

Date of issue: Monday, 1 February 2021

**MEETING:**

**EXTRAORDINARY NEIGHBOURHOODS AND  
COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL**

(Councillors Hulme (Chair), Kelly, Ajaib, Begum, M Holledge, Matloob, Minhas, S Parmar and Sabah)

Non-Voting Co-Opted Members

Manvinder Matharu (Residents Panel Board) and Trevor Pollard (Residents Panel Board)

**DATE AND TIME:**

TUESDAY, 9TH FEBRUARY, 2021 AT 6.30 PM

**VENUE:**

VIRTUAL MEETING

**DEMOCRATIC SERVICES**

SHABANA KAUSER

**OFFICER:**

**(for all enquiries)**

01753 787503

**NOTICE OF MEETING**

You are requested to attend the above Meeting at the time and date indicated to deal with the business set out in the following agenda.

*All w-cy,*

**JOSIE WRAGG**  
Chief Executive

**AGENDA**

**PART 1**

**AGENDA  
ITEM**

**REPORT TITLE**

**PAGE**

**WARD**

**CONSTITUTIONAL MATTERS**

1. Declarations of Interest

*All Members who believe they have a Disclosable Pecuniary or other Interest in any matter to be considered at the meeting must declare that interest and, having regard to the circumstances described in Section 4 paragraph 4.6 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, leave the meeting while the matter is discussed.*



<u>AGENDA ITEM</u>	<u>REPORT TITLE</u>	<u>PAGE</u>	<u>WARD</u>
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## SCRUTINY ISSUES

2. Member Questions

*(An opportunity for panel members to ask questions of the relevant Director / Associate Director, relating to pertinent, topical issues affecting their Directorate – maximum of 10 minutes allocated.)*

- |    |  |          |     |
|----|--|----------|-----|
| 3. | Repairs Maintenance and Investment (RMI) Contract Update | 1 - 96   | All |
| 4. | Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Task and Finish Group    | 97 - 112 | All |
| 5. | Date of Next Meeting - 25th February 2021                | -        | -   |

### Press and Public

This meeting will be held remotely in accordance with the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020. Part I of this meeting will be live streamed as required by the regulations. The press and public can access the meeting from the following link (by selecting the meeting you wish to view):

<http://democracy.slough.gov.uk/mgCalendarMonthView.aspx?GL=1&bcr=1>

Please note that the meeting may be recorded. By participating in the meeting by audio and/or video you are giving consent to being recorded and acknowledge that the recording will be in the public domain.

The press and public will not be able to view any matters considered during Part II of the agenda.



**SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:** Extraordinary Neighbourhood and Community Services Scrutiny Panel

**DATE:** 9<sup>th</sup> February 2021

**CONTACT OFFICER:** Kamal Lallian, Neighbourhood Contracts & Business Services Manager

**(For all Enquiries)** (01753) 87695

**WARD(S):** All Wards

**PART I**  
**FOR COMMENT & CONSIDERATION**

**REPAIRS MAINTENANCE & INVESTMENT (RMI) CONTRACT UPDATE**

**1. Purpose of Report**

The purpose of the report is to provide a 'Follow on Update' to the Panel following the panel meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> November 2020, focused on the performance of Osborne's delivery of the RMI contract covering the following points.

- Progress against key performance indicators;
- Osborne's Service Improvement Plan and WIP Reduction Plan;
- Results of the Resident's Satisfaction Survey (some Panel members attended one of the presentation sessions on this);
- HR data on number of local people employed by Osborne;
- Detail on the social return on investment from the contract;
- Data/information on the number of estate inspections that had been carried out and timescale for future inspections.
- An update on the report of the Independent Audit Agent (IAA);

**2. Recommendation(s)/Proposed Action**

The Panel are recommended to note and comment on:

- a) The contents of this report and progress made
- b) The contents of the presentation
- c) Future reporting requirements for the RMI including financial year-end report and separate quarterly RMI updates on landlord statutory compliance in HRA tenanted stock.

**3. The Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy, the JSNA and the Five Year Plan**

**3a. Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy Priorities**

The provision and maintenance of good quality and affordable housing can reduce housing need for local households and contributes to the identified priorities of the JSNA. The RMI is contracted to provide investment into existing council properties through a partnership approach between Osborne Property

Services Limited and the Council to sustain good quality homes that will improve the safety, health and well-being of the borough's tenants.

3b. **Five Year Plan Outcomes**

The RMI contract is housing revenue funded from a 30-year business plan that has enabled the investment required to sustain a HRA Housing Asset Management Strategy to meet objective 4 'Our residents will live in good quality homes'. The RMI is intended to focus on making the best use of the borough's existing stock and provide better solutions to the needs and challenges through delivery of services, adopting excellent customer care and safeguarding and working to find these solutions in partnership.

4. **Other Implications**

(a) Financial

The RMI is a 7-year contract with an option to extend for three years. The contract is funded from the Housing Revenue Account and the business plan has set aside £100m for the Contract Administrator to fund the annual expenditure of day-to-day repairs and maintenance, voids properties refurbished for reletting, and the major works programme e.g. kitchens, bathrooms, windows. The total spend can be up to £14m per year.

(b) Risk Management

The committee are requested to note that the contractual governance offers a formal basis for management of risk through contract management, a framework for discussion intended to seek not just solutions but foster innovation through partnership initiatives. The structure of governance allows for a forum for the raising of issues, discussion on performance as well as commercial initiatives across the breadth of the contract. The levels of escalation and accountability are set out alongside basis for contractual scrutiny by members and residents.

**The Table outlines the context of risk management.**

<b>Recommendation from section 2 above</b>	<b>Risks/Threats/Opportunities</b>	<b>Current Controls</b>	<b>Using the Risk Management Matrix Score risk</b>	<b>Future Controls</b>
a) Completion of the backlog of responsive repairs and management of open repairs.	Uncompleted repairs are leading to complaints. Opportunity to change perception by completing these repairs.	There has been a significant reduction in the number of backlog repairs, this continues to be monitored weekly by SBC.	3 Low	Continued focus on the uncompleted repairs from both Osborne and SBC.

b) Osborne Staffing and experience.	Osborne have covered all the senior posts within the contract, some supervision posts are still to be filled.	Dialogue between SBC and Osborne at OMB to ensure the structure meets the demand.	3 Low	Continued dialogue and open communication to ensure the right people are working on the contract.
c) Verification of performance data	Inconsistencies have been identified in the performance data supplied by Osborne.	Each set of monthly data to be fully analysed and updated year to date to be submitted each month.	6 Medium	With full consultation of the Residents Board, better and clearer defined performance measures will be implemented following the IAA recommendations.
d) Resident perception of the service	Although the aspects of the service have improved the volume of complaints and enquiries remains high.	Through contract governance, resident board involvement. Fortnightly complaint meetings.	12 Significant	Continued high focus on the causes of complaints and improvements to procedures to avoid the same mistakes being made.

**(c) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications**

The Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018 (the ‘Act’) adds hazards listed in the governments housing health and safety-rating system (HHSRS) set out in the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985. Tenants will therefore be able to legally compel their landlord to address any of the 29 HHSRS hazards, which ranges from fire safety issues to damp & mould or poor natural lighting and ventilation. The Act came into effect for new tenancies on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2019, but now applies to all existing tenancies.

**(d) Equalities Impact Assessment**

The contractor routinely carries out equality Impact Assessments as part of operational service delivery.

**(e) Workforce**

The workforce delivering the RMI are Osborne direct employees or sub-contracted services. The RMI has a contractual payment framework that offers a monthly establishment fee and thereafter payment is based on the work delivered.

**5. Supporting Information**

- 5.1 At the meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> November 2020 the Panel expressed frustration about the data that was presented and asked for change; Information needed to be presented in a simple and coherent way to enable members to see trends at a glance, see and learn what is working well backed by evidence to provide confidence in the figures reported and where things are not going well, be given information on what the partnership is doing to fix the issue.

This report aims to achieve what was requested and the RMI Client Team and Osborne welcome comments and feedback for future reporting.

The report does not include information on landlord statutory compliance which, is delivered by the RMI contract and will be reported to the Panel on 25<sup>th</sup> February 2021 as per quarterly reporting specified in the HRA Tenanted Stock Landlord Compliance Strategy (August 2019).

## 5.2 Progress against key performance indicators (see presentation slides)

### Call Centre

Members and residents have expressed concerns and reported issues with not being able to get through to the call centre, having to wait a long time before a call was answered, which in turn contributes to a lack of confidence and frustration and calls being abandoned.

Osborne recognised this area needed attention as the service being offered to our customers was not at the level, any of us were happy with. An improvement plan was implemented which has included;

- Employing a Customer Service Assistants Team Leader and appointing 7 new Customer Services Assistants (CSAs) during 2020/21 to address vacant posts where staff have left the service. Currently there are 9 CSAs within the team that are able to pick up the phones.
- At the height of the poor performance, Osborne operated 6 different phone lines so calls were being filtered to different people (New Repairs, Repairs Enquiry, Gas Repairs, Planned Works, Gas Servicing and OOH) so if there was an issue in one area customers experienced longer than acceptable waiting times and calls were lost. Now all calls are back directly into the call centre and there are sufficient numbers of staff to take the calls.
- The addition of the CSA Team Leader has meant CSAs' have more daily support and are able to escalate and resolve issues promptly. The Team Leader monitors CSAs' ensuring work orders are being diagnosed correctly. Success is celebrated which has helped improve the morale and motivation within the team and will contribute to staff retention.
- Daily Briefings have helped the team to see how well they performed the day before, performance across the month, targets and team priorities of the day and individual targets. Osborne are pro-active in their approach to monitor any issues and reacting quickly to address concerns.

Performance is recorded and monitored against two indicators, both of which are now being delivered (**see slides 2-7**):

- KDI 5 – Average call waiting time
- KDI 4 – Number of calls lost / abandoned

Osborne will continue to work with the improvement plan to sustain the service and deliver training and support as they identify areas of risk and individual need. Things have definitely improved which is borne out by feedback from the neighbourhood housing teams, the Residents Board and from Members who have all commented on less 'noise' around the call centre. Calls are recorded and can

be monitored when required, information is available to the Client Team, the Residents Board have also been offered the opportunity to visit the call centre and see how it operates first hand. A screen on a wall near the team immediately flags RED if the call centre is in non-compliance and action can be promptly taken to turn performance back to GREEN.

#### Void Completions

We have measured the average number of days to complete void works as this represents a better measure than the existing KDI's. The KDI's, as identified by the IAA audit measured the system dates from void specification approval to completion on a void by void basis with a pass/fail depending on the priority. This measure failed to capture the time taken by Osborne to produce the specification of works and hence didn't represent an accurate measure of the entire void time. Measuring the average gives an accurate assessment of the time properties are void and rental income isn't being gained.

Void performance remains a key focus area for the client team noting a general downward trend in the average number of days ([see slide 8](#)). There was a spike in early January, a result of the Christmas period, annual leave and material shortages, but also impacted by the return of 4 long term voids. We continue to work with Osborne, monitoring service performance to ensure the agreed improvements are achieved and now that many of the longer span voids have been completed performance is expected to improve in the coming weeks. Voids are monitored through weekly update reports provided to the Client Team

#### Uncompleted Repairs

The number of uncompleted repairs has reduced significantly; the target is still not being met though. Much of this however, is due to issues surrounding the second and then third national Covid-19 lockdown. The lockdown presents significant issues for Osborne, where there is no access / access is refused by residents, shortages of material and available labour also cause delays in completing repairs. The progress of overdue works is monitored weekly and [slide 9](#) shows the current position of all outstanding works to be completed – this includes work that is overdue and all gas and response repairs to be delivered but are not overdue.

Most of the complaints being received from residents and Members are about uncompleted repairs and there are cases where more than one repair issue is being reported. The Client Team have raised concerns over 'complex' cases which are not being actioned in a timely manner, subsequently increasing complaints and frustration amongst residents and Members. These cases may require multiple repairs, external works and potentially capital investment. Some of the issues are long-standing. Osborne have responded positively and are developing a proposal to deal with these cases in a different way to ensure they have dedicated focus and are not left whilst the focus is on reducing the volume of outstanding repairs.

For a contract of this size and SBC stock levels we would expect © 1000 works in progress (WIP), the number as at 25<sup>th</sup> January was 1533 so there is still work to be done to meet the target but progress has definitely been made and continues to head in the right direction, considering this peaked at 4450 in September 2020, the improvement is significant and has greatly reduced the number of general enquiries coming into SBC.

To ensure data integrity and evidence that repairs are not being closed which have not been verified as fully completed, or completed to a required standard we have worked with Osborne to introduce several new steps;

- As works are completed, the operative provides a description of the works undertaken along with supporting photographs all of which is captured in their operating system “Dynamics”. These critical steps are mandatory which enables both Osborne and our Client Team to carry out additional quality checks
- We are introducing a new process, beginning in February to gather ongoing evidence of resident satisfaction, through calls made by both the Client Team and Osborne call centre (who are already doing this) to verify repairs have been completed and measure satisfaction with the repair, whilst also providing the opportunity for comments on any other aspects of the service. The findings will enable continuous review, identify learning and implement further improvements where needed.
- 10% post inspections of repairs completed are being undertaken by both the RMI Technical Team and Osborne supervisors/planners. Issues are immediately being picked up and applications for payment analysed to ensure payment is made only where jobs are completed satisfactorily.
- There is still some work to be done to tighten Osborne processes so more work is undertaken by the Client Team to verify applications made each month for payment. The measures detailed above and below will support this requirement and as confidence grows the Client Team review will be less onerous but remain diligent.
- Osborne, through their new ‘Dynamics System’ are able to offer access to SBC of ‘before and after photographs of repairs’ which will also be used to do desk-top verifications and support us to deal with enquiries and complaints more efficiently.

### Complaints/Casework

The volume of overdue complaints in 2020 was simply not acceptable and we needed to take action. The RMI Client Manager and Osborne Operations Manager have worked together to develop processes in both teams to tackle this head-on.

- Osborne have appointed two Service Delivery Specialists who are proactively working with residents to deal with outstanding matters. Very positive feedback was given at the Residents Board from those that had experienced direct contact with the officers, who have started to make a real difference in the short time they have been here.
- The Operations Manager has diligently applied herself to clear the overdue Members casework from 2020 and is working closely with the RMI Client Team to manage and monitor the 2021 casework/complaints/enquiries that are being received so they are responded to within SBC timelines.
- The RMI Client Team are working at the front end, when logging cases on Intelex to identify where requests have been submitted multiple-times on the same issue. We recognise that some of this may be out of frustration at not having the issue resolved, although, there are instances where a repair has not been reported but the matter is escalated.
- The volume of casework and complaints remains high (**slides 10-13**). We will continue to clear outstanding repairs/complex cases working with Osborne, and coupled with the partnership approach to dealing with issues we will continue to improve, whilst accepting that there will always be matters that have to be resolved given the nature of the contract.

### Appointments Made & Kept

The percentage of appointments kept is trending downwards, the cause of this is partly due to the high volume of works being put through to catch up with the backlog of uncompleted orders, but mainly this is due to pressures caused by the Covid-19 lockdowns, which result in operatives reporting in sick or having to isolate, also residents changing appointments due to isolation. This will continue to be monitored closely by the team ([slide 14](#)). All services remain fully operational, however with the rise in Covid-19 cases and equally experiencing a greater number of isolation cases and changing appointments these past weeks, continues to present a challenge in achieving this performance target. The client team will continue to monitor this closely over the coming weeks.

### Right First Time

The IAA highlighted that the methodology and definition around this KDI were not at all prescriptive. This led to Osborne reporting the data and capturing more repairs as completed right first time than the residents perception of this maybe, due to the lax definition. We have proposed a redefinition of this KDI which will be discussed with the Residents Board and ensure a more meaningful measure of this key indicator.

### New Performance Measures

We have been working together to consider new performance measures which we will begin collecting information on from February. These, we believe will give us more meaningful data than some of the indicators currently measured within the contract. If successful we will consider a contract variation to embed the changes.

At a meeting with the Residents Board on 26<sup>th</sup> January we also agreed to attend a workshop to consult with residents on what information they would like to receive and we will work with Osborne to capture these measures and report on this in future updates to the Residents Board and the Panel.

These performance measures to be collected from February include;

- Repairs completed in one visit  
Enables SBC to track the improvement Osborne are making in allocating and booking in works without altering the original appointment, ensuring the correct materials are available immediately. Resolving issues once.
- Number of Repairs due in the Month that have been completed in target  
The number of responsive repairs due in the month which have a completion within the target date set. As identified in the RSM report, this performance measure focuses on all repairs providing greater transparency around all activities in support of improving performance
- Resident Satisfaction with Repairs Completed  
To demonstrate a more balanced and robust approach in capturing residents' feedback we have amended the questions asked by the call centre and the way in which this is captured. The Residents Board will be consulted on this approach and further refinement may be undertaken.

OPSL - RMI Contract			
	Total Number of Employees	Reside in Slough	Reside within 5 Miles+ of Slough
OPSL Staff	84	49	35
Sub Contractors	53	2	2

- Average number of days to complete Voids  
As already noted, the purpose is to establish a measure for monitoring the overall performance of the voids service which allows for the differences in the nature of the void works and tracked with greater transparency.
- Accuracy of Cost in Repairs applied for  
The client team will be undertaking additional % inspection of all completed repairs to ensure continued improvement while continuing to address robustly, any inaccuracies
- Number of complaints escalated from stage 1 to stage 2 in the month  
This indicator will examine the quality of both investigation and handling of the complaint at stage 1. The focus is on resolution at stage 1 wherever possible.  
Osborne also propose an additional measure that will track by complaint status, the response time through to resolution. Again, to monitor quality and performance of complaint management with greater transparency

### 5.3 Social Return on Investment (SROI)

Osborne's commitment to supporting people across Slough remains resolute. There is a recognition that the needs of the community are changing and more focus is required to support vulnerable groups with the issues of isolation, unemployment, and wellbeing. These priorities have been recognised by the government who have introduced a new public procurement model that takes greater account of the additional social value created by contractors and is being implemented from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2021.

Osborne have a dedicated officer responsible for development, and management of SROI delivery, Claire Giacobbe is the Community Investment Manager. A number of slides (**slides 15-20**) have been prepared to provide the Panel with an update on the significant work that has been done, even during lockdown to support Slough and vulnerable people which Clare will be attending to present at the Panel meeting.

#### Osborne Resourcing

The Panel requested information on staff employed by Osborne on the RMI contract who lived in the borough of Slough. Details are included in the tables below, showing more than 50% of employed staff live in Slough.

Osborne use a range of sub-contractors for specialist works and to provide additional resources as and when required. A review of the sub-contractors supporting the RMI contract revealed 2 of the 53 subcontractors are local Slough businesses, however, overall, they employ 41 local people residing within the Slough boundaries.

### Apprenticeships and supporting people into employment

- Osborne work with local colleges/schools to provide opportunities/local work experience and jobs
- A relationship has been developed with Windsor Forest College and all new new apprentices will attend the college from 2021.
- An example of Osborne's response to unemployment in Slough, saw them collaborate with others to launch an online 'Employment and Wellbeing' course, to build confidence, identify individual strengths and to support career pathways. From February – October 2020, they have worked with 25 learners of which 8 are now in employment and 5 are enjoying volunteering roles. Case Studies are attached at Appendix B.

OPSL - RMI Contract			
	Total Number of Apprentices	People into employment Slough	People in attendance to our course
OPSL Slough	7	8	32

### Reviewing the delivery of SROI commitments and progress - Slough £ invested in Slough

- SROI will be measured using 'Thrive'
- Thrive has now been adopted by Osborne as the group social value measurement tool. Training was rolled out on 28th January, and Slough data will be loaded in February and will be translated to provide a £ value.

### 5.4 Results of the Residents survey (update from Information & Participation Manager)

The results of the annual resident satisfaction survey were presented by M.E.L on 10 November 2020 to an audience of residents, members, neighbourhood officers and officers from other Council service areas. The presentation is attached at Appendix C. This year the survey was led by the Resident Board who were involved in both the commissioning of M.E.L (the market research company) and setting the questions to inform their co-regulation and scrutiny activities as well as testing their perceptions of the quality of the service in light of their engagement with the Neighbourhood Forums and Stage 3 complaints.

A summary of the findings is included at Appendix D which shows that overall satisfaction has dropped from the previous year's report in a number of key areas (**slides 21-25**). The infographic report (Appendix E) and feedback for residents is in the latest edition of Housing Highlights that will hit doormats in February.

Work needs to be done to develop an improvement action plan but this is currently on hold pending transformation when new job roles and responsibilities will become clear. The White Paper published in November 2020 also needs to be considered to ensure the requirements of both are incorporated. The Resident Board and Scrutiny Groups will be picking up on

### 5.5 Estate Inspections - Update from Neighbourhood Managers

It was reported at November's Panel meeting that housing officers would be recommencing estate inspections, and that these would be carried out by single

officers. Since then amidst a second lock down and then the third coming in prior to the end of December, some progress was made ([slides 26-27](#)).

Across the borough, 107 inspections were carried out, many were street and outside of blocks picking up issues such as fly tipping, abandoned vehicles and tenancy breaches, putting in motion consequent action. One of these inspections did involve a Councillor and a walk around. Taking account of Government Guidance, internal inspections of blocks were limited but driven by fire risk assessments. On a monthly basis, over and beyond what housing officers identify, independent inspections are carried out of blocks, and any risks identified are provided to each housing team. Housing officers prioritise these, visiting as necessary, identifying any other issues of concern.

Since November, there have been 30 inspections in the South, 52 in the North and 25 in the East. Going forward for this quarter, fire risk assessment actions will be the priority with limited estate inspections. Once this lockdown is over, and taking account of transformation and any changes in guidance, housing staff will work closely with the Residents' Board and Councillors to move to a more thorough estate inspection regime, and ways in which Councillors and residents can be more involved.

