

London Borough of Camden

2019 Leaseholder Satisfaction Survey Report

March 2020



Customer Survey 2019

Prepared for: Camden Council

by: Acuity

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Produced by Acuity

Acuity Research & Practice

PO Box 395, Umberleigh, Devon, EX32 2HL

Tel: 01273 287114

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www.arap.co.uk

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Executive Summary

Camden commissioned Acuity to carry out a resident satisfaction survey. This report covers the views of Camden leaseholders from 2,820 surveys issued during October and December 2019. The results from the survey are somewhat disappointing with a downward trend in satisfaction within all question areas.

Key findings

Overall satisfaction

Over a third of leaseholders are satisfied with the services provided by Camden (35%); satisfaction has dropped by 2% since the 2016 survey. Although this is within the margin of error between the two surveys it indicates a downward trend, supported by results in other areas.

The home

Over half of Camden's leaseholders are satisfied with the overall quality of their home (55%).

Service charge

Just under half of leaseholders find the service charge information easy to understand (46%).

Two-fifths of leaseholders are satisfied with the additional breakdowns of service on the service charge account (42%) and a third or more with information on how the service charge is calculated on the website

Individual elements of delivery of services were rated between 20% and 23% for Estate repairs and maintenance, block repairs and maintenance and lift charges. Grounds maintenance and the Insurance premium were rated at 39% and 38% respectively. Block electricity, door entry systems, caretaker services and estate cleaning were rated between 40% and 45%.

521 leaseholders provided one or more comments detailing why they were dissatisfied with the value for money of services, most of which related to repairs and maintenance, estate services and grounds maintenance.

The neighbourhood

Two-thirds or more of leaseholders expressed satisfaction with their neighbourhood as place to live (67%), providing the highest rating of the survey.

Fewer leaseholders are satisfied with the appearance of their neighbourhood (50%), a rating which is now 27% lower than previously recorded. The survey found higher levels of local major problems including drug use or dealing (14% higher) and other crime (7% higher). A new category introduced this year covered the issue of rough sleeping and 22% of leaseholders consider this a major problem.

Repairs and maintenance service

Just over a quarter of leaseholders are satisfied with the repairs and maintenance service (28%).

Contact method

Over a quarter of leaseholders are satisfied with the ease of getting their most recent query resolved (27%).

Communication and information

A fifth of leaseholders feel that their landlord listens to their views and acts upon them (20%). Two-fifths of leaseholders are satisfied with the information in the Homeowner newsletter (42%) and with the services delivered through the Camden account (42%), with a third satisfied with the new website service charge guide (31%).

Leaseholder comments

A total of 424 leaseholders were happy to offer their views on Camden services,



providing a total of 612 separate comments. Out of the 612 comments, 6% were positive, with leaseholders generally happy with services.

The majority of negative comments related to customer contact and communications (32%). A lack of response to calls, emails and letters was highlighted as was the need to listen more carefully.

Repairs & maintenance accounted for 17% of comments, planned works (4%) estate and grounds maintenance (5%) and property condition (5%).

Estate services were commented on by 7% of leaseholders, citing lack of maintenance of communal areas, internally and externally and poor caretaking services.

Neighbourhood problems were an issue for 6% of respondents, covering problems with drug use and dealing, tenant services (5%) covering issues around service charges and tenancy management (4%), with concerns over statements.

Further analysis

Change in satisfaction

There are five notable areas where there has been a significant drop in satisfaction levels since 2016:

- Appearance of neighbourhood (27% lower)
- Neighbourhood as a place to live (10% lower)
- Grounds maintenance (10% lower)
- Quality of home (8% lower)
- Ease of understanding the service charge invoice (8% lower)

Areas of dissatisfaction

The survey found a few areas with noticeably higher levels of dissatisfaction. There are some ratings

where over a quarter of leaseholders are dissatisfied:

Housing & services

- Overall services (47% dissatisfied)
- Quality of home (25% dissatisfied)

Service charge

- Breakdown of charges (40% dissatisfied)
- Ease of understanding invoice (38% dissatisfied)
- Information on how service charge is calculated (37% dissatisfied)

Neighbourhood

- Appearance of neighbourhood (34% dissatisfied)

Delivery and cost of service

- Repairs & maintenance - Block (58% dissatisfied)
- Repairs & maintenance – Estate management charge (51% dissatisfied)
- Lift charges (46% dissatisfied)
- Caretaker services – estate cleaning (43% dissatisfied)
- Grounds and/or Tree maintenance (40% dissatisfied)
- Caretaker services - Block (37% dissatisfied)
- Door entry systems - Block (35% dissatisfied)
- Heating/Hot water/Gas supply (34% dissatisfied)

Communication

- Listens to views and acts upon them (54% dissatisfied).

These may be areas which Camden wish to investigate further and may help to explain why 47% leaseholders are dissatisfied with the overall services they receive from the Council.

Comparison with other landlords

When the satisfaction ratings are compared against other leaseholder



social housing providers Camden is 28% below the HouseMark median (63%). Other key service areas fall into the fourth quartile, being some 8% to 24% below average.

Satisfaction at district level

The results from general needs leaseholders are analysed at district level and the survey found differences in some areas, which may require further investigation once leaseholder demographics, property type, stock condition and neighbourhood and environmental issues are taken into account:

- Camden Town – leaseholders give above average satisfactions with the exception of satisfaction with the neighbourhood both as a place to live and its appearance which are both below average.
- Gospel Oak – leaseholders in this district are on many occasions the least satisfied of the areas, however, the rating for neighbourhood is 2% higher than the average and neighbourhood appearance equals the average rating.
- Hampstead – Leaseholders in this district give close to the average satisfaction levels with the exception of quality of home which is joint lowest (2% lower) and external building repairs & maintenance which was the highest satisfaction rating of the districts (39%).
- Holborn – leaseholders in Holborn have similar ratings to Hampstead in most service areas but gave the lowest ratings for estate services.
- Kentish Town – Leaseholders in Kentish Town gave the highest ratings out of all districts for their

neighbourhood as a place to live (9% above average) and for its appearance (6% above average). However, this district also gave the lowest ratings for elements of the service charge, communication and the overall repairs service.

Analysis by key strands of diversity and property type

Throughout the report, satisfaction with different services is analysed by the key strands of diversity. Older leaseholders aged 65+ years of age were generally more satisfied than other age groups. Female leaseholders generally awarded lower ratings than male leaseholders; non-disabled leaseholders gave higher ratings than disabled leaseholders; and leaseholder satisfaction reaches its peak between 4 to 10 years' length of residency, starting to decrease thereafter.

Recommendations

The survey found a number of areas where Camden may wish to continue their investigations into service area improvements.

Customer services – Previous recommendations in respect of close monitoring of services and improvement in contact, communication and listening to views are still applicable, along with ensuring that the working environment for front line staff allows them time to respond to queries in a professional and helpful way.

Repairs & maintenance and Estate services – Satisfaction ratings remain low for these services. Camden are recommended to continue liaising and consulting with leaseholders on a pro-active method of monitoring contractors to ensure services are carried out at an acceptable level.

**Neighbourhood and local problems –**

Satisfaction ratings are decreasing for neighbourhood as a place to live and its appearance. Much of the problem seems related to local problems which may need a multi-agency approach to resolving.



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1. Introduction

Acuity Research & Practice (an independent research agency) was commissioned to undertake an independent survey of the London Borough of Camden's (Camden) residents (tenants and leaseholders) to collect data on their opinions and attitudes towards their landlord and the services provided. The survey was designed using HouseMark's STAR questions for resident satisfaction surveys. This report is based on the survey of Camden's leaseholders. The survey of tenants is covered in a separate report.

1.1 About STAR

STAR surveys are a set of questions introduced in 2011, designed to measure tenant and leaseholder satisfaction in the housing sector.

Using this framework allows providers the means by which to compare key satisfaction results with other landlords and to carry out trend analysis.

STAR surveys are a useful tool which landlords are able to use to engage with their residents as part of a wider and coordinated customer engagement strategy.

1.2 Aim of the surveys

The aim of these surveys is to provide data on resident satisfaction, which will allow Camden to:

- Provide an up-to-date picture of leaseholders' satisfaction with their homes and customer experience with Camden

- Examine the results in different management areas
- Compare the current performance against previous surveys where possible
- Compare the performance of Camden as a landlord with that of other social landlords who have undertaken STAR surveys
- Inform decisions regarding service reviews.

1.3 Sampling frame and fieldwork

Sampling

The sampling frame was designed to achieve a sampling error of $\pm 4.0\%$ at the 95% confidence interval, for leaseholders.

Fieldwork

A sample of 2,820 leaseholders were invited to participate in the survey, either online or by post. The postal survey consisted of two individual mailings. Acuity carried out the administration of the first mailing, which was sent out on 28 October 2019. This consisted of a copy of the questionnaire, a covering letter written by Camden and a reply-paid envelope. All questionnaires were returned to Acuity.

On 18 November a final reminder comprising a full survey pack was sent to all leaseholders who had not responded. The final closing date for the survey was extended to 31 December 2019, when the final questionnaires were sent for data entry.

1.4 Questionnaire design

STAR questionnaires were designed for the survey: one for general needs,



sheltered housing, and leaseholders. The leaseholder comprised 22 questions in a 4-page booklet. A copy of the leaseholder questionnaire can be found in Appendix 3.

1.5 Response rates

A sample of 2,820 leaseholders were surveyed, of whom 778 responded – either to a postal survey or online (32 surveys were ineligible and 3 were incomplete). The overall response from all leaseholders was 27% (a decrease on the 43% response for the previous survey). See Figure 1.1 for the full figures and response rates.

1.6 Accuracy

For the overall results, Acuity and HouseMark recommend that surveys of over 1,000 population achieve a sampling error of at least $\pm 4\%$ at the 95% confidence level. This means, for example, that if 35% of leaseholders answered 'Yes' to a particular question, there are 95 chances out of 100 that the correct figure for all leaseholders – including those who did not respond – would be between 31% and 39%.

For Camden, when the data is analysed for all leaseholders, 743 responses were achieved. This response was high enough to conclude that any figures quoted at this level are accurate to within $\pm 3.5\%$ at the 95% confidence interval.

