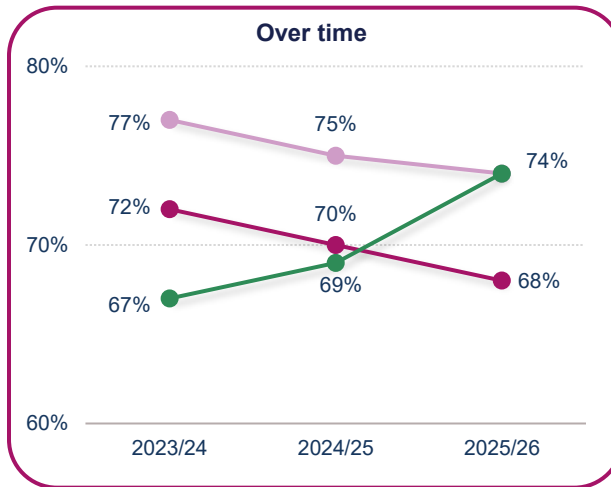
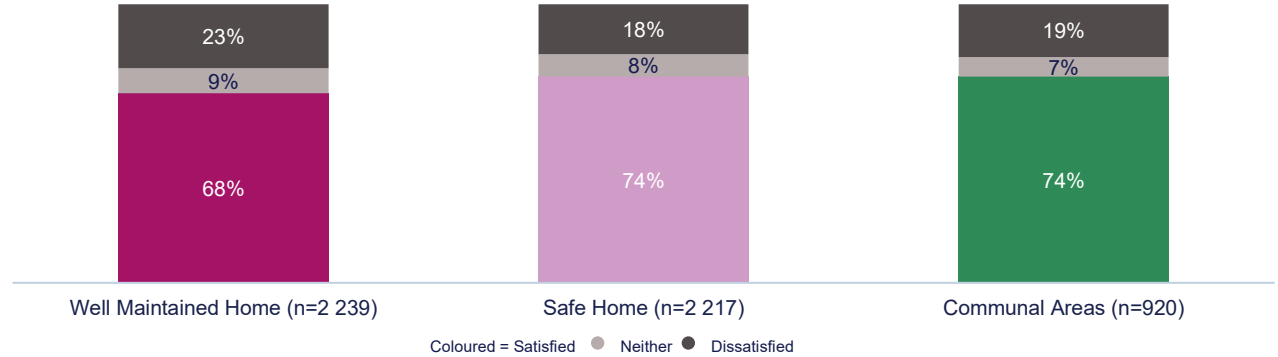
Well Maintained, Safety & Communal Areas

Just over two-thirds of tenants are satisfied with their homes; 68% feel their homes are well maintained, and even more feel they are safe (74%). However, both measures have decreased slightly since the previous quarter; down 2p.p for the home being well maintained and down 1p.p for its safety.

For maintenance of the home, median satisfaction among Acuity clients is up by 3p.p to 77% satisfied. Acuity recently undertook Key Driver Analysis of over 200,000 responses from TSM surveys completed in 24/25 and was able to demonstrate that the maintenance of the home had the strongest influence on overall satisfaction. Slightly more tenants are satisfied with the safety of the home than with its maintenance, with a median score of 82%, an increase of 2p.p, again a little above that for Sandwell.

Nearly half the tenants stated that they live in a building with communal areas that the Council is responsible for maintaining (46%). Three-quarters of these tenants are satisfied that the Council keeps their communal areas clean and well-maintained (74%). Satisfaction has increased since the previous survey (up by 5p.p).

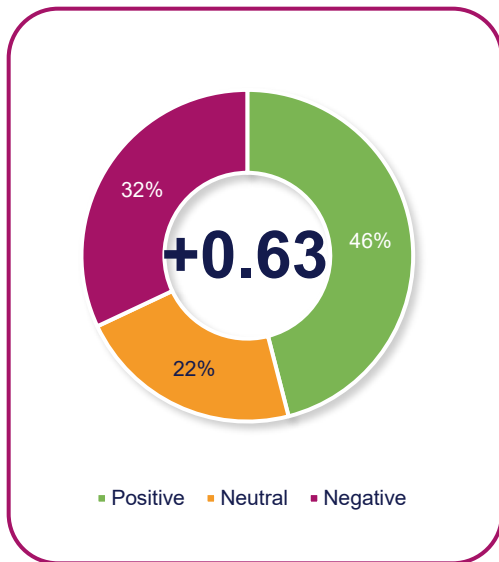
For communal areas, the Acuity median satisfaction has remained unchanged at 71%, which is notably lower than the metrics for individual home maintenance and safety. The average has increased by 4p.p.



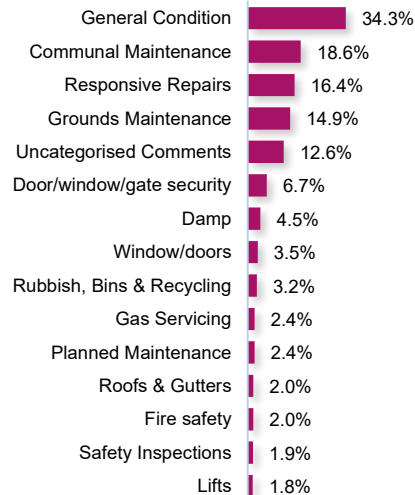
The Home

Share your views on the safety and maintenance of your home and the cleanliness and maintenance of any communal areas.

Base Size: 1,795



Top Subcategories



Attribute	Count	%	Sentiment Score
Quality of Work / Service	367	20.4%	+0.57
Timeliness & Responsiveness	256	14.3%	-1.18
Subcategory, no attribute (yet)	219	12.2%	-0.61
Safety	119	6.6%	-0.53
Resolution	62	3.5%	-2.47
Satisfaction	45	2.5%	+2.36
Communication / Transparency	41	2.3%	-2.02
No Comments	36	2.0%	-0.89
Listening / Acting	20	1.1%	-3.95
Effort	15	0.8%	-2.67
Empathy	11	0.6%	-1.82
Worker Conduct	11	0.6%	+0.55
Appointments / Convenience	8	0.4%	-3.13
Trust	8	0.4%	-3.75
Accountability	5	0.3%	-2.60
Consistency	3	0.2%	-3.67
Staff Conduct	3	0.2%	-2.00
Accessibility	2	0.1%	-4.00
Fairness	2	0.1%	-2.50

The 1,795 responses reveal a mixed sentiment towards the safety and maintenance of homes and communal areas managed by Sandwell. A number of respondents express satisfaction with cleanliness, noting regular grass cutting and maintenance efforts, particularly in communal gardens. However, numerous concerns have been raised about the state of repairs, with many tenants reporting long wait times and unresolved maintenance issues, including mould, damp, and unsafe conditions.

Feelings of safety vary; while some tenants feel secure, others report issues with anti-social behaviour and inadequate responses to safety complaints. The presence of drug use and the ongoing issues with a violent neighbour are particularly distressing for some. Many tenants also highlight the lack of regular, thorough cleaning in communal areas, which contributes to an overall feeling of dissatisfaction.

Despite receiving positive feedback on emergency responses and safety checks, several tenants indicated a need for improved communication about repairs and an overall improvement in maintenance standards. Feedback suggests that while progress has been made in certain areas, gaps remain in meeting tenants' expectations for safety and effective maintenance services.



The Home - Example Comments

Positive comments

"Pretty satisfied with what they have done. Everything is maintained. Doors kept locked and communal areas cleaned."

"It's been okay. In the few years I've been here, there have been no problems; it has been quiet."

"The communal areas are good; they cut the grass in the communal areas of the building. The safety and maintenance of my home is fine; I have been here 30 years, so I must be happy."

"Very satisfied, it's a lovely community, I have neighbours who look after me. I've just been for an operation, and my neighbours are so good to me."

"Sandwell are pretty good with the safety side of it, sending the gas people and the people to check the electricians. I have no problem with that, I am quite happy with that."

Repairs

"They do get the job done, but you generally wait a long period. Anything from 2 to 3 weeks."

"Sandwell Council don't really do anything. They don't do the repairs. If you call them, there are no appointments."

"Just the repairs, they don't keep up with, they let it get worse. Over the last 4 years, it has been a joke. It has been terrible for them to do stuff."

"They don't do anything really. You report a repair, and you can't get an appointment for a very long time, and the problem gets worse and worse."

"It's very cold and mouldy. All the time you need to paint the house. The mould is affecting us. I have asthma now."

"Never cleaned the gutters, never cleaned."

Communal areas

"The bin area doesn't get cleaned properly."

"The area around the back of the building, the grass is not getting cut, they have not been for a few months. Outside the front of the building, they don't clear the grass after cutting, and it leaves it slippery; there are leaves as well."

"We pay a monthly fee for the cleaners. But the floors are slimy, and they're not washed at all. The entrance is an eyesore and is so slippery."

"They clean twice a week and cut the grass. However, a few years ago, it was Sandwell that cut the grass, but now it's contractors, and I think Sandwell was better."

"Cleaners do come every week, but haven't mopped this week. Not happy with cleaners."

Other matters

"We have been waiting for the bathroom and kitchen to be modernised."

"They are fairly good on emergencies. We had a leak and had to wait for it. It took a few days."

"Refurbished all new community centres and redone it all, so I'm very satisfied with that."

"It's not up to the standard I expect. The windows are old, the stairs are breaking, we've got damp, and everything is quite dated. It's been a good few years since there were any upgrades."

"Somebody should be going around these properties to check with these elderly people for what needs doing."

"It's everything, ranging from poor lighting down to vile decor that's battered and needs upgrading. The outside areas are poorly maintained with litter and weeds everywhere."



Keeping Properties in Good Repair



Keeping Properties in Good Repair

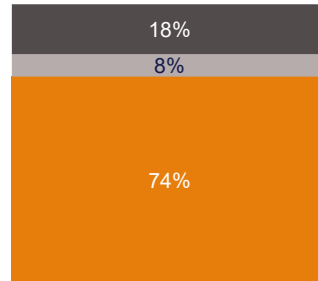
Seven out of ten tenants (72%) stated that they had a repair carried out to their home in the last 12 months. Of these tenants, 74% are satisfied with the repairs service during this period, although fewer are satisfied with the time taken to complete their last repair (69%).

Satisfaction has largely stayed the same for the repairs service in the last 12 months but is up 4p.p for the time taken.