#### **5.6 Independent Audit Report Update**

The report prepared by the IAA is in draft format and is 90 pages long. We need to remove duplication, re-organise the sections and present it in an easily readable format in order that it can be used throughout SBC and Osborne teams as a reference point to understand and drive service performance.

Notwithstanding this, the key findings are already shaping the improvements evidenced earlier in this report. A new SBC Client Team is now being recruited to, following the outcome of the Our Futures Consultation, and this team will work with IAA and with Osborne to refine the draft IAA report and to carry out the audit of the full contract that Cabinet has now agreed should take place. The IAA report will form a baseline from which to review improvements being made, identify areas where further improvements are needed and make further recommendations. The terms of reference for the audit will identify the areas of audit which will be refined in consultation with stakeholders.

#### **6. Comments of Other Committees**

The Cabinet accepted, at its meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> January 2021, the recommendation from the Panel that an audit of the full contract will be carried out as soon as practically possible.

Terms of reference for the audit and timing will be discussed with the Chair of the Panel by the RMI Contract Manager.

#### **7. Conclusion**

This report, along with the presentation attached at Appendix A provides key information on the RMI contract performance. The report highlights issues that need to be resolved as we review and analyse data to measure and improve the service. The report also seeks to provide assurance that the clear governance structure and governance arrangements which underpin the contract are being stringently followed to ensure concerns are addressed, and all identified issues are

proactively managed through clear action plans and continuous communication with senior officers and members of the council.

Recognising the need to change and improve processes that are not working, a review of skills and opportunity to look at doing things differently are being embraced by Osborne and good relationships have now developed. This has been in line with a change in Managing Director at Osborne Property Services and other key senior staff at Osborne who in their approach are only interested in collaboration and partnership working to deliver necessary improvements in the services provided to residents. Considering the very low level of service SBC received during the Summer of 2020 we have seen evidence of this change, there is still much work to be done but Osborne are now receptive to making real efforts to improve and deliver the service which the contract sets out.

8. **Appendices Attached**

- A – Presentation - Performance and Improvements
- B – SROI Case Studies
- C – Residents Satisfaction Survey 2020 M.E.L. presentation
- D – Residents Satisfaction Survey 2020 – Summary Report
- E – Residents Satisfaction Survey 2020 – Infographic

9. **Background Papers**

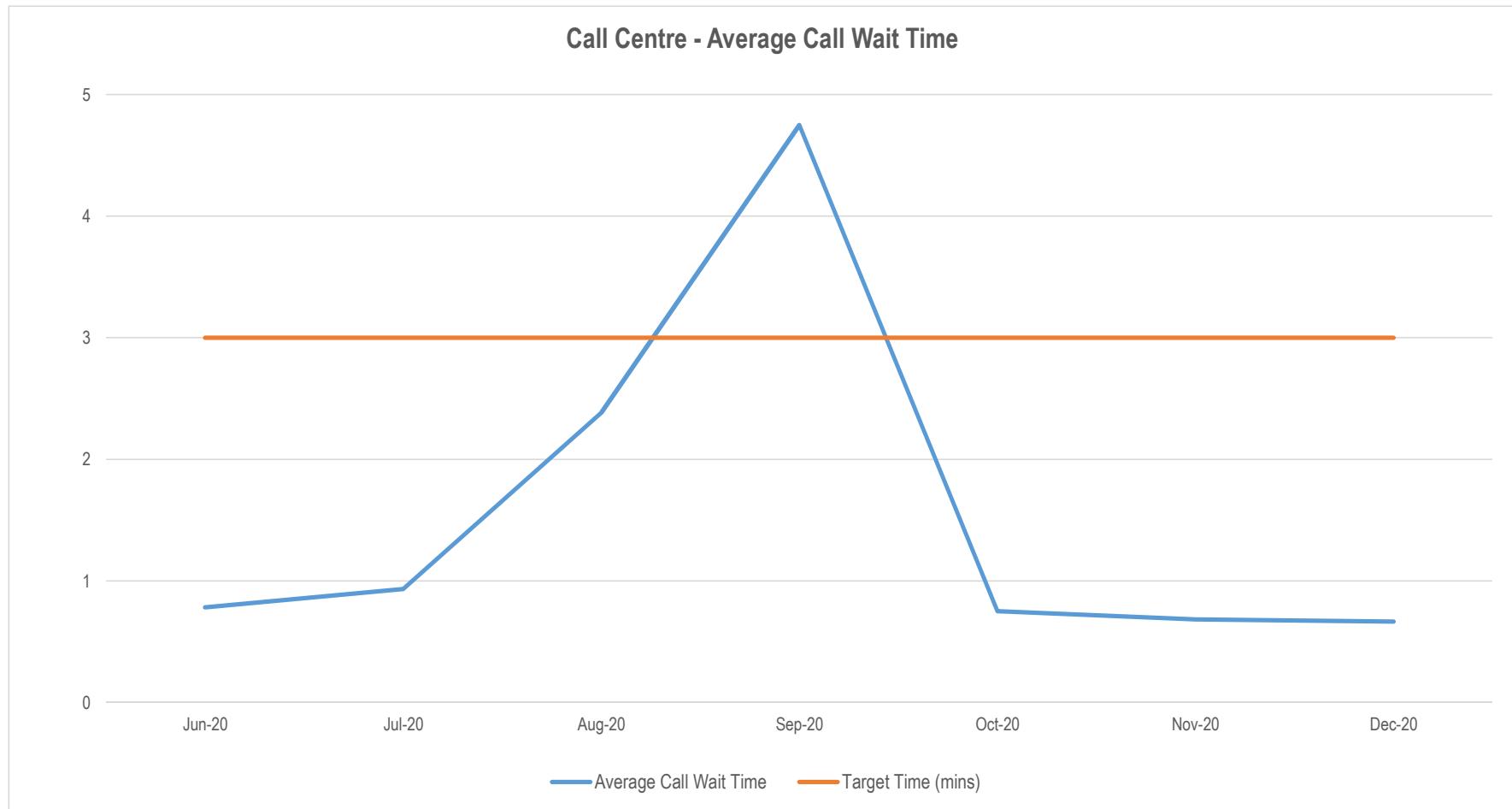
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# Appendix A

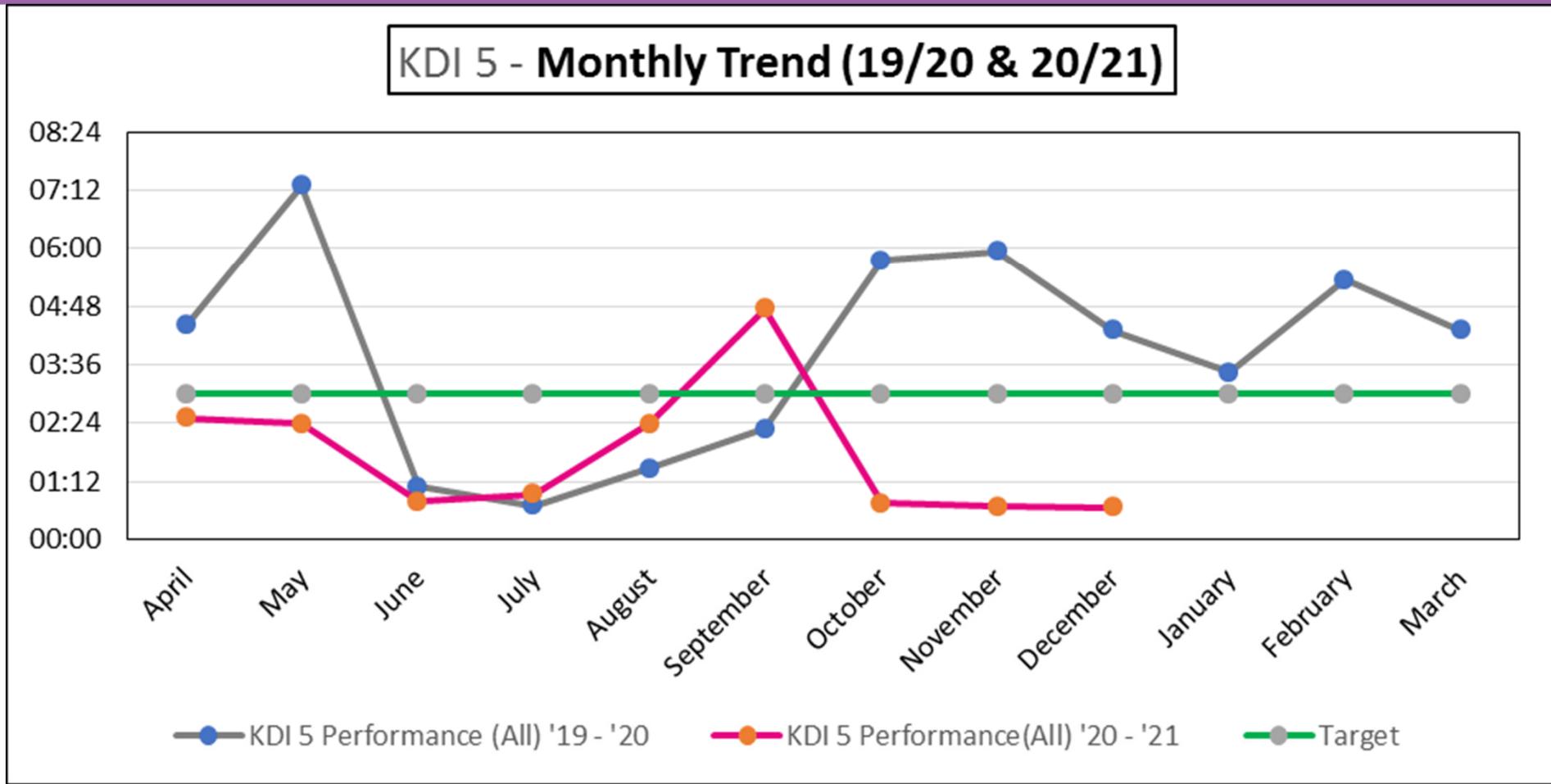
# RMI Contract Performance

# Call Centre KDI 5 - Average Call Waiting (June-Dec 2020)



# Call Centre KDI 5 – Average Call Waiting

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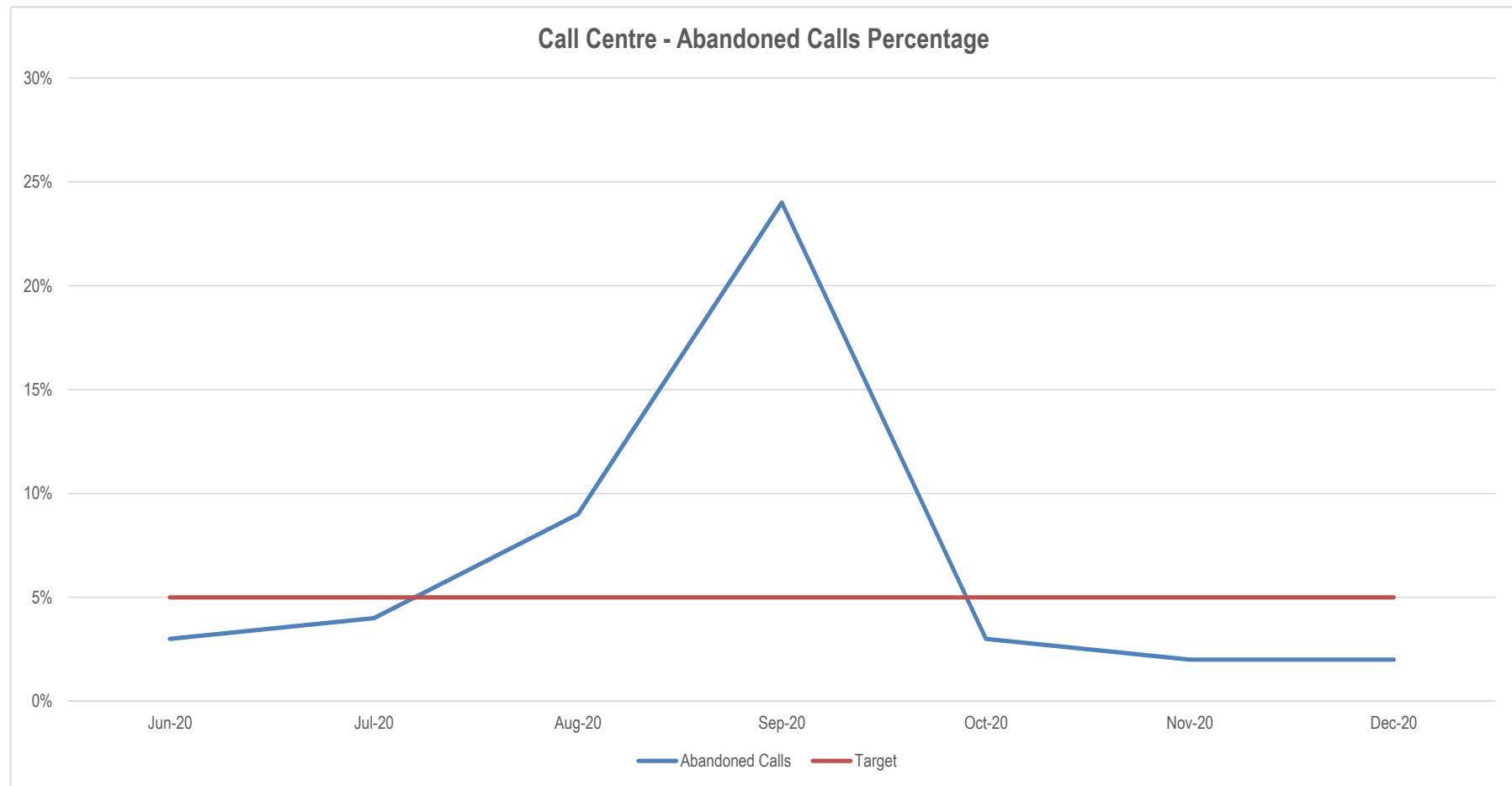
# Call Centre KDI 5 – Average Call Waiting 2019/20 – 2020/21

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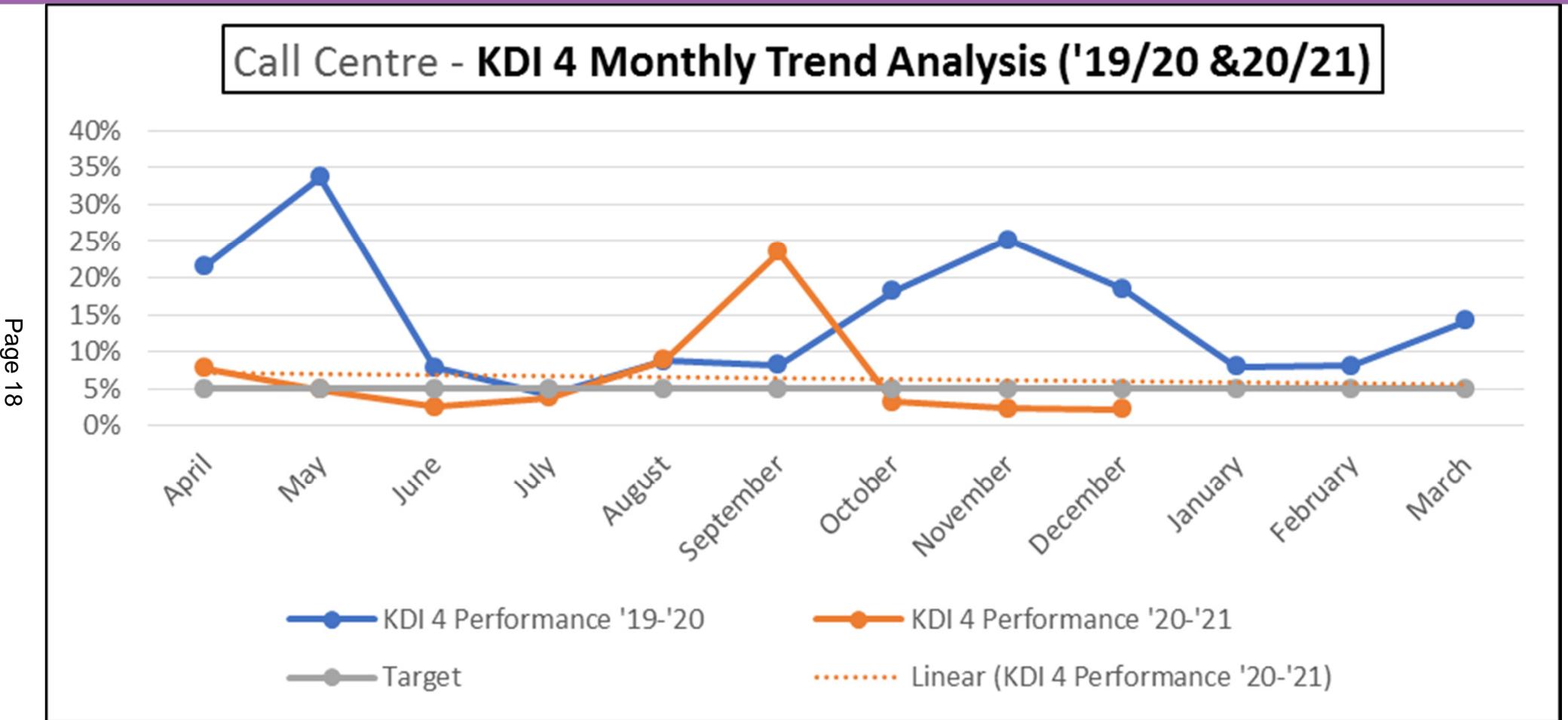
	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March
KDI 5 Performance (All) '19 - '20	00:04:24	00:07:18	00:01:06	00:00:42	00:01:28	00:02:17	00:05:45	00:05:56	00:04:18	00:03:26	00:05:20	00:04:18
KDI 5 Performance(All) '20 - '21	00:02:30	00:02:23	00:00:47	00:00:56	00:02:23	00:04:45	00:00:45	00:00:41	00:00:40			
Target	00:03:00	00:03:00	00:03:00	00:03:00	00:03:00	00:03:00	00:03:00	00:03:00	00:03:00	00:03:00	00:03:00	00:03:00

# Call Centre KDI 4 - Calls Abandoned (%) June-Dec 2020

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# Call Centre KDI 4 – Calls Abandoned



# Call Centre KDI 4 – Calls Abandoned 2019/20 – 2020/21

**Table 1a**

	2019-2020												
	Apr-19	May-19	Jun-19	Jul-19	Aug-19	Sep-19	Oct-19	Nov-19	Dec-19	Jan-20	Feb-20	Mar-20	Total
<b>Total Calls</b>	2,732	2,936	2,132	1,994	1,953	2,106	3,002	3,230	2,838	3,919	4,055	3,632	<b>34,529</b>
<b>Calls Lost</b>	591	990	168	85	172	173	547	813	525	313	329	515	<b>5,221</b>

**Table 1b**

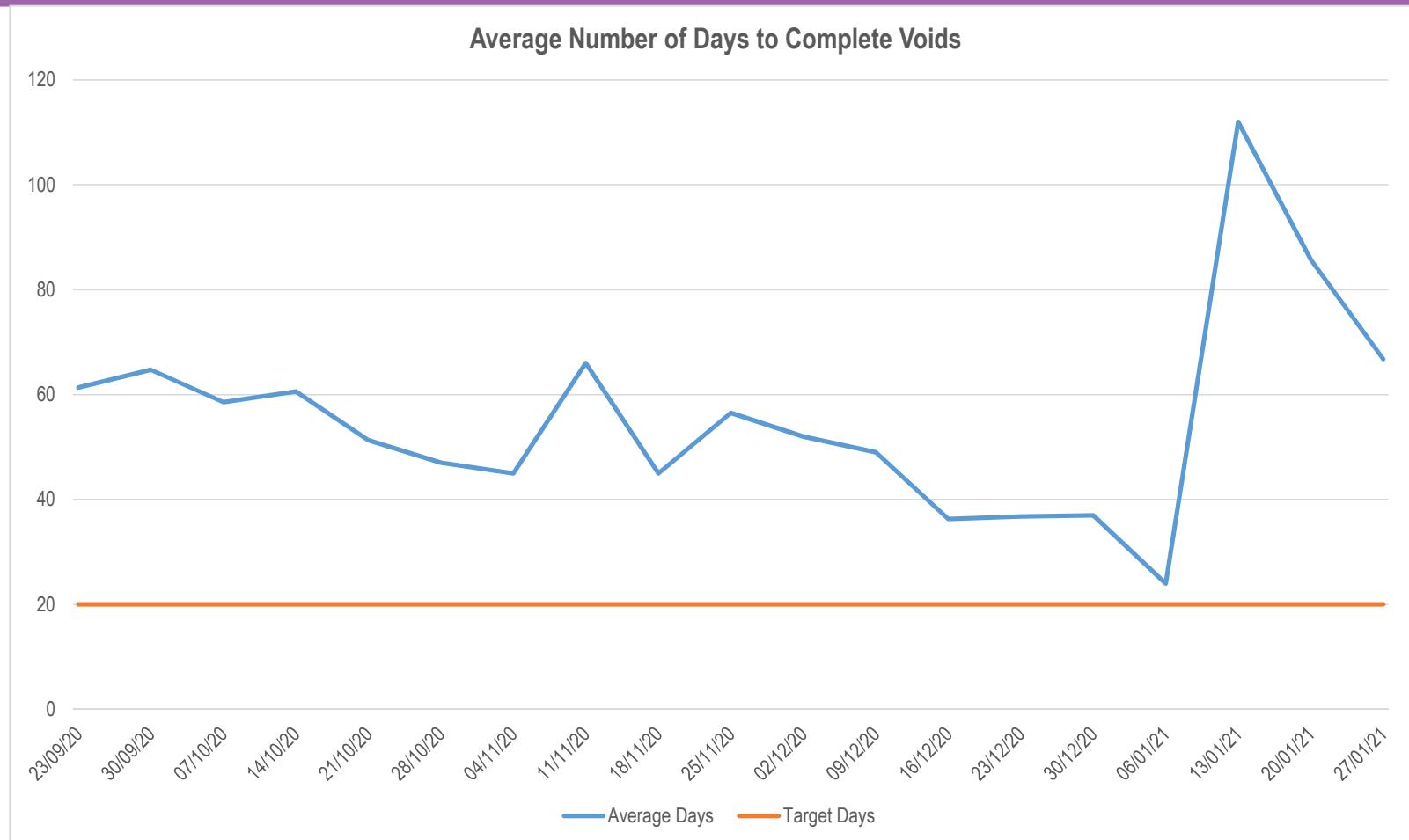
	2020-2021									
	Apr-20	May-20	Jun-20	Jul-20	Aug-20	Sep-20	Oct-20	Nov-20	Dec-20	Total
<b>Total Calls</b>	1,672	1,597	4031	4536	5547	6817	5,896	5,464	4,988	<b>40,548</b>
<b>Calls Lost</b>	129	78	101	169	490	1,605	187	127	109	<b>2,995</b>