The raw data has been checked to take into account any differences between the responding leaseholders and the total leaseholder population. Weightings have been applied at district level.

1.7 Presenting the findings

This report presents the findings of the survey for leaseholders. The report focuses on the key findings of the survey and the results are analysed by:

- Leaseholder characteristics
- Management area
- Comparison with previous surveys, and
- Comparison with the results from other landlords.

1.8 Notes to figures

Throughout this report, the figures show the results as percentages and base numbers are also shown where appropriate.

Rounding

Throughout this report, the vast majority of figures show the results as percentages. The percentages are rounded up or down from one decimal place to the nearest whole number, and for this reason may not in all cases add up to 100%. Rounding can also cause percentages described in the supporting text to differ from the percentages in the charts by 1% when two percentages are added together. In some parts of the report percentages may be expressed to one decimal place.

Excluding 'don't know' and 'no opinion'

In general, in line with the convention for satisfaction surveys, only valid responses to questions have been included and all non-valid responses (for example, where a response to a question has not been stated) have been excluded. Responses such as 'no opinion', 'can't remember' or 'don't know' (where these were possible responses to questions) are also excluded from the base in this report. Where these results



are excluded this is noted in the written comments and charts.

1.9 Acknowledgements

Our thanks go firstly to the leaseholders of Camden who took part in the survey. We would also like to thank the staff of Camden for their assistance with the project, and our particular thanks go to Julien Danero Iglesias (Participation Lead) for his help throughout the project.

Figure 1.1 Survey sampling, response and reliability

	Total Leaseholder population	Completed surveys	Sampling error (%)
Camden	1,737	121	8.6%
Gospel Oak	1,473	141	7.9%
Hampstead	1,837	170	7.2%
Holborn	1,408	126	8.3%
Kentish Town	1,938	185	6.7%
Total	8,393	743	3.5%



2. Overall satisfaction with services

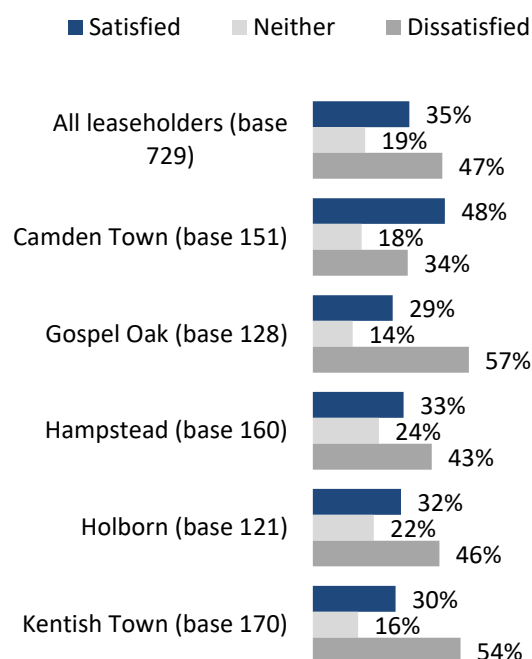
This section looks at the survey results based on the views of Camden's leaseholders. Comment is made where there are noted differences between the different management districts and leaseholder demographics and the ratings have also been compared with previous surveys. The overall rating is viewed as the headline figure in the survey. Section 10 of the report explores in more depth the differences in the relationship between the overall rating and specific service ratings, to identify what is driving overall leaseholder satisfaction at Camden.

2.1 Overall satisfaction

Just over a third of Leaseholders are satisfied overall (35%) with the service from the landlord, with a fifth neither satisfied nor dissatisfied (19%) and over two-fifths dissatisfied (47%).

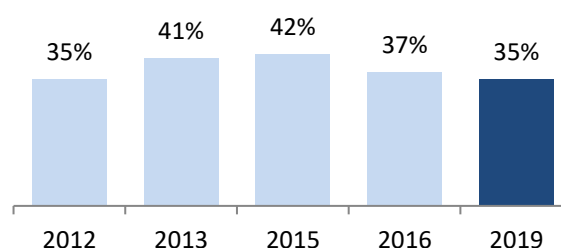
There are variances within the districts with leaseholder satisfaction in Camden Town (48%) higher than in other districts, particularly in Gospel Oak (29%), where dissatisfaction is registered at 57%.

Figure 2.1: Satisfaction with services provided by Camden



There has been a slight drop in overall satisfaction in the past three years (2% lower); and the rating is now back to the level recorded in 2012 (35%).

Figure 2.2: Change in satisfaction with services provided by Camden





3. The home

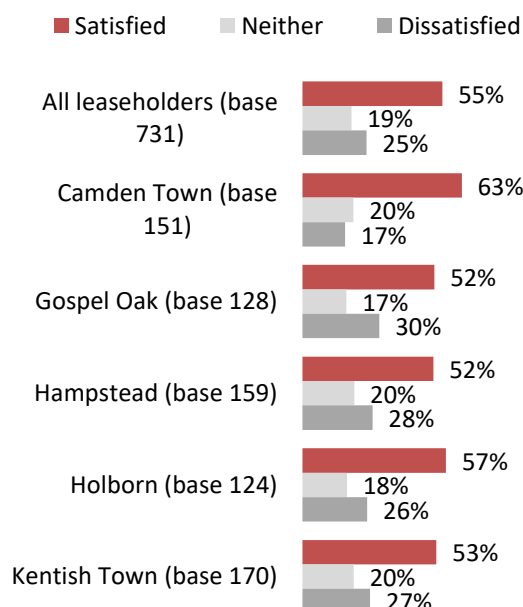
This section covers the results of leaseholders in relation to their homes. Although Camden ensures that quality standards are maintained in respect of the building, leaseholders are responsible for maintaining the inside of their home.

3.1 Overall quality of the home

Over half of leaseholders are satisfied with the quality of their home (55%), a fifth are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied (19%) and a quarter are dissatisfied (25%).

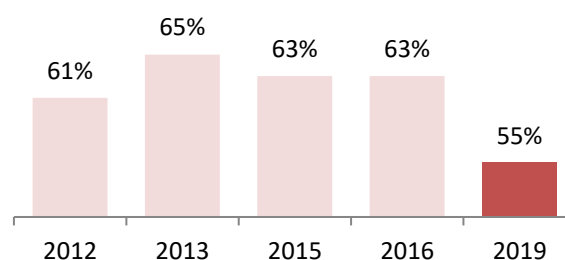
Leaseholders in Camden Town (63%) and Holborn (57%) are the most satisfied in this respect and those in Gospel Oak and Hampstead (both 52%) the least satisfied.

Figure 3.1: Satisfaction with the quality of the home



When compared to previous survey satisfaction has dropped quite significantly over the past four years (8% lower). Satisfaction is now 10% lower than the rating in 2013.

Figure 3.2: Change in satisfaction with the home since 2012





4. Service charge

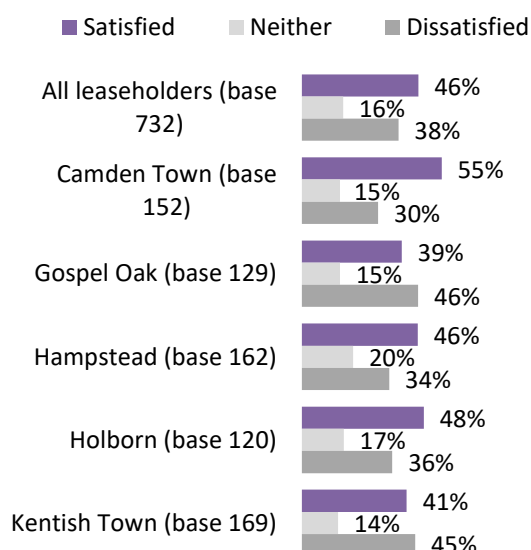
Under the terms of the lease, leaseholders are required to contribute towards the costs incurred by Camden for any services or work to the building and the grounds or estate by way of a service. Leaseholders pay a variable service charge dependent on the level and cost of the service provided.

4.1 Ease of understanding the service charge information

Just under half of all leaseholders find the service charge information easy to understand (46%), with 16% neutral and over a third dissatisfied with the information (38%).

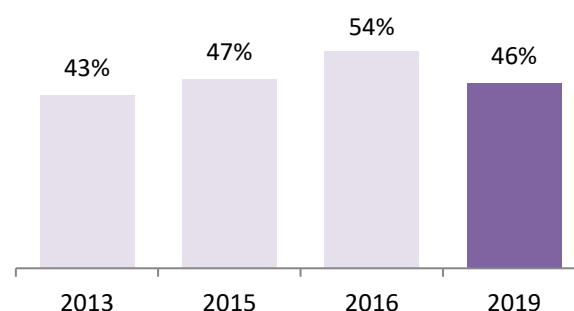
Camden Town leaseholders are the most satisfied (55%) and leaseholders in Gospel Oak (39%) and Kentish Town (41%) the least satisfied.

Figure 4.1: Ease of understanding service charge information



Satisfaction with ease of understanding the service charge information has dropped by 8% since the last survey in 2016.

Figure 4.2: Change in satisfaction with the ease of understanding the service charge invoice

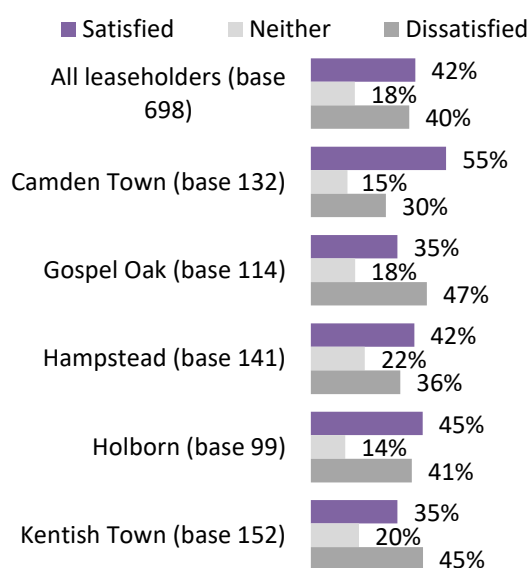


4.2 Additional breakdowns of services on the service charge account

Leaseholders were further asked how satisfied they were with the additional breakdowns now given on the service charge account.

