

Pye Tait Consulting

**National Customer
Satisfaction Survey to
Support the New Building
Standards Verification
Performance Framework**

**Phase 2 Report –
National Survey Findings**

July 2014

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Executive Summary

The remit of the building standards system is to protect the public interest by setting out the standards to be met when building or conversion work takes place, to the extent necessary to meet the building regulations.

In 2013 the Building Standards Division commissioned Pye Tait Consulting to develop and run the first national satisfaction survey. The survey was predicated on the need to obtain nationally consistent baseline data across all 32 local authorities in Scotland and to permit trends analysis in future years.

The survey relates particularly to Key Performance Outcome (KPO) 5 of the new verification performance framework, titled: '*Improvement of the customer experience*'. The purpose of this KPO is for verifiers to gain a more detailed understanding of their different customer groups and to be able to respond appropriately to their needs.

The project was carried out in two phases:

Phase 1 (October 2013 – January 2014): Development of the first national customer satisfaction survey

Phase 2 (February 2014 – June 2014): Conducting the survey and providing analysis and reporting

This report relates specifically to phase 2 (the phase 1 report is available separately).

Approach to delivering the survey:

Preparatory work began in October 2013. The survey opened on 2nd April 2014 and closed on 12th May 2014.

- Local authorities sought consent from their customers (via an opt-out process) to having their contact details passed to Pye Tait, who then coordinated the survey;
- The historic cut-off point for customers in scope of the first survey was set as 1st April 2013;
- All customers within the agreed time-period were invited to participate in the survey, as opposed to a sample of customers;
- For the purpose of the survey, customers were defined as:

- a. Applicants for building warrants (including any agents);
 - b. Submitters of completion certificates (including any agents); and
 - c. Others that have interacted with the building standards service;
- Local authorities were only asked to supply Pye Tait with customer names and email addresses. They were not asked to supply application information relating to each customer, for example project types and fee income bands;
 - The survey was hosted online and customers with email addresses were directly invited to participate;
 - Local authorities were at liberty to promote the survey link to all their customers via other means, as appropriate;
 - When completing the survey, customers were asked to select the local authority to which their responses were attributed. Customers of multiple local authorities were invited to complete the survey more than once, as applicable.

Achieved sample:

Total email addresses supplied to Pye Tait from local authorities: **10,216¹**

Total survey invitation emails sent by Pye Tait: **7,904²**

Total survey responses received: **1,444**

Response rate: 18.3% (against 7,904 emails sent).

Respondent profile:

- Just under half of surveyed customers (43%) classified themselves as direct building warrant applicants and/or direct submitters of completion certificates;
- A similar proportion (49%) confirmed that they were agents, i.e. acting on behalf of applicants; and
- A small minority (9%) defined themselves in multiple or other capacities.

¹This number includes repeat email addresses supplied by more than one local authority.

² Unique customers, i.e. following a de-duplication of customer email addresses supplied by local authorities.

- The majority (61%) of customers had submitted applications for domestic work only;
- 14% had submitted applications for non-domestic work only; and
- 25% had submitted applications for both domestic and non-domestic work.

Headlines:

Indicators	Scotland
OVERALL SATISFACTION	
Overall satisfaction with the service received (score out of 10)	7.5
MEETING EXPECTATIONS	
Extent to which the service met expectations (score out of 10)	7.4
Very/fairly satisfied with the timeliness of various aspects of the service	65%
Kept very/fairly well informed about the progress of an application or submission	63%
QUALITY OF SERVICE	
Strongly agree/agree to some extent that sufficient advice and guidance was received to meet needs	73%
Strongly agree/agree to some extent that building standards service staff were polite and courteous	88%
Yes - an inspection visit was undertaken by building standards staff	61%
Very/fairly satisfied with the quality of the advice and guidance received from inspection staff	82%
Yes – aware are of the need to notify the building standards service prior to commencing warrantable work	98%
COMMUNICATIONS	
Would prefer to exchange written communication with building standards via email rather than hard copy letter	86%
Satisfied with the <u>accuracy</u> of written information (score out of 10)	8.0
Satisfied with the <u>quality</u> of written information (score out of 10)	8.0
ACCESSIBILITY	
Have visited the building standards section of the Council's website	82%
Found the information they were looking for on the Council's website	81%
Have visited the building standards service offices	54%
Very/fairly satisfied with the reception service	80%
Very/fairly satisfied with accessibility of staff	75%

1.1 Background and purpose of the project

The building standards system in Scotland is established under the Building (Scotland) Act 2003. The Act gives powers to Ministers to make building regulations, procedure regulations, fees regulations and other supporting legislation as necessary to fulfil the purposes of the Act. The purposes include setting building standards and dealing with dangerous and defective buildings.

The remit of the building standards system is to protect the public interest by setting out the standards to be met when building or conversion work takes place, to the extent necessary to meet the building regulations.

The standards are intended to:

- Secure the health, safety, welfare and convenience of persons in or about buildings and of others who may be affected by buildings or matters connected with buildings;
- Further the conservation of fuel and power; and
- Further the achievement of sustainable development.

The role of the Building Standards verifier is to protect the public interest by:

- Providing an independent check of applications for building warrants to construct buildings, provide services, fittings or equipment in buildings, or to convert buildings;
- Granting or refusing building warrants;
- Carrying out an independent check of construction activities through the process of reasonable inquiry; and
- Accepting or rejecting completion certificates.

Verifiers are appointed by Scottish Ministers and the Act provides for a variety of verifiers should they be required. At present, the only appointed verifiers are the 32 Scottish local authorities, each covering their own geographical area. The local authorities were re-appointed on 1 May 2011 for a further six-year period, on the basis that a new performance framework was established to improve the quality, compliance, consistency and predictability of verification activities.

In 2011 Pye Tait Consulting, on behalf of the Scottish Government, developed a

set of nine national Key Performance Outcomes (KPOs), which were implemented as part of the Building Standards Verification Performance Framework and launched on 1st May 2012³. The intention of these was, through more accurate and effective comparisons, to ensure consistency and quality in terms of outputs and overall service, along with a greater focus on peer review, benchmarking and sharing of best practice. Additionally the KPOs underpin a strong culture of continuous improvement. This encourages local authorities to commit to 'raising the bar' across all aspects of delivery and particularly in relation to quality, compliance and consistency of service, while still maintaining the public interest.

Three of the nine KPOs, categorised under '*Quality Customer Experience*', aim to ensure that verifiers provide high quality standards and services to customers, underpinned by clear and transparent communications, and an understanding of different customer and stakeholder types and their differing needs. These insights, and actions taken in response to them, are intended to bring about continuous improvement of the customer experience through regular measurement and assessment.

This research relates particularly to KPO5 of the new verification performance framework, titled: '*Improvement of the customer experience*'. The purpose of this KPO is for verifiers to gain a more detailed understanding of their different customer groups and to be able to respond appropriately to their needs.

In 2013 the Building Standards Division commissioned Pye Tait Consulting to develop and run the first national customer satisfaction survey, predicated on the need to obtain nationally consistent baseline data and to permit trends analysis in future years.

1.2 Project objectives

The project was carried out in two phases and the objectives are set out below.

Phase 1 (October 2013 – January 2014): Development of the first national customer satisfaction survey:

1. Undertake research into existing effective customer satisfaction surveys;
2. Investigate the potential use of the Customer Management Tool (CSMT);
3. Carry out research into the existing local authority building standards surveys;
4. Investigate individual local authority needs for a national building standards

³ The Scottish Government (2012) *Building Standards Verification - Key Performance outcomes Handbook*. Available at: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0040/00403923.pdf> (Accessed 20/01/2014).

survey including local requirements;

5. Develop the national building standards customer survey methodology;
6. Develop a suitable annual questionnaire;
7. Develop a methodology to identify the customer sample; and
8. Test the proposed survey methodology and questionnaire with local authorities.