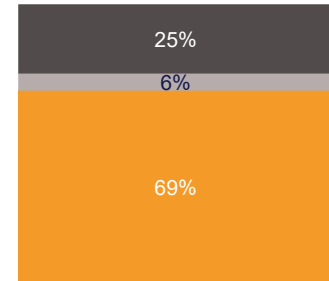
Acuity data shows that the median satisfaction stands at 80%, with the 25th percentile at 72% and a minimum score of 42%. The wide gap between the maximum (100%) and minimum values highlights the variation in performance across landlords. The median trend shows a 4p.p increase, continuing the upward trajectory seen since the end of 24/25. This is potentially driven by increases in resourcing as landlords try to tackle backlogs and improve service as the Regulator publicises more downgrades.

The median satisfaction for the time to complete repairs remained relatively stable between 23/24 and 25/26, fluctuating between 70% and 72%. The 4p.p rise this year represents the largest change, positive or negative, since the end of 22/23 and start of 23/24.

Riverside tenants are again slightly more satisfied, as are those responding by telephone interview.

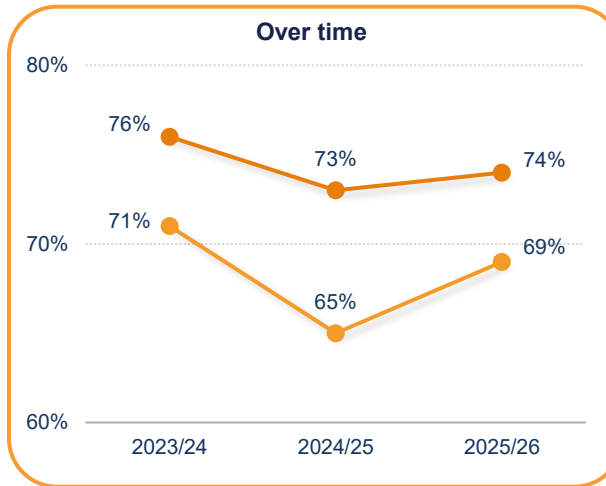


Repairs Last 12 Months (n=1 610)



Time Taken Repairs (n=1 611)

Coloured = Satisfied ● Neither ● Dissatisfied





Contribution to the Neighbourhood



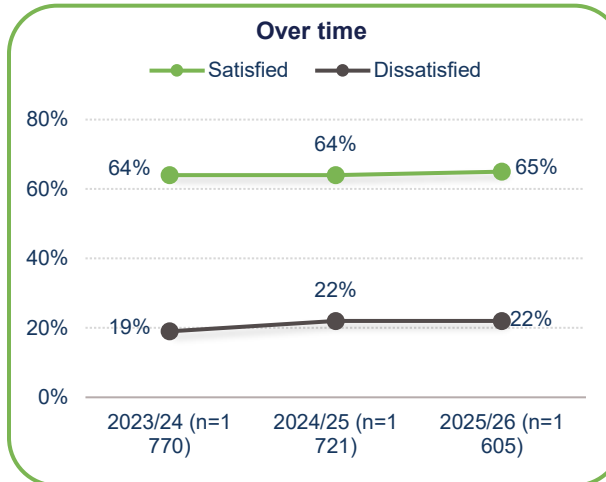
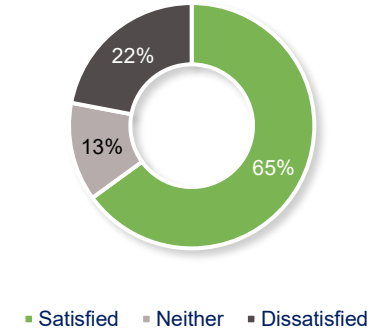
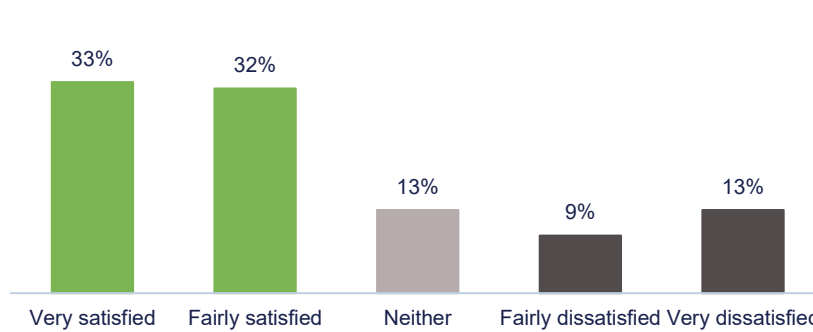
Contribution to the Neighbourhood

Around two-thirds of tenants are satisfied that the Council makes a positive contribution to their neighbourhood (65%), although 22% are dissatisfied. Satisfaction has increased by 1p.p since last year.

On average over the sector, 69% of tenants are satisfied with the positive contribution their landlord made to their neighbourhood (TP11) during 25/26.

The median satisfaction has remained stable at 69%, with a 25th percentile of 62% and a minimum score of 23%, reflecting high variability in neighbourhood contribution. Satisfaction with the contribution made to the neighbourhood remains at its highest level in three years.

More tenants managed by Riverside are satisfied with the contribution made to the neighbourhood than for the remaining council tenants, and there is quite a difference based on the method of delivery.





Approach to ASB

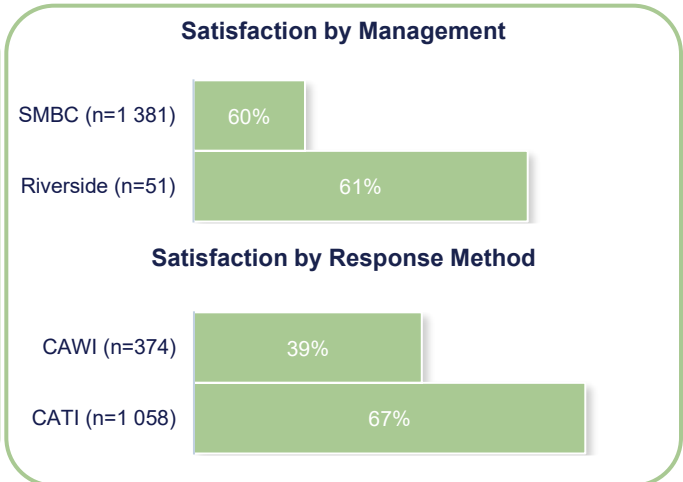
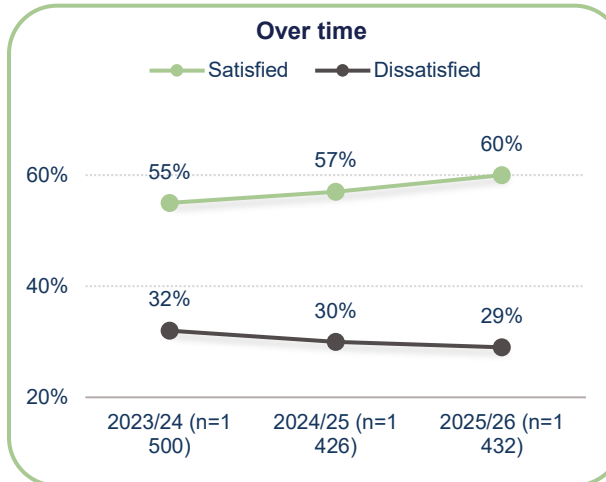
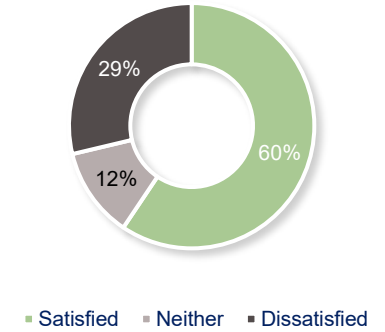
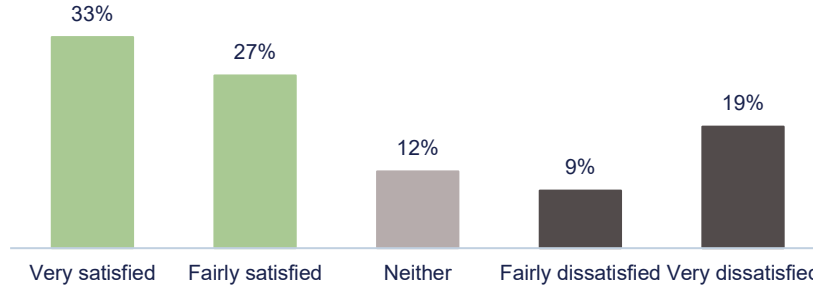


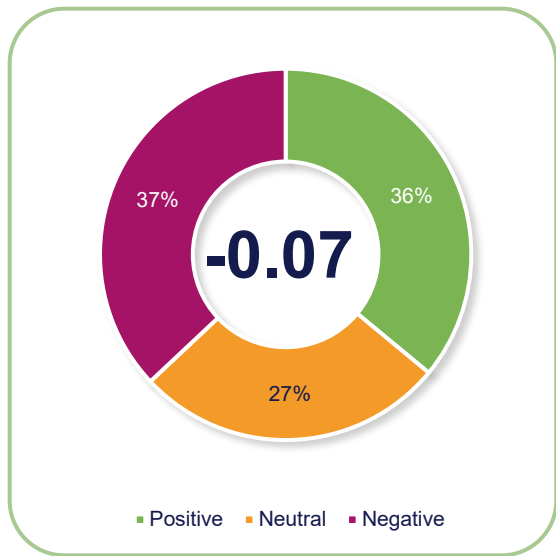
Approach to ASB

Three-fifths of tenants are satisfied with the Council's approach to dealing with anti-social behaviour (60%), although 29% are dissatisfied. Satisfaction with this measure is, however, up a little, in this case, by 2p.p since the previous survey.

For the handling of anti-social behaviour (ASB) (TP12), the median satisfaction is 62%, a 2p.p increase since the start of 25/26. It has remained largely stable over three years, fluctuating by a maximum of 2p.p.

Note: all tenants were asked about their perception of how the Council handles ASB cases, not just those who have reported a case within the previous twelve months. This can lead to some unexpected results and relies heavily on how effective communication is with all tenants, not just those who have experienced ASB in the past.





