



Local authority tenant satisfaction in 2008

Results from local authority STATUS surveys



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Hal Pawson and Filip Sosenko
Heriot-Watt University

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Department for Communities and Local Government

Department for Communities and Local Government
Eland House
Bressenden Place
London
SW1E 5DU
Telephone: 030 3444 0000
Website: www.communities.gov.uk

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Introduction

Background

In 2007, as part of a new performance reporting framework introduced for local authorities in England, the then government defined a new set of national indicators (NIs)¹. Incorporated within this new framework was NI 160 – local authority tenants' satisfaction with landlord services. This carried forward the periodic measurement of tenant satisfaction previously incorporated under the former best value performance indicator regime as BVPI 74 and BVPI 75.

Under the specific guidance on NI 160² local housing authorities retaining a landlord role were required to commission surveys of tenants of general needs housing only, using the STATUS survey methodology (see below) with the fieldwork being scheduled within a specified timeslot. The first round of NI 160 surveys were undertaken within the five months from 1 June 2008.

In addition to gauging tenants' overall satisfaction with their landlord, the surveys researched tenant views on a range of more specific housing management and neighbourhood quality issues.

Drawing on the national dataset of some 201,000 survey responses in relation to 182 local authorities, this report sets out national and regional results on NI 160 and on several other questions included in the survey.

Survey scope and methodology

The survey remit was the 184 local housing authorities retaining a landlord role, including those with arms-length management organisations (ALMOs), in autumn 2008. In the event, five authorities failed to participate. For four of these, data collected via the last BVPI survey (in 2006-07) has been substituted for the purpose of analysis in this report. This was not possible for the Isles of Scilly.

A rigorous programme of data quality checks also revealed a small number of local authority batches which appeared potentially problematic (e.g. in relation to high rates of non-response on key questions). Again, while it was possible in three cases to substitute 2006-07 data for the relevant authorities, this proved impossible for Mid Devon because of non-participation in the 2006-07 survey. Hence, the regional and national figures set out in this report are based on results from the 2008 surveys for 179 local housing authorities, and 2006/07 results for three. The results as reported here therefore cover 182 of the 184 local authorities retaining a landlord role in autumn 2008 (including those with ALMOs) with no results for Isles of Scilly and Mid Devon. Further details of the ways that allowance was made for missing or questionable data are set out in Annex 1.

¹ CLG (2007); *The New Performance Framework for Local Authorities & Local Authority Partnerships: Single Set of National Indicators* London: CLG <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/localgovernment/pdf/505713.pdf>

² NHF (2007) *Carrying out STATUS for Local Authorities and ALMOs – Short Guidance*; http://www.housing.org.uk/Uploads/File/PolicyBriefings/LA-ALMO_guidance.pdf; National Housing Federation (2008) *Running STATUS : a guide to undertaking the standardised tenant satisfaction survey.*, 2nd ed. London: NHF

In line with the STATUS guidance for local authorities and ALMOs, surveys were undertaken via postal self-completion questionnaires based on the standard template produced by the National Housing Federation³. Typically, authorities commissioned survey fieldwork and data processing from market research contractors. Approximately one authority in ten, however, managed its survey in-house.

Including the 2006-07 batches incorporated within the analysis to allow for missing or questionable data, the national dataset included 201,425 valid cases - i.e. survey responses considered sufficiently complete for inclusion. On average, therefore, the number of valid cases per local authority batch was 1,113. However, the range was 412 to 4,863, with a median value of 918.

Collectively, the adjusted response rate (i.e. allowing for addresses found ineligible) recorded by participating local authorities was 41.7 per cent. However, the median local authority value was 44.3 per cent, and more than a quarter of authorities (28 per cent) recorded adjusted response rates in excess of 50 per cent⁴.

For the purposes of deriving aggregate results - e.g. at the regional and national level - it was necessary to apply a local authority-specific weighting regime. This was to ensure the appropriate representation of each authority batch within the weighted sample such that this was truly proportionate to that authority's share of the national population of council tenants. Further details of weighting procedures are set out in Appendix 1.

³ Downloadable at: http://www.housing.org.uk/Uploads/File/Services/feedback/STATUS_4NB_LAv2.pdf

⁴ These figures are drawn from an analysis of 'meta data' returns submitted by participating local authorities along with their survey data. It should be noted that such returns were forthcoming for only 159 authorities.

Survey results

Overall satisfaction with landlord services (NI 160)

Across England, three quarters of council tenants (75 per cent) were 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with the overall service provided by their authority. The comparable figure from the last round of local authority tenant satisfaction surveys (undertaken as part of the 2006-07 BVPI data collection) was also 75 per cent⁵.

As shown in Table 1, there are considerable variations at regional level. However, the main outlier here is London, where the satisfaction rate is markedly lower than the national norm. This tendency is in line with previous evidence⁶. It may be connected, in part, with the atypical housing stock and demographic profiles of council housing in London.

