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The Scottish
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Identifying the Priorities of Tenants of Social Landlords



social
research

IDENTIFYING THE PRIORITIES OF TENANTS OF SOCIAL LANDLORDS

**Mark Diffley and Steven Treanor,
Ipsos MORI Scotland and
Professor Hal Pawson,
School of the Built Environment
Heriot-Watt University**

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1 KEY FINDINGS SUMMARY

- ‘Firm Foundations’, the Scottish Government’s discussion document on the future of housing in Scotland, identified some key issues for the social housing sector. In particular it highlighted how, unlike consumers in ‘ordinary markets’, tenants in social housing cannot easily wield influence over service providers by ‘taking their custom elsewhere’.
- To address this, ‘Firm Foundations’ proposed two key initiatives: Firstly, strengthening the role of tenants so that they can become more empowered customers of their landlord – the ongoing development of the Registered Tenant Organisation (RTO) network is highlighted as a crucial step forward in this respect. Secondly, modernising the regulatory framework so that it exists to promote the needs and interests of tenants of social landlords.
- The Scottish Government included proposals for modernising the regulatory framework in the consultation paper on the draft Housing (Scotland) Bill that it published on 27 April 2009. The proposals have two main elements: introducing a Scottish Social Housing Charter that would define the outcomes and value that social landlords should be delivering for their tenants; and modernising the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) by giving it statutory independence with the objective of promoting the interests of tenants and prospective tenants and a range of modernised duties and powers to ensure that it achieved that objective.
- Within this context the Scottish Government’s Communities Analytical Services team commissioned Ipsos MORI and Heriot-Watt University to carry out research to inform the work of the Scottish Government in leading a national conversation about the outcomes that should be included in the Charter.
- The research comprised five components:
 - 1) a literature review of the current evidence base on tenants’ satisfaction with services delivered by social landlords;
 - 2) a telephone survey of a representative sample of 500 social housing tenants;
 - 3) a postal survey of all Registered Tenant Organisations (RTOs) in Scotland (of which we received 193 returns), who answered on behalf of their tenant members;
 - 4) qualitative research among mainstream tenants; and
 - 5) qualitative research among elected tenant members from each of the Regional Networks of RTOs in Scotland, who were representing tenants in their area.
- The research highlighted a number of key findings which contribute to a better understanding of social tenants’ priorities and of their perceptions of the SHR

and its work. The Scottish Government can use these findings to inform its current review of the SHR's purposes and roles.

Overall priorities of tenants

- The key service priority identified by tenants centred on immediate and 'everyday' services that directly affect the quality of tenants' lives on a daily basis. By far the biggest priority in this respect was the provision of good quality accommodation, with 23% of tenants rating this as the most important service relative to all other services. The second most important service was a good day-to-day repairs service (14% of tenants rated this as the most important service relative to all other services), followed by dealing with anti-social behaviour (12%), ensuring buildings and entrances are secure (11%), major modernisation and improvement work (9%) and dealing with nuisance neighbours (7%) (see Figure 3.2).
- Broadly speaking, tenants' priorities were reflected in the views of RTOs; like tenants, their highest priority was provision of good quality accommodation, with 79% of RTOs rating this as essential. However, RTOs were more likely than tenants to prioritise services that impacted on the wellbeing of the wider estate or neighbourhood (see Table 3.1).
- For the most part, those services that tenants and RTOs perceived as being foremost priorities also received high satisfaction ratings, while those services that received lower satisfaction ratings were perceived to be less important. However, this was less true of RTO responses. In particular, while attaching particularly high importance to addressing antisocial behaviour, RTOs tended to see landlords as weak performers here (see Figure 3.7).

Making judgements on service quality

- Tenants had limited knowledge of how the standard of service provided and the rent charged by their landlord compares to other landlords. Although RTOs were more likely to be knowledgeable on such comparisons, this was still mixed across RTOs.
- Further, tenants had mixed aspirations for knowing more about how the level of rent they pay and the services they receive compare to other social landlords. Moreover, among those who would like to know more, awareness of where to obtain information on landlord performance was limited.
- Three quarters (74%) of tenants who pay rent and nearly two-thirds (60%) of RTOs rated the accommodation and services provided by their landlord as representing good value for money.
- The two major considerations in determining perceptions on value for money were views on the standard of accommodation provided by landlords and rent levels. While tenants were most likely to mention the standard of accommodation as the factor primarily influencing their view on value for money, RTOs were most likely to mention rent levels.

- A minority of tenants (38%) and RTOs (20%) favoured a move to a regime where tenants could opt for additional services attracting additional charges. Focus group evidence revealed that tenants were unwilling to pay more while perceived weaknesses with current services remained to be addressed.

Awareness and perceptions of the Scottish Housing Regulator

- Awareness of inspection and regulation was low among tenants, with less than a quarter (24%) aware that the housing and other services provided by their landlord are inspected. Further, among those who were aware, only 1% identified the SHR as the organisation that carries out the inspection.
- As might be expected, awareness of regulation and inspection was greater among RTOs, with two fifths (41%) aware of occasions in the last three years when housing provided in their area had been inspected. In addition, the majority of this group had some degree of involvement in the inspection process.
- Despite limited awareness, nearly all tenants (95%) and RTOs (99%) believed it was important that their landlord's work is regulated and monitored by an independent organisation. Over a third (34%) of tenants and nearly three quarters (72%) of RTOs felt it was essential.
- Nearly all RTOs (97%) believed that the SHR should monitor and regulate all landlords in the social rented sector, including local authorities and RSLs.
- Despite being positive about the potential of the SHR to improve landlord services and create parity across different landlords, both tenants and RTOs had reservations about its work.
- While tenants' concerns related to the need to ensure inspections were representative of a landlord's service – for example, by adopting a 'hands on' approach and inspecting a random sample of properties, and consulting tenants directly – RTOs were critical of the move towards carrying out 'proportionate' inspections. In particular, they were concerned that light touch inspections might be inadequate to ensure the maintenance of high standards.
- In order for the SHR to function properly, both tenants and RTOs believed that it should be afforded sufficient powers to enforce change. While financial sanctions were perceived by both tenants and RTOs as counter-productive, there was a lack of consensus on the best means of penalising poorly performing landlords. Suggested actions included publicising findings or 'naming and shaming', implementing changes in management and enforcing housing stock transfers.

2 INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

“Meeting the changing demands and aspirations of [social housing] tenants is key to coping with a society that has changed a great deal and will go on changing in the future”¹

- 2.1 The availability of affordable, good quality social housing in Scotland is crucial for a significant proportion of the population, with one in four households currently renting their home from a Registered Social Landlord (RSL) or a local authority². Recognising this, the Scottish Government has highlighted the key contribution that improved social housing provision will make to the realisation of several of the Scottish Government National Outcomes, including tackling social inequalities and ensuring that our public services are of high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people’s needs.³
- 2.2 ‘Firm Foundations’, the Scottish Government’s discussion document on the future of housing in Scotland identified some key issues for the social housing sector. One of these was that tenants are in a relatively weak bargaining position in relation to their landlords because demand for social housing remains high in most areas, supply is relatively low and allocation continues to be determined by need rather than individual choice. Consequently, unlike consumers in ‘ordinary markets’, tenants in social housing cannot easily wield influence over service providers by ‘taking their custom elsewhere’.
- 2.3 To address this, ‘Firm Foundations’ proposed two key initiatives: Firstly, strengthening the role of tenants so that they can become more empowered customers of their landlord – the ongoing development of the Registered Tenant Organisation (RTO) network is highlighted as a crucial step forward in this respect. Secondly, modernising the regulatory framework so that it exists “for the benefit of consumers of housing and related services, with an explicit duty to promote their needs and interests.”⁴
- 2.4 The Scottish Government included proposals for modernising the regulatory framework in the consultation paper on the draft Housing (Scotland) Bill that it published on 27 April 2009⁵. The consultation paper described the purpose of these proposals as focusing the efforts of landlords on:
- Meeting tenants’ priorities
 - Continually improving performance and value; and
 - Commanding the confidence of public and private investors in social housing.

¹ Scottish Government (2007) *Firm Foundations: The Future of Housing in Scotland: A discussion document* (Chpt.7). Edinburgh: Scottish Government

² Scottish Housing Regulator:
http://www.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk/stellent/groups/public/documents/webpages/shr_whatwed_o.hcsp

³ <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/About/scotPerforms/outcomes>

⁴ Ibid

⁵ <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2009/04/27095102/0>

- 2.5 The proposals have two main elements: introducing a Scottish Social Housing Charter that would define the outcomes and value that social landlords should be delivering for their tenants; and modernising the SHR by giving it statutory independence with the objective of promoting the interests of tenants and prospective tenants and a range of modernised duties and powers to ensure that it achieved that objective.
- 2.6 It is within this context that the Scottish Government's Communities Analytical Services team commissioned Ipsos MORI and Heriot-Watt University to carry out research to inform the work of the Scottish Government in leading a national conversation about the outcomes that should be included in the Charter.
- 2.7 While there is a significant body of research on tenant satisfaction in social housing, few studies have specifically investigated tenant priorities for the operation of landlord services (a more detailed discussion of this body of research can be found in the literature review, included in Annex A). Such work has been particularly sparse in Scotland. Perhaps the most directly relevant publication on this subject concerns tenant interests regarding information on landlord services. Drawing on a survey of Registered Tenant Organisations (RTOs), a 2007 study found that 'tenants were concerned most with service standards and information about performance in the main areas of lettings, rent, anti-social behaviour, inspection, tenant participation and satisfaction'⁶.
- 2.8 Three recent studies on tenant priorities in England are of some relevance in relation to this. The first is the most recent report of the four-yearly Existing Tenants Survey (ETS) as undertaken for the Housing Corporation⁷ since the early 1990s. With a sample size of 10,000 housing association tenants, the dataset is a potentially valuable source of data on consumer attitudes in the social rented sector. The questions most relevant to the matter of 'tenant priorities' have been relatively few in number and somewhat indirect in phraseology. Nevertheless, the 2004 ETS found that services considered very important to the largest number of respondents were: home repairs and maintenance (73%); repairs and maintenance to shared facilities (62%); security (57%); overall quality of home (57%); and keeping tenants informed (54%). At the other end of the scale, the services considered very important by the smallest numbers of respondents were: advising tenants on starting their own business (24%); helping tenants to access jobs and/or training (26%); and providing community facilities (30%).
- 2.9 A second recent English study relevant to our research is the report of the Housing Corporation's Residents Panel survey⁸, made up of 2,400 tenants of local authorities and housing associations. These findings appear somewhat at variance with the ETS results outlined above. Asked to indicate which

⁶ ERS (2007) *National research for the thematic study into how social landlords share information about performance and governance*, Glasgow: Communities Scotland

⁷ Housing Corporation Survey of existing housing association tenants. London: Housing Corporation

⁸ Unpublished findings from: Tenants Services Authority (2008) *Housing Corporation Residents' Panel Wave 8 research*, July 2008.

issues they believed should be priorities for the Tenant Services Authority (TSA) , England's new social housing regulator, the key priorities, identified were: rent levels; neighbourhood issues (namely crime and anti-social behaviour); condition of homes; repairs and maintenance services; opportunities for tenants to contact the TSA; the financial performance of landlords; and opportunities for tenants to have a say⁹.

2.10 Residents Panel members were also asked to rate their landlord's performance in terms of the functions performed 'well' and 'less well'. It highlighted functions where the percentage of respondents considering their landlord as performing poorly exceeded the proportion seeing their landlord as doing a good job. Landlord functions tending to be seen as relatively problematic included those concerned with 'neighbourhood management', with the proportion of tenants rating their landlord as performing 'well' exceeding the proportion rating it as 'less well' in relation to 'looking after the neighbourhood' and 'dealing with crime and vandalism'¹⁰.

2.11 In a third recent English study relevant to the current research, the Tenant Involvement Commission¹¹ found that:

- Housing association tenant priorities were: a commitment to delivering a quality service; competent and polite service from frontline staff; speedy repairs completed to a high standard; listening to tenants; security; and affordable rent.
- Repairs and maintenance were the major areas of dissatisfaction for Housing Association (HA) tenants. Some tenants believed they received a poor level of service in terms of repairs because they were not considered by their landlord as 'valued customers'.
- Very few tenants knew how their landlord compared with others, but there were tenants interested in this.
- Many tenants felt they had few choices and would have liked more say on the operation of landlord services.
- While concerned that customers should not pay extra for what should be core services, some tenants would like the option to pay more for additional services.

2.12 Complementing these findings, the current research has investigated the priorities of social sector tenants in Scotland. In this way, we have sought to enhance the evidence base which will be used to inform the development of appropriate objectives for Scottish social landlords, against which the SHR will measure future landlord performance.

2.13 This document reports the priorities of social housing tenants in Scotland and will allow a contrast to be made with the various English-based studies reported above.

⁹ A more detailed discussion of these findings is included in the literature review included in Annex A.

¹⁰ A more detailed discussion of these findings is included in the literature review included in Annex A.

¹¹ Tenant Involvement Commission (2006) *What Tenants Want*. Report of the tenant involvement commission

Aims and objectives

2.14 The central aim of this research was to identify tenants' priorities for social housing provided by both Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) and local authorities. In addition, the research aimed to capture tenants' understanding and opinion of 'value' in terms of the service delivered by their landlords compared to other landlords, as well as their views on the jurisdiction of, and powers required by, the modernised SHR.

2.15 In order to achieve these aims, the specific objectives of the research were to:

- undertake a brief evidence review on tenant satisfaction with services they receive in Scotland.
- identify and rank the range and type of tenant priorities in terms of services received from their social landlord.
- examine the extent to which tenants would be willing to pay a higher rent for additional or improved services.
- identify tenants' views and priorities in terms of the role the regulation of social landlords should play in protecting tenants' interests.
- identify whether tenants are currently able to compare the service quality and value for money of local social landlords and whether this is something they would like to be able to do more in the future.
- identify what tenants consider to be examples of good and bad practice in terms of social housing provision and related services.
- provide a summary of key themes and messages; identifying any key trends by age, sex, ethnicity, disability/limiting long term illness and receipt of benefits.

Methodology

2.16 The research included the following five components:

- a literature review¹² of the current evidence base on tenants' satisfaction with services delivered by social landlords;
- a telephone survey of a representative sample of 500 social housing tenants;
- a postal survey of all Registered Tenant Organisations (RTOs) in Scotland (of which we received 193 returns), who answered on behalf of their tenant members;
- qualitative research among mainstream tenants; and
- qualitative research among members of RTOs, who were representing tenants in their area.

¹² Although it has already been drawn on in this chapter, a copy of the full literature review is included in the Annex A.

2.17 Full details of the methodology used for each component are provided in Annex B.

Structure of the report

2.18 The next chapter describes the methodology adopted for the research. Subsequent chapters detail the main findings from the survey. Chapter three outlines the key overall services as identified by tenants and considers how satisfied they were with these services, before considering priorities in relation to specific aspects of the day-to-day repairs service and customer services. Chapter four looks at whether tenants might be able to make accurate judgements of service quality and examines perceptions of value for money. Chapter five outlines the extent to which tenants feel their landlord consults them on issues that might affect them and examines whether or not tenants would like more involvement in the way landlords run housing services. Chapter six focuses on awareness and perceptions of inspection, regulation and the SHR. Finally, Chapter seven concludes the report and discusses the implications of the research for policy.

3 OVERALL PRIORITIES OF TENANTS

Key findings

Tenants and RTOs identified the provision of good quality accommodation as their key service priority.

Other services identified as priorities by tenants were centred on immediate and 'everyday' services; that is, those services that directly affect the quality of tenants' lives on a daily basis. By far the biggest priority in this respect was the provision of good quality accommodation, with 23% of tenants rating this as the most important service relative to all other services. The second most important service was a good day-to-day repairs service (14% of tenants rated this as the most important service relative to all other services), followed by dealing with anti-social behaviour (12%), ensuring buildings and entrances are secure (11%), major modernisation and improvement work (9%) and dealing with nuisance neighbours (7%).

Similar to tenants, RTOs were most likely to rate good quality accommodation as a priority service, with 79% rating this as essential. However, relative to other services, RTOs were more likely than tenants to prioritise the importance of services impacting on the wellbeing of the wider estate or neighbourhood, including dealing with anti-social behaviour, dealing with nuisance neighbours, keeping buildings and entrances secure, taking tenants' views into account and involving tenants in decision making.

The majority of tenants were satisfied with all services. RTOs were less likely than tenants to be satisfied with all services

For the most part, those services that tenants and RTOs perceived as being most important also received high satisfaction scores. Further, those services that tenants and RTOs were least likely to be satisfied with were perceived to be less important. However, this was less true of RTO responses. In particular, while attaching particularly high importance to addressing antisocial behaviour, RTOs generally considered that landlords were weak performers here (see Figure 3.7, page 31).

- 3.1 This chapter focuses on tenants' key overall priorities. The chapter is divided into three main sections. Firstly, we outline the services that tenants and RTOs identified, unprompted, as the most important to them, followed by a discussion of the extent to which all main services were identified as being important. Secondly, we consider how satisfied tenants and RTOs were with these services and compare levels of service importance and service satisfaction. Thirdly, we examine the particular aspects of the day-to-day repairs service and customer services that were important to tenants and RTOs.

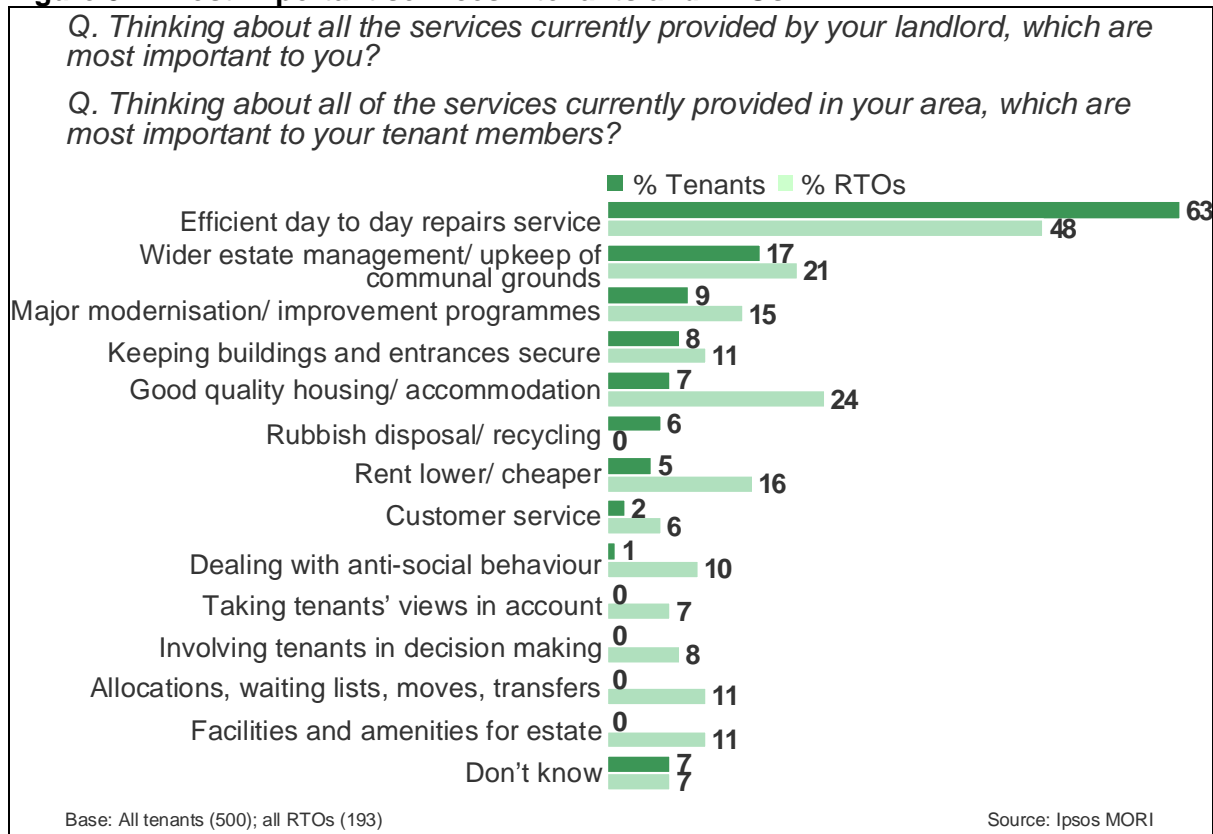
Most important services – unprompted responses

- 3.2 Tenants and RTOs showed consistency in their views of services which are most important to them. Around two-thirds of tenants (63%) and around half of RTOs (48%) reported that the repairs service is of the highest priority to them. (See Figure 3.1). Other services identified as being most important by both groups included wider estate management and the upkeep and maintenance of communal grounds (17% of tenants and 21% of RTOs),

major modernisations and improvement to homes (9% and 15%) and security, including keeping the building and entrances secure (8% and 11%). These findings also widely reflect the views of tenants from the many English-based studies that have taken place.

3.3 However, there were some differences between tenants and RTOs. For example, RTOs were more likely than tenants to say that affordable rent levels, allocations, including waiting lists and requests for moves and transfers and facilities for the community and estate were among the most important services (16%, 11% and 11% compared to 5%, 0% and 0% respectively).

Figure 3.1: Most important services – tenants and RTOs



Overall service priorities

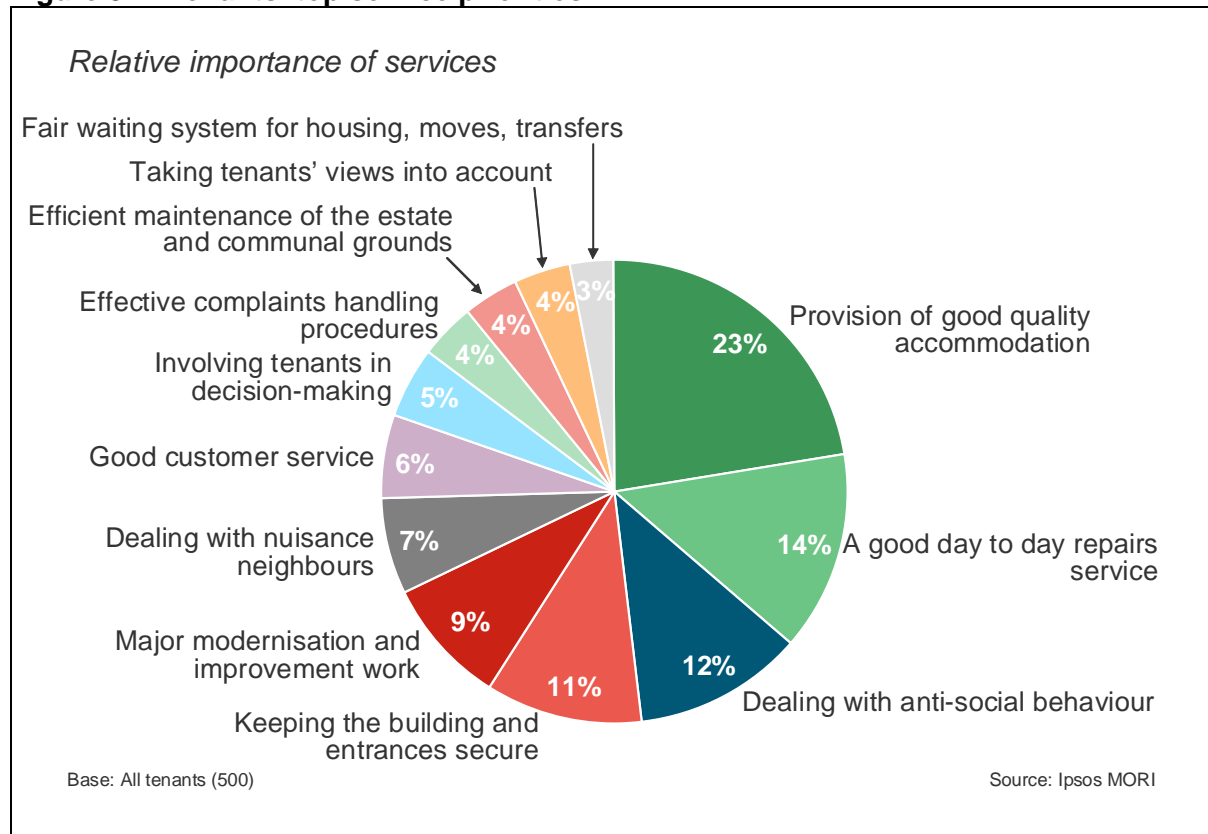
Tenants

- 3.4 The findings from the 'paired choice'¹³ questions, shown in figure 3.2, indicate that the priorities of tenants were centred on immediate and 'everyday' services, that is, those services that directly affect the quality of tenants' lives on a daily basis. By far the most important service for tenants was the provision of good quality accommodation, with 23% of tenants stating this as the most important service *relative to all other services*¹⁴, despite this not being the most mentioned response unprompted. The second most important service was good day to day repairs (14% of tenants said this was the most important service relative to all other services), followed by dealing with anti-social behaviour (12%), ensuring buildings and entrances are secure (11%), major modernisation and improvement work (9%) and dealing with nuisance neighbours (7%).
- 3.5 Those services that are less likely to directly affect tenants' quality of life on a daily basis, or those that tenants are likely to have less experience of, were felt to be less important: good customer service (6%); involving tenants in decision making (5%); effective complaints handling procedures (4%); efficient maintenance of the estate and communal grounds (4%); taking tenants views into account (4%); and having a fair system for managing lists for housing and requests for moves and transfers (3%). It is important to bear in mind that the survey results for service priorities are based on the perceptions of tenants and not necessarily service users. Therefore, it is possible that some tenants would have had little experience of, or little need to use, some of the services.

¹³ Paired Choice is an analysis technique where we ask respondents to choose between two attributes, in this case services. By repeating this exercise a number of times, we are able to ascertain how people feel about a list of many services (in comparison to the others). We can use this information to come up with 'worth' scores for each service which we can turn into preference percentages. This is a form of derived importance, but as opposed to a rating/ranking exercise, we can make relative comparisons. For example, not only can we rank A higher than B, but we also know if A is twice as important than B.

¹⁴ This also meant that 77% of tenants perceived other services as the most important.

Figure 3.2: Tenants' top service priorities



3.6 While the prioritisation of services was broadly consistent across all subgroups, including tenants of local authorities and RSLs, the most significant difference was in relation to dealing with anti-social behaviour. Tenants living in the most deprived areas ranked dealing with anti-social behaviour as more important than a good day-to-day repairs service (14% compared to 13%).

3.7 This is consistent with the experiences of tenants reported in the focus groups. Indeed, for tenants living in urban areas of high deprivation, particularly in Glasgow, who are more likely to encounter anti-social-behaviour, dealing with anti-social behaviour and making entrances secure were felt to be foremost priorities.

3.8 Further, the focus on prioritising 'everyday' services was reflected in group discussions with tenants and RTOs. Throughout discussions, it was evident that tenants wanted their landlords to ensure that the 'basics' were delivered effectively. However, in the most part, tenants believed that the priority was having accommodation that meets their needs and is fit for purpose.

"Well I think if they look after the housing stock then that's the most important to us, that the houses are suitable to live in" (Kilmarnock).

"When you get to my age you want somewhere comfortable to stay...your own wee castle, so to speak" (Galashiels).

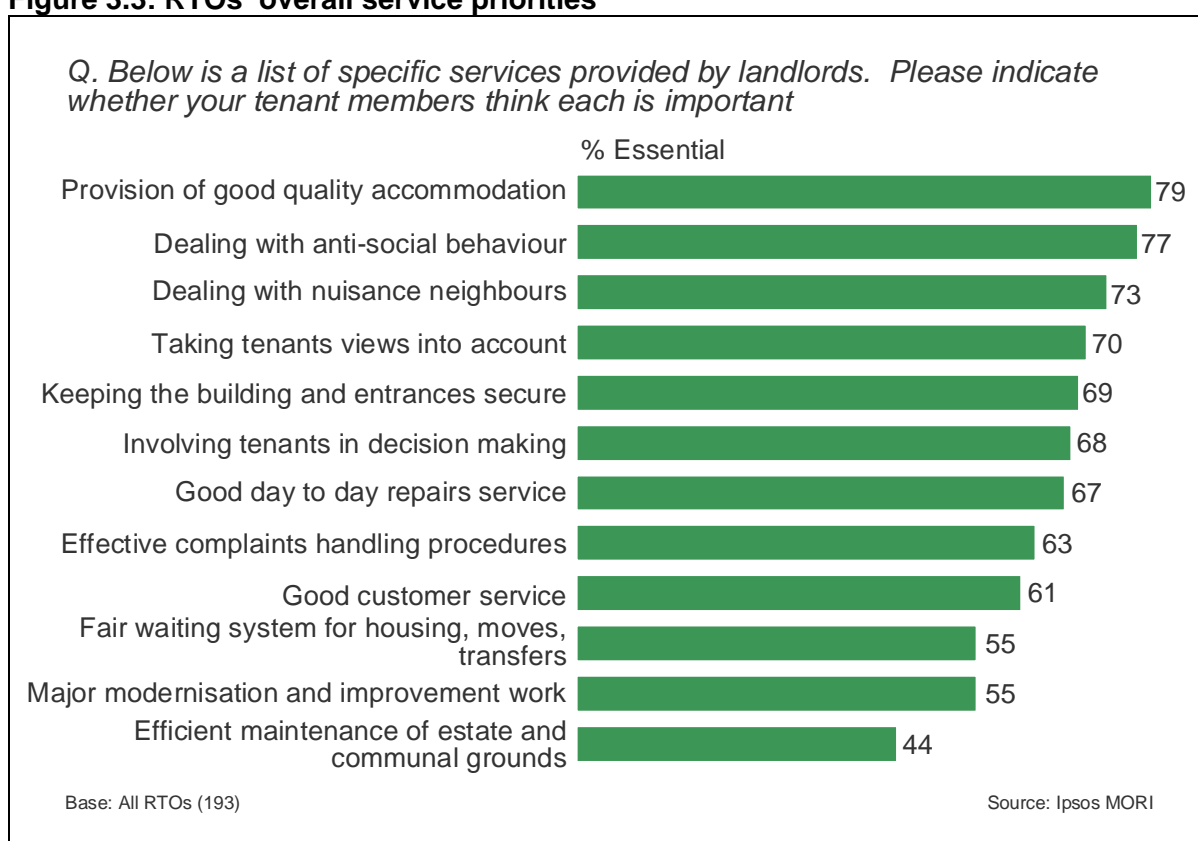
"As long as your house is adequate for your needs" (Glasgow).

3.9 For those tenants with disabilities it was important that their landlord provided accommodation that catered for any additional needs they had, for example, installing wet room bathrooms and wheelchair ramps.

RTOs

3.10 More than eight in ten RTOs perceived each of the overall services as being essential or very important. However, given that it might be expected that each service would be perceived to be at least very important by a large proportion of RTOs, in order to distinguish the priority services, it is more useful to analysis those services that were perceived to be essential (see Figure 3.3).

Figure 3.3: RTOs' overall service priorities



3.11 Tenants' focus on prioritising good quality accommodation was reflected in the priorities of RTOs, with around eight in ten perceiving this service as essential. However, in terms of the ranking of the services that were perceived to be essential¹⁵ they were more likely than tenants to prioritise services that impacted on the wellbeing of the wider estate, rather than individual homes. Indeed, relative to other services, they were less likely than tenants to feel that the day-to-day repairs services and major modernisation and improvement work were important but, instead, were more likely to

¹⁵ Please note, given the different methods that were used in the tenants and RTO surveys, caution must be taken when comparing the results. The tenants' survey results show the relative importance for services and therefore the services can be ranked. The RTO survey results, however, do not show levels of relative importance and the ranking is based on the proportion of RTOs who rated each service as essential.

perceive dealing with anti-social behaviour, dealing with nuisance neighbours and keeping buildings and entrances secure as essential services. Further, as might be expected given their function to represent the views of tenants, relative to other services, RTOs were more likely than tenants to rate taking tenants views into account and involving tenants in decision making as important (see Table 3.1).

Table 3.1: Rank importance of services – tenants and RTOs compared

Service	Rank importance – tenants	Rank importance – RTOs
The provision of good quality accommodation	1	1
A good day to day repairs service	2	7
Dealing with anti-social behaviour	3	2
Keeping the buildings and entrances secure	4	5
Major modernisation and improvement work	5	11
Dealing with nuisance neighbours	6	3
Good customer service	7	9
Involving tenants in decision making	8	6
Efficient maintenance of the estate and communal grounds	9	12
Taking tenants views into account	9	4
Effective complaints handling procedures	9	8
A fair system, for managing lists for housing and requests for moves and transfers	12	10

3.12 The results of the RTO survey were reflected in the focus group with RTOs. As with tenants, RTOs recognised the importance of ensuring good quality of housing as it has a direct impact on tenants' everyday quality of life. The priority for the tenants they represent is having accommodation that is fit for living in and offers sufficient shelter and security.

"I've been talking to [area] tenants and number of them would like to have a warm dry home rather than damp and they don't feel their homes are completely water-tight, wind and water tight as there is damp condensation inside" (RTO).

"Quality of life comes into it, keep them clean and also comfortable and living in a clean house [with no] vermin, and being safe...I think that's part and parcel of the daily life of a tenant" (RTO).

3.13 While RTOs also recognised the importance of the repairs service to their tenant members, having good quality accommodation was a much higher priority. Participants discussed how having good quality housing with good quality fixtures and fittings would mean that landlords would not necessarily require a good day-to-day repairs service.

“If we had good quality accommodation, we wouldn’t necessarily need great day-to-day [repairs], if we were in good properties that didn’t need a lot of maintenance” (RTO).

3.14 However, differences in service priorities between tenants and RTOs were also evident in group discussions. Throughout, it was clear that engaging tenants was much more of a priority for RTOs than mainstream tenants.

“Involving tenants in decision making, that’s an even bigger tick. You cannot not have that” (RTO).

Satisfaction with services

3.15 To help contextualise service priorities, we also asked tenants and RTOs how satisfied they were with their landlord’s performance at providing services. Comparing satisfaction levels with priorities allows an analysis of whether services considered essential by tenants are also those which are seen to be being delivered effectively. On the whole, tenants were more likely than RTOs to say they are satisfied with all services. This notwithstanding, the services that both groups were most likely to be satisfied with were broadly consistent.