Attribute	Count	%	Sentiment Score
Subcategory, no attribute (yet)	345	29.2%	-0.40
Listening / Acting	225	19.1%	-2.40
No Comments	207	17.5%	-0.06
Satisfaction	206	17.5%	+3.27
Timeliness & Responsiveness	143	12.1%	-1.17
Resolution	130	11.0%	-1.52
Quality of Work / Service	80	6.8%	-0.73
Communication / Transparency	72	6.1%	-1.47
Safety	26	2.2%	-1.96
Empathy	16	1.4%	-0.25
Effort	13	1.1%	-1.08
Fairness	8	0.7%	-2.50
Staff Conduct	6	0.5%	-1.67
Accountability	4	0.3%	-3.00
Trust	2	0.2%	-1.00
Accessibility	1	0.1%	-5.00
Appointments / Convenience			-
Consistency			-
Worker Conduct			-

The survey responses reflect a mixed perception of how Sandwell Council handles anti-social behaviour (ASB) within the community. Many respondents express satisfaction with the Council's responsiveness, noting effective intervention in cases of noise complaints, drug-related issues, and neighbour disputes. Specifically, some cited prompt actions taken by Council representatives, which led to improved neighbourhood conditions and resolution of problems.

However, concerns persist around the Council's perceived ineffectiveness and lack of follow-through in tackling ongoing ASB. Some respondents labelled the Council "useless" or "dissatisfied," particularly regarding drug dealing and persistent noise disturbances, highlighting instances where their complaints went unaddressed. Reports of discrimination and racial bias have also been noted, with some feeling their concerns are neglected or not treated seriously.

Overall, while a segment of the community feels the Council is approachable and effective, a substantial number of tenants believe there is room for improvement in communication, accountability, and active measures to manage ASB effectively. The variation in experiences suggests a need for a more proactive and consistent approach to addressing these issues.



ASB - Example Comments

Positive comments

"They deal with it very well; they communicate what is happening in the area."

"The area here is very nice."

"They are brilliant, our housing officer pops round to check in on everything."

"They're quite supportive and try to tackle issues as much as they can around here."

"They do an excellent job."

"We have neighbourhood officers, it's pretty good."

"Every time I've had anything go wrong, they are there immediately."

"I am very satisfied as in the lift, and in the halls there's messages to say if anyone feels threatened to call a number, so there's letter reminders for if people feel uncomfortable, and there's something to stand on if you need help."

ASB

"They could do better, well, I have problems with certain neighbours in the last 10 years, brought issues with the police or the Council, and they have done absolutely nothing."

"There is loads, it's just common places. There is one road that has rubbish and dirt dumped here, and they come to pick it up, and not address the issues. The racing of cars and bikes is terrible, and they start fires. They don't tackle the issues; they are aware of it, but they don't address it."

"They don't because I live next to the park and everyone has reported gangs of kids, drugs being sold and nobody has done anything."

"Not really good, outside our flat, there are people selling drugs in their cars. Reported and the neighbours and no feedback. Last report was 7 months ago."

Complaints process

"They seem to react to things after the situation instead of having preventative measures."

"Sandwell don't do anything about ASB in my area. Neighbours have made requests, but so far they have been ignored."

"What handling. To me, when you make a complaint, it takes 28 days to deal with it. So by the time it happens, it might have changed."

"They don't handle it, they ignore it and hope it goes away. They say if it's really bad, we must call the police. By the time the police get there, the situation is over as the police are just very busy."

"They're not interested. You can report it as many times as you want, they seem to take the attitude that you have to get used to it."

"There is a lot of ASB here, and Sandwell do nothing about it."

Other matters

"They don't really. There is a lot of speeding on my street. There have been 3 people killed in the time I have lived here. We have asked for traffic calming measures, but what they have put in actually encourages dangerous driving."

"Very dissatisfied. There are so many thugs and drug dealers in my neighbourhood."

"We get a lot of bikes, and they do not deal with things like that, and there is a lot of noise from the bikes and cars speeding. Mainly vehicles, and it's a very small road, and they cut through our road to get to the quickest point at the bottom."

"They should be more involved in those situations, so as to make it known that they are the authority and that people should behave."

"They need to listen to tenants more who live here, not those who make excuses."



Respectful & Helpful Engagement



Respectful & Helpful Engagement

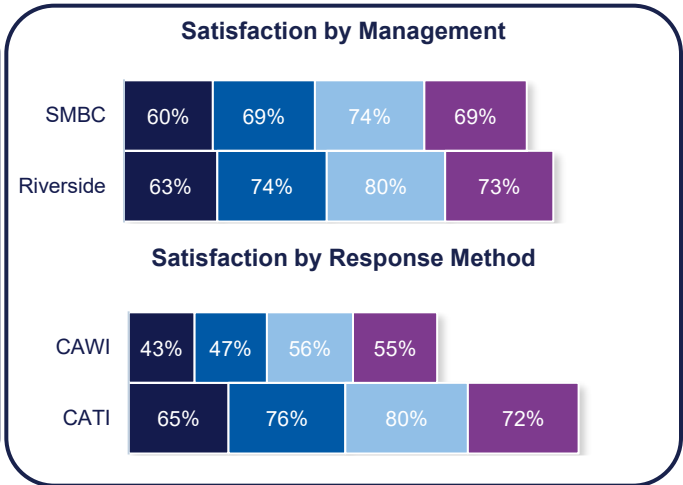
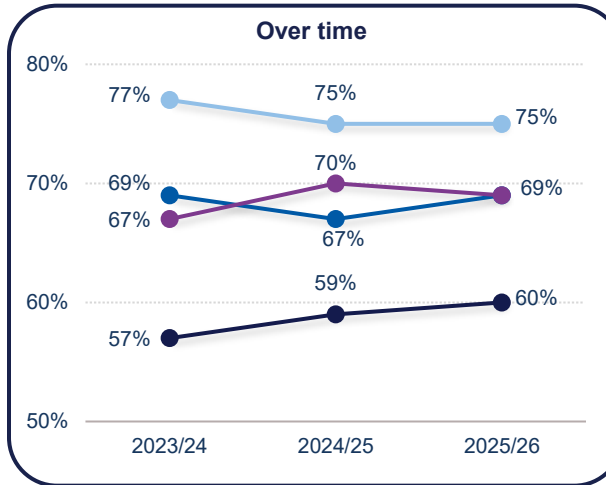
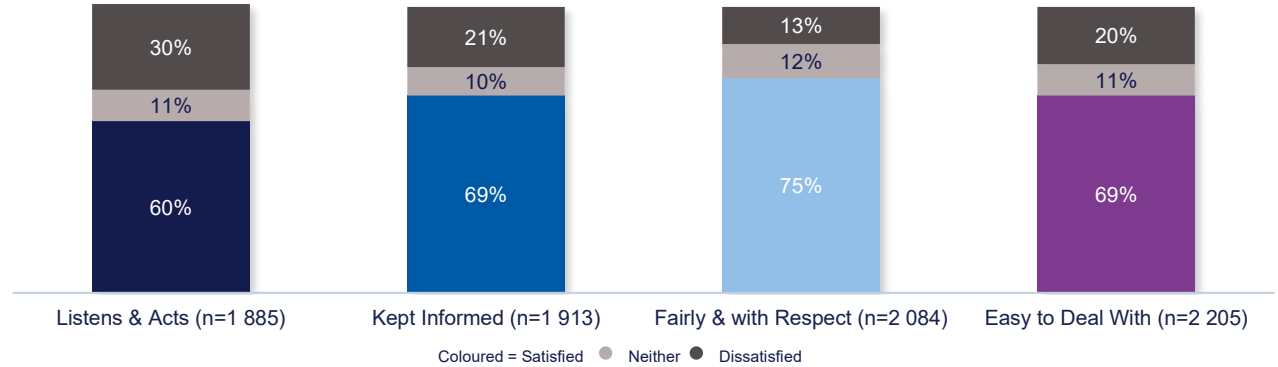
Seven out of ten tenants find the Council easy to deal with (69%), down 1p.p from the previous survey, while the same number (69%) are satisfied with how they are kept informed about things that matter to them. However, fewer tenants are satisfied that the Council listens to their views and acts upon them (60%).

Satisfaction with being kept informed has gone up by 2p.p, while 1p.p more tenants are satisfied that their views are listened to.

A good proportion of tenants (75%) agree that they are treated fairly and with respect by the Council; however, this is down 1p.p. compared with last year.

Whilst listens and acts remains the lowest-scoring metric across the sector at 65%, this is a 6p.p increase in satisfaction, and this upward trend is also seen in measures for being kept informed (75%, up 2p.p) and fairly and with respect (83%, up 5p.p). These are the highest engagement scores that Acuity have seen in over two years.

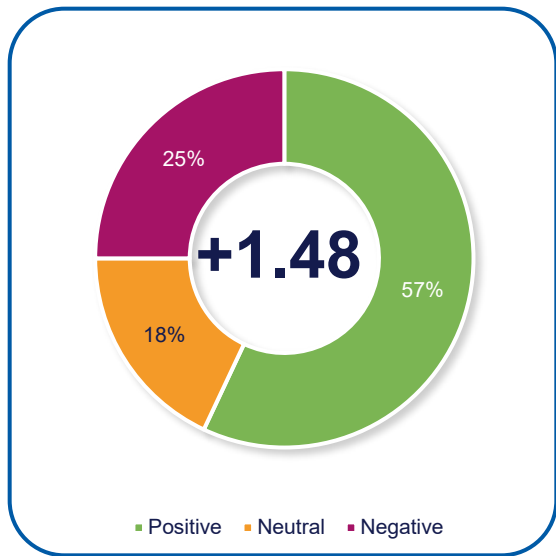
A familiar pattern exists based on the management and response method.



Customer Service & Communication

Describe your experience with the customer service and communications you receive.

Base Size: 1,877



Attribute	Count	%	Sentiment Score
Satisfaction	542	29.3%	+3.61
Subcategory, no attribute (yet)	330	17.8%	-0.08
Staff Conduct	326	17.6%	+3.41
Communication / Transparency	275	14.9%	+0.63
Timeliness & Responsiveness	254	13.7%	+0.26
Quality of Work / Service	144	7.8%	+0.65
Effort	123	6.6%	-1.13
Listening / Acting	106	5.7%	+1.05
Resolution	87	4.7%	-0.15
No Comments	70	3.8%	-0.64
Empathy	52	2.8%	+1.46
Appointments / Convenience	49	2.6%	-1.55
Worker Conduct	15	0.8%	-1.07
Fairness	10	0.5%	+0.80
Trust	9	0.5%	-1.00
Consistency	8	0.4%	+1.00
Safety	5	0.3%	+0.20
Accessibility	4	0.2%	-0.50
Accountability	4	0.2%	-1.25

When asked to “Describe your experience with the customer service and communications you receive,” 1,877 tenants left comments, revealing a mixed sentiment among users of Sandwell Council’s services. While many respondents express satisfaction with the politeness and attentiveness of customer service representatives, issues persist, particularly related to response times and the effectiveness of repairs. A notable concern is the difficulty in reaching the right departments, often leading to frustration due to lengthy wait times and automated systems that fail to address specific needs.