**Table 1c**

	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March
<b>KDI 4 Performance '19-'20</b>	22%	34%	8%	4%	9%	8%	18%	25%	18%	8%	8%	14%
<b>KDI 4 Performance '20-'21</b>	8%	5%	3%	4%	9%	24%	3%	2%	2%			
<b>Target</b>	<b>5%</b>											

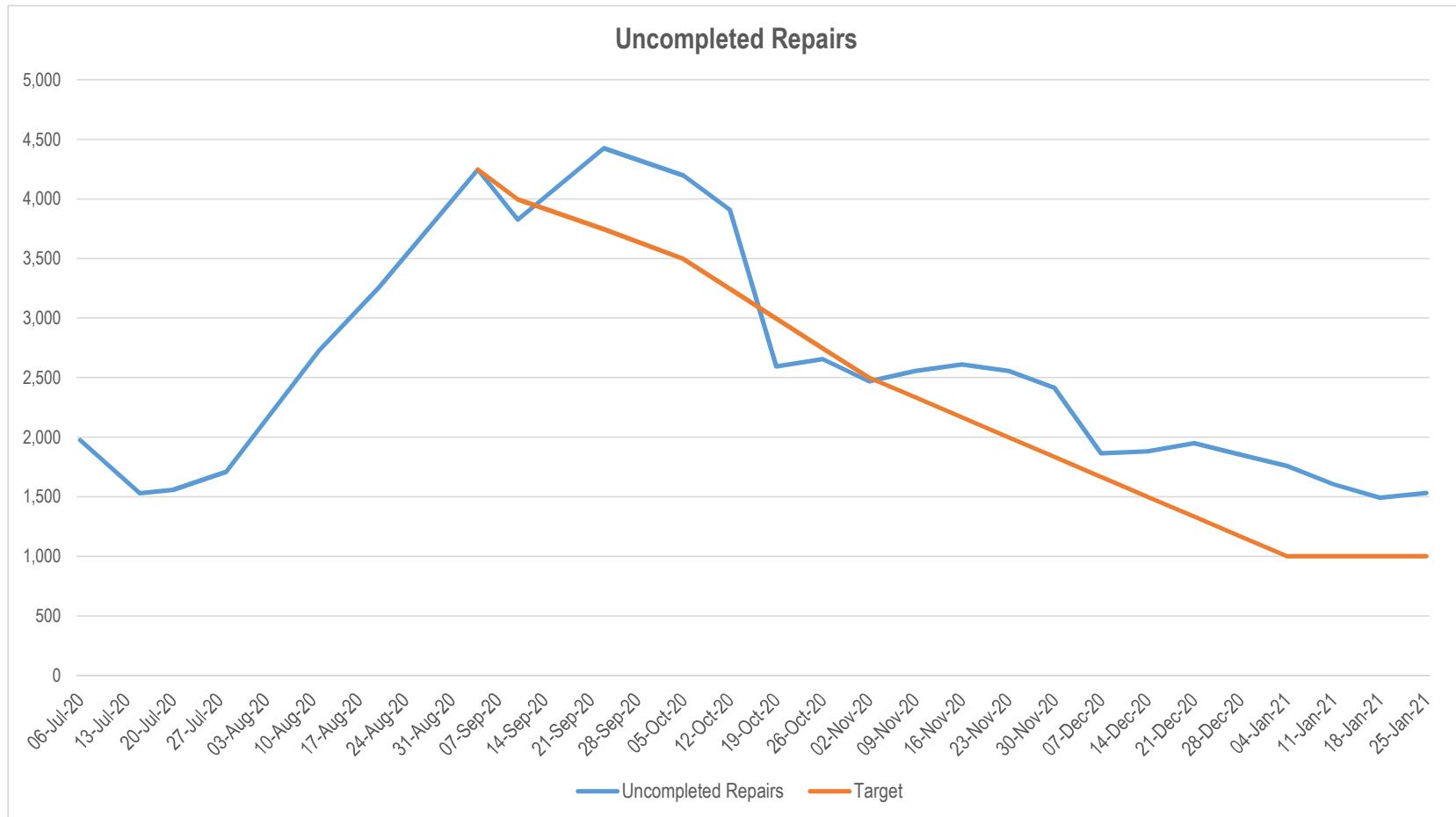
# Void Completions

Page 20



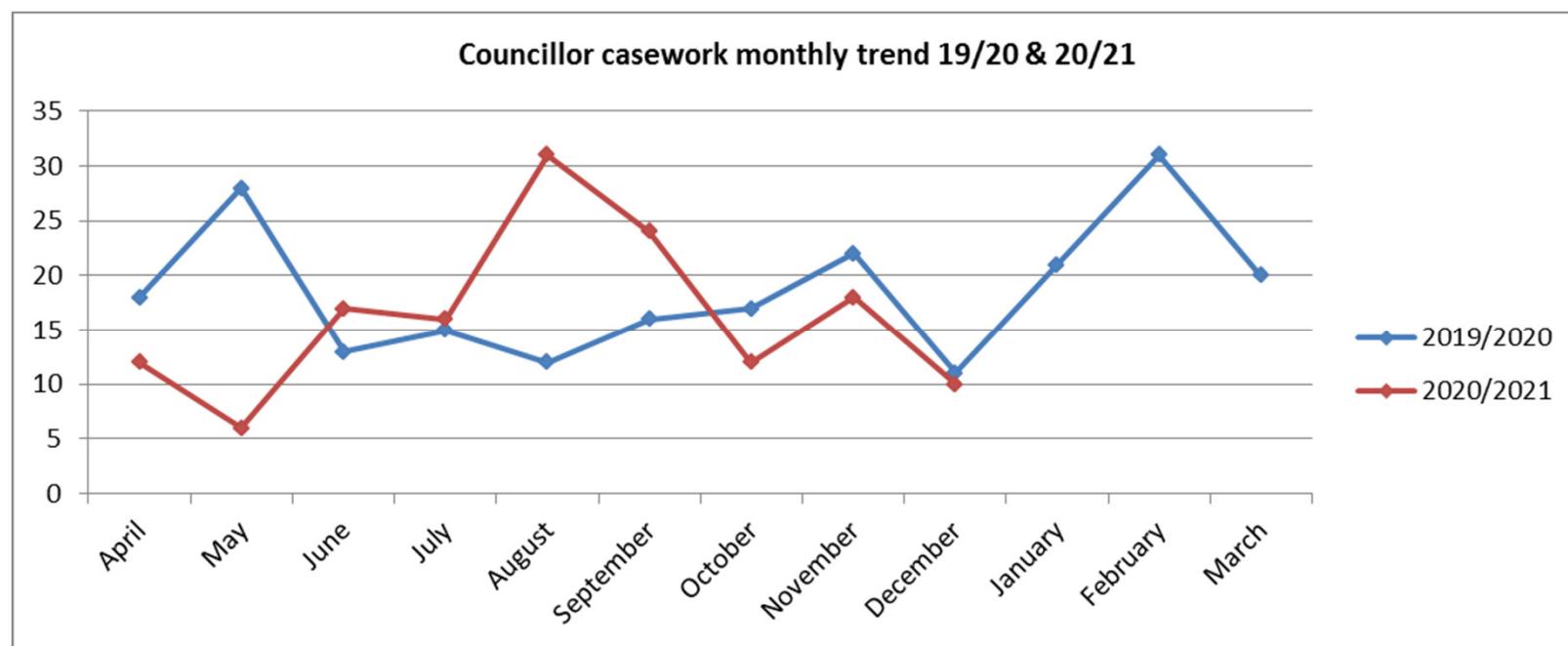
# Uncompleted Repairs - WIP

Page 21



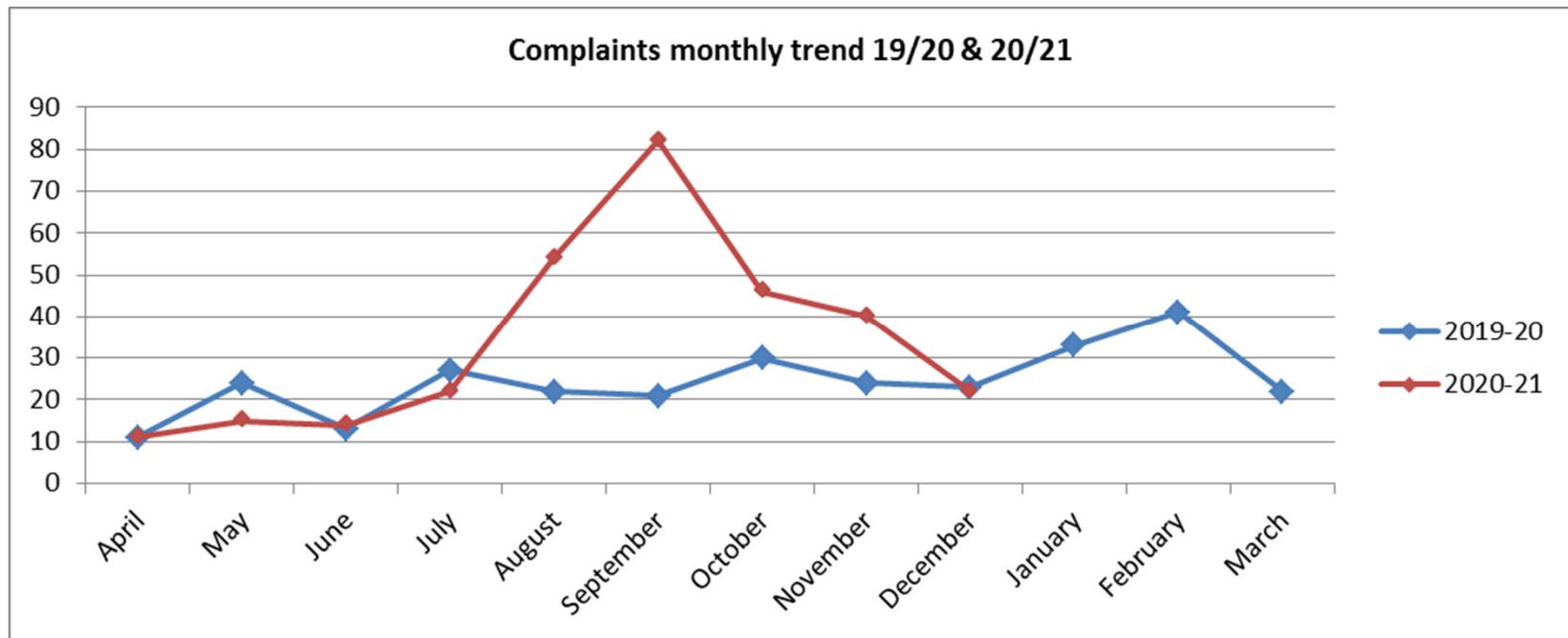
# Member Casework – 2019/20 & 2020/21

Councillor Casework	2019-20	2020 - 21
April	18	12
May	28	6
June	13	17
July	15	16
August	12	31
September	16	24
October	17	12
November	22	18
December	11	10
January	21	
February	31	
March	20	



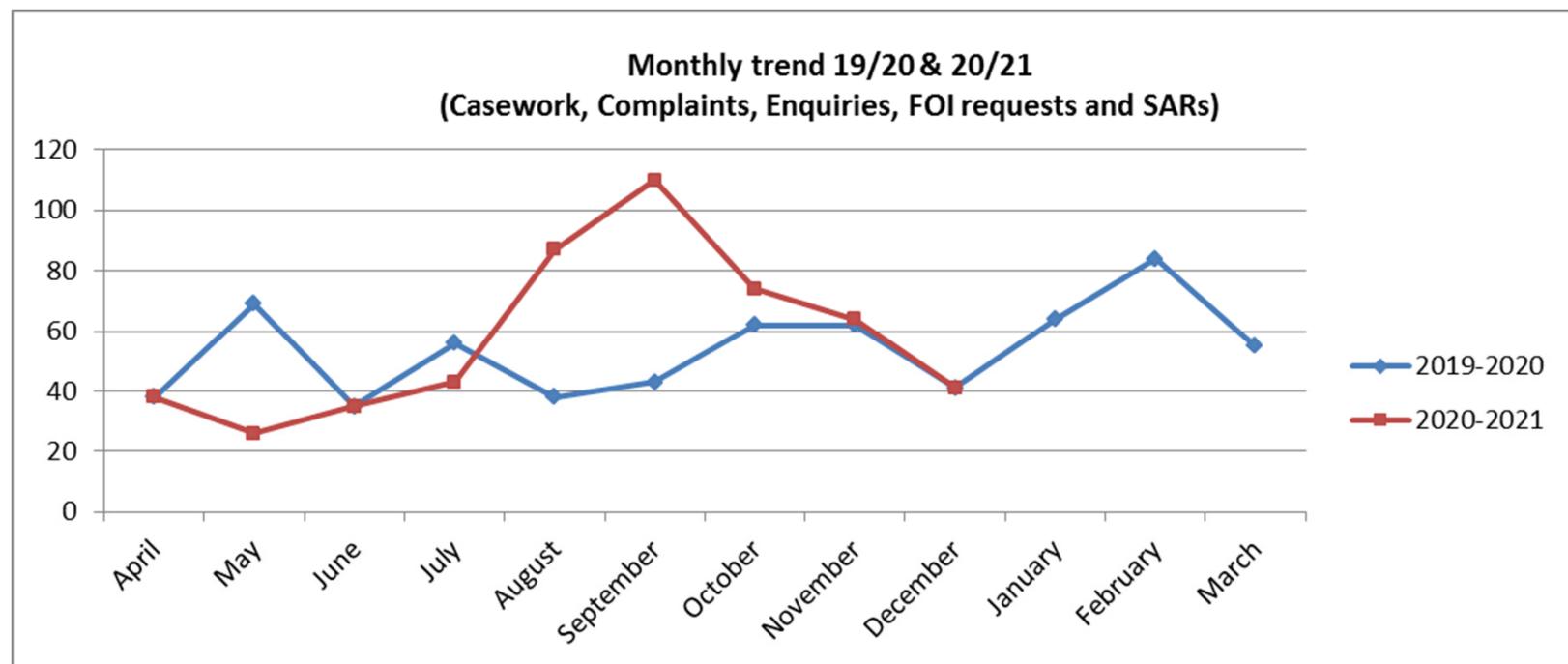
# Complaints – 2019/20 & 2020/21

Complaints	2019-20	2020-21
April	11	11
May	24	15
June	13	14
July	27	22
August	22	54
September	21	82
October	30	46
November	24	40
December	23	22
January	33	21
February	41	21
March	22	



# Casework, Complaints, Enquiries, FOI requests and SARs

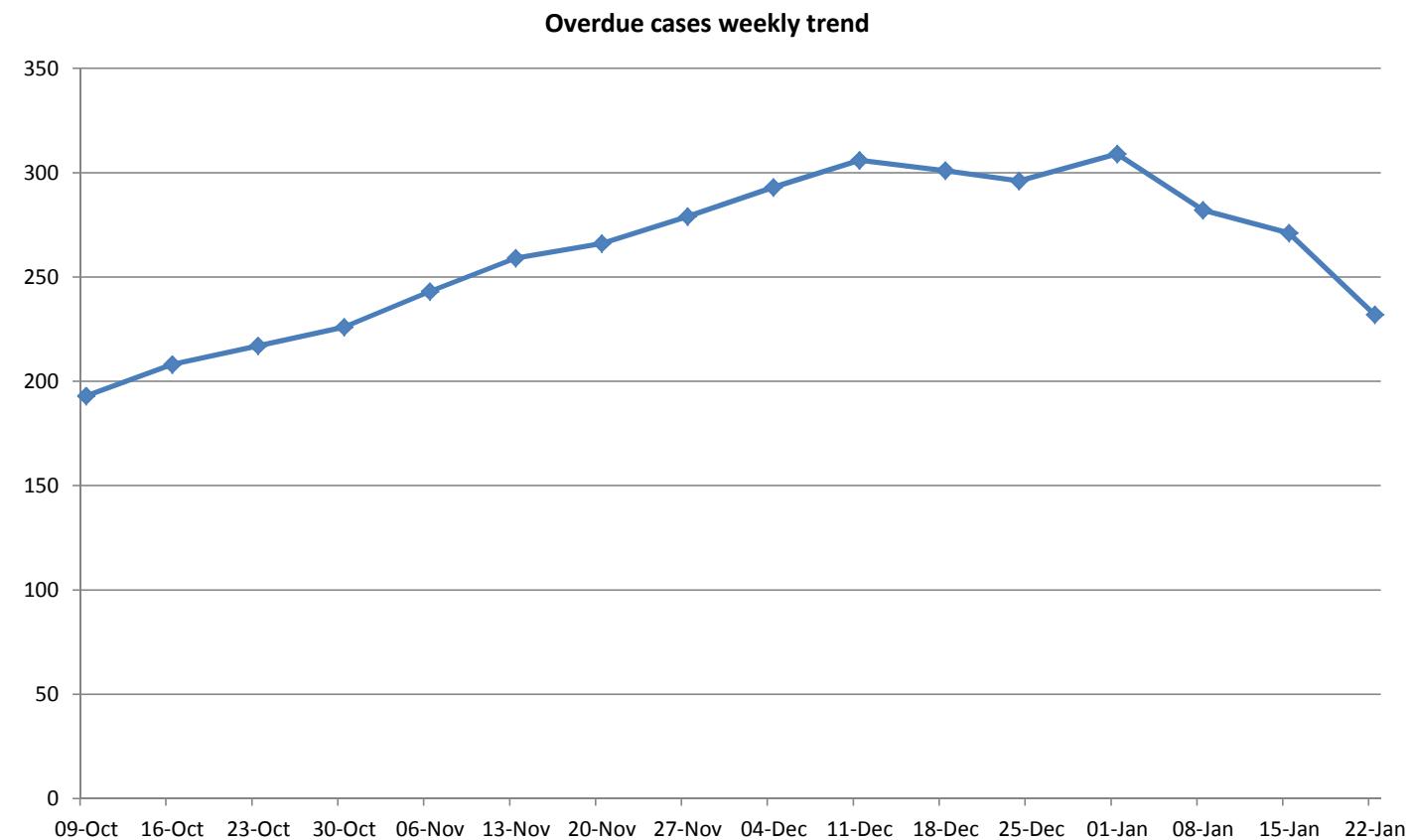
	2019-2020	2020-2021
April	38	38
May	69	26
June	35	35
July	56	43
August	38	87
September	43	110
October	62	74
November	62	64
December	41	41
January	64	
February	84	
March	55	



(Note: SARs = Subject Access Request from Resident)

