



Tenant Satisfaction Survey 2009

Management Commentary

16th December 2009



Background

Eden Housing commissioned Survey Solutions to set up, host and analyse their 2009 Tenant Satisfaction Survey, which was carried out during the period from Monday 28th September until Monday 2nd November, a total of 5 weeks.

The key aims of the survey were to gather accurate and detailed customer feedback on the services offered by Eden Housing Association, to help understand those areas of services that need to be improved and highlight any other issues that need to be addressed. The survey was offered to a selection of tenants and leaseholders.

Methodology

Three questionnaires were designed for the different housing types, General Needs, Sheltered and Homeowners. They consisted of c.50-55 questions, of which 22 questions were standard across each survey and the remaining questions asked were specific areas for each housing type. The questionnaire also included 1 open comment question, where tenants were encouraged to comment on their home and/or the services Eden Housing Association provides.

Questions were arranged under the following sections:

- Information about their Household / Background Information
- Housing & Services
- Out of Hours Emergency Service
- Contact with Eden Housing Association
- Repairs and Maintenance
- Communication & Information
- Anti-Social Behaviour
- Future Plans
- General

A mixture of question types were used in the survey, where tenants were asked to rate certain aspects of the service. The survey was provided as a printed questionnaire for respondents to complete and return via confidential Freepost envelopes.

1568 Eden Housing Association tenants were invited to participate.

The project was carried out in compliance with, and to the Quality Standards required under:

- The Data Protection Act
- ISO 20252:2006 (for Social, Opinion & Market Research)
- ISO 9001:2008 (for Quality Management Systems)
- The MRS (Market Research Society) Code of Conduct
- The MRS Company Partner Quality Commitment

RESPONSE LEVELS

A total of 818 tenants responded to survey, representing 52% overall. However across each housing type a good response rate was achieved and will provide a reasonable indication of tenant satisfaction with the services Eden Housing Association provides.

The breakdown of responses by each housing type is as follows:

	Number of participants	Number responded	%
Homeowners	108	42	38.9%
Sheltered	95	68	71.6%
General Needs	1365	708	51.9%
TOTAL	1568	818	52.2%

When reading the charted results, please bear in mind that:

- Care should be taken when comparing results from groups of markedly different sizes
- In a much smaller group, a few strong opinions can have a significant impact on the overall findings for that housing type

HOW TO INTERPRET THE RESULTS

For those questions in the survey which are rated on a 5 point scale, where '5' equates to Strongly Agree / Very Satisfied and '1' equates to Strongly Disagree / Very Dissatisfied, a mean (or average) rating has been calculated for these questions and, in general, we suggest that:

- a mean rating that is above 4.00 is excellent, indicating high levels of positivity
- results between 3.80 and 3.99 are very good
- results between 3.50 and 3.79 are good
- anything between 3.25 and 3.49 shows room for improvement
- results below 3.25 should be considered as targets for action planning
- a mean below 3.00 is more negative than positive (and should be regarded as a priority concern)

It is important to look at actual levels of agreement / disagreement in addition to the mean rating for each question.

In addition to those questions where the mean rating is particularly low, we suggest that the following should be considered as potential targets for action planning:

- Any results where more than 20% of respondents disagree or are dissatisfied

- Any questions which show a high level of neutral voting i.e. more than 20% (unless the reason for this is understood and not seen as an issue, e.g. a topic that a particular group would not find important, or where they could not be expected to have a definite opinion)
- Any results that are particularly disappointing, or relate to an issue that is important to Eden Housing Association

OVERVIEW

In general, these results compare favourably with other Status surveys that we have run for housing groups over recent years.

This general point applies especially to General Needs and Sheltered Housing tenants, less so Homeowners, where there seems to be scope for improving perceptions and satisfaction levels on a number of aspects (further detailed below). However, it also needs to be pointed out that this group only yielded 42 responses, 5% of the total for the project.

Sheltered Housing tenants are generally more satisfied with services than either of the other two groups, and record very high satisfaction levels (most questions register mean scores well over 4.00 out of 5).

General Needs tenants are slightly less enthusiastic about the advice they are given on moving home, and the support provided to new, and to vulnerable, tenants. The average ratings given on these questions are not bad by any means, they are just not as positive as other aspects that were rated on a 5 point scale.