Several participants emphasise the lack of follow-through on reported issues, such as repairs and communication about ongoing problems, including damp and mould. There are also criticisms regarding the handling of sensitive situations and the perceived indifference of some staff members towards tenants’ serious concerns.

Overall, while there are positive remarks about the helpfulness and friendliness of the customer service staff, more substantial improvements are needed in communication, follow-up processes, and repair efficacy to enhance overall tenant satisfaction and trust in the Council’s services, the need for a more streamlined communication process and efficient repairs is evident across numerous responses.



Customer Service - Example Comments

Positive comments

"When I go to them for anything important, it is very fast, and they respond quickly."

"We have got a housing office on the estate. If you have any problems they report them straight away. If I can't get through on the Sandwell website, I just go straight through to the office."

"The customer service is good, very, very good."

"Brilliant."

"They're brilliant. The ones that answer the phone are quite good."

"I think it's good, they are quite proactive and respond quickly."

"Very good, actually. They answer the phone pretty quickly, and the appointments are normally pretty good."

"They are really lovely and very well mannered."

Praise for staff

"They're very helpful, they listen and do what I ask."

"Customer Services is very good - they're very helpful."

"They're very polite and explain stuff to me. They're nice over the phone, and the people who come out are polite."

"Very satisfied. The customer service agents are easy to deal with."

"They're friendly. They take time to talk to you, explain things and chase things up for you."

"They're ever so polite. With my rent arrears, I call them up, and they tell me the reasons why they messaged me and sort it from there."

"When you call out of hours, they are helpful and friendly, get you sorted as quickly as possible."

"Always very polite and very good."

Contact issues

"Customer service is terrible, you can hardly get through, and it's a long hold if you get through to a human. It's hard, and if you do, they're usually rude, and it's hard to get help from them. Most of the time, you can't even get through to a human as it's automated."

"It takes ages to get through. They try their best to help, but it can be annoying. I have applied for a charging point, but Sandwell have denied me, due to something that is beyond my control."

"There is no communication, you can't get hold of anybody, you have to hold for 45 mins, being passed to the wrong department, then passed to someone else and wait for another 20 mins, then have to leave a voice message."

"The length of time you wait on a call is long."

"It's okay, it takes a long time to get through on the phone, they say do it online, but I'm not very good at things like that."

Other matters

"The only problem with customer service is the answering machines. Automated services. A bit disappointed with that. He likes to talk to an actual person."

"It's hard to get through on the phone. You can't speak to someone directly about a problem. You sometimes have to go all the way through the phone system, and when you finally get to the right department, you get cut off."

"It's hard to get through to anyone; you can't ever get through. We now have to do everything online. Prefer to walk in and talk to a person or call on the phone and talk with someone."

"It's difficult to get through because there are so many different numbers and departments to get through."

"I find it very hard because you have to use the website, but I don't have a smartphone or a computer."



Effective Handling of Complaints



Effective Handling of Complaints

A quarter of tenants said they had made a complaint to the Council in the last 12 months, although it is not clear how many of these are genuine complaints, or service requests yet to be fully actioned, a common problem faced by landlords since the introduction of the TSMs.

Nevertheless, just 30% of those affected are satisfied with how these complaints were handled, while almost twice as many (58%) are dissatisfied. Satisfaction is down 3p.p, whilst dissatisfaction is up 1p.p.

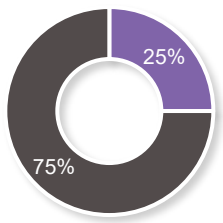
On this occasion, those managed by Riverside are far less satisfied than their counterparts in the Council-managed properties, 17% compared with 31%, although this is based on relatively few responses. Again, the method of response does appear to affect satisfaction levels.

For complaints handling (TP09), median satisfaction has increased by 3p.p to 40% satisfied, a little above that of the Council, with the percentage of tenants reporting making a complaint down 2p.p at 21%.

Satisfaction has shown minor fluctuations over time. Satisfaction with the complaints handling process has consistently scored lower than other indicators, with tenants struggling to identify what constitutes a complaint and whether it has been resolved. The new Housing Ombudsmen Code should hopefully provide some clarity.

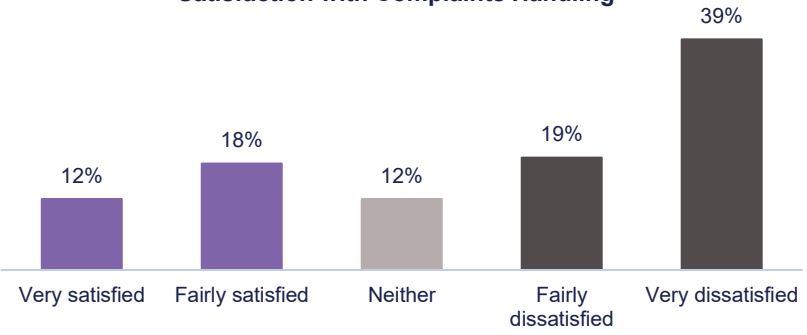
In addition, the comments made by tenants, shown below, may help identify what works well and where there is room for improvement.

Complaint in last 12 months

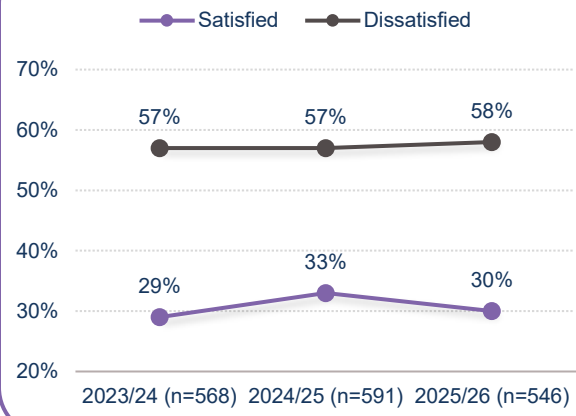


■ Yes ■ No

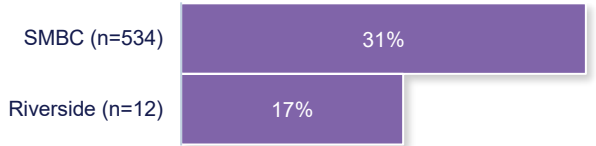
Satisfaction with Complaints Handling



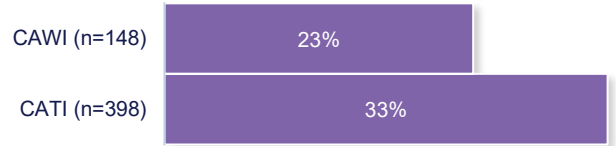
Over time



Satisfaction by Management



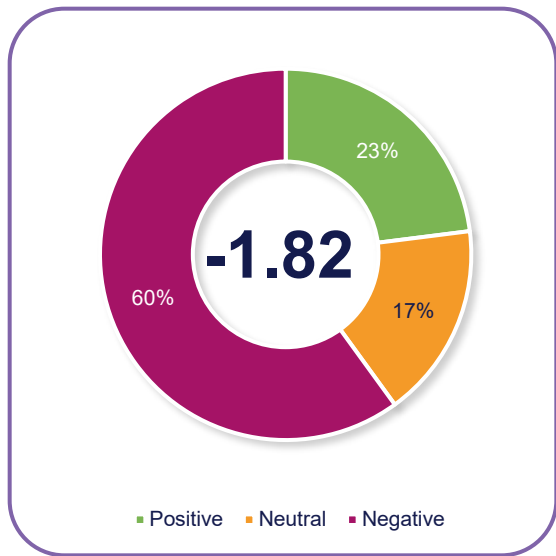
Satisfaction by Response Method



Complaints

Please describe your experience of how complaints are handled.

Base Size: 465



Attribute	Count	%	Sentiment Score
Timeliness & Responsiveness	111	23.9%	-1.70
Subcategory, no attribute (yet)	111	23.9%	-1.99
Communication / Transparency	102	21.9%	-3.27
Resolution	77	16.6%	-2.47
Listening / Acting	76	16.3%	-3.03
Quality of Work / Service	58	12.5%	+0.48
Satisfaction	39	8.4%	+1.21
No Comments	33	7.1%	-1.52
Effort	21	4.5%	-2.90
Empathy	10	2.2%	-3.40
Accountability	7	1.5%	-4.29
Appointments / Convenience	5	1.1%	-1.00
Staff Conduct	5	1.1%	-3.00
Trust	5	1.1%	-3.60
Consistency	3	0.6%	-3.33
Fairness	2	0.4%	-4.00
Safety	1	0.2%	0.00
Accessibility			-
Worker Conduct			-

The survey responses highlight dissatisfaction with the handling of complaints at Sandwell Council. Many respondents report issues such as delayed responses, lack of follow-up, and unresolved complaints, particularly regarding damp, mould, and repairs. Complaints about anti-social behaviour are often ignored, leading to frustration among tenants who feel their concerns are not taken seriously. Efficient communication is another concern, with many stating that they received generic replies, but no substantive actions were taken.

While some respondents note positive experiences, such as quick resolutions and polite staff interactions, these are outweighed by reports of complaints being disregarded or deemed low priority. Several individuals express feelings of helplessness and frustration, particularly regarding ongoing issues that remain unaddressed for months or even years. Overall, there is a sentiment that improvements are needed in responsiveness, accountability, and the overall complaints process to restore trust and satisfaction among tenants. The data indicate a need for Sandwell Council to address these concerns to enhance service delivery and community relations.



Complaints - Example Comments

Positive comments

"I emailed them about a job that hadn't been done, and they got it done the very next day."

"When complaints are put in, they investigate."

"It's always dealt with in a friendly and well-mannered way."

"I had a complaint, phoned up, spoke to someone and got an email about it. Then someone was around to speak to me about it. It was sorted at the time, but it's still an ongoing issue."

"Very satisfied."

"The anti-social behaviour team took details and dealt with it within a time frame and gave us updates when there were any, to let us know what they'd done."

"They are handled properly, they listen to what you say and try to find the solution."

Complaints process

"Sometimes they ask you to ring someone else (in this case, Highways instead of Sandwell Council) - for parking issues."

"They listen to me but don't do anything about it. I have a neighbour who keeps shouting abuse at me, but the council is doing nothing."

"I get an email confirming receipt of the complaint, and then I wait for the response, and it is usually within 10 working days."

"They send you out a diary, and you have to fill the diary in over a certain period of time and send it back to them. It's just annoying."

"It takes time for everything to get sorted out, it gets lost in translation. I am still waiting for them to resolve my damp problem."

"They just sent me a letter about how it was being looked into."