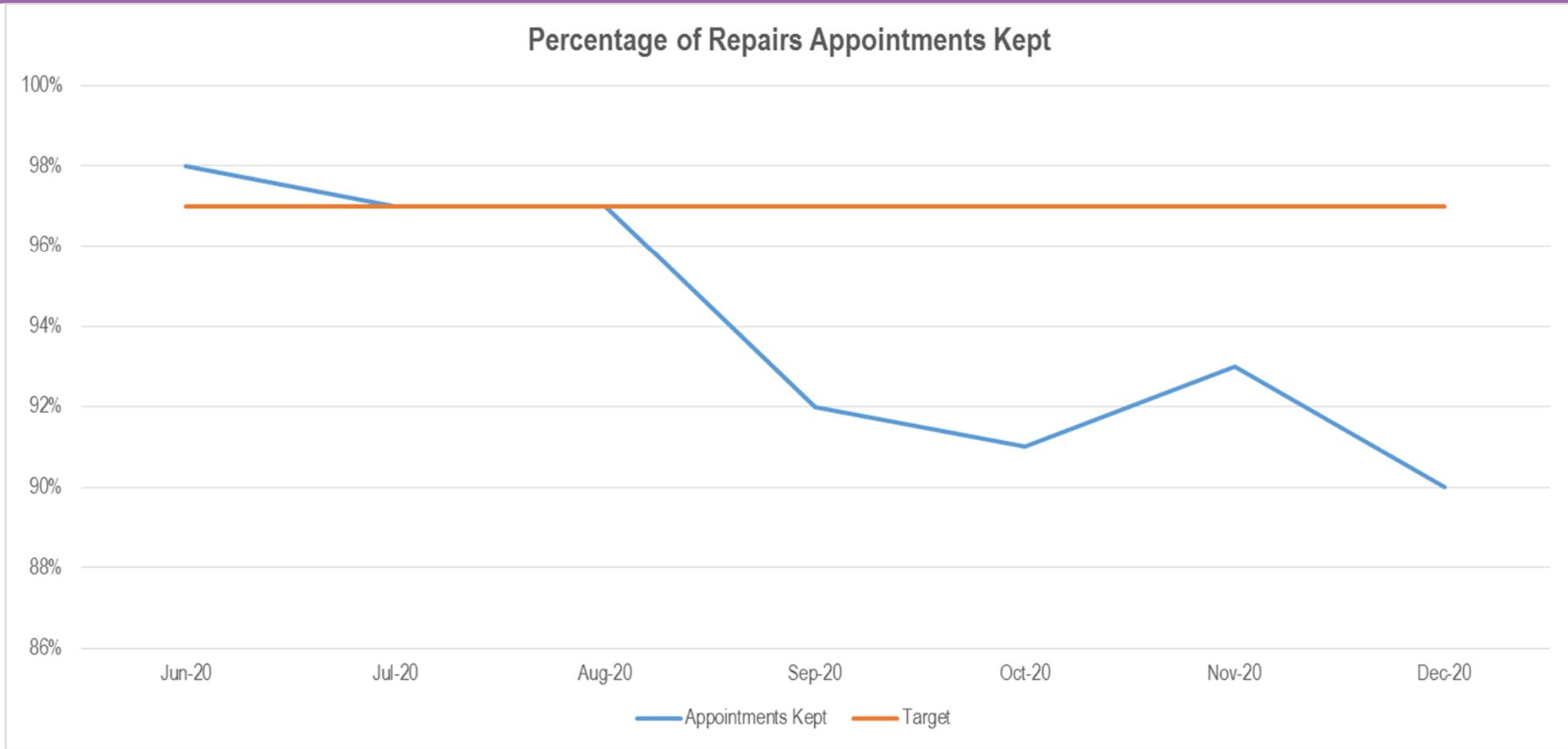
# Open Cases by Stage Type (22<sup>nd</sup> January 2021)

	open cases	Overdue	Overdue %
Stage 1 Complaint	153	142	92.81%
Stage 2 Complaint	12	11	91.67%
Stage 3 Complaint	3		
Councillor casework	38	34	89.47%
Enquiry	50	44	88.00%
FOI	1	0	0.00%
SARs	1	1	100.00%
Total	258	232	89.92%



# Appointments Made & Kept (%) June-Dec 2020

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# Community Investment

## COMMITMENT Number 1 - Support for SME's and Social Enterprises

Business mentoring (non-building trade)

### Active Weight Loss



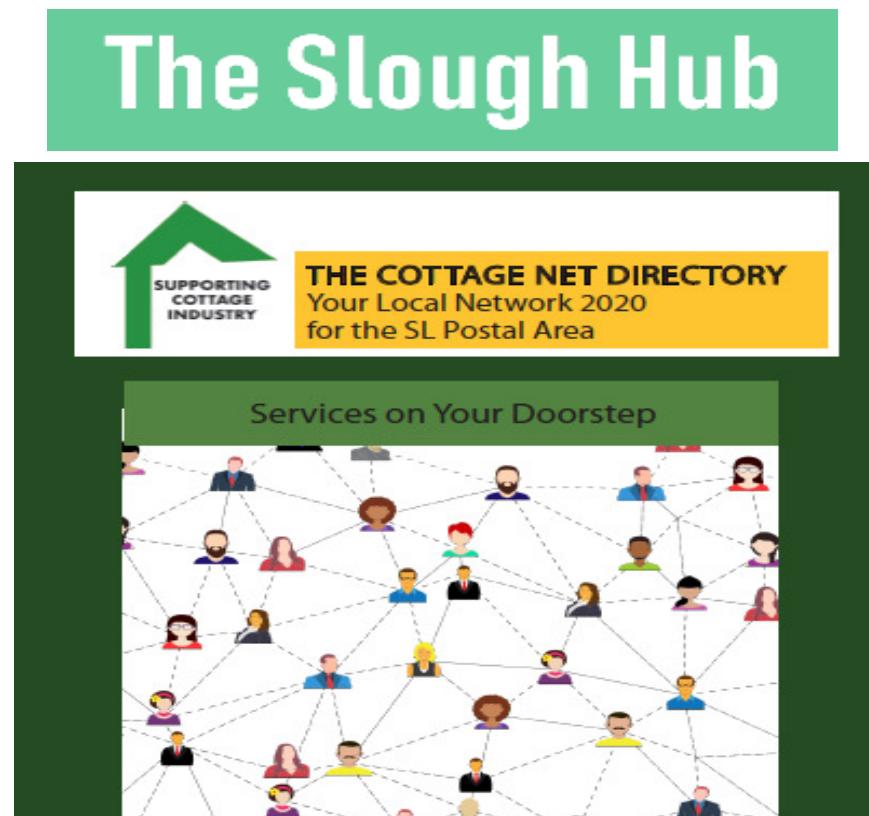
### Virtual Assistant



# Community Investment

## COMMITMENT Number 1 - Support for SME's and Social Enterprises

Support either Social Enterprise or Community Interest Company



# Community Investment

**COMMITMENT Number 2 - Targeted recruitment from disadvantage groups/community to support "Pathways to Work"**

**SMART WORKS  
READING**

*East Berkshire Community Learning and Skills Service*

## Personal Development For Employment

Monday to Thursday 9-11 hours a day Monday 2 hours a day 11 weeks



**LEARN WITH US:**

- For all job seekers and low income
- Explore the world of work, training the and knowledge give experience
- Linking community and personal to employment opportunities
- Developing a personal action plan for employment
- Support with job search, interview skills and CV building
- Individual information, advice and guidance support
- Progression to further learning and/or work

**HOW TO ENROL:**

- To book a place please contact Glynne Gooch on 0175 699 0217 or email [glynne.gooch@ebsl.co.uk](mailto:glynne.gooch@ebsl.co.uk)

**COURSES & VENUE:**  
Online – internet access and a telephone



Learn | Enjoy | Improve

**Slough**  
Borough Council

10 Into employment

32 learners to date

5 in volunteer roles

2 new Business start up

# Community Investment

## COMMITMENT Number 4 – Partnerships & Health Programmes

### Become a #OneSlough Community Champion

Help stop the spread of COVID-19

Sign up at  
[www.oneslough.org.uk/champions](http://www.oneslough.org.uk/champions)



**Do you want to help your community?**  
Anyone living or working in Slough can get involved.

**Get live updates on COVID-19**  
Receive the latest information and government guidelines on how to stay safe and healthy.

**Spread the word**  
Share this information with your family, friends, work colleagues and the wider community.

**Help us to stop the virus**  
Keeping our communities well informed will help minimise the risk of the virus spreading.

**Become a #OneSlough Community Champion**  
Join our network of local people to help during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Slough CVS Newsletter - 4th Dec Getting Covid messages into the community

Community Response 'Train the Trainer' pilot, on Zoom, took place this week, presented by Claire Giacobbe and Samina Hussain.



### #OneSlough

One Slough Community Response  
Train the Trainer



Claire Giacobbe & Samina Hussain  
Date : January 2021

#OneSlough



# Community Investment

## COMMITMENT Number 7 - Support for the local community

Page 31



**SHEIN**

**30 Boxes of clothes**



**56 gifts to the  
value of  
£400**



**3 Charities supported**



**10 gifts  
delivered**



# Community Investment

**COMMITMENT Number 4 & 7**

**Support for the local community & Partnerships – Vaccine roll out**



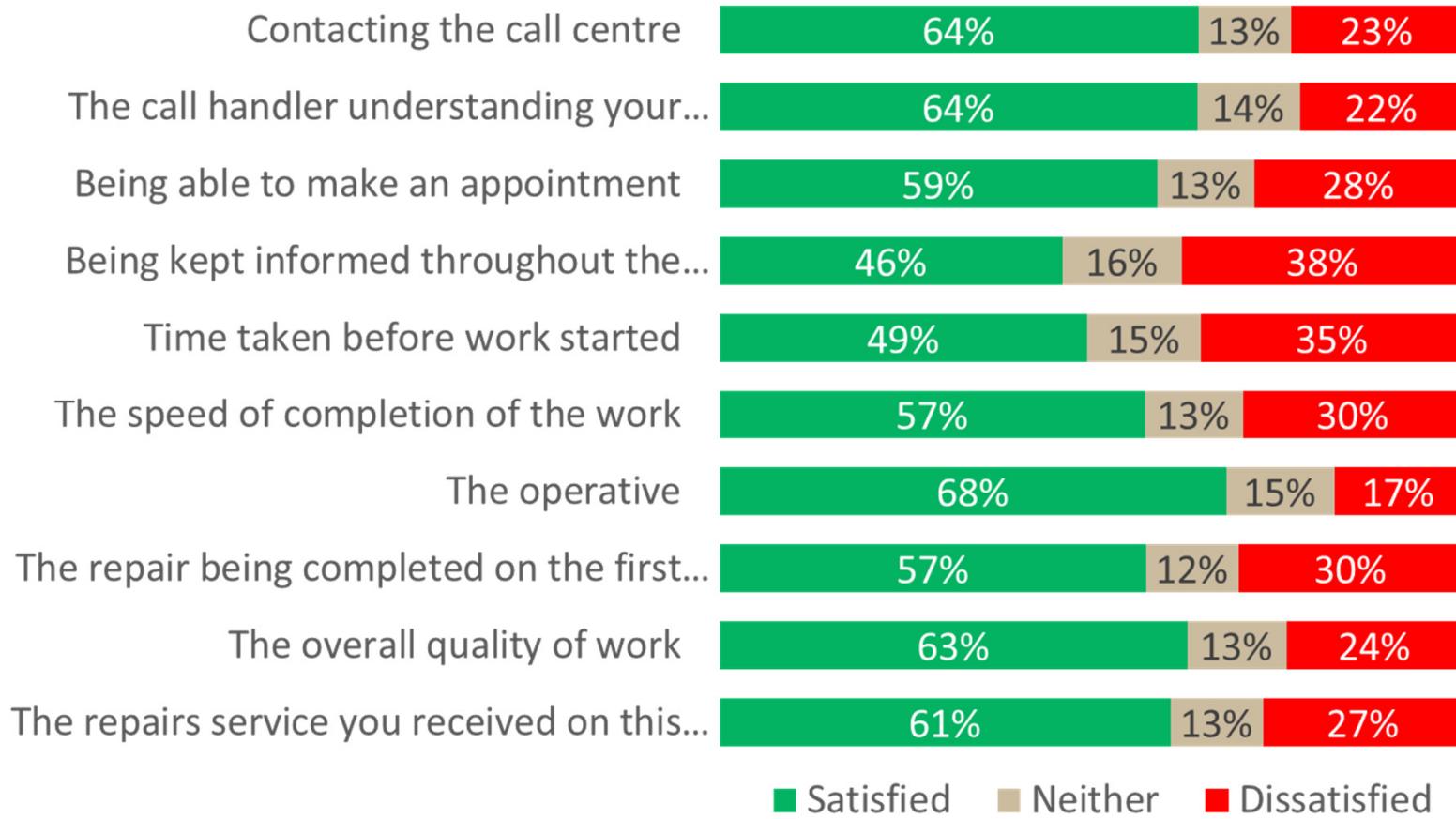
# Residents Satisfaction Survey 2020

## Overall satisfaction with RMI services



# The Repairs Journey

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# Cleaning

## Frequency



**63%** **24%**

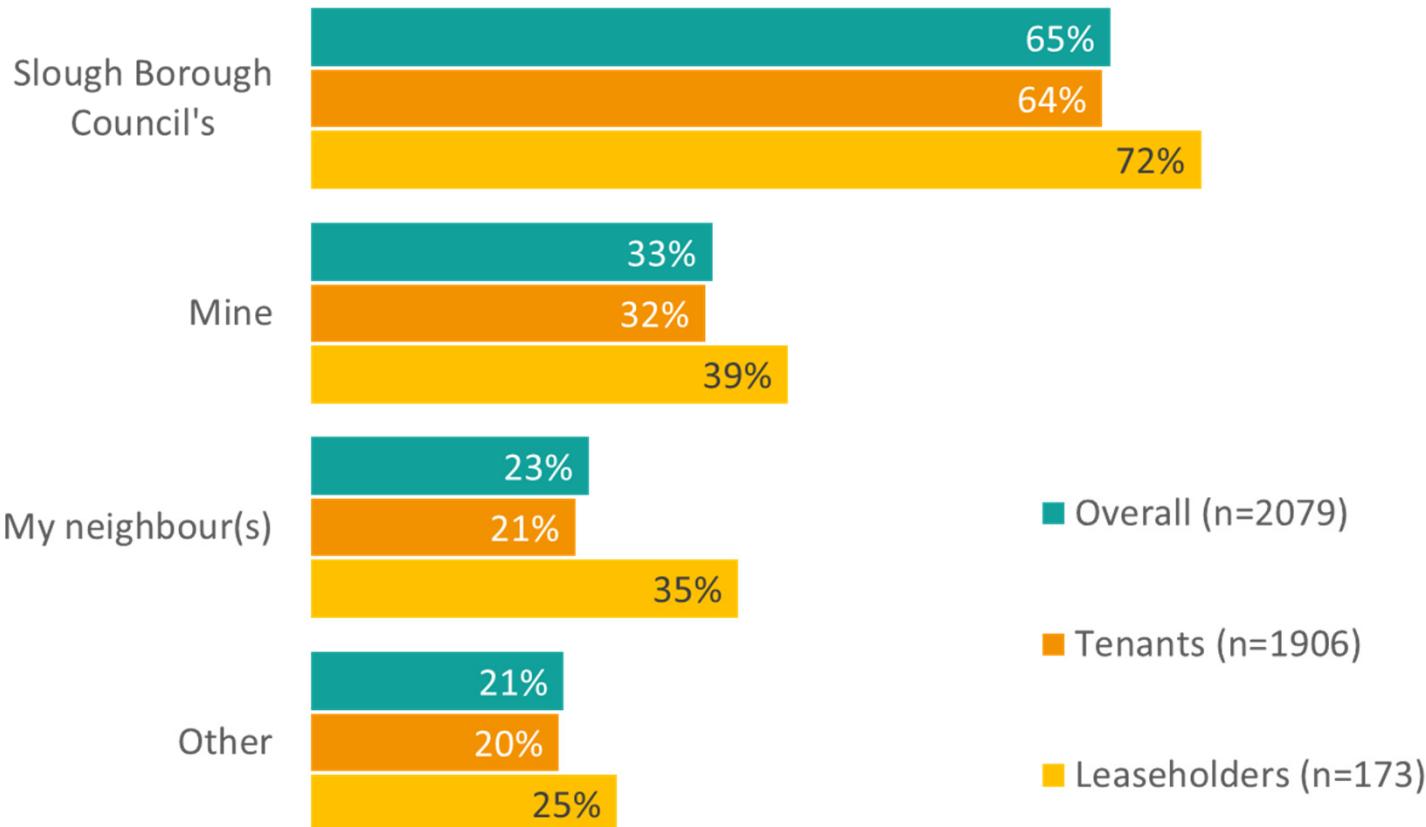
Satisfied Dissatisfied

## Standard

**59%** **27%**

Satisfied Dissatisfied

# Responsibility for Keeping Area Clean & Tidy



# Residents are Saying

"They need to listen more. Never take into consideration what you are saying. When reporting a repair they came out few weeks later."

"They should update when the job is delayed or postponed rather than keeping quiet until you call again."

"\* Response time. \* Communication with the client prior to the scheduled visit."

"Would like if they could do the job faster. Taking months for a repair is too long."

"Better customer service. Speak respectfully and politely to customers."

"More customer service staff. One person following jobs through to keeping tenants informed."

## **Approach to Estate Inspections**

- Fire Risk Assessments
- External & Street Inspections
- Full Estate Inspections

# HPS – Estate Inspections

## **November & December 2020**

- South – 30 inspections
- North – 52 inspections
- East – 25 inspections

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**Client A - 35 year old Asian Housewife**, not worked for 6 years since having children, recently secured a part-time admin role working from home.

On day 1 of the course the words used to describe how she felt were uncomfortable, resentful.

On day 12 the words used to describe how she now feels are :

"I've learnt so much and I wasn't expecting to learn so much about myself and my skills. That's what makes it so powerful, because each individual learns about themselves and what makes them special and unique, no matter how different we all maybe. Thank you for guiding me and helping me to learn and love myself again

**Client B - 40+ Female** (previous roles held in senior positions).

When asked for advice to give to anyone considering the course : "No need to be nervous if the course goes like this one: I've done plenty of job skills courses in the past but this is unique with the focus on well-being right from the start and the focus on YOU and your blockages in the 1-2-1s. This may sound daunting if you are in a hard place: isolated, jobless, stuck etc and you feel like a lost cause. But the empathy and groundedness of the trainers provides a safe space where you can express yourself and get help and encouragement. The job skills part of the course is not just theoretical but supplemented with material to look at and refer to as homework and also brought to life with real speakers who talk openly about their career path. Daily homework may sound a burden but it is helpful, relevant and not overly time-consuming and keeps your mind focused on the sessions as does the fact that they take place 4 mornings a week: the consistency means you can ask questions immediately the next day and keep your own momentum up without sinking into self-doubt or busyness".

**Client C - Mature Asian Male** when asked about the difference he sees in himself from Day 1 to Day 12.

"I really feel pumped up and my self-esteem is on higher level than ever before. On day 1<sup>st</sup> I was feeling myself a failure, inexperienced and unwanted but now I feel myself energetic, positive and constructive".

**Client D - White Male** - 3 degree's and a Master's

Q - What has surprised you about what you've learnt about yourself by being on this course?

Answer: I'm not broken, I am just inexperienced at doing things the right way, in a better way.

Q - What advice would you give someone else who is nervous about joining this course?

Answer: When I started the course I was thinking: "I'll give it a try see what's all about." Now that I am about to start my last week, I don't want it to finish. So my advice? "GIVE IT A TRY, SEE WHAT'S ALL ABOUT".

**Client E - White Female** - has successfully secured a role as a carer, since starting the course.

"This course has helped me get to know myself more and I can believe in my strengths more, and dig deep to recognize my transferable skills".

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# Slough Tenant & Leaseholder Satisfaction Survey 2020

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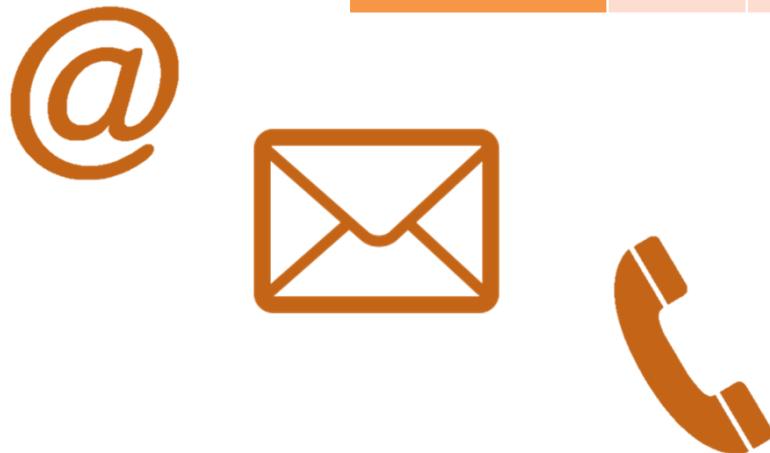
Adam Knight-Markiegi + Sam Jones  
M·E·L Research



# Our approach

- Census approach to 7,164
- Co-produced with Resident Board
- Core questions + more
- Mixed methods:
  - SMS / email
  - Postal
  - Telephone
- Aug – Oct 2020
- Heard from 2,113

	Stock	Responses	Response rate	Margin of error
Tenants	6,048	1,938	32%	±1.8%
Leaseholders	1,116	175	16%	±6.8%
Overall	7,164	2,113	29%	±1.8%

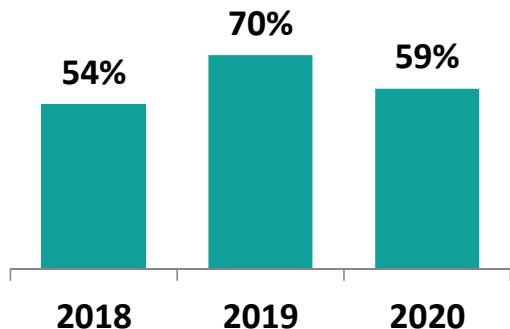


# Service overall



**59% 24%**

Satisfied Dissatisfied



## Sub-groups:

- Tenants > leaseholders
- Satisfaction rising with age
- Highest among black / black British
- Highest in bungalows

# Property related

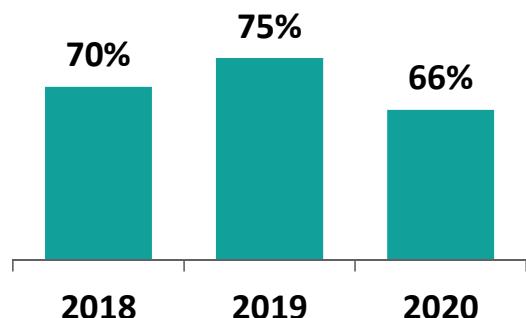
# Overall quality of home



**66%** **21%**

Satisfied

Dissatisfied



## Sub-groups:

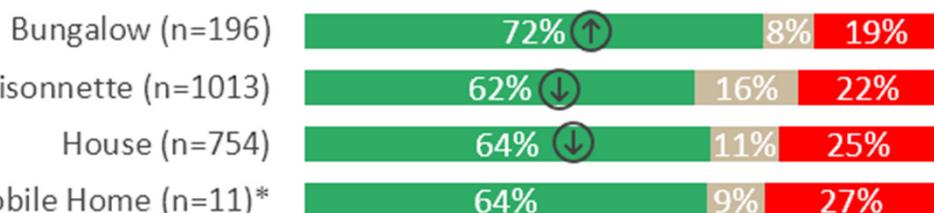
- Tenants > leaseholders – **but not as much**
- Satisfaction rising with age
- Highest in bungalows
- Highest in 1-bedroom properties