The 'London factor' is also apparent in Table 2 where the highest satisfaction ratings are recorded by the largely non-urban district councils. Table 3 suggests no simple relationship between ALMO status and satisfaction rates. Only among tenants of metropolitan borough councils was there any clear sign of ALMOs evoking higher satisfaction. However, it should be noted that most metropolitan boroughs which have retained ownership of housing stock have delegated management to ALMOs. Therefore, results for metropolitan boroughs continuing to manage their housing directly relate to only a small number of authorities - albeit including Birmingham, the largest municipal landlord in England.

⁵ This figure derived from the BVPI figures published for each local authority by the Audit Commission at: <http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/localgov/audit/BVPIs/Pages/200607bvpidataquartiles.aspx>, with calculation of the national figure incorporating a weighting regime representing each local authority's housing stock size (according to the same principles embodied in the weighting framework for the 2008/09 data – see Annex 1).

⁶ Pawson, H., Sosenko, F. & Ipsos MORI (2010) *Assessing Resident Satisfaction; A report for London & Quadrant Housing Group* http://www.lqgroup.org.uk/_assets/files/L&Q-report-V4.pdf

Table 1 – Satisfaction with overall landlord services by region

Region	Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Total	% satisfied	Base
	%	%	%	%	%	%		No of cases
North East	31.2	47.5	11.0	6.0	4.2	100.0	78.7	9,962
North West	36.5	43.8	9.4	6.3	4.0	100.0	80.3	16,767
Yorks & the Humber	32.0	45.7	10.8	6.5	5.0	100.0	77.7	15,847
East Midlands	30.0	46.1	10.4	8.1	5.3	100.0	76.1	26,893
West Midlands	28.0	46.9	11.4	7.9	5.8	100.0	74.9	18,611
East of England	32.3	45.3	11.7	6.5	4.2	100.0	77.6	22,009
London	23.2	43.8	14.9	9.5	8.6	100.0	67.0	35,667
South East	34.2	45.0	10.4	6.5	3.9	100.0	79.2	35,955
South West	34.9	42.6	9.4	6.6	4.3	100.0	77.5	14,346
England	30.0	45.1	11.8	7.5	5.6	100.0	75.1	196,057

Table 2 – Satisfaction with overall landlord service by local authority type

LA type	Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Total	% satisfied	Base
	%	%	%	%	%	%		No of cases
London boro	23.2	43.8	14.9	9.5	8.6	100.0	67.0	35,667
Met boro	30.1	46.1	11.6	7.0	5.3	100.0	76.2	31,967
Unitary	31.8	45.1	10.4	7.7	5.1	100.0	76.9	33,424
District	34.3	45.2	10.4	6.3	3.8	100.0	79.5	94,999
Total	30.0	45.1	11.8	7.5	5.6	100.0	75.1	196,057

Table 3 – Satisfaction with overall landlord service: by ALMO status and local authority type

LA type	ALMO	Not ALMO	All	Base
	% satisfied or very satisfied			No of cases
London boro	66.9	67.3	67.0	35,667
Met boro	77.6	70.4	76.2	31,967
Unitary	75.1	77.5	76.9	33,424
District	78.3	79.9	79.5	94,999
England	74.2	76.0	75.1	196,057

As shown in Table 4 the rate of satisfaction with overall landlord services was substantially above average among households including older people. Conversely, satisfaction rates were relatively low among family households and non-white ethnic groups.

Table 4 – Satisfaction with overall landlord service by household type and ethnic origin

Cohort	All satisfied	All dissatisfied	Base
	%	%	No of cases
All	75.1	13.1	195,176
1-2 persons aged < 60	71.6	15.2	49,103
1-2 persons, 1+ aged > 60	84.9	7.7	79,812
Family household	63.5	19.2	40,107
Other	70.9	15.1	20,003
White British	77.1	11.7	163,430
Mixed race	59.8	22.5	2,197
Asian/Asian British	67.0	17.0	4,340
Black/black British	65.3	21.0	8,472
Other	70.5	16.0	8,051

Note: Ethnic origin attribution for tenant (rather than other household members)

Satisfaction with home and neighbourhood

As shown in Table 5, tenant satisfaction with 'the overall quality of your home' is somewhat higher than for 'the general condition of this property'. The proportions of tenants 'very dissatisfied' with property quality and condition were fairly modest - see Table 5.

Table 5 – Satisfaction with home and neighbourhood

Satisfaction with...	Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Total	% <i>satisfied</i>	<i>Base</i>
	%	%	%	%	%	%		<i>No of cases</i>
Property quality	30.3	46.9	8.0	9.3	5.6	100.0	77.2	<i>191,111</i>
Property condition	23.9	48.6	9.1	12.2	6.2	100.0	72.5	<i>182,539</i>
Local neighbourhood	33.6	41.6	9.8	8.8	6.3	100.0	75.2	<i>183,135</i>

Three-quarters of tenants were satisfied with 'this neighbourhood as a place to live' - see Table 5. This compares with 80 per cent of the general population as responding in the 2008 CLG Place survey⁷. Comparing the results of the two surveys at a regional level shows that similar relationships are present in most areas of the country - i.e. neighbourhood satisfaction rates are a few percentage points lower among council tenants than the all-tenure figure. The greatest differential is for the South West where the council tenant figure shown in Table 6 - 78 per cent - compares with an all-tenure figure of 86 per cent. Bucking the trend here is the North East where the proportion of council tenants satisfied with their neighbourhood - 80 per cent - was slightly higher than the all-tenure figure - 77 per cent.