Contact & communication

"I have reported it, and they have acknowledged my complaint."

"I made a complaint; I've asked them to make sure it's logged. Sometimes they write to me saying they have acknowledged my complaint, but it still never gets done! the complaints just fall on deaf ears."

"When people say they are going to get back, they should get back, rather than chasing it up."

"You make a complaint, they throw it on a computer, and then you don't hear anything for months."

"We have spoken to them, they wrote it down on the computer, passed it on to someone else, and have not heard anything about it."

"Communication would be a great thing, satisfied to a degree as there are many situations."

Other matters

"They have to go through certain channels that make it slightly more difficult to get the problem sorted; they don't take a strong approach and use the tools that are available to them, so they are a little bit slow on the investigation side of it."

"I reported rats in the garden due to the state of the neighbour's garden. I put in a formal complaint, a lovely lady phoned me back, she gave me honest answers, but unfortunately could not help me the way I wanted."

"I followed the guidelines, logged online and by email. Received a reply back that was standard, saying they would get back within 5-8 days, took them over 2 weeks to respond with a phone call. Asked what the problem was which was in the email, then it was just left, said we will look into this, and this was 2 weeks ago. I have heard nothing since. It is absolute rubbish."



Net Promoter



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?"

Two-fifths of tenants are promoters, very loyal and happy to promote the Council to other people (41%), with 33% of tenants giving a score of 10 out of 10. A quarter of tenants are currently passive and could be persuaded either way (24%), whilst just over a third are detractors (35%), and likely to have negative views about the Council.

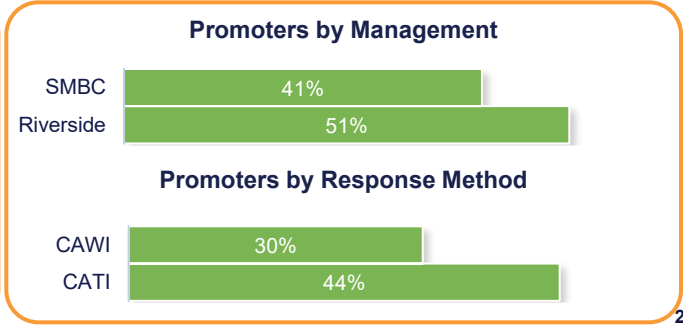
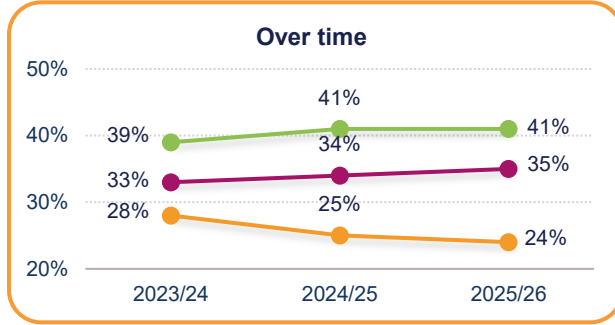
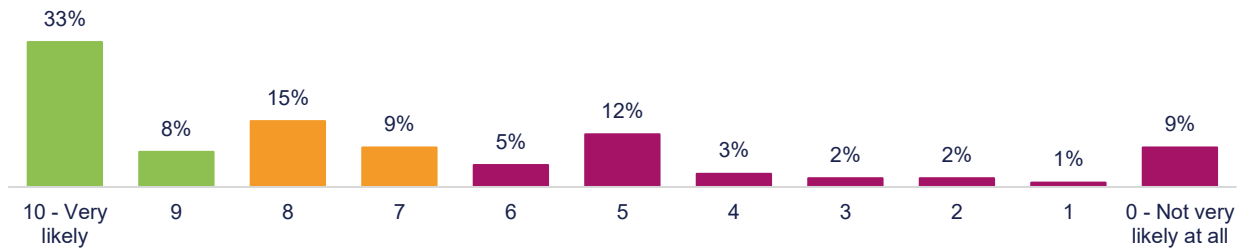
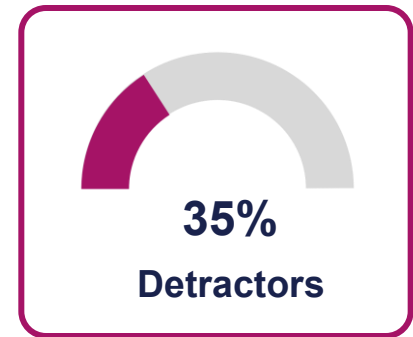
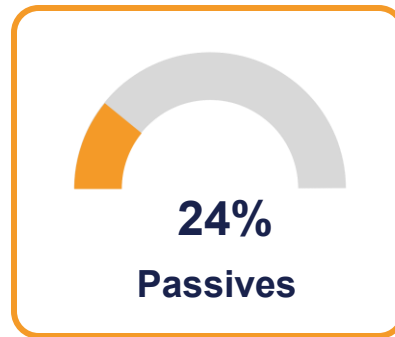
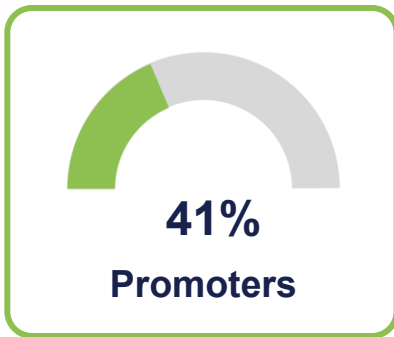
Some 15% of tenants gave a score of 8, and it would be interesting to know how this group could be converted into promoters. Looking at the comments from these tenants, their main concerns appear to be around property maintenance and repairs.

The Net Promoter Score (promoters minus detractors) is +6, which is positive but below the Acuity clients' 24/25 average of around +25. The NPS has decreased by 2 points since the previous survey.

Those managed by Riverside are more likely to recommend the Council, as are those responding by telephone interview.

+6
NPS ↓ 2

Net Promoter





Further Insight



Satisfaction & Dissatisfaction

The charts summarise the key results from 2025/6, and show the range of both satisfaction and dissatisfaction.

Sometimes, where satisfaction is low, the remaining tenants can be split between those who fall into the neutral middle ground and those who are actually dissatisfied. This difference can signal areas where tenants do not have strong opinions or areas where a high percentage of tenants are actually dissatisfied.

For Sandwell MBC, it generally follows that measures with high satisfaction also have low dissatisfaction, and vice versa, with relatively few opting for a neutral response.

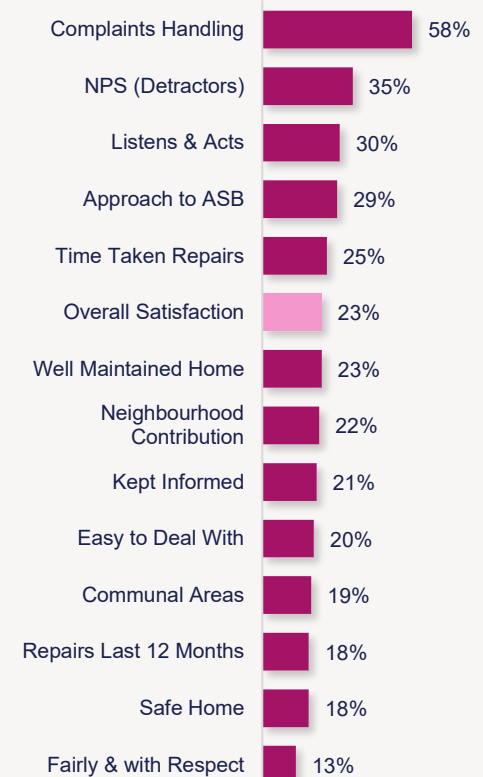
The range of satisfaction is fairly consistent from 60% to 75%, with the highest satisfaction for the way tenants are treated fairly and with respect, apart from the handling of complaints, which is much lower at 30%.

Correspondingly, the highest dissatisfaction is for the handling of complaints, although this is the only measure where more are dissatisfied than satisfied. For the remaining measures, around a quarter of tenants are dissatisfied, including 23% dissatisfied with the overall service.

Satisfaction with Measures 2025/26



Dissatisfaction with Measures 2025/26





Year-on-Year Change

The table shows the annual results for 2025/26 compared with 2024/25, with increases shown in green and decreases in purple.

To be statistically significant, changes need to exceed the combined margins of error for the last two surveys, around 4p.p, so just the increase in satisfaction for the maintenance of the communal areas exceeds this threshold.

Satisfaction with the overall service is down just 1p.p and all other changes are small. The Net Promoter Score is down by 2 points, perhaps reflecting the slightly lower overall rating.

	2024/25	2025/26
Overall Satisfaction	67%	66% (-1)
Well Maintained Home	70%	68% (-2)
Safe Home	75%	74% (-1)
Communal Areas	69%	74% (+5)
Repairs Last 12 Months	73%	74% (+0)
Time Taken Repairs	65%	69% (+4)
Listens & Acts	59%	60% (+1)
Kept Informed	67%	69% (+2)
Fairly & with Respect	75%	75% (-1)
Easy to Deal With	70%	69% (-1)
Neighbourhood Contribution	64%	65% (+1)
Approach to ASB	57%	60% (+2)
Complaints Handling	33%	30% (-3)
NPS (Promoters)	41%	41% (+0)