# Overall condition of home



64% 23%

Satisfied Dissatisfied



## Sub-groups:

- Tenants > leaseholders – **but not as much**
- Satisfaction generally rising with age
- Highest in bungalows
- Highest in 1-bedroom properties

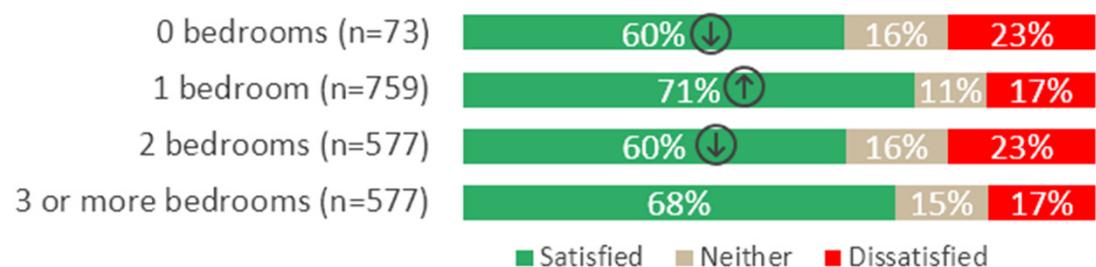
# Safe and secure home



**67% 19%**

Satisfied Dissatisfied

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## Sub-groups:

- Tenants > leaseholders
- Satisfaction generally rising with age
- Highest in bungalows
- Highest in 1-bedroom properties

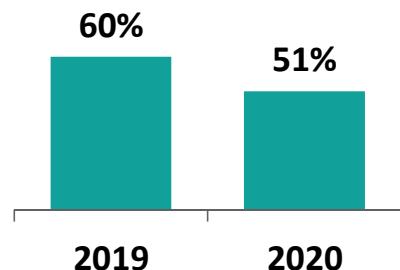
# Repairs and maintenance service overall



51% 35%

Satisfied

Dissatisfied



## Sub-groups:

- Tenants > leaseholders
- Satisfaction rising with age
- Highest among non-British white and Asian / Asian British
- Highest in bungalows



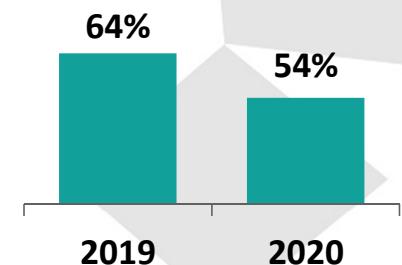
# Osborne's customer services



54% 31%

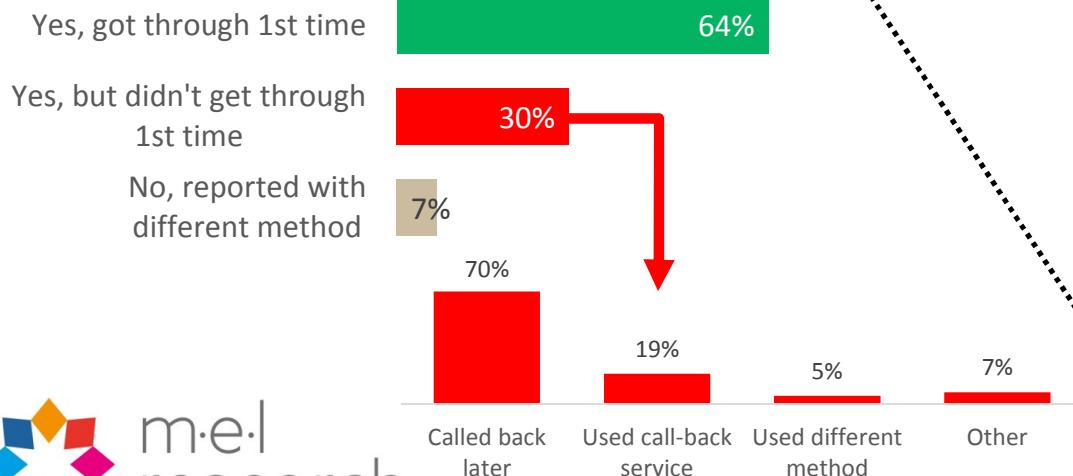
Satisfied

Dissatisfied



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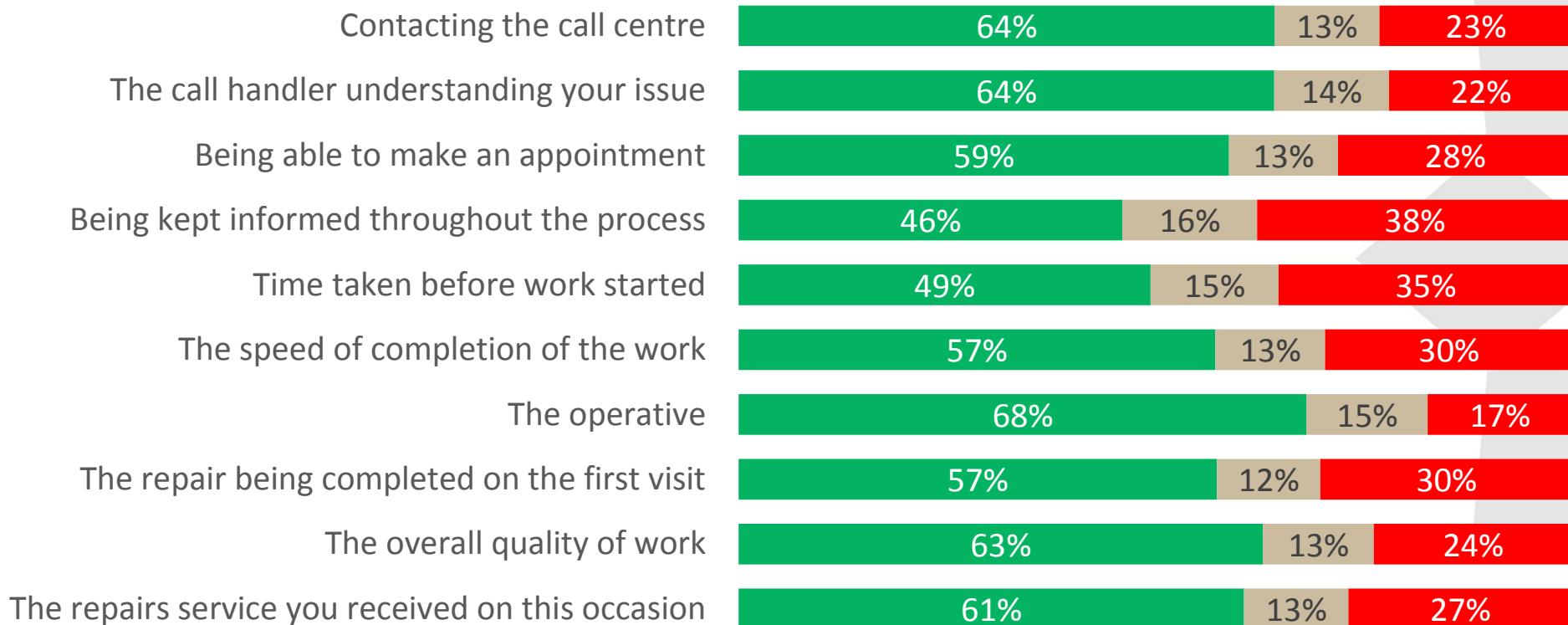
## Reporting last repair by phone



## Sub-groups:

- Tenants > leaseholders
- 75+ most satisfied
- Highest among black / black British
- Highest in bungalows and houses

# The repairs journey



■ Satisfied      ■ Neither      ■ Dissatisfied

# Improvements to repairs service

	Count	% of residents
<b>Quicker/ more responsive</b>	461	38%
<b>Better customer service</b>	448	37%
<b>Improved communication</b>	406	33%
<b>Better quality work</b>	304	25%
<b>Time taken</b>	277	23%
<b>Outstanding repair work</b>	253	21%
<b>Better contractors</b>	177	15%
<b>Satisfied (i.e. no improvements)</b>	162	13%
<b>Better appointment times</b>	154	13%
<b>Need more compliance checks</b>	44	4%
<b>Other</b>	57	5%

"They need to listen more. Never take into consideration what you are saying. When reporting a repair they came out few weeks later."

"They should update when the job is delayed or postponed rather than keeping quiet until you call again."

"Better customer service.  
Speak respectfully and politely to customers."

"\* Response time. \* Communication with the client prior to the scheduled visit."

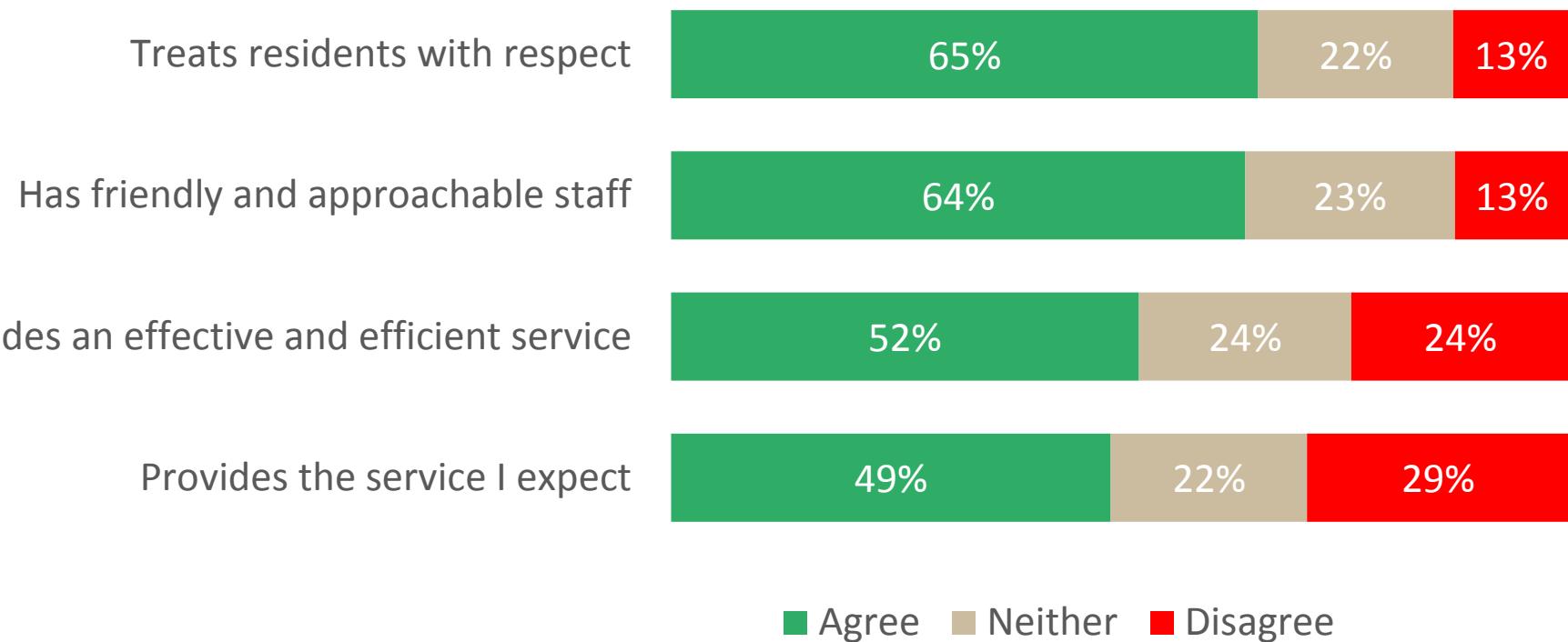
"Would like if they could do the job faster. Taking months for a repair is too long."

"More customer service staff. One person following jobs through to keeping tenants informed."

# Perceptions of Slough BC

# Perceptions of Slough BC

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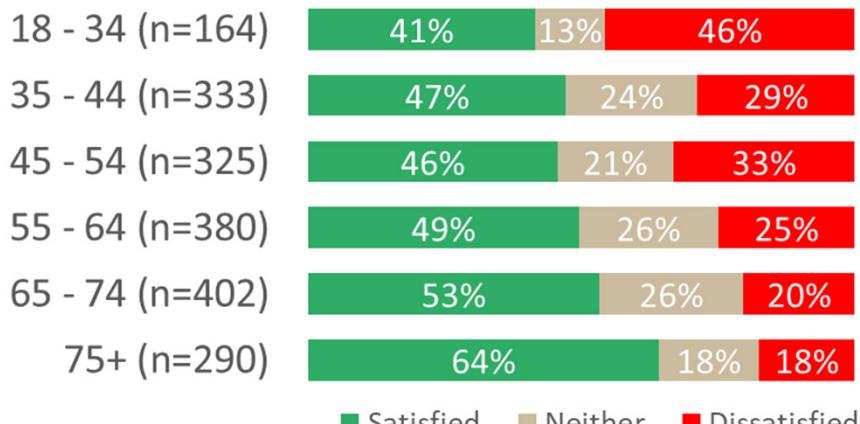


# Easy to deal with



**50% 27%**

Satisfied Dissatisfied



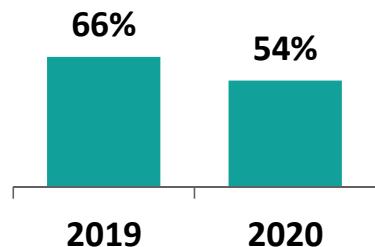
## Sub-groups:

- Tenants > leaseholders
- Satisfaction rising with age
- Highest in bungalows

# Treating residents fairly



**54%** **21%**  
Satisfied Dissatisfied



## Sub-groups:

- Tenants > leaseholders
- Satisfaction rising with age
- Highest among most ethnic groups except white British and mixed ethnic groups
- Highest in bungalows

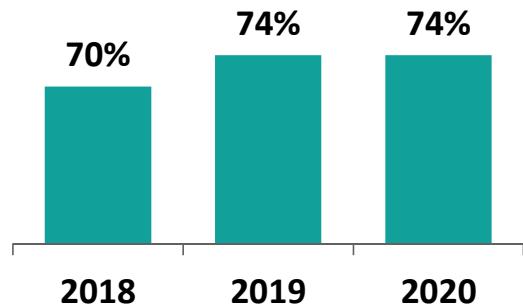
# The neighbourhood

# Neighbourhood as a place to live



**74%** **15%**

Satisfied Dissatisfied



## Sub-groups:

- Tenants > leaseholders
- Satisfaction generally rising with age
- Highest among non-British white and Asian / Asian British
- Highest in bungalows

# Neighbourhood as a place to live by ward

	Satisfied	Neither	Dissatisfied
<b>Baylis and Stoke (n=157)</b>	79%	10%	11%
<b>Britwell and Northborough (n=469)</b>	68%	14%	18%
<b>Central (n=99)</b>	71%	10%	19%
<b>Chalvey (n=104)</b>	66%	13%	22%
<b>Cippenham Green (n=103)</b>	82%	7%	12%
<b>Cippenham Meadows (n=94)</b>	70%	16%	14%
<b>Elliman (n=70)</b>	66%	15%	19%
<b>Farnham (n=69)</b>	77%	13%	10%
<b>Foxborough (n=140)</b>	73%	16%	11%
<b>Haymill and Lynch Hill (n=197)</b>	82%	10%	8%
<b>Langley Kedermister (n=294)</b>	72%	12%	16%
<b>Langley St Mary's (n=109)</b>	78%	7%	15%
<b>Upton (n=27)*</b>	59%	4%	37%
<b>Wexham Lea (n=179)</b>	86%	5%	9%

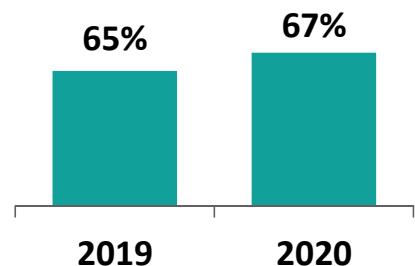
# Overall appearance of the neighbourhood



**67%** **20%**

Satisfied

Dissatisfied



## Sub-groups:

- Tenants > leaseholders
- 65+ most satisfied
- Highest among Asian / Asian British and non-British white
- Highest in bungalows

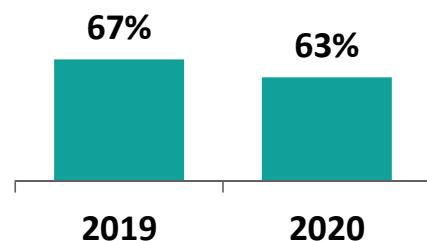
# Cleaning

## Frequency



**63%** **24%**

Satisfied Dissatisfied

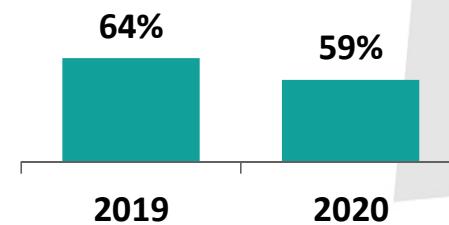


## Standard



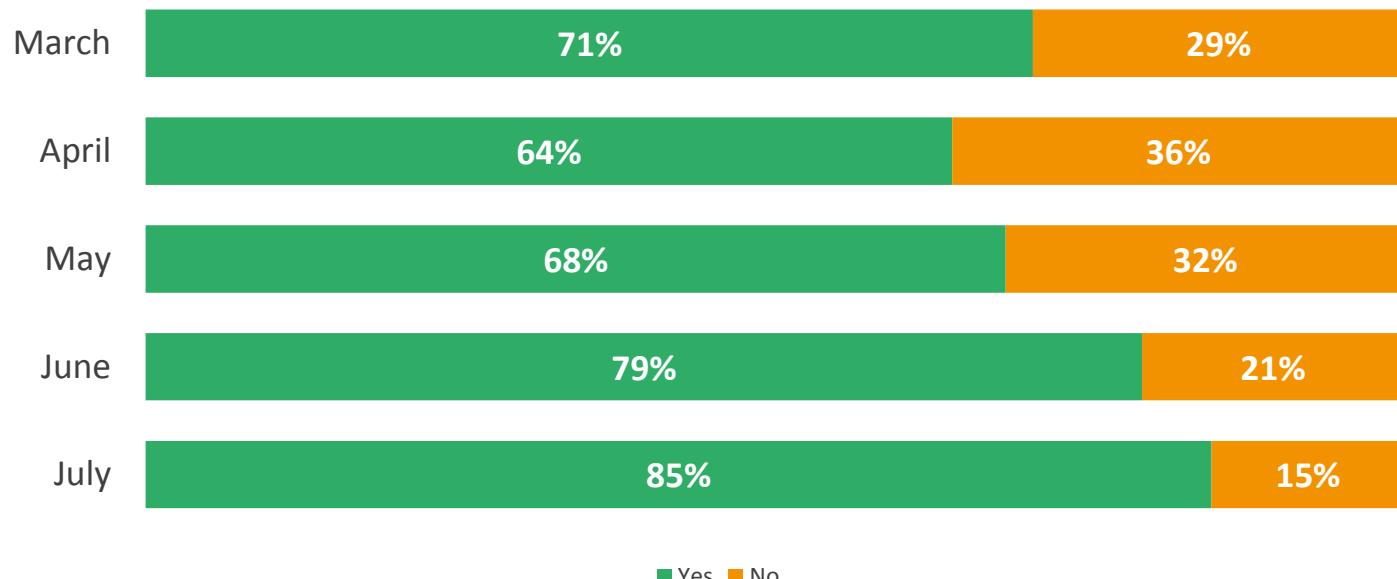
**59%** **27%**

Satisfied Dissatisfied

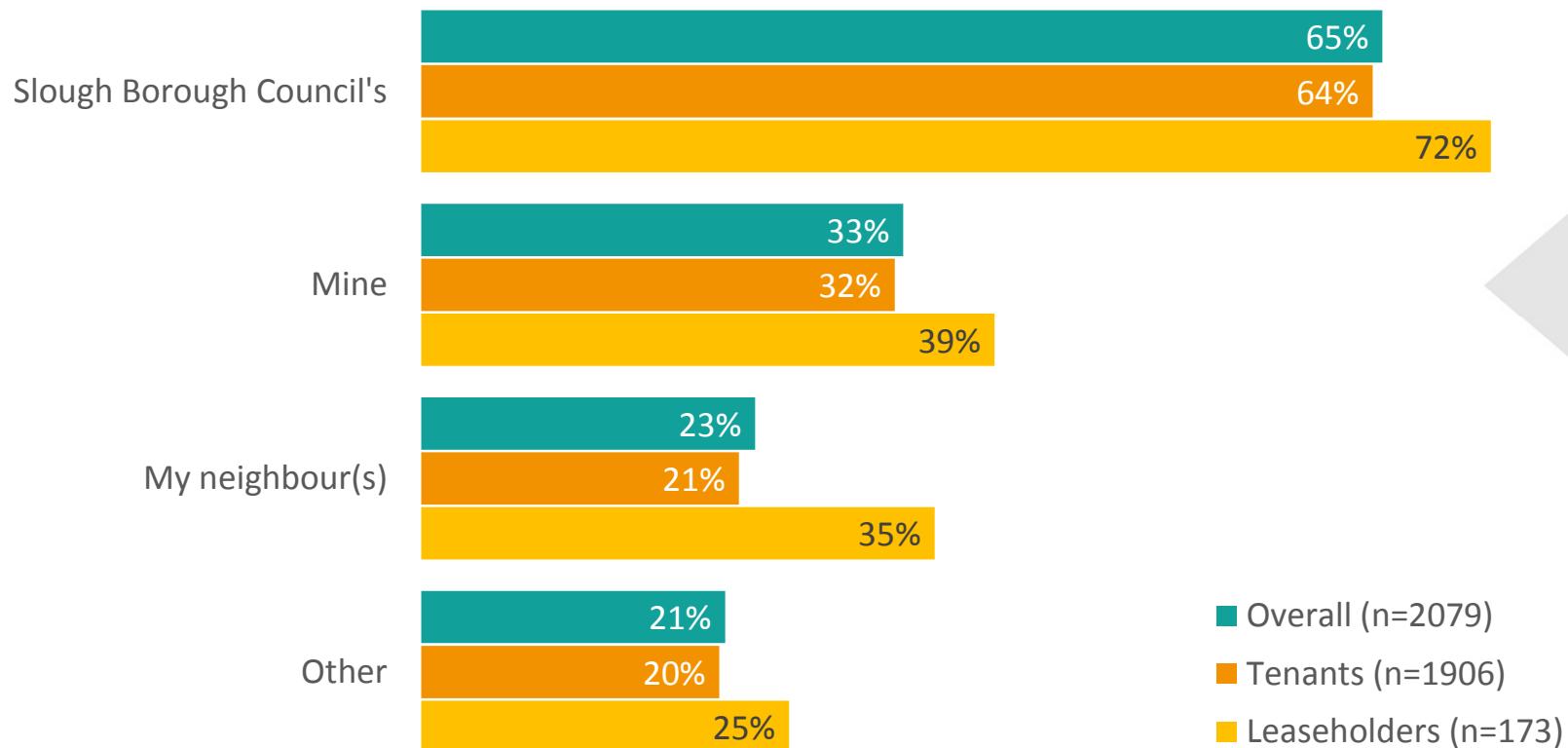




# Cleaning



# Responsibility for keeping area clean and tidy



# Top 10 neighbourhood priorities for the future

	Count	% of residents
<b>Nothing / Don't know</b>	799	38%
<b>External areas/ grounds maintenance/ neighbourhood appearance / littering / dog fouling / road sweeping</b>	384	18%
<b>Safety and security (e.g. a safer neighbourhood, street lighting, install CCTVs, better locks, more policing)</b>	285	13%
<b>Car parking</b>	267	13%
<b>Crime / ASB / neighbour issues / drug dealing</b>	267	13%
<b>Improvement / maintenance of property standards (e.g. replacing windows, new bathrooms, sort out damp/mould, guttering)</b>	218	10%
<b>Communal cleaning (e.g. internal areas, window cleaning)</b>	122	6%
<b>Repairs and maintenance - Appointments/ speed</b>	108	5%
<b>Communication / views taken into account / follow-up on complaints</b>	104	5%
<b>Repairs and maintenance - Quality</b>	97	5%