As in relation to satisfaction with landlord services, overall, London's relatively poor showing is the main feature of the regional breakdown on measures of satisfaction with the home – see Table 6. Probably relevant here is the fact that in April 2009, some 31 per cent of London's council housing remained non-compliant with the decent homes standard, with 23 per cent of homes failing the standard on disrepair (the comparable figures for England as a whole were 22 per cent and 16 per cent)⁸.

As for the previous measure, Table 6 shows relatively high rates of satisfaction for households including older people and relatively low figures for certain non-white British groups. As far as the latter are concerned, this appears to be closely connected with the regional pattern of satisfaction ratings - see Tables 1 and 6 - and the concentration of certain ethnic minority populations in London. As shown by the survey results, some 63 per cent of the national population of mixed race, Asian/Asian British and black/black British council tenants lived in the capital - almost three times the comparable figure for all ethnic groups - 23 per cent. In all regions there was a tendency for lower satisfaction rates for mixed race, Asian and black tenants. Therefore, the concentration of these groups in London (see above), was associated with the overall (all ethnic group) satisfaction rates for London tending to be lower than elsewhere.

Related to the contrasting satisfaction rates by ethnic group are the differing age structures of the relevant cohorts, with the white British population containing a much larger proportion of older people who - as shown in Table 6 - tend to express greater contentment with landlord services. As shown in Table 7, there is very little inter-ethnic difference in satisfaction rates of tenants aged under 45. However, as the table also reveals, satisfaction tends to be considerably higher among white tenants in older age groups. The precise reasons for this are not obvious.

In relation to the striking results for households including older people as set out in Table 6, part of the explanation is likely to lie in the lower expectations of this group. Beyond this, it may be that older people tend to live in somewhat more desirable homes in more desirable areas. However, since property type details and precise spatial coding are not included within the STATUS questionnaire, this cannot be explored further on the basis of the survey data.

⁷ CLG (2009) *Place Survey 2008* <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/corporate/statistics/placesurvey2008>

⁸ Pawson, H. (2010) *Analysis of English local authority housing management performance 2008/09*; York: Housing Quality Network – original data from local authority HRA Business Plan Statistical Annex returns accessible at: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/housing/housingresearch/housingstatistics/housingstatisticsby/localauthorityhousing/dataforms/hssa0809/bpsadata200809/>

Table 6 – Satisfaction with home and neighbourhood: percentage satisfied or very satisfied by selected characteristics

Cohort	Property quality	Property condition	Neighbourhood	Base
	%	%	%	No of cases (min)
All	77.2	72.5	75.2	182,539
North East	79.8	76.0	79.7	9,279
North West	80.5	76.9	75.4	15,619
Yorks & the Humber	80.1	76.2	76.3	14,547
East Midlands	78.7	74.7	77.1	25,281
West Midlands	78.8	73.3	75.5	17,420
East of England	80.7	76.8	79.1	20,561
London	68.5	62.2	69.0	32,671
South East	80.6	76.0	76.9	33,802
South West	80.3	75.4	77.7	13,344
1-2 persons aged < 60	74.7	69.3	70.7	46,407
1-2 persons, 1+ aged > 60	88.9	85.2	84.8	71,513
Family household	62.1	57.6	65.9	39,352
Other	73.1	68.2	72.1	19,255
White British	79.8	75.3	76.7	152,270
Mixed race	60.8	54.9	64.9	2,034
Asian/Asian British	64.9	61.0	66.7	4,062
Black/black British	62.8	57.5	69.8	7,832
Other	71.5	65.9	69.8	7,381

Table 7 – Overall satisfaction with landlord: breakdown by ethnicity and age

Tenant age	Ethnic group	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Neutral	Base
		%	%	%	No of cases
Under 45	White British	64	18	17	39,753
	Ethnic minority	62	21	17	9,776
45-64	White British	76	12	12	53,849
	Ethnic minority	68	19	13	6,829
65 and over	White British	87	7	7	57,926
	Ethnic minority	76	13	11	4,091

Customer service

As a means of gauging satisfaction with general ‘customer service’, the STATUS questionnaire probes respondents’ experiences of their most recent contact with their landlord. This excludes contacts taking place more than a year previously, or which were solely concerned with rent payment.

Across England, nearly three-quarters of tenants (73 per cent) reported having made a (non-rent payment-related) contact with their landlord during the 12 months preceding the survey. While this figure was fairly constant across the country, it was considerably higher for family households (81 per cent) than for households including older people (68 per cent). The large majority of contacts (76 per cent) were by phone. Only 19 per cent were via an office visit and only just over 1 per cent by e-mail.

Overwhelmingly the most common issue prompting tenant contact with landlords was repairs -71 per cent of contacts were related to this issue. The next most common subject was rent/housing benefit - 11 per cent.