3.16 When interpreting results on satisfaction with services it is important to bear in mind that it is not just the quality of the service that determines levels of satisfaction. Therefore, high satisfaction scores do not always indicate high quality services. There are two other factors that influence perceptions¹⁶:

- Whether or not a person has had direct experience of using a service – in order to make informed judgements on service quality, tenants would need to have experienced the service. Without this experience, they may not be able to give a view or may rate a service based on experiences of others, acquired through word of mouth, which are likely to be negative.
- Significantly, expectation levels will also drive satisfaction – those with low expectations are more likely to be satisfied as the service they receive is more likely to meet or exceed these expectations. On the other hand, those with high expectations are less likely to be satisfied and, in many cases, are dissatisfied. Further, expectations are influenced by demographics, with different types of people more likely than others to say they are satisfied with services.

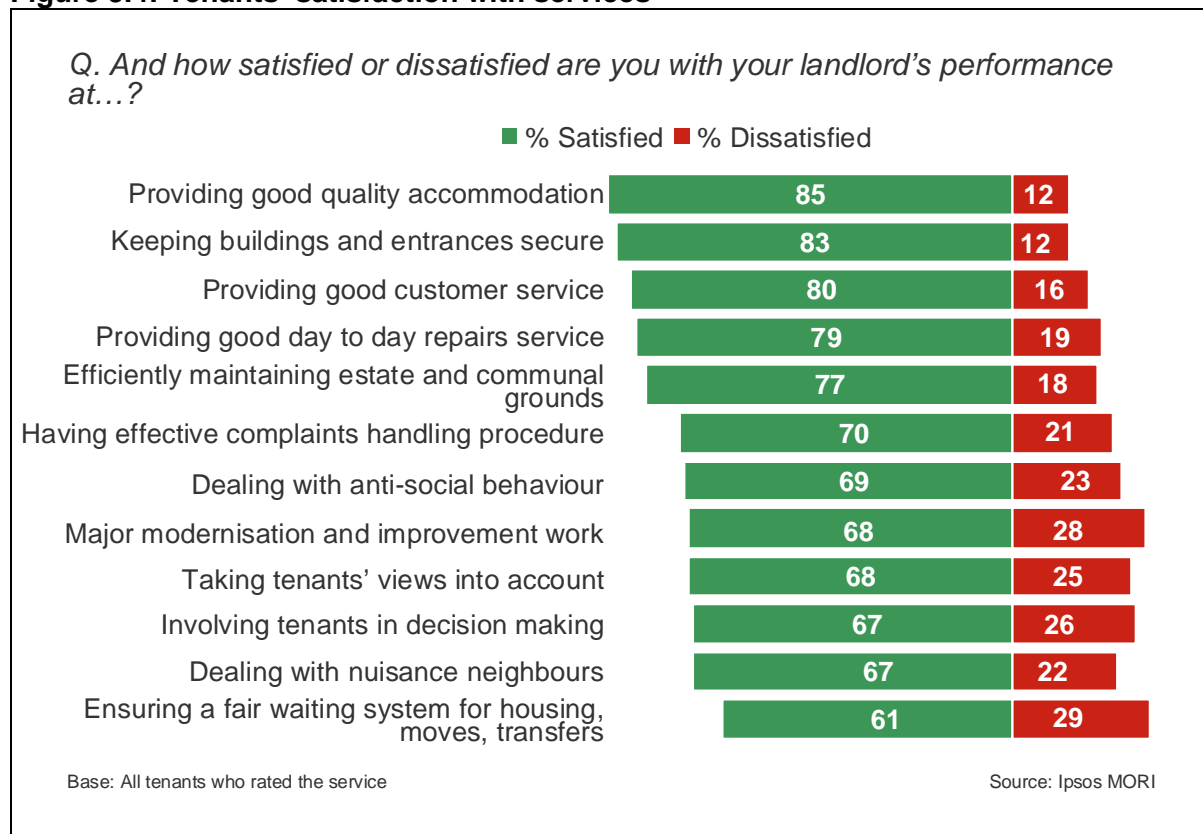
¹⁶ For more discussion on satisfaction with services, see Consumer Focus Scotland and the Improvement Service (2008) *Improving the understanding of customer satisfaction and experience in Scottish Local Government: Towards a collaborative and common approach* and Scottish Consumer Council (2006) *Building on success: customer satisfaction with public services*

Tenants

- 3.17 The majority of tenants were satisfied with all services¹⁷ (see Figure 3.4). They were most likely to be satisfied with their landlord's performance at providing good quality accommodation (85%), keeping the buildings and entrances secure (83%), providing good customer service (80%) and providing a good day-to-day repairs service (79%).
- 3.18 They were least likely to be satisfied with their landlord's performance at involving tenants in decision making (67%), dealing with nuisance neighbours (67%), and ensuring a fair system for managing waiting lists for housing and requests for moves and transfers (61%).
- 3.19 However, a significant proportion of tenants – over a fifth in each case – said they were dissatisfied with seven of the twelve services, including having effective complaints handling procedures (21%), dealing with nuisance neighbours (22%), dealing with anti-social behaviour (23%), taking tenants' views into account (25%), involving tenants in decision making (26%), major modernisation and improvement work (28%) and ensuring a fair system for managing waiting lists for housing and requests for moves and transfers (29%).

¹⁷ For the purposes of analysis, all respondents who answered 'don't know' on the satisfaction with services question were excluded. Small proportions (6% or less) answered don't know for 9 of the 12 services. However, a greater proportion of tenants answered don't know in relation to ensuring a fair system for managing waiting lists for housing and requests for moves and transfers (16%), dealing with anti-social behaviour (13%) and dealing with nuisance neighbours (16%), reflecting low experience of these services among some tenants.

Figure 3.4: Tenants' satisfaction with services



3.20 As Table 3.2 shows, tenants of RSLs were more likely than those of local authorities to be satisfied with all services. This was particularly the case with regards providing a good quality day-to-day repairs service (87% compared to 75%), having effective complaints handling procedures (78% compared to 66%), dealing with nuisance neighbours (74% compared to 63%), and ensuring a fair system for managing lists for housing and requests for moves and transfers (69% compared to 58%).

Table 3.2: Tenants' satisfaction with services by landlord

	All	Local Authority	RSL	% diff
	% Satisfied			
Providing good quality accommodation	85	82	90	8
Keeping the buildings and entrances secure	83	82	86	4
Providing good customer service	80	77	86	9
Providing a good day to day repairs service	79	75	87	12
Efficiently maintaining the estate and communal grounds	77	74	84	8
Having effective complaints handling procedures	70	66	78	12
Dealing with anti-social behaviour	69	68	72	4
Taking tenants views into account	68	65	73	8
Carrying out major modernisation and improvement work	68	65	73	8
Dealing with nuisance neighbours	67	63	74	11
Involving tenants in decision making	67	66	70	4
Ensuring a fair system for managing lists for housing and requests for moves and transfers	61	58	69	11
<i>N</i>	500	285	215	

3.21 This finding reflects results from the 2007 Scottish House Condition Survey (SHCS), which showed that RSL tenants were more likely than local authority tenants to say they were satisfied with their landlord's overall service (80% (40% of whom were very satisfied) compared to 74% (20% of whom were very satisfied)). However, the SHCS also showed that the highest satisfaction rates are actually in the private rented sector. In attempting to explain this finding it should be recognised that expectations of landlords may be relatively low in a sector where there is a very high tenancy turnover, with many treating it as a purely transitional home. Additionally, with the private rented sector nowadays accommodating a substantial number of better-off

households many of those concerned may be less reliant on their landlord than is typically true of social renters¹⁸.

3.22 Consistent with the assertion that some groups are more likely than others to say they are satisfied with services, there were also differences by age. Generally, older tenants aged 55 years or more were more likely than younger tenants to say they were satisfied with all services (see Table 3.3). Most notably, they were more likely than younger tenants aged 35 to 54 years and 16 to 34 years to say they were satisfied with their landlord's performance at efficiently maintaining the estate and communal grounds, having effective complaints handling procedures, carrying out major modernisation and improvement work, taking tenants' views into account, involving tenants in decision making, and dealing with anti-social behaviour and nuisance neighbours.

3.23 By contrast, younger tenants aged 16 to 34 years were least likely to be satisfied with all services. Moreover, they were more likely to be dissatisfied than satisfied with their landlord's performance at taking tenants' views into account, involving tenants in decision making and ensuring a fair system for managing waiting lists for housing and requests for moves and transfers. These differences may be a reflection of older tenants having lower expectations than younger tenants of their landlord's services. Indeed, it could be argued that younger tenants are more likely to have a more consumerist outlook to day-to-day life and thus will demand products and services that are more tailored to their needs.

¹⁸ For further discussion on the SHCS findings, please see the literature review in Annex A.

Table 3.3: Tenants' satisfaction with services by age

	All	16-34	35-54	55+
	% Satisfied			
Providing good quality accommodation	85	56	86	94
Keeping the buildings and entrances secure	83	72	80	91
Providing good customer service	80	59	82	87
Providing a good day to day repairs service	79	63	79	85
Efficiently maintaining the estate and communal grounds	77	63	72	87
Having effective complaints handling procedures	70	51	63	84
Dealing with anti-social behaviour	69	63	63	78
Taking tenants views into account	68	47	63	80
Carrying out major modernisation and improvement work	68	48	65	78
Dealing with nuisance neighbours	67	53	59	81
Involving tenants in decision making	67	38	64	80
Ensuring a fair system for managing lists for housing and requests for moves and transfers	61	38	57	75
<i>N</i>	500	78	189	232

3.24 There were also some differences by Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD). Reflecting the greater prevalence of anti-social behaviour in these areas, tenants living in the most deprived 20% areas were more likely than those living in other areas to say they were dissatisfied with their landlord's performance at dealing with anti-social behaviour and nuisance neighbours (27% compared to 17% and 26% compared to 17%, respectively). This is particularly significant given that tenants living in the most deprived areas in Scotland ranked dealing with anti-social behaviour as the second most important service, more important than the day-to-day repairs service. In addition, tenants living in other areas were more likely than those living in the most deprived 20% areas to say they were satisfied with their landlord's performance at providing good quality accommodation (88% compared to 81%).

Waiting lists and transfers

3.25 In group discussions, the issue of ensuring a fair system for managing waiting lists for housing and requests for moves and transfers was raised as an area where landlords could improve and where tenants felt dissatisfied. While, for the majority of tenants, who are unlikely to be seeking a move, the allocations service might not be considered a priority vis a vis other core services – overall, this service was ranked the lowest priority by tenants – it was generally felt, particularly strongly among those who had direct experience of the service, that it could be fairer. Furthermore, the allocations service will be particularly important for prospective tenants. There was a strong view from participants in the tenants groups that the allocations and waiting list system unfairly gave preference to those whom they considered ‘undeserving’ tenants, namely migrants, people with social problems and people with a previous record of anti-social behaviour.

“I’ve been waiting for years to get a bigger house for my family, there’s five of us living in a two bedroom house; we’re busting basically at the seams...if you take drugs and you’re an alcoholic you’re a priority to them”. (Kilmarnock)

“Well there’s people on waiting lists for years for houses and they can’t get them and then foreigners are getting them left, right and centre” (Fraserburgh).

3.26 Further, tenants believed that more consideration could be given to types of tenants who are allocated housing. On one hand this was linked to unfair priority being given to tenants with a record of social problems. Indeed, participants living in urban areas felt the housing allocation system was one of the sources of problems in their area.

“Control the waiting and allocation of the houses, they shouldn’t be giving them to people with ASBOs, to start selling drugs, into brand new houses” (Glasgow).

“You would wait like ten years for a house, never mind a maisonette and then they started bringing all the druggies from different areas and totally ruined it” (Dundee).

3.27 On the other hand, tenants believed that a more common-sense approach could be taken when managing waiting lists and allocating housing in general. Two main examples were given. First, tenants who had experience of the service were frustrated that they had little choice over where they were offered housing, a lot of the time in areas that were perceived to be unsuitable for their circumstances.

“...you don’t have choices, you don’t have the ability to say what area you want or what kind of house you’re needing...” (Glasgow).

“...I put in for a house, I get offered one down in [place], all the junkie paradise. I don’t take drugs and I don’t want my kids round about those sorts of things. A couple of years ago it was in the paper for people

pulling out machetes and that's what I got offered...it's not really fair"
(Kilmarnock).

3.28 Linked to this, some tenants discussed how it was important for tenants to take the demographics and lifestyles of tenants into consideration and house them in suitable locations. One problem highlighted was housing young families in blocks of older tenants

"I don't see what the point is of [landlord] putting in youngsters into a block of flats, into a house, or whatever it is, amongst old people. The young people are driving the old people out" (Galashiels).

3.29 Second, it was felt that more could be done to re-house tenants in suitably sized accommodation, particularly those that are currently occupying housing that is bigger than they require.

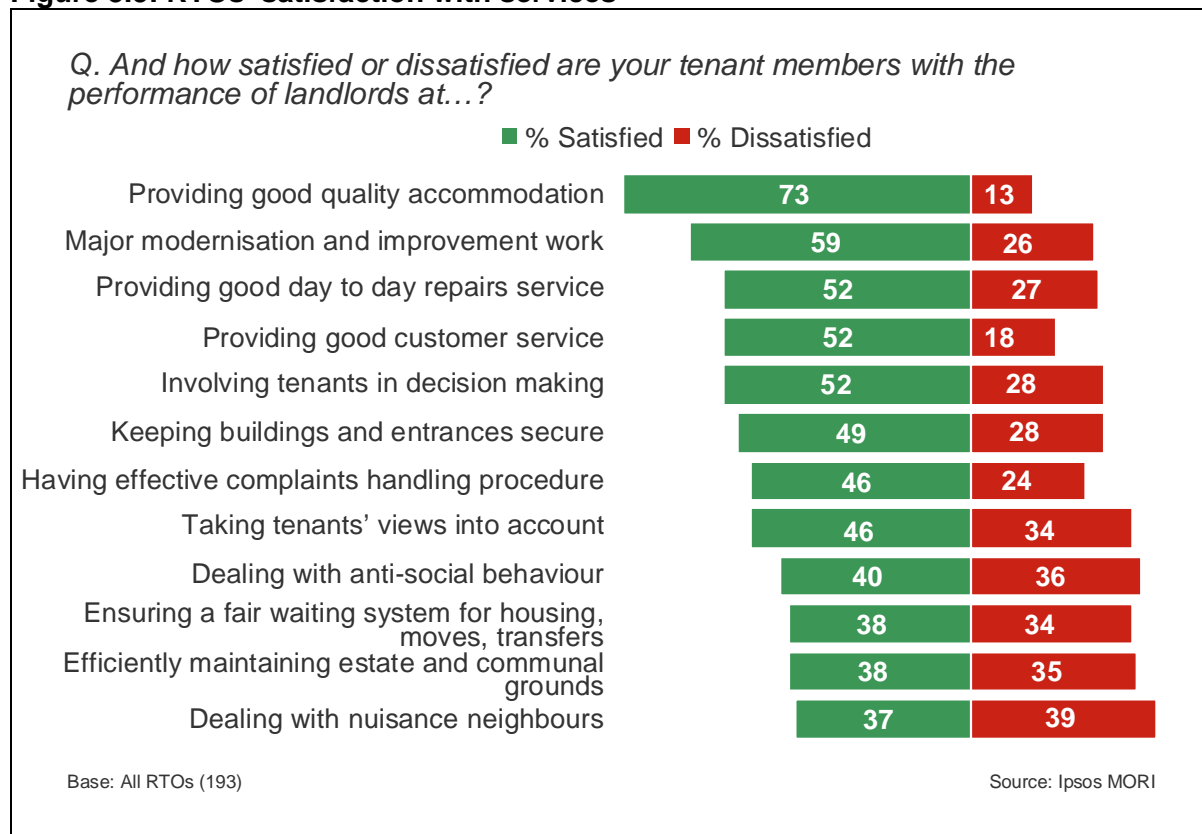
"There is a load of older folk in the houses and they don't want to move because they've been there all their lives and I think that is totally wrong. Old wifies biding in three bedroom houses; they should be made to come out to a smaller house because there is not enough three bedroom houses in this town for the amount of folk" (Fraserburgh).

"There is a lot of houses out there and people living in them where there's only a couple or a single person living in a three or four bedroom, or even a five bedroom house and if there is a smaller house and they want to be downsized, they don't get an offer of that house. Whereas, if they had a list of people who want to downsize and they moved there would be a wee bit bigger house for a family, but they can't do that" (RTO).

RTOs

3.30 On balance, RTOs were generally less likely than tenants to be satisfied with all services, a possible reflection of their role of representing tenants' views with landlords. RTOs reported greatest satisfaction with the same services as tenants reported but to a lesser degree. Highest levels of satisfaction were expressed with landlords' performance at providing good quality accommodation (73%), carrying out major modernisation and improvements work (59%), providing good customer service (52%), involving tenants in decision making (52%) and providing a good day-to-day repairs service (52%) (see Figure 3.5).

Figure 3.5: RTOs' satisfaction with services



3.31 RTOs were least likely to be satisfied with dealing with anti-social behaviour (40%), efficiently maintaining the estate and communal grounds (38%), ensuring a fair system for managing waiting lists for housing and requests for moves and transfers (38%) and dealing with nuisance neighbours (37%).

3.32 However, more than a fifth of RTOs were dissatisfied with ten of the twelve services. Further, RTOs were more likely to be dissatisfied than satisfied with landlords in their area's performance at dealing with nuisance neighbours (39% compared to 37%).

3.33 There was some variation by landlord type. More specifically, RTOs of RSL landlords were more likely than those of local authorities to be satisfied with:

- efficiently maintaining the state and communal grounds (57% compared to 34%);
- ensuring a fair system for managing waiting lists for housing and requests for moves and transfers (55% compared to 29%); and
- dealing with nuisance neighbours (49% compared to 31%).

3.34 Moreover, RTOs of RSL tenants were more likely than those of local authorities to say they were very satisfied with the performance of landlords in their area at providing good quality accommodation (39% compared to 19%), efficiently maintaining the estate and communal grounds (31% compared to 8%), carrying out major modernisations and improvements work (35% compared to 19%), keeping the buildings and entrances secure (27%

compared to 11%), involving tenants in decision making (43% compared to 20%) and taking tenants views into account (37% compared to 19%).

3.35 Satisfaction with services among RTOs also varied by their perceived level of influence over the way landlords deliver housing services in their area (see Table 3.4). RTOs who felt they have some or a lot of influence (at least some influence) were more likely than those who felt they have little or no influence to say they were satisfied with all services. Of course, the causality is not clear. On one level, it could be argued that those RTOs with greater influence over the way their landlord provides services in their area might have a greater role in moulding services to match tenants' needs and, therefore, would have greater satisfaction with a service that more adequately meets their needs; while those who have little or no influence would not have this same role and might therefore receive a service that does not meet their needs. However, this association might be the result of a wider dissatisfaction with their landlord, of which feeling that they do not have an influence over them may only be a part.

Table 3.4: Satisfaction with services by perceived level of influence

	At least some influence	Little or no influence	All
	% Satisfied		
Providing good quality accommodation	83	62	73
Carrying out major modernisation and improvement work	68	49	59
Providing good customer service	68	36	52
Providing a good day to day repairs service	61	43	52
Keeping the buildings and entrances secure	60	36	49
Having effective complaints handling procedures	57	33	46
Taking tenants views into account	71	19	46
Involving tenants in decision making	75	26	40
Dealing with anti-social behaviour	54	26	40
Efficiently maintaining the estate and communal grounds	50	24	38
Ensuring a fair system for managing lists for housing and requests for moves and transfers	55	20	38
Dealing with nuisance neighbours	51	22	37
<i>N</i>	<i>101</i>	<i>90</i>	<i>193</i>

Good and bad practice

3.36 Exploring the theme of satisfaction further, we also asked RTOs, unprompted, what they felt landlords in their area did well and what they needed to improve. Reflecting some of the differences in their overall priorities compared with tenants, RTOs tended to highlight issues related to their role as an organisation for representing tenants' views, rather than issues directly related to tenants' homes, highlighting the heightened emphasis RTOs place on issues of tenant participation and involvement. This emphasis occurred in highlighting positive and negative aspects of landlord service.

3.37 Indeed, they were most likely to say that their landlord is *good* at listening to tenants (25%) and keeping residents informed about what is going on (13%), while they were less likely to mention issues relating to repair work being

carried out promptly (9%) and staff being very approachable and helpful (7%). However, 15% said their landlord does nothing well.

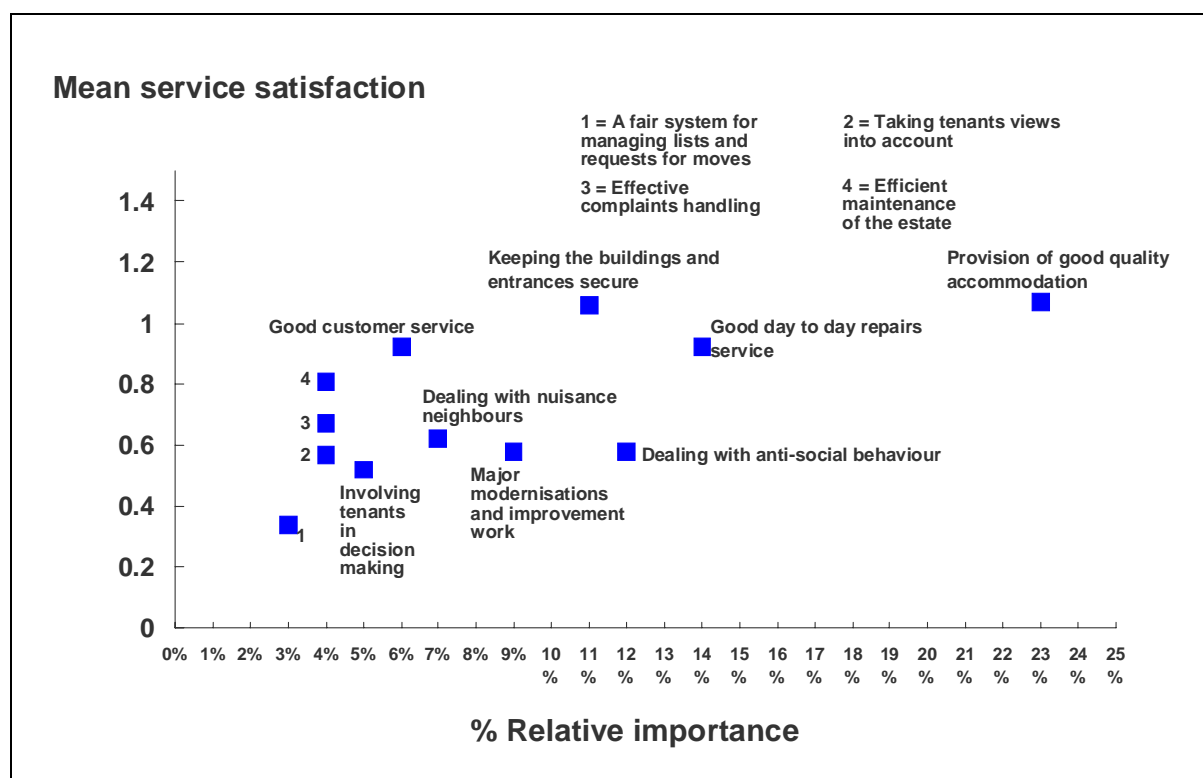
3.38 With regards improvements that landlords could make, RTOs were most likely to mention improved communication with/between tenants (22%), listening to tenants/RTO/act on their concerns (14%) and involving tenants in decision-making (7%). By comparison, they were less likely to mention improvements that could be made to other areas: improving the repairs service (15%), dealing with antisocial behaviour (6%) and improving the general maintenance of properties and facilities (5%). Six per cent of RTOs said landlords in their area need to improve their performance on everything.

Comparing satisfaction and importance of services

3.39 In general, those services that tenants and RTOs perceived as being most important also received high satisfaction scores. Further, those services that tenants and RTOs were least likely to be satisfied with were perceived to be less important. However, there were a number of services that did not follow this pattern, namely dealing with anti social behaviour in the tenants' survey and dealing with anti-social behaviour and nuisance neighbours in the RTO survey.

3.40 Figure 3.6 shows that, in the most part, the services tenants perceived as being most important were also among those with the highest satisfaction score. At the same time, those services that tenants were least likely to be satisfied with were also likely to be those that were less important. Dealing with anti-social behaviour is the only service where levels of satisfaction are relatively low vis a vis the relative importance of the service. This notwithstanding, dealing with anti-social behaviour should not be interpreted as being the only service worthy of consideration.

Figure 3.6: Tenants' priorities by levels of satisfaction

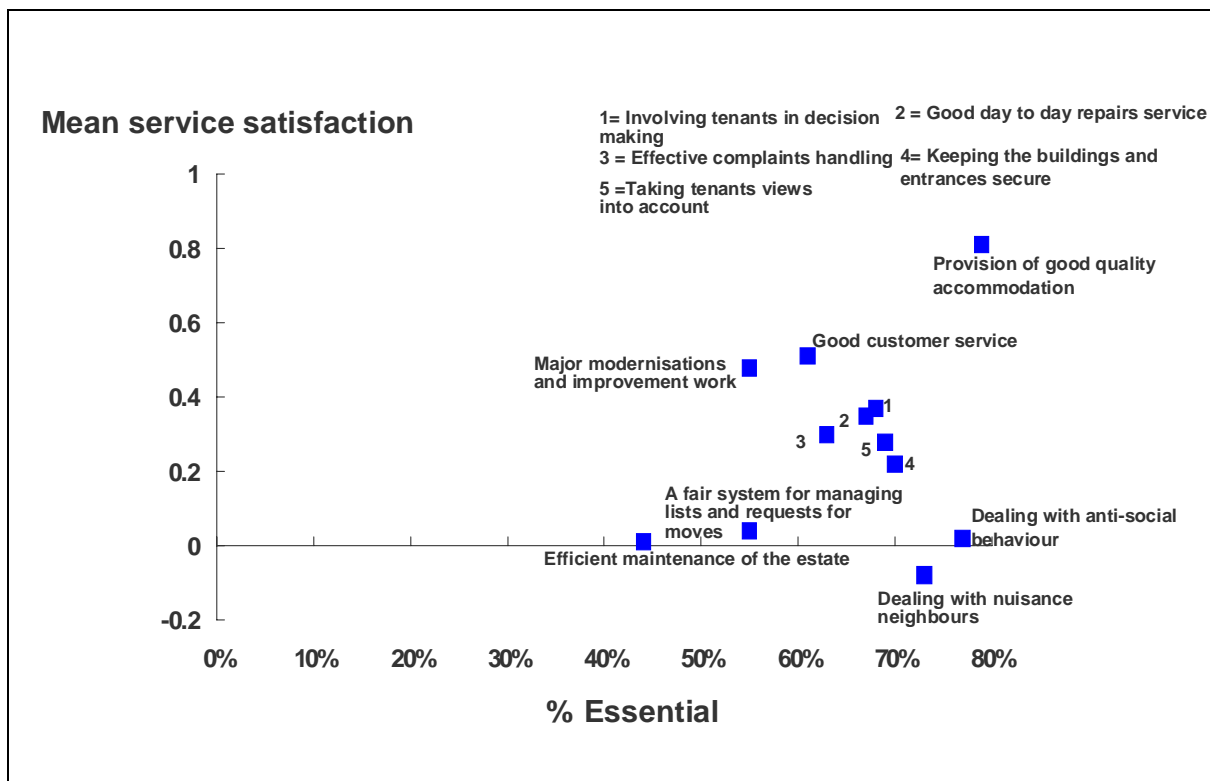


3.41 Figure 3.7 shows the equivalent results from the RTO survey¹⁹. Similar to the tenants' results, the service that RTOs were most likely to perceive as important, the provision of good quality accommodation was also the service they were most likely to be satisfied with. However, while dealing with anti-social behaviour and dealing with nuisance neighbours were considered as essential services by around three-quarters of RTOs, they were among the services that they were least likely to be satisfied with and as such are particularly worthy of consideration.

3.42 Such analysis of where services of high priority are rated poorly by users, can help landlords make decisions about where investments need to be made to improve delivery and enhance performance.

¹⁹ Please bear in mind that results relating the importance of services in the tenants and RTO surveys are not directly comparable.

Figure 3.7: RTOs' priorities by levels of satisfaction



Service specific priorities

3.43 Two of the main ways in which tenants interact with their landlord on a regular basis are via the repairs and customer services. Therefore, experiences of these services are likely to have a considerable influence in shaping tenants' perceptions of their landlord's overall performance. Accordingly, in order to identify the priorities for these services, tenants and RTOs were asked which specific aspects of these services were most important.

Experience of the repairs service

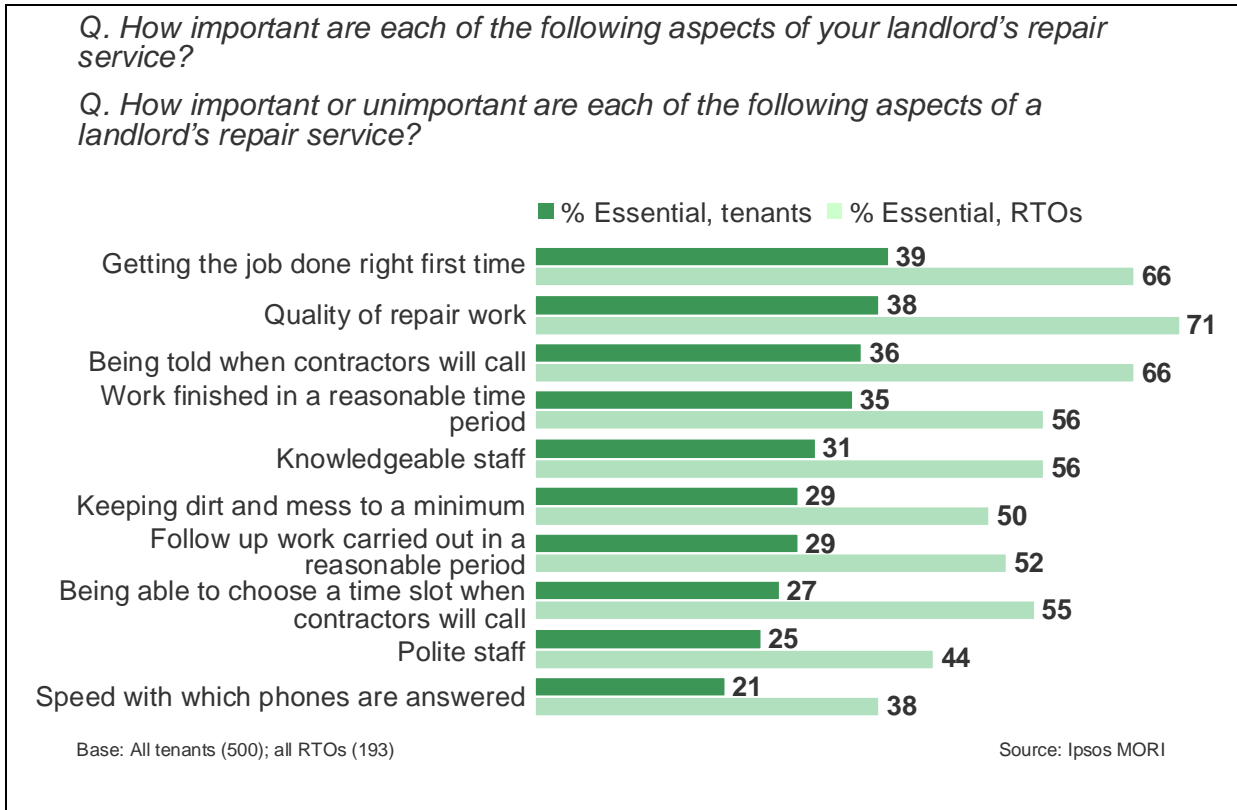
3.44 Nearly two thirds (65%) of tenants had a day-to-day repair completed in the last 12 months. The repairs most commonly completed related to plumbing (33%), gas and heating (not including the annual gas safety check) (22%), carpentry (17%) and electrical issues (10%).

Importance of aspects of the repairs service

3.45 RTOs were considerably more likely than tenants to perceive each aspect of the repairs service as a priority, with a majority of RTOs rating all but three aspects of the repairs service as essential (see Figure 3.8). However, the priorities of tenants and RTOs for the repairs service were broadly the same. The aspects both groups were most likely to identify as being essential were related to the fundamental aspects of the repairs service upon which successful completion of the job depends, including getting the job done right first time, the quality of repair work, being told when contractors will call and when the repair work being finished within a reasonable period. By comparison,

both groups were less likely to feel that more customer-service related, or less fundamental, aspects of the repairs service were essential: keeping dirt and mess to a minimum; polite staff; and speed with which phones are answered.

Figure 3.8: Essential aspects of the repairs service



3.46 Working tenants were more likely than non-working tenants to say that it is essential or very important to be told when contractors will call (86% compared to 74%), being able to choose a time slot when contractors will call (80% compared to 61%) and getting the job done first time (91% compared to 81%). These findings are unsurprising given the greater planning that would be required to fit repairs around work commitments, be it arranging the day off work or organising someone to be at home when the repairs are being carried out.

3.47 The prioritisation of the fundamental aspects of the repairs service was also apparent in focus groups. Although tenants identified having good quality accommodation as their key overall service priority, it was felt that having a home that was fit for purpose was heavily dependent on it being in a good state of repair and, thus, their landlord providing an effective day-to-day repairs service. Most participants had had a negative experience relating to their landlord's repairs service. In the most part, discussions about the repairs service revolved around three key issues:

- First, many tenants believed that landlords were not effectively dealing with repairs in the home or not dealing with them sufficiently first time around.

"I had mould on my kitchen wall and the Clerk or Works came up and looked at it and said we'll just put up a false wall" (Fraserburgh).

"I mean they come in, they knock the plaster off the wall, they re-plaster it; oh, it's lovely, they put the stuff on. Six months later black patch is back again." (Kilmarnock)

- Second, tenants discussed how they were dissatisfied with the length of time they needed to wait before repairs are carried out, in some cases, for repairs perceived to be urgent.