GENERAL NEEDS IN MORE DETAIL

Housing & Services

- Half of all respondents claim to be 'very satisfied' in overall terms with the services provided by EHA, and a further 43% are 'fairly satisfied – a total positive of 93%
- Most satisfaction is with 'this neighbourhood as a place to live' (90% satisfied). There is slightly less satisfaction with 'value for money for your rent' (82% positive)
- There were quite high levels of mid-point voting ('neither') for support provided to new tenants and to vulnerable tenants, together with advice on moving home, presumably because these aspects did not apply to many tenants
- Amongst those who had been tenants for under a year, however, satisfaction levels are well above average on these three questions
- There is a similarly high level of satisfaction for: 'enquiries being dealt with effectively' (89% satisfied)
- When asked about what aspects of service are considered to be most important, 'repairs and maintenance' (85%), and 'overall quality of your home' (62%) are easily the most important. The quality of the neighbourhood (34%), value for money for the rent (34%), and keeping tenants informed (31%) are also quite important, and the two least important elements being 'taking tenants views into account' (25%) and 'dealing with anti-social behaviour' (18%)

- The largest problem area by a long way is seen as car parking. This is regarded as a big problem by 20%, and a fairly big problem by a further 18% (total 38% seeing as a problem). The next biggest area is seen as rubbish/litter at 15% overall.

Out of Hours Emergency Service

- In all, 19% of General Needs respondents had used the out of hours emergency services in the previous 12 months, and this was almost always to report an emergency repair. Of those that had used the service, 52% were very satisfied with the response, and a further 26% fairly satisfied (total 78% satisfaction).

Contact with Eden Housing Association

- 78% of General Needs respondents had general contact with Eden Housing Association in the last 12 months, and the shorter the time of tenancy, the higher the likelihood of having been in contact – 89% of ‘under 1 year’ tenants and 94% of 1-2 year tenants claimed to have been in touch with EHA in the past 12 months.
- The usual method of contact was by phone (86%), and 11% had visited the office. No-one had written in, whilst a small minority (1.5%) had emailed. The normal reason for contact was ‘Repairs’ (78%), followed by ‘Rent/housing benefit’ (9%). Other reasons were very much minority issues.
- The vast majority (87%) claimed it was easy to get hold of the right person. Only 4% found it difficult. Similarly, 94% found the staff to be helpful, 86% found them able to deal with their problem, and 81% were satisfied with the outcome (14% were dissatisfied, however).
- When asked if customer services and reception should be open outside the existing hours, 66% claim to be happy with the existing hours, but there is some demand - from 14% of General Needs tenants (or 1 in 6) - for a Saturday morning service.
- It seems that 36% of General Needs tenants are unaware that there is a formal complaints procedure. 91% of tenants say that nothing would prevent them from using it, should the need arise. For the 9% that might be put off from using it, the major reasons are not knowing who to contact, not knowing how to complain, or a general feeling that it wouldn’t make any difference anyway. For each of these 3 reasons, between 30-40 respondents claimed it to be an issue.

Repairs and Maintenance

- Overall, 49% are very satisfied with the way that EHA deals with repairs and maintenance, and a further 42% are fairly satisfied (overall satisfaction 91%)

- 77% claimed to have had repairs completed in the past 12 months. Those that had were asked to rate various aspects of the experience, and these ratings are generally positive. The attitude of the workers comes out as the highest rated (96% very or fairly good). The lowest rated area (though still generally positive) was the time taken before the work started.
- As with the reception/customer service question, there is general satisfaction with current service hours, but with a slightly higher proportion (18%) saying that a Saturday morning service would be helpful.

Communication and Information

- Letter post is the most preferred method of communication/consultation (79%), followed by telephone (36%), and Magazine/newsletter (25%). Personal visits were voted for by 20%, but would presumably be costly to implement. Other methods are seen as of minor interest.
- There is 78% overall satisfaction amongst General Needs tenants that their views are taken into account by EHA. Only 6% are dissatisfied with this.
- 88% feel that EHA is very good or good at keeping them informed about things that might affect them as a tenant.

Anti-Social Behaviour

- Only 6% claimed to have reported any anti-social behaviour in the past 12 months. Of those that had (only 44 respondents), 75% had found it easy to get hold of the right person, and 70% found the staff they spoke to were helpful. However, only 48% claim that the staff were able to deal with their problem, and 34% claim they were unable to deal with it.
- Most (70%) were satisfied with the advice provided by staff on the matter. However, there was less satisfaction for:
 - Being kept informed (23% dissatisfied)
 - How the report was dealt with (21% dissatisfied)
 - Speed that report was dealt with (22% dissatisfied)
 - Support provided by staff (24% dissatisfied)
 - The final outcome (**39% dissatisfied**)

Future Plans

- Of those that responded, 12% of General Needs tenants said that they were very or fairly likely to move from their current home in the next 3 years. These seem most likely to be people who have been tenants for 1-2 years already.
- Of those likely to move, most plan to rent somewhere from EHA.