Thinking back to their last contact with their landlord, two-thirds of respondents (68 per cent) reported having found it easy to get in touch with the right person to deal with their query - see Table 8. However, more than 80 per cent found the staff helpful. On both these measures, London boroughs were rated somewhat less positively than the national norm. Especially in terms of the ease of 'getting hold of the right person', responses to questions of this kind may to some extent reflect organisational size. For example, the average 2009 local authority stock among district councils was relatively small, at 5,100 (CLG HSSA data). However, there is no direct relationship between stock size and customer service rating: the average council housing stock among metropolitan boroughs - 23,400 - was well above the figure for London boroughs - 14,400.

Table 8 – Perceived 'customer service' quality by local authority type

LA type	<i>Ease of getting hold of right person</i>			<i>Helpfulness of staff</i>			<i>Base</i>
	Easy	Difficult	Neither	Helpful	Unhelpful	Neither	No of cases (min)
	%	%	%	%	%	%	
London boro	59.2	27.9	12.9	73.4	14.5	12.1	21,716
Met boro	68.7	20.6	10.7	82.7	9.2	8.2	22,206
Unitary	69.7	19.7	10.6	81.6	9.6	8.9	21,403
District	73.0	16.9	10.1	83.5	7.9	8.6	67,980
England	68.0	21.0	11.0	80.5	10.1	9.4	134,312

Table 9 – Perceived 'customer service' quality by ALMO status by authority type

	<i>Getting hold of right person 'easy'</i>		<i>Landlord staff helpful</i>		<i>Base</i>
	ALMO	Non-ALMO	ALMO	Non-ALMO	No of cases (min)
	%	%	%	%	
London boro	59.8	58.1	73.7	72.9	21,176
Met boro	70.6	59.4	82.6	83.3	22,206
Unitary	69.0	70.0	79.9	82.2	21,403
District	74.9	72.4	84.2	83.4	67,980
England	67.8	68.1	79.9	81.1	134,312

Again, in relation to ALMO status the results are not clear-cut - see Table 9. Nationally, ALMOs are rated slightly below non-ALMO councils on these measures. Only among metropolitan boroughs is this not the case. And even here, the ALMO advantage does not extend to the helpfulness of landlord staff.

Satisfaction with repairs and maintenance services

As shown in Table 10, almost three quarters of tenants (73 per cent) were satisfied with repairs and maintenance services. While this is a slightly lower figure than that for satisfaction with overall landlord services (see Table 1) it is important to appreciate that the STATUS questionnaire allows six response options on the former question, rather than the five options allowed for the latter

question. As well as 'neither (satisfied nor dissatisfied)' possible answers also include 'no opinion/don't know'.

Looking at the results on this question in more detail, London is again the main outlier in terms of both geography and authority type (see Tables 10 and 11), with just under two-thirds of tenants happy with repairs and maintenance. While there is, again, no simple national pattern in relation to ALMO status, ALMOs in metropolitan boroughs outscored their non-ALMO counterparts by a considerable margin - see Table 12.

Table 10 – Satisfaction with repairs and maintenance services by region

Region	Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Total*	% satisfied	Base
	%	%	%	%	%	%		No of cases
North East	31.9	45.3	6.4	8.4	6.8	100.0	77.2	8,993
North West	39.2	39.3	5.7	7.3	6.7	100.0	78.5	16,725
Yorks & the Humber	33.9	43.3	6.2	7.6	7.4	100.0	77.3	15,846
East Midlands	30.4	41.6	6.9	9.9	9.6	100.0	72.0	26,900
West Midlands	28.5	42.5	7.7	9.8	9.6	100.0	71.0	18,581
East of England	32.7	41.9	7.4	9.1	6.0	100.0	74.6	21,836
London	25.7	40.1	9.5	10.0	12.8	100.0	65.8	35,559
South East	36.1	41.3	6.6	7.7	6.8	100.0	77.5	36,069
South West	34.8	40.7	7.0	8.3	7.0	100.0	75.5	14,343
England	31.5	41.6	7.4	8.9	9.0	100.0	73.0	194,852

*Total (as used in denominator) includes 'no opinion/don't know' responses – 1.7 per cent for England.

Table 11 – Satisfaction with repairs and maintenance services by local authority type

LA type	Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Total*	% satisfied	Base
	%	%	%	%	%	%		No of cases
London boro	25.7	40.1	9.5	10.0	12.8	100.0	65.8	35,559
Met boro	31.6	43.3	6.9	8.5	8.1	100.0	74.8	31,946
Unitary	33.6	40.4	6.5	8.9	9.0	100.0	74.0	33,382
District	34.7	41.8	6.8	8.4	6.9	100.0	76.5	93,965
England	31.5	41.6	7.4	8.9	9.0	100.0	73.1	194,852

N=193,969. *Total (as used in denominator) includes 'no opinion/don't know' responses – 1.7 per cent for England.