"Length of time you wait for the repairs. I've actually been waiting from 7th December to get the damp, my living room has actually got black mould and I've got three kids and I'm waiting to get that" (Kilmarnock).

- Third, some participants spoke with frustration at times when they had arranged appointment times for repairs but contractors did not turn up for the appointment.

"[They] send you a letter saying they are coming to do a job and that date has passed and you phone in and you have to wait another couple of months before they appear at your door. They always forget they've got to come to your house" (Fraserburgh).

Experience of customer services

3.48 Relative to other services, customer services were perceived to less of a priority to tenants overall. Nevertheless, tenants and RTOs use this service regularly, with just over three quarters (76%) of tenants and most (90%) RTOs having contacted their landlord in the last 12 months. Given the regularity at which a large proportion of tenants interact with their landlord, we asked a set of questions about priorities of different aspects of customer services.

Reasons and methods used for contacting landlords

3.49 Nearly three quarters (74%) of tenants who had contacted their landlord in the last 12 months did so about repairs. Other reasons tenants had for contacting their landlord were considerably less common. By comparison, RTOs who had contacted landlords in their area in the last 12 months had done so for a wide range of reasons. While, similar to tenants, the main reason was queries relating to repairs (19%), other common reasons included discussing issues raised at tenants' meetings (17%) and discussing a programme of improvements and upgrades (11%).

3.50 By far the most common method of contact used by tenants who had contacted their landlord was telephone (78%), while 16% visited the office of their landlord. Other methods of contact, including email, were considerably less common.

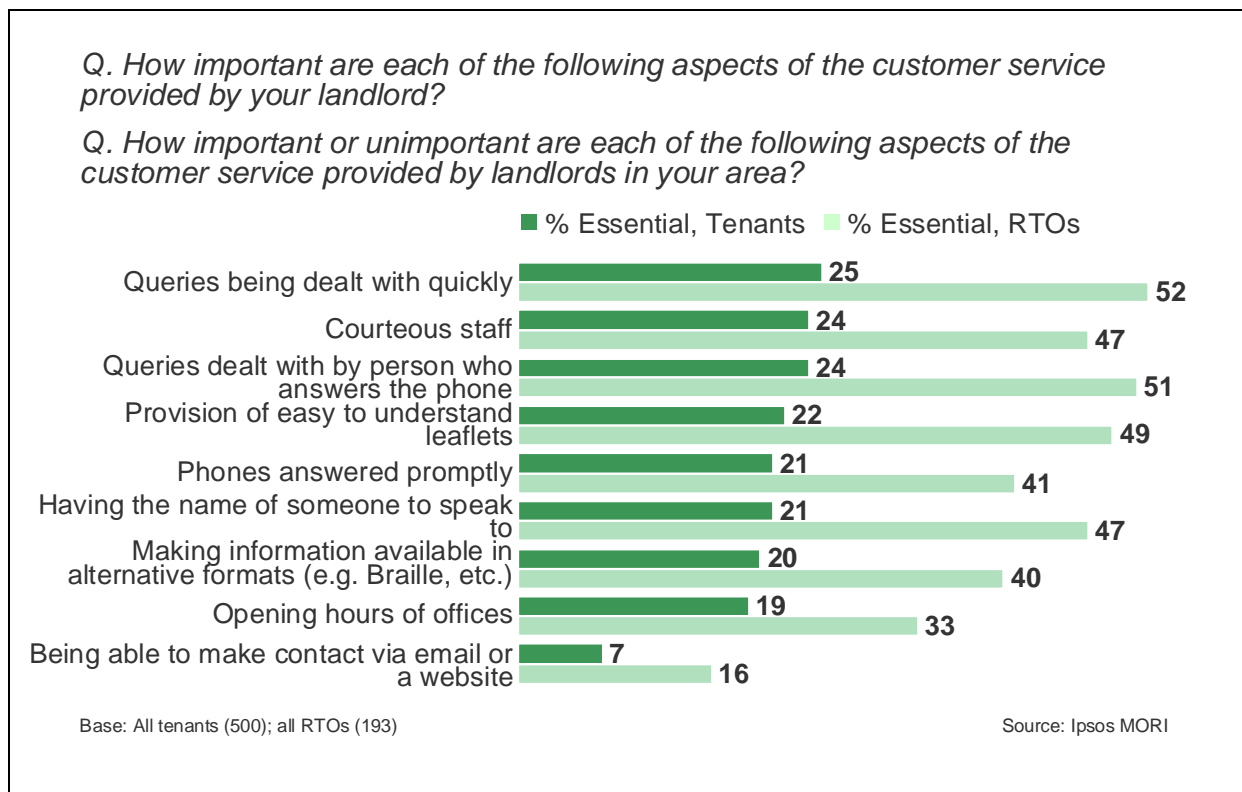
3.51 Similarly, the most common method of contact used by RTOs²⁰ who had contacted landlords was telephone (77%). However, unlike tenants, they were also likely to have used a range of other methods. Nearly three-quarters (72%) had contact with their landlord in meetings, while more than half had used other methods, including working groups (60%), forums (59%), email (57%) and visiting the landlord's office (56%). Other less common methods used included writing a letter (45%), a visit from a landlord (34%) and via the landlord's website (13%).

Customer service priorities

3.52 Reflecting the lesser importance attributed to the service overall, relative to aspects of the repairs service, both tenants and RTOs were less likely to rate aspects of customer services as essential. As was the case with ratings of the repairs service, RTOs were considerably more likely than tenants to rate each aspect as essential (see Figure 3.9). Nevertheless, their priorities for customer services were broadly the same, with both groups most likely to rate aspects of customer query handling as essential, including queries being dealt with quickly, the person answering the phone being able to deal with the query and courteous staff. In addition, relative to other aspects, the provision of easy-to-understand information leaflets was also identified as a priority by both groups. By contrast, tenants and RTOs were least likely to rate being able to make contact by email or through a website as an essential aspect of customer services.

²⁰ Please note, given the different question formats used in the tenants and RTO surveys, the results for this question are not directly comparable. Tenants were asked what one method they used to contact their landlord the last time they did so, while RTOs were asked the methods they use to contact landlords in their area in general terms in the last 12 months.

Figure 3.9: Essential aspects of customer services



3.53 There were some differences relating to whether or not tenants had contacted their landlord in the past 12 months. Tenants who had contacted their landlord were more likely than those who had not to rate as essential: courteous staff (25% compared 18%); phones being answered promptly (23% compared to 16%); the person answering the phone being able to deal with the query (25% compared to 18%); and queries being dealt with quickly (27% compared to 21%).

3.54 Most likely a reflection of the lower priority attributed to the service, in focus groups there was very little discussion about customer services. However, when the service was raised in discussions, it tended to be focused on how tenants perceived landlords as ‘passing the buck’ when it came to complaints or requests for things to be done. Reflecting the two aspects that tenants and RTOs were most likely to perceive as essential – queries being dealt with quickly and the person on the phone being able to deal with the query – there was a feeling that the staff working in customer services would often transfer responsibility to other departments, causing a great deal of frustration to tenants.

“With most of the complaints that you try to bring up, they will go oh no, no, we’re the left hand, you want the right hand” (Galashiels).

“One department will say, oh that department should have done this and they say it was their fault. You don’t get any further forward” (Dundee).

4 MAKING JUDGEMENTS ON SERVICE QUALITY

Key findings

Tenants had limited knowledge of how the standard of service provided and the rent charged by their landlord compares to other landlords. Although RTOs were more likely to have levels of awareness, this was still mixed.

There was mixed appetite among tenants in knowing more about how the level of rent they pay and the services they receive compares to other social landlords.

Among those who were interested in knowing more, there was limited awareness of where to obtain information about landlord performance, with significant proportions of tenants and RTOs not knowing where to find information on other landlords.

The majority of respondents - three quarters of tenants and nearly two thirds of RTOs - rated the accommodation and services provided by their landlord as representing good value for money in relation to current rent levels

The two major considerations in determining perceptions of value for money were views on the standard of accommodation provided by landlords and the rent level. While tenants were most likely to mention the standard of accommodation, RTOs were most likely to mention the cost of rent.

For the most part, there was reluctance among tenants and RTOs to pay more rent or an additional service charge for improved or additional services.

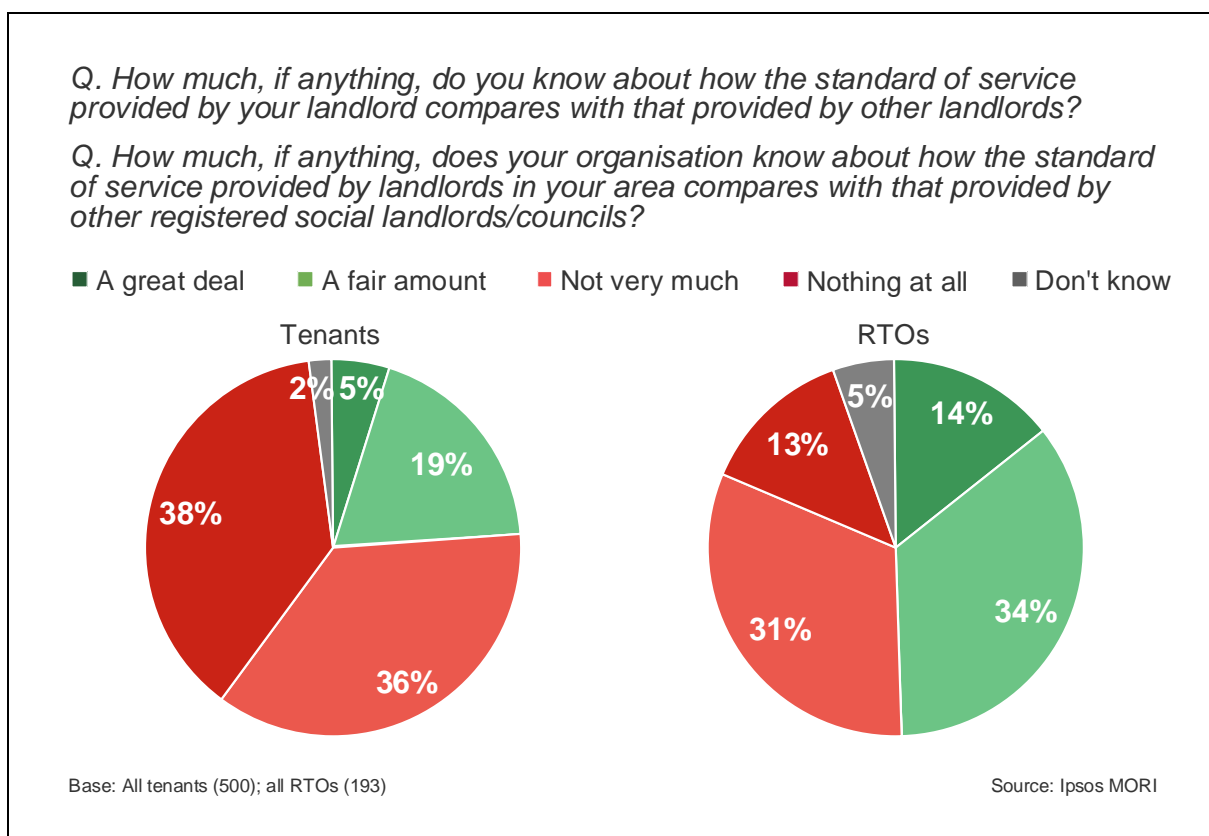
- 4.1 One of the functions of the SHR is to make information about landlord performance available to the public. In doing so, the aim is to enable social housing tenants to make more accurate assessments of the level of service they are currently receiving by comparing their landlord's service and rent levels against other landlords in their area. Of course, use of this type of information will be largely dependent on the extent to which tenants already feel they have knowledge of other landlords and, perhaps more importantly, their interest in making such comparisons.
- 4.2 This chapter considers the extent to which tenants of social landlords might be able to make accurate judgements about the levels of service they are receiving from their landlord. It starts by examining the extent to which tenants and RTOs were aware of how the rent they pay and service they receive from their landlord compares to that of other landlords, as well as knowledge of the sources of information available to make comparisons. Following this, it explores perceptions of value for money and considers the reasons why tenants and RTOs believed they were receiving good or poor value for money. Finally, this chapter outlines the extent to which tenants and RTOs said they would be willing to pay extra rent or an additional service charge for additional or improved services.

What do tenants know?

Service quality

4.3 Tenants had limited knowledge of how the standard of service provided by their landlord compares to other landlords. Only a quarter (24%) said they know a fair amount or a great deal (see Figure 4.1). By comparison, as you might expect, RTOs had greater awareness, with just less than half (48%) saying they know a great deal or fair amount.

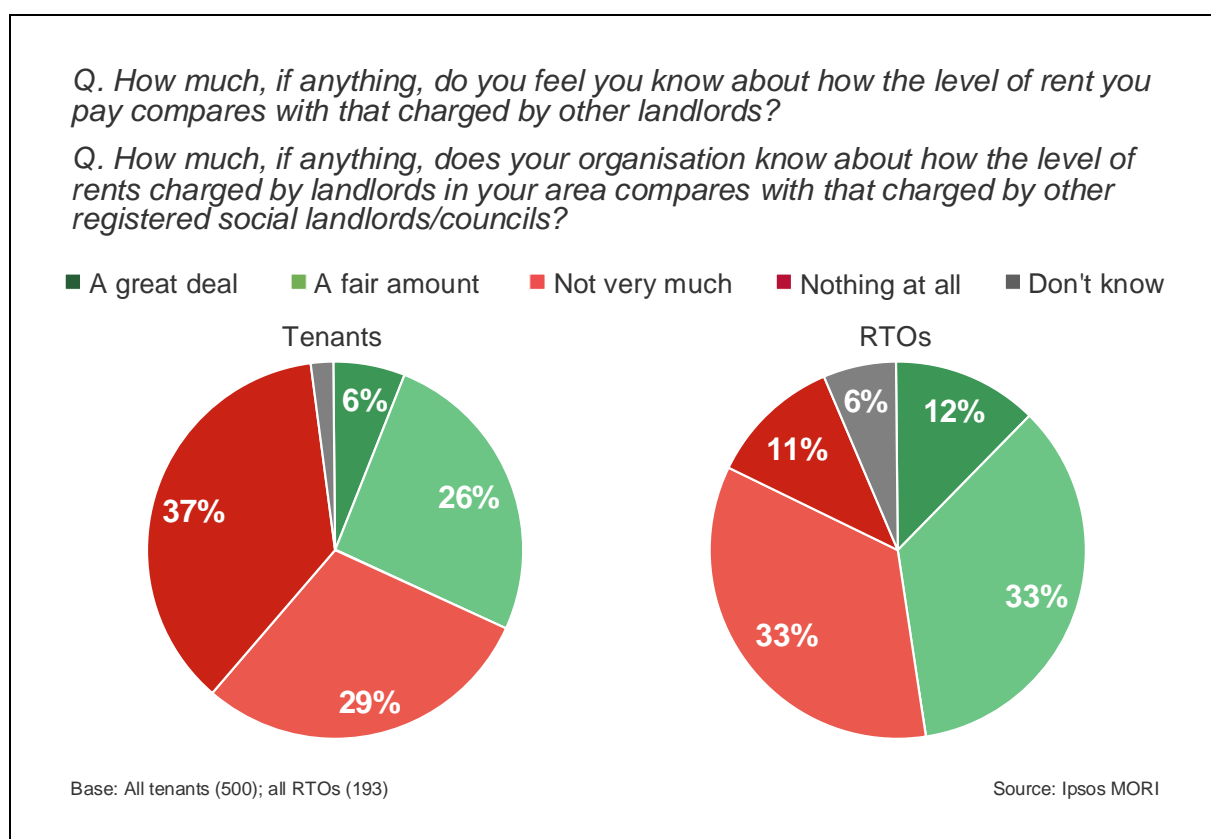
Figure 4.1: Awareness of how the standard of service compares with other social landlords – tenants and RTOs compared



Rent

4.4 Compared to their knowledge of service quality, tenants were slightly more knowledgeable about how the level of rent they pay compares with that charged by other landlords, although this was still limited: only a third (32%) said they know a great deal or a fair amount (see Figure 4.2), although this rises to 37% of tenants who pay rent. Again, awareness was higher among RTOs, with just under half (46%) saying they know a great deal or fair amount.

Figure 4.2: Awareness of how the level of rent compares with other social landlords



4.5 The focus groups reinforced this low level of knowledge. When people did have a level of awareness it tended to stem from past personal experience or from experiences of family and friends, whose landlord was generally perceived to be performing better.

“What I can remember of when I was with [landlord] many years ago. I had something wrong with my, I think it was my gas boiler. As soon as I phoned them up, a knock at the door within half an hour but if I phone [current landlord], oh about three or four days” (Galashiels).

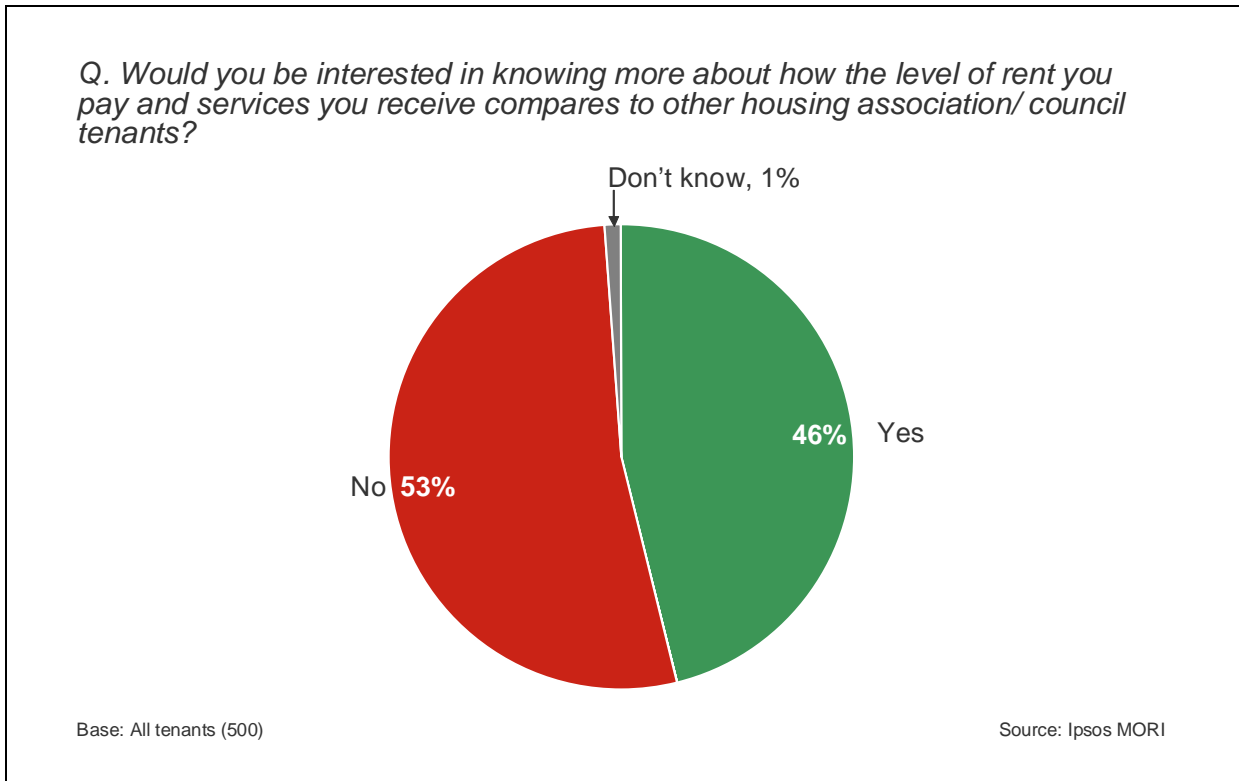
“Well my sister is in Glasgow and she’s with [landlord]... They’ve got a secure entry system, nobody gets in, they can’t climb a wall to get into it. If they have a bad neighbour it only takes two people to complain and they’re out...so there is a housing association that works. Any repairs that are needing done get done....my sister had a rat in the kitchen....they came up, stripped the whole kitchen out, put a new kitchen in, re-bricked all the wall, I couldn’t believe it. I said you’re having me on!” (Kilmarnock).

Tenants’ interest in comparing services and rent

4.6 There was mixed appetite among tenants in knowing more about how the level of rent they pay and the services they receive compares to other social

landlords. A minority (46%) said they were interested in knowing more (see Figure 4.3).

Figure 4.3: Interest in comparing services and rent



4.7 Subgroup analysis reveals that interest in having information to make comparisons with other social landlords was highest among:

- Tenants of RSLs (52% compared to 43% of local authority tenants), perhaps reflecting the greater number of RSLs that are operating in an area;
- The youngest group of tenants (62% compared to 32% of those aged 55 years or more);
- Tenants living in the most deprived areas (52% compared to 40% of those living in other areas); and
- Tenants who pay full rent (54% compared to 38% of those who receive Housing Benefit)

4.8 These findings suggest an uphill task for landlords, SHR and the Scottish Government in encouraging more tenants to have a greater interest in comparing their levels of service and rent with others.

Where tenants would get information?

4.9 Around a third (34%) of tenants said they would not know where to go to find out information about how their landlord's service and rents compare to other landlords. Of those mentioned, the most common sources were the local council (21%), the housing association (17% of RSL tenants), do a search online (19%) and ask family or friends (8%). Perhaps more significantly, 32% of tenants who said they would be interested in knowing how their landlord's

performance compares to that of other social landlords said they would not know where to find information on other landlords.

Making comparisons against other landlords – RTOs

4.10 Most RTOs appreciate the potential that greater information could have with two thirds (67%) saying the ability to make comparisons would help their organisation to work better with landlords to improve services and performance in their area.

Information RTOs would like

4.11 Specific types of information which RTOs would like included the repairs service/quality of repairs (18%), rents and rent levels (17%) and financial information, including expenditure and how budgets are spent (11%). One in ten (10%) RTOs said they already have good information on landlords in their area provided by landlords and other sources. Over a quarter (27%) did not know what type of information on other landlords they would want.

4.12 Further, despite the majority of RTOs believing that having the ability to make comparisons would help their organisation to work better with landlords, a third of RTOs (32%) did not know where to find this information. The sources most commonly mentioned were contacting a tenants group (16%), doing a search online (13%) and contacting the council (10%).

Making judgements on value for money

4.13 As well as establishing priorities and levels of satisfaction, the study probed tenants' views around the extent to which they receive good value for the services they use, that is, making judgements about the service delivered by landlords in relation to the amount of money paid in rent. Tenants will have expectations of what type of service they should receive from their landlord in return for the rent they pay. If the level of service exceeds these expectations, they are likely to perceive their landlord as providing good value, while, conversely they will perceive a service that falls below expectations as poor value.

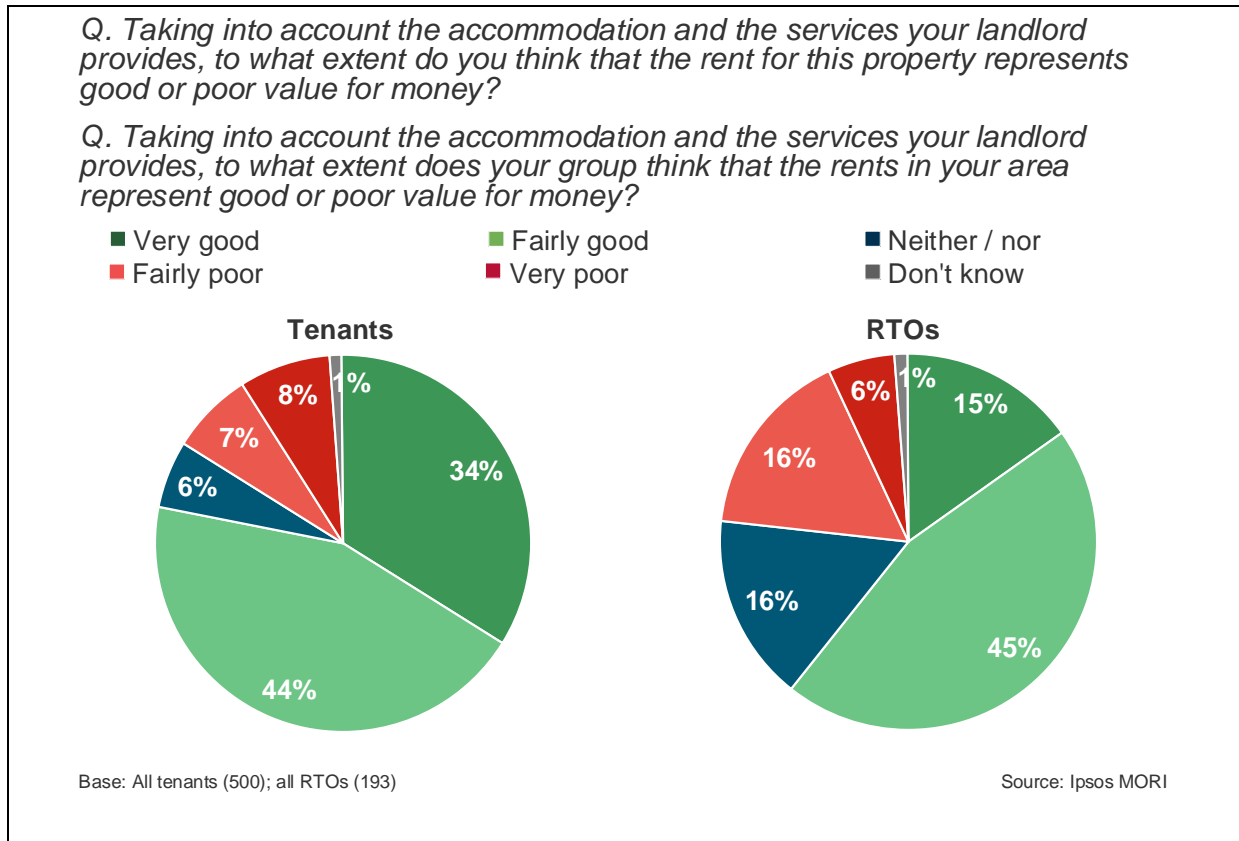
4.14 Perceptions on the most significant drivers of value for money differ between tenants and RTOs. For tenants, perceptions of value for money centre on quality of accommodation, reflecting the main priority of tenants. By comparison, RTOs were more likely to mention levels of rent as reason for judging landlord services as offering good or poor value for money.

Perceptions of value for money

4.15 The majority of tenants and RTOs rated the accommodation and services provided by their landlord as representing good value for money. Over three quarters (78%) of tenants - 74% of tenants who pay rent - rated the accommodation and services provided by their landlord as representing good value for money for the amount of money they pay in rent (see Figure 4.4). While RTOs were slightly less likely than tenants to say the accommodation and services in their area represents value for money, a majority (60%) felt

they represented good value. Only 15% felt their landlord provides poor value for money, while a significant proportion (22%) of RTOs said landlords in their area provide poor value for money. Significantly, RTOs were far less likely than tenants to say their landlord's services represent very good value for money (15% compared to 34%).

Figure 4.4: Perceptions of value for money - tenants and RTOs compared



4.16 There was no difference in perceptions of value for money between local authority and RSL tenants. Further, there were no differences between those who received housing benefit and those who did not. However, there were some differences by other factors. Older tenants were more likely than younger tenants to say they receive good value for money (see Table 4.1). Indeed, tenants aged 55 years or more were significantly more likely than younger tenants to say the rent they pay for their property represents very good value for money (43% compared to 31% of tenants aged 35 to 54 years and 17% of those aged 16 to 34 years). Again, as was discussed in relation to differences in satisfaction ratings, this may be a reflection of older tenants having lower expectations of their landlord's services.

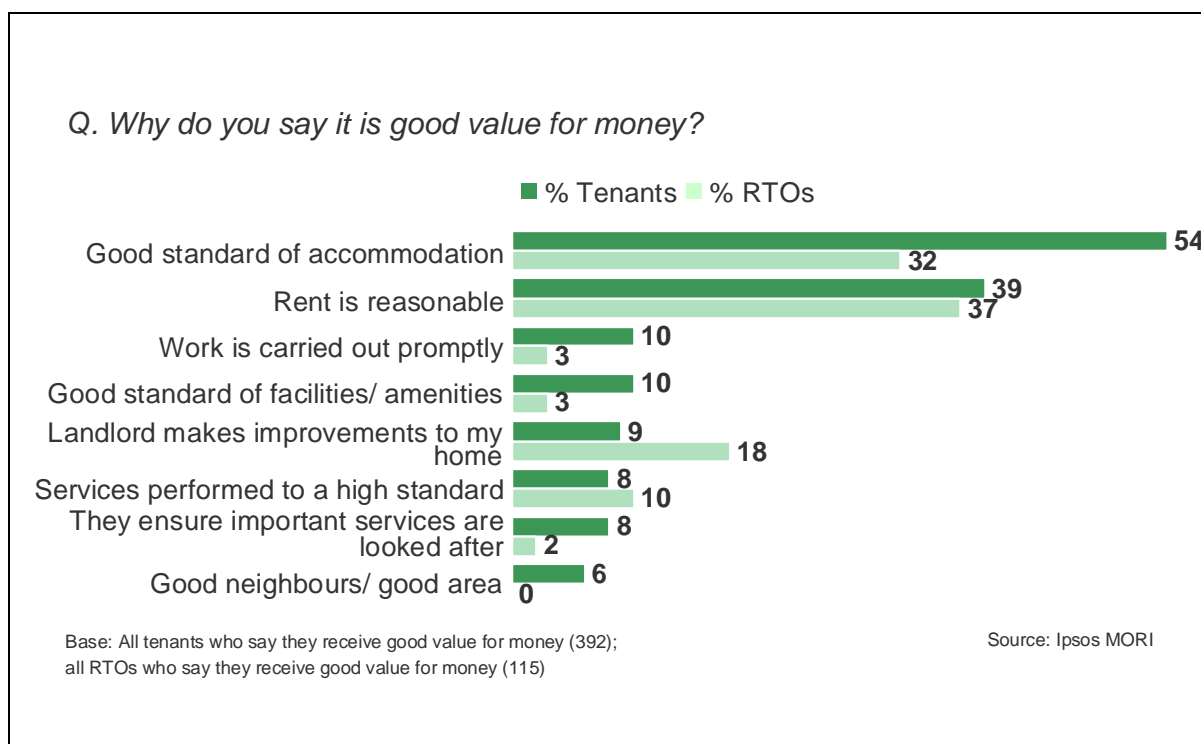
Table 4.1: Perception of value for money by age

	Age			
	16-34	35-54	55+	All
	%	%	%	%
Very good value for money	17	31	43	34
Fairly good value for money	38	48	42	44
Neither good nor poor value for money	14	6	3	6
Fairly poor value for money	13	6	5	8
Very poor value for money	18	7	5	8
	78	189	232	500

Receiving good value for money

4.17 By far the main reasons tenants and RTOs gave for rating their landlord’s services as good value for money were they provide good standard of accommodation (54% and 32%) and charge reasonable rent (39% and 37%) (see Figure 4.5). It is notable, however, that RTOs were more likely, albeit slightly, to highlight the cost of rent than quality of accommodation.

Figure 4.5: Main reasons for rating their landlord’s service as good value for money



4.18 Other less common reasons mentioned by tenants and RTOs who rated their landlord's service as representing good value for money were work being carried out promptly (10% and 3%), good standard of facilities and amenities (10% and 3%), making improvements and modernisations to home (9% and 18%) and general services are performed to a high standard (8% and 10%).

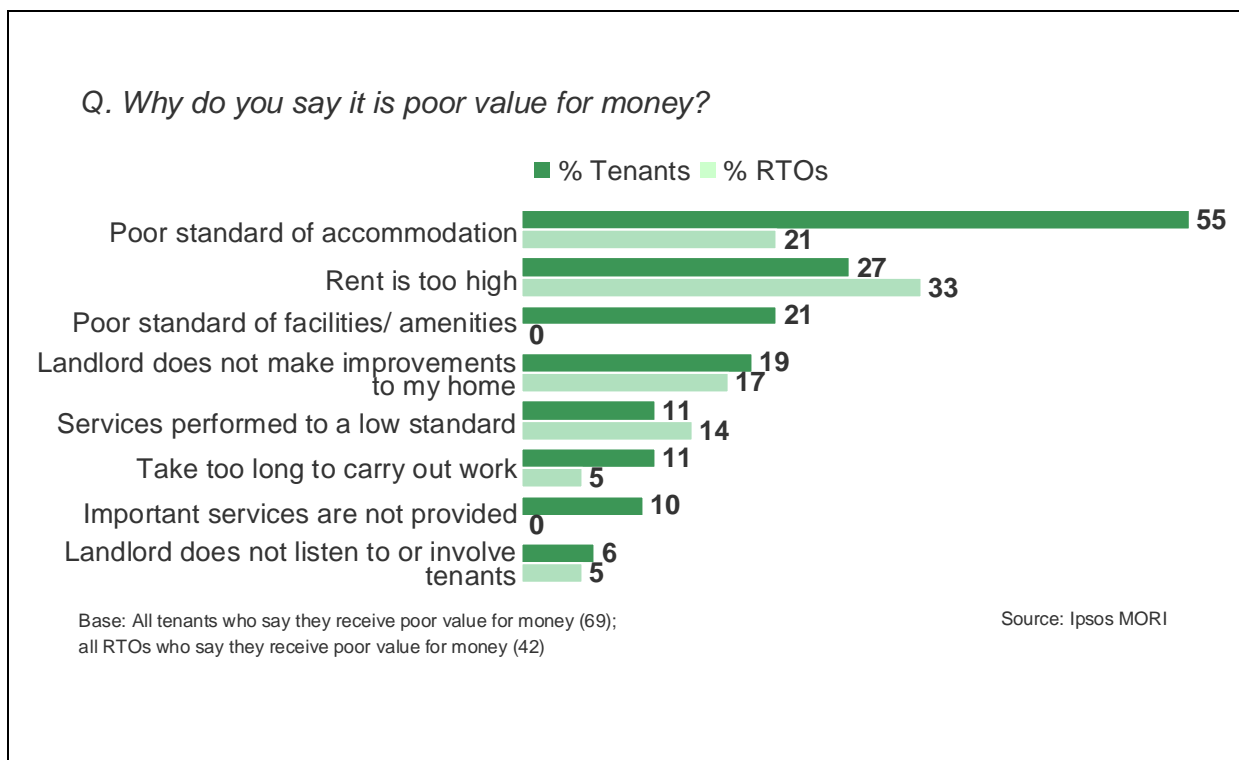
4.19 While there were no significant differences in overall perceptions of value for money between tenants who pay rent and those who do not, the reasons they gave for saying their landlord provides good value for money differed. Tenants who pay rent were much more likely than those who do not to mention rent is reasonable as a reason for saying they their landlord provided good value for money (50% compared to 31%). In fact, tenants who pay rent were equally as likely to mention rent is reasonable as good standard of accommodation (50% compared to 51%).