General Perceptions of EHA

- 90% agree that they would recommend EHA as a good landlord to friends or colleagues, and 70% of these would strongly agree.
- There are similarly very positive ratings for:
 - EHA plays an important role in the local community (84% agree)
 - EHA treats all of its tenants fairly and equally (82% agree)
 - EHA does not tolerate anti-social behaviour (76% agree)

SHELTERED IN MORE DETAIL

- Responses were received from 68 tenants living in Sheltered Housing, 8% of the overall response for the project.
- The following sections highlight where the views are materially different from those of General Needs tenants, or where the questions asked were specific to Sheltered tenants.

Ease of Access

- All three questions in this section: ease of access to the building, inside the building and to the home within the building received very favourable ratings – well over 90% positive

Home Help/Care Service Provision

- 35% of Sheltered respondents receive some form of home help or care services, 11% of which are provided by EHA and 25% by another organisation or agency.
- This sub sample is quite small, but satisfaction levels with the various services provided seems to be generally good or excellent, especially for laundry, cleaning and shopping. Areas where there is slightly (but only slightly) less satisfaction is for more personal services, which could simply indicate some frustration or distress that the respondents need to have this kind of service at all.

Emergency Call System

- All but one Sheltered respondents have access to an emergency call system. 43% had used it in the last 12 months for themselves or another household member, and a further 5% on behalf of a neighbour or visitor.
- In two-thirds of cases, the call was answered by the emergency call staff, and one third was answered by the Supported Housing Officer.

- 70% declared themselves to be 'very satisfied' with the helpfulness of staff (a further 26% were 'fairly satisfied'), whilst somewhat less (57%) were 'very satisfied' with the speed of response of staff in answering (a further 36% were 'fairly satisfied').

Supported Housing Officer

- 77% have a SHO who visits every day, 5% have one living at the scheme, and 18% have an SHO who visits less frequently.
- Satisfaction with the SHO is very high, especially for helpfulness (95% very satisfied), 'contact via intercom' (78% very satisfied), and in overall terms (74%).
- There is slightly less extreme satisfaction with the promotion of social activities at 63%, but even this increases to 92% of residents when the 'fairly satisfied' category is included.
- The longest-term residents (over 21 years) are less likely to be satisfied with frequency of contact, promotion of social activities, and with the SHO in overall terms.

Anti-Social Behaviour

- A total of 5 residents out of 66 responses received had experienced anti-social behaviour whilst at the home in the previous 12 months.
- Of these, one had reported it to EHA, one had not reported it at all, two had reported it to another organisation, and one declined to answer.
- The one, who had reported it to EHA, was happy with the way they dealt with the report.

Housing & Services

- As stated earlier, Sheltered residents are generally more likely to be positive about most of the services than the other two groups covered in this survey, in particular:
 - Neighbourhood (77% very satisfied)
 - The overall quality of your home (68% very satisfied)
 - General condition of property (59% very satisfied)
 - Rent value for money (62% very satisfied).
- In addition, 66% claim to be very satisfied with the security and safety of their home (not asked of the other two housing groups).
- There is slightly less satisfaction for 'advice on benefits' (56% very satisfied).

- Not unexpectedly, those in Sheltered Housing are far less likely to see car parking as a problem than either of the other two housing groups, for whom it is seen as a significant problem.

Contact with Eden Housing Authority

- 48% of Sheltered respondents had contacted EHA over the past 12 months, mostly (68%) about Repairs. 79% found it easy to get hold of the right person, 93% found the staff to be helpful, and 90% found them able to deal with their problem. The same percentage (90%) declared themselves satisfied with the final outcome.
- There is no real demand at all from Sheltered tenants for longer customer service hours
- This groups seems to be slightly more aware than the other two groups of EHA's formal complaints procedure (75% are aware)

Repairs & Maintenance

- There is higher satisfaction amongst Sheltered tenants in general about the R&M services.
- Again there is no real demand for extended hours for these services.

Communication & Information

- Letter (52%) is the most preferred method of communication, followed by the Sheltered Housing Officer (SHO) (44%), and personal visit (21%)

HOMEOWNERS IN MORE DETAIL

- A small proportion of Homeowners (42 respondents) participated in the survey (5% of the overall response).
- The following sections highlight where the views are materially different from those of General Needs tenants, or where the questions asked were specific to Homeowner tenants.