Table 12 – Satisfaction with repairs and maintenance services: percentage satisfied or very satisfied* by ALMO status and local authority type

	ALMO	Not ALMO	All	Base
	%	%	%	No of cases
London boro	65.8	65.8	65.8	35,559
Met boro	76.9	66.5	74.8	31,946
Unitary	71.1	75.1	74.1	33,382
District	75.7	76.7	76.5	93,965
England	72.9	73.2	73.1	194,852

*Denominator includes 'no opinion/don't know' responses.

Just over two-thirds of all tenants (68 per cent) reported having had a repair undertaken within the previous year - a proportion very similar across the four categories of local authority type used in Tables 11 and 12. Perhaps significantly, those reporting having had a repair undertaken were markedly more satisfied with the service - 76 per cent of this group were satisfied or very satisfied with repairs and maintenance services, as compared with only 65 per cent of those who had not had a repair. This illustrates the potential pitfalls of comparing results from STATUS surveys - comprehensive across the tenant population - with statistics derived from 'continuous tracking surveys' focusing only on tenants who have recently received a landlord service⁹.

Table 13 – Tenants having had repairs carried out in previous year: rating of various aspects of last repair

	Very good	Fairly good	Neither	Fairly poor	Very poor	Total*	% good*
Rating of last repair carried out in terms of...	%	%	%	%	%	%	
Being told when workers would call	48.7	33.3	5.3	6.3	5.7	100.0	82.0
Time taken before work started	36.0	38.4	8.4	7.7	7.1	100.0	74.4
Speed with which work was completed	49.1	33.7	6.3	4.5	5.1	100.0	82.8
Attitude of workers	61.4	27.7	5.1	2.2	1.8	100.0	89.0
Overall quality of repair work	48.9	32.4	6.6	5.6	5.2	100.0	81.3
Keeping dirt and mess to a minimum	52.2	32.4	6.3	4.1	3.4	100.0	84.5

* Total (as used in denominator) includes 'no opinion/don't know' responses – 0.8 per cent - 2.4 per cent of all responses. Minimum sample size on any individual question: 119,484

The detailed breakdown of repairs customer satisfaction set out in Table 14 shows a fairly consistent pattern with the highest satisfaction rates on virtually every measure being registered in the North East, while London tenants were the least satisfied on all counts - albeit by relatively small margins on some measures.

⁹ Pawson, H., Sosenko, F. & Ipsos MORI (2010) *Assessing Resident Satisfaction; A report for London & Quadrant Housing Group* http://www.lqgroup.org.uk/_assets/files/L&Q-report-V4.pdf

Table 14 – Tenants having had repairs carried out in previous year: rating of various aspects of last repair by region

Region	Rating - being told when workers would call			Rating - time taken before work started		
	Good	Poor	Base	Good	Poor	Base
	%	%	<i>No of cases</i>	%	%	<i>No of cases</i>
North East	85.8	9.3	5,979	78.9	12.8	5,430
North West	83.4	11.0	11,358	76.7	13.0	10,859
Yorks & the Humber	84.4	10.9	10,691	76.1	14.2	9,965
East Midlands	82.1	12.4	17,677	74.2	15.2	16,784
West Midlands	80.3	13.2	11,889	73.6	15.6	11,281
East of England	80.6	12.6	14,283	74.7	14.3	13,452
London	78.6	14.0	9,374	68.8	18.0	8,760
South East	83.9	10.4	23,836	77.3	12.5	22,509
South West	84.0	10.7	9,374	78.2	12.5	8,760
England	82.0	12.0	126,122	74.4	14.8	118,580

Region	Rating - speed with which work completed			Rating - attitude of workers		
	Good	Poor	Base	Good	Poor	Base
	%	%	<i>No of cases</i>	%	%	<i>No of cases</i>
North East	87.0	7.2	5,636	91.4	3.1	5,626
North West	84.4	8.6	11,020	88.7	4.1	11,042
Yorks & the Humber	83.6	9.5	10,265	90.8	3.0	10,205
East Midlands	83.6	8.8	17,093	90.3	3.2	17,099
West Midlands	83.6	8.4	11,485	89.8	3.5	11,468
East of England	83.9	8.5	13,747	89.5	3.7	13,766
London	76.4	7.6	8,976	84.8	6.2	8,959
South East	85.2	8.3	22,994	90.6	3.7	22,928
South West	86.4	7.6	8,976	90.9	3.9	8,959
England	82.7	9.6	121,092	89.0	4.1	120,989

Region	Rating - overall quality of repair work			Rating - keeping dirt and mess to a minimum		
	Good	Poor	Base	Good	Poor	Base
	%	%	<i>No of cases</i>	%	%	<i>No of cases</i>
North East	84.5	9.4	5,672	87.0	6.7	5,661
North West	82.8	9.7	11,056	84.8	7.4	11,077
Yorks & the Humber	83.4	9.6	10,281	86.1	7.2	10,303
East Midlands	81.7	10.6	17,134	85.9	6.9	17,166
West Midlands	83.2	9.4	11,518	85.9	6.5	11,516
East of England	82.4	10.2	13,835	85.7	6.5	13,830
London	75.2	14.0	9,003	78.7	6.8	9,029
South East	82.8	9.9	23,027	86.7	6.6	23,060
South West	83.4	9.7	9,003	87.6	6.8	9,029
England	81.3	10.8	121,581	84.5	7.5	121,649

Tenant participation

Across England, as shown in Table 15, some 56 per cent of respondents were satisfied with their landlord in terms of tenants views being taken into account, while 74 per cent rated their landlord as 'good' or 'very good' as regards 'keeping you informed about things that might affect you as a tenant'. In comparing these two scores, however, it is important to be aware that - as in the case of satisfaction with repairs and maintenance (see above), the STATUS questionnaire offers six response options for the 'tenant views taken into account' question. Again, possible responses include 'no opinion' as well as 'neither (satisfied nor dissatisfied)'.