4.20 Further, perhaps alluding to their greater ability to make informed judgements about value for money, tenants who said they knew a great deal or fair amount about how their landlord's rent levels compare to other landlords were more likely than those who knew not very much or nothing at all to say that rent is reasonable (52% compared to 33%).

Receiving poor value for money

4.21 The reasons cited by tenants and RTOs who rated the service provided by their landlord as representing poor value for money were also strongly related to the quality of accommodation and cost of rent, albeit negatively skewed (see Figure 4.6). We have not conducted detailed sub-group analysis on this question as the base sizes are too low to draw any firm conclusions.

Figure 4.6: Main reasons for rating their landlord's service as poor value for money



4.22 The focus on the quality of accommodation as the core determining reason for landlords providing good or poor value for money was also reflected in focus groups. It was apparent in discussions with tenants that receiving good services was the central consideration, more important than the cost of rent, when making judgements on value for money.

"I think it's the value for your service, what you're paying, as long as the job's done right is the most important thing" (Glasgow).

4.23 More specifically, tenants believed value for money is linked to key services being delivered effectively. Most importantly, tenants believed that the difference between receiving good or poor value for money hinged on having suitable accommodation that catered for their needs and circumstances.

"Having the proper accommodation that you need for your needs...that's what you're looking for, for your value for money, so that you're happy in that house and you're happy with the value...because this is what you wanted" (Galashiels).

"I suppose it depends on the house you've got and where you are, if it's good value for money. My old house, I wouldn't have thought it was good value for money, the house I'm in now yes, it's good value for money"... so I suppose it's where you are and what you've got" (Dundee).

4.24 Further, for tenants, having suitable accommodation that is fit for purpose and in a good state of repair was also felt to be more important than modernisations and upgrades to homes. As this tenant discussed, there is little point in landlords renovating houses if they are failing to ensure that the fundamental services are being carried out effectively.

"The rents go up but the services has come down...they talked about they're going to do this, give you central heating, give you a new kitchen, new windows, make the houses all habitable and blaa, blaa, blaa, but if the main structure of the house is not right so you've got dampness, what's the point of getting new windows, new doors or new kitchens, if the dampness is in the house, you've got to fix that, fix the fundamental things, but they don't do that. You're paying over the top in rent but you've got a repair and it takes ages to get done" (Kilmarnock).

4.25 However, contrary to this general view among tenants, RTO participants believed that value for money was "usually always" dependent on landlords carrying out modernisations and upgrades in tenants' home. In fact, there was a consensus that it would not be possible to have good value for money without the provision of this service.

"..there is a thin line of divide here because the tenants that have had their properties upgraded, they will tell you they are getting value for money with the rent but tenants that haven't had that and they're not on the housing as yet for the programme, they are paying for what is being done there and they're not getting anything for it" (RTO).

4.26 RTOs had two main reasons for championing upgrades and modernisations as the core driver of value for money. First, modernisations and upgrades were perceived to be inseparable from the quality of accommodation and, consequently, quality of life.

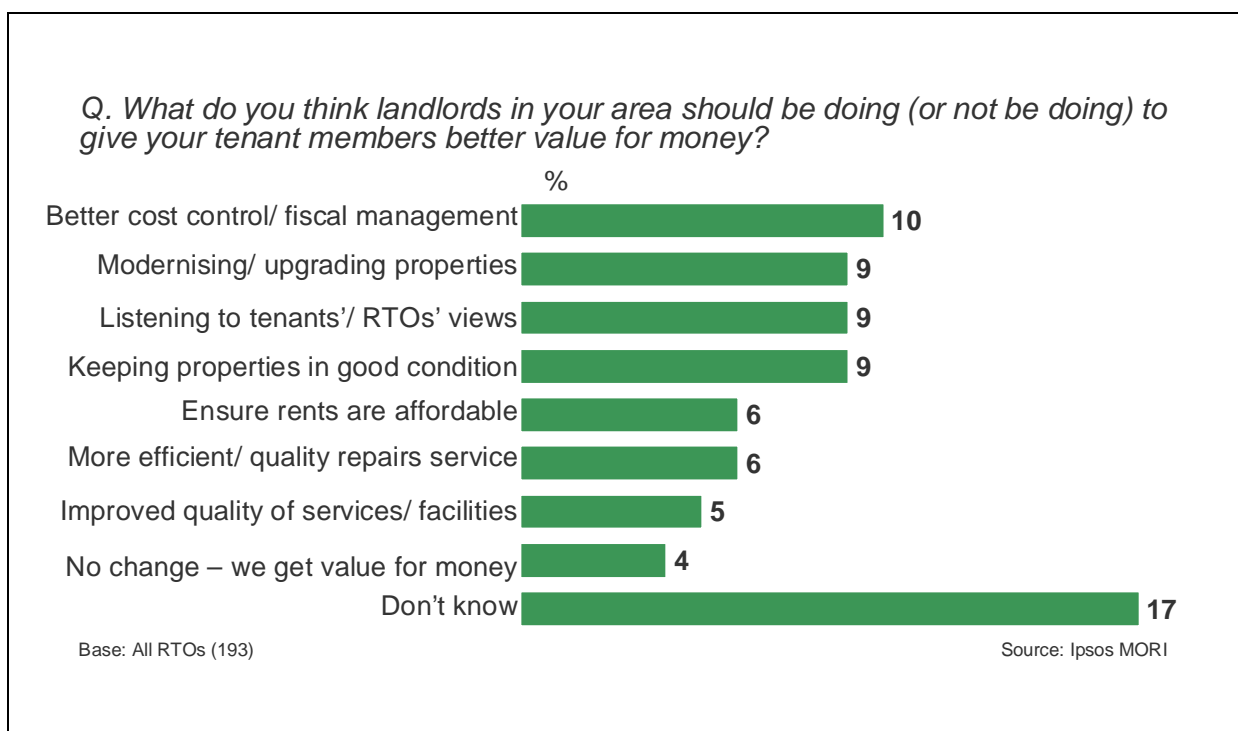
“It has to be because it is the quality of your home and the quality of your life, so value for money is in that, isn’t it. If you were paying a lot of money and getting nothing” (RTO).

4.27 Second, RTOs discussed at length how modernising homes had wider implications than offering immediate better value for money for tenants. Indeed, they believed that making upgrades and modernisations could save money for the landlord in the long term, by ensuring that all homes are of a minimum standard. As a result, the landlord would be able to save money on repairs.

Improving value for money

4.28 We asked RTOs what changes landlords in their area could make to improve the value for money tenants receive. As Figure 4.7 shows, they mentioned a range of changes, each mentioned by around one in ten RTOs, including better control over costs and fiscal management (10%), modernising and upgrading properties (9%), listening to and consulting tenants and acting on their suggestions (9%) and maintenance of properties (9%).

Figure 4.7: Changes that could be made to improve value for money



4.29 In the group discussions, tenants also made suggestions of things their landlord could do to improve levels of value for money. Generally, tenants felt that landlords should provide the core services that they should already be providing.

“If I’m paying my rent and I get that level of service, I mean it is a [social landlord] after all. I’m not expecting them to put gold handles on my doors. As long as it’s, I’m saying a basic service. But it’s a requirement we’re all entitled to, is to have a decent level of living” (Glasgow).

“Do the repairs. Fix it, do the things they’re meant to do” (Kilmarnock).

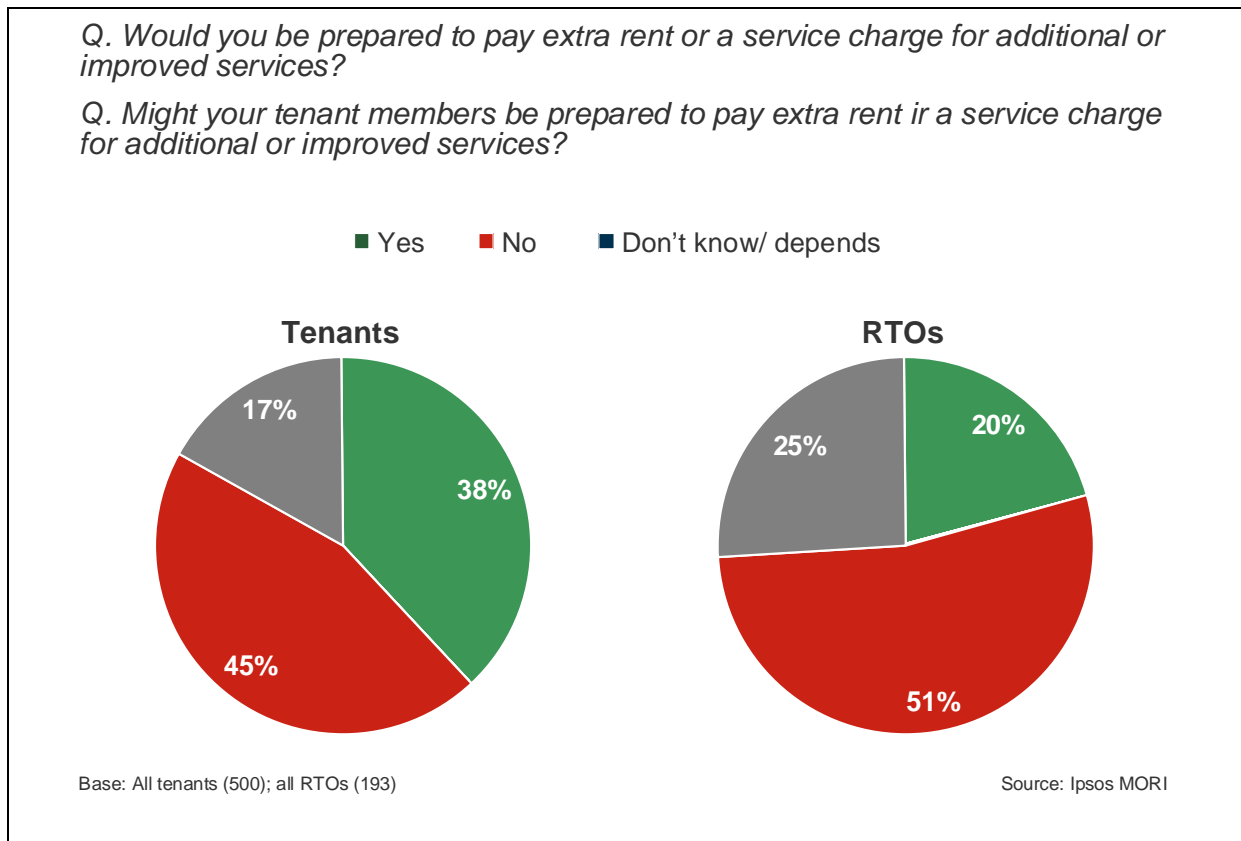
“See, I expected my house to be windproof, waterproof, I expected my kitchen and bathroom to be in working order. It doesn’t have to be my preference in what units they put in, as long as it’s clean, it’s secure, and it’s in good working order. If something breaks they fix it and they fix it quickly and in a reasonable manner. I’m paying my rent for that” (Glasgow).

Willingness to pay extra for additional or improved services

4.30 The data above clearly illustrates that landlords can improve perceptions of value for money among tenants. Some landlords have proposed schemes to allow tenants to improve their homes by making additional payments. For example, as one of the participants of the RTO group mentioned, the landlords in their area have a scheme in operation that gives tenants the option to pay £5 extra per month for a new kitchen, or an alternative improvement such as new porch or paved garden.

4.31 On balance, tenants were slightly more likely to be unwilling to pay extra rent or a service charge for additional or improved services (45% compared to 38%) (see Figure 4.8). Just under a fifth (17%) of tenants said it would depend. There was no significant difference between people who paid rent and those who did not. By comparison, RTOs were much more decisive in their answer, around half (51%) saying their tenant members would not be willing to pay extra rent or a service charge for additional or improved services. A fifth (20%) would be willing to pay extra, while 25% said it would depend.

Figure 4.8: Tenants' willingness to pay extra rent or a service charge for additional or improved services



4.32 There was no significant difference between tenants who feel they receive good value for money and those who feel they receive poor value for money.

4.33 This reluctance to pay more was also evident in discussions with both tenants and RTOs, where there was a general consensus that they would not be willing to pay more rent or an additional service charge for additional or improved services. This was for two key reasons. First, generally, there was reluctance among tenants to pay more as they perceived there to be problems with the core services currently provided by their landlord. There was a feeling that they were already paying for services that their landlords were failing to deliver adequately.

“Are you having us on? Paying them for more! What for?...You’re paying for services you’re not really getting, that’s what it amounts to” (Kilmarnock).

“Why should we pay more than what we are already paying when they should be getting these in our house? They should be having what it is we need, what we require inside our house, what we’re requiring outside our house and, more importantly, what we’re needing within our communities, now that all falls under your rent. Now we shouldn’t have to, that should not be raised because we should already have that and you don’t” (Galashiels).

4.34 Second, a number of tenants questioned why they should pay for upgrades and modernisations to a home that they do not own but only rent from their landlord. As a consequence, despite paying for them, tenants would not have ownership over the fittings.

*“At the end of the day, it’s not your house, you’re just a lodger there”
(Fraserburgh).*

*“They want to improve your housing and if you’ve to give an extra £50 a month just to get a new kitchen, it’s them that’s getting the kitchen because if you move out the day after, you leave your kitchen”
(Fraserburgh).*

4.35 However, a few participants did say that they might be willing to pay extra for additional services, although this was dependent on their landlord improving the basic core service they currently provide and involving tenants in decisions over what additional services would be provided.

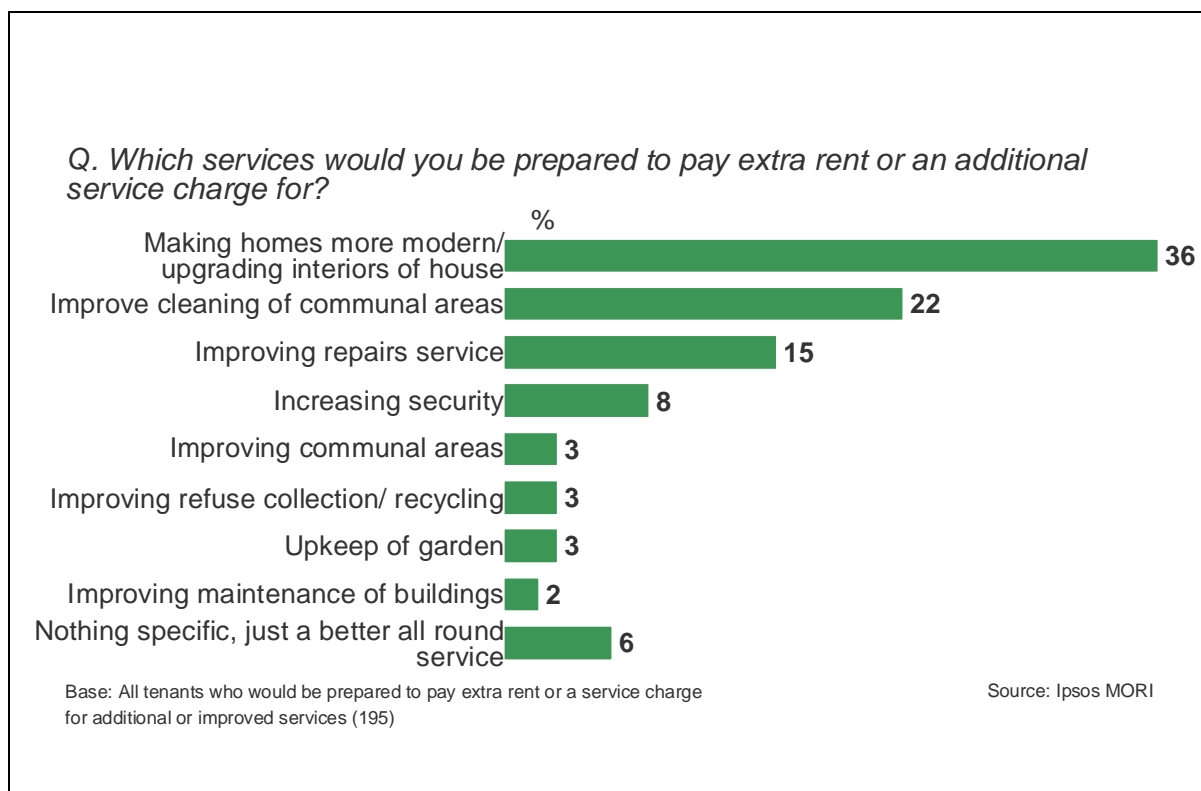
“Like everything else if they were giving you a good service, you wouldn’t mind paying the extra, or a wee bit more” (Kilmarnock).

“If they said your rent is going up £2 but there is a service charge of £3, an extra £3 but it’s dependent on tenants agreeing on what they want done, rather than them pushing it and saying you’ve got to pay it and we’ll do this and you’ve got no option but to take it” (Glasgow).

Services they would pay more for

4.36 Those tenants who said they would be prepared to pay extra rent or an additional service charge for additional or improved services would be most willing to pay for home improvements, namely making homes more modern by upgrading the interior of their house, for example installing double glazing and new kitchens (36%) (see Figure 4.9). Other services commonly mentioned were improving cleaning services to communal areas (22%), improving the repairs service (15%) and increasing security (8%). Despite problems being attributed to core services, including repairs, it is unsurprising that tenants were less likely to say they would pay for improving core services that, as discussed, they believe they should already be receiving. Modernisations, cleaning services to communal areas and increased security, by comparison, could be considered additional services, outside the core service offering.

Figure 4.9: Services tenants would pay extra rent or an additional service charge for



4.37 Similarly, RTOs who said their tenants would be willing to pay more (N=39) were most willing to pay for making homes more modern (9), garden maintenance, close cleaning and caretaker services (9) and improving cleaning services (6).

Additional services (unprompted)

4.38 While, as reported, tenants in the groups dismissed the idea of paying more for services, in the postal survey, RTOs were asked (unprompted) which additional services not already provided in their area, should be provided. Around a quarter (24%) of RTOs did not know what additional services should be provided. No clear favourites emerged among those that were mentioned. RTOs were most likely to say facilities and amenities for the community/estate (11%) and wider estate management and upkeep and maintenance of communal grounds (10%).

4.39 During group discussions, tenants suggested a number of additional services that they would like their landlord to provide. One of the services mentioned in groups in urban areas was the provision of wardens, akin to those present in sheltered accommodation, to deal with the problem of nuisance neighbours and anti-social behaviour in these areas. Other services included gardening services and cleaning in communal areas.

5 COMMUNICATION AND TENANT PARTICIPATION

Key findings

Most tenants saw their landlord as good at keeping them informed about things that might affect them. However, while most were also satisfied with opportunities for participation in decision making, nearly a quarter were dissatisfied.

While generally somewhat more critical of landlords, a majority of RTOs felt their landlord was good at keeping them informed about issues affecting tenants. Again, however, although most RTOs were satisfied with opportunities for involvement in decision making, more than a quarter were dissatisfied.

Appetite for greater involvement in the running of housing services was relatively low among tenants. Among tenants wanting to be more involved, the main issues on which they wanted a greater say were related to the condition of their home, a reflection of their key overall service priority.

In terms of the methods by which tenants would like to have more say, the most frequently-mentioned techniques were those requiring less commitment of time and effort, including filling in feedback cards and responding to surveys.

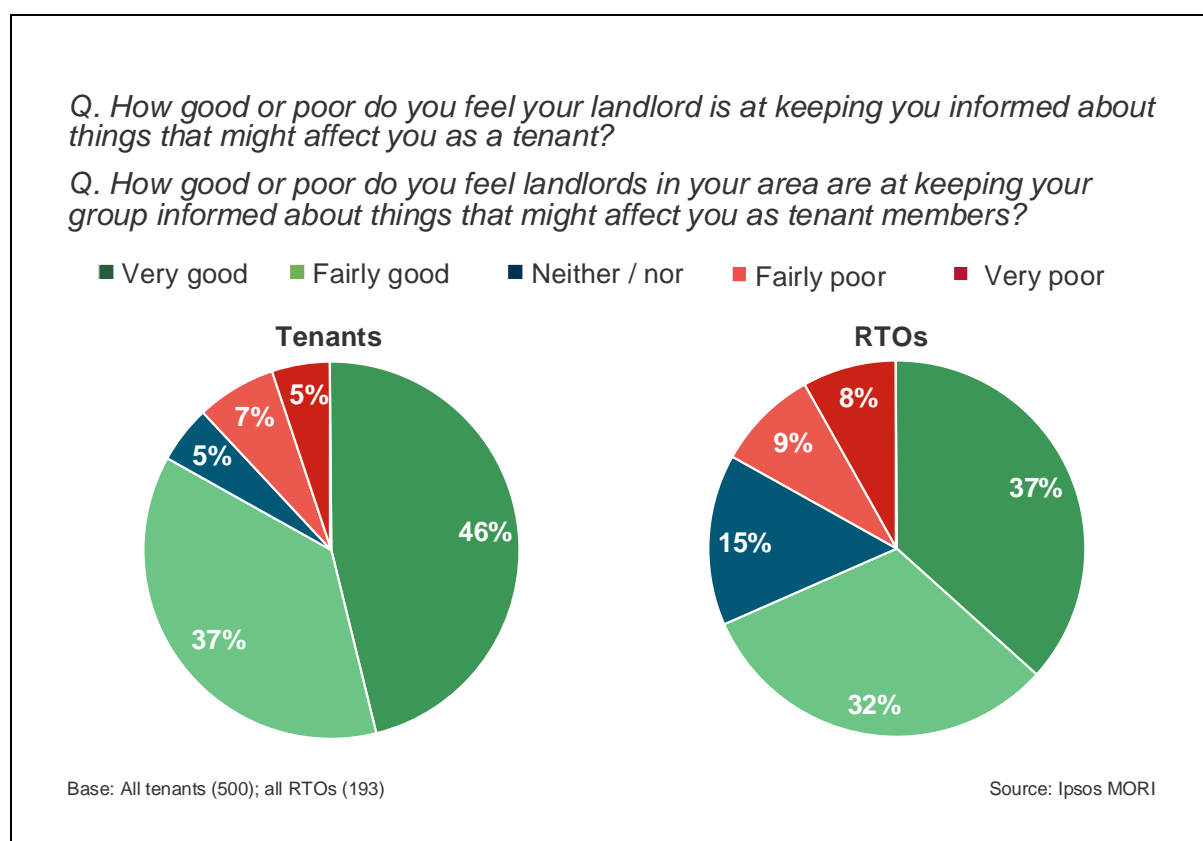
Just over half of RTOs believed they had a lot or some influence over the way their landlord delivered services. However, while 18% felt they had a lot of influence, a similar proportion felt they had no influence at all.

- 5.1 In addition to ensuring that landlords are providing good quality services, meeting the priorities of tenants and delivering good value for money, the SHR also ensures that landlords are fulfilling their duty to be responsive to the views and needs of tenants and service users. As part of this, landlords need to demonstrate that they are providing tenants with adequate information to exercise rights and choice and show commitment to involving tenants and tenant organisations in the decisions about their homes and communities. With this in mind, the research also highlighted the extent to which landlords engage tenants and RTOs in their activities.
- 5.2 This chapter begins by outlining the extent to which tenants and RTOs felt that landlords were good at keeping them informed about things that might affect them as tenants and whether or not they were satisfied with opportunities for participation in decision making, before considering the extent to which tenants would like to be involved in the way their landlord delivers services in the future.

Keeping tenants informed

- 5.3 Most tenants (83%) felt their landlord is good at keeping them informed about things that might affect them as tenants, with 46% saying they are *very good* (see Figure 5.1).

Figure 5.1: Keeping tenants informed – tenants and RTOs compared



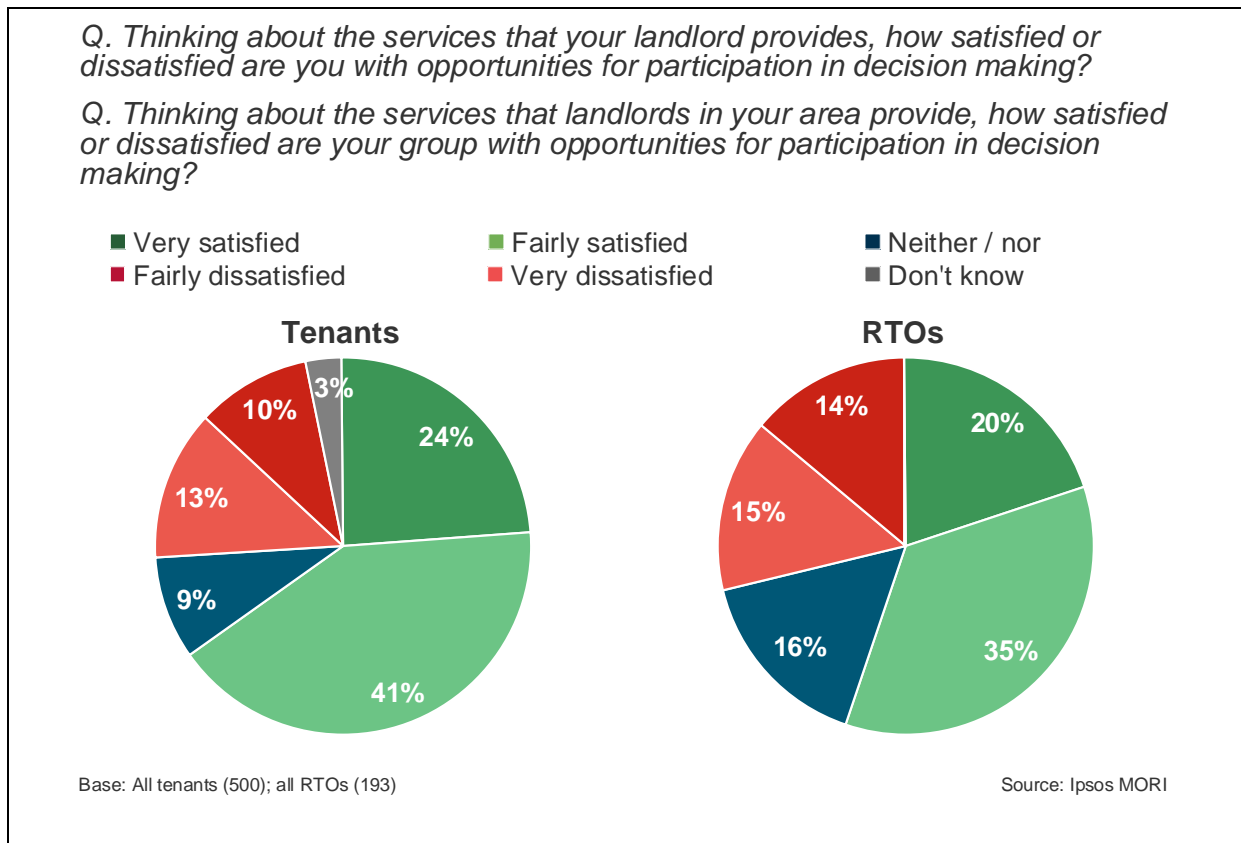
5.4 The youngest group of tenants – aged 16 to 34 years – were considerably less likely than older tenants to say that their landlord is good at keeping them informed (57% compared to 83% of those aged 35 to 54 years and 91% of those aged 55 years or more). Nearly a third (31%) of tenants aged 16 to 34 years felt their landlord is *poor* at keeping them informed.

5.5 While RTOs were less likely than tenants to say landlords in their area are good at keeping their group informed about things that might affect their tenant members, a majority (68%) still said their landlord is good at keeping them informed about things that might affect them as tenants. 17% of RTOs felt landlords in their area were poor at keeping their group informed.

Opportunities for involvement

5.6 In addition to feeling that they were being kept informed, the majority (65%) of tenants were also satisfied with opportunities for participation in decision making (Figure 5.2). However, a significant proportion (23%) were dissatisfied.

Figure 5.2: Satisfaction with opportunities for involvement in decision making – tenants and RTOs compared



5.7 While there were no differences between local authority and RSL tenants in perceptions of whether their landlord is good at keeping them informed, there were differences in satisfaction with opportunities for participation in decision making, with RSL tenants more likely than local authority tenants to be very satisfied (32% compared to 20%). The combined ‘very’ and ‘fairly’ satisfied scores are 69% for RSL tenants and 63% for local authority tenants which is not a significant difference.

5.8 As Table 6.1 shows, the youngest group of tenants were less likely than older residents to say they were satisfied with opportunities for participation in decision making. Indeed, this group were more likely than average to say they were dissatisfied with opportunities.

Table 5.1: Satisfaction with opportunities for participation in decision making by age

	Age			
	16-34	35-54	55+	All
	%	%	%	%
Satisfied	42	63	74	65
Dissatisfied	35	26	16	23
	78	189	232	500

5.9 Younger tenants' lack of satisfaction with opportunities for participation in decision making, coupled with a feeling that they are not always kept informed, could be indicative of higher expectations of this group. This notwithstanding, a lack of involvement in decision making may serve to marginalise this younger group, making them feel they can do little to improve any perceived weaknesses in services provided by their landlord. This finding echoes data from the previous chapter around the expectations of younger tenants when thinking about value for money from landlords.

5.10 The majority (55%) of RTOs were satisfied with opportunities for participation in decision making. However, as was the case with tenants, a significant proportion (28%) were dissatisfied, with 14% saying they were *very* dissatisfied.

Do tenants want to be involved?

5.11 Appetite for involvement in the way their landlord runs housing was relatively low among tenants. Nearly two thirds (60%) of tenants said they would not like to be involved in the way their landlord runs housing in their area, consistent with low levels of interest in finding about the service and rent levels of their landlords, reported in Chapter 4.

5.12 Given their greater dissatisfaction with opportunities for participation in decision making, and services more widely, it is perhaps unsurprising that younger tenants were more likely than those older to say they would like to be more involved in the way their landlord runs housing in their area (57% of those aged 16 to 34 years and 43% of those aged 35 to 54 years compared to 23% of tenants aged 55 years or more). Nearly three-quarters (72%) of tenants aged 55 years or more would *not* like to be more involved in the way their landlord runs housing in their area.

5.13 Further working tenants and non-working tenants were more likely than those who are retired to say they would like to be more involved (46% and 43% compared to 16%). In addition, tenants living in the most deprived areas were more likely than those living in more affluent areas to say they would like to be more involved in decision making (42% compared to 31%).

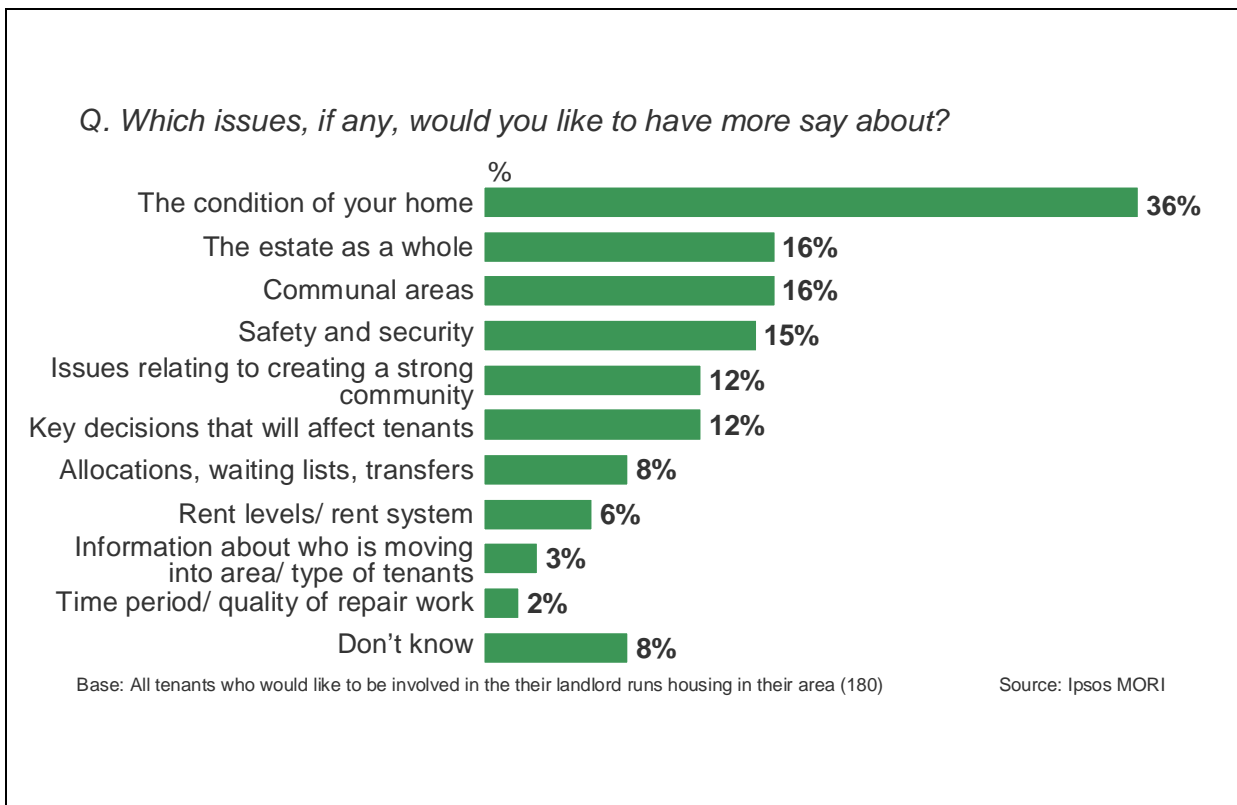
5.14 It is important to bear in mind that expressing a desire to become involved does not necessarily result in people becoming involved. As recent research

carried out by the Tenant Services Authority²¹ highlighted, with regards tenant involvement, there is a considerable “gap between what people say and what people do”

5.15 Furthermore, while the findings highlight that there is a desire among a significant proportion of younger and working tenants to become more involved, there are practical barriers which may prevent this. Firstly, time pressures and work commitments may prevent working tenants from becoming involved, particularly as a considerable number of RTO meetings and related tenant participation events take place during the day. Secondly, among younger tenants, their stage of life is likely to create barriers to tenant involvement. For example, tenants with children may need to arrange childcare thus making it difficult or inconvenient to attend meetings, even if these were scheduled to take place in the evening.