Two-fifths of leaseholders overall were satisfied with this additional information (42%), with higher ratings in Camden Town (55%) than in Kentish Town and Gospel Oak (both 35%)

Figure 4.3: Satisfaction with information on how the service charge is calculated on the website



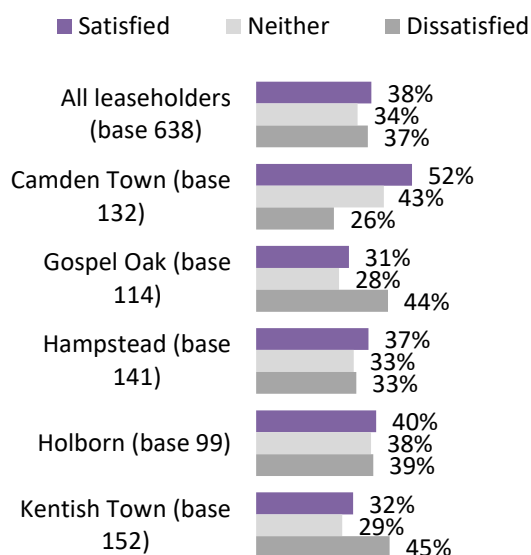


4.3 Information on how service charges are calculated on the website

Over a third of leaseholders are satisfied with the information provided on how the service charge has been calculated (38%). A similar percentage are dissatisfied (37%), with 34% neutral.

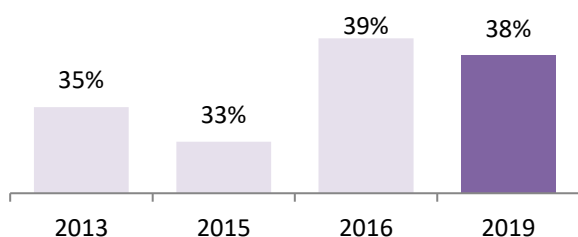
Satisfaction ratings are highest in Camden Town (52%) and Holborn (40%) and lowest in Gospel Oak (31%).

Figure 4.4: Satisfaction with information on how the service charge is calculated on the website



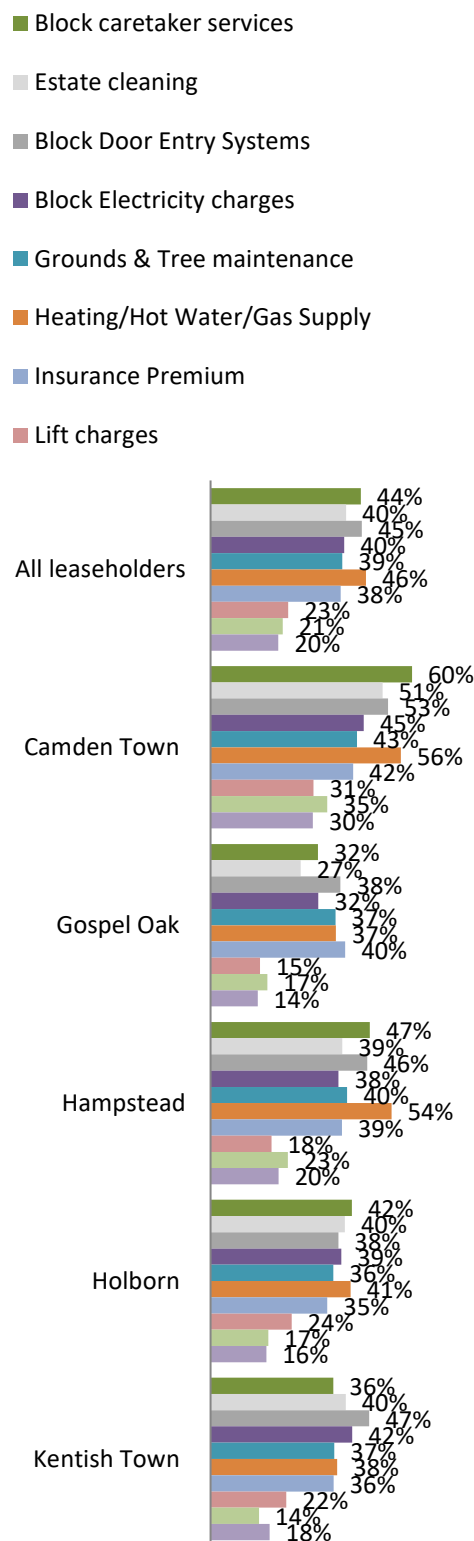
Satisfaction with information on how service charges are calculated has remained at a similar level to that recorded at the last survey.

Figure 4.5: Change in satisfaction with information on how the service charge is calculated



4.4 Satisfaction with specific services

Figure 4.6: Satisfaction with individual elements within the service charge





Over two-fifths of leaseholders overall (40% to 46%) are satisfied with half of the individual services they receive, the highest rating being for the heating/hot water/gas supply (46%).

Over a third of leaseholders are satisfied with the insurance premium (38%) and grounds and tree maintenance (39%); with around a fifth satisfied with lift charges (23%), block repairs and maintenance (21%) and estate repairs & maintenance (20%).

Reasons for dissatisfaction

Altogether 521 leaseholders provided one or more comments (total of 846) detailing why they were dissatisfied with the value for money of specific services.

Almost half of the comments (45%) related to repairs and maintenance (23%) and estates and ground maintenance (22%), with a further 4% covering issues around gardening, 2% on planned works and 2% on property condition. The majority of comments around repairs and maintenance were around a perceived poor service generally, with major themes being repairs 'right first time' and completing outstanding repairs.

Similarly, comments relating to the estates and ground maintenance were regarding the general service, with major themes being the cleaning, maintenance and decoration of communal areas and the on-site office/caretaker. Gardening issues were around tree surgery and grass cutting.

Tenancy management and tenancy issues covered 17% of comments. Key areas here were around service charges being too high and not value for money and services not being carried out fully or properly explained.

Neighbourhood and local problems accounted for 9% of comments, with litter/rubbish and improved security top of the list.

Poor customer service concerned 5% of respondents, while a further 1% felt communications and information could be improved.

General comments included a wish to be able to opt out of services not used.

Repairs & maintenance	23%
Repairs service generally	120
Right first time	12
Outstanding repairs	11
Timescale to complete repairs	9
Quality of repair work	8
Quicker repairs	6
Improve contractors	5
Repairs not covered	4
Some repairs not covered/ rechargeable	4
Follow up works communication	2
Missed appointment	2
Replace not repair	2
Returning calls	2
Check repairs done, inspect work	1
Communicating service standards	1
Ease of reporting repair	1
Finish off repair	1
Had to keep reporting repair to get it fixed	1
Provide appointments, at the right times	1
Provide info of contractor beforehand (e.g. company's name)	1
Estates & ground maintenance	22%
Estate services (general)	55
Cleaning of communal areas	35
On-site office/caretaker	33
Maintenance/decoration of communal areas	24
Lifts (keep in good repair)	18
Grounds maintenance - grass cutting/ gardeners	8
Trees and hedges	6
Drainage, flooding problems	3



Fences and gates	2
Communal Cleaning	9%
Poor quality of cleaning service	49
Cleaning needs to be done more regularly	7
Poor cleanliness of communal areas	6
Poor cleaner / caretaker, does not respond to requests, does not care	5
Rubbish accumulating in communal areas	4
Caretaker has too much to cover	3
Fly-tipping	1
Never seen anyone cleaning	1
Neighbours, neighbourhood or local problems	9%
Litter and rubbish	28
Improved security, do not feel safe	15
Neighbourhood / local problems	7
Vandalism	5
Drugs related problems	4
Problems with pests	4
Problems with noise from neighbours	3
Dogs noise or fouling	2
People hanging around on streets	2
ASB	1
Car parking	1
Going downhill	1
Litter, graffiti, vandalism	1
Problems with alcohol	1
Tenancy management	10%
Service charge too high/poor value	55
Lower heating costs	13
Rent too high / not value for money	9
Rent issues, rent statements	3
Need bigger property	2
Enforce tenancy agreement	1
Want to move	1
Tenant services	7%
Service charge services not carried out/not properly explained	44
Poor services generally	13
Gardening service or cheaper service	1
Poor warden/housing officer	1
Gardening	4%
Trees surgery needed	10

Grass cutting / gardening service not regular enough	7
Fly-tipping	4
Neglected areas, grounds are a disgrace	3
Poor maintenance of flower beds, empty flower beds	3
Bushes & hedges - not pruned, trimmed regularly enough	2
Do not pick up leaves, cuttings	2
Poor grass cutting, do not pick up grass cuttings	2
Rubbish everywhere	2
Gardens are overgrown	1
Never seen a gardener	1
Poor or little weeding carried out	1
Customer contact	5%
Poor customer service (general)	17
Did not call /email back/have to keep chasing	4
Do not keep us informed of progress	3
Respond to queries quicker	3
Better customer care, customer service	2
Did not call back/have to keep chasing	2
Don't answer phones	2
Not very helpful or professional, rude staff	2
Respond to emails	2
Complaints handling	1
Issue/problem not resolved/Enquiry not answered	1
Lack of knowledge	1
Not taken seriously	1
Communications & information	1%
Improve communication	3
Should listen more carefully/do not seem interested	3
Keep tenants up to date with planned works timetable	2
More concerned with budgets than customers	2
Don't always consult or inform before acting	1
Improve website	1
Planned works	2%
Planned works (general)	12



Central heating, better heating system	3
New windows	3
Doors - internal or external, porch	2
Refurbishment used poor quality fittings	1
Property condition	2%
External property maintenance	4
Need internal decoration	3
Poor property condition	3
Need better property security	1
Roof repairs	1
Sound proofing	1
Subsidence	1
Local facilities	2%
Lighting, street lighting	13
Problems with refuse storage	1
General comments	4%
Would like to opt out of certain services/have to pay for services I don't use	13
Problems with rubbish collection, areas, skips	6
Homeowners not treated same as tenants	4
Not as good as it once was/many cutbacks	3
Shared owners have to cover all costs	2
Spent a lot of own money doing up property	2
Gas servicing arrangements inefficient	1
Give no more than they have to	1
More energy efficient, environmental, group purchase, solar panels etc.	1
Other	9%
Already commented in an earlier Q	2
Don't know	1
Negative comment	3
Neutral comment/not applicable	4
Other	69



5. Neighbourhood and estate services

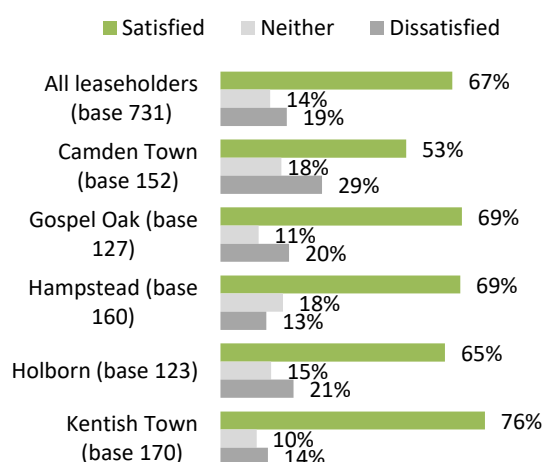
Working with residents, Camden actively encourages and supports the development and adoption of neighbourhood forums in each of its districts. Camden is responsible for maintaining the communal green spaces and trees on its estates, security systems, refuse collection areas, lighting and maintenance of estate roads and footpaths as well as providing a caretaker service and maintaining internal communal areas.