"Keep the exteriors clean and tidy. Car park access still pending. Strict measures should put in place for fly tipping." *Leaseholder*

"(1) Making my neighbourhood a safe place to live. (2) Tackling anti social behaviour. (3) Keeping the appearance of the neighbourhood up to a high standard." *Tenant*

"We would like to request you to create different initiatives that would let us get to know our community better and closer, to discuss our differences. Please trim down the neighbourhood trees. Stranger safety, frequent cleaning, remove gravel." *Tenant*

"Increase parking availability, relax yellow lines Cut down the berry tree Arrange window cleaning." *Tenant*

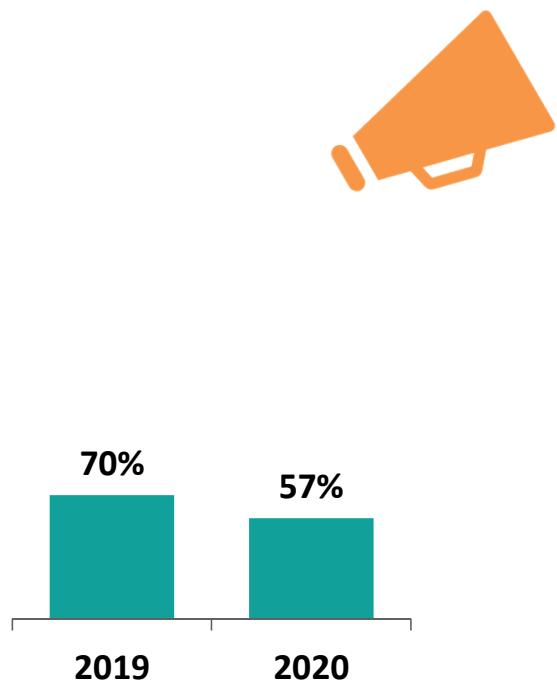
"Anything to improve security and safety." *Leaseholder*

"Parking, cars everywhere bins everywhere rubbish everywhere." *Tenant*

"Make sure the doors in blocks of flats are closing securely. Lighting in bin area - clean up of bin area - gardens - people need to keep tidy. Noisy neighbours - music banging out." *Leaseholder*

# Information and communications

# Being kept informed



57% 18%

Good

Bad

## Sub-groups:

- Tenants > leaseholders
- 65+ most satisfied
- Highest among Black / Black British
- Highest in bungalows

# Access to information



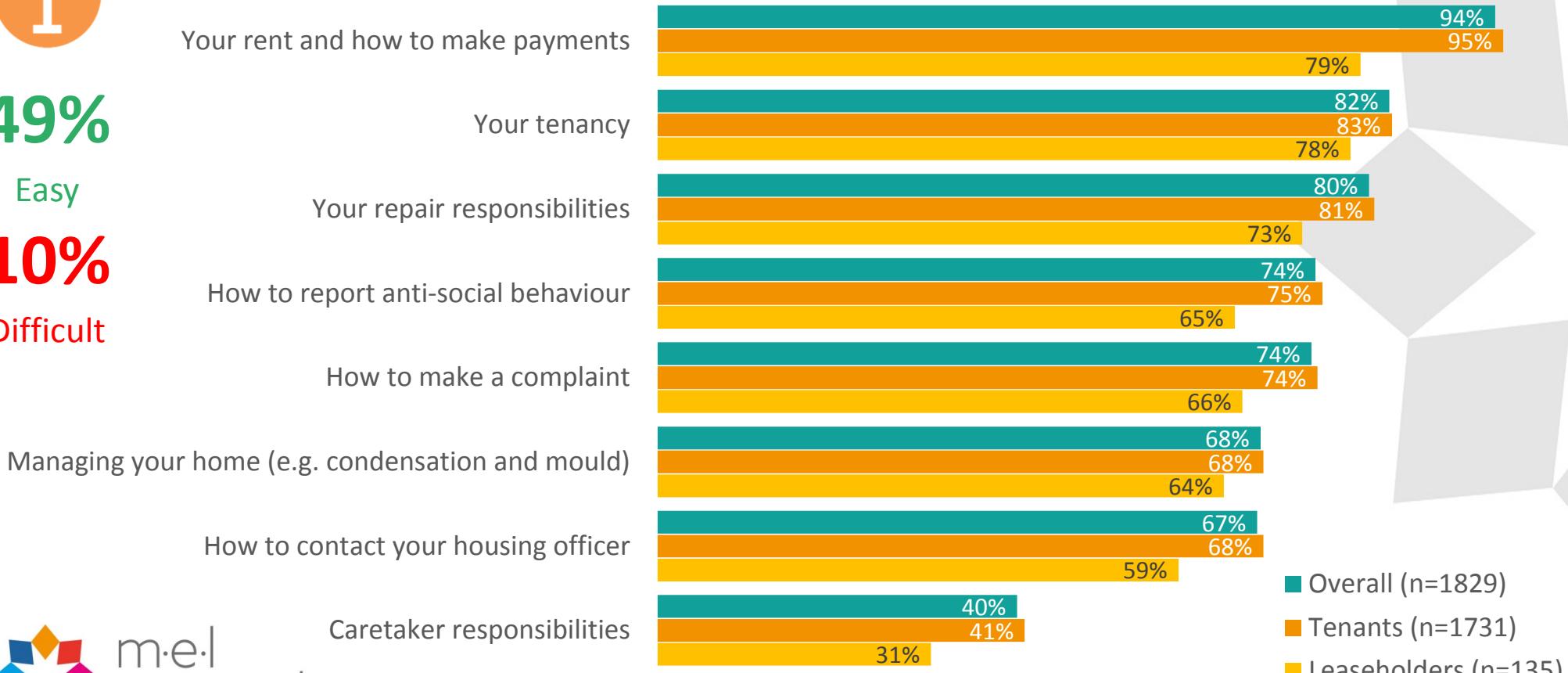
49%

Easy

10%

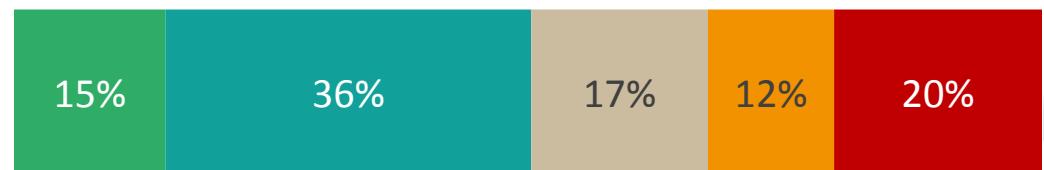
Difficult

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# Leasehold service charges

How easy it is to understand your service charge statement



The information about how your service charges are calculated



■ Very satisfied

■ Fairly satisfied

■ Neither

■ Fairly dissatisfied

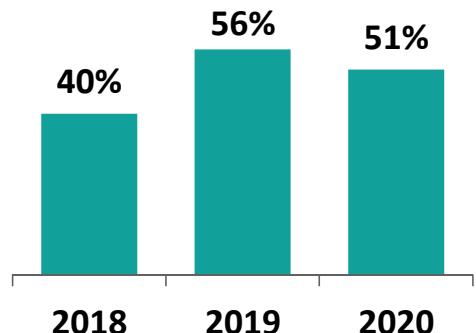
■ Very dissatisfied

# Listening to views + acting upon them



**51%** **27%**

Satisfied Dissatisfied



## Sub-groups:

- Tenants > leaseholders
- Satisfaction rising with age
- Highest in bungalows



# Contacting Slough's Housing Service



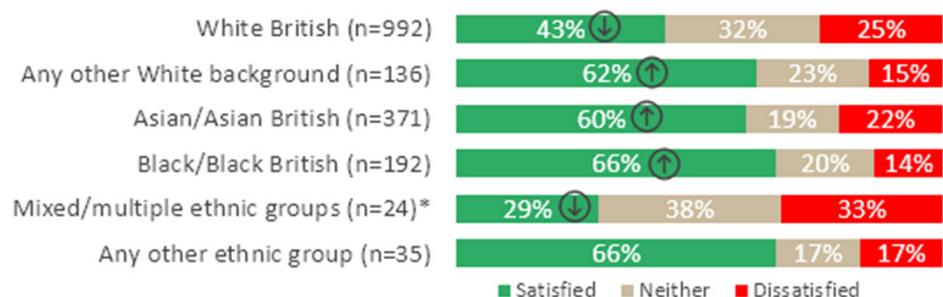
# Having a say in how services are managed



**49% 24%**

Satisfied

Dissatisfied



## Sub-groups:

- Tenants > leaseholders
- 35-44 and 75+ most satisfied
- Most non-British white more satisfied



# Resident Board

## Awareness



■ Yes ■ No

## Interest in involvement



■ Yes ■ No

### Sub-groups:

- **Leaseholders** > tenants

### Sub-groups:

- Similar whether knew about Resident Board or not

# Housing HIGHLIGHTS

Housing Services newsletter

## Housing Highlights

Page 76

Overall (n=2067)



Tenants (n=1897)



Leaseholders (n=170)



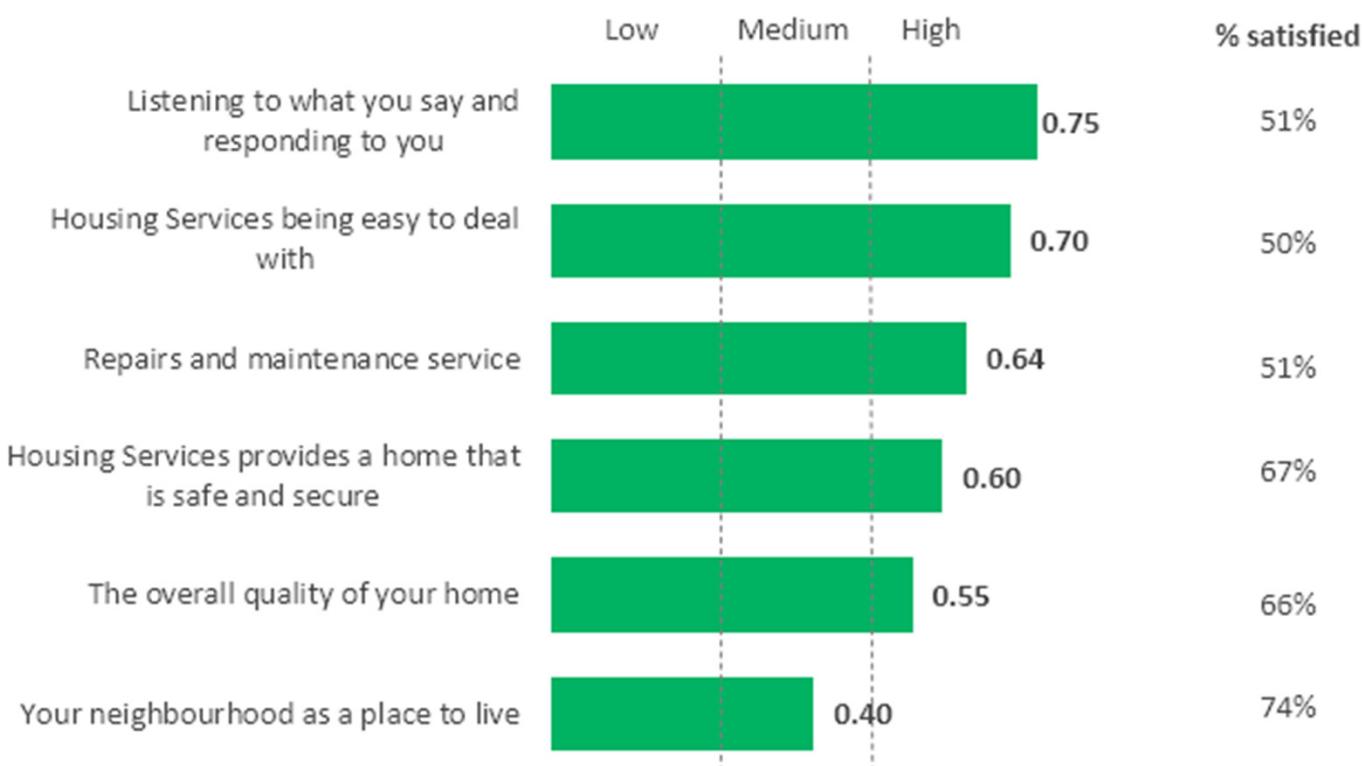
- I read the newsletter from cover to cover
- I read nearly all of it
- I read a few articles
- I just glance at it
- I don't read it

# Summing up

# Satisfaction by ward

 Ward	Overall service provided		Overall quality of home		Home that is safe and secure		Easy to deal with		Repairs and maintenance service		Neighbourhood as a place to live		Listening + responding to what you say	
	Sat.	Dis.	Sat.	Dis.	Sat.	Dis.	Sat.	Dis.	Sat.	Dis.	Sat.	Dis.	Sat.	Dis.
Baylis and Stoke (n=157)	65%	20%	65%	24%	73%	13%	61%	21%	57%	27%	79%	11%	62%	21%
Britwell and Northborough (n=469)	58%	24%	60%	23%	65%	23%	48%	30%	48%	40%	68%	18%	49%	28%
Central (n=99)	65%	23%	71%	15%	66%	20%	52%	24%	58%	31%	71%	19%	56%	24%
Chalvey (n=104)	56%	32%	69%	18%	69%	18%	61%	23%	53%	37%	66%	22%	57%	24%
Cippenham Green (n=103)	56%	23%	65%	21%	63%	19%	54%	22%	49%	34%	82%	12%	49%	31%
Cippenham Meadows (n=94)	64%	22%	71%	21%	70%	11%	54%	19%	57%	29%	70%	14%	53%	26%
Elliman (n=70)	54%	29%	73%	15%	64%	24%	42%	34%	54%	36%	66%	19%	43%	27%
Farnham (n=69)	58%	24%	66%	17%	63%	18%	46%	26%	58%	30%	77%	10%	48%	28%
Foxborough (n=140)	66%	18%	74%	16%	71%	19%	53%	22%	49%	38%	73%	11%	54%	21%
Haymill and Lynch Hill (n=197)	54%	24%	69%	17%	64%	18%	48%	28%	49%	32%	82%	8%	49%	28%
Langley Kedermister (n=294)	58%	24%	63%	25%	66%	18%	49%	28%	52%	35%	72%	16%	50%	29%
Langley St Mary's (n=109)	49%	35%	61%	30%	62%	28%	46%	32%	50%	37%	78%	15%	42%	32%
Upton (n=27)*	44%	28%	56%	36%	56%	28%	42%	42%	19%	48%	59%	37%	54%	38%
Wexham Lea (n=179)	64%	20%	71%	21%	74%	13%	48%	27%	55%	32%	86%	9%	51%	25%

# Key drivers



# Conclusion

- Higher scores for neighbourhood and quality / condition of home
- Lower scores for most **services** received
  - Mixed picture on repairs and maintenance
  - Customer contact not great
- Certain groups more satisfied
- Recommendations
  - Drill down with Resident Board
  - Push Osborne for action plan
  - Engage leaseholders, eg with Resident Board





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# Tenant and Leaseholder Satisfaction Survey 2020



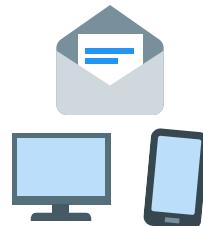
**SUMMARY REPORT  
DECEMBER 2020**

# Introduction

Slough Borough Council's Housing Services commissioned M·E·L Research to carry out a tenant and leaseholder satisfaction survey to gain an understanding of the levels of satisfaction residents have with their homes and the associated services provided to them.

This year, the Resident Board took over the survey. They were involved throughout the process, particularly at the design stage where the questionnaire was designed cooperatively by the Resident Board, Housing Services team members and M·E·L Research.

We used a mixed method (online, postal and telephone) approach to obtain 2,113 responses for both tenants and leaseholders which gives an overall margin of error of  $\pm 1.8\%$ . This summary report provides headline results for all residents, tenants and leaseholders combined.



A mixed method approach was used to maximise inclusiveness and allow residents to complete the survey in their preferred way.

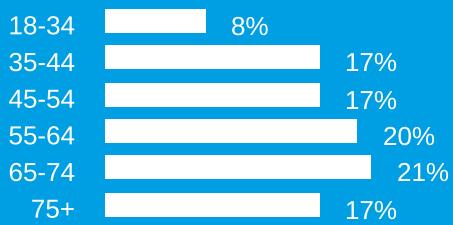
All **7,164** residents were invited to take part.

**2,113** completed questionnaires were returned.

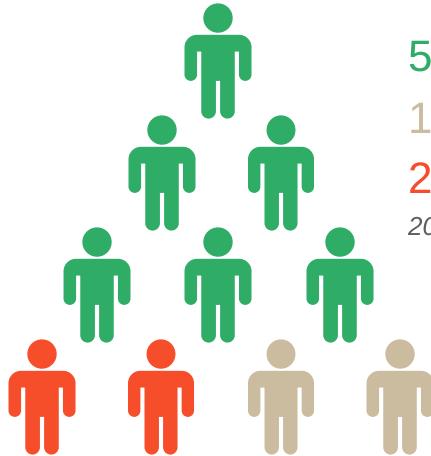


	Stock size	Response	Response rate	Margin of error
Tenants	6,048	1,938	32%	$\pm 1.8\%$
Leaseholders	1,116	175	16%	$\pm 6.8\%$
<b>Overall</b>	<b>7,164</b>	<b>2,113</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b><math>\pm 1.8\%</math></b>

## RESPONDENT PROFILE:



# Overall services



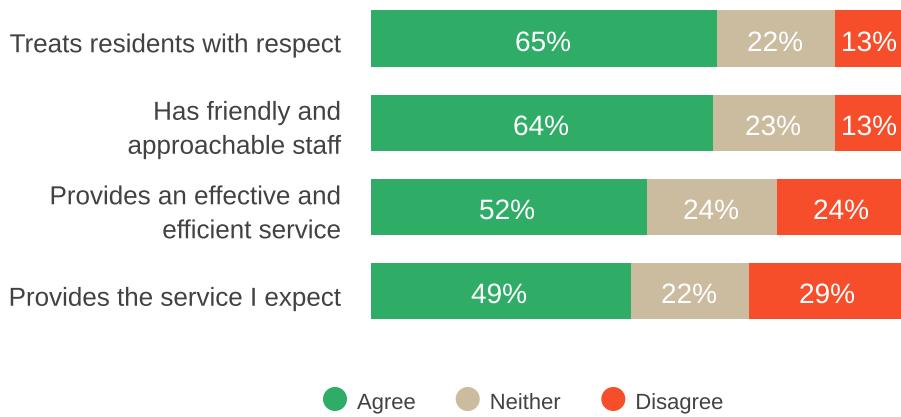
**59% satisfied**  
**17% neither**  
**24% dissatisfied**  
 2019: 70% satisfied

Taking everything into account, little under six in ten (59%) were satisfied with the **overall service provided**. Around a quarter (24%) reported some degree of dissatisfaction and 17% had no strong feelings either way.