In terms of local authority type, London boroughs are again the main outlier on both the questions covered in Table 15. Also in common with most other questions, there was little difference between typical scores for ALMO and non-ALMO authorities.

Table 15 – Views on landlord approach to tenant participation

Cohort	% of respondents satisfied with how landlord takes tenant views into account	% rating landlord 'good' at keeping tenants informed	Base – no of cases (min)
All	56.2	74.2	193,593
London borough	50.1	69.2	34,553
Met borough	57.9	74.7	31,618
Unitary	57.9	74.4	33,352
District	58.6	77.7	92,818
1-2 persons aged < 60	52.5	71.0	48,751
1-2 persons, 1+ aged > 60	64.7	83.3	78,545
Family household	46.4	63.6	39,934
Other	52.3	71.0	19,866
White British	57.0	75.1	160,629
Mixed race	46.8	65.4	2,155
Asian/Asian British	55.3	70.1	4,244
Black/black British	51.1	71.6	8,172
Other	54.2	72.6	7,888

Just over a quarter of responding tenants (27 per cent) had heard of tenant participation compacts (TPCs), with this proportion ranging from 22 per cent in London to 32 per cent in district council areas. Among those aware of their existence, around two-thirds of tenants (65 per cent) indicated that they were satisfied with their locally-agreed TPC. On this measure, however, metropolitan boroughs were rated slightly more highly than other classes of authority, with a 68 per cent satisfaction rating.

Responding to anti-social behaviour

Some 15 per cent of respondents had reported an incident of anti-social behaviour (ASB) to their landlord in the previous year. Scaled up in proportion to the total size of the sector, this suggests that over 250,000 council tenants are significantly affected by ASB, annually.

Interestingly, on this measure of ASB, the incidence of the problem varies relatively little by class of local authority. Neither - as might be expected - is it most widespread in London. The proportion

of respondents who had reported an incident within the previous year ranged from 13 per cent among district council tenants to 17 per cent among tenants living in unitary authorities (16 per cent in London and 15 per cent among tenants of metropolitan boroughs).

To probe the perceived effectiveness of local authorities in responding to ASB, the STATUS questionnaire asks people who have recently reported such a problem about their experience of doing so. As shown in Table 16, rates of satisfaction here are considerably lower than in relation to repairs services. Less than half of all respondents (46 per cent) were happy about the way their report was handled and only just over a third (38 per cent) were happy about the final outcome.

The results set out in Table 17 show that metropolitan boroughs tended to be rated most highly and London boroughs most poorly in relation to the various different aspects of how a report of anti-social behaviour is handled (on each of the measures detailed in the table the difference between these two classes of authority is statistically significant at the 95 per cent confidence level). Given that, as noted above, metropolitan boroughs are typically much larger landlords than other classes of authority, this might imply that larger size facilitates a more professional approach.

Table 17 also shows that respondents who were members of family households tended to be least satisfied with their council's ASB responses, while those including older people were the happiest.

Table 16 – Rating of landlord response to reported antisocial behaviour (Minimum sample size: 22,205)

Satisfaction rating on last reported instance of ASB in terms of...	Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Total	% satisfied
	%	%	%	%	%	%	
...Advice provided by staff	24.2	34.9	17.4	12.8	10.7	100.0	59.1
...Being kept informed	17.6	25.7	21.6	17.9	17.2	100.0	43.3
...Support provided by staff	17.7	25.4	23.7	16.1	17.0	100.0	43.1
...How the report was dealt with	18.7	27.2	18.6	16.8	18.7	100.0	45.9
...Speed with which report was dealt with	18.9	25.1	18.6	16.6	20.8	100.0	44.0
...The final outcome of your report	17.6	20.3	18.3	14.6	29.1	100.0	37.9

Table 17 – Respondents having reported antisocial behaviour within previous year: satisfaction with various aspects of how case handled