5.1 A place to live

Two-thirds or more of leaseholders are satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live (67%). Less than a fifth are dissatisfied (19%) and 14% are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.

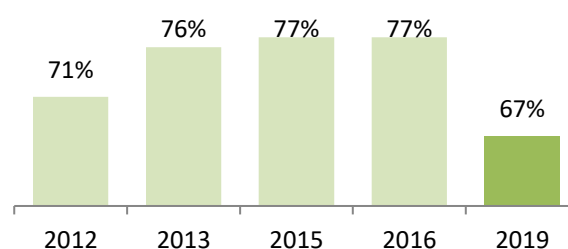
There is some variance in satisfaction ratings within the different districts, with fewer leaseholders in Camden Town satisfied with their neighbourhood (53%) than leaseholders in Kentish Town (76%).

Figure 5.1: Satisfaction with the neighbourhood as a place to live



Satisfaction with the neighbourhood as a place to live for all leaseholders decreased significantly in the past three years (10% lower).

Figure 5.2: Change in satisfaction with the neighbourhood

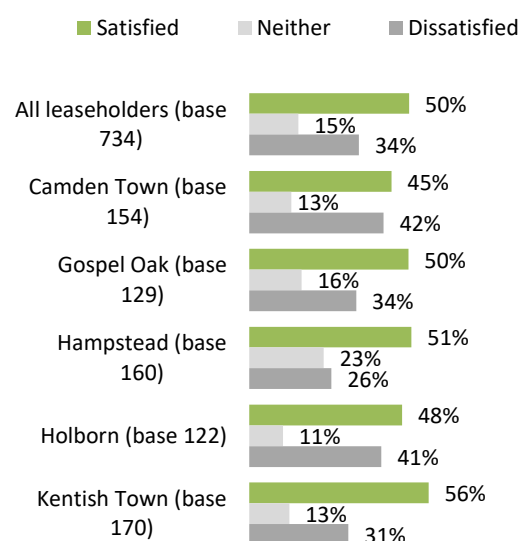


5.2 Appearance of the neighbourhood

Fewer leaseholders are satisfied with the appearance of their neighbourhood (50%), with a third dissatisfied (34%) and 15% neutral.

Leaseholders in Kentish Town (56%), Hampstead (51%) and Gospel Oak (50%) are more satisfied than those in Holborn (48%) or Camden Town (45%).

Figure 5.3: Satisfaction with the appearance of the neighbourhood

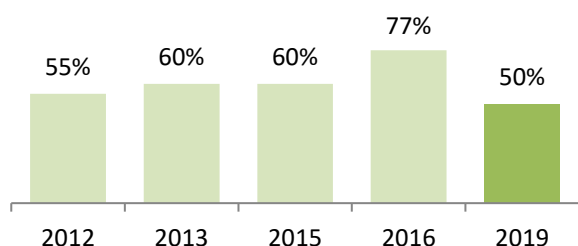




Change in satisfaction

Satisfaction with the appearance of the neighbourhood has gone from an all-time high in 2016 of 77% down to a new low figure of 50% (27% lower).

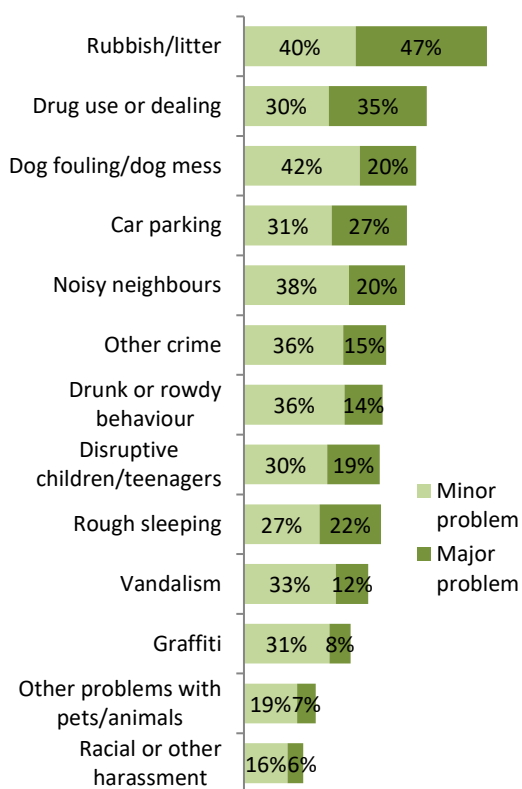
Figure 5.4: Change in satisfaction with the appearance of the neighbourhood



5.3 Local problems

There are some worrying aspects to note in respect of local problems being experienced by leaseholders in their neighbourhood.

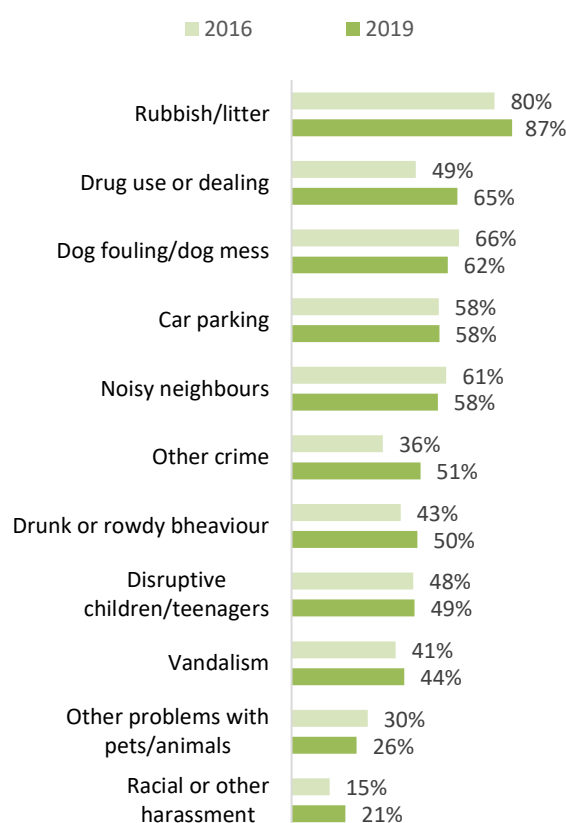
Figure 5.5: Local problems (minor and major) all leaseholders



It can be seen in the following table (Figure 5.6) that there is a notable increase in drug use or dealing being more of a major problem than in 2016 (14% higher); rubbish/litter has also become more of a major problem (12% higher), as has Other crime (7% higher). The new category asked this year was the issue of rough sleeping and 22% of leaseholders consider this a major problem and 27% a minor one.

Change over time

Figure 5.6: Change in satisfaction with local problems over the past three years (combined major & minor problems)



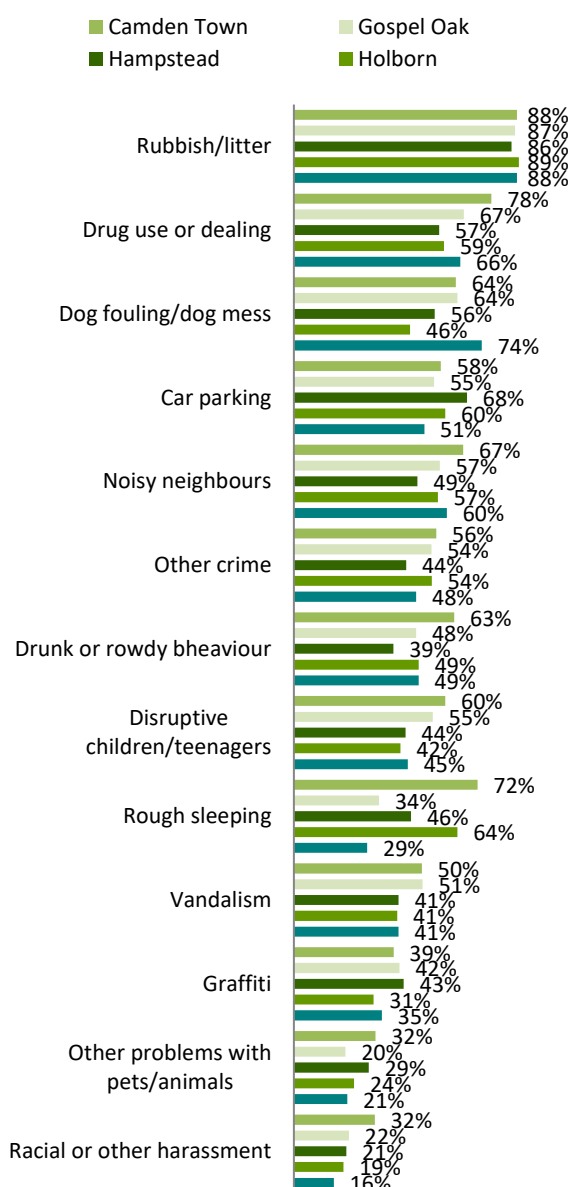
Local problems in each district

All districts cite litter/rubbish as their uppermost problem, and most have an increasing issue with drug use or dealing although only Camden Town and Gospel Oak have more than half of



leaseholders considering this a major problem. Camden Town also experience greater problems than other districts in all but a few aspects, particularly with rough sleeping, drunk and rowdy behaviour and racial or other harassment. Hampstead leaseholders have greater problems than others in respect of car parking and graffiti. Kentish Town leaseholders have a greater problem with dog fouling/dog mess than the other areas.