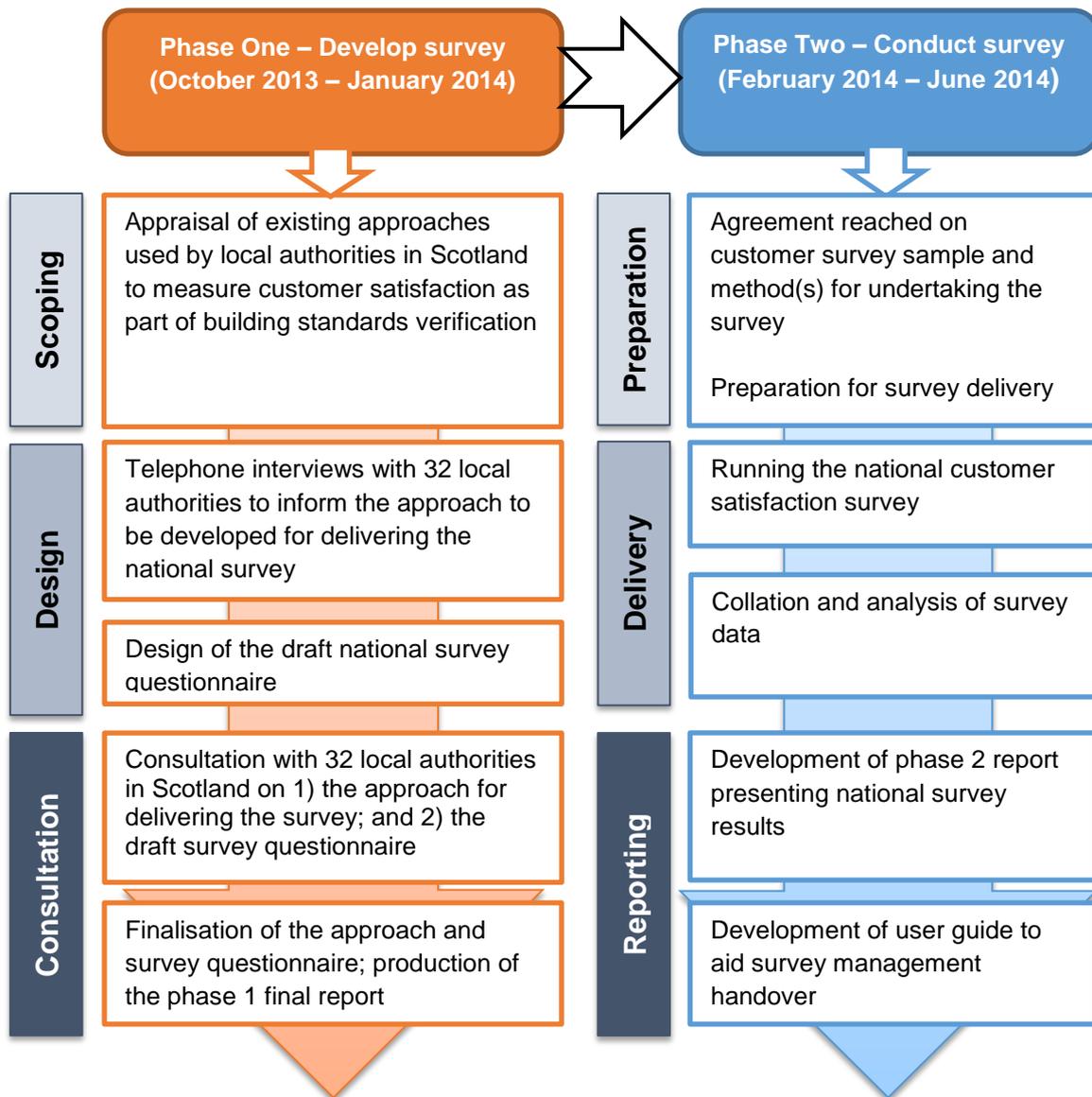
Phase 2 (February 2014 – June 2014): Conducting the initial survey and providing analysis and reporting:

1. Undertake the first national survey in April 2014;
2. Collate and analyse the results, and provide a report on the survey findings;
3. Undertake any adjustments to the survey tool/questions if required; and
4. Provide a post-survey report on the survey methodology for future years.

This report relates specifically to phase 2 (the phase 1 report is available separately).

1.3 Summary of approach

The diagram below summarises the methodology used to deliver the project.



1.4 Detailed approach

Following completion of phase 1, the survey was delivered using the following mechanisms:

Local authorities sought consent from their customers (via an opt-out process) to having their contact details passed to Pye Tait, who then coordinated the survey.

Rationale:

- Ensured national consistency in the survey delivery process;
- Enabled initial central collation of:
 - customer numbers – in order to ascertain the size of the ‘survey population’ across all 32 local authorities in Scotland;
 - email address records – in order to determine which local authorities are more and less likely to be represented in the customer survey;
- Permitted a ‘de-duplication’ exercise to be undertaken against customer names/email addresses so that the same customers would not be emailed multiple times (a risk if mailings were undertaken by individual local authorities);
- Minimised work for local authorities, i.e. by not asking them to undertake the survey mailing and reminders themselves.

The historic cut-off point for customers in scope of the first survey was set as 1st April 2013.

Rationale:

- Historic customers dating back over one year (at the time the survey was operational in April 2014) would be less likely to recall their experiences;
- The cost and administrative time required for local authorities to obtain consent for customers dating back further than one year was considered to be prohibitive; and
- The selected cut-off point provided a database of sufficient size to permit reasonable statistical accuracy at the analytical stage.

All customers within the agreed time-period were invited to participate in the survey, as opposed to a sample of customers.

Rationale:

- Telephone interviews with BSMs raised concerns that the volume of customer email address records might vary between local authorities, with the risk that this might already limit the potential reach of the survey;
- The potential variance in customer numbers between local authorities (particularly those with email addresses) would make the development of a sample strategy particularly difficult; and
- The survey needed to be as fully inclusive as possible.

For the purpose of the survey, customers were defined as:

- a. Applicants for building warrants (including any agents);**
- b. Submitters of completion certificates (including any agents); and**
- c. Other individuals and businesses that have interacted with the building standards service.**

Customers are therefore primarily property owners, developers and their agents.

Local authorities were only asked to supply Pye Tait with customer names and email addresses. They were not asked to supply application information relating to each customer, for example project types and fee income bands.

Rationale:

- Given the intention to survey 'all' customers rather than a stratified sample – application information was not needed to define a sample strategy;
- It would not have been feasible to pre-seed application information into the survey questionnaire responses as some customers may have submitted multiple applications of different types for more than one local authority;
- The survey questionnaire was used to establish the capacity in which a respondent had been a customer of a local authority (including application-related information).

The survey was hosted online and only customers with email addresses were directly invited to participate (although local authorities were at liberty to promote the survey link via other means, as appropriate).

Rationale:

- The cost and administrative time associated with printing, mailing and subsequently entering response data from hard copy paper questionnaires for customers of all 32 local authorities would render a postal survey cost-prohibitive;
- The potential resource burden for local authorities in terms of printing and issuing paper questionnaires would have been prohibitive based on the feedback received from the telephone interviews; and
- Response times are typically longer for postal surveys and this could have had a negative impact on the requirement for timely results and feedback;
- An online survey was considered to be more environmentally sustainable.

Pye Tait Consulting hosted the online survey and carried out all analysis using SNAP 11 survey software.

Further information on the background and rationale for the agreed approach to survey delivery is presented separately in the Phase 1 report.

2. Achieved Sample and Respondent Profile

2.1 Achieved Sample

A	<p>Number of customer email addresses supplied by local authorities to Pye Tait:</p> <p>Email addresses were supplied to Pye Tait from 31 of the 32 Scottish local authorities (East Lothian Council opted to undertake their own mailing for the survey).</p> <p>This number includes repeat email addresses supplied by more than one local authority.</p>	10,216
B	<p>Of these – number of customers invited to participate in the survey:</p> <p>This number follows a de-duplication of repeat email addresses supplied by multiple local authorities</p>	7,904
C	<p>Total survey responses for Scotland:</p> <p>Customers self-selected the local authority about which their feedback related and were invited to complete the survey more than once if they wished to provide feedback about more than one local authority</p>	1,444
D	<p>Response rate for Scotland (C as a percentage of B):</p>	18.3%

A breakdown of the achieved sample (including response rates) by local authority is provided in Table 1.

NB: The response rate for Scotland is not directly comparable with individual local authority response rates. This is because some respondents completed the survey more than once where they were customers of multiple local authorities and this is only reflected in Scotland's response rate.