Cohort	% of respondents satisfied with...						Base – min no of respondents
	...advice provided by landlord staff	...being kept informed	...support offered by landlord staff	...how case dealt with	...speed case dealt with	...final outcome of case	
All respondents	59.1	43.3	43.1	45.9	44.0	37.9	22,432
London borough	50.8	37.2	33.4	38.5	36.3	31.7	4,587
Met borough	62.6	47.3	42.7	49.4	48.0	41.8	4,011
Unitary	61.4	43.8	45.9	47.9	45.3	38.9	4,532
District	61.8	44.8	39.4	48.3	46.5	39.4	9,745
1-2 persons aged < 60	55.8	40.3	39.2	42.9	41.3	35.3	7,504
1-2 persons, 1+ aged > 60	67.4	52.7	46.9	55.7	53.3	47.5	5,931
Family household	55.5	37.7	33.5	40.7	38.7	32.2	6,013
Other	57.7	43.3	37.1	44.9	42.6	36.8	2,344
White British	60.6	44.0	40.3	47.4	45.7	39.0	18,232
Mixed race	49.3	36.8	37.4	36.0	37.2	30.8	347
Asian/Asian British	54.4	39.1	37.4	40.3	37.7	34.0	590
Black/black British	55.6	43.3	36.8	42.6	40.2	37.7	1,014
Other	53.4	40.5	37.2	40.0	36.9	33.0	1,059

Conclusions

Satisfaction with overall landlord services remained relatively high among council tenants in England in 2008. As in 2006-07, three quarters of survey respondents were happy with the service, in general.

High 'overall satisfaction ratings' were consistent with strong ratings for repairs services - a function which, as shown by the survey, was the service by far the most commonly rated as among 'the three most important' landlord activities. Among tenants who had direct experience of the repairs service in the recent past there was particularly strong appreciation for the attitude, speed and tidiness of repairs operatives.

Somewhat by contrast, tenant ratings of landlord effectiveness in handling and resolving complaints about antisocial behaviour tended to be lower with less than half of those affected being content about the way their ASB report was handled and only just over a third satisfied with the final outcome.

Across the whole range of services and functions covered by the survey, London boroughs tended to be rated somewhat less positively than other classes of local authority. Since the average number of homes managed by London boroughs is lower than that for metropolitan councils, this cannot be attributed purely to authority size.

In relation to household type and ethnicity, there was a fairly consistent pattern across most indicators which accords with existing research showing that satisfaction rates tend to be higher for older people, while they were lower for family households and for ethnic minorities, irrespective of regional location¹⁰.

The factors identified above are likely to influence satisfaction scores for individual local authorities such that ratings will be affected by the local tenant profile. To address this point, one means of deriving more properly comparable tenant satisfaction scores might be to experiment with generating authority-specific scores based on a standardised mix of the survey cohort within each area. This would resemble the mix-adjustment technique routinely used in house price indices. Here, it could involve deriving a combined case-specific weight calibrated to replicate the profile of the tenant population, nationally, in terms of:

- age group

¹⁰ Diffley, M., Treanor, S. & Pawson, H. (2009) *Identifying the Priorities of Tenants of Social Landlords*; Edinburgh: Scottish Government <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/280163/0084392.pdf>

Heriot-Watt University and Ipsos MORI (2009) *Tenant Perspectives on Social Landlord Services*; London: Tenant Services Authority
<http://www.tenantservicesauthority.org/server/show/ConWebDoc.19412>

Pawson, H., Sosenko, F. & Ipsos MORI (2010) *Assessing Resident Satisfaction; A report for London & Quadrant Housing Group* <http://www.lggroup.org.uk/assets/files/L&Q-report-V4.pdf>

- property type occupied (would require additional question in survey or information to be provided by the landlord)
- employment status (proxy for deprivation)

Annex 1 - Weighting and related adjustments

Data incompleteness

The term 'data incompleteness' here is used to refer to two issues. Firstly, the non-submission of 2008 survey data by five local authorities and, secondly, the submission by six authorities of data revealed by our quality checks as potentially problematic - e.g. in relation to the incidence of inappropriate routing, entry of illegal values, low response rates on specific questions or 'outlier' status in relation to key questions.

In relation to the non-submission of data, 2006-07 survey data was substituted for 2008 where possible. Only in the case of the Isles of Scilly (local authority housing stock 2009: 108) was this infeasible because of non-participation in the 2006-07 survey.

As regards the second issue, the relevant authorities have been contacted via CLG to provide them with an opportunity to re-submit. Two (Carrick and Runnymede) took up this invitation. Following verification that these batches were free from the quality concerns applicable to the data originally provided, the data has been integrated within the national dataset.

For three of the remaining four 'problematic 2008-09 data' authorities, it is proposed that 2006-07 data is substituted. In the case of Mid Devon, however, this strategy is not possible because the council did not participate in the survey in 2006-07.