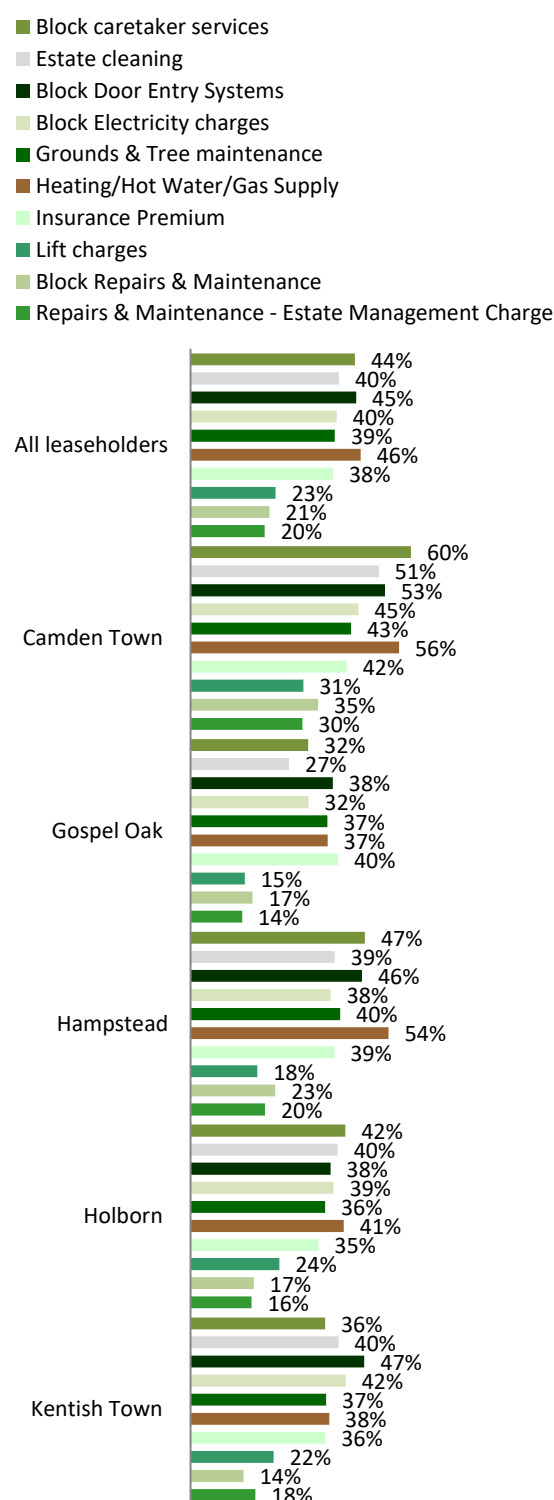
Figure 5.7: Differences in the levels of local problems reported by leaseholders in each district



5.4 Estate services

Leaseholders have rated their satisfaction with services provided on their estate and within their block.

Figure 5.8: Satisfaction with external services





Less than half of leaseholders are fully satisfied with the services offered with ratings ranging from 20% for repairs and maintenance up to 44% for block caretaker services.

Within district areas Camden Town consistently give the highest satisfaction ratings (30% up to 60%), while Gospel Oak and Kentish Town give some of the lowest ratings (14% up to 36%).



6. Repairs and maintenance service

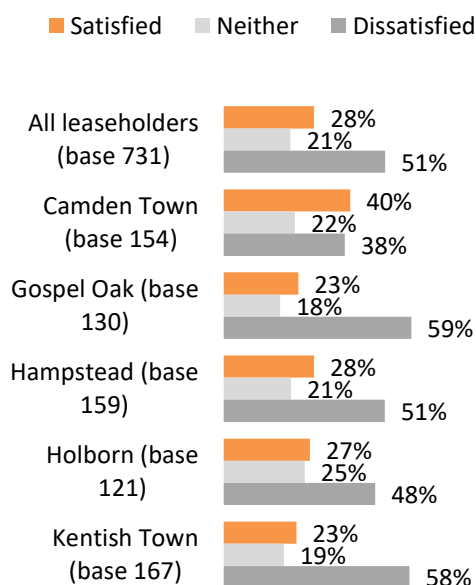
Camden Council is responsible for carrying out repairs & maintenance to the shared (communal) areas of buildings and estates, this may include repairs to roof, windows, doors, stairways, outside brickwork, electrical testing, fire risk assessment and repairs to pathways and fences within estates. Leaseholders are responsible for maintaining the inside of their home.

6.1 Overall satisfaction with repairs service

The overall rating for repairs remains quite low, with just over a quarter satisfied (28%) and over a half dissatisfied (51%).

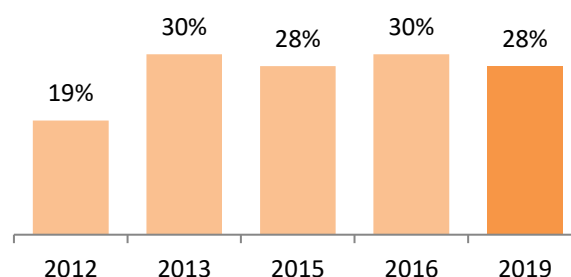
Camden Town leaseholders are the most satisfied (40%) with Gospel Oak and Kentish Town the least satisfied (both 23%).

Figure 6.1: Satisfaction with repairs and maintenance service



The overall rating for the repairs and maintenance service (28%) is 2% lower than the level recorded in 2016 (30%).

Figure 6.2: Change in satisfaction with the repairs and maintenance service by tenure





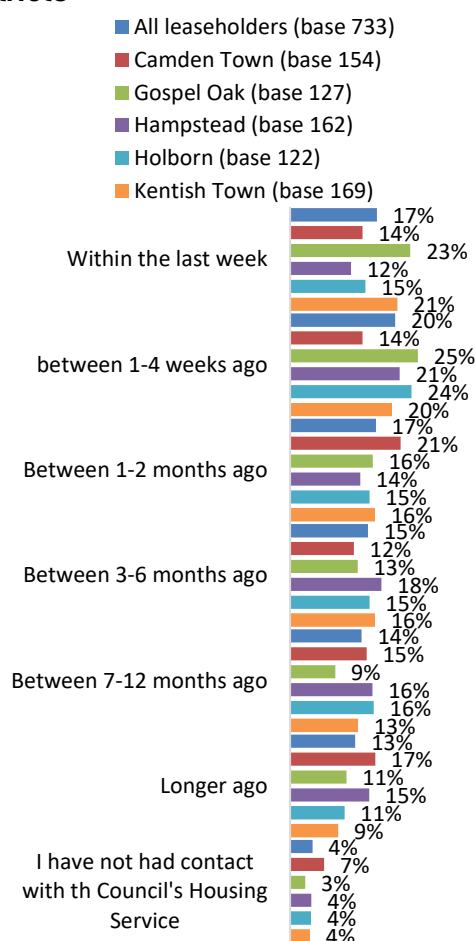
7. Contact and communication

This section examines leaseholder perceptions of the customer service they receive and the level of satisfaction they have with how Camden communicates with them.

7.1 Contacting the landlord

Overall around a third of leaseholders contacted Camden during the four weeks prior to the survey – of which 17% had contacted within the week of the survey. Leaseholders in Gospel Oak (25%) and Holborn (24%) made more contact recently than leaseholders in other areas (14% to 21%).

Figure 7.1: Breakdown of contact within districts

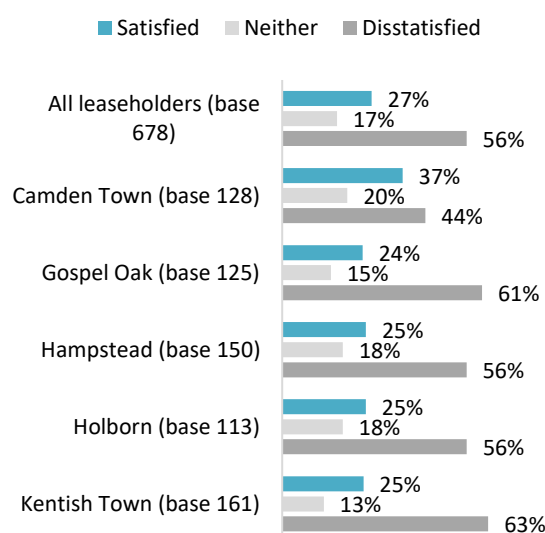


7.2 Ease of getting most recent query resolved

Over a quarter of leaseholders are satisfied with the ease of getting their most recent query resolved (27%). There are, however, over half of leaseholders who found it difficult (56%).

Leaseholders in Gospel Oak (61%) and Kentish Town (63%) had the most difficulty in getting their query resolved.

Figure 7.2: Satisfaction with ease of resolving queries by district



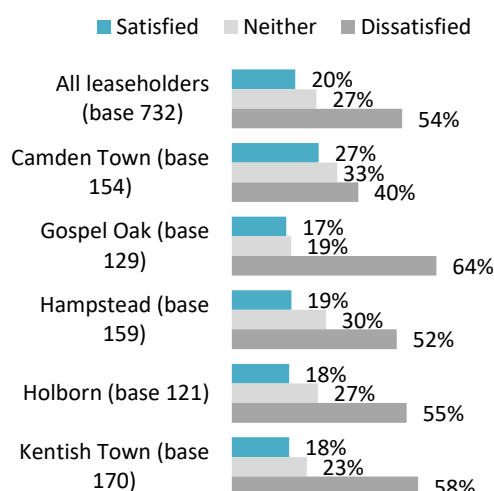
7.3 Listens to views and acts on them

A fifth of leaseholders expressed satisfaction that their views are listened to and acted upon (20%).

The satisfaction rating is higher in Camden Town (27%) than in other districts (17% to 19%). Dissatisfaction is noticeably higher in Gospel Oak (64%) than in other districts (40% to 58%).