Satisfaction has fallen significantly since 2019.

Satisfaction was significantly higher for tenants (61%) compared to leaseholders (33%).

## Perceptions of Slough Borough Council



Residents were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with a series of statements, to better understand their perceptions of Slough Borough Council.

The highest level of agreement was with the statement 'SBC treats residents with respect'. Fewer residents agreed that SBC provides the service they expect.



Listening to views and acting upon them

**51% satisfied**    **27% dissatisfied**

2019: 56% satisfied

Satisfaction has fallen 5%-points. Satisfaction was significantly higher for tenants (53%) compared to leaseholders (28%).



Slough being easy to deal with

**50% satisfied**    **27% dissatisfied**

Satisfaction was significantly higher for tenants (52%) compared to leaseholders (31%).



Treating residents fairly

**54% satisfied**    **21% dissatisfied**

2019: 56% satisfied

Satisfaction has fallen significantly by 12%-points. Satisfaction was significantly higher for tenants (56%) compared to leaseholders (31%).

# Your home

## Access to information

Residents were asked if they have, or know where to find, information about their tenancy and other housing services.

Almost all residents had information, or knew where to find information, about their rent and how to make payments. The vast majority also knew where to find information on their tenancy and their repair responsibilities.



● Tenants

● Leaseholders

## Overall quality of home



**66%**  
satisfied

**21%**  
dissatisfied

2019: 75% satisfied

Satisfaction has fallen 9%-points since 2019.

Satisfaction was significantly higher for tenants (67%) compared to leaseholders (59%).

## Overall condition of home



**64%**  
satisfied

**23%**  
dissatisfied

Satisfaction was significantly higher for tenants (64%) compared to leaseholders (59%).

## Slough providing a home that is safe and secure



**67%**  
satisfied

**19%**  
dissatisfied

Satisfaction was significantly higher for tenants (69%) compared to leaseholders (48%).

# The repairs service



## Repairs and maintenance service

51% satisfied    35% dissatisfied

2019: 60% satisfied

Satisfaction has fallen significantly by 9%-points.

Satisfaction was significantly higher for tenants (53%) compared to leaseholders (26%).



## Osborne's customer services

54% satisfied    31% dissatisfied

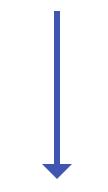
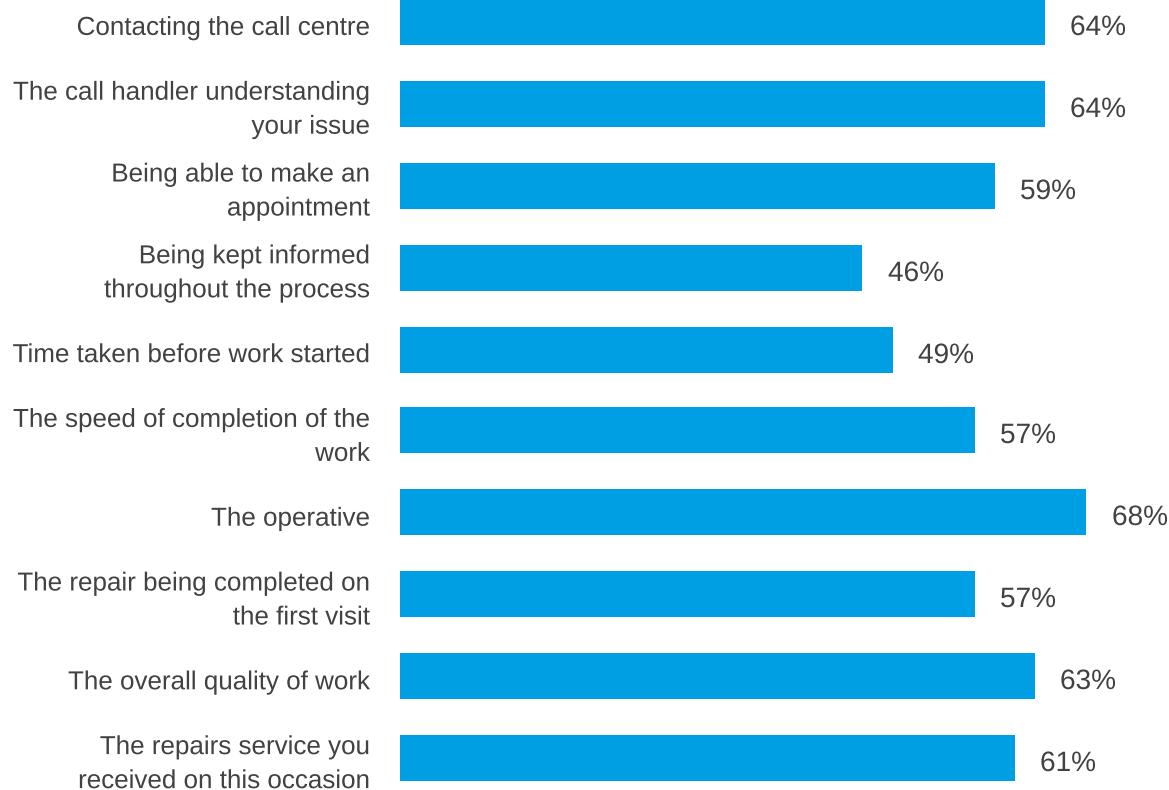
2019: 64% satisfied

Satisfaction has fallen significantly by 10%-points.

Satisfaction was significantly higher for tenants (56%) compared to leaseholders (25%).

## Satisfaction with the repairs journey

To understand the satisfaction that residents have at different points of the repairs journey, they were asked to think back to their last repair and how satisfied they were with various aspects of the service: from the original contact with the call centre, through to the time taken before work started and then the actual repair work (e.g. the operative and quality of work).



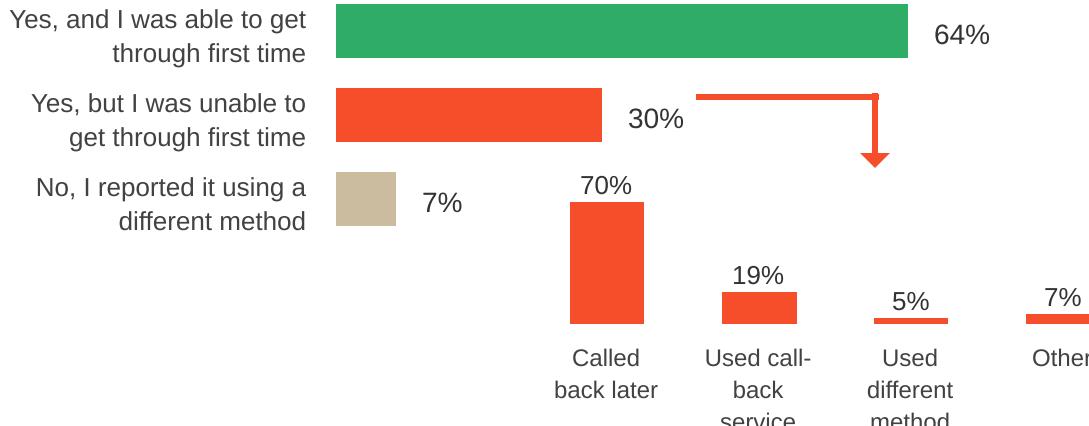
# The repairs service



**83%** were shown proof of identity the last time they had a repair carried out

In order to understand residents' behaviour when reporting a repair, they were asked if they reported their last repair by telephone and if so, if they were able to get through first time. Results show that 93% of residents reported their last repair by telephone and, of those, 64% were able to get through first time.

Those residents that were unable to get through first time were then asked what action they took. The majority called back later.



All residents were asked how the repairs and maintenance service could be improved.

A total of 1,216 valid comments were left. All comments have been grouped into themes and the top 6 are shown in the table.



	Count	% of residents
Quicker/ more responsive	461	38%
Better customer service	448	37%
Improved communication	406	33%
Better quality work	304	25%
Time taken	277	23%
Outstanding repair work	253	21%

# Your neighbourhood and estate services

## Neighbourhood as a place to live

74% satisfied    15% dissatisfied

2019: 74% satisfied

Satisfaction is consistent with the 2019 score.

Satisfaction was significantly higher for tenants (75%) compared to leaseholders (58%).

## Overall appearance of the neighbourhood

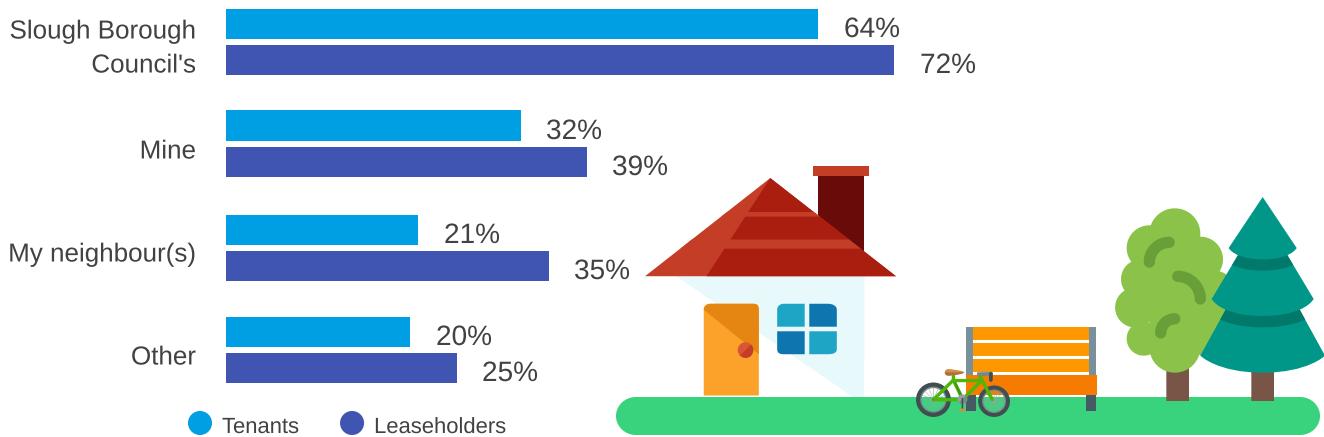
67% satisfied    20% dissatisfied

2019: 65% satisfied

Satisfaction has risen a little since 2019.

Satisfaction was significantly higher for tenants (69%) compared to leaseholders (47%).

Residents were asked whose responsibility they think it is to **keep their neighbourhood clean and tidy**. The majority felt this was Slough Borough Council's (65%), with a third (33%) taking ownership themselves.



45% of residents said they receive a **caretaking and cleaning service**



### Frequency of cleaning

63% satisfied    24% dissatisfied

2019: 67% satisfied

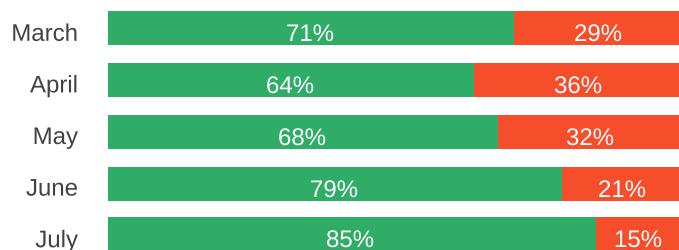
### Standard of cleaning

59% satisfied    27% dissatisfied

2019: 67% satisfied

All residents who receive a cleaning service were also asked if their block was cleaned between March and July, **during the first national lockdown** as a result of the coronavirus pandemic.

The majority continued to receive their cleaning service.



# Contact and communication



## Being kept informed

57% satisfied    18% dissatisfied  
2019: 70% satisfied

Satisfaction has fallen significantly by 13%-points.

Satisfaction was significantly higher for tenants (58%) compared to leaseholders (37%).



## Having a say in how services are managed

49% satisfied    24% dissatisfied

Satisfaction was significantly higher for tenants (51%) compared to leaseholders (28%).  
43% of leaseholders expressed dissatisfaction.



**60%** of residents said they had **contacted Housing Services in the last 12 months**

Residents that had been in touch were asked to rate their satisfaction with different aspects of getting in touch.



62%                      15%                      23%                      Helpfulness of staff



54%                      13%                      33%                      Ease of getting hold of the right person



53%                      13%                      34%                      Time taken to answer query



51%                      14%                      34%                      Ability of staff to deal with query quickly and efficiently



51%                      13%                      36%                      Final outcome of query

● Satisfied    ● Neither    ● Dissatisfied



In line with having a say in how services are managed, residents were then asked if they were aware of the Resident Board - one of the ways tenant and leaseholders can get involved in decision making and being responsible for co-regulating and scrutinising the Housing Service.

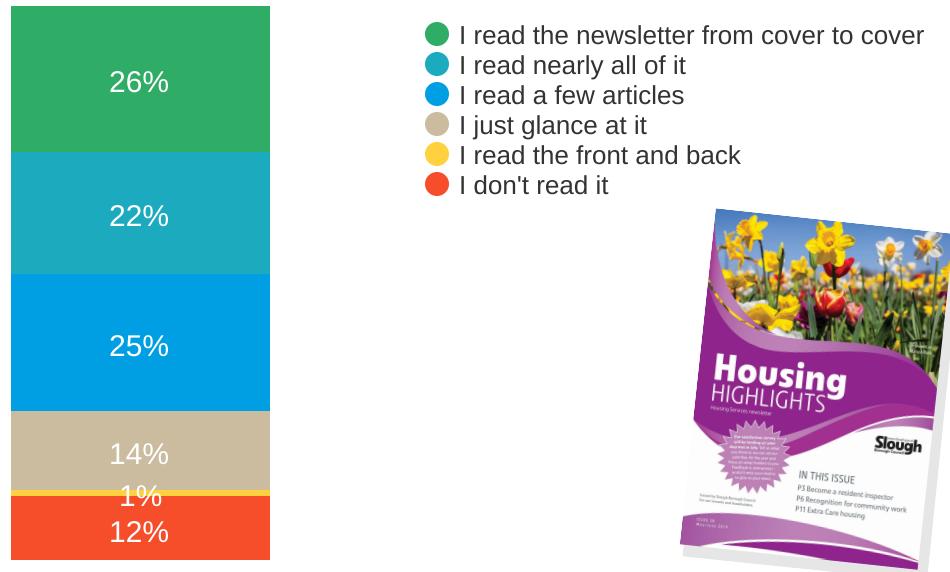


**33%** of residents said they were **aware of the Resident Board**

**18%** of residents said they were **interesting in becoming involved with the Resident Board**

# Housing Highlights and service charges for leaseholders

In 2019, Slough Borough Council changed their newsletter from Streets Ahead to Housing Highlights. To understand how much of the newsletter is read by residents, they were given a list of statements and asked to select which one they most agree with.



Leaseholders were asked an additional question about their level of satisfaction with the ease of understanding their service charge statement and the information about how their service charge is calculated.



● Very satisfied   ● Fairly satisfied   ● Neither   ● Fairly dissatisfied   ● Very dissatisfied

# Priorities for the future

Residents were asked what they think should be the Council's top three priorities for their neighbourhood over the next year. All comments have been grouped into themes and the top priorities are presented in the table below.

Most comments (38%) were residents stating that there is nothing or they don't know what Slough should prioritise. Beyond that, the next most common theme was about the cleanliness and upkeep of external areas, such as grounds maintenance, littering and dog fouling - 18% of residents felt this should be a priority.



	Count	% of residents
Nothing / Don't know	799	38%
External areas/ grounds maintenance/ neighbourhood appearance / littering / dog fouling / road sweeping	384	18%
Safety and security (e.g. a safer neighbourhood, street lighting, install CCTVs, better locks, more policing)	285	13%
Car parking	267	13%
Crime / ASB / neighbour issues / drug dealing	267	13%
Improvement / maintenance of property standards (e.g. replacing windows, new bathrooms, sort out damp/mould, guttering)	218	10%
Communal cleaning (e.g. internal areas, window cleaning)	122	6%
Repairs and maintenance - Appointments/ speed	108	5%
Communication / views taken into account / follow-up on complaints	104	5%
Repairs and maintenance - Quality	97	5%
Fly tipping	73	3%
Look after older / vulnerable people	63	3%
Road safety / traffic congestion / speeding	61	3%
Maintenance / improvement on communal areas, neighbourhood, open spaces	60	3%
Regular bin collections / better service including recycling / more bins in neighbourhood	50	2%
More or better services for children / young people (e.g. more sports clubs, improve or more children's play areas, mental health service)	46	2%
Condition of roads / pavements	44	2%
Advice and support to residents / local businesses	41	2%
Bin areas/stores - cleanliness or improvement	34	2%

# Results by ward

In order to compare differences in satisfaction by ward, satisfaction scores for the key questions have been presented in the table below. The top 3 and bottom 3 satisfaction scores have been highlighted.

	Overall service provided	Overall quality of home	Slough provides a home that is safe and secure	Slough is easy to deal with	Repairs and maintenance service	Neighbourhood as a place to live	Listening to what you say and responding to you
Baylis and Stoke (n=157)	65%	65%	73%	61%	57%	79%	62%
Britwell and Northborough (n=469)	58%	60%	65%	48%	48%	68%	49%
Central (n=99)	65%	71%	66%	52%	58%	71%	56%
Chalvey (n=104)	56%	69%	69%	61%	53%	66%	57%
Cippenham Green (n=103)	56%	65%	63%	54%	49%	82%	49%
Cippenham Meadows (n=94)	64%	71%	70%	54%	57%	70%	53%
Elliman (n=70)	54%	73%	64%	42%	54%	66%	43%
Farnham (n=69)	58%	66%	63%	46%	58%	77%	48%
Foxborough (n=140)	66%	74%	71%	53%	49%	73%	54%
Haymill and Lynch Hill (n=197)	54%	69%	64%	48%	49%	82%	49%
Langley Kedermister (n=294)	58%	63%	66%	49%	52%	72%	50%
Langley St Mary's (n=109)	49%	61%	62%	46%	50%	78%	42%
Upton (n=27)*	44%	56%	56%	42%	19%	59%	54%
Wexham Lea (n=179)	64%	71%	74%	48%	55%	86%	51%

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# TENANT AND LEASEHOLDER SATISFACTION SURVEY 2020



## Foreword from the Resident Board:

The Resident Board took a particular interest in this year's satisfaction survey as this is an area of particular interest to us. We paid attention to the way that M•E•L were commissioned, the questions included in the survey and how your feedback was analysed and presented. We wanted to hear all feedback, whether good or bad, so we know where things are ok and where more attention is needed. We will take what you have told us and use this to prioritise our work moving forwards to improve things. This is the only way things will change. The council is currently going through a transformation process that will see a significant change in the way that services are delivered. Your feedback will be critical in helping us to make sure that the changes deliver what you expect and need from your Housing Service.

Thank you to everyone who took the time to complete the survey. If you did not and you want to add anything to the feedback shown below, you can contact the Resident Board via Anita Jan: [anita.jan@slough.gov.uk](mailto:anita.jan@slough.gov.uk).

All **7,164** residents were invited to take part.

**2,113** completed questionnaires were returned.  
A 29% response rate.



**59%**

were satisfied with the overall service provided by Slough's Housing Service

2019: 70% satisfied

**74%**

were satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live

2019: 74% satisfied



**66%**

were satisfied with the overall quality of their home

2019: 75% satisfied



**54%**

were satisfied that SBC treats residents fairly

2019: 66% satisfied

**51%**

were satisfied that SBC listens to what they say and responds to them

2019: 56% satisfied

**50%**

were satisfied that SBC is easy to deal with

# THE REPAIRS SERVICE



were satisfied with the repairs and maintenance service delivered by Osborne Property Services  
2019: 60% satisfied



were satisfied with Osborne's customer services  
2019: 64% satisfied

## Improvements for the repairs service

Quicker/ more responsive

Improved communication

Better customer service

Better quality work

## Residents were most satisfied with...

The operative **68%**

Contacting the call centre **64%**

The call handler understanding their issue **64%**

The overall quality of work **63%**



**94%** of residents reported their last repair by telephone - **64%** got through first time, **30%** were unable to get through

**70%** of those unable to get through called back later

**19%** used the call back service

# NEIGHBOURHOOD AND ESTATE SERVICES



were satisfied with the overall appearance of their neighbourhood  
2019: 65% satisfied



**45%** of residents had a caretaking and cleaning service



were satisfied with how often their block is cleaned  
2019: 67% satisfied



were satisfied with the standard of cleaning  
2019: 64% satisfied



# CONTACT AND COMMUNICATION



were satisfied with Slough keeping them informed about things that might affect them as a resident  
2019: 70% satisfied



were satisfied with Slough giving them a say in how services are managed

**60%** of residents said they had contacted Housing Services in the last 12 months



**62%** were satisfied with the helpfulness of staff

**54%** were satisfied with the ease of getting hold of the right person

**53%** were satisfied with the time taken to answer their query

**51%** were satisfied with the ability of staff to deal with their query quickly and efficiently

**51%** were satisfied with the final outcome of their query

**SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:** Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel

**DATE:** 9<sup>th</sup> February 2021

**CONTACT OFFICER:** Tom Overend, Policy Insight Manager  
**(For all Enquiries)** (01753) 875657

**WARD(S):** All

**PART I**  
**FOR DECISION****HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPING TASK & FINISH GROUP****1. Purpose of Report**

To update the Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel on the findings of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Task & Finish Group.

**2. Recommendation**

That the panel endorse the recommendations of the task and finish group, as laid out in section 5.3.

**3. The Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy, the JSNA and the Five Year Plan****3a. Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy Priorities**

The work of the task and finish group relates to priority three of the SJWS for 2020-25 – Strong, Healthy and Attractive Neighbourhoods.