Your Home, Management and Service Provision

- The most immediate point to make about the Homeowner group who responded to this survey is that they tend be far less satisfied than either the General Needs or Sheltered groups.
- For example when asked how satisfied they were 'taking everything into account', only 10% are 'very satisfied', compared to 50% of General Needs and 63% of Sheltered, tenants. A further 51% are 'fairly satisfied', but the 'overall

- satisfied' percentage of 61% is well below that of the other two groups, both of which are over 90%
- The areas where Homeowners are least satisfied are:
 - The way that EHA deals with repairs and maintenance (only 49% are very or fairly satisfied, and 33% are dissatisfied)
 - Being told when workers would call (45% consider this poor or very poor)
 - Time taken before work started (again, 45% consider this poor or very poor)
 - Perceived quality of repair work (39% consider it to be poor or very poor)
 - However, despite this, 78% say they are satisfied overall with their home, and only 4% are dissatisfied. Moreover:
 - 88% are satisfied with the size of their home
 - 86% are satisfied with the design
 - 81% are satisfied with the heating system
 - However:
 - there is less enthusiasm for the construction quality (only 26% very satisfied, out of a total of 78% satisfied)
 - 27% claim to be dissatisfied with their garden/outside space
 - 31% are dissatisfied with the storage they have
 - On security measures, 33% are ambivalent (voting 'neither satisfied nor dissatisfied'), but the majority (55%) are satisfied.
 - Whilst 50% are satisfied with Rent/service charge information, more respondents are negative than positive on the following communal services:
 - External building repairs and maintenance (1 in 4 homeowners are dissatisfied)
 - Cleaning and upkeep of communal areas (36%, more than 1 in 3, are dissatisfied)
 - However, when asked to rate the services on the basis of **value for money**, the results are slightly more positive, and 95% go on to claim they would be unwilling to pay more in return for extra services anyway.

The Neighbourhood

- Only 5% of Homeowners are definitely dissatisfied with the neighbourhood as a place to live, and 83% claim to be satisfied (and 31% of these are very satisfied)
- However, 28% feel that the neighbourhood has declined in the past 3 years, compared to 25% who think it has improved (48% think it has stayed the same).

- Car parking is the biggest perceived problem for Homeowners, cited by 47% of those who responded. This is followed by 'Pets and animals' and 'Rubbish or litter', as for the other two household groups covered by the survey.

Contact with Eden Housing Association

- 50% of homeowners claimed to have contacted EHA in the previous 12 month, 81% of whom were in contact by phone.
- Homeowners seem to have had more difficulty getting hold of the right person than the other two groups – 24% found this 'Difficult', and they are similarly far less likely to have found the staff helpful (67% compared to 93-94% for the other two groups)
- Only 55% of Homeowners found that the person they spoke to at EHA was able to deal with their problem (compared to 86-90% in the other two groups)
- As a result 50% declared themselves to be dissatisfied with the final outcome of the contact.
- 45% of Homeowners are unaware that EHA has a formal complaints procedure, again higher than for the other two groups
- Similarly, 61% are unaware that EHA has published service standards for customer service.

Communication & Information

- When asked about the degree of consultation when EHA sets the service charges, 34% felt it to be 'about right', whilst 27% claimed there was 'none at all'
- 98% of homeowners prefer contact from EHA to be by letter. Magazines/newsletters (27%) and telephone (22%) are also important to a more limited degree
- When asked how satisfied they were with various communication methods, there is a lot of indifference amongst Homeowners, and generally little dissatisfaction. However, 13% would like the service charge statement to be clearer
- When being asked to get involved and give views on issues, 30 out of 41 respondents (73%) prefer completing (printed) questionnaires, and a further 17% opt for online surveys/email panel.

Purchasing Your Property

- Overall, 54% of Homeowners who responded were satisfied with the sales process that they had experienced.

- There could be some minor room for improvement in some aspects of information and advice that are provided to homebuyers, however, the majority of respondents feel that such information/advice is at least fairly good. A consistently high percentage is fairly ambivalent on the subject.
- Similarly, the majority feel that the service received when buying their home was acceptable in terms of politeness of staff (71% satisfied), clarity of sales information, clarity of the lease and knowledge of sales staff.
- There was less satisfaction with the time taken to process the sale, and being kept informed during the sale (36% dissatisfied on both aspects), and 'how defects are rectified' (40% dissatisfied).
- 92% claim that they have already, or would if asked, recommend this type of home purchase to family or friends, compared to 8% who would not.

Household Costs

- Only one respondent admitted to having experienced financial difficulties in making payments over the previous 12 months.

Future Plans

- There is interest in buying more of the home through staircasing: 81% of those that did not already own the maximum proportion allowed by their lease, claim that they would like to acquire more.
- However, for the majority, this enthusiasm is moderated by a sense of not being able to afford it and/or worry about taking on a bigger mortgage.