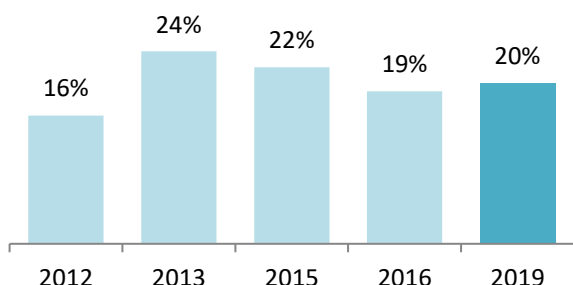


Figure 7.3: Satisfaction with the listening to views by district



There has been little change in satisfaction levels over the past three years, however, slightly better ratings were recorded in 2013 (24%)

Figure 7.4: Change in satisfaction with listening to views over the last five years



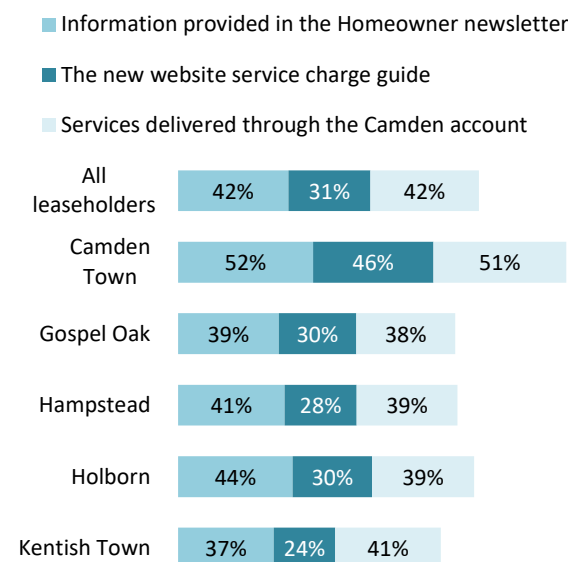
7.4 Information and advice

Leaseholders were asked for their views on the information and advice they received from Camden about being a leaseholder; the new service charge guide on the website; and the Camden Account which allows leaseholders to view, pay and get more information about their service charge online.

Two-fifths of leaseholders are satisfied with the information in the Homeowner newsletter and the online Camden account services (42%). Fewer leaseholders are satisfied with the new service charge guide on the website (31%).

Satisfaction is higher in Camden Town district (52%) and lower in Kentish Town (37%) and Gospel Oak (39%).

Figure 7.5: Satisfaction with information and advice



8. Leaseholder comments

In order to provide greater understanding of leaseholder perceptions and expectations around the services they receive, a section was provided in the survey offering the opportunity to make comments about Camden's Housing Service.

424 leaseholders took up the opportunity to comment on services received – many making more than one point, providing a total of 612 comments altogether.

A number of the comments are of a positive nature (6%), with praise for staff and efficiency of service.

The service area with the most comments was customer contact (29%), which with communications and information, (3%) makes up to a third of all comments. Key issues are the difficulties experienced in getting hold of staff and not getting calls returned. Chief among the issues in communications and information is not being listened to.

A lot of the comments seem related to the next highest area of concern, repairs and maintenance (17%). Along with planned works (4%) and property condition (5%) these account for over a quarter of comments made. While many comments were general, areas highlighted are difficulties in reporting repairs and in getting them carried out in a reasonable time. Key areas under property condition are roof repairs and external property maintenance.

Tenant services (5%) and tenancy management (4%) account for 9% of comments, most of which relate to

service charge services being too high; not being carried out; or not properly explained.

Estate services are commented on by 5% of leaseholders, with communal maintenance and cleaning of key concern. There are also a number of residents commenting on problems with rubbish collection areas/skips.

Positive comments	6%
Staff - helpful	12
General, happy, no problems	6
Good efficient service, well managed	6
Cleaning & maintenance are good	2
Good housing officer/warden	2
Staff - approachable, easy to contact	2
Staff in general	2
Good website, easy to use	1
Repairs - good workmen/contractors, arrive on time	1
Repairs service	1
Resolve queries, respond quickly	1
Customer contact	29%
Long time to get through / hard to contact	36
Respond to emails	22
Complaints handling	14
Did not call /email back/have to keep chasing	13
Poor call handling - kept on hold/passed around to different people	12
Not very helpful or professional, rude staff	11
Issue/problem not resolved/Enquiry not answered	10
Did not know who to call/new numbers	7
Poor customer service (general)	7
Do not keep us informed of progress	6
Did not call back/have to keep chasing	5
No direct lines	5
Inconsistent - some staff	4



good/some bad	
Lack of knowledge	4
Staff don't communicate with each other	4
Better customer care, customer service	3
Not taken seriously	3
Respond to queries quicker	3
Do not like automated system	2
Don't give direct answers	2
Accessibility e.g. of centres, offices	1
Be more understanding & honest, treat fairly	1
Communications & information	3%
Should listen more carefully/do not seem interested	7
Improve website	6
Improve communication	3
Keep tenants up to date with planned works timetable	2
More concerned with budgets than customers	1
Views not acted upon/no feedback	1
Repairs & maintenance	17%
Repairs service generally	29
Ease of reporting repair	10
Quicker repairs	7
Improve contractors	6
Returning calls	6
Repairs not covered	5
Timescale to complete repairs	5
Missed appointment	4
Quality of repair work	4
Had to keep reporting repair to get it fixed	3
Outstanding repairs	3
Right first time	3
Some repairs not covered/rechargeable	3
Check repairs done, inspect work	2
Communicating service standards	2
Follow up works communication	2
Provide appointments, at the right times	2
Contractors damaged home/belonging	1
Contractors just turn up	1
Did not turn up with right fittings	1

Gave up in the end and did the job themselves	1
Internal communication breakdown	1
Keep appointments	1
Planned works	4%
Planned works (general)	19
Central heating, better heating system	3
New windows	1
Property condition	5%
Roof repairs	11
External property maintenance	8
Sound proofing	4
Need better property security	3
Carry out fire safety check	2
Poor property condition	2
Insulation needed	1
Poor build quality	1
Neighbourhood	6%
Drugs related problems	8
Problems with noise from neighbours	4
Problems with pests	4
ASB	3
Car parking	3
Crime	3
Improved security, do not feel safe	3
Litter and rubbish	2
Litter, graffiti, vandalism	2
Dogs noise or fouling	1
Going downhill	1
Neighbourhood / local problems	1
Problems with neighbours (non-specific)	1
Standard of tenant gardens	1
Tenant services	5%
Service charge services not carried out/not properly explained	18
Poor caring company	7
Poor services generally	6
Poor warden/housing officer	2
Tenancy management	4%
Rent issues, rent statements	9
Service charge too high/poor value	7
Enforce tenancy agreement	2
Poor housing officer	2



Better tenant mix, vet tenants	1
Lower heating costs	1
Poor condition of property at letting	1
Rent too high / not value for money	1
Want to move, transfer	1
Estate & grounds maintenance	5%
Cleaning of communal areas	8
Maintenance/decoration of communal areas	4
On-site office/caretaker	3
Poor quality cleaning service	3
Drainage, flooding problems	2
Estate services (general)	2
Grounds maintenance - grass cutting/ gardeners	2
Lifts (keep in good repair)	2
Fences and gates	1
Poor cleanliness of communal areas	1
Other codes	5%
Problems with rubbish collection, areas, skips	17
Homeowners not treated same as tenants	8
More energy efficient, environmental, group purchase, solar panels etc.	2
Give no more than they have to	1
Lack of understanding from decision makers	1
More financial efficiency	1
Not as good as it once was/many cutbacks	1
Other	10%
Negative comment	31
Other	23
Neutral comment/not applicable	8
Already commented in Q5	2

9. Demographics

This section looks at the demographics of Leasehold respondents in the 2019 survey. The demographic composition of leaseholders does have an influence on satisfaction ratings and this information will provide Camden with greater insight into how services are used and in determining the right mix of services to provide.

9.1 Age (principal leaseholder)

Around three-fifths of all principal leaseholders (62%) are aged between 35 and 64 years old, with almost a third now aged over 65 years of age and just under a fifth aged 34 years and under. This is a similar picture to the situation at the time of the last survey in 2016.

Figure 9.1: Age of leaseholders

All leaseholders	
34 years & under	17%
35-64 years	62%
65+ years	28%

(Base 699 leaseholders)

9.2 Gender (principal leaseholder)

There is a fairly even split in the gender of leaseholders – 45% male and 55% female. This is similar to the 2016 survey, although the ratio was then 51% male and 49% female

Figure 9.2: Gender of principal leaseholder

All leaseholders	
Male	45%
Female	55%

(Base 682 leaseholders)

9.3 Ethnic origin

Just over three-quarters of Camden's leasehold respondents are White (78%) and around a fifth (22%) having a Black and Minority Ethnic background.

Figure 9.3: Ethnic origin of respondent

All leaseholders	
White	78%
Mixed/multiple ethnic group	4%
Asian/Asian British	9%
Black/Black British: African/Caribbean	3%
Chinese	2%
Other ethnic group	3%

(Base 644 leaseholders)

9.4 Disability

The majority of leaseholders do not consider themselves to have a disability (91%). This figure has not altered since the last survey in 2016.

Figure 9.4: Does the leaseholder consider themselves to have a disability?

All leaseholders	
Yes	9%
No	91%

(Base 677 leaseholders)

9.5 Sexual orientation

The vast majority of leaseholders describe themselves as heterosexual (91%), with 7% gay or lesbian and 2% bisexual.

Figure 9.5: How would you describe your sexual orientation?

All leaseholders	
Heterosexual / Straight	91%
Gay or lesbian	7%
Lesbian	1%
Bisexual	2%

(Base 534 leaseholders)



9.6 Demographic differences

The data tables reveal a lot of information and show how differences in demographics can influence the results, however, only those areas where numbers are sufficient to provide statistical reliability for comparisons shown.

Age – As a rule, residents of 65+ years tend to be more satisfied than younger age groups, and this is the case for Camden leaseholders. Leaseholders 65+ years of age are 38% more satisfied than leaseholders in the middle age range (35 years to 64 years) in respect of cleaning and upkeep of communal areas and between 16% and 29% more satisfied with other estate services. Satisfaction ratings were between 9% and 12% higher for aspects of the service charge; 16%-18% higher for communication, and 18% higher for repairs & maintenance. Leaseholders aged 34 years and under are also more satisfied than middle age range leaseholders generally, particularly with listening to views (10% higher) and the repairs service overall (8% higher).