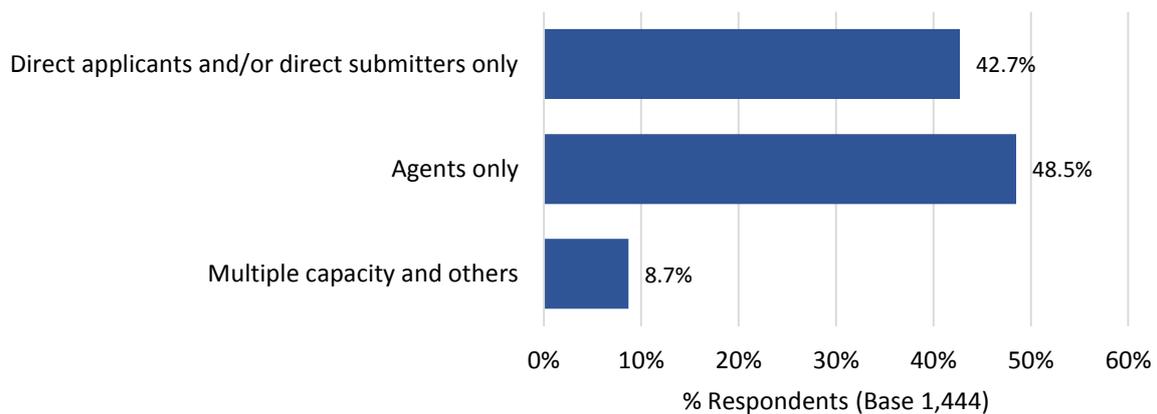
Table 1 Achieved sample by local authority

Local authority	A: Total email addresses supplied to Pye Tait (includes repeats, i.e. if the same emails were supplied by multiple LAs)	B: Total unique customers invited by Pye Tait to participate (excludes repeats, i.e. customers of multiple LAs)	C: Actual survey responses attributed to each local authority (selected by the customer)	D: Response rate: Actual responses (C) as a % of total email addresses supplied (A)
Aberdeen City	328	196	50	15.2%
Aberdeenshire	503	302	55	10.9%
Angus	180	113	31	17.2%
Argyll and Bute	519	376	77	14.8%
City of Edinburgh	369	252	110	29.8%
Clackmannanshire	141	82	13	9.2%
Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar	150	133	21	14.0%
Dumfries and Galloway	210	162	60	28.6%
Dundee City	207	139	22	10.6%
East Ayrshire	196	115	20	10.2%
East Dunbartonshire	678	343	49	7.2%
East Lothian	Own Mailing	Own Mailing	26	Own Mailing
East Renfrewshire	419	214	45	10.7%
Falkirk	203	102	23	11.3%
Fife	392	283	55	14.0%
Glasgow City	840	525	103	12.3%
Highland	937	787	164	17.5%
Inverclyde	84	45	5	6.0%
Midlothian	192	122	17	8.9%
Moray	313	210	48	15.3%
North Ayrshire	129	55	16	12.4%
North Lanarkshire	812	532	73	9.0%
Orkney	141	128	18	12.8%
Perth and Kinross	671	447	97	14.5%
Renfrewshire	24	10	12	50.0%
Scottish Borders	395	315	74	18.7%
Shetland	49	45	14	28.6%
South Ayrshire	187	110	14	7.5%
South Lanarkshire	298	174	51	17.1%
Stirling	225	123	34	15.1%
West Dunbartonshire	198	103	17	8.6%
West Lothian	226	122	30	13.3%
Customers of multiple local authorities	Included in above totals	1,239 (each counted once)	N/A	N/A

2.2 Respondent profile

Just under half of surveyed customers (43%) classified themselves as direct building warrant applicants and/or direct submitters of completion certificates. A similar proportion (49%) confirmed that they were agents, i.e. acting on behalf of applicants. A small minority (9%) defined themselves in multiple or other capacities (Figure 1).

Figure 1 Customer type⁴



Customers were asked to state the category (or categories) of work for which they had submitted an application. The majority (61%) of customers had submitted applications for domestic work only; 14% had submitted applications for non-domestic work only; and 25% had submitted applications for both domestic and non-domestic work.

Table 2 shows the profile of survey respondents by customer type and category of application.

Table 2 Customer type by category of application

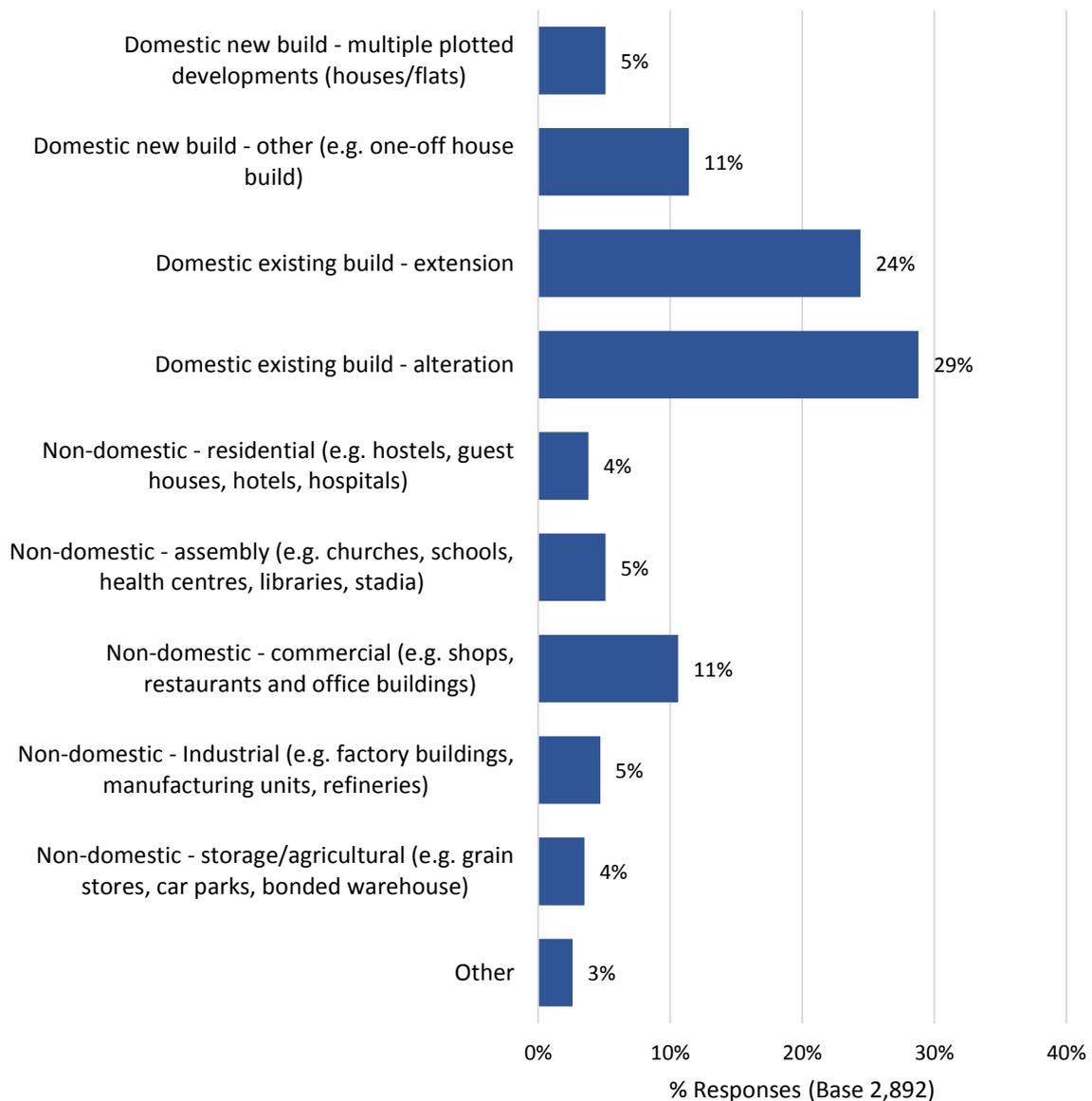
	Total	Direct applicants/ submitters only	Agents only	Multiple capacity and others
Base	1444	617	701	126
Domestic property applicants only	61%	84%	43%	53%
Non-domestic property applicants only	14%	10%	19%	9%
Domestic and non-domestic property applicants	25%	7%	38%	38%

⁴ Proportions in certain Figures and Tables may not add up to exactly 100% due to rounding.