Housing is often identified as an important co-determinant of health, as the quality of housing will have a strong impact on an individual's health and wellbeing.

**3b. Five Year Plan Outcomes**

Reducing homelessness and rough sleeping in Slough will have a major impact on the delivery of the fourth priority outcome of the Five Year Plan – our residents will live in good quality homes.

**4. Other Implications****(a) Financial**

It is anticipated that the majority of the recommendations are able to be implemented within existing budgets.

The proposed alternative giving scheme is anticipated to require between £3,000 - £5,000 to set up, the funding of which would need to be agreed with the Business Improvement District.

There may be further financial implications, depending on what course of action is taken by officers to implement the recommendations.

(b) Risk Management

Risk assessments may need to be conducted by officers as necessary in the implementation of the task and finish group's recommendations.

(c) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

There are no anticipated legal implications for adopting the recommendations. Legal assessments may need to be conducted by officers as necessary in the implementation of the task and finish group's recommendations.

(d) Equalities Impact Assessment

Should the implementation of the recommendations necessitate such an exercise, it will be carried out as required.

(e) Workforce

The implementation of the recommendations will require significant staff time and support from senior leaders.

## 5. Supporting Information

### 5.1 Terms of reference

The terms of reference for the task and finish group were approved by the Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel, at its meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2020:

To investigate and make recommendations in relation to SBC's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Prevention strategies, with specific reference to:

- Identification and reporting
- Support provision
- Engagement and communication

### 5.2 Membership

The task and finish group was chaired by Cllr Zaffar Ajaib, supported by the following members:

- Cllr Christine Hulme (Chair, Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel)
- Cllr Harjinder Minhas
- Cllr Waqas Sabah

Stuart Adnitt, Outreach Team Leader, Slough Borough Council also joined the task and finish group to provide officer support and assist the group in forming its recommendations.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

The task and finish group, feel that the council and partners should focus on the areas listed below over the next year. Within these areas, the group would also wish to propose a number of specific actions it feels will be most effective:

#### **Strategic Partnerships, Collaboration & Funding**

- The Strategic Partnerships workstream of the Our Futures programme should consider establishing a new strategic board or group, bringing together the various organisations providing services to rough sleepers and homeless people in Slough, to:
  - co-ordinate strategy;
  - identify emerging issues early;
  - ensure accountability;
  - explore opportunities for additional funding; and
  - raise the profile of the issues
- As part of the localities strategy, SBC should also explore opportunities for these partners to operate alongside SBC teams, out of the new hubs and other SBC premises, building on other examples of the co-location of services currently being explored by the council.
- SBC should work with the Business Improvement District to explore the viability of an alternative giving scheme in Slough.

#### **Communications**

- The new Associate Director for Community should establish a plan for reviewing and enhancing external communications to improve awareness of where to get help, what type of support is available and how to apply for it, bearing in mind the challenges some clients face in regard to language, literacy and access to the internet.
- This plan should, ideally, include a public directory of services and named SBC contacts for partner organisations.

#### **Commissioning, complex needs and supply**

- SBC should form a task group of officers from the housing, benefits and commissioning teams to review the commissioning of accommodation for specific client groups with complex needs –and develop proposals.
- SBC should explore opportunities for using James Elliman Homes, section 106 payments, compulsory purchase orders and void stock to acquire accommodation for this group.

## **Health and mental health**

- Collaboration between the Community Mental Health team and the Housing Team needs to be improved and an action plan established to reduce waiting times and improve referral processes.
- SBC should work with the CCG to investigate the viability of piloting the Health Outreach Liaison Team (HOLT) model in Slough, which has been effective in West Berkshire.

## **Skills and strengths**

- SBC and partners should consider how a strength-based model for supporting homeless people and rough sleepers might be developed, to help them lead their own recovery, gain confidence and improve their networks.
- There may be chances to work with One Slough to identify volunteering placements for clients or generate opportunities through Social Return on Investment.

## **Localities and customer services**

- Once the new localities strategy has had an opportunity to bed in, SBC should evaluate how effective it has been in:
  - enabling homeless residents and rough sleepers to access support
  - helping customer services staff rapidly identify those at risk of homelessness and guide them to necessary support or action

## **Safety**

- The council should review the recent incident of violence against a female rough sleeper (see findings), and consider whether further action, either by SBC or by partners, can be taken in future to protect vulnerable rough sleepers.

## **6. Comments of Other Committees**

This report is yet to be seen by any other committee.

## **7. Conclusion**

This report details the recommendations of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Task & Finish Group, and seeks the panel's endorsement.

## **8. Appendices Attached**

'A'      Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Task & Finish Group

## **9. Background Papers**

'1'      Agenda and minutes, Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel Thursday, 22nd October, 2020

# Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Task & Finish Group

Findings of Task and Finish Group  
commissioned by the Neighbourhoods and  
Community Services Scrutiny Panel

October 2020 – January 2021

## **Contents**

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## Preface

In the summer of 2020, Slough Borough Council's Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel decided to investigate the growing issue of homelessness and rough sleeping in Slough. This was mainly due to concerns over the persistent nature of the problem in Slough and with the potential increase in the numbers, as more and more people were expected to lose their jobs because of COVID and the anticipated winding down of government support schemes. I am pleased to commend our report, which brings this inquiry to a close at this stage.

Due to the COVID restrictions, all the investigative work has been done via virtual meetings and conference calls.

We are very grateful to the Slough Borough Councillors and partner organisations (detailed on pages 11-12) who contributed to our work to date - whether through the virtual meetings or through submitting written evidence. We would like to extend our special thanks to Browns and their clients who were brave enough to take the time to share their stories and experiences with us.

Our investigations highlighted several areas of concerns around identification and reporting, current support provision in place, and overall engagement and communications. To address these and other issues, we have made several recommendations in the report below to the council leadership. It is our hope that all these will be endorsed by Slough Borough Council, and that an action programme is put in place to ensure progress in their implementation, which will greatly assist in addressing the key issues and drivers behind homelessness and rough sleeping in Slough.

**Cllr Zaffar Ajaib  
Chair  
Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Task and Finish Group**



## **Terms of reference**

To investigate and make recommendations in relation to SBC's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Prevention strategies, with specific reference to:

- Identification and reporting
- Support provision
- Engagement and communication

## **Membership**

The task and finish group was chaired by Cllr Zaffar Ajaib, supported by the following members:

- Cllr Christine Hulme (Chair, Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel)
- Cllr Harjinder Minhas
- Cllr Waqas Sabah

Stuart Adnitt, Outreach Team Leader, Slough Borough Council also joined the Task and Finish group to provide officer support and assist the group in forming its recommendations.

## **Background**

In the summer of 2020, the NCS Scrutiny Panel decided to investigate the issue of homelessness and rough sleeping in the borough. This was mainly driven by concerns over the persistent nature of the problem in Slough and the potential increase in numbers that was anticipated - with more people expected to lose their jobs because of COVID and the anticipated winding down of the furlough scheme.

SBC has developed a Homelessness Prevention Strategy, which was updated in June 2019 and gives an overview of our existing services for the homeless and rough sleepers. It also outlines the initiatives the council has in place to prevent homelessness as well as the risks, challenges and opportunities the council have.

## **Summary of recommendations and proposed areas for consideration**

The task and finish group feel that the council and partners should focus on the areas listed below over the next year. Within these areas, the group would also wish to propose a number of specific actions it feels will be most effective.

The rationale behind these recommendations is laid out in the Findings section.

### **Strategic Partnerships, Collaboration & Funding**

- The Strategic Partnerships workstream of the Our Futures programme should consider establishing a new strategic board or group, bringing together the various organisations providing services to rough sleepers and homeless people in Slough, to:
  - co-ordinate strategy;
  - identify emerging issues early;
  - ensure accountability;
  - explore opportunities for additional funding; and
  - raise the profile of the issues
- As part of the localities strategy, SBC should also explore opportunities for these partners to operate alongside SBC teams, out of the new hubs and other SBC premises, building on other examples of the co-location of services currently being explored by the council.
- SBC should work with the Business Improvement District to explore the viability of an alternative giving scheme in Slough.

### **Communications**

- The new Associate Director for Community should establish a plan for reviewing and enhancing external communications to improve awareness of where to get help, what type of support is available and how to apply for it, bearing in mind the challenges some clients face in regard to language, literacy and access to the internet.
- This plan should, ideally, include a public directory of services and named SBC contacts for partner organisations.

### **Commissioning, complex needs and supply**

- SBC should form a task group of officers from the housing, benefits and commissioning teams to review the commissioning of accommodation for specific client groups with complex needs – and develop proposals.
- SBC should explore opportunities for using James Elliman Homes, section 106 payments, compulsory purchase orders and void stock to acquire accommodation for this group.

### **Health and mental health**

- Collaboration between the Community Mental Health team and the Housing Team needs to be improved and an action plan established to reduce waiting times and improve referral processes.
- SBC should work with the CCG to investigate the viability of piloting the Health Outreach Liaison Team (HOLT) model in Slough, which has been effective in West Berkshire.

## **Skills and strengths**

- SBC and partners should consider how a strength-based model for supporting homeless people and rough sleepers might be developed, to help them lead their own recovery, gain confidence and improve their networks.
- There may be chances to work with One Slough to identify volunteering placements for clients or generate opportunities through Social Return on Investment.

## **Localities and customer services**

- Once the new localities strategy has had an opportunity to bed in, SBC should evaluate how effective it has been in:
  - enabling homeless residents and rough sleepers to access support
  - helping customer services staff rapidly identify those at risk of homelessness and guide them to necessary support or action

## **Safety**

- The council should review the recent incident of violence against a female rough sleeper (see findings), and consider whether further action, either by SBC or by partners, can be taken in future to protect vulnerable rough sleepers.

# **Findings**

## **Strategic Partnerships, Collaboration & Funding**

The lack of effective collaboration and co-ordination between different organisations in Slough was a theme which ran throughout many of the task and finish group's meetings - both with SBC officers and external organisations.

There is an informal forum currently in place. However, several of the charities, housing associations and other partners the group spoke to expressed concerns that this forum is not strategic enough in nature, and SBC officers raised apprehensions about its effectiveness.

The issue of homelessness and rough sleeping does not feature prominently in any of the statutory partnership boards that SBC currently participates in. Housing was listed as a key priority in the previous Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy; however this was replaced in the 2020-2025 iteration.<sup>1</sup>

The success of One Slough throughout the COVID 19 crisis presents an opportunity for re-setting partnership working in this area, and filling this identified gap.

The group felt that a new strategic board or group, with a single strategy, was needed in order to strengthen working relationships and ensure that there was sufficient leadership across different agencies. This might be looked at through the partnerships workstream of the Our Futures programme.

Such a group could also become a vehicle for sharing intelligence and data, identifying emerging issues and challenges to support prevention, and allowing for collaboration in the pursuit of future sources of much needed funding.

The Government is yet to respond to its consultation on structures that support partnership working and accountability in homelessness services.<sup>2</sup> By taking pre-emptive steps in this area, SBC and its partners might be better placed to respond to any future changes in this area of policy.

Accommodation and co-location was also raised as an issue for partnership working. The group was informed that there are several organisations operating in this field that are willing to provide services in SBC premises and community centres. However, under current policy, SBC would charge such groups. For example, it was reported to the Task and Finish Group, that one community group were asked to pay between £40,000 - £50,000 annually to use SBC's Britwell Hub. This was eventually reduced to £25,000 a year, however this level of charge might still be prohibitive for other organisations, and would mean that more time would need to be spent on fundraising, instead of providing services.

SBC is currently exploring opportunities through the localities strategy for other partners, such as the NHS, to operate under the same roof. It may be fruitful for SBC to consider whether a similar approach might be taken for services provided to homeless and rough sleeper clients.

Finally, representatives of the Business Improvement District recommended that Slough explore the possibility of establishing an alternative giving scheme in the town centre, an approach which has been adopted by other local authorities nationally. It was estimated that such a scheme would require between £3,000 - £5,000 to set up, but could then enable residents to donate to local charities, instead of giving money to people on the streets.

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<sup>1</sup> Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy 2020-2025

<sup>2</sup> Tackling homelessness together <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/tackling-homelessness-together>

## **Communications**

Throughout its investigations, the task and finish group were pleased to note the many initiatives and the range of activity undertaken by SBC teams in regards to homelessness and rough sleeping. There was however a consensus amongst communications officers, operational teams and external organisations that more could be done to raise awareness of this work.

Several witnesses expressed concerns that it can be very hard for people to find information on what support is available, and where and how this can be accessed. The group heard that these challenges can be exacerbated by a lack of access to the internet, or by language barriers. Some charities also expressed concerns that the closure of Landmark Place could present further challenges over the coming years.

In addition, in most meetings the Task and Finish group held with external organisations, the lack of a named contact at SBC was identified as an important issue. Those interviewed expressed frustrations at the difficulties this can cause when different agencies are referring clients between them, with the risk of people falling through the cracks and missing out on support.

For example, Trinity have reported difficulties in following up their clients' correspondence on housing benefits, and have flagged the potential risk of them missing their payments. The DWP also raised challenges in following up the result of referrals, in order to verify statements that their clients have made.

The task and finish group felt that these issues could be readily addressed through an updated directory of services and officers, that could be provided to all key partners, once the restructure was complete.

While members did not feel they could make further specific recommendations in terms of communication priorities, the group felt that the new Associate Director for Community could work with the communications team to review all comms activities in this area, and develop an action plan for enhancing them.

Members also felt that a communications campaign on available services may be able to help tackle some of the stigma associated with homelessness, which research has shown can deter individuals from accessing support, such as healthcare.<sup>3</sup>

## **Commissioning, complex needs and supply**

Housing officers informed the task and finish group that the current provision of housing is not enough to support those rough sleepers or homeless households with complex needs, and that more targeted support is needed once someone has been housed.

The group heard that there were difficulties in supporting clients with mental health challenges, those with issues around drugs or alcohol, those who have experienced trauma and ex-offenders.

The group were also informed that there was a particular challenge with the provision of accommodation for those aged 16-17.

A 'floating service' has recently been recommissioned by SBC, which seeks to ensure that people are supported to stay in their accommodation. However, the task and finish group heard that the current KPIs of this contract do not incentivise providers to focus on those with the most complex issues.

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<sup>3</sup> Big Issue, Homelessness stigma stops people accessing healthcare even when housed, January 2020

There was also recognition, from both commissioning and housing officers, that improved collaboration was necessary.

While it is anticipated that the Our Futures programme will remove historical silos and enable the development of more strategic approaches, the group felt that it might be necessary to form a task group of senior officers from across the housing, benefits and commissioning teams to review this area urgently and to develop an holistic approach, in light of the potential challenges in this area arising from COVID.

The task and finish group would like to see this task group explore creative solutions for acquiring supported accommodation for this group, such as using James Elliman Homes, section 106 payments, compulsory purchase orders and void stock.

### **Health and mental health**

Throughout its investigations, the task and finish group frequently heard of the particular challenges homeless clients and rough sleepers experience in accessing mental health support. The group were informed that it is not uncommon for people to have to wait 18 months to see a specialist.

All of the clients of Browns that the group interviewed had experienced difficulties in getting the necessary support from the community mental health team, and several of the external organisations spoken to raised issues with the referral system.

The task and finish group were informed that there is supposed to a dedicated worker within the community mental health team to liaise with housing officers, but that this is not happening.

The group felt that urgent action needs to be taken to improve collaboration between SBCs housing teams and the community mental health team, and to reduce waiting times for access to these vital services.

In its meeting with the clinical support team, the task and finish group were informed of the Health Outreach Liaison Team (HOLT) model that has been adopted in West Berkshire, which has proved effective in providing mental and physical health support via regular clinics for those who struggle to access mainstream health services. It was agreed that it would be worth exploring the viability of piloting this approach in Slough, as a means of improving access to this type of support.

### **Skills and strengths**

Throughout its interviews with clients, the task and finish group heard about the challenges former rough sleepers can face in rebuilding their lives and accessing work. Most were not ready to enter the labour market.

However, most people we spoke to had hobbies and interests that they would like to build on, which would help build their confidence and involve them in positive activity. For example, one man the group spoke to had a particular interest in gardening and would be keen to work on an allotment or in Slough's parks.

According research from Crisis, 61% of homeless service users classify as 'lonely', 'three times the proportion of over 52s in the UK, a group most associated with being most lonely in society', and 37% reported 'often' feeling isolated and lacking companionship.<sup>4</sup> The group felt that generating opportunities for positive activity would provide clients with new support networks, while building their

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<sup>4</sup> Crisis, '*I was all on my own': experiences of loneliness and isolation amongst homeless people*, December 2015

self-esteem. According to Homeless Link, activities are also important in preventing the boredom that may lead people to turn back to the streets, or to alcohol or drugs.

The task and finish group would like to recommend that the council explores options for expanding strengths-based practice for our homeless and rough sleeper clients, building our interventions around the individual.

The group also felt that there may possibilities to build on SBC's work with One Slough to identify volunteering placements for clients, and to use commissioning to generate opportunities through Social Return on Investment.

In addition, Homeless Link are looking for local authority commissioning teams to be involved in the development of a new Strengths-Based Practice Toolkit, which may present an opportunity for the council.<sup>5</sup>

### **Localities and customer services**

As discussed previously, the task and finish group heard concerns regarding the closure of Landmark Place, and fears that rough sleepers and those at risk of homelessness would now find it harder to access available support.

Specific concerns were raised around the possibility of security staff at locality hubs turning away those in need of urgent support who didn't have an appointment, or that the customer services staff operating out of hubs would not be able to recognise someone at risk of becoming homeless. However, the task and finish group were assured that training is being put in place to prevent this from happening.

Members of the task and finish group also felt that it will be important for the opening hours for the new community hubs, and any out of office services created, to be developed in a way which allows rough sleepers, many of whom have chaotic lives, to easily access services.

The task and finish group understands that it is too early to assess how effectively the localities approach will support homeless and rough sleeper clients in accessing services. However, the group felt that it will be important that this be properly evaluated after a suitable period, to ensure these vulnerable groups are rapidly supported.

### **Safety**

In January, the Task and Finish Group were informed of a report from Slough Homeless Our Concern (SHOC) that a young homeless woman had been seriously assaulted on the streets, after her application for emergency accommodation was delayed over a weekend.

While it would not be appropriate to raise specifics in this report, without the opportunity for officers to comment on the case, SHOC also raised concerns around further instances when other potentially-vulnerable single women were not provided with same-day accommodation.

The task and finish group would like to recommend that SBC officers investigate the facts behind such incidences and ensure that all is being done, by both SBC and partners, to ensure the safety of rough sleepers, as far as is practicable.

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<sup>5</sup> Homeless Link, *Stepping Forward with Strengths-Based Practice*, October 2020

<https://www.homeless.org.uk/connect/blogs/2020/oct/26/stepping-forward-with-strengths-based-practice>

## List of Meetings and Events

The following meetings were held by the Task & Finish Group:

Date	Meeting
09.10.2020	Slough Borough Council Housing Officers
13.10.2020	Slough Borough Council Parks and Open Spaces Team
13.10.2020	Slough Borough Council Resilience and Enforcement Team
19.10.2020	Slough Borough Council Commissioning Team
20.10.2020	Slough Borough Council Communications Team
26.10.2020	Slough Business Improvement District
27.10.2020	Department for Work and Pensions
28.10.2020	Homelessness Clinical Support Team
28.10.2020	Slough Charities
03.11.2020	One Slough (Ketan Gandhi)
05.11.2020	Thames Valley Police
10.11.2020	One Slough (Ketan Gandhi)
12.11.2020	Housing Associations
20.11.2020	Britwell Hub Officers

The Task and Finish Group also held a series of interviews with clients from Browns throughout November 2020.

## Acknowledgements

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### Slough Borough Council:

Stuart Adnitt	Outreach Team Leader
Ian Blake	Resilience & Enforcement Team Manager
Helen Buckland	Risk and Exploitation Co-ordinator
Ketan Gandhi	Associate Director, Place Regulation & One Slough
Debra Gilbert	Temporary Accommodation Manager
Ian Judd	Parks Officer
Amanda Kuwana	Housing Needs Officer
Gerald Pleace	Parks & Open Spaces Manager
Ray Prosper	Customer Service Officer
Julie Render	Housing Demand Manager
Difaf Sharba	Policy Insight Analyst
Jane Senior	Associate Director, People Strategy and Commissioning
Anne Stavrou	Allocations Team Manager
Victoria Tutty	Commissioning Project Manager

### External Organisations:

Yasmin Baig	Shelter
Sharon Ballantyne	NHS East Berkshire CCG
Valerie Bruce	L&Q Group
Craig Buckley	Slough Business Improvement Trust
Alan Buckley	Berkshire Healthcare NHS Trust
Seb Byrne	Berkshire Healthcare NHS Trust
Shin Dhothen	Slough Outreach
Simon Dorney	A2Dominion
Charlotte Dubisson	Paradigm Housing
Angeline Gore	Browns
Steve Hedley	Slough Homeless Our Concern (SHOC)
Rebecca Hewitt	NHS East Berkshire CCG
Jeremy Hutchings	L&Q Group
Hanna Irfan	Catalyst Housing
Sobia Khan	Browns
Jessica Lath	Browns
Tracy Lupton	Paradigm Housing
Mandy McGuire"	Slough Homeless Our Concern (SHOC)
Lisa Meader	Browns
Inspector Neil Misselbrook	Thames Valley Police
John Power	The London and Slough Run
Nick Robert	Windsor Homeless Project
Andrea Rose	Department for Work and Pensions
Dr Kamaljeet Samra	Clarence Medical Centre and East Berkshire Out of Hours service
Claudete Sirqueira	LookAhead
Mike Wooldridge	NHS East Berkshire CCG