Gender – There is little difference in satisfaction ratings between male and female leasehold respondents, with some exceptions: female ratings are around 3% to 6% lower than ratings from male respondents in respect of service charge calculations, service charge guide, the Camden account, cleaning and upkeep of communal areas, grounds maintenance and repairs & maintenance. Female respondents are, however, more satisfied with services overall and the information provided in the Homeowner newsletter.

Ethnicity – Non-white British leaseholders are much less satisfied than White British leaseholders in the areas of housing and services (4% to

22% lower), service charge (6% to 11% lower) and neighbourhood (14% to 19% lower). White British leaseholders are less satisfied with estate services (3% to 7% higher).

Disability– Leaseholders with a disability are less satisfied in all service areas (particularly with quality of home which is 15% lower), but more satisfied with the new service charge guide on the website, cleaning of external areas and refuse and recycling arrangements – all 10% higher than leaseholders without a disability.

Length of tenancy – The majority of leaseholders responding to the survey have been in their properties for over 11 years (88%) so comparisons with those who have been resident for a shorter period of time are indicative rather than statistically reliable. The indications are that satisfaction is highest amongst new residents, gradually decreasing for those residents for between one and three years, at their peak between 4 and 10 years and starting to decrease again from leaseholders' resident for 11 years or more.

9.7 Area differences

Camden Town - leaseholders give above average satisfaction ratings for overall services, quality of home, service charge, communication, contact, estate services and repairs & maintenance. The only element lower than average, and indeed the lowest for all areas, is satisfaction with the neighbourhood, both as a place to live and its appearance.

Gospel Oak - In contrast, leaseholders in Gospel Oak are on many occasions the least satisfied of the areas, with lower than average ratings for housing and services, service charge, listening to views, contact and repairs. The satisfaction rating for Gospel Oak as a



place to live is, however, 2% higher than the average rating and neighbourhood appearance equals the average rating.

Hampstead - Leaseholders in Hampstead are close to the average satisfaction levels with the exception of the quality of home which is joint lowest (2% lower) and external building repairs & maintenance which gave the highest satisfaction rating of the districts (39%).

Holborn - leaseholders in this district had similar ratings to Hampstead in most service areas but gave the lowest ratings for estate services.

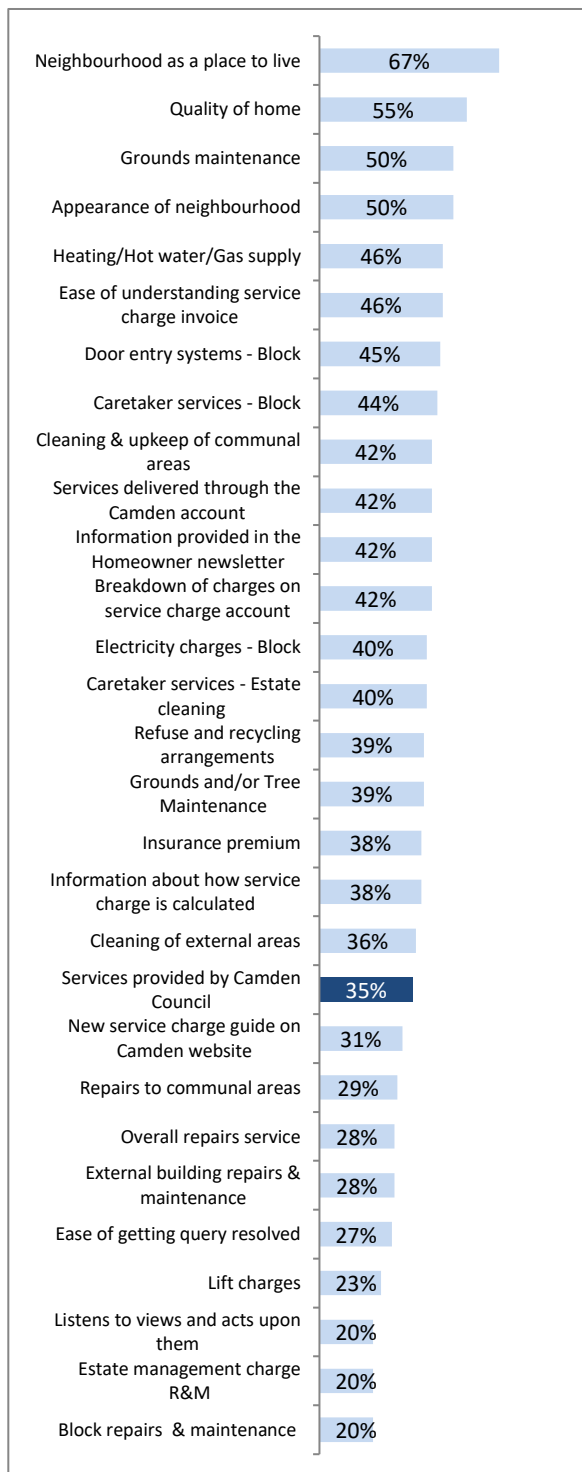
Kentish Town - Leaseholders in Kentish Town gave the highest ratings out of all districts for their neighbourhood as a place to live (9% above average) and for its appearance (6% above average). However, this district also gave the lowest ratings for elements of the service charge, communication and the overall repairs service.

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10. Understanding overall satisfaction

10.1 Key services

Figure 10.1: Satisfaction with key services for all leaseholders



It is apparent that the majority of leaseholders like the area of London in which they live and with the quality of their home – both of which receive the highest satisfaction ratings (67% and 55% respectively).

Far fewer leaseholders are satisfied with aspects of leasehold ownership over which they have less control:

- Service charge communication 38% to 46% satisfaction
- Delivery and cost of service 20% to 46% satisfaction
- Communication and information 20% to 42% satisfaction
- Customer contact 27% satisfaction
- Estate services 28% to 50% satisfaction
- Repairs & maintenance 28% satisfaction

The low satisfaction ratings in these areas have resulted in an overall headline figure of 35% satisfaction with landlord services.

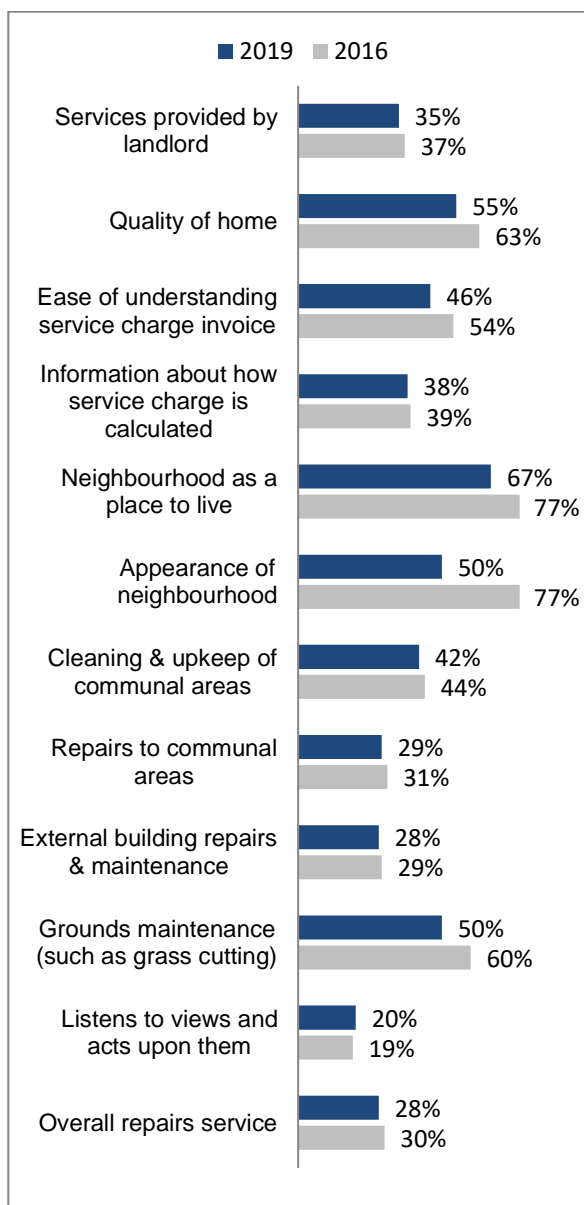
10.2 Changes in satisfaction

There are five areas where there has been a significant drop in satisfaction levels since 2016: quality of home (8% lower); ease of understanding the service charge invoice (8% lower); neighbourhood as a place to live (10% lower); grounds maintenance (10% lower); and appearance of neighbourhood (27% lower)

In other areas there has been a downward trend in satisfaction in 2016 (between 1% and 2% lower). These are not statistically significant but do need bearing in mind when reviewing policy.



Figure 10.2: Change in satisfaction since 2016



10.4 Dissatisfaction levels

With such low satisfaction ratings it is unsurprising that there are some correspondingly high dissatisfaction levels, although it should be noted that in some areas the level of leaseholders who are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied is also high, which in some cases may indicate a lower level uptake of the service area – such as the service charge guide on the Camden website (51% neutral) , information provided in

the Homeowner newsletter (41% neutral) and services delivered through the Camden account (35% neutral).

In other areas a neutral response may also indicate a possible leaning towards dissatisfaction if things do not improve, such as aspects within the delivery and cost of service, estate services and communication.