The mix of work categories for which surveyed customers had applied, is shown in Figure 2. These categories are drawn from the building standards verification performance framework and used by local authorities for reporting purposes.

Applications relating to domestic existing builds (either alterations or extensions) account for the largest combined share (53%) of responses (Figure 2).

Figure 2 Categories of building work



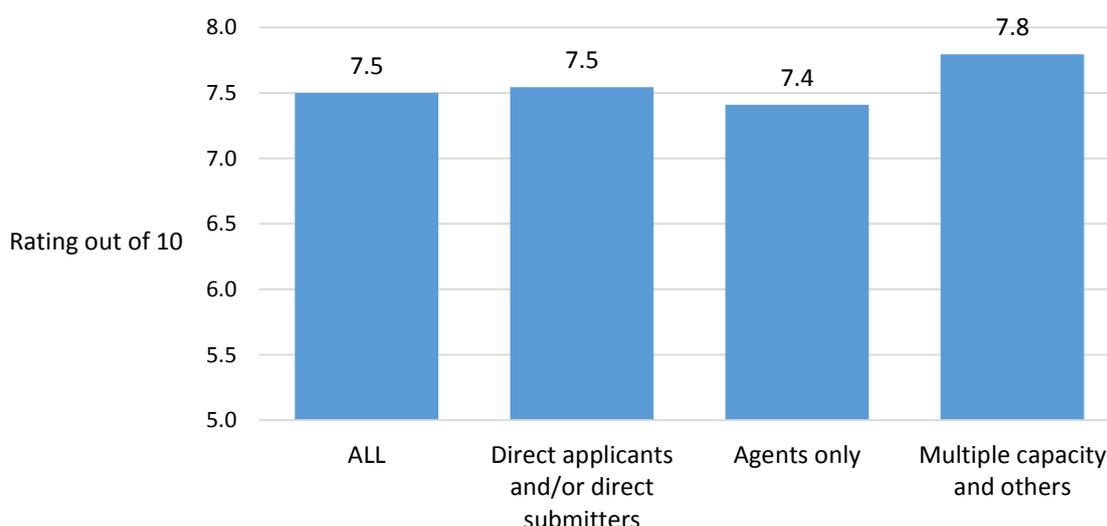
From this point forward the survey findings are presented for ‘all customers’ and, in some cases, cross-tabulated by customer type. It should be noted that the findings have not been subject to statistical tests to determine the significance of any apparent patterns and should therefore be treated as indicative.

3. Overall Satisfaction

Customers were asked to rate their overall satisfaction with the local authority building standards service on a scale from 1 'not at all satisfied' to 10 'completely satisfied'.

- On the whole, customers are generally satisfied, returning an average rating of 7.5 out of 10;
- The most common (modal) rating was the perfect mark of 10 out of 10;
- The overall ratings are virtually identical when analysed by customer type (Figure 3); and
- On average, applicants for 'domestic work only' are more satisfied with the overall service (scoring 7.6 out of 10) than applicants for 'non-domestic work only' (scoring 6.8 out of 10).

Figure 3 Overall satisfaction with the building standards service



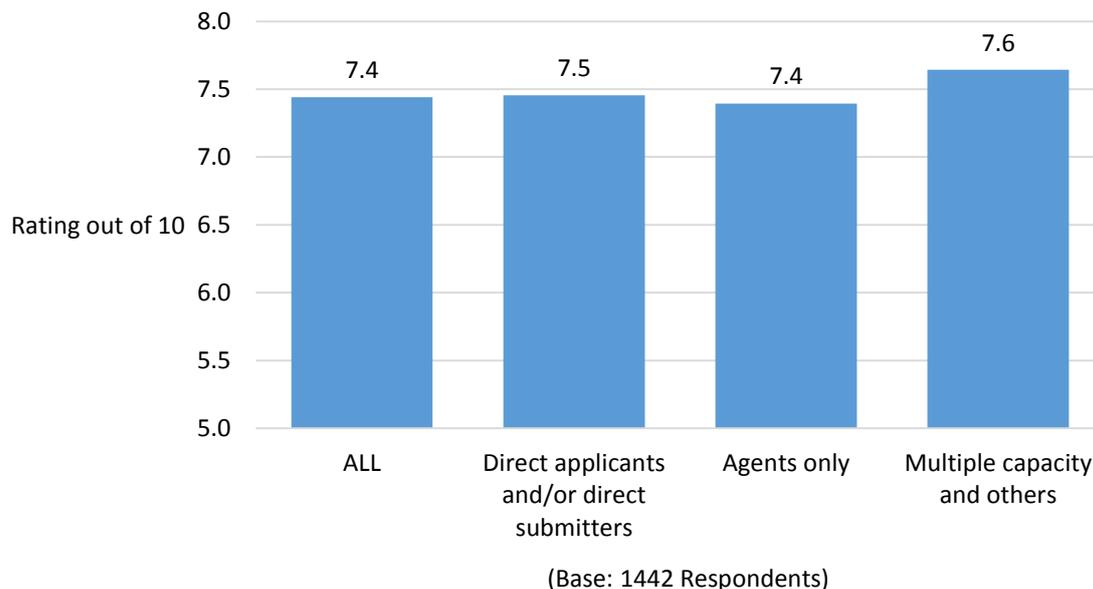
(Base: 1,428 Respondents)

4. Meeting Expectations

Customers rated the extent to which they felt the local authority building standards service had met their expectations, on a scale from 1 'not at all' to 10 'completely'.

- The service generally appears to have met expectations, with customers returning an average rating of 7.4 out of 10;
- The most common (modal) rating was the perfect mark of 10 out of 10;
- The overall ratings are virtually identical when analysed by customer type (Figure 4); and
- On average, applicants for 'domestic work only' believe the service met their expectations to a greater extent (scoring 7.5 out of 10) than applicants for 'non-domestic work only' (scoring 6.8 out of 10).

Figure 4 Extent to which service met expectations



Respondents were also asked to provide a reason for their rating. Analysis of this question involved ordering all responses to the rating question from highest to lowest score, then dividing them into approximate thirds by number of respondents:

- The 'top group' (353 respondents) gave a perfect rating of 10;
- The 'middle group' (570 respondents) gave a rating of 8 or 9; and

- The 'bottom group' (519 respondents) gave a rating between 1 and 7.

As the results were skewed to the high end of the scale, splitting the groups in this way for analysis enables one to differentiate between the higher and highest end of the scale (8 and 9 compared to 10). At the same time, these two groups can then be compared to the group of equal size who gave comparatively lower ratings of between 1 and 7.

Reasons for a rating 10 out of 10

The three most common reasons for customers providing a rating of 10 out of 10 include:

- Efficiency of verification;
- Quality of service; and
- Helpfulness of staff.

Compliments from customers about the speed and efficiency of the verification process are more common alongside ratings of 10 out of 10, compared to ratings of 8 or 9, suggesting that high levels of efficiency result in positive perceptions among customers and that the efficiency of service may be central to meeting customers' expectations to the fullest.

"Excellent assistance and personal service"

Direct applicant for a Building Warrant

"The applications have been dealt with very quickly and any questions posed to the Building Standards have been answered effectively"

Agent

Reasons for rating 8 or 9 out of 10

Among the explanations given for a rating of 8 or 9 out of 10, the two most common were that:

- Staff are helpful, for example by developing a good relationship with customers;
- Staff provide good service, for example some first time applicants are grateful for being guided through the various stages of application process;

and

- The service is efficient and prompt, for example response timescales and enquiry handling.

“Very helpful and to my experience they were always on time”

Agent

Issues raised by respondents providing ratings of 1 to 7 out of 10

The most common issues raised by these customers relate to the speed of application processing, with comments that the service can be slow, inconsistent, pedantic and bureaucratic.

“The application went through several iterations. The delay before each response was long and the responses were not particularly helpful”

Direct applicant for a Building Warrant

“Interactions have been totally unsatisfactory with little to no guidance, constant changes in requirements (resulting in additional costs) and lack of anything in writing confirming instructions”

Direct applicant for Building Warrant

Some issues were not specifically linked to service but more a result of policy, such as additional costs being imposed where modifications were requested by verification staff. Having said that, a small number of customers went on to express criticism about verification staff being seemingly unwilling to negotiate. Some respondents who gave the lowest ratings remarked that the advice received from verifiers had been contradictory during the application process, for example when dealing with different members of staff.