5.16 Tenants who said they would like to have more involvement would like to have more say over issues related to the condition of their home (36%), a reflection of their key overall service priority (see Figure 5.3). Other issues commonly mentioned issues related to the estate as a whole (16%), communal areas of the building (16%) and safety and security (15%).

Figure 5.3: Issues tenants would like to have more say about



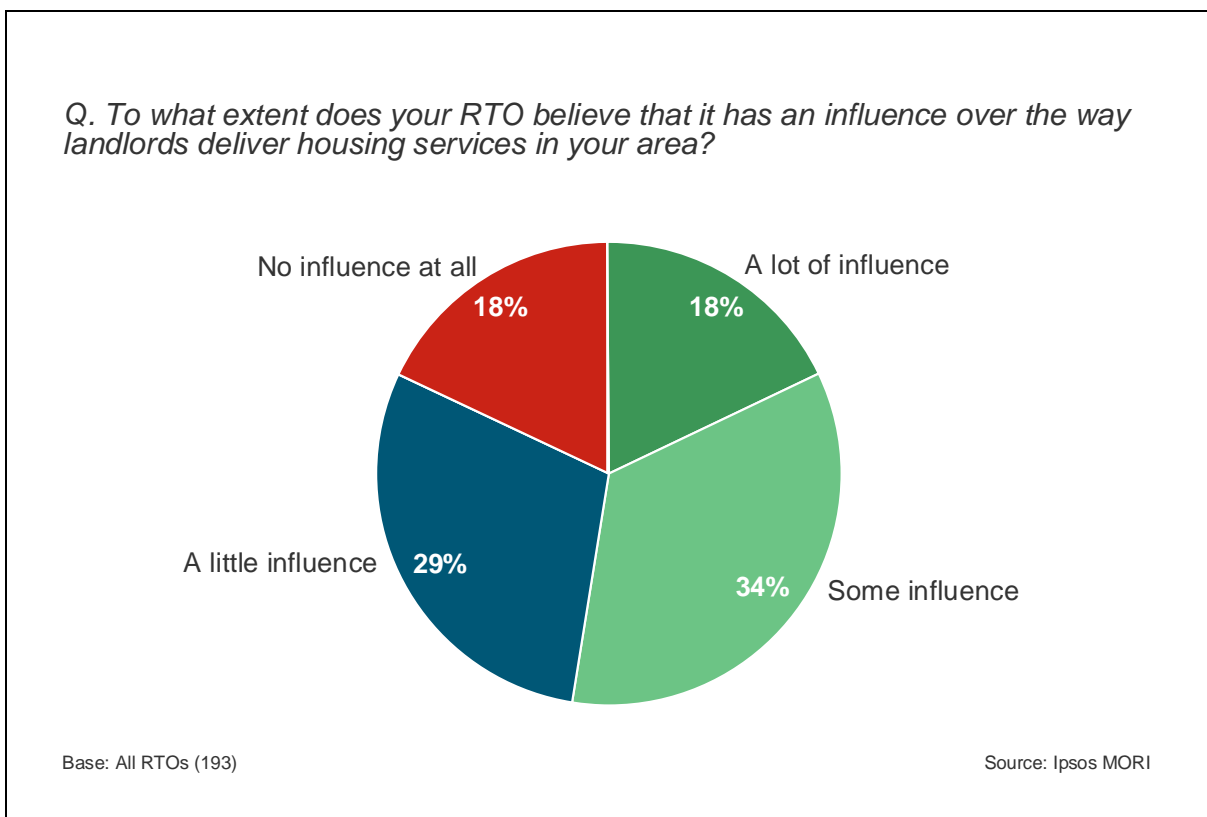
5.17 With regards the means by which interested tenants would like to have more say, they were most likely to mention methods that require less commitment of time and effort, including providing feedback on particular services, for example by filling in feedback cards (63%), and completing surveys –

²¹ Tenant Services Authority (2009) *Understanding Tenant Involvement* London:TSA

telephone surveys (62%) and online surveys (35%). They were less likely to want to become more actively involved in issues affecting tenants, including attending regular meetings (52%), joining a committee or residents organisation (37%) and meeting with staff at social events (35%).

5.18 As Figure 5.4 shows, asked about how much influence they feel their RTO has over the way the landlords deliver services in their area, opinion was fairly evenly split between those that felt they have a lot or some influence (52%) and a little or no influence (47%). Less than a fifth of RTOs (18%) felt they have a lot of influence, while a similar proportion (18%) felt they have no influence at all.

Figure 5.4: RTO perceptions of the level of influence they have over the delivery of services in their area



5.19 This finding of mixed degrees of influence was apparent in the RTO group discussion. Some participants were happy with their level of involvement and spoke of how they were consulted on a number of initiatives, including what type of upgrades and modernisations should be carried out in tenants' homes.

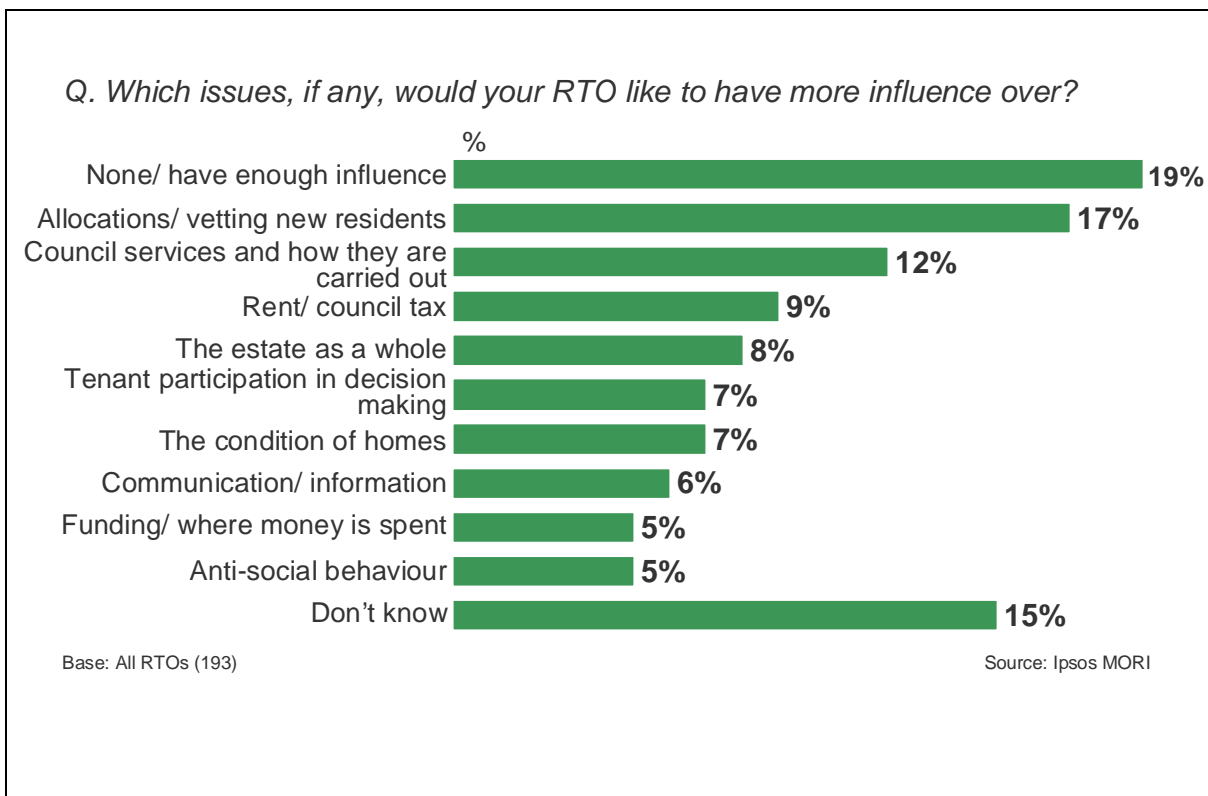
5.20 However, other participants felt frustrated at the lack of engagement their RTO had with their landlord, with one even questioning the purpose of their RTO.

"Involving tenants in decision making, yes, but how does that happen we thought? I thought it doesn't happen at all really, it should happen, but it doesn't, it just does not happen" (RTO).

“They don’t have the time to let you know what’s going on in your own area, you wonder what the RTO is there for, the purpose” (RTO).

5.21 RTOs were most likely to say they would like more influence over issues relating to: housing allocations and how tenants are vetted (17%) – perhaps affirming the strength of feeling of unfairness concerning this service – and issues relating to services and how they are carried out (12%) (see Figure 5.5). This notwithstanding, 19% of RTOs they felt they have enough influence and 15% said they did not know.

Figure 5.5: Issues over which RTOs would like to have more influence



5.22 It was less common for RTOs to mention specific means of having more say or influence but, rather, they said they would like more influence by generally being listened to (28%). Specific means mentioned by RTOs included having a representative on working group or attending committee meetings (16%), by attending regular meetings (11%) and through their landlord improving their communication and consultation practices (9%).

6 AWARENESS AND PERCEPTIONS OF THE SCOTTISH HOUSING REGULATOR

Key findings

Less than a quarter of tenants were aware that the housing and other services provided by their landlord are inspected.

Only 1% of tenants who were aware of inspection identified the SHR as the organisation which carries out this scrutiny.

Two fifths (41%) of RTOs were aware of occasions in the last three years when housing in their area had been inspected, the majority of this group having had some degree of involvement in the inspection process.

Despite limited awareness, nearly all tenants (95%) and RTOs (99%) thought it important that their landlord's work is regulated and monitored by an independent organisation. Over a third (34%) of tenants and nearly three quarters (72%) of RTOs felt it was essential.

Nearly all RTOs (97%) believed that the SHR should monitor and regulate all landlords in the social rented sector, including local authorities and RSLs.

Both tenants and RTOs felt the main focus of the SHR should be on ensuring landlords provide a good service overall, rather than examining any specific aspect of their landlord's service.

Both tenants and RTOs had reservations about the work of the SHR. Tenants' concerns related to the need to ensure inspections were representative of a landlord's service, while RTOs were critical of the move towards carrying out 'proportionate' inspections.

In order for the SHR to function properly, both tenants and RTOs believed that it should be afforded sufficient powers to enforce change. While financial sanctions were perceived by both tenants and RTOs as counter-productive, there was a lack of consensus on the best means of penalising poorly performing landlords. Suggested actions included publicising findings, implementing changes in management and enforcing housing stock transfers

6.1 A key aim of this research was to provide an evidence base that the Scottish Government could draw on as part of the modernisation of the SHR and its powers. Accordingly, the research explored current awareness and perceptions of regulation and inspection and wider views on the jurisdiction and powers required by the SHR among tenants and RTOs.

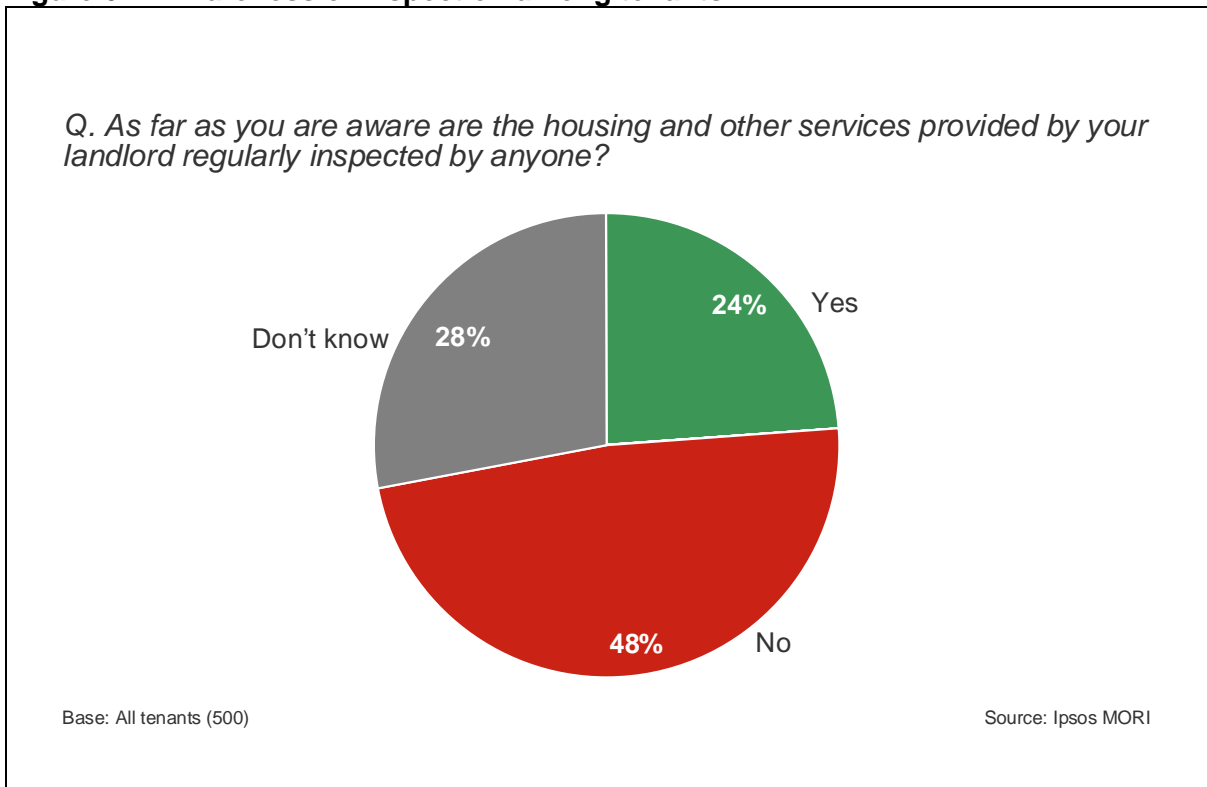
6.2 This chapter explores these themes by, first, outlining the extent to which tenants and RTOs were aware of inspection and regulation and whether or not they felt inspection and regulation of social landlords was important. Second, the chapter considers the views of tenants and RTOs on the powers of the SHR and how the regulation process should be managed. Third, it examines what respondents felt should be the main focus of the SHR, the

extent to which they would like to be involved in the process and what type of information should be made available by the SHR.

Awareness of the SHR

6.3 Among tenants, there was low awareness of inspection and regulation. Less than a quarter (24%) of tenants were aware that the housing and other services provided by their landlord are inspected (Figure 6.1). Over three quarters were not aware of inspection: 48% did not think they were inspected, while 28% did not know.

Figure 6.1: Awareness of inspection among tenants



6.4 Awareness of inspection was highest among RSL tenants (30% compared to 21% of local authority tenants).

6.5 Of the minority of tenants who were aware of inspections, over a third did not know who carries out the inspection. Organisations most likely to be named included the Council (27%), the Scottish Government (12%) and someone from the Housing Association (11%). Only 1% of tenants who were aware of inspection said that the SHR carried out inspections.

6.6 Low awareness of inspection and regulation was reflected in focus groups with tenants, where there was very little awareness of inspection and regulation.

“No idea. They appear to be a law unto themselves, I’m sorry but that’s my view” (Galashiels).

“Not got a clue” (Glasgow).

6.7 Participants who were aware were based in Dundee, but only because the findings of the inspection of Dundee City Council had been published shortly before the focus group. The negative results had been heavily publicised in local media coverage.

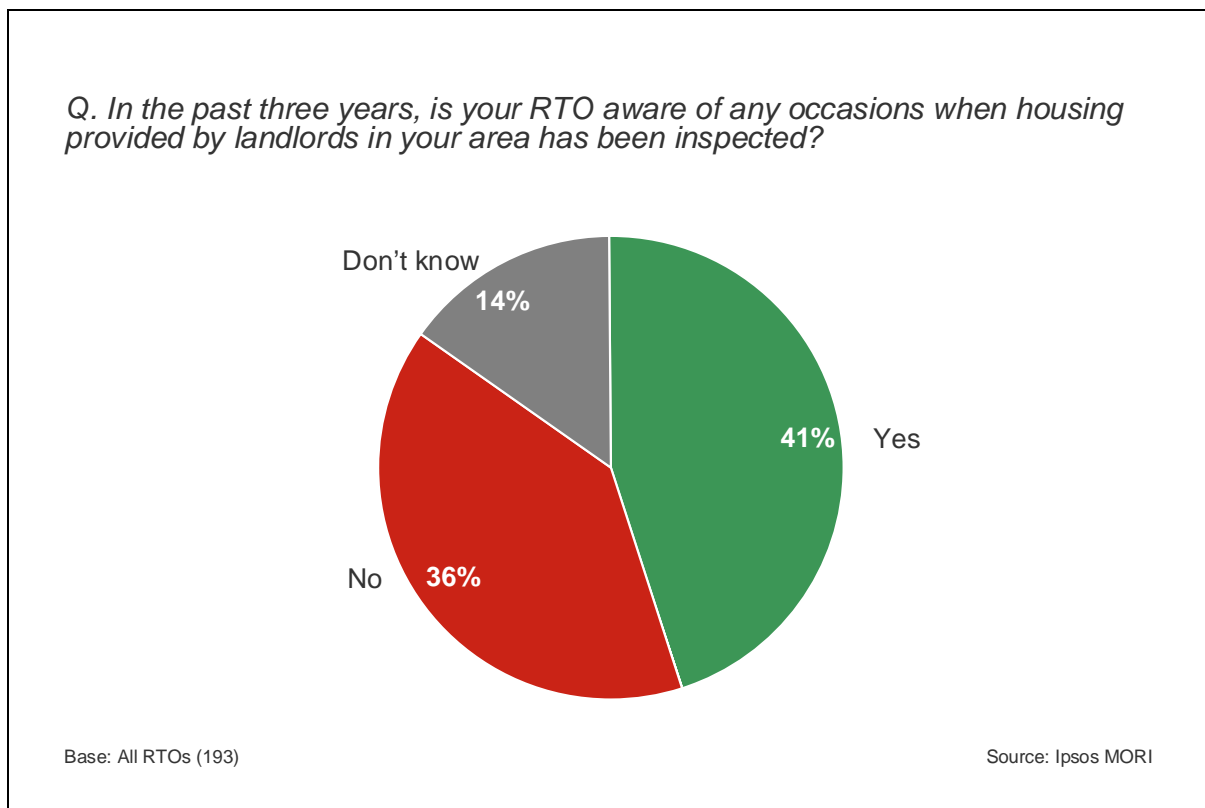
“Well according to the local paper, I do now. I didn’t before” (Dundee).

“I’ve been reading it in the paper this week” (Dundee).

6.8 However, although participants were aware of the inspection of Dundee City Council through negative reports in the media, they were unaware of the SHR’s involvement in the process, or, indeed, what role the SHR has in the social housing sector.

6.9 Awareness of regulation and inspection was greater among RTOs. Two fifths (41%) of RTOs were aware of occasions in the last three years when housing provided by landlords in their area had been inspected (see Figure 6.2). However, half said they were not aware: 36% were not aware of an occasion, while 14% did not know. However, it is important to note that the survey did not measure whether this perception was accurate, that is, the extent to which RTOs of landlords inspected in the last three years were aware that this had actually taken place.

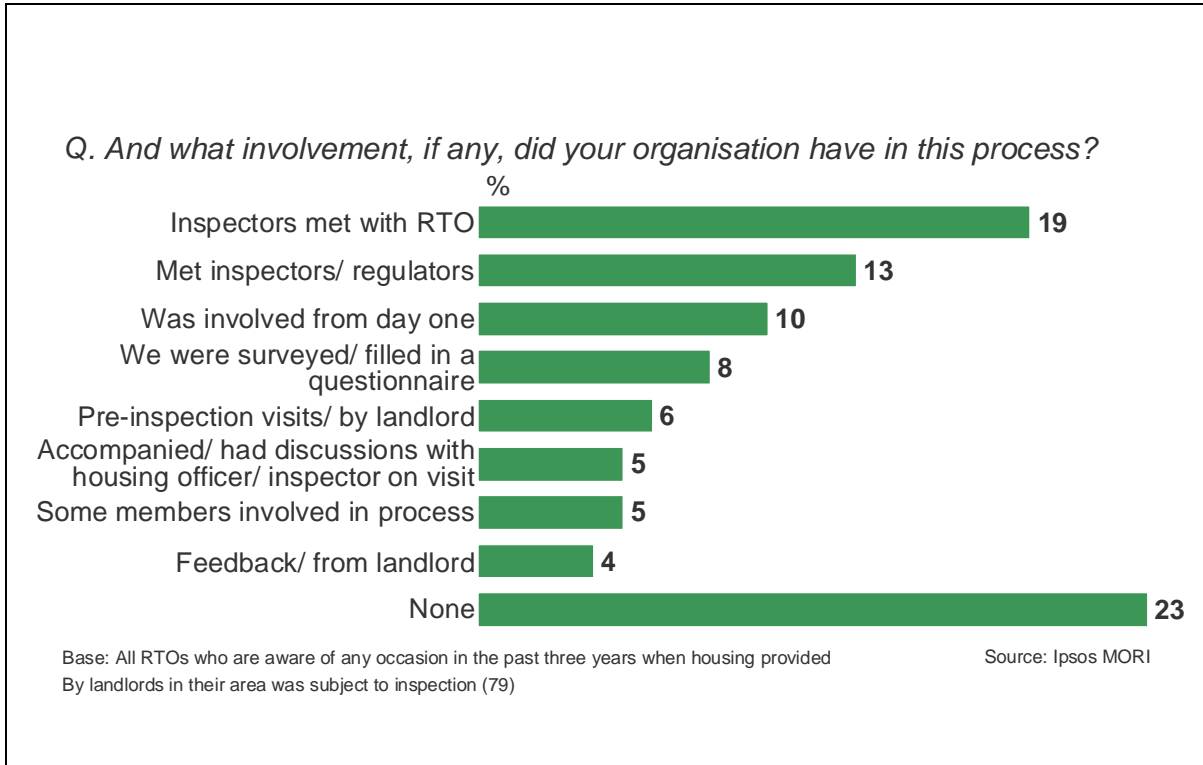
Figure 6.2: Awareness of inspection among RTOs



6.10 Of those RTOs who were aware of occasions when housing in their area had been inspected, the majority had some degree of involvement in the process

(see Figure 6.3). This took many different forms, including inspectors attending an RTO meeting (19%), RTOs meeting inspectors (13%), while one in ten (10%) were involved from the very start of inspection process. Just under a quarter (23%) of RTOs had no involvement in the process.

Figure 6.3: RTO involvement in the inspection process

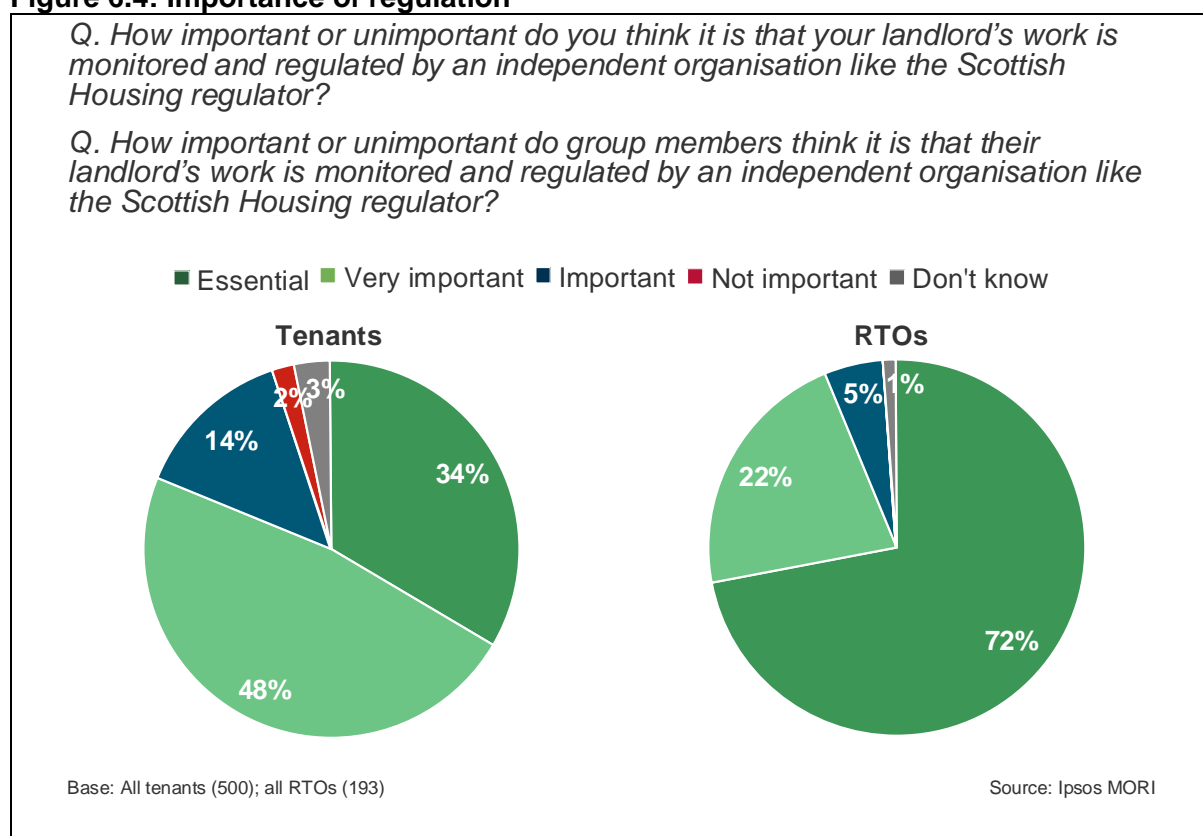


Importance of the SHR

6.11 Despite low awareness of the inspection and regulation, nearly all (95%) tenants thought that it is important that their landlord’s work is regulated and monitored by an independent organisation like the SHR. Over a third (34%) said it was essential (see Figure 6.4).

6.12 Similarly, nearly all RTOs (99%) said that their members think it is important that their landlord’s work is monitored and regulated by an independent organisation such as the SHR. However, they were much more likely than tenants to say it is essential (72%).

Figure 6.4: Importance of regulation



6.13 Furthermore, nearly all RTOs (97%) believed that the SHR should monitor and regulate all landlords in the social rented sector, including local authorities and RSLs.

6.14 The qualitative research provided an opportunity to further explore perceptions of regulation and the SHR, going beyond the survey measures of awareness and importance. Reflecting the survey results, there was a consensus in the groups that regulation of social landlords, and the role that the SHR has in this process, was very important. Central to this, were the benefits tenants believed regulation could confer on them. On the most basic level, tenants felt regulation would put pressure on their own landlord to improve the services they provide, something that tenants welcomed.

“Regulators can normally enforce things to happen and penalize other bodies for not doing certain things” (Glasgow).

“I don’t see why the landlords should get off with slacking off and that’s exactly what [landlord] are doing, they’re slacking off and the Regulator obviously haven’t got round to, they are going to get a rude awakening.....and when that day of reckoning comes, I want to be front seat please (Galashiels)”.

6.15 This perspective was reinforced in the RTO groups, in which participants believed RTOs, and tenants generally, could use information provided by the SHR to ask their landlord more informed questions and put pressure on them

to carry out changes. If these were not made, the RTO could inform the SHR that it was not being carried out.

I think it would give RTOs and tenants the opportunity to ask, have you done this? Let them go back to them and say, right have you done this? This is needing done, have you done it, can you demonstrate you have done it? And, if that wasn't done, they would go back to the Regulator and say have you done this, you need to have another look" (RTO).

6.16 Further, on a wider level, there was a general feeling that the SHR could help ensure parity of service and rent levels across different landlords.

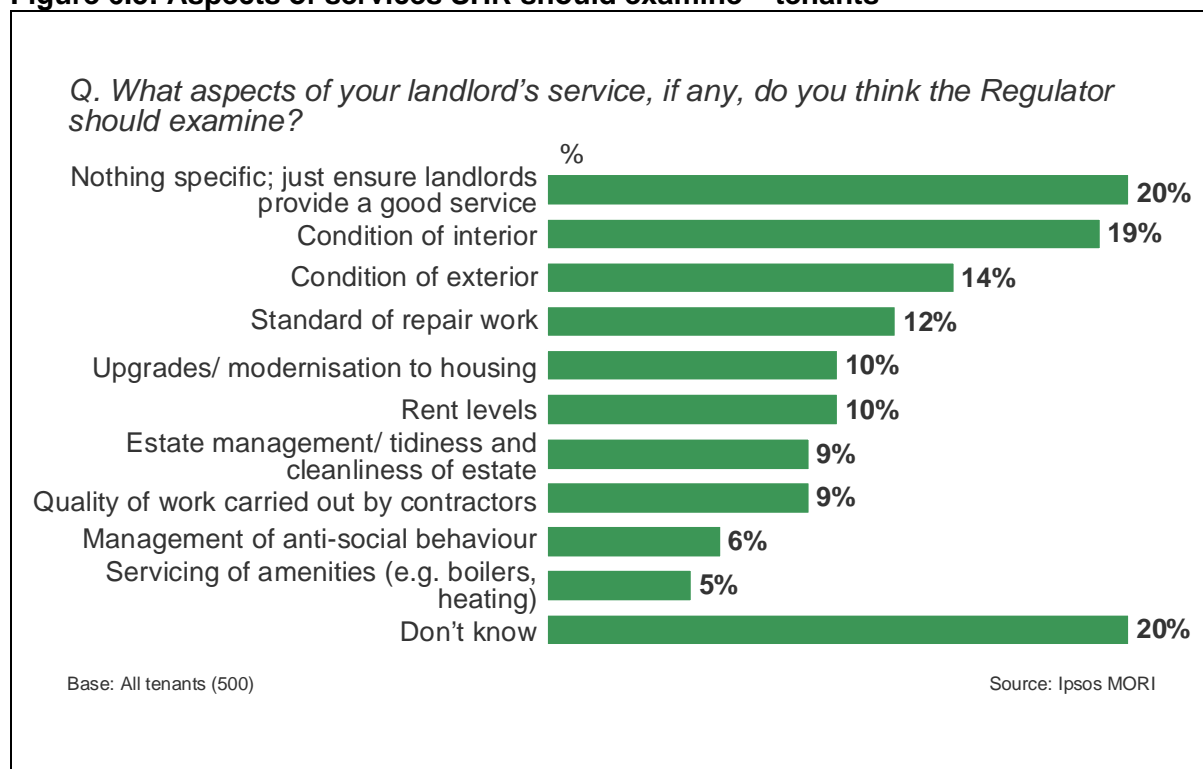
"[Ensure that] we're getting accommodation, we're not being overcharged for rent, we're getting repairs done as they come up, not having to wait three or four or five weeks, all that sort of thing, equality, across the board for every one of us" (Galashiels).

So we can get a conjunction that everybody is the same, they're all doing the same thing, they've got somebody looking in and saying, well we've got to get this housing fixed. You can spend it here and take it off this budget and no spend it on that budget. If it's needed you are going to have to keep it going" (Kilmarnock).

Main focus of the SHR

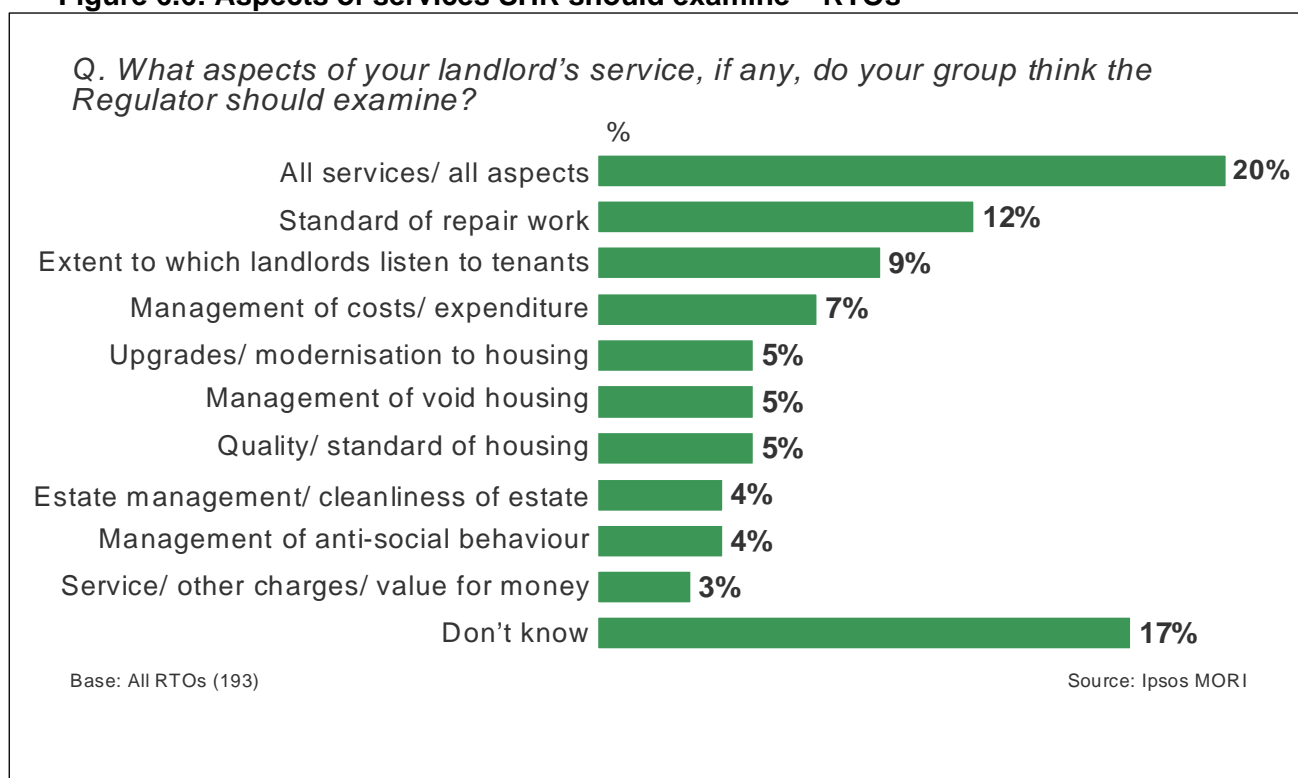
6.17 Tenants were most likely to say that the SHR should ensure landlords provide a good service overall, rather than examining any specific aspect of their landlord's service (20%) (see Figure 6.5). In terms of specific aspects, tenants most commonly mentioned the interior of housing (19%), the condition of the exterior of housing (14%) and the standard of repairs (12%). This notwithstanding, a reflection of the low awareness of the SHR among tenants, a fifth (20%) said they did not know what aspects of their landlord's service the SHR should examine.