Dissatisfaction levels run from 17% up to 56%. Breaking this down into the different service areas, high dissatisfaction levels (over 20%) were noted as follows:

Figure 10.3: Dissatisfaction levels

Housing and services	Dissatisfied
Services provided by Camden Council	47%
Quality of home	25%
Service charge	
Breakdown of charges on service charge account	40%
Ease of understanding service charge invoice	38%
Information about how service charge is calculated	37%
Neighbourhood	
Appearance of neighbourhood	34%
Delivery and cost of service	
Repairs & maintenance - Block	58%
Repairs & maintenance - Estate management charge	51%
Lift charges	46%
Caretaker services - Estate cleaning	43%
Grounds and/or Tree Maintenance	40%
Caretaker services - Block	37%
Door entry systems - Block	35%
Heating/Hot water/Gas supply	34%
Electricity charges - Block	24%
Communication	
Listens to views and acts upon them	54%

Services delivered through the Camden account	23%
Contact	
Ease of getting query resolved	56%
Estate Services	
External building repairs & maintenance	51%
Repairs to communal areas	50%
Cleaning of external areas	46%
Cleaning & upkeep of communal areas	45%
Refuse and recycling arrangements	44%
Grounds maintenance	31%
Repairs & maintenance service	
Overall repairs service	51%
Estate Services	

10.5 Key driver analysis

Key Driver Analysis is an important tool that informs landlords which service areas are most likely to influence overall customer satisfaction. This is carried out by examining the correlations between independent variables (the different

questions) and overall satisfaction. The stronger the correlation the greater the influence.

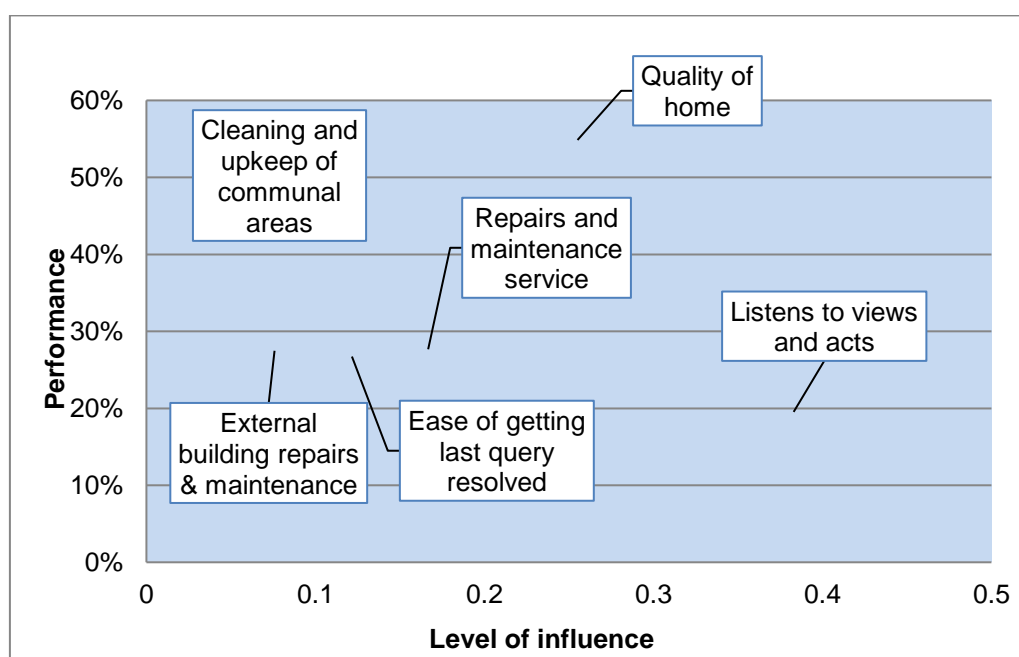
The analysis is based on the results from all leaseholders, those who did not have an opinion are excluded this this analysis.

Overall satisfaction

As figure 10.4 demonstrates the most important driver of satisfaction is listening to views and acting upon them, which aligns with the lowest ratings in the survey (20%), this is closely followed by quality of home which is one of the better performing areas but as noted in 10.2, satisfaction has dropped by 8% since the last survey.

Other important drivers of satisfaction are the repairs and maintenance service and elements of estate services.

Figure 10.4: Key driver analysis – overall satisfaction

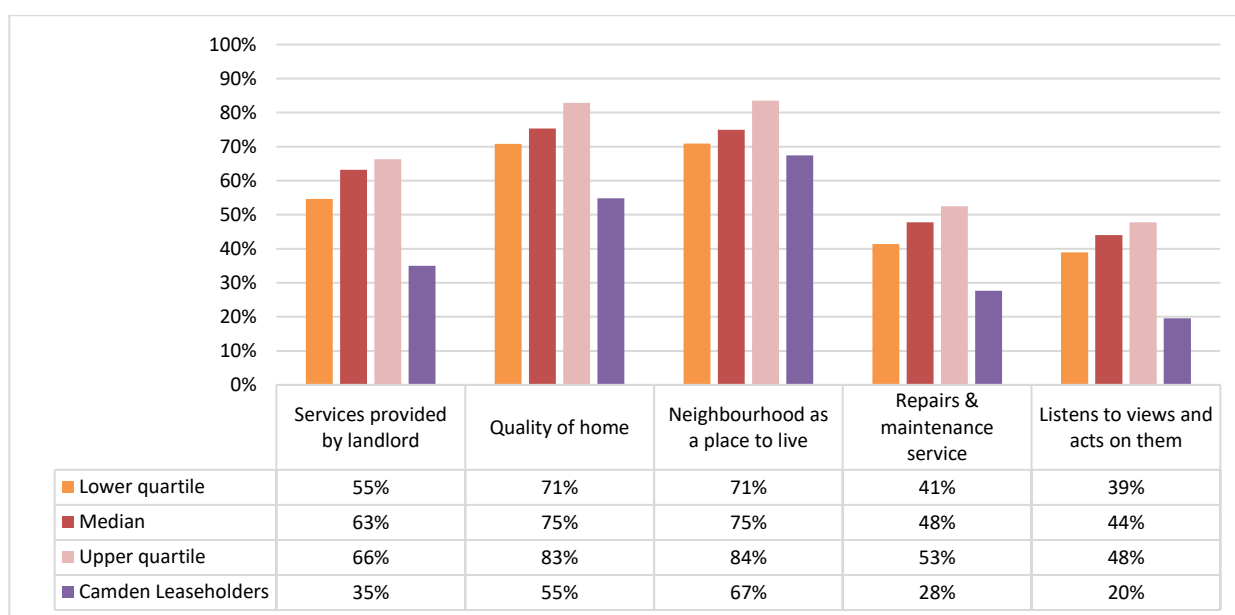




11. Comparison with other landlords

The results from the Camden survey have been compared against HouseMark benchmarking data for landlords with Leaseholders. The comparison reveals that satisfaction at Camden is significantly below average for all aspects covered: 28% lower for overall services; 20% lower for quality of home, 8% lower for neighbourhood as a place to live; 20% lower for repairs & maintenance; and 24% lower for listening to views and acting upon them. All results fall into the bottom quartile.

Figure 11.1: Comparison with other landlords – HouseMark Leaseholders (2019/20)





12. Conclusion

Acuity and other research agencies have evidenced over the years that leaseholders, whether in social housing or in private housing, generally have little or no confidence in the abilities of their managing agent and satisfaction ratings are very modest, in particular for communications and service charge expenditure.

As is found in reading through the comments made by respondents to this survey, a significant minority display extreme frustrations with making contact with Camden, being listened to and getting their query resolved. Expectations are high among an increasing number of residents who are used to shopping around for the best deals and obtaining goods and services within a short time scale. Even taking this into account, the difference in the ratings from tenants is much greater than would be expected.

The rating for services overall shows that less than a third of leaseholders are satisfied (35%) and this is lower than recorded in the past six years, matching the 2012 rating.

The key drivers of satisfaction in the 2019 survey have been identified as listening to views and acting upon them and the quality of the home. Listening to views is an area that crops up in the comments made by leaseholders, many of which are connected with poor customer contact, poor communications, repairs & maintenance and estate services.

The comments from leaseholders cite problems with the length of time to get through to a member of staff, the lack of responses to emails/letters and not very helpful or knowledgeable staff.

These comments are followed up with comments around repairs & maintenance and the frustrations around continually chasing up work, what is and what isn't covered in the lease and communication breakdown. There also appears to be a continuing issue of service charge services not being carried out or properly explained. Few leaseholders as yet are making use of the service charge guide on the website, perhaps preferring to discuss things with an officer.

These aspects of leaseholder occupancy also appear to be affecting satisfaction with the quality of home, which has seen a drop of 8% in satisfaction since 2016. Neighbourhood, although having the highest rating in the survey (67%), has also seen a drop in satisfaction (10% lower). The survey identifies that local problems are becoming more of a major problem – most particularly drug use or dealing (14% higher), which may need a multi-agency approach in managing.

These points have been noted in previous surveys and, with around 350 leaseholders willing to be re-contacted regarding information they have provided, there may be scope to involve them in discussions on how to improve services and meet their concerns.

There have been some changes in satisfaction levels within the different districts of Camden. Camden Town leaseholders give the highest ratings in all aspects except the neighbourhood and its appearance. Kentish Town ratings are improving – possibly in line with the new planning framework setting out the vision and objectives for future development in this area. Leaseholders in Gospel Oak are among the least satisfied with the exception of neighbourhood as a place to live.



Recommendations

Customer services

Good customer service reaps its rewards. It does not have to mean providing everything a leaseholder wants, but it does mean helping them in an efficient manner, being patient and attentive. Although regular customer service training will be taking place, it is important to ensure that the working environment allows staff to be able to respond to queries in a professional and helpful way, that there is support for staff, time allowed for dealing with queries and returning calls and information available to answer questions.

Repairs & maintenance and Estate services

There has been little movement in satisfaction with repairs & maintenance or estate services and leaseholders are reporting dissatisfaction with both the delivery and cost.

Camden are recommended to maintain the liaison they have with leaseholder groups and consult on more pro-active methods of monitoring contractors to ensure services are carried out at the specified levels.

Neighbourhood and local problems

Satisfaction with the appearance of the neighbourhood is 27% lower than in 2016 and the reasons for this may need investigating further. There may be a linkage with the increase in local problems, such as drug use or dealing, rubbish/litter and Other Crime, which will need a multi-agency approach to resolving.



About Acuity

Acuity Research & Practice provide resident satisfaction survey and benchmarking services, helping housing providers to improve services and engage with their residents through an understanding of satisfaction, performance and profiling data.

We focus on providing information that will inform performance improvement: positive outcomes for providers and residents, not just box-ticking. Our services are highly flexible, always carefully tailored to the requirements and budgets of our customers.

We have been providing consultancy services to the social housing sector for over 21 years. We work in partnership with HouseMark to support the benchmarking activities of smaller and specialist housing providers.