“Some building standard offices are more efficient than others, There is a lack of consistency between offices”

Agent

“Making contact with building standards surveyors can be difficult due to 'out-of-office' days”

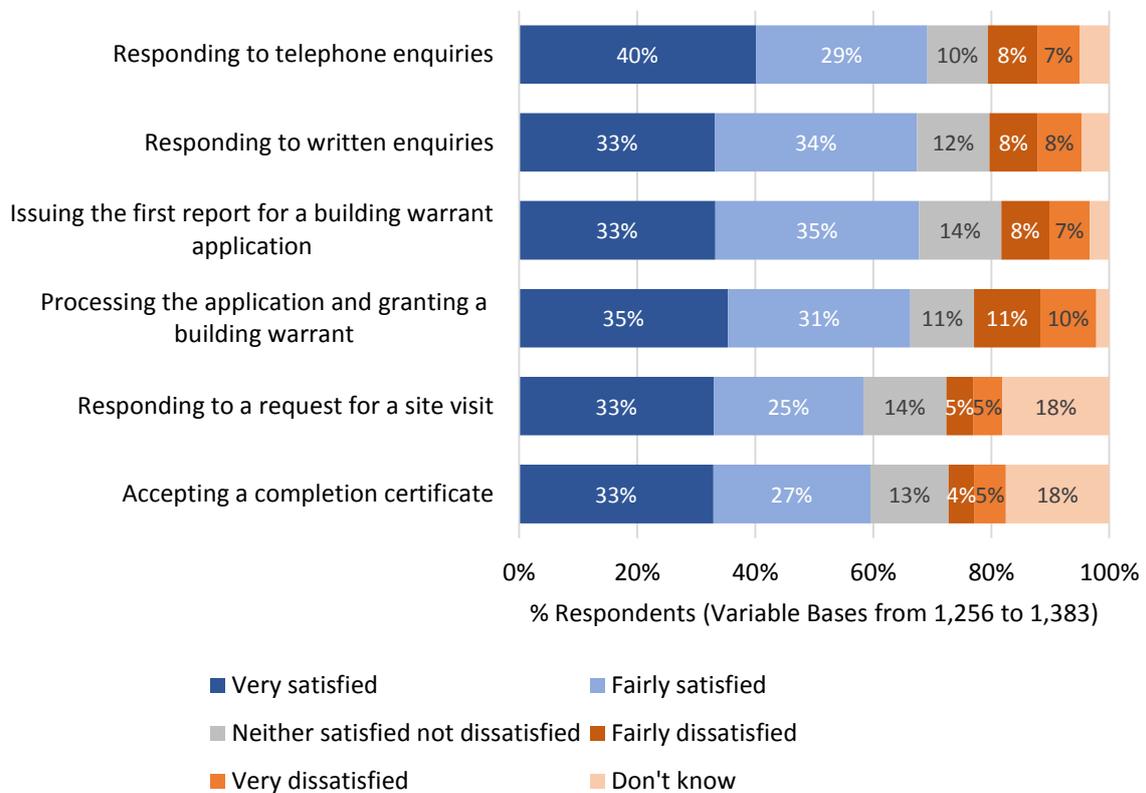
Agent applying for a Building Warrant

5. Timeliness and Keeping Customers Informed

5.1 Timeliness

On average, two thirds of customers (65%) are satisfied with the timeliness of various aspects of the service they received. Conversely, 15% of customers are dissatisfied, with the largest pocket of criticism relating to 'processing the application and granting a building warrant' (Figure 5).

Figure 5 Timeliness of service aspects (all customers)



Satisfaction levels with the timeliness of the service are slightly higher among direct applicants/submitters compared with agents for some of the aspects (Figures 6 and 7).

Figure 6 Timeliness of service aspects (direct applicants/submitters)

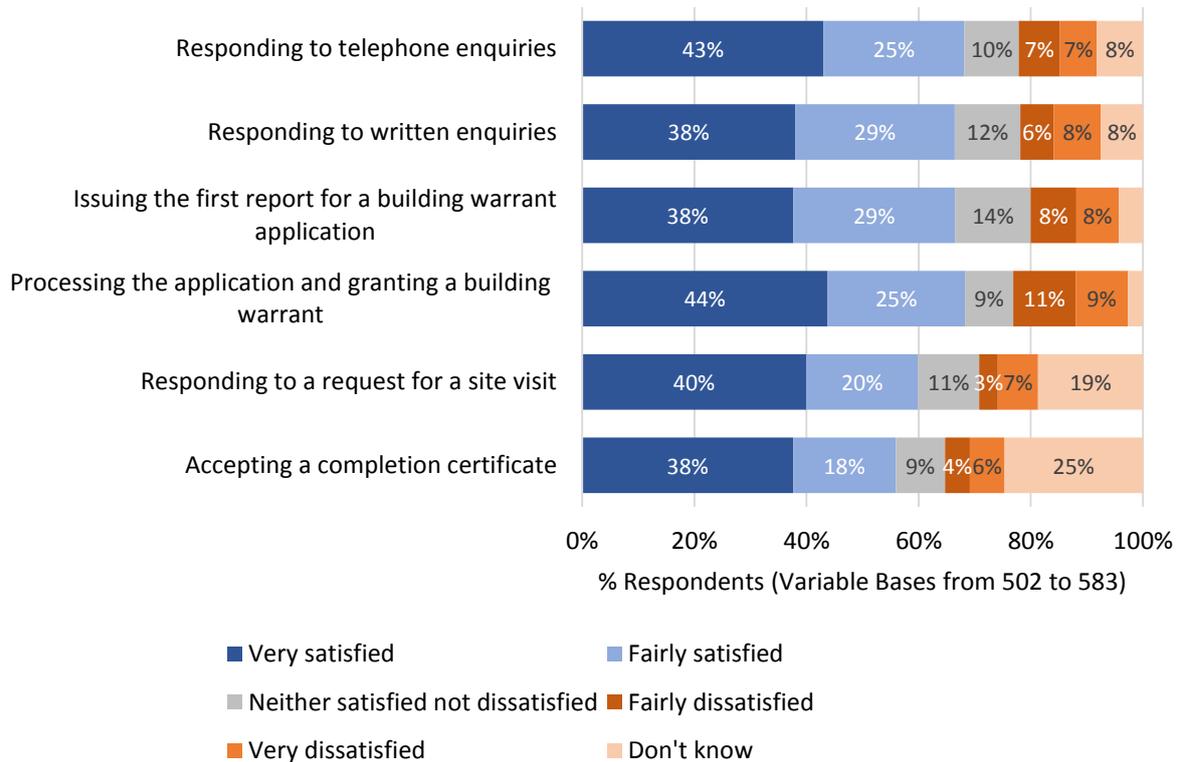
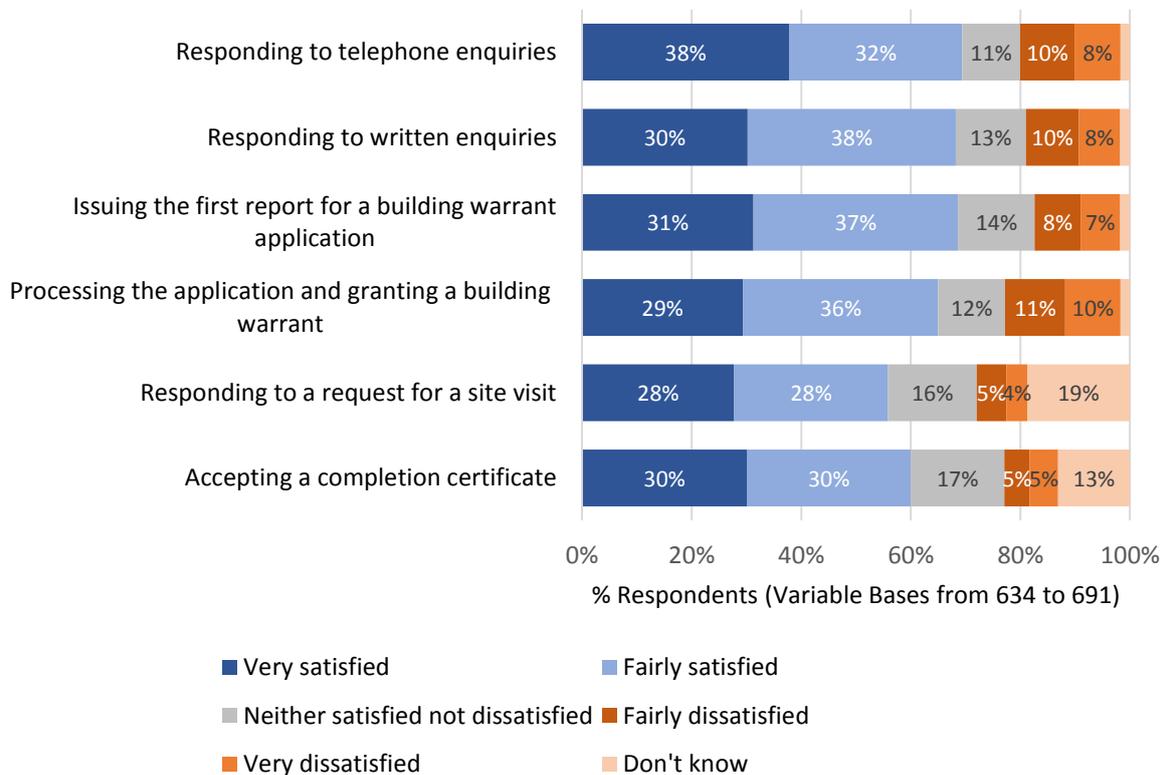