Figure 6.5: Aspects of services SHR should examine – tenants



6.18 Similar to tenants, RTOs were most likely to say that the SHR should not focus on any specific aspect of service but should ensure that landlords provide a good service overall by focusing on all aspects (20%) (see Figure 6.6). The aspects of service RTOs were most likely to mention were the standard of repairs work (12%), the opportunities available for tenants to become involved in decision making (9%) and fiscal management (7%). However, as with tenants, a significant proportion (17%) said they did not know what aspect of the landlords services the SHR should examine.

Figure 6.6: Aspects of services SHR should examine – RTOs



Views on the management of regulation

6.19 One of the key changes made to regulation in the past five years has been a move away from routine cycles of inspections at three or five-yearly intervals towards promoting greater self-regulation among social landlords. One of the components of this is for the SHR to have different levels of engagement with landlords depending on their risk and performance profile derived from baseline inspections. Future inspections are carried out proportionate to risk. In cases where the landlord is found to be performing well, they would be considered low risk and future engagement would take the form of 'light touch inspections', with future contact with the landlord being limited. Further, there has been a move to a more principles-based approach to regulation, that is, where the SHR sets expectations of what improvements the landlord should be making but is no longer prescriptive about how they should go about making these improvements²².

6.20 While the general consensus was that the role of regulation was important, some participants in both tenants and RTOs' groups had reservations about the way in which regulation and inspection is managed.

6.21 For tenants, because they were unaware of the role of the SHR, the central concerns were hypothetical and related to whether the SHR would obtain a representative picture of their landlord's performance and, more specifically,

²² The Scottish Housing Regulator (2008), *A guide to how we regulate*, Edinburgh: The Scottish Government

whether landlords were forewarned about inspections and whether they decided which aspects of their service the SHR could inspect. It was felt that involving landlords in decisions about regulation and inspection could lead to them showcasing the best aspects of their services and thus not provide a representative picture of performance.

“It’s just a staged thing. You work for your company and you know your big boss is coming, what are you going to be like? Are you going to be smartly dressed, yes sir, no sir, three bags full, because you want to keep your job” (Tenant, Kilmarnock).

6.22 Tenants discussed the steps that could be taken to circumvent this potential problem. The discussion centred on two key areas. First, in order to ensure landlords were providing good quality accommodation – the key overall priority for tenants – they believed it was important to inspect the ‘real’ physical evidence of landlord performance, as well as consult tenants living in the areas, rather than relying solely on information gathered by the landlord.

“When they do the inspection do they just go round the council, well the housing department and inspect the information they got in the office or do they actually take [themselves] up to the areas that people are living in and see for themselves?” (Dundee)

“They should let the people know they’re there. Not just statistics, hands on” (Dundee).

“They would just tell them what they want them to hear, yes, everything is fine here, everybody is happy with us. Take them to the bits that haven’t got nothing, who they’re not doing things for, let them see it for themselves” (Tenant, Kilmarnock).

6.23 By having this approach to regulation, the SHR and tenants could work together to achieve better outcomes for tenants. Key to this was the SHR building trusting relationship with tenants.

“Be quite open and approachable about it instead of coming across like a government agency or body. Building people’s trust is not just a case of them and us, you know, working together trying to be a fairer situation for everybody” (Dundee).

6.24 Secondly, they believed inspections should be carried out at random, with little or no involvement from the landlord.

“...just do it random and no have the housing picking the people because they could say, he’s a good tenant, we’ll send them to his house because that’s a good standard, no send them to them with the ASBOs that knock holes through the wall” (Glasgow).

“...do a mystery shop, get some of your people to do a mystery shop of [landlord] and give that to them and say there you are, that’s the real story in Kilmarnock. Don’t go where they want to send them because

they'll think great look at this, beautiful...go to the real housing" (Kilmarnock).

6.25 As would be expected given their far greater knowledge of the SHR and the way it currently manages the regulation process, RTO participants were much more likely to be critical of some of the actual methods currently employed by the SHR. More specifically, the move towards a greater reliance on self-regulation and the current method of carrying out 'light touch' inspections were considered problematic. Indeed, one participant whose landlord had recently been inspected with positive results was concerned that the landlord would not be inspected in the future. If this was the case, participants questioned how they could be sure that the high standards of the landlord could be maintained, relying solely on the landlord continuing to be self-critical in their approach.

"...who is going to decide where the need is because, as it stands just now, I'm sitting in a council that have double As and, as far as I can see, they are never going to be inspected again and how am I going to know they are going to stay like that?" (RTO)

"it has to be maintained and if there is no going to be any more inspections, how do you know if it's going to be maintained?" (RTO).

"The Regulator needs to be in there regularly to each RSL and council regularly. Self assessment is no good" (RTO).

6.26 Furthermore some participants were critical of the move away from routine cycle inspections and believed the Regulator should be given more powers to enforce the landlord to improve their performance.

"I don't think they have enough power at the moment. I think they need to be more like they were in Communities Scotland you could go into a council or RSL on a regular basis: a year; five year or seven year cycle and go through the whole housing. Not just pass it right, go through it and have a bit of teeth to say, right you need to do something there or need to do something here, that needs sorted, sort it. They need to have the power" (RTO).

6.27 While findings suggest that more could be done to build awareness of the SHR and what it does, tenants' views on how regulation should be managed suggest building awareness is not without challenges. Tenants championed the role of 'hands on' inspection in the regulation process, with a strong desire for the SHR to be present in areas during inspections and consult tenants directly about 'real' experiences. However, with recent changes to the regulation process which have resulted in inspections moving away from this type of approach, tenants, despite their positive view of the SHR, may begin to mistrust the organisation. Therefore, any awareness campaign, in addition to building awareness of the SHR, will need to manage the expectations of tenants and provide clear rationale for the current system of managing regulation, outlining the benefits of adopting the proportionate approach.

Equally, the increased consultation with RTOs could be beneficial, particularly in terms of providing a rationale for the move from routine cycles of inspections at three or five-yearly intervals towards greater self-regulation among social landlords and proportionate inspections.

Powers of the SHR

6.28 Participants in both the RTO and tenants' groups discussed what powers the SHR should have, particularly when it is dealing with poorly performing landlords. There was an acknowledgement that to carry out its role effectively and make a difference to tenants, the SHR should have sufficient powers. In summary these powers relate to *transparency* (publishing details of poor performance), *accountability* (holding landlords responsible for poor performance) and *redress* (finding suitable punishments for poorly performing landlords).

"The Regulator actually needs teeth, there's no use having a Regulator if they haven't got teeth" (RTO).

"There is no point in them coming, having a look round your place or round our place, or anything and going away. They need a bit of clout to give us what we're paying for" (Galashiels).

6.29 While it was felt in the RTO group that these powers should not be overly heavy-handed, the regulation system and the powers conferred on the SHR should, nonetheless, be sufficient to ensure that landlords are carrying out their jobs correctly.

"I don't think we need to go in with a big stick or anybody or that, we just need to make sure a SHR makes sure that a job is getting done and it's getting done properly and, if it's no getting done properly, they go back in and make sure that it's getting done properly" (RTO).

6.30 In both sets of focus groups, participants discussed what should happen if a landlord was found to be performing poorly. Arriving at the most effective means was difficult for both tenants and RTO participants. While the first reaction of many participants in the tenants groups was to impose fines on landlords, the consensus was that financial penalties would be counter productive as tenants would inadvertently suffer.

"If your housing is doing a bad job then fining him £100,000 is not going to help you get your kitchen or toilet fixed" (Glasgow).

"Well if you fine the [landlord], you're fining yourself because at the end of the day, it's us that pay it because we have to pay them (Kilmarnock).

6.31 A number of alternative actions were suggested in the groups. First, on the most basic level, tenants believed that landlords should be held publicly accountable for their actions, with findings of the inspection published in local and national media, in an attempt to 'name and shame' the landlord into making changes.

“I think you would get better action if it was brought to light and everybody was seeing it” (Glasgow).

“I would say publicise it, definitely publicise it and just make everybody aware.....name and shame in the newspaper” (Galashiels).

- 6.32 Secondly, tenants believed that, following inspections, landlords should be given a time limit for making improvements based on the numbers that are needed. However, if the landlord does not make sufficient improvements after this time, further more serious action should be taken.

“All depending on what it is that is needing improved, they should have a time limit, a reasonable time limit to give them a chance to make improvements and if they don’t, they should either have the authority to fine them very heavily or take the housing stock off them and put it on to a housing stock that are going to look after it” (Glasgow).

- 6.33 Third, the most serious and final action suggested by tenants would be to either change the management structure within the landlord or transfer the housing stock to a better performing landlord.

“The only way they should enforce it is to say, right, you’re the Managing Director of that housing you’re going to have to lose your job or get somebody new. Or a new team” (Glasgow).

“if a bad [landlord] is running the whole thing, clean them out, bring in a new service, pass it on” (Kilmarnock).

- 6.34 By comparison, RTOs were far more conservative in their suggested actions and concentrated on thinking of actions that ensure funding was allocated to specific aspects of a landlord’s service, without penalising tenants.

“Would it be possible to set aside so much of the [landlord’s] money and say, you must use this money for this purpose? ...Rather than penalise the tenants or the tax payers or whatever, to set aside some money” (RTO).

Involvement in regulation process

- 6.35 Consistent with the ways in which they would like to be involved in and have more say about their landlord’s services, tenants were most likely to say they would like to be involved in the regulation through means that require less commitment of time and effort, including taking part in surveys (42%) and speaking informally with staff during inspections visits (40%). Tenants were less likely to want to become involved through more proactive methods: having a say through a tenants association (31%) or by meeting staff from the SHR (22%).

- 6.36 Despite the lack of desire to be involved in the regulation process on a proactive level, this should not be taken to mean that tenants did not care about regulation or feel that they should have little role in the process. Indeed,

as discussed, tenants in the group discussions felt strongly that they should be consulted during inspection to gather local intelligence to ensure that the SHR is capturing a true picture of their landlord's performance and what is happening in the area. In addition to providing local intelligence on the area, by having a presence in the local community during inspections and engaging with tenants, some believed the SHR could form trust with tenants, in a sense, advertising themselves and their role of working to protect the interests of tenants.

"Then they are getting things done. At least they're advertising"
(Dundee).

"People would maybe feel there was someone on their side then"
(Dundee).

6.37 Furthermore, there was a desire among some tenants to be able to contact the SHR directly and provide feedback on poor performance.

"you should be able to write a letter to him to say look my [landlord] is no doing what they're supposed to do. I've been waiting x amount of weeks for a repair and it's no getting done or the repair that has been done is no up to scratch so he should be able to do something"
(Kilmarnock).

"I think it would make a difference especially if the council tenants knew there was a government body that works for the council, that if you put leaflets through their door, contact, email, whatever, they can then go to them. They might feel better" (Dundee).

6.38 RTOs, by comparison, were more likely than tenants to want to have more proactive input into the SHR's monitoring of landlords' performance: 13% by taking part in the monitoring process; 12% by meeting staff from the SHR; and 10% through regular follow-up and feedback on results on landlord performance. However, just over a quarter (26%) of RTOs did not know what type of involvement they would like.

Information made available by the SHR

6.39 As part of the changes made to regulation in the past five years, the SHR makes information on social landlords' performance available to the public. With this in mind, in group discussions, participants were asked what format information from the SHR should be provided in. There was a general consensus that information should be disseminated in easy-to-access sources, using simple language, that is easy to understand for all tenants.

"I wish they would put everything in plain language. Absolutely, a load of trash you wonder what's being said, what does it mean? You have no idea some of the stuff that comes off, I think plain English please - or Scottish" (RTO).

“It should be reported in the press and be in plain English. I don’t think we need great big books and leaflets; I think we need a report that people will see and I think that might help maintain standards as well” (RTO).

6.40 In addition, some tenants commented on how the independence of the SHR would mean that tenants could trust information from the regulation process, much more so than that provided by their landlord.

7 CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Incorporating rigorous fieldwork, this study has brought to light important evidence both indirectly and directly relevant to the ongoing reform of social housing regulation in Scotland, to the Government's and landlords' understanding of tenant priorities and to the development of policies to meet tenants' priorities – most notably through the proposal to introduce a Scottish Social Housing Charter. The twin focus of the study on mainstream tenants and on representatives of Registered Tenant Organisations (RTOs) has usefully tapped both popular and more informed opinions about the operation of social landlords and the regulatory system.
- 7.2 While the research demonstrates that overall satisfaction with landlord services is fairly high across the sector, there is a marked difference between housing associations and local authorities – the former being significantly more highly rated than the latter. Strikingly, the survey data collected in the course of the research (see Table 3.2) shows associations scoring above authorities on every one of 12 distinct service areas. Similarly, previously unpublished figures from the Scottish House Condition Survey show a marked advantage on the part of associations (see Annex A, Figure 1). Equally, landlords across the social sector should pause for thought in response to the SHCS finding that private landlords evoke overall satisfaction rates higher than those for either local authorities or housing associations (Annex A, Figure 1).
- 7.3 By and large, social landlords are seen positively especially in terms of their repairs and maintenance services and delivery of value for money. At the same time, however, the survey evidence emphasises the importance attributed to landlords' role in tackling anti-social behaviour and – particularly among RTOs – strong reservations about current performance in this area (Figures 3.5 and 3.7). This echoes recent research findings from England in relation to social landlord activity on 'looking after the neighbourhood' and 'dealing with crime and vandalism' (see Annex A, Table 5). All of this suggests that, just as in England, Scottish tenant priorities would see 'neighbourhood management' activities assuming a high priority for service improvement.
- 7.4 Another striking finding from the survey work undertaken in this research is the extent of the difference in opinions held by respondents of different ages. As shown in Table 3.3, among tenants aged 35 years or under the proportion satisfied with tenant involvement in decision-making was less than half the comparable figure for those aged over 55 years. The same was true in relation to perceptions on the 'fairness' of allocations policies. Particularly with social landlords likely to be housing an increasingly youthful population in coming years²³, these are especially notable findings.
- 7.5 A number of the research findings have direct relevance to ongoing discussions on the reform of social housing regulation. Particularly notable is

²³ Newhaven Research (2006) *The Future of Social Housing in Scotland: A Discussion Paper*, Chartered Institute of Housing in Scotland <http://www.cih.org/scotland/policy/future-social-renting.pdf>

the large majority of RTOs (72%) seeing it as 'essential' that their landlord continues to be overseen by an independent SHR and the 82% of tenants seeing this as 'essential' or 'very important'. Alongside this is the virtually unanimous view among RTOs that oversight of both local authorities and housing associations should remain the responsibility of the SHR (para 6.13). Especially within the context of fresh evidence demonstrating lower overall satisfaction rates among council tenants (see above) these findings seem to run counter to the recent suggestion that the SHR might withdraw 'from any role in respect of local authorities'²⁴.

- 7.6 In terms of regulatory practice, the research highlights tenant scepticism about the effectiveness of the current inspection model in uncovering service shortcomings. While mystery shopping receives explicit backing, it would appear that instigation of short notice inspection could also evoke tenant support. At the same time, the research confirms a very low level of awareness of regulation among mainstream tenants. This perhaps suggests a need for more active publicity about the SHR, its role and methods (e.g. 'reality checking'). Given that the existing framework is currently under review it is of course recognised that such an exercise would be presently inappropriate. Any such campaign mounted in the future would need to address what appear to be quite widespread RTO concerns that recent developments in regulatory practice could amount to a dilution of the service.

²⁴ p29 in: Scottish Government (2009) Draft Housing (Scotland) Bill: A consultation; Edinburgh: Scottish Government <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2009/04/27095102/0>

ANNEX A: LITERATURE REVIEW

TENANT PRIORITIES FOR SOCIAL HOUSING – LITERATURE AND DATA REVIEW

1. Introduction

The Scottish Government's project brief for this study specifies the inclusion of an evidence review on service user satisfaction among social sector tenants. While the brief also indicates that this review should focus on material specific in Scotland, such literature is relatively sparse. Hence, the following digest also incorporates some evidence drawn from English studies. Additionally, although the review is required only to cover material on service user satisfaction, the review extends beyond this to encompass published evidence on tenant priorities for social housing.

The structure of the review is as follows. In the next section we look at research on tenant views undertaken by Scottish Homes during the 1990s. Section 3 highlights the clauses within current regulatory guidance which are of particular relevance to measurement of tenant satisfaction. This leads on to a review of current practice by social landlords in Scotland. Section 5 considers the scope for comparing satisfaction ratings across social landlords and over time and shows how this has been promoted under the English regulatory framework. In the penultimate section we look more widely at recent research findings on tenant priorities for social housing in England. Finally, in Section 8, we draw together some brief conclusions from the review.

2. Historical context in Scotland

Both in Scotland and England, recent official statements about the regulatory regime for social housing have stressed the importance of re-casting existing frameworks so that these are more squarely informed by tenant priorities²⁵. Although this is not entirely new, it does reflect a growing emphasis on tenants' status as consumers and the need for social landlords to develop more effective frameworks to promote accountability to their service users.

As far back as the early 1990s Scottish Homes commissioned regular national surveys of popular attitudes towards housing. Encompassing people living in all housing tenures, these were designed to 'build up and explore a detailed analysis of consumer preference in housing and consumer satisfaction with housing circumstances'. Overall, the surveys sought to establish 'what people want from the Scottish housing system and how far their aspirations are being met'²⁶.

²⁵ Scottish Government (2007) *Firm Foundations: The Future of Housing in Scotland: A discussion document* (Chpt.7). Edinburgh: Scottish Government
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2007/10/30153156/0>

Communities & Local Government (2007) *Delivering housing and regeneration: Communities England and the future of social housing regulation*; London: CLG
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/housing/pdf/322429.pdf>

²⁶ PIEDA (1996) *Third Survey of Consumer Preference in Housing*, Scottish Homes Research Report 51; Edinburgh: Scottish Homes

The Third Survey of Consumer Preference in Housing (CPH), for example, reported that if they were given a 'realistic choice', 81% of respondents would prefer to live in an owner occupied house although 67% of renters preferred renting. More recent survey evidence suggested that 86% of all households would 'ideally prefer' to own rather than rent²⁷. While a third of social renters (32%) preferred this tenure, it is notable that this is much lower than what would appear to be an approximately comparable figure as cited in the 1996 CPH survey (see above).

More directly relevant to the current research is the finding from the 1996 CPH survey that 80% of social renters were satisfied or very satisfied with their current accommodation. In terms of specific attributes of their homes, the lowest satisfaction rates among social renters related to storage space (58% satisfied) and the cost of heating (61%). Other features scored more highly – for example, 81% of social renters were happy with the layout of their home, 84% with the size of rooms and 85% with the number of rooms. Beyond this, however, the consumer preference surveys were of limited specific relevance to the current study because they focused mainly on attitudes towards accommodation and house moves rather than probing tenants' views on landlord services.

3. Scottish regulatory guidance for social landlords

In addition to commissioning national surveys, Scottish Homes – in its regulatory role – also encouraged the commissioning of tenant satisfaction surveys by individual housing associations. There was an expectation that such surveys would be conducted on a three yearly cycle. This was a recognition that, even at this stage, the measurement of service user experiences could usefully inform plans for improving the quality of service delivery. As early as the start of the 1990s, the satisfaction survey was reportedly being heralded as an effective means of listening to consumers, and thus as a necessary component of organisations becoming more demand-responsive²⁸.

More recently, with the creation of a single regulatory framework for social housing (from 2002), the associated regulatory criteria have placed 'the needs and views of tenants and other service users at the centre of the regulatory framework'²⁹. The critical 'guiding standards' define satisfactorily performing landlords as those able to state:

We have published and are implementing a sound strategy for encouraging and supporting tenants, residents and service users to participate actively in all areas of our work. We support tenants to take an active interest in managing their homes.
(GS2.2 Tenant participation)

and

²⁷ Clegg, S., Coulter, A., Edwards, G. & Strachan, V. (2007) *Housing Aspirations*; Edinburgh: Scottish Government <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2007/10/25095712/0>

²⁸ Satsangi, M. & Kearns, A. (1992) The use and interpretation of tenant satisfaction surveys in British social housing" *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy* Vol 10 (3) pp317 – 331

²⁹ Communities Scotland (2005) *Thematic study of openness and access to information provided by local authority landlords and RSLs: Project brief*

*We place the people who want to use our services at the heart of our work. We treat people with respect and are responsive to their views and priorities. (GS3.1 Responsiveness to service users)*³⁰.

The corresponding self-assessment questions are published on the SHR website.

The Scottish Homes guidance promoting tenant satisfaction surveys on a three-yearly cycle was withdrawn by Communities Scotland on the grounds that this was no longer yielding very useful data and that, as such, it was 'no longer fit for purpose'. In place of this requirement CS published a good practice toolkit 'How to gather views on service quality'³¹. This reflected a view that it would be preferable to encourage landlords to utilize a wider range of methods for collating tenant feedback on landlord services. Hence, regulatory inspections now look at the whole spectrum of ways (including via the use of qualitative rather than quantitative techniques) that inspected organizations consult tenants and collect service user feedback. Inspectors also look for evidence that service development is influenced by messages emerging from user feedback analysis.

4. Measurement of tenant satisfaction in Scotland: social landlord practice

To gauge the ways that the stipulated regulatory standards are implemented in practice a recent study reviewed Communities Scotland inspection reports. These were seen as confirming that 'most social landlords engage in some form of tenant consultation and involvement and many seek feedback on some aspects of their services' (p2). However, there was little evidence of landlords adopting a 'planned, strategic approach to research and consultation. Similarly, few organisations collected consumer feedback on a regular basis and although tenant satisfaction surveys were commissioned or undertaken periodically by some inspected landlords, the data was not always analysed fully'³².

To build on this evidence, particularly in relation to tenant satisfaction surveys, we reviewed the ten most recently published (2008/09) regulatory inspection reports on landlord services provided by local authorities and larger housing associations. Six of the ten reports related to housing associations and four to local authorities. Of the ten landlords, all but one had conducted a large-scale tenants satisfaction survey within the previous three years. Survey coverage was not always clearly specified in the reports but in at least one instance, the most recently conducted exercise had focused on a 10% sample. In other cases surveys had apparently encompassed all tenants. Although the inspection reports did not generally specify whether such

³⁰ Communities Scotland (2006) Performance Standards for Social Landlords and Homelessness Functions

http://www.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk/stellent/groups/public/documents/webpages/shr_performancestan_ia47f1df80.pdf

³¹ Communities Scotland (2006) *How to gather views on service quality: guidance for social landlords*; Edinburgh: Communities Scotland

http://www.lc.communitiesscotland.gov.uk/stellent/groups/public/documents/webpages/cs_019551.hcsp

³² Communities Scotland (2006) *How to gather views on service quality: guidance for social landlords*; Edinburgh: Communities Scotland

surveys are undertaken via face-to-face interviews or self-completion questionnaires it would appear that the latter is more common.

Table 1 – Recently inspected social landlords in Scotland: tenant satisfaction survey scores

	Landlord								
	MB HA	WS HA	TF	GvHA	GOH A	LH A	RC	NAC	EAC
	% of all survey respondents								
Overall satisfaction with landlord	85	94		96	90	91	81	91	74
Overall satisfaction with landlord services		95	89						69
Satisfaction with repairs service			87	96			83	74	
Rent seen as 'good value'	60			91					
Satisfaction with how landlords keeps tenants informed		97		98					
Satisfaction with neighbourhood			92	79	70	85	85	82	

Source: Scottish Housing Regulator inspection reports as published in 2008/09.

Notes to table

1. Covers nine of the ten most recently published inspection reports relating to landlord services provided by local authorities and larger housing associations (Midlothian Council had not recently conducted a tenants satisfaction survey).

2. Landlord identities as follows: MBHA=Margaret Blackwood HA, WSHA=Whiteinch & Scotstoun HA, TF=Tenants First, GvHA=Govan HA, GOHA=Glen Oaks HA, LHA=Langstane HA, RC=Renfrewshire Council, NAC=North Ayrshire Council, EAC=East Ayrshire Council.

3. Because survey methodologies used by different landlords may well have differed, the individual percentages may not be directly comparable.

Satisfaction rates, as cited in inspection reports, tended to show a large majority of survey respondents content with their landlord and with the services provided (see Table 1). However, inspection reports (understandably) do not include detailed information about satisfaction survey methodology and quality assurance. Neither is it always clear exactly what phraseology has been used in specific instances. Consequently, it may be risky to attach too much significance to the apparently high levels of satisfaction as cited in the table.

What is, perhaps, more significant is that the professed regulatory emphasis on service user views is reflected in the fact that a section on tenant satisfaction has recently featured as a standard element within the inspection report structure. Some reports included separate commentaries on tenant satisfaction with housing management and repairs services. As a rule, nevertheless, commentary on such issues remains fairly limited in extent and it may well remain the case that the collection of customer feedback information remains a key area needing to be strengthened by most social landlords³³.

³³ Pawson, H., Currie, A., Currie, H., Hayhurst, W. & Holmes, J. (2004) *Performance Management in Local Authority Housing Services: An Empirical View*, Edinburgh: Communities Scotland

5. Comparing and tracking tenant satisfaction

For reasons outlined above, comparison of tenant satisfaction scores across Scottish social landlords is problematic. As noted above, official guidance has been usefully disseminated³⁴. However, this is deliberately framed to promote a range of approaches to collection and analysis of service user feedback. While survey-based approaches continue to be seen as one acceptable and potentially useful approach, there has been no attempt to promote or endorse a specific model. In England, a more prescriptive approach has been followed with the semi-official backing given to the STATUS tenant satisfaction survey template and methodology developed by the National Housing Federation³⁵.

The priority attached to the measurement of tenant satisfaction has also been emphasized by the inclusion of satisfaction indicators within the national performance indicators dataset. Since 2001, every local authority has been required to report annually on council tenants' satisfaction with their landlord, as well as on tenant satisfaction on opportunities for participation in management and decision making on housing services. The relevant guidance states that:

*The tenant satisfaction survey should be carried out at least every three years. In years when no survey is undertaken, the most recent available year's results should be reported with a note highlighting the date of the survey. The survey must follow the National Housing Federations STATUS standard tenant satisfaction methodology*³⁶

Within this framework comparison across local authorities has become more tenable. At the national scale, the median 'overall satisfaction with landlord' score for 2007/08 was 79%, with the equivalent figure for 'satisfaction with opportunities for participation' being 65%³⁷.

Under regulatory guidance, housing associations operating in England have also been expected to undertake three-yearly tenant satisfaction surveys on the STATUS model. Headline figures for 2007/08 show stock transfer landlords slightly out-performing traditional associations on the three key measures. The percentage of tenants fairly or very satisfied on these measures was as follows:

http://www.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk/stellent/groups/public/documents/webpages/shr_performancemanagementinloc.pdf

³⁴ Communities Scotland (2006) *How to gather views on service quality: guidance for social landlords*; Edinburgh: Communities Scotland
http://www.lc.communitiesscotland.gov.uk/stellent/groups/public/documents/webpages/cs_019551.html

³⁵ National Housing Federation (2008) *About STATUS surveys*
<http://www.housing.org.uk/default.aspx?tabid=291&mid=1033&ctl=Details&ArticleID=717>

³⁶ Audit Commission (2007) *Best Value Performance Indicators Guidance 2007/08 – Housing*
http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/performance/downloads/0708_5_Housing.pdf

³⁷ Audit Commission (2008) *2007/08 BVPI data and quartiles* (excel spreadsheet) <http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/performance/dataprovision.asp>

- Overall satisfaction with landlord: 81% for transfer HAs, 78% for traditional HAs
- Satisfaction with opportunities for participation in management: 62% for transfer HAs, 60% for traditional HAs
- Satisfaction with repairs service: 78% for transfer HAs, 74% for traditional HAs³⁸

In Scotland, national statistics on tenant satisfaction were collected in the 1990s via the Scottish Homes consumer preference in housing surveys. However, this series was terminated in 1996. More recently, some relevant questions have been included within the social survey element of the Scottish House Condition Survey. These make it possible to derive national figures for both the social and private rented sectors to show:

- Satisfaction in relation to the overall service provided by the respondent's landlord
- Views on whether the standard of the overall service provided by the landlord has changed over the previous year
- Satisfaction with management and maintenance of common parts of the building
- Overall satisfaction with accommodation
- Satisfaction with property size and heating

As shown in Figure 1, there is appears to be a marked contrast between the three rented tenures in terms of overall satisfaction. However, the relatively small sample sizes should be taken into consideration here. For example, the confidence interval for the proportion of 'very dissatisfied' council tenants is plus or minus 2%, while that for housing associations is plus or minus 2.5%.

The proportion of social sector tenants reporting themselves dissatisfied is similar to that found by household surveys in England. For example, the proportion of all English social renters dissatisfied with the overall service provided by their landlord in 2006/07 was 17% (as compared with 18% of council tenants and 13% of housing association tenants in Scotland in 2007). The English figures in this instance are sourced from the Survey of English Housing (SEH).

³⁸ Housing Corporation (2008) *Headlines from the 2008 Performance Indicators* <http://www.housingcorp.gov.uk/server/show/nav.2252>

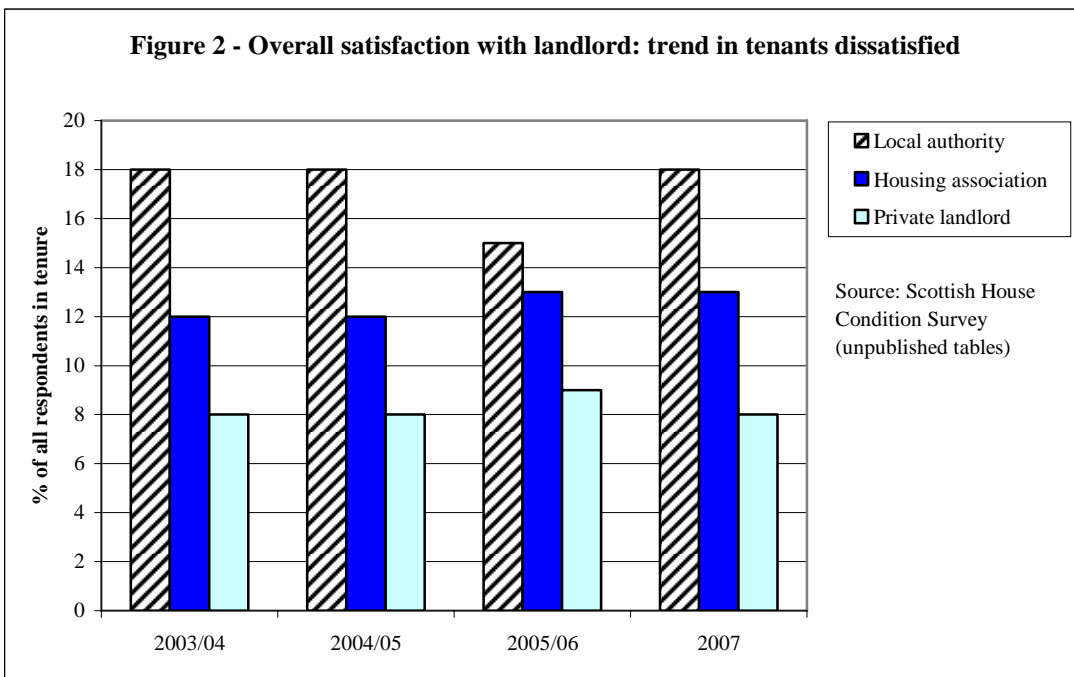
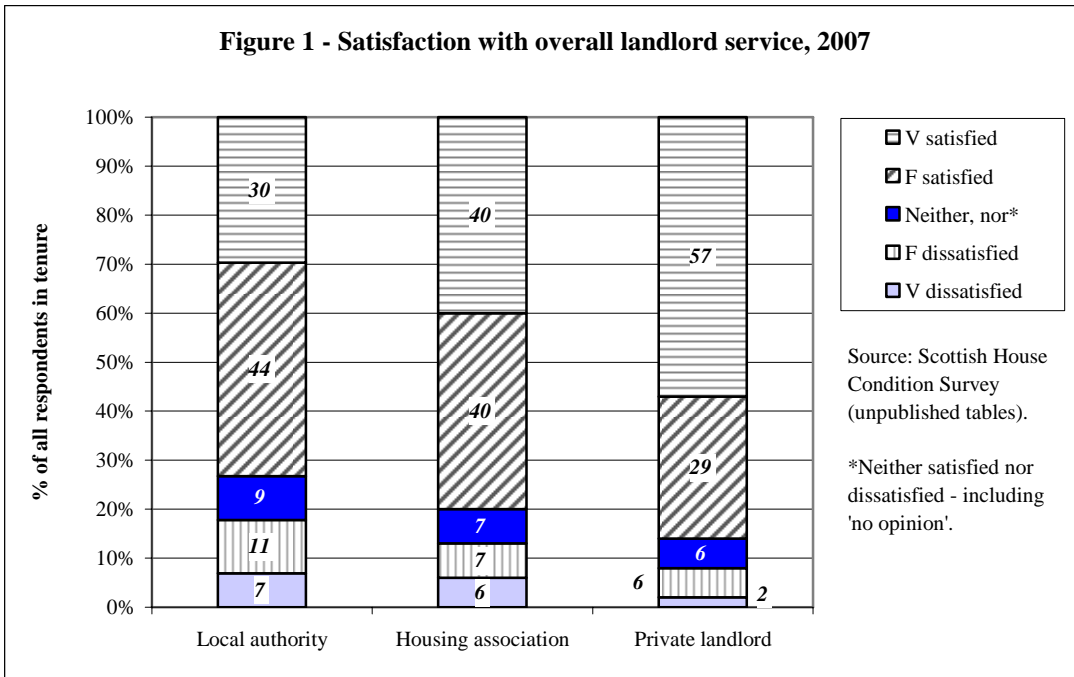


Figure 2 graphs opinions on 'overall satisfaction with landlord' over the past four years of the SHCS. Again, the limited sample size means there is an element of uncertainty attached to these figures but in any event there is little suggestion of any clear trend.