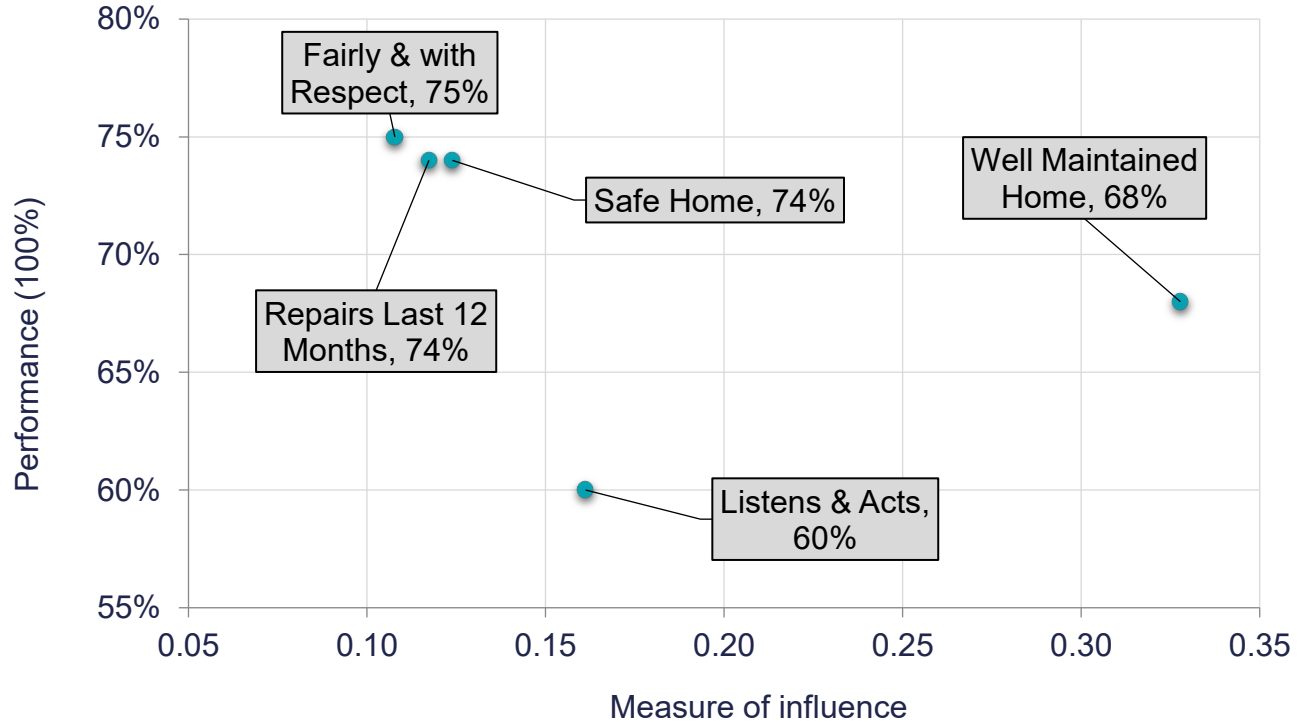
Key Driver Analysis

Key driver analysis is used to examine the relationship between the different variables (the questions asked in the survey) and determine which elements of the service are the key drivers for tenants' overall satisfaction.

Each landlord has its own unique pattern of influence, and, when considering the results for 2025/26, the most important driver of tenants' satisfaction with overall services is that Sandwell MBC provides a well-maintained home. How views are listened to, the home being safe, the repairs service and how tenants are treated fairly and with respect, are all also important, but not as influential.

This analysis implies that if improvements around the most influential measures can be achieved, it is more likely to lead to increased satisfaction with the overall services provided.

Annual Key Driver Analysis – Overall Satisfaction



Benchmarking – RSH Data 2024/25 (LCRA - Councils)

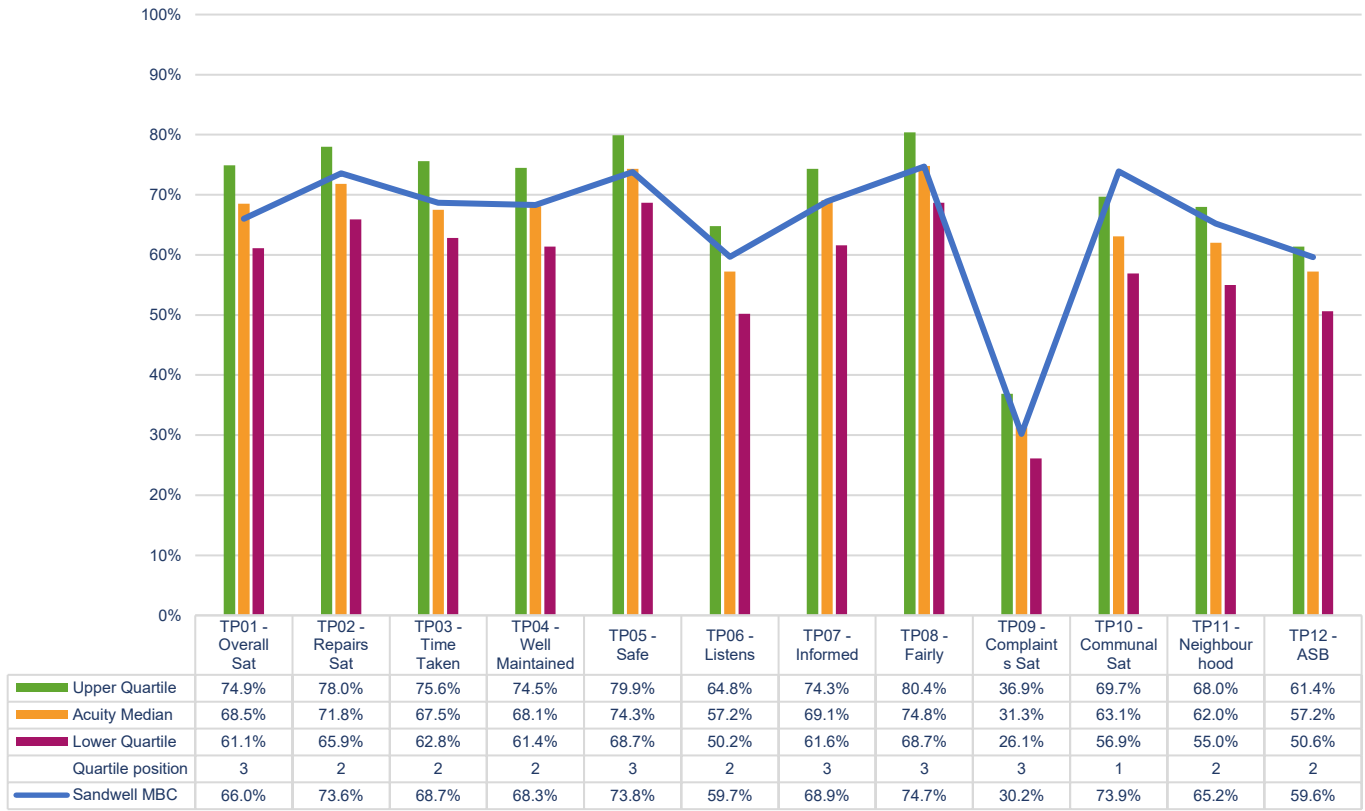


The Regulator of Social Housing has now released the results of the TSMs for 2024/25, so it is possible to compare the results from Sandwell MBC against these. The chart shows the results from all other councils, for LCRA tenants only.

Sandwell MBC compares well with this group, with seven of the measures above the group median; six are in the second quartile, and one, the maintenance of communal areas, is in the top quartile.

The remaining five measures all fall into the third quartile, including the overall service.

This is encouraging for a landlord of Sandwell's size. The following page includes a comparison against large landlords of 20,000 properties or more.



Benchmarking – RSH Data 2024/25 (LCRA >20,000)



When compared against all landlords with more than 20,000 properties (HAs and councils), the situation is very similar, with seven measures above the group median and five below. The overall service is still in the third quartile, and the maintenance of the communal areas is in the top quartile.

These comparisons help provide context for the results, showing where there is still room for improvement if the Council wishes to compete with the best performers.





Top 30 Comments

The table summarises the subject areas of all comments on the open questions.

The most common are comments about the time taken to complete repairs, and these are primarily negative, suggesting the time could be improved for many of the reported repairs.

However, customer service is generally seen as good, with many positive comments about the staff and their responses to queries.

These comments help to provide insight beyond the satisfaction scores and can help the Council target the areas most in need of improvement. The full text of these comments is available on the Acuity dashboard.

	%	Count	Score
Property Services - Responsive Repairs - Timeliness / Responsiveness	39.27%	838	-1.68
Housing Services - Customer Service & Contact - Satisfaction	30.79%	657	3.61
Property Condition - General Condition	29.71%	634	2.05
Uncategorized Comments	19.73%	421	0.18
Housing Services - Customer Service & Contact - Staff Conduct	16.49%	352	3.47
Housing Services - ASB - Other	15.98%	341	-0.33
Housing Services - Customer Service & Contact - Other	15.75%	336	0.47
Property Services - Responsive Repairs - Resolution	14.71%	314	-2.85
Property Services - Responsive Repairs - Other	12.56%	268	-0.93
Housing Services - Communal Maintenance - Quality of Work / Service	11.34%	242	1.15
Property Condition - Damp	10.97%	234	-3.70
Housing Services - Customer Service & Contact - Communication / Transparency	10.92%	233	1.04
Property Services - Responsive Repairs - Quality of Work / Service	10.68%	228	-0.91
Housing Services - ASB - Listening / Acting	10.50%	224	-2.46
Housing Services - Customer Service & Contact - Timeliness / Responsiveness	9.70%	207	1.11
Housing Services - ASB - No Comments	9.65%	206	-0.97
Housing Services - ASB - Satisfaction	9.56%	204	3.33
Property Services - Responsive Repairs - Communication / Transparency	8.20%	175	-2.02
Property Condition - Window/doors	8.20%	175	-3.53
Housing Services - Complaints - Timeliness / Responsiveness	7.59%	162	-2.23
Housing Services - ASB - Timeliness / Responsiveness	7.08%	151	-1.44
Housing Services - Grounds Maintenance - Quality of Work / Service	7.03%	150	-1.06
Housing Services - Complaints - Other	6.42%	137	-2.14
Housing Services - ASB - Resolution	6.23%	133	-1.93
Building Safety - Door/window/gate security	6.23%	133	-0.53
Equality, Diversity & Inclusion - Vulnerabilities	6.09%	130	-2.82
Housing Services - Customer Service & Contact - Quality of Work / Service	6.04%	129	1.69
Property Condition - Roofs & Gutters	5.86%	125	-4.30
Estate Services - Rubbish, Bins & Recycling	5.58%	119	-3.04
Housing Services - Grounds Maintenance - Timeliness / Responsiveness	5.53%	118	-3.17



National Context

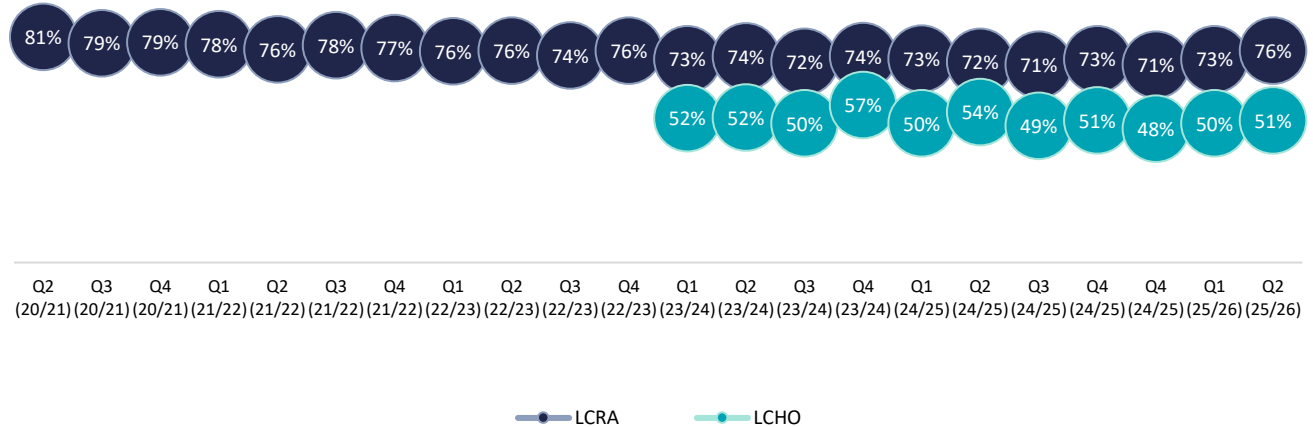
When considering the results, the national context and external factors must also be taken into account.