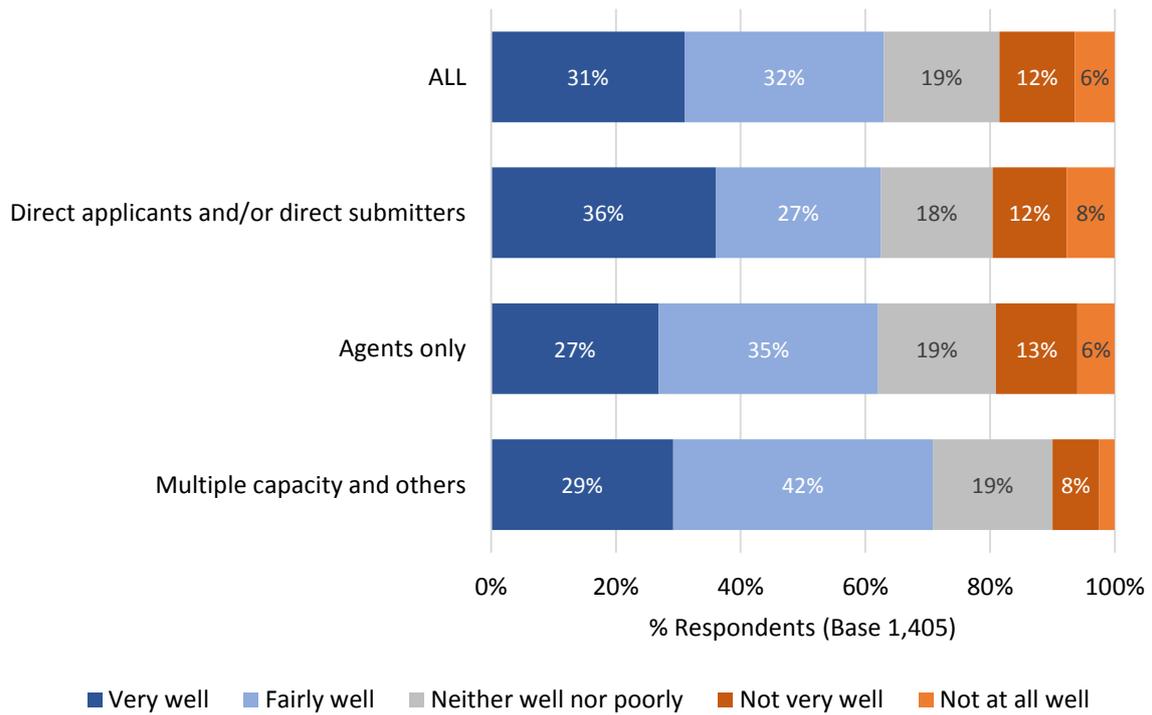
Figure 7 Timeliness of service (agents)



5.2 Keeping customers informed

Just below two thirds of customers (63%) believe they were kept well informed about the progress of their application or submission, with similar responses among the different customer types. Nonetheless, approximately one fifth (18%) of customers felt they were not kept well informed (Figure 8).

Figure 8 How well customers were kept informed

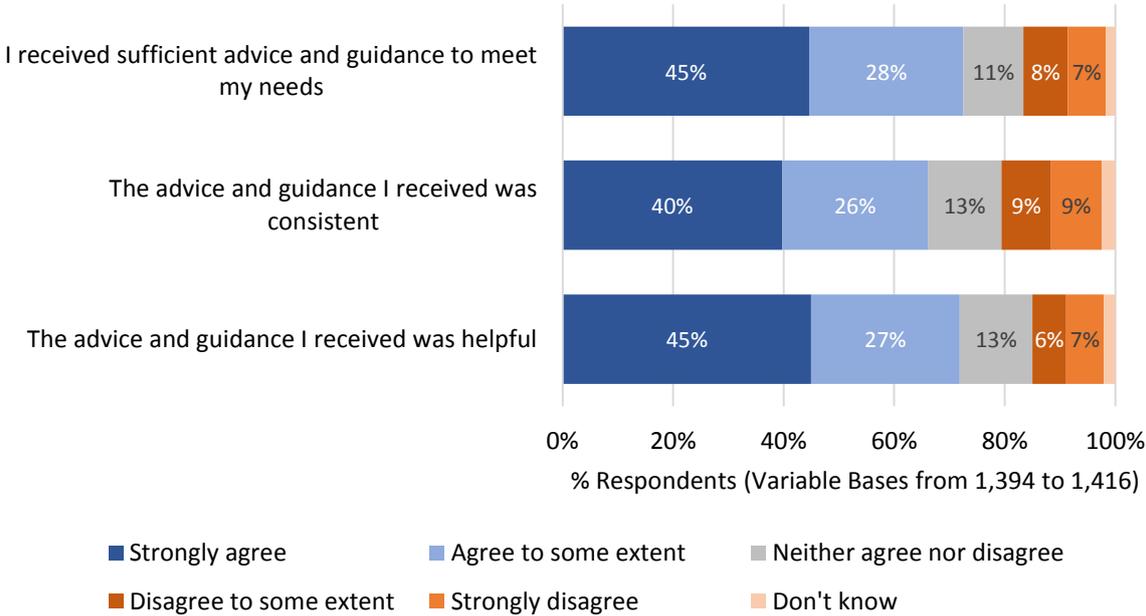


6. Quality of Service

6.1 Advice, guidance and staff service

Just under half of surveyed customers strongly agree that the advice and guidance received from the local authority building standards service met their needs and was consistent and helpful (Figure 9). The results follow an almost identical pattern among the different customer types (not shown for this reason).

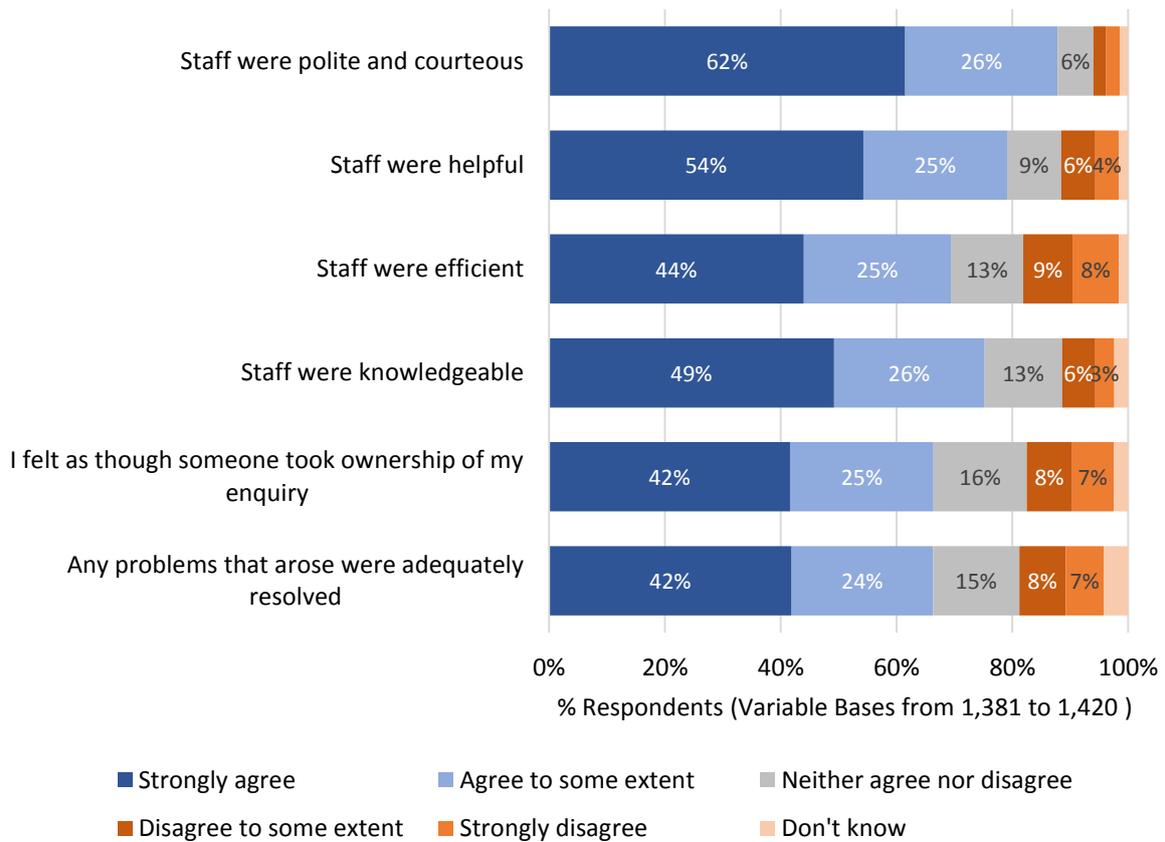
Figure 9 Quality of advice and guidance received



Approximately half of customers strongly agree that building standards staff are polite, courteous, helpful and knowledgeable. Pockets of criticism are more notable with respect to staff efficiency, problem solving abilities and willingness to take ownership of customer enquiries (Figure 10).

Again, the results follow an almost identical pattern among the different customer types.

Figure 10 Quality of staff service



Customers who strongly agreed or strongly disagreed with at least one of the above statements were asked to provide their reasons.

Among customers who stated 'strongly agree' to one or more of these statements, the most common adjectives used to describe staff included:

- Approachable;
- Courteous;
- Friendly;
- Forthcoming;
- Knowledgeable;
- Pleasant; and
- Polite.

A small number of respondents noted the ease with which they were able to make contact with the right people within the service.

Some agents (more so than applicants) consider the usefulness of advice to be the most important part of their interactions with verification staff.

Direct applicants offered particular praise for the promptness of responses from

verification staff and the clarity of explanations where required.

“Polite, very helpful service. Someone always available to take a call, to visit and to explain and follow through”

Direct applicant for a Building Warrant

“Being known to most of the surveyors they are usually very helpful on all questions. Surveyors not known to me are often less forthcoming”

Agent

In total, 170 respondents (12%) stated that they ‘strongly disagree’ with at least one of the listed statements about the service received from staff.

The most common reasons are that:

- Advice can be contradictory or of low quality;
- Communication processes are slow;
- Emails are not acknowledged quickly;
- Staff are difficult to contact; and
- Staff are unhelpful.

“The officer gave me the impression she did not understand the regulations as she kept referring me to a table and provided no advice what was wrong with my submission”

Agent

“The officer took an average of two weeks to respond to messages, emails or calls. Very unhappy with this service”

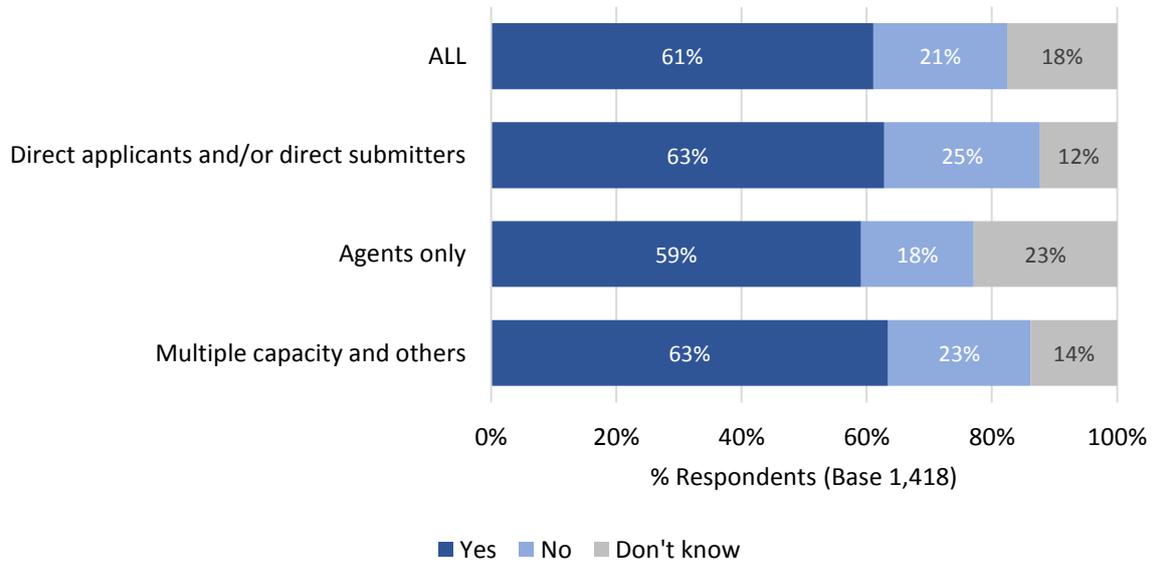
Direct applicant for a Building Warrant

6.2 Inspection visits

Just under two thirds of customers (61%) confirmed that an inspection visit was undertaken by building standards service staff. A fifth (21%) stated that an inspection didn’t take place and a further 18% didn’t know (Figure 11).

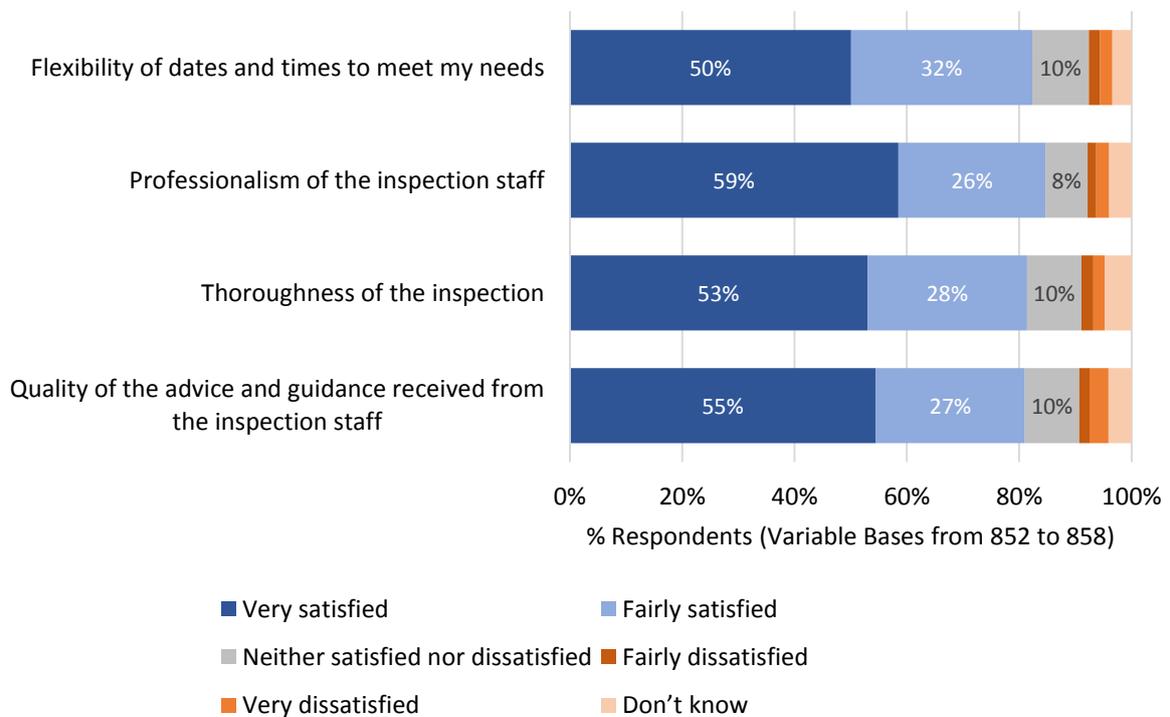
The results suggest that agents may be less likely to know whether an inspection has been carried out than direct applicants/submitters.