The data illustrated in Figures 1 and 2 is highly relevant to the current research in that it confirms the finding from our own fieldwork that satisfaction rates are higher among housing association tenants than among council tenants. In interpreting these figures it is also important to appreciate that almost half of Scotland's housing association tenants rent their homes from 'transfer landlords' – housing associations newly set up to take on ex-public sector housing since the 1990s. Indeed, more than

a quarter of RSL tenants rent from Glasgow Housing Association. Bearing this in mind, the relatively strong rating of the association sector is particularly notable.

Another important observation arising from Figures 1 and 2 is that the highest satisfaction rates are in neither of the social rented tenures, but in the private rented sector. In 2007, the proportion of private tenants dissatisfied with their landlord's overall service was only 8% – as compared with 13% in the housing association sector and 18% of council tenants. Similar figures were highlighted within the English context by an influential report, recently published³⁹. In attempting to explain this finding it should be recognised that expectations of landlords may be relatively low in a sector where there is a very high tenancy turnover, with many treating it as a purely transitional home. Additionally, with the private rented sector nowadays accommodating a substantial number of better-off households many of those concerned may be less reliant on their landlord than is typically true of social renters. Notwithstanding these points, however, the fact that private tenants are, collectively, more content with their landlords than social renters should give social landlords pause for thought.

Table 2 sets out tenants' views on recent changes in the quality of their landlord's management service. Across all three rented tenures most respondents questioned in 2007 perceived little change. In both of the social rented tenures the proportion believing the service to have improved was greater than the proportion considering it to have deteriorated. Again, however, figures for the local authority sector are somewhat weaker than for housing associations. The relatively small proportion of private tenants taking a view on this may be related to the short average length of tenancy in the private rented sector.

Table 2 – Views on changes in the quality of landlord property management over past five years

	Improved	Same	Worse	Don't know	Total
	%	%	%	%	%
Local authority	19	62	14	6	100
Housing association	21	65	9	5	100
Private landlord	7	81	3	9	100

Source: Scottish House Condition Survey

Table 3 – Satisfaction with specific aspects of landlord service: proportion of tenants (fairly or very) dissatisfied (2007)

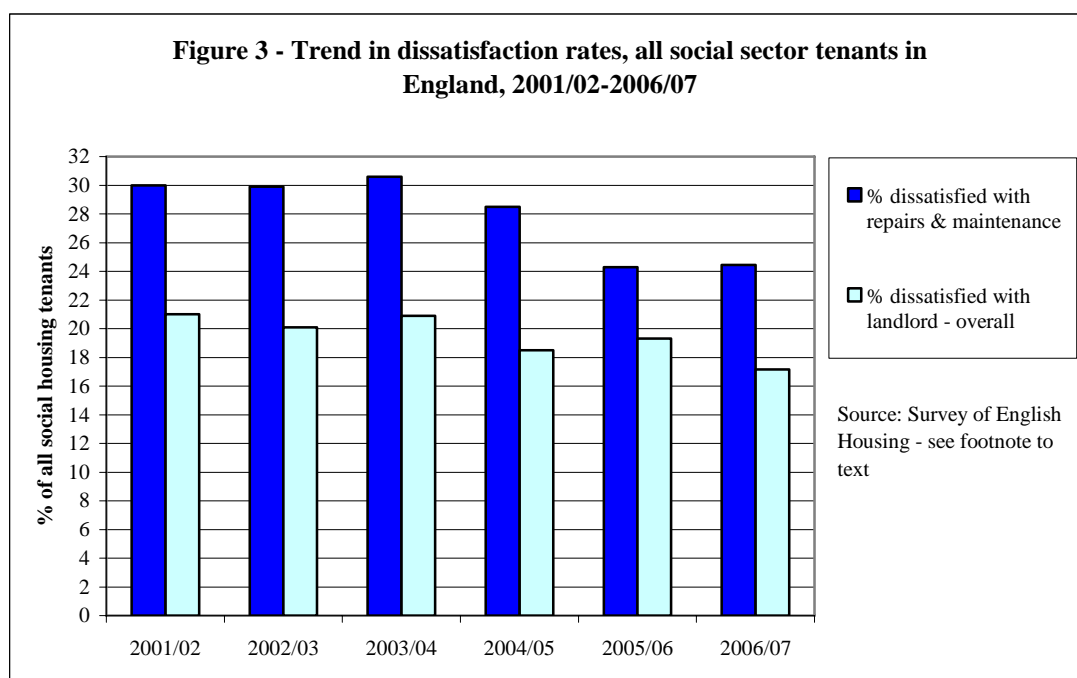
	Management & maintenance of common parts	Property size	Heating	Overall satisfaction with accom
	%	%	%	%
Local authority	18	13	13	9
Housing association	13	15	13	9
Private landlord	10	7	13	7

Source: Scottish House Condition Survey

³⁹ Hills, J. (2007) *Ends and Means: The Future Roles of Social Housing in England* (London: CASE/CLG <http://sticerd.lse.ac.uk/dps/case/cr/CASEREport34.pdf>)

The differences in dissatisfaction rates for the three main tenures as shown in Table 3 are mainly fairly modest.

In England, because key tenant satisfaction questions have been retained in national surveys over a long period such patterns can also be traced⁴⁰ - see Figure 3. While these numbers are also subject to a degree of sample error, results for the most recent three years appear to illustrate an encouraging trend of reducing dissatisfaction – both in relation to repairs and maintenance and overall. A plausible explanation might be the impact of stepped-up investment in the social housing stock post-2001 under the Government’s Decent Homes programme. They might also reflect more effective day-to-day housing management on the part of social landlords – as shown in the consistent post-2003 improving trends registered via official performance indicators for functions such as response repairs and reletting empty homes⁴¹. Set against the societal backdrop of rising expectations on the part of service consumers, the recent pattern is all the more creditable for the sector.



6. Tenant priorities for social housing

As noted above, there is very little direct evidence on tenant priorities for social housing specific to Scotland. This gap is, of course, being remedied by the current study. One recently-published fragment of relevance here concerns priorities for information. Drawing on a survey of tenant representatives, the 2007 study undertaken on this issue for Communities Scotland found that ‘tenants were

⁴⁰ Communities & Local Government (2008) *Housing in England 2006/07*; London: CLG <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/corporate/pdf/971061.pdf> and Communities & Local Government (2008) *Survey of English Housing – Live Tables* (Table S817) <http://www.communities.gov.uk/housing/housingresearch/housingsurveys/surveyofenglishhousing/sehlivetables/satisfactionwithlandlord/>

⁴¹ Pawson, H. (2008) *Analysis of local authority housing management performance 2006/07 [England]*; York: Housing Quality Network

concerned most with service standards and information about performance in the main areas of lettings, rent, anti-social behaviour, inspection, tenant participation and satisfaction⁴². The most widely 'preferred method' for disseminating such information was tenants conferences or meetings.

English evidence: survey and panel data

The largest scale research on tenant priorities is the Existing Tenants Survey undertaken by the Housing Corporation on a four-yearly basis since the early 1990s. With a sample size of 10,000 and a questionnaire designed specifically to address issues of concern to tenants, the dataset is a potentially valuable source of data on consumer attitudes and priorities in the social rented sector. However, the utility of the ETS for this purpose is limited by its coverage which has historically encompassed only housing association tenants. Also, the questions most clearly relevant to the matter of 'tenant priorities' have been few in number and somewhat indirect in phraseology.

The 2004 ETS found that the services considered very important to the largest numbers of respondents were:

- Home repairs and maintenance (73%)
- Repairs and maintenance to shared facilities (62%)
- Security (57%)
- Overall quality of home (57%)
- Keeping tenants informed (54%)

At the other end of the scale, the services considered very important by the smallest numbers of respondents were:

- Advising tenants on starting their own business (24%)
- Helping tenants to access jobs and/or training (26%)
- Providing community facilities (30%)

The above ranking may be seen as fairly predictable and not particularly illuminating in terms of revealing tenants' priorities for social landlord action. Perhaps more significant in this sense are findings from research involving the Housing Corporation's Residents Panel as undertaken in 2008. The Panel includes some 2,400 tenants of local authorities and housing associations across England. Panellists were asked to indicate, from a specified list, which issues they believed should be priorities for the Tenant Services Authority, England's new social housing regulator. Key findings are set out in Table 4.

⁴² ERS (2007) *National research for the thematic study into how social landlords share information about performance and governance*; Glasgow: Communities Scotland

Table 4 – The most important areas for the regulator to ‘get right’

	ALMO	LA retained stock	Housing assoc
	% of respondents citing issue		
The rents charged by landlords	48	55	47
Neighbourhood issues – e.g. crime, ASB	43	55	53
Condition of homes	43	40	38
Repairs and maintenance services	31	28	37
Opportunities for tenants to contact the regulator	29	19	30
The financial performance of landlords	28	20	27
Opportunities for tenants to have their say	27	36	25

Source: Unpublished figures provided by the Tenant Services Authority from Housing Corporation Residents' Panel Wave 8 research, July 2008

Perhaps of more direct relevance to the current research were Residents Panel members' opinions about their own landlord's performance where respondents were asked to rate landlord activities in terms of the functions performed 'well' and 'less well'. This highlighted functions where the percentage of respondents considering their landlord as performing poorly exceeded the proportion seeing their landlord as doing a good job. Hence, while repairs and maintenance is (according to the 2004 ETS) the function most widely seen as 'very important', landlords were – by and large – seen as effective performers here. For example, 60% of housing association tenants saw this as a function their landlord 'does well' whereas only 27% deemed it an activity their landlord 'does less well' (see Table 5). Hence, the net positive score here was 33. For local authority tenants the comparable rating was even better – a net positive score of 49.

Perhaps significantly, landlord functions connected with managing the environment surrounding social housing tended to be seen as relatively problematic in that net scores (for all three cohorts) were negative for activities such as 'looking after the neighbourhood' and 'dealing with crime and vandalism' (see Table 5). Also notable are the negative scores for local authority and ALMO tenants in relation to landlord effectiveness in looking after communal areas.

Table 5 – Housing Corporation Residents Panel views on landlord effectiveness with respect to specific functions

	Housing assoc tenants			LA tenants			ALMO tenants		
	Does well	Does less well	Net score	Does well	Does less well	Net score	Does well	Does less well	Net score
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Repairs and maintenance	60	27	33	69	20	49	60	27	33
Standard of homes	52	24	28	43	26	17	36	26	10
Keeping tenants/residents informed	51	29	22	56	26	30	46	31	15
Making homes more energy efficient	39	35	4	53	33	20	38	36	2
Looking after communal areas/facilities	34	35	-1	26	48	-22	26	45	-19
Giving tenants/residents a say	32	40	-8	34	37	-3	32	40	-8
Housing advice	25	31	-6	35	25	10	22	34	-12
Looking after the neighbourhood	23	39	-16	32	43	-11	28	43	-15
Dealing with crime and vandalism	21	36	-15	25	52	-27	28	39	-11
Help with getting back to work	4	25	-21	15	29	-14	3	25	-22

Source: Unpublished figures provided by the Tenant Services Authority from Housing Corporation Residents' Panel Wave 8 research, July 2008

These findings seem to chime with those from a recent survey of 66 tenants and residents associations representing 270,000 households across England. Asked 'what do you feel residents' greatest concern is about the area where they live?' the most commonly cited issue was anti-social behaviour (35% of responses). More than a fifth (23%) thought that 'lack of housing for children' was the greatest local concern. In these terms, the 'poor state of repair of homes' was considered the most important problem by only 17%⁴³.

Tenant Involvement Commission findings

Another important contribution to recent English debate on tenant priorities has come from the Tenant Involvement Commission established by the National Housing Federation in 2005/06. The centerpiece of the project was an evidence-gathering 'deliberative forum' involving around 100 housing association tenants.

Based on views expressed at the forum, the TIC observed that 'Many tenants feel that housing associations should provide housing that their staff would be happy to live in themselves and should provide a service which they would consider to be good if they were receiving it'(p12)⁴⁴. The TIC found that awareness of housing associations' management performance was generally very low among forum participants. Perhaps of greater significance, it was noted that 'there is very little

⁴³ Cooper, K. (2008) What tenants want; *Inside Housing* 12 September pp26-30

⁴⁴ National Housing Federation (2006) *What Tenants Want – Report of the Tenant Involvement Commission* http://www.housing.org.uk/Uploads/File/Campaigns/TIC_report.pdf

awareness of what services their housing association must provide and what minimum standards should be' (p20).

Generally, it was found that tenants were much clearer about their responsibilities than their rights. 'Many tenants were surprised at the rights they have' (p36). This was especially true in relation to rights of succession, the right to take in lodgers, the right to make improvements (with permission) and the right to claim compensation for improvements when moving on. There could be a suspicion that landlords choose not to publicise such rights because they could be seen as inconvenient from a managerial viewpoint. Another implication is that establishing and/or making known 'service standards' should be accorded greater priority by social landlords.

In relation to choice, the Commission noted that 'Tenants feel that they are often asked by the housing association what they want but see little evidence of their association acting on their wishes' (p23). This may suggest a need for better communication about consultation outcomes and the ways in which these have been influenced by tenant views. More specifically, forum participants voiced calls for tenants to be given more choices in relation to issues such as:

- The choice or option to make repairs themselves and bill the housing association if it does not make the repairs within a reasonable period
- Choices on where to live
- Choices about neighbours
- Choices about modernisation and changes to their homes and neighbourhood – especially in relation to decisions on new kitchen facilities, 'tenants want to participate as other consumers do'(p24)
- Choice over staff in sheltered housing
- Choice, when allocated a new home, about interior works 'within a budget that has been set' (p25)
- Choice to move to another landlord if dissatisfied with the current landlord
- Choice over contractors used by their landlord.

More contentiously, it was also reported that 'having the option to buy is considered to be a fundamentally good thing...Tenants are aware that most council housing tenants have the right to buy and they view their situation as unfair and discriminatory' (p25).

Overall, the TIC concluded that priorities for tenants in terms of service provision were:

- a commitment to delivering a quality service
- competent and polite service from frontline staff

- speedy repairs completed to a high standard
- listening to tenants
- security
- affordable rent

Some tenants believed they received a poor level of service because they were not considered 'valued customers' by their housing association. Rather, associations were 'often perceived to be paternalistic or even patronising in their approach to tenants' (p4) – a "get what you are given' culture'.

While tenants stressed that customers should not pay extra for what should be core services, some favoured the option of paying more for additional services (e.g. security features).

Summary and conclusions

Despite the production and dissemination of official good practice advice, social landlord practice on measurement of tenant satisfaction remains inconsistent and under-developed in Scotland.

Available national data appear to confirm a hypothesis that satisfaction rates among housing association tenants are somewhat higher than among local authority tenants, although dissatisfaction is considerably greater in both social tenures than among private tenants.

The lack of consistently collected data on tenant satisfaction with specific services makes it difficult to be certain about the social landlord functions most frequently seen as in need of improvement. However, recently-collected English data suggests that concerns about landlord effectiveness may be more widespread in relation to 'neighbourhood' issues than with respect to dwelling maintenance. It also appears that a consistent trend of reducing tenant dissatisfaction has become established in England over the past few years although this is not (yet) evident in Scotland.

More broadly, there is evidence to suggest that social sector tenants tend to be poorly informed about their legal rights and about landlord service standards, and that there is a widespread desire for greater consumer choice.

Hal Pawson, Heriot-Watt University, April 2009

ANNEX B: METHODOLOGY

This research was designed to inform an understanding of the priorities of social tenants on services provided by their landlord and to explore awareness and views on the jurisdiction and powers of the SHR. Specifically, the research comprised five components:

- a literature review of the current evidence base on tenants' satisfaction with services delivered by social landlords
- a telephone survey of a representative sample of social housing tenants
- a postal survey of all Registered Tenant Organisations (RTOs) in Scotland, who answered on behalf of their tenant members
- qualitative research among mainstream tenants
- qualitative research among elected tenant members from each of the Regional Networks in Scotland, who were representing tenants in their area

Sampling

Survey of tenants

The survey sample of tenants of social landlords was drawn from a database of people who had taken part in the Scottish Household Survey (SHS)⁴⁵ in the first three quarters of 2008 and had agreed to take part in further research. This was a highly effective way of drawing a sample for this research for four main reasons:

- Given that SHS collects information on tenure type, we were able to target tenants living in social rented accommodation
- The database includes information about households collected during the SHS interview. This allowed the analysis to include a number of additional variables without the need to collect fresh data in the survey and thus helped to minimise questionnaire length
- The selected individuals were more likely to be willing to take part in the research having given their informed consent to be re-contacted
- The SHS database includes full contact details for all individuals included in it, making it possible to send a personalised advance letter about the survey, explaining the purpose and aims of the research, thereby encouraging participation in the research.

Achieved sample

The sample comprised a total of 1,149 eligible households from which 500 interviews were achieved. Table B.1 outlines the response to the survey.

⁴⁵ The Scottish Household Survey is a continuous survey commissioned by the Scottish Government. The survey is designed to provide accurate, up-to-date information about the characteristics, attitudes and behaviour of households and individuals in Scotland on a range of issues.

Table B.1: Response to the survey of tenants

Outcome	N
Total dialled sample	1,359
Ineligible leads	210
Valid sample	1,149
Refusals	199
Unable to contact (engaged, no answer)	450
<i>Response rate for contacted sample</i>	<i>72%</i>

To ensure that the achieved sample was in line with the profile of tenants of social landlords in Scotland, the data was weighted by dwelling type, landlord type⁴⁶, urban/rural indicator and whether or not the respondent was in receipt of Housing Benefit. Data was weighted using 2007 Scottish Household Survey data.

Table B.2 shows the weighted and the non-weighted profile of the achieved sample on a number of key variables and compares these with the characteristics of the population of tenants of social landlords from the Scottish Household Survey.

Table B.2: Sample profile

	Tenants' Priorities Survey Unweighted profile	Tenants' Priorities Survey Weighted profile	SHS 2007 data
	%	%	%
<i>Dwelling type</i>			
House or bungalow	55	44	44
Flat, maisonette or apartment	43	55	55
Other type of dwelling	2	1	1
<i>Landlord type</i>			
Council	57	66	66
Housing association or other RSLs	43	34	34
<i>Receipt of housing benefit</i>			
Yes	56	51	51
No	44	49	49

⁴⁶ Some respondents mistakenly report being a LA tenant rather than a RSL tenant. Before weighting, the data for respondents living in areas that have undergone a complete stock transfer was corrected manually from local authority to RSL. However, it was not possible to correct misreporting in LAs that have not undergone full stock transfers

Urban/rural			
Large urban	36	44	44
Other urban	30	33	33
Accessible small towns	10	9	9
Remote small towns	9	4	4
Accessible rural	8	6	6
Remote rural	7	4	4

Table B.3 shows the weighted⁴⁷ and the non-weighted profile of the achieved sample based on sex, age and working status and compares these with the characteristics of the population of tenants of social landlords from the Scottish Household Survey. When interpreting this table, it is important to bear in mind that the comparison is not like-for-like. In the SHS, the respondent is either the householder or the spouse of the householder. By comparison, while the sample for the survey was comprised of named respondents to the SHS, any adult member of the named household was asked to participate in the survey, who, in most cases, would be the householder or spouse of the householder. In general, the profile of respondents is broadly in line with the profile of respondents in the SHS.

Table B.3: Weighted versus unweighted profile of the sample

	Tenants' Priorities Survey Unweighted profile	Tenants' Priorities Survey Weighted profile	SHS 2007 data All respondents ⁴⁸
Sex			
Male	31	31	37
Female	69	69	63
Age			
16-34	16	17	22
35-54	38	39	37
55+	46	45	41
Working status			
Working	32	35	30
Not working (excludes retired and studying)	32	30	38
Retired	32	31	30
Studying	2	2	2
Other	2	2	1

⁴⁷ Please note, the data was not weighted by age, sex and working status but the profile of the sample on these attributes changed slightly as a result of weighting by other variables.

⁴⁸ This profile is based on the respondent to the SHS who may or may not have been the highest income householder (HIH).

Table B.4 shows the profile of tenants across Scotland by selected local authority and compares this to the population in Scotland of tenants of social landlords from the Scottish Household Survey⁴⁹.

Table B.4: Profile of tenants across Scotland by selected local authority

	Tenants' Priorities Survey Weighted profile			SHS 2007 data		
	Local Authority	RSL	All	Local Authority	RSL	All
*column percentages						
Local Authority	%	%	%	%	%	%
Aberdeen City	8	2	6	7	2	5
Dundee City	5	2	4	4	3	4
Edinburgh City	9	3	7	6	6	6
Glasgow City	0	42	14	0	49	17
Scotland	100	100	100	100	100	100

Survey of RTOs

The sample of RTOs was provided by the Scottish Government. In total the sample comprised 661 RTOs and 211⁵⁰ returned questionnaires, of which 193 were valid, representing a valid response rate of 29%.

Survey method

Survey of tenants

Fieldwork for the telephone survey of tenants took place from 26th January to 15th February 2009. The interviews were conducted by Ipsos MORI Telephone, using Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI). CATI offered three important advantages for this survey.

- First, routing is automated using CATI and eliminates potential interviewer error. Given that the questionnaire included questions to be asked of specific groups depending on answers to previous questions, CATI automatically directed interviewers to the correct questions, ensuring no questions were accidentally missed.
- Second, CATI also facilitated the rotation of questions items thus minimising ordering effects. This was particularly significant in questions relating to rating the importance of particular services.
- Further, CATI facilitated the inclusion of a paired choice exercise in the survey⁵¹ by allowing for different modules of questions or categories to be asked of

⁴⁹ Misreporting of landlord type has been corrected in areas that have undergone full stock transfers – most notably Glasgow. However, it was not possible to correct misreporting in LAs that have not undergone full stock transfers. As a result, the survey and the SHS will overestimate LA, and underestimate RSLs in these cases.

⁵⁰ The questionnaire gave RTOs an option to opt out of the survey (see question QPart), which accounted for the majority of the 18 incomplete questionnaires received.

different respondents in the sample. Indeed, nine separate versions of blocks of eight pairs of services were developed, with each version being randomly asked of 55 respondents. This would not have been possible using traditional paper and pen techniques.

Survey of RTOs

Fieldwork for the survey of tenants took place from 26th January to 6th March 2009. A questionnaire was sent to all 661 RTOs. In advance of receiving their questionnaire, each RTO was sent a letter by the Scottish Government, outlining the main aims of the research. All completed questionnaires were returned to Ipsos MORI for scanning and data processing. During the fieldwork period, one reminder letter was sent to RTOs to try and encourage those RTOs who had not already responded to participate in the survey.

Questionnaire design

Both questionnaires were designed by Ipsos MORI in close consultation with the Scottish Government and other national stakeholders. To inform the objectives of the research both questionnaires covered a number of topics, including:

- priorities for tenants and RTOs relating to overall services, as well as specific aspects of customer and day-to-day repairs services
- perceptions of services provided by social landlords
- attitudes relating to tenant consultation and participation
- awareness and perceptions of service quality and value for money
- awareness and views on inspection and regulation.

Both questionnaires are included in Annex C.

Piloting the questionnaires

To ensure that the tenants' questionnaire was clear and easy to understand, it was piloted among 46 respondents via telephone between 12th and 13th January. More specifically, one of the main reasons for undertaking the pilot was to test different approaches⁵² to measuring the level of importance placed on core services provided by social landlords.

⁵¹ Paired Choice is an analysis technique where we ask respondents to choose between two attributes, in this case services. By repeating this exercise a number of times, we are able to ascertain how people feel about a list of many services (in comparison to the others). We can use this information to come up with 'worth' scores for each service which we can turn into preference percentages. This is a form of derived importance, but as opposed to a rating/ranking exercise, we can make relative comparisons. For example, not only can we rank A higher than B, but we also know if A is twice as important than B.

⁵² During the pilot of the tenants' survey, two different formats for the question on importance of core services were tested: one using the scaled response format (scales from 'not important' to 'essential') which is used in other questions in the survey; and a second using paired choice, described earlier. Following the pilot, it was decided that the paired choice method was the most effective method to meet the aims of the survey.

The RTO questionnaire was piloted among representatives of the Scottish Regional Tenants Network (SRTN).

Analysis

Computer tables were prepared to facilitate reporting. Each question in the survey of tenants was analysed by a number of key variables⁵³, namely:

- gender
- age (16-34, 35-54 and 55+)
- employment status (working, not working and retired)
- Type of landlord (Council and Registered Social Landlord (RSL))
- Dwelling type (house or bungalow and flat, maisonette or apartment)
- Length of residence (Up to 2 years, 3 to 10 years, more than 10 years)
- Disability or health problem (yes or no)
- SIMD (20% most deprived areas and other area (excluding 20% least deprived areas⁵⁴))
- Receipt of Housing Benefit (Yes – full, Yes – partial, Yes and No)
- Household income (£10k or less, more than 10k to 15k, more than 15k to 20k and more than 20k)
- SHS Household type (Single adult, small adult, single parent, single pensioner, small/large family, older smaller household and large adult household)
- Urban/rural indicator (urban and rural)
- Perception of value for money (Good value for money and poor value for money).

Similarly, each question in the survey of RTOs was analysed by a number of key variables⁵⁵, including:

- Type of landlord represented (Local authority, an RSL area and a mixture of both)
- Number of tenants represented (1-399 and 400 or more)
- Number of landlords represented (One or two or more)
- Time in existence (less than 10 years and more than 10 years)
- Perceived level of influence of RTO (at least some influence and a little or no influence).

Presentation and interpretation of the survey data

Quantitative research allows us to infer assumptions about the general population. However, when interpreting the findings from the survey of tenants it is important to remember that the results are only based on a sample of tenants of social landlords, and not on the entire social tenants' population. Consequently, results are subject to sampling tolerances, and not all differences between subgroups are therefore statistically significant. Throughout the report, we have only commented upon differences which are statistically significant at the 95 per cent level.

⁵³ This is not an exhaustive list of all variables used in analysis. Where appropriate, other additional analysis variables were utilised on particular questions.

⁵⁴ While, originally, 20% least deprived areas was designated as an analysis variable, the final base size of this group was too small to make analysis possible.

⁵⁵ Despite this list of analysis variables, due to small base sizes and incomplete data, subgroup analysis of RTO data was not always possible.

Similarly, when interpreting the finding from the survey of RTOs, it is important to bear in mind that the results are based on a sample of RTOs and not all RTOs in Scotland. Given the limited information that is known about non-responding RTOs, the findings of the RTO survey should be considered indicative, rather than representative, of the total population of RTOs in Scotland. Further, due to small base sizes and incomplete data⁵⁶, subgroup analysis of RTO data was not always possible. Where differences have been highlighted in the RTO survey, they should be treated with some caution.

Where percentages do not add up to 100 per cent, this may be due to computer rounding, the exclusion of don't know/not stated categories or multiple answers.

Qualitative research

Six focus groups were carried out with tenants of social landlords: five with, what might be considered, mainstream tenants; and one with tenants' representatives of Regional Networks, representing RTOs.

Focus groups with tenants

Five focus groups were conducted between 10th and 19th March 2009 across Scotland. These were designed to provide an in-depth understanding of tenants' priorities and explore awareness and perceptions of inspection and regulation.

Composition and recruitment of focus groups

The composition of focus groups was designed to capture the views of tenants from a broad range of socio-economic backgrounds and a mix of social landlords. In addition, within specific areas, the composition of focus groups was designed to include tenants living in sheltered accommodation, from BME groups and with disabilities.

A recruitment questionnaire was designed so that only people who satisfied the criteria set to inform the objectives of the research were invited to take part in the focus groups. In addition to the project specific criteria, the questionnaire screened out people who work in market research, media, advertising, PR and/or had attended a group discussion or workshop in the previous six months.

Participants were recruited face to face in their homes between 2nd March and 16th March 2009 by experienced recruiters from Magnetic Field. Ten participants were recruited for each group on the assumption that eight will turn up at the scheduled time. Recruiters telephoned participants prior to the groups to check that they would be attending. Table B.5 sets out the compositions of each group and provides details on attendance. All attendees were paid £20 to cover any costs they might have incurred as a result of attending the focus groups.

⁵⁶ Given the RTO survey was administered using a self completion questionnaire, it was not possible to ensure all questions were answered correctly. As a result, some questionnaires were returned with incomplete or missing responses.

Table B.5: Focus Group composition

Group No	Date	Location	Landlord type	Dwelling type	Demographics	Disability	Ethnicity	No. attended
1	Tues 10th March, 7pm	Galashiels, Scottish Borders	Mixed RSL	At least 2 people living in Sheltered Housing	Mixed length of stay in area; mixed gender; mixed age (16 and over); mixed working status; mixed receipt of Housing Benefit	At least 2 people with a disability	Any	5
2	Wed 11th March, 7pm	North Glasgow	Mixed RSL	At least 2 people living in Sheltered Housing	Mixed length of stay in area; mixed gender; mixed age (16 and over); mixed working status; mixed receipt of Housing Benefit	Any	At least 2 BMEs	10
3	Thur 12th March, 7pm	Dundee	Mixed Council and RSL	Mixed dwelling type	Mixed length of stay in area; mixed gender; mixed age (16 and over); mixed working status; mixed receipt of Housing Benefit	At least 2 people with a disability	At least 2 BMEs	10
4	Wed 18th March, 7pm	Fraserburgh, Aberdeenshire	Mixed Council and RSL	At least 2 people living in Sheltered Housing	Mixed length of stay in area; mixed gender; mixed age (16 and over); mixed working status; mixed receipt of Housing Benefit	Any	Any	7
5	Thurs 19th March, 7pm	Kilmarnock	Mixed Council and RSL	Mixed dwelling type	Mixed length of stay in area; mixed gender; mixed age (16 and over); mixed working status; mixed receipt of Housing Benefit	At least 2 people with a disability	At least 2 BMEs	8

Focus group with members of RTOs

In addition to the focus group with tenants, one focus group was conducted with elected tenant members from each of the Regional Networks⁵⁷ in Scotland. These tenant members were invited to speak on behalf of tenants in their area about aspects of their landlord's services which were most important. However, given the greater knowledge of this group vis a vis mainstream tenants with regards the regulation of social housing, it was possible to explore perceptions of the SHR in more detail than was possible in groups with tenants. In order to recruit participants, the chairperson of each Regional Network was sent a letter asking them to nominate a tenant member to attend the focus group; the nominees were subsequently phoned by a member of the Ipsos MORI research team and a time and date suitable for all representatives was arranged. Following this, an invitation letter was sent to all participants. The focus group was held on 1st April at the Ipsos MORI office in Edinburgh. All but one Regional Network committee – Region 9 Glasgow and Eilean Siar⁵⁸ – was represented in the focus group. All attendees were reimbursed travel costs incurred as a result of attending the group.

Topic guide

A topic guide was designed by Ipsos MORI with input from the Scottish Government. The guide was used to facilitate the focus groups discussions with tenants and RTOs, although for the discussion with RTOs, the guide was tailored to accommodate their greater knowledge of regulation and wider housing policy issues. The main themes covered in the guide were:

- service priorities and examples of good and bad landlord practice
- perceptions of service quality and value for money and willingness to pay extra for additional or improved services
- in the tenants focus groups, general awareness and perceptions of inspection, regulation and the SHR
- in the RTO focus group, perceptions of inspection, regulation and the SHR and the extent of the powers of the SHR

Interpretation of qualitative findings

In contrast to the quantitative elements of the project, the aim of qualitative research is not to generalise about the wider population in terms of the prevalence of attitudes or behaviour, but to identify and explore the different issues and themes relating to the subject being researched. The assumption is that issues and themes affecting participants are a reflection of issues and themes in the wider population. Although the extent to which they apply to the wider population or specific sub-groups cannot be quantified, the value of qualitative research is in identifying the range of different issues involved and the way in which they affect people.

⁵⁷ There are nine Regional Networks in Scotland, comprising of RTOs from particular geographic catchment areas across Scotland. Each Regional Network is made up of elected members who are currently members of an RTO in their area.

⁵⁸ The representative for this region needed to pull out of the focus group at short notice and, despite their best efforts, The Regional Network was unable to arrange a suitable replacement in time.

Literature review

Heriot-Watt University undertook a review of academic and government research on tenants' satisfaction with social landlord services. As well as setting the current research within a broader context, the review also helped to inform the survey element of the work⁵⁹. Professor Pawson also contributed to the design of research instruments.

⁵⁹ A copy of the literature review is included in the Annex A, although it is also drawn on in the introductory section of the report.

ANNEX C: QUESTIONNAIRES

Telephone survey of tenants

Final tenants survey questionnaire

Good morning/afternoon/evening. My name is.....from Ipsos MORI, the independent research organisation. You may remember that you took part in the Scottish Household Survey and agreed to take part in follow up research. We are phoning to see if you would be willing to take part in a short survey about your home and the service you receive from your landlord. You should have received a letter about this. The interview will take 20 minutes at the most.

I'd like to assure you that all of the information you provide will be treated in the strictest confidence and used for research purposes only. It will not be possible to identify any particular individuals or addresses in the results.

Would you be interested in taking part?

Q1	Yes	1	CONTINUE TO Q2
	No	2	CLOSE

Screening

Q2 The subject we are researching is landlord services provided by housing associations and councils. Can I just check, do you live in housing owned by a council, housing association or other Registered Social Landlord?

SINGLE CODE.