Table 1 – summary of actions taken to remedy data incompleteness

LA	Problem	Action
Alnwick	No 2008 data submitted	Substitute 2006-07 data
Birmingham	No 2008 data submitted	Substitute 2006-07 data
Isles of Scilly	No 2008 data submitted	Omit - no 2006-07 data submitted
Rutland	No 2008 data submitted	Substitute 2006-07 data
Salisbury	No 2008 data submitted	Substitute 2006-07 data
Carrick	2008 data appeared problematic	Use 2008-09 data as re-submitted 2010
City of London	2008 data appeared problematic	Substitute 2006-07 data
Ipswich	2008 data appeared problematic	Substitute 2006-07 data
Mid Devon	2008 data appeared problematic	Omit - no 2006-07 data submitted
Portsmouth	2008 data appeared problematic	Substitute 2006-07 data
Runnymede	2008 data appeared problematic	Use 2008-09 data as re-submitted 2010

Weighting

The survey involves two levels of weighting. The first involves the weighting schemes provided by some local authority respondents to facilitate the generation of results properly representative of the local tenant population. In all, 58 authorities weighted their data in this way. Such 'case-specific' weights therefore incorporate allowances for (a) sample stratification - e.g. oversampling of ethnic minority tenants, and (b) differential non-response in relation to factors such as property type or neighbourhood. On this basis authorities were allowed to submit up to two weights for each case: a 'stratification weight' and a 'final weight'. It is understood that the 'final weight' incorporates the stratification weight, where present. We therefore adopted 'final weight' values as overall case specific weights. Or, in relation to the small number of cases where a 'stratification weight' was provided but no 'final weight', the former will be used as the case-specific weight. Where, as in the majority of cases, no weightings were provided by the local authority the case-specific weight defaults to 1.0.

A second level of weighting is needed to facilitate calculation of regional and national results from the survey. This is to ensure that the representation of each local authority batch within the weighted sample is truly proportionate to that authority's share of the national population of council tenants. The need for such 'authority-specific' weighting arises from the widely varying sampling fractions implemented across the country. In other words, expressed as a proportion of all tenants, the number of valid survey returns in each authority batch varies dramatically. In nine authorities, for example, valid interviews equated to more than 50 per cent of tenanted homes, whereas in almost 50 other authorities the comparable figure was below 10 per cent. Such variations arise partly because of the different sizes of local authorities and their need to respect the official stipulation that sample size should exceed 625, irrespective of the local tenant population.

The procedure for deriving authority-specific weights involved the formula:

$$\text{Authority specific weight} = \frac{\% \text{ of national total of valid survey responses}}{\% \text{ of national total of council owned dwellings}}^{11}$$

The same formula was applied, irrespective of whether the 'valid cases in survey dataset' were drawn from fieldwork undertaken in 2008-09 or in 2006-07 (see above). It is appreciated that 'dwelling stock' figures are slightly in excess of the numbers of tenanted dwellings. However, because local authority void rates are now generally very low and do not vary greatly, this is considered unproblematic. Also, while the above formula incorporates a grossing factor, the published results from the survey will all be expressed in terms of percentage rates rather than numbers of tenants.

The omission of the Isles of Scilly and Mid Devon from the survey dataset (see above) is allowed for in the weighting to the extent that the LA dwelling stock for these authorities is also excluded from the weighting calculation. Strictly speaking, therefore, the regional results for South West England and for England as a whole

¹¹ As sourced from CLG HSSA data

will reflect the views of local authority tenants for these geographical entities 'except for the Isles of Scilly and Mid Devon'.

Bringing together the weightings provided by local authorities and those calculated by the researchers (see above), a composite weight is calculated for each case in the dataset is derived as follows:

Composite weight = case specific weight x authority-specific weight

Annex 2 – Comparability with other surveys

Comparing the overall satisfaction with landlord statistics from the NI 160 surveys with benchmark figures from the Survey of English Housing (SEH) suggests the former may slightly overstate tenant satisfaction. While the NI 160 surveys show tenant satisfaction with overall landlord services at 75 per cent, the SEH 2007-08 reported a figure of 71 per cent¹². Similarly, the NI 160 surveys show tenant satisfaction with repairs and maintenance services at 73 per cent while the SEH 2007-08 reported 67 per cent¹³.

The STATUS surveys are designed primarily for use at the local level. Other government surveys, such as the Survey of English Housing, should be used at the national and regional level where identical questions are asked.

One factor possibly contributing to the slightly higher rates of tenant satisfaction shown by the NI 160 surveys could be that these are based on a less representative sample of survey respondents. This is certainly a risk given the somewhat lower response rates achieved via the self-completion method used here, as compared with that achieved by the face to face interview method employed in the SEH. In SEH fieldwork undertaken in 2007-08, for example, a response rate of 62 per cent was recorded¹⁴, as compared with 42 per cent in the NI 160 surveys. The scope for differential non-response across different demographic groups is, therefore, greater in the latter. It is possible that this will have led to (typically more satisfied) older people being somewhat overrepresented in the NI 160 surveys.

Another possibility is that sample bias results from alienation among dissatisfied tenants who are consequently less likely to respond. The alternative hypothesis, as sometimes advanced in this context, is that discontented tenants are **disproportionately likely** to participate in voluntary surveys which provide an opportunity for them to voice complaints.

¹² See Table S821 at: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/housing/xls/140522.xls>

¹³ See Table S816 at: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/housing/xls/140522.xls>

¹⁴ Communities and Local Government (2010) Housing in England 2007/08; London: CLG
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/statistics/pdf/1346249.pdf>

Further information

Media enquires

Telephone (office hours and out of hours): 0303 444 1201

E-mail: press.office@communities.gsi.gov.uk

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