Figure 11 Whether an inspection was carried out by building standards service staff



Among customers who confirmed that an inspection visit had taken place, just over half were 'very satisfied' with various specific aspects of the visit, with only a small minority (less than 5%) dissatisfied (Figure 12).

Figure 12 Satisfaction with inspection visits (all respondents)



The charts below compare customer satisfaction with inspection visits between direct applicants/submitters (Figure 13) and agents (Figure 14). The findings suggest that direct applicants/submitters are more likely to be 'very satisfied' than agents.

Figure 13 Satisfaction with inspection visits (direct applicants/submitters)

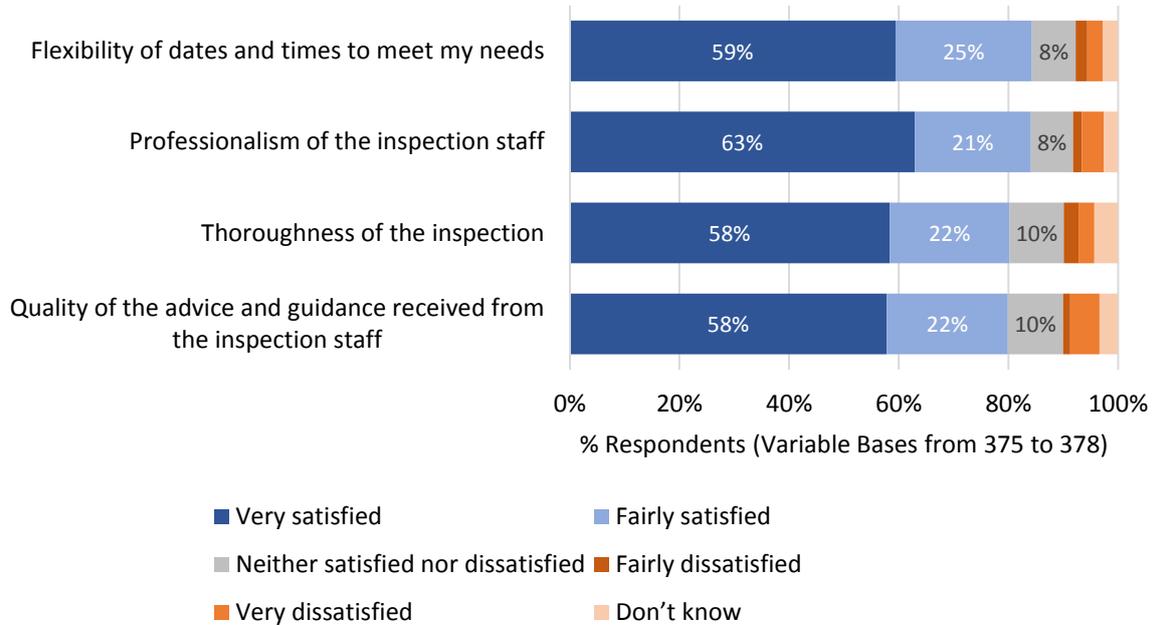
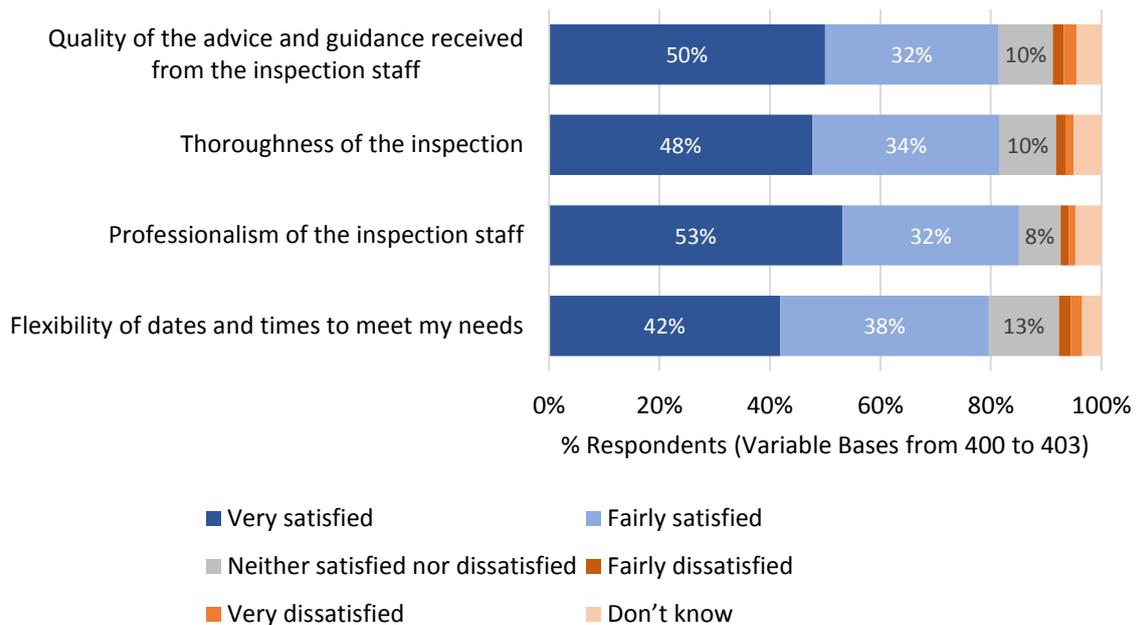


Figure 14 Satisfaction with inspection visits (agents)



6.3 Need to notify the building standards service

Almost all (98%) of customers stated that they were aware of the need to notify the building standards service prior to commencing warrantable work. This figure is marginally lower among direct applicants/submitters (97%) compared with agents (98%) and multiple capacity/other respondents (100%).

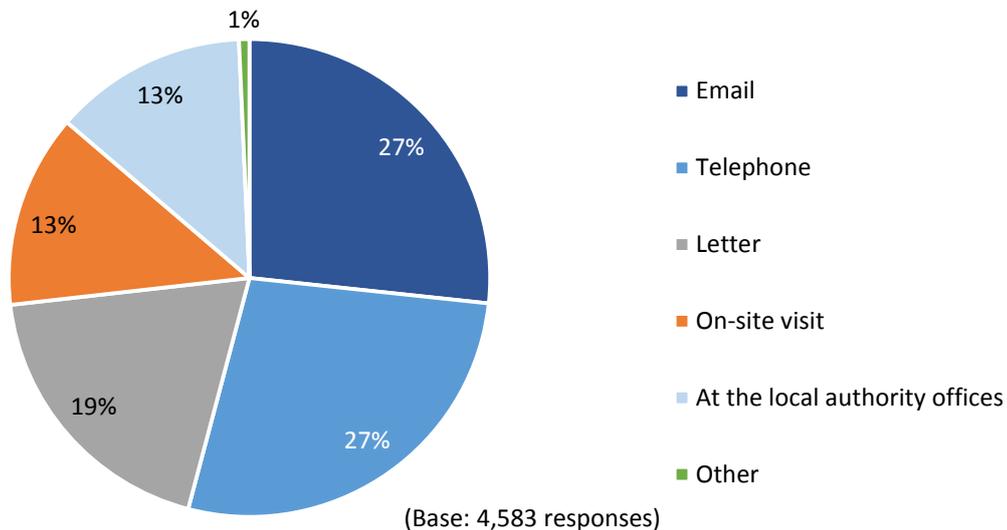
7. Communications

7.1 Channels of communication

Surveyed customers have interacted with local authority building standards using a variety of channels. Email and telephone communication are the most popular forms of communication (each accounting for 27% of responses) followed by hard-copy letters and on-site visits (Figure 15).

On average, customers cited having used 3.2 channels of communication and the proportional mix is almost identical across all customer types.