Yes – Council	1	CONTINUE
Yes – Housing Association or other Registered Social Landlord	2	CONTINUE
No	3	CLOSE
Don't know/unsure	4	CLOSE

Priorities

I'd like to begin asking you some questions about services provided by your landlord

ASK ALL

Q3 Thinking about all of the services currently provided by your landlord, which are most important to you?Any others?

DO NOT PROMPT. MULTICODE OK.

Efficient day to day repairs service	1
Allocations, including managing waiting lists for housing and requests for moves and transfers	2
Customer service	3
Security/ Keeping the buildings and entrances secure	4
Involving tenants in decision making	5
Dealing with anti-social behaviour	6
Dealing with nuisance neighbours	7
Complaints handling	8
Wider estate management/ Upkeep and maintenance of communal grounds	9
Taking tenants views into account/listening to tenants	0
Good quality housing/accommodation	X
Major modernisation/upgrades/improvement programmes (kitchens, bathrooms etc.)	Y
Other WRITE IN	1
Nothing specific	2
Don't know	3

Please note: following the pilot survey, question 4 was deleted. For ease of data processing and scripting, subsequent question numbering was unchanged from the pilot.

ASK ALL

RANDOMISE ORDER. EACH OF THE 9 BLOCKS OF PAIRED SERVICES TO BE ASKED OF AN EQUAL NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS

Q5 I am going to read you a pair of services. Choose the one service you think is more important to you.

IF NECESSARY READ OUT: Even if you would likely choose neither, please choose the one that you think is more important

Services included in the paired choice question:

A good day to day repairs service

Efficient maintenance of the estate and communal grounds

Major modernisation and improvements work (e.g. kitchens and bathroom upgrades)

A fair system, for managing waiting lists for housing and requests for moves and transfers

Good customer service

Effective complaints handling procedures

Keeping the buildings and entrances secure

Dealing with anti-social behaviour

Dealing with nuisance neighbours

Involving tenants in decision making

Taking tenants views into account

The provision of good quality accommodation

ASK ALL

RANDOMISE ORDER

Q6 And how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your landlord's performance at....

SINGLE CODE EACH ROW

	Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Don't know/not applicable
Providing a good day to day repairs service	1	2	3	4	5	6
Efficiently maintaining the estate and communal grounds	1	2	3	4	5	6
Carrying out major modernisation and improvements work (e.g. kitchens and bathroom upgrades)	1	2	3	4	5	6
Ensuring a fair system for managing waiting lists for housing and requests for moves and transfers	1	2	3	4	5	6
Providing good customer service	1	2	3	4	5	6
Having effective complaints handling procedures	1	2	3	4	5	6
Keeping the buildings and entrances secure	1	2	3	4	5	6
Dealing with anti- social behaviour	1	2	3	4	5	6
Dealing with nuisance neighbours	1	2	3	4	5	6
Involving tenants in decision making	1	2	3	4	5	6
Taking tenants views into account	1	2	3	4	5	6
Providing good quality	1	2	3	4	5	6

accommodation

Now some questions on the contact you have had with your landlord

ASK ALL

Q7 Have you contacted your landlord within the last 12 months?

SINGLE CODE

- | | | |
|------------|---|----------------|
| Yes | 1 | CONTINUE TO Q8 |
| No | 2 | GO TO Q10 |
| Don't know | 3 | GO TO Q10 |

ASK ALL WHO SAID YES AT Q7

Q8 How did you last contact your landlord?

SINGLE CODE.

- | | |
|---|---|
| Phoned | 1 |
| Visited office | 2 |
| Wrote a letter | 3 |
| Emailed | 4 |
| Via landlord's website | 5 |
| Visit from landlord/home visit | 6 |
| Meeting(s) with landlord | 7 |
| Through a tenants/residents association/RTO | 8 |
| Through someone else | 9 |
| Working groups | 0 |
| Forums | X |
| Other WRITE IN | Y |
| Don't know/can't remember | 1 |

ASK ALL WHO SAID YES AT Q7

Q9 And what did you last have contact about?

SINGLE CODE.

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Repairs | 1 |
| Rent/housing benefit | 2 |
| Transfer/exchange | 3 |
| Neighbours/neighbourhood issues | 4 |
| Garden/communal areas | 5 |
| Other WRITE IN | 6 |
| Don't know/can't remember | 7 |

ASK ALL

RANDOMISE ORDER

Q10 How important are each of the following aspects of the customer service provided by your landlord?

SINGLE CODE EACH ROW.

	Essential	Very important	Important	Not important	Don't know
The opening hours of offices	1	2	3	4	5
Courteous staff	1	2	3	4	5
Phones being answered promptly	1	2	3	4	5
The person answering	1	2	3	4	5

the phone being able to deal with the query					
Being able to make contact by email or through a website	1	2	3	4	5
Having the name of a person to speak to	1	2	3	4	5
Queries being dealt with quickly	1	2	3	4	5
Making information available in alternative formats (e.g. large print, braille, audio)	1	2	3	4	5
The provision of easy-to-understand information leaflets	1	2	3	4	5

ASK ALL

Q11 **In which ways would you like to contact your landlord in the future?**
DO NOT PROMPT. MULTICODE OK

In person at the landlord's offices	1
By telephone	2
Through email	3
By post	4
By text	5
Through a Tenants/residents association/RTO	6
Via landlord's website	7
Through a fellow resident	8
Other WRITE IN	9
Don't know	0

ASK ALL

Q12 **Have you had any day to day repairs completed in the last 12 month?**
SINGLE CODE.

Yes	1	CONTINUE TO Q13
No	2	GO TO Q14
Don't know/can't remember	3	GO TO Q14

ASK ALL WHO SAY YES AT Q12

Q13 **And what was the last repair to be completed?**

SINGLE CODE.

Gas/central heating (excluding the annual gas safety check)	1
Plumbing (e.g. water supply, drainage, toilet, bathroom fittings)	2
Carpentry (e.g. to windows, doors, floorboards)	3
Plastering and brick work (e.g. walls, ceiling, tiles)	4
Painting	5
Glazing	6
Roofing (e.g. tiling, slating, guttering)	7
Electrical	8
Repairs in communal area (e.g. stairway)	9
Other WRITE IN	0
Don't know/can't remember	X

ASK ALL

RANDOMISE ORDER

Q14 **How important are each of the following aspects of your landlord's repair service?**

SINGLE CODE EACH ROW.

	Essential	Very important	Important	Not important	Don't know
Quality of repair work	1	2	3	4	5
Speed with which phones are answered	1	2	3	4	5
Polite staff	1	2	3	4	5
Knowledgeable staff	1	2	3	4	5
Being told when contractors will call	1	2	3	4	5
Being able to choose a time slot when contractors will call	1	2	3	4	5
Repair work being finished within a reasonable period	1	2	3	4	5
Keeping dirt and mess to a minimum	1	2	3	4	5
Getting the job done right first time	1	2	3	4	5
Follow up work being carried out within a reasonable period	1	2	3	4	5

ASK ALL

Q15 **Now thinking back to all the services provided by your landlord, what do you think should be the two or three main priorities for improvement in the future?**

DO NOT PROMPT. CHOOSE UP TO THREE ONLY.

Quality of repair work/ Improving the repairs service	1
Repair work being finished within a reasonable period	2
Wider estate management/ Upkeep and maintenance of communal grounds	3
Keeping tenants informed about what is going on	4
Listening to tenants/Involving tenants in decision making that will affect them	5
Allocations/waiting lists for housing / time taken to move or transfer	6
Making homes more modern/ Upgrading interior of house (e.g. double glazing, new kitchen)	7
Security/ Keeping the buildings and entrances secure	8
Dealing with anti-social behaviour and nuisance neighbours	9
Improving energy efficiency	0
Increasing security	X
General Customer service	Y
Complaints handling	1
The opening hours of offices	2
Phones being answered promptly	3
Being able to make contact by email or through a website	4
Queries being dealt with quickly	5
The provision of easy-to-understand information leaflets	6
Training staff/more knowledgeable/polite staff	7
Ensuring contractors carry out their work efficiently and to a high standard	8
Other WRITE IN	9
Don't know	0

Communication, consultation and participation
--

ASK ALL

Q16 **How good or poor do you feel your landlord is at keeping you informed about things that might affect you as a tenant?**

SINGLE CODE ONLY.

Very good	1
Fairly good	2
Neither good nor poor	3
Fairly poor	4
Very poor	5
Don't know	6

Q17 **Thinking about the services that your landlord provides, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with opportunities for participation in decision making?**

SINGLE CODE ONLY.

- | | |
|---|---|
| Very satisfied | 1 |
| Fairly satisfied | 2 |
| Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied | 3 |
| Fairly dissatisfied | 4 |
| Very dissatisfied | 5 |
| Don't know | 6 |

ASK ALL

Q18 **Would you like to be more involved in the way your landlord runs housing in your area?**

SINGLE CODE ONLY.

- | | | |
|-----------------------|---|-----------------|
| Yes | 1 | CONTINUE TO Q19 |
| No | 2 | GO TO Q21 |
| Don't know/it depends | 3 | GO TO Q21 |

ASK ALL WHO SAY YES AT Q18

Q19 **Which issues, if any, would you like to have more say about?**

DO NOT PROMPT. MULTICODE OK.

- | | |
|--|---|
| Issues relating to the condition of your home | 1 |
| Issues relating to the estate as a whole | 2 |
| Issues relating to communal areas e.g. stairways, lifts | 3 |
| Issues relating to safety and security | 4 |
| Key decisions made by my landlord that will affect tenants | 5 |
| Issues relating to creating a strong community | 6 |
| Other WRITE IN | 7 |
| None of these | 8 |
| Don't know | 9 |

ASK ALL WHO SAY YES AT Q18

RANDOMISE ORDER

Q20 **And, in which, if any, of these ways would you like to have more say?**

MULTICODE OK.

- | | |
|---|---|
| By answering surveys like this | 1 |
| By answering online surveys | 2 |
| By attending regular meetings | 3 |
| By joining a committee or residents organisation | 4 |
| By meeting with staff at social events | 5 |
| By providing feedback on particular services – for example, filling in a comments card after a repair has been completed | 6 |
| Via landlord's website | 7 |
| Other WRITE IN | 8 |
| Don't know | 9 |

Value for money

I'm now going to ask a few questions about whether you feel you are receiving value for money for the amount of rent you pay.

ASK ALL

Q21 Without telling me the amount, do you know how much you pay in rent per month?

SINGLE CODE ONLY

Yes	1
No	2
Refused	3

ASK ALL

Q22 Taking into account the accommodation and the services your landlord provides, to what extent do you think that the rent for this property represents good or poor value for money? Is it....

SINGLE CODE ONLY

.... Very good value	1	ASK Q23
.... Fairly good value	2	ASK Q23
.... Neither good nor poor value	3	GO TO Q25
.... Fairly poor value	4	GO TO Q24
.... Very poor value	5	GO TO Q24
Don't know	6	GO TO Q25

ASK ALL WHO SAY FAIRLY OR VERY GOOD VALUE FOR MONEY AT Q22

Q23 **Why do you say it is good value for money?**

DO NOT PROMPT. MULTICODE OK.

They make sure important services are looked after	1
Work is carried out promptly	2
Services are performed to a high standard	3
Rent is reasonable	4
Landlord keeps residents informed of what is going on	5
Good standard of accommodation/living conditions	6
Good standard of facilities and amenities	7
Landlord listens to tenants/Involve tenants in decision making that will affect them	8
Landlord makes improvements/modernisations to my home	9
Other WRITE IN	0
Don't know	X

ASK ALL WHO SAY FAIRLY OR VERY POOR VALUE FOR MONEY AT Q22

Q24 **Why do you say it is poor value for money?**

DO NOT PROMPT. MULTICODE OK

- | | |
|--|---|
| Important services are not provided | 1 |
| Take too long to carry out work | 2 |
| Services are performed to a low standard | 3 |
| Rent is too high | 4 |
| Residents are not kept informed about what is going on | 5 |
| Poor standard of accommodation/living conditions | 6 |
| Poor standard of facilities and amenities | 7 |
| Landlord does not listen to tenants/Involve tenants in decision making that will affect them | 8 |
| Landlord does not make improvements/modernisations to my home | 9 |
| Other WRITE IN | 0 |
| Don't know | X |

ASK ALL

Q25 **Would you be prepared to pay extra rent or a service charge for additional or improved services?**

SINGLE CODE ONLY

- | | |
|--------------------|------------|
| Yes | GO TO Q26 |
| No | GO TO Q27A |
| Don't know/depends | GO TO Q27A |

ASK ALL WHO SAY YES AT Q25 OTHERS GO TO Q27A

Q26 **Which services would you be prepared to pay extra rent or an additional service charge for?**

DO NOT PROMPT. MULTICODE OK.

Reducing anti social behaviour	1
More play and sports facilities	2
Improving the repairs service	3
Improving cleaning services to communal areas	4
Increasing security	5
Improving energy efficiency	6
Listening to tenants/Involving tenants in decision making that will affect them	7
Making homes more modern/ Upgrading interior of house (e.g. double glazing, new kitchen)	8
Nothing specific, just an all round better service	9
Other WRITE IN	0
Don't know	X

ASK ALL

Q27A **How much if anything do you know about how the standard of service provided by your landlord compares with that provided by other landlords? Would you say you know...**

SINGLE CODE ONLY.

A great deal	1
A fair amount	2
Not very much	3
Nothing at all	4
Don't know	5

ASK ALL

Q27B **How much if anything do you know about how the level of rent you pay compares with that charged by other landlords. Would you say you know...**

SINGLE CODE ONLY.

A great deal	1
A fair amount	2
Not very much	3
Nothing at all	4
Don't know	5

ASK ALL

Q28 **If you wanted to find out about how your landlord's rent levels and performance compares with that of other landlords, where would you go to find this information?**

DO NOT PROMPT. MULTICODE OK.

- | | |
|--|---|
| I would ask family/friends/other people I know | 1 |
| My local council | 2 |
| Ask other council | 3 |
| My housing association | 4 |
| Ask other housing association | 5 |
| Do a search online | 6 |
| The Scottish Housing Regulator's website | 7 |
| Contact a tenants group, TIGHRA, TIS etc | 8 |
| Other WRITE IN | 9 |
| Don't know | 0 |

ASK ALL

Q29 **Would you be interested in knowing more about how the level of rent you pay and services you receive compares to other housing association/council tenants?**

SINGLE CODE ONLY.

- | | |
|------------|---|
| Yes | 1 |
| No | 2 |
| Don't know | 3 |

Regulation/inspection

As you may know, outside bodies often inspect and monitor the quality of public services like housing. A well known example of this is Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education, an independent body who inspects schools in Scotland and make their findings available to public.

ASK ALL

Q30 **As far as you are aware are the housing and other services provided by your landlord regularly inspected by anyone?**

SINGLE CODE ONLY.

- | | |
|------------|---|
| Yes | 1 |
| No | 2 |
| Don't know | 3 |

Q31 Who do you think carries out the inspection?

DO NOT PROMPT. SINGLE CODE ONLY.

- | | |
|---|---|
| The Scottish Housing Regulator | 1 |
| Another independent inspection body | 2 |
| My local council | 3 |
| INCLUDE FOR HA TENANTS ONLY: Someone from the Housing Association | 4 |
| The Scottish Government | 5 |
| Tenants organisations/Associations | 6 |
| Communities Scotland | 7 |
| Care Commission | 8 |
| Other WRITE IN | 9 |
| Don't know | 0 |

READ TO ALL THOSE WHO DID NOT SAY SCOTTISH HOUSING REGULATOR:
In fact, the regulation and inspection of housing services is carried out by an organisation called the Scottish Housing Regulator. Their job is to protect tenants' interests by making sure landlords are well run and providing good quality houses and services.

ASK ALL

Q32 How important or unimportant do you think it is that your landlord's work is monitored and regulated by an independent organisation like the Scottish Housing Regulator?

SINGLE CODE ONLY.

- | | |
|-----------------------|---|
| Essential | 1 |
| Very important | 2 |
| Important | 3 |
| Not important | 4 |
| Don't know | 6 |

Q33 What aspects of your landlord's service, if any, do you think the Regulator should examine?

DO NOT PROMPT. MULTICODE OK.

Opportunities available for tenants to become involved in decision making/extent to which landlords listen to tenants	1
Quality of work carried out by contractors	2
The type of information given to tenants/communication with tenants	3
Complaints handling	4
Estate management/tidiness and cleanliness of estate (e.g. removing litter, fly-tipping)	5
Management of anti-social behaviour (e.g. graffiti, vandalism)	6
Management of problem households (e.g. nuisance neighbours)	
Servicing of amenities (e.g. gas boilers, heating)	7
Waiting times for repairs/time taken to complete repairs	8
Standard of repairs work	9
Upgrades, modernisations to housing	0
Application process for housing/waiting lists for housing/time taken to move or transfer	X
Rent levels	Y
Condition of inside home/interior	1
Condition of outside home/exterior	2
General customer care	3
Nothing specific, just ensure landlords provide a good service	4
Other WRITE IN	5
Don't know	6

ASK ALL

Q34 **And in which of these ways, if any, would you like to have your say when the Regulator is examining your landlord's activities?**

MULTICODE OK.

- | | |
|---|---|
| By meeting with staff from the Regulator | 1 |
| By speaking informally with staff during inspection visits | 2 |
| By taking part in surveys like this | 3 |
| Through a tenants association | 4 |
| Other WRITE IN | 5 |
| None of these | 6 |
| Don't know | 7 |

Demographics

Finally, I'd like to finish by asking some questions about your current circumstances....

ASK ALL

Q35 **How long have you lived in your current home?**

DO NOT PROMPT. SINGLE CODE ONLY.

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| Up to 2 years | 1 |
| 3 to 10 years | 2 |
| More than 10 years | 3 |
| Don't know | 4 |

ASK ALL

Q36 **Do you know roughly when your home was built?**

DO NOT PROMPT. SINGLE CODE ONLY.

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| Before 1919 | 1 |
| 1919-1944 | 2 |
| 1945-1964 | 3 |
| 1965-1982 | 4 |
| Since 1982 | 5 |
| Don't know | 6 |

ASK ALL

Q37 **Do you have any long-standing illness, health problem or disability that limits your daily activities or the kind of work that you can do?**

By disability as opposed to ill-health, I mean a physical or mental impairment, which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on your ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

SINGLE CODE ONLY.

- | | |
|--|---|
| Yes, disability | 1 |
| Yes, illness or health problem | 2 |
| Yes, both disability and illness or health problem | 3 |
| No, neither | 4 |
| Don't know | 5 |
| Refused | 6 |

Q38 **Can I just check, does your household currently receive housing benefit? IF YES, ASK: Does the housing benefit pay for all the rent (full), or just part of it (partial)? SINGLE CODE ONLY**

- | | | |
|----------------|-------------------------------|---|
| 1. Yes: | | |
| | All (full) | 1 |
| | Part (partial) | 2 |
| | Don't know if full or partial | 3 |
| 2. No | | 4 |
| | Don't know | 5 |
| | Refused | 6 |

Q39 **INTERVIEWER CODE: Gender**

- | | | |
|--|---------|---|
| | Male | 1 |
| | Female | 2 |
| | Refused | 3 |

ASK ALL

Q40 **And are you.....**

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| Self employed | | 1 |
| Employed full time | | 2 |
| Employed part time | | 3 |
| Looking after the home or family | | 4 |
| Permanently retired from work | | 5 |
| Unemployed and seeking work | | 6 |
| At school | | 7 |
| In further/higher education | | 8 |
| Government work or training scheme | | 9 |
| Permanently sick or disabled | | 0 |
| Unable to work due to short-term illness or injury | | X |
| Other WRITE IN | | Y |
| Don't know | | 1 |
| Refused | | 2 |

ASK ALL

Q41 **Which of these best describes your ethnic group?**

- | | | |
|---------------------------|---|-----------|
| White | 1 | GO TO Q42 |
| Black | 2 | GO TO Q43 |
| Asian | 3 | GO TO Q44 |
| Chinese | 4 | |
| Mixed ethnic group | 5 | |
| Other WRITE IN | 6 | |
| Don't know | 7 | |
| Refused | 8 | |

ASK ALL WHO SAY WHITE AT Q41

Q42 **Would you say you are.....**

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| White - Scottish | 1 |
| White - British | 2 |
| White - Irish | 3 |
| Any other White background | 4 |
| Don't know | 5 |
| Refused | 6 |

ASK ALL WHO SAY BLACK AT Q41

Q43 **Would you say you are.....**

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Black - Caribbean | 1 |
| Black - African | 2 |
| Any other Black background | 3 |
| Don't know | 4 |
| Refused | 5 |

ASK ALL WHO SAY ASIAN AT Q41

Q44 **Would you say you are.....**

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Asian - Indian | 1 |
| Asian - Pakistani | 2 |
| Asian - Bangladeshi | 3 |
| Any other Asian background | 4 |
| Don't know | 5 |
| Refused | 6 |

ASK ALL

Q45 **Please could you tell me your age last birthday?**

WRITE IN NUMBER.

Numeric range (16 – 99)

Don't know

Refused

ASK ALL

Q46 **And finally, are you a member of a registered tenant organisation (RTO)?**

SINGLE CODE ONLY

- | | |
|------------|---|
| Yes | 1 |
| No | 2 |
| Don't know | 3 |

Postal survey of RTOs

Identifying Tenants' Priorities for Social Housing

Welcome to the survey, and thank you for helping make sure we hear the views of Registered Tenant Organisations. You should have received a letter from the Tenant Participation Team in the Scottish Government about this important research, about those aspects of housing services that matter most to the tenants of social landlords. As the letter outlines, this survey offers an excellent opportunity for RTOs to represent the views of their members and to influence the shape of future policy. I hope very much that your RTO will use the opportunity to discuss and debate what you consider to be the priorities for your members and to reflect these priorities in your answers to the questionnaire. Please make your RTO's voice heard.

Helpful hints for completing this questionnaire

- Please read each question carefully and tick or write in the box to indicate your answer.
- There are instructions under each question as to how to complete the questions:

PLEASE WRITE IN SPACE BELOW

PLEASE WRITE IN UP TO THREE SERVICES ONLY

PLEASE TICK ONE BOX PER ROW

PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY

- Answer the next question unless asked otherwise.
- Once you have finished please take a minute to check you have answered all the questions that you should have answered.
- The survey consists of 16 pages and should take no longer than 25 minutes to complete.
- If you have any queries about the questionnaire please do not hesitate to contact Steven Treanor at Ipsos MORI on 0131 240 3265 or steven.treanor@ipsos.com
- Once you have completed the questionnaire please return in the pre-addressed envelope supplied by 6th March. **You do not need to add a stamp**

<ID NUMBER>

QPART Would your RTO like to take part in this survey?

PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY.

Yes

GO TO Q1

No (WRITE IN REASON BELOW)

PLEASE ENTER DETAILS OF WHY YOUR GROUP CANNOT OR DOES NOT WANT TO TAKE PART AND RETURN QUESTIONNAIRE IN PREPAID ENVELOPE

Priorities for housing

Q1 Thinking about all of the services currently provided by landlords in your area, which are most important to your tenant members?

PLEASE WRITE IN SPACE BELOW

Don't know

Q2 And apart from the services your tenant members currently receive, what additional services, if any, do they think landlords in your area should provide?

PLEASE WRITE IN SPACE BELOW

Don't know

Q3 Below is a list of specific services that are provided by landlords. Please indicate whether your tenant members think each is essential, very important, important or not important.....

PLEASE TICK ONE BOX PER ROW

	Essential	Very important	Important	Not important	Don't know
The provision of good quality accommodation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A good day to day repairs service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Efficient maintenance of the estate and communal grounds	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Major modernisation and improvements work (e.g. kitchens and bathroom upgrades)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A fair system for managing waiting lists for housing and requests for moves and transfers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Good customer service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Effective complaints handling procedures	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Keeping the buildings and entrances secure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dealing with anti-social behaviour	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dealing with nuisance neighbours	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Involving tenants in decision making	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Taking tenants views into account	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q4 And how satisfied or dissatisfied are your tenant members with the performance of landlords in your area at.....

PLEASE TICK ONE BOX PER ROW

(If your RTO covers more than 1 landlord area, please reflect your experience of the landlord with the largest number of houses in your area.)

	Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Don't know/not applicable
Providing good quality accommodation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Providing a good day to day repairs service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Efficiently maintaining the estate and communal grounds	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Carrying out major modernisation and improvements work (e.g. kitchens and bathroom upgrades)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ensuring a fair system for managing waiting lists for housing and requests for moves and transfers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Providing good customer service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Having effective complaints handling procedures	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Keeping the buildings and entrances secure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dealing with anti-social behaviour	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dealing with nuisance neighbours	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Involving tenants in decision making	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Taking tenants views into account	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q5 Has your group had contact with landlords in your RTO area within the last 12 months?

PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY

- | | | |
|------------|--------------------------|----------------|
| Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | CONTINUE TO Q6 |
| No | <input type="checkbox"/> | GO TO Q8 |
| Don't know | <input type="checkbox"/> | GO TO Q8 |

ANSWER Q6 IF YOUR GROUP HAS HAD CONTACT WITH LANDLORDS IN YOUR RTO AREA IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS. OTHERWISE GO TO Q8.

Q6 In which ways has your Group had contact with landlords in your RTO area in the last 12 months?

PLEASE TICK AS MANY BOXES AS APPLY

- | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| Phone | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Visited office | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Wrote a letter | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Email | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Via landlord's website | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Visit from a landlord | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Meeting(s) with landlord | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Through someone else | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Working groups | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Forums | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other WRITE IN | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Don't know/can't remember | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Q7 And what did you last have contact about?

PLEASE WRITE IN SPACE BELOW

- | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| Don't know/can't remember | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|

Q8 How important or unimportant to your tenant members are each of the following aspects of the customer service provided by landlords in your area?

PLEASE TICK ONE BOX PER ROW

	Essential	Very important	Important	Not important	Don't know
The opening hours of offices	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Courteous staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Phones being answered promptly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The person answering the phone being able to deal with the query	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Being able to make contact by email or through a website	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Having the name of a person to speak to	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Queries being dealt with quickly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Making information available in alternative formats (e.g. large print, braille, audio)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The provision of easy-to-understand information leaflets	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q9 And how important or unimportant are each of the following aspects of a landlord's repair service?

PLEASE TICK ONE BOX PER ROW

	Essential	Very important	Important	Not important	Don't know
Quality of repair work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Speed with which phones are answered	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Polite staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Knowledgeable staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Being told when contractors will call	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Being able to choose a time slot when contractors will call	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Repair work being finished within a reasonable period	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Contractor time-keeping	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Polite contractors	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Efficiency of contractors	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Keeping dirt and mess to a minimum	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Getting the job done right first time	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Follow up work being carried out within a reasonable period	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q10 Now thinking back to all the services provided by landlords in your area, what do you think should be the two or three main priorities for improvement in the future?

PLEASE WRITE IN UP TO THREE SERVICES ONLY

Don't know

Q11 In your group's opinion, what, if anything, does your landlord do particularly well? PLEASE WRITE IN SPACE BELOW.

(If your RTO covers more than 1 landlord area, please reflect your experience of the landlord with the largest number of houses in your area.)

Nothing

Don't know

Q12 And in your group's opinion, what, if anything, does your landlord need to do better?

PLEASE WRITE IN SPACE BELOW.

(If your RTO covers more than 1 landlord area, please reflect your experience of the landlord with the largest number of houses in your area.)

Don't know

Communication, consultation and participation
--

Q13 How good or poor do you feel landlords in your area are at keeping your group informed about things that might affect your tenant members?

PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY

Very good

Fairly good

Neither good nor poor

Fairly poor

Very poor

Don't know

Q14 Thinking about the services that landlords provide in your area how satisfied or dissatisfied is your group with opportunities for participation in decision making?

PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY

Very satisfied

Fairly satisfied

Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied

Fairly dissatisfied

Very dissatisfied

Don't know

Q15 To what extent does your RTO believe that it has influence over the way landlords deliver housing services in your area?

PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY

- A lot of influence
- Some influence
- A little influence
- No influence at all
- Don't know

Q17 Which issues, if any, would your RTO like to have more influence over?

PLEASE WRITE IN SPACE BELOW

- None, we have enough influence
- Don't know

Q18 And, by which means would your RTO like to have more say or influence?

PLEASE WRITE IN SPACE BELOW

- None, we have enough influence
- Don't know

Value for money

Q18 Taking into account the accommodation and the services your landlord provides, to what extent, does your group think that the rents in your area represent good or poor value for money? Is it....

PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY

(If your RTO covers more than 1 landlord area, please reflect your experience of the landlord with the largest number of houses in your area.)

-Very good value GO TO Q19
-Fairly good value GO TO Q19
-Neither good nor poor value GO TO Q21
-Fairly poor value GO TO Q20
-Very poor value GO TO Q20
- Don't know GO TO Q21

ANSWER Q19 IF YOUR GROUP THINKS THAT RENTS IN YOUR AREA REPRESENT GOOD VALUE FOR MONEY

Q19 Why do you say it is good value for money?

PLEASE WRITE IN SPACE BELOW

Don't know

ANSWER Q20 IF YOUR GROUP THINKS THAT RENTS IN YOUR AREA REPRESENT POOR VALUE FOR MONEY

Q20 Why do you say it is poor value for money?

PLEASE WRITE IN SPACE BELOW

Don't know

Q21 What do you think landlords in your area should be doing (or not be doing) to give your tenant members better value for money?

PLEASE WRITE IN SPACE BELOW

Don't know

Q22 Might your tenant members be prepared to pay extra rent or a service charge for additional or improved services?

PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY

Yes

GO TO Q23

No

GO TO Q24A

Don't know

GO TO Q24A

ANSWER Q23 IF TENANT MEMBERS MIGHT BE PREPARED TO PAY EXTRA RENT OR A SERVICE CHARGE FOR ADDITIONAL OR IMPROVED SERVICES. OTHERWISE GO TO Q24A

Q23 Which services would your tenant members be prepared to pay extra rent or an additional service charge for?

PLEASE WRITE IN SPACE BELOW

Don't know

Q24A How much, if anything, does your organisation know about how the standard of service provided by landlords in your area compares with that provided by other registered social landlords/councils? Does your organisation know...

PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY

- A great deal
- A fair amount
- Not very much
- Nothing at all
- Don't know

Q24 B How much, if anything, does your organisation know about how the level of rents charged by landlords in your area compares with that charged by other registered social landlords/councils? Do you know...

PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY

- A great deal
- A fair amount
- Not very much
- Nothing at all
- Don't know

Q25 If your members wanted to find out about how the rent levels and performance of landlords in your area compares with that of other landlords, where would they go to find this information?

PLEASE WRITE IN SPACE BELOW

- Don't know

Q26 Do you think that being able to compare your landlords' performance and rents with that of other landlords would help your RTO to work better with landlords to improve services and performance in your area?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Q27 What kind of information about the performance of landlords in your area would your RTO like to have access to?

PLEASE WRITE IN SPACE BELOW

Don't know

Regulation/inspection

As you may be aware, the regulation and inspection of the housing services provided by housing associations and local authorities is carried out by an organisation called the Scottish Housing Regulator set up in 2008 to take over this role from Communities Scotland. The Regulator's job is to protect the interests of council and housing association tenants by making sure landlords are well run and provide good quality houses and services. The Scottish Government is currently modernising the powers and duties of the Scottish Housing Regulator.

Q28 How important or unimportant do group members think it is that their landlord's work is monitored and regulated by an independent organisation like the Scottish Housing Regulator?

PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY

Very important

Fairly important

Neither important or unimportant

Fairly unimportant

Not important at all

Don't know

Q29 Does your group think that the Scottish Housing Regulator should monitor and regulate the performance of all landlords in the social rented sector?

A PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY

Yes

No

Don't know

Q29B Please write in space below if you would like to any further comments about Q29A PLEASE WRITE IN SPACE BELOW

Q30 What aspects of the service provided by landlords does your group think are currently subject to monitoring and inspection by The Scottish Housing Regulator?

PLEASE WRITE IN SPACE BELOW

Don't know

Q31 And what additional aspects, if any, does your group think the Regulator should examine?

PLEASE WRITE IN SPACE BELOW

Don't know

Q32 In the past three years, is your RTO aware of any occasions when housing provided by landlords in your area has been inspected?

PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY

Yes

GO TO Q33

No

GO TO Q34

Don't know

GO TO Q34

ANSWER Q33 IF YOUR RTO IS AWARE OF ANY OCCASIONS WHEN HOUSING HAS BEEN INSPECTED. OTHERWISE GO TO Q34

Q33 And what involvement, if any, did your organisation have in this process?

PLEASE WRITE IN SPACE BELOW

No involvement

Don't know

Q34 In future, in which ways, if any, would your RTO like to have an input into the Scottish Housing Regulator's monitoring of your landlord's performance?

PLEASE WRITE IN SPACE BELOW

Don't know

Q35 What other comments or observations, if any, would your group like to make about the Scottish Housing Regulator?

PLEASE WRITE IN SPACE BELOW

Don't know

Information about your RTO

Q36 Does your RTO represent:

PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY

A local authority

An RSL area

A mixture of both

Don't know

Q37 Roughly how many tenants does your organisation represent?

A PLEASE WRITE NUMBER IN SPACE BELOW

Don't know

Q37 And how many landlords does your organisation represent?

B PLEASE WRITE NUMBER IN SPACE BELOW

Don't know

Q38 How long has your group been in existence?

PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY

Less than one year

1 to 3 years

3 to 5 years

5 to 8 years

8 to 10 years

10 to 15 years

More than 15 years

Don't know

Q39 And to which regional network does your RTO belong?

PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY

- Highland and Argyll and Bute
- Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire, Angus, Moray, Orkney, Shetland
- Dundee, Fife, Perth and Kinross
- Clackmannanshire, Falkirk, Stirling, West Lothian
- East Lothian, Edinburgh, Midlothian, Scottish Borders
- Dumfries and Galloway, East Ayrshire, South Ayrshire
- East Renfrewshire, Renfrewshire, North Ayrshire and Inverclyde
- East Dunbartonshire, North Lanarkshire, South Lanarkshire
- Glasgow, Western Isles
- West Dunbartonshire RTOs (network affiliation on hold)
- Don't know

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR TIME

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