Satisfaction is based on perception rather than specific values, so it can be affected by these factors and how positive people feel about their lives.

Residents have had to face considerable challenges in recent years, particularly the ongoing cost-of-living crisis, political changes and some will still be recovering from the disruption caused by the pandemic of 2020 and the effect it had on the delivery of services.

The top graph demonstrates how overall satisfaction has changed over time for Acuity's clients (tracker only). The trendline is downward over the last few years, but there are signs that it is starting to increase again as we move into 2025/26.

Overall Services (Acuity Clients)





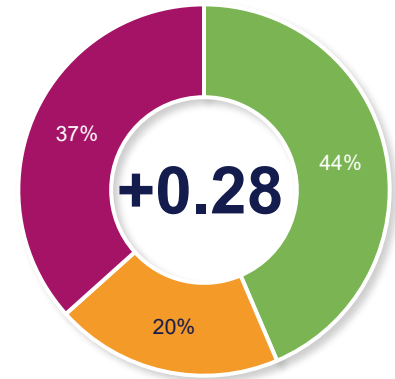
Summary

Overall RSI Score

The Organisational-Level RSI offers a single, headline metric that captures the overall emotional tone of tenant feedback across all key service areas.

It is based exclusively on responses to the five RSI open-ended questions. It reflects how positively or negatively tenants feel about the organisation's performance across these key areas.

Please note, if your organisation does not ask all seven core RSI questions, you are unable to benchmark your Organisational RSI Score. Each individual RSI question will be analysed in its relevant section throughout the report.



■ Positive ■ Neutral ■ Negative

Sentiment Scores



Summary

Overall Satisfaction

Tenants' comments reveal a mixed sentiment towards the housing services provided by Sandwell. While many tenants appreciate quick responses to urgent repairs, complaints frequently highlight long waiting times for non-urgent issues and a lack of communication regarding ongoing repair statuses. Common issues reported include persistent damp and mould problems, inadequate response to maintenance requests, and dissatisfaction with the handling of anti-social behaviour. Overall, improvements in repair timelines and customer communication are suggested as most highly sought by the feedback received.

The Home

There is also a mixed sentiment regarding safety and maintenance in communal areas and homes. While many tenants report satisfaction with cleanliness, repairs are frequently highlighted as problematic, with lengthy wait times for completion. Some safety concerns persist, particularly regarding lighting, secure entry points, and general upkeep. Tenants emphasise the need for better communication about repairs, with some expressing frustration at inadequate responses to safety issues such as damp and mould. Overall, while many feel safe, improvement is required in maintenance efficiency and responsiveness.

ASB

Sandwell Council's approach to handling anti-social behaviour (ASB) also shows mixed experiences. Many tenants appreciate prompt responses and effective interventions, particularly in noise complaints and drug-related issues. However, some dissatisfaction exists, with numerous reports of inaction or inadequate responses to recurring problems such as drug dealing, noisy neighbours, and vandalism. Several respondents express frustration over perceived discrimination in how complaints are managed and the lack of follow-up communication from the Council. Overall, a need for improved consistency and communication in addressing ASB is evident.

Customer Service & Communication

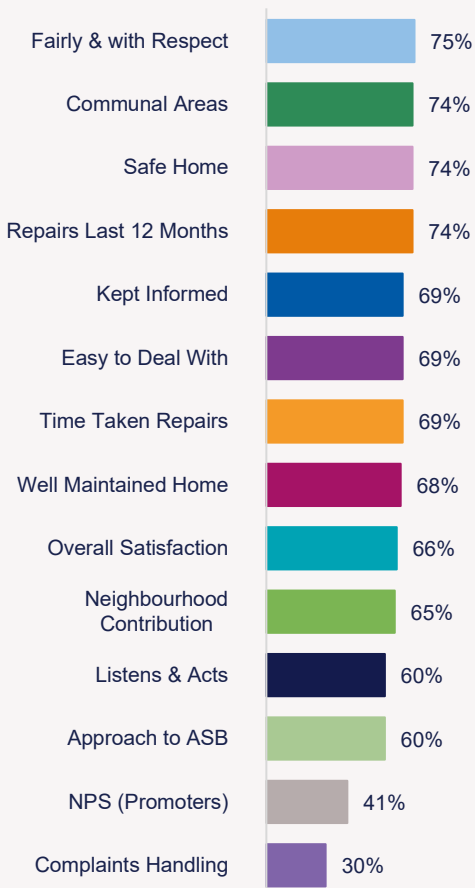
The overall customer service experience with Sandwell Council is primarily positive, with many respondents appreciating the polite and helpful staff when contact is established. However, some frustrations arise from lengthy wait times, poor communication, and unresolved issues, especially regarding repairs. Several tenants report difficulties in reaching the correct departments, inconsistent service quality, and recurring delays in response and follow-up. While some praise prompt actions for urgent matters, some express dissatisfaction with the overall reliability and effectiveness of the service.

Complaints

Finally, there is widespread dissatisfaction with Sandwell Council's complaint handling, citing inefficiency, poor communication, and a lack of follow-up. Many respondents express frustration with unresolved issues, including damp and mould, neighbour disputes, and delayed repairs. While some report prompt responses, the overall sentiment indicates that complaints often feel ignored or inadequately addressed. Emotional tolls, such as stress and mental health impacts, are common themes, with several individuals resorting to legal action or ombudsman involvement due to a lack of resolution.



Satisfaction with Measures



Summary

Sandwell MBC commissioned Acuity to carry out annual independent satisfaction surveys to help them improve tenants' satisfaction with their services and to meet the requirements of the Regulator of Social Housing. The survey was completed both online and by telephone interview, and a total of 2,394 responses were received - sufficient to give a margin of error of $\pm 1.92\%$.

The range of results is generally good, with two-thirds of tenants satisfied with the overall service provided by the Council (66%). Four measures exceed 70% satisfaction, with the highest rating for the way the Council treats its tenants fairly and with respect. Just one measure falls below 60%, the handling of complaints, where just 30% are satisfied and almost twice as many (58%) are dissatisfied. However, this is the only measure where more are dissatisfied than satisfied. In addition, 41% of tenants would recommend the Council to other people, although 35% wouldn't, giving a Net Promoter Score of +6.

Satisfaction has changed very little since last year's survey, and only the maintenance of the communal areas, which is up by 5p.p., is statistically significant. Satisfaction with the overall service is down by just 1p.p and the handling of complaints is down by 3p.p. Across the sector, satisfaction is increasing slightly after a long period of decline.

When compared with the results from the Regulator of Social Housing for 2024/25, Sandwell MBC has a relatively strong performance. Seven of the measures are above the group medians, with the maintenance of the communal areas in the top quartile. The remaining five measures are in the third quartile, including the overall service. The key driver for overall satisfaction is that the Council provides their tenants with well-maintained homes. Less influential, but still important, are the satisfaction that tenants' homes are safe, the repairs service in the last 12 months, that their views are listened to and acted upon, and they are treated with respect.

For the first time, sentiment analysis has been used against five qualitative questions, covering the main areas of service. This gives a sentiment score based on the comments made and also highlights where tenants are happy with the service or where they think improvements could be made. The overall sentiment score is positive at +0.28, and all other subject areas are split between positive and negative scores. Analysing sentiment scores and reading the comments will help the Council better understand what is driving satisfaction and what is not working quite as well.

When breaking down the results further, this shows that satisfaction tends to increase with age; newer tenants to the Council are the most satisfied; and the method of response does make a difference, with those responding online less satisfied than those giving a telephone interview.





Recommendations

Sandwell MBC aims to provide housing that meets the needs of Sandwell. It is prioritising the provision of more affordable homes, making the best use of the homes they have and providing quality housing for all. The council also aims to support people's health through housing and to address issues around climate change and fuel poverty.

This survey of Sandwell MBC's tenants will help deepen the understanding of the issues that they face, supporting their work towards the above aims.

The recommendations point towards some areas of service that could be improved and suggest particular issues that could be targeted as a priority.

Repairs service

It is perhaps no surprise that having a well-maintained home is the key driver of overall satisfaction. This is often the case and shows the importance of the repairs service to tenants. For the Council, the repairs service fares well and satisfaction has increased since last year. However, a quarter of tenants remain dissatisfied with the time taken to complete repairs, and this issue accounts for most of the open comments tenants make about the service. Whilst emergency repairs appear to be dealt with quickly and effectively, some say there are long delays on some less urgent works, leading to frustration. This is exacerbated by a lack of suitable communication about the process. In addition, some say they have issues with damp and mould in their homes, which are of even more priority with the introduction of Awaab's Law in October. The survey did not include a separate question about damp, but this may be useful in determining the extent of the problem in Sandwell.

Communal area management

As well as some criticism of the repairs service generally, some highlight issues with the maintenance and management of the communal areas. There appears to be consistency across the area, with many praising the efforts of the cleaners and enjoying their neighbourhood. Still, others say that some areas are not cleaned regularly enough, and some report disturbing incidents of anti-social behaviour, sometimes involving drug dealing and violence. Some say the response from the Council can be inadequate, whilst the ASB team does its best, some feel neglected and not taken seriously when reporting problems. Dealing with ASB is notoriously difficult, but the Council may wish to delve deeper into these comments to identify where most issues lie, analyse how the Council responds, and determine what could be improved.

Handling of complaints

The handling of complaints is once again the lowest-performing metric in the survey, and satisfaction has fallen slightly since the previous survey; almost twice as many are dissatisfied with the approach taken as are satisfied. Some say that they suffer with delayed responses, a lack of follow up and complaints remaining unresolved. This is particularly relevant regarding damp and mould, repairs and ASB. The general feeling from the comments made is that the Council is not proactive enough in handling complaints, doesn't take ownership of problems and often relies on others, such as the police, to sort out issues. Whilst the effective handling of complaints is an issue for all social landlords, satisfaction is not improving in Sandwell, so the Council may wish to review processes to ensure responses are adequate and tenants' frustrations are addressed.

Resident Sentiment Index (RSI)

Resident Sentiment Index (RSI): Overview

Our new Resident Sentiment Index (RSI) uses a sector-specific sentiment categorisation model developed from decades of housing data and commentary. It allows landlords to move beyond satisfaction scores by showing not only how residents feel, but why. The framework includes seven key open-ended TSM questions across each of the main service areas, allowing organisations to benchmark with their peers.

Our model analyses open-ended survey responses across key service areas, categorising them using a deep learning sentiment engine. Each comment is scored on a 5-point scale (from -5 to +5) and grouped by category, subcategory, and – where relevant – cross-cutting attributes such as trust, listening, or communication. These attributes help identify what drives sentiment within services like repairs or tenancy management.

Note: Not every subcategory will have attributes. Some service areas (e.g. Property Condition, Neighbourhoods) are stand-alone themes that don't require further layering.

Key Features

- A clear, overall sentiment score for your organisation and each service area
- Detailed analysis by category, subcategory, and (where applicable) attribute
- Automated, regulator-ready reporting aligned to TSM and STAR survey requirements
- Scalable benchmarking for tracking performance over time and against sector peers

How We Categorise Feedback

We follow a multi-stage process to turn unstructured comments into actionable insight:

- **Model Design:** Combining housing sector expertise with real resident language to build a structured categorisation model
- **Expression Building:** Creating comprehensive expressions to detect key themes and sentiments
- **Testing & Tuning:** Refining expressions to maximise accuracy and coverage
- **Deployment:** Automatically categorising and scoring comments at scale

Some feedback will remain “Uncategorised” – particularly when language is highly specific, off-topic, or outside current theme coverage. This is expected and will reduce as the model continues to grow.



Demographics



Management

Although the Council manages the vast majority of properties, Sandwell also has a number of PFI properties, which are managed by Riverside. 78 tenants from these properties responded, compared with 2,316 from the Council-managed properties.

The table shows the range of satisfaction and shows that this small number of tenants are generally more satisfied with the service provided by Riverside than the majority managed by the Council.

Overall, 72% of Riverside-managed tenants are satisfied, compared with 66%. The only exception to the general rule is for the handling of complaints, where only 17% of the Riverside-managed tenants are satisfied.

It is not clear from the survey why these differences occur, but the PFI properties will likely be much newer and more desirable, so it is possible that this will affect satisfaction.

	All Tenants	SMBC	Riverside
Overall Satisfaction	66%	66%	72%
Well Maintained Home	68%	68%	82%
Safe Home	74%	74%	82%
Communal Areas	74%	74%	79%
Repairs Last 12 Months	74%	73%	86%
Time Taken Repairs	69%	68%	78%
Listens & Acts	60%	60%	63%
Kept Informed	69%	69%	74%
Fairly & with Respect	75%	74%	80%
Easy to Deal With	69%	69%	73%
Neighbourhood Contribution	65%	65%	72%
Approach to ASB	60%	60%	61%
Complaints Handling	30%	31%	17%
NPS (Promoters)	41%	41%	51%



Response Method

The method of response does appear to affect the levels of satisfaction, and this is again true here, with those responding online consistently less satisfied than those giving a telephone interview.

This is commonly seen, and one suggestion for the differences is that those responding online are often younger and are generally less satisfied. However, for Sandwell MBC, very similar numbers of those over 60 responded by each method, so another explanation may be needed.

It could be that it is easier to be more critical online than talking directly to someone, even when they are independent of the Council. Whatever the reason, differences exist and need to be factored in when considering the results.

	All Tenants	Online	Telephone interview
Overall Satisfaction	66%	51%	70%
Well Maintained Home	68%	54%	72%
Safe Home	74%	57%	78%
Communal Areas	74%	58%	78%
Repairs Last 12 Months	74%	63%	76%
Time Taken Repairs	69%	55%	72%
Listens & Acts	60%	43%	65%
Kept Informed	69%	47%	76%
Fairly & with Respect	75%	56%	80%
Easy to Deal With	69%	55%	72%
Neighbourhood Contribution	65%	44%	72%
Approach to ASB	60%	39%	67%
Complaints Handling	30%	23%	33%
NPS (Promoters)	41%	30%	44%



Age Group

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

For the Council, this tends to be the case, with tenants aged 85 and over the most satisfied and those aged 25 to 34 the least satisfied.

Regarding overall satisfaction with services, 84% of tenants aged 85 and over are satisfied, compared with 49% of those aged 25 to 34. This older group is also the most likely to recommend the Council to others, along with those aged 75 to 84.

The general trend is consistent with many other surveys and means that the age profile of different landlords will be a significant factor in determining satisfaction levels.

It is not entirely clear why this is, but it could be that older people are generally less likely to complain and may be more willing to put up with lower standards of service. In contrast, younger tenants may have higher expectations of what services should look like.

	All Tenant	0 - 24	25 - 34	35 - 44	45 - 54	55 - 59	60 - 64	65 - 74	75 - 84	85 +
Overall Satisfaction	66%	69%	49%	59%	63%	67%	66%	77%	83%	84%
Well Maintained Home	68%	76%	51%	56%	64%	72%	71%	83%	85%	89%
Safe Home	74%	76%	55%	62%	70%	78%	81%	86%	91%	94%
Communal Areas	74%	71%	64%	70%	71%	76%	77%	78%	80%	81%
Repairs Last 12 Months	74%	71%	57%	65%	72%	74%	82%	85%	90%	88%
Time Taken Repairs	69%	74%	54%	62%	65%	72%	73%	80%	82%	92%
Listens & Acts	60%	66%	44%	51%	59%	57%	60%	69%	77%	86%
Kept Informed	69%	71%	56%	65%	69%	65%	67%	78%	79%	87%
Fairly & with Respect	75%	84%	61%	71%	72%	74%	77%	80%	86%	94%
Easy to Deal With	69%	83%	54%	63%	65%	68%	71%	77%	84%	88%
Neighbourhood Contribution	65%	82%	55%	56%	60%	56%	68%	77%	80%	92%
Approach to ASB	60%	78%	51%	56%	55%	56%	55%	67%	72%	86%
Complaints Handling	30%	33%	24%	33%	23%	27%	46%	33%	34%	60% *
NPS (Promoters)	41%	33%	30%	37%	43%	44%	40%	47%	48%	48%

*Base below 10



Length of Tenancy

As those with the longest tenancies are often among the oldest tenants, satisfaction tends to be high in these groups, as is the case to some extent at Sandwell.

Satisfaction also tends to be high for newer tenants, as seen here, where the less than 1-year group is the most satisfied overall and on nine other measures.

One theory for this pattern is that tenants are often happy to finally get an offer of a home, perhaps having waited for some time or having come from poor accommodation, but as they experience more issues over the years, they become more critical, and then, as they age, satisfaction tends to increase again. This is shown here, with, for example, tenants of 6 to 10 years being the least satisfied on all but one of the measures.

The new tenants are also the most likely to recommend the Council to other people.

	All Tenants	< 1 year	1 - 3 years	4 - 5 years	6 - 10 years	11 - 20 years	Over 20 years
Overall Satisfaction	66%	79%	63%	61%	60%	68%	70%
Well Maintained Home	68%	79%	68%	61%	60%	69%	74%
Safe Home	74%	78%	73%	67%	67%	75%	81%
Communal Areas	74%	88%	73%	71%	68%	74%	79%
Repairs Last 12 Months	74%	78%	70%	70%	71%	74%	79%
Time Taken Repairs	69%	73%	66%	65%	63%	70%	75%
Listens & Acts	60%	72%	56%	56%	53%	63%	64%
Kept Informed	69%	83%	68%	65%	60%	70%	74%
Fairly & with Respect	75%	84%	72%	71%	70%	77%	77%
Easy to Deal With	69%	81%	68%	65%	62%	69%	74%
Neighbourhood Contribution	65%	82%	65%	64%	54%	65%	70%
Approach to ASB	60%	76%	60%	57%	50%	59%	64%
Complaints Handling	30%	31%	29%	39%	24%	31%	31%
NPS (Promoters)	41%	53%	41%	40%	34%	43%	41%



Gender

Female tenants outnumber their male counterparts but are generally slightly less satisfied with most measures.

In fact, male tenants are more satisfied with all but one of the satisfaction measures; the handling of complaints. However, the differences between these two groups are relatively small.

The number who would recommend the Council to others is very similar between the two genders.

	All Tenants	Female	Male
Overall Satisfaction	66%	63%	71%
Well Maintained Home	68%	66%	73%
Safe Home	74%	72%	76%
Communal Areas	74%	71%	78%
Repairs Last 12 Months	74%	71%	78%
Time Taken Repairs	69%	66%	74%
Listens & Acts	60%	58%	62%
Kept Informed	69%	68%	71%
Fairly & with Respect	75%	75%	75%
Easy to Deal With	69%	67%	72%
Neighbourhood Contribution	65%	62%	70%
Approach to ASB	60%	60%	60%
Complaints Handling	30%	32%	27%
NPS (Promoters)	41%	41%	42%



Property Type

The final chart shows the levels of satisfaction by the type of property occupied. This shows that those in bungalows are the most satisfied and are the most likely to recommend the Council to other people.

Conversely, the least satisfied are those in maisonettes.

This is likely linked to the age of the tenants, as older tenants are more likely to live in bungalows. Maisonettes are likely to be occupied by younger families, but are often up steps and lack outside space.

	All Tenants	Bungalow	Flat	House	Maisonette
Overall Satisfaction	66%	73%	70%	62%	51%
Well Maintained Home	68%	79%	73%	63%	50%
Safe Home	74%	86%	75%	71%	52%
Communal Areas	74%	77%	74%	77%	48%
Repairs Last 12 Months	74%	82%	77%	69%	63%
Time Taken Repairs	69%	71%	75%	64%	58%
Listens & Acts	60%	65%	62%	57%	60%
Kept Informed	69%	69%	71%	67%	71%
Fairly & with Respect	75%	78%	75%	74%	62%
Easy to Deal With	69%	75%	71%	65%	67%
Neighbourhood Contribution	65%	73%	70%	60%	56%
Approach to ASB	60%	71%	60%	58%	50%
Complaints Handling	30%	41%	30%	29%	33%
NPS (Promoters)	41%	48%	44%	37%	28%



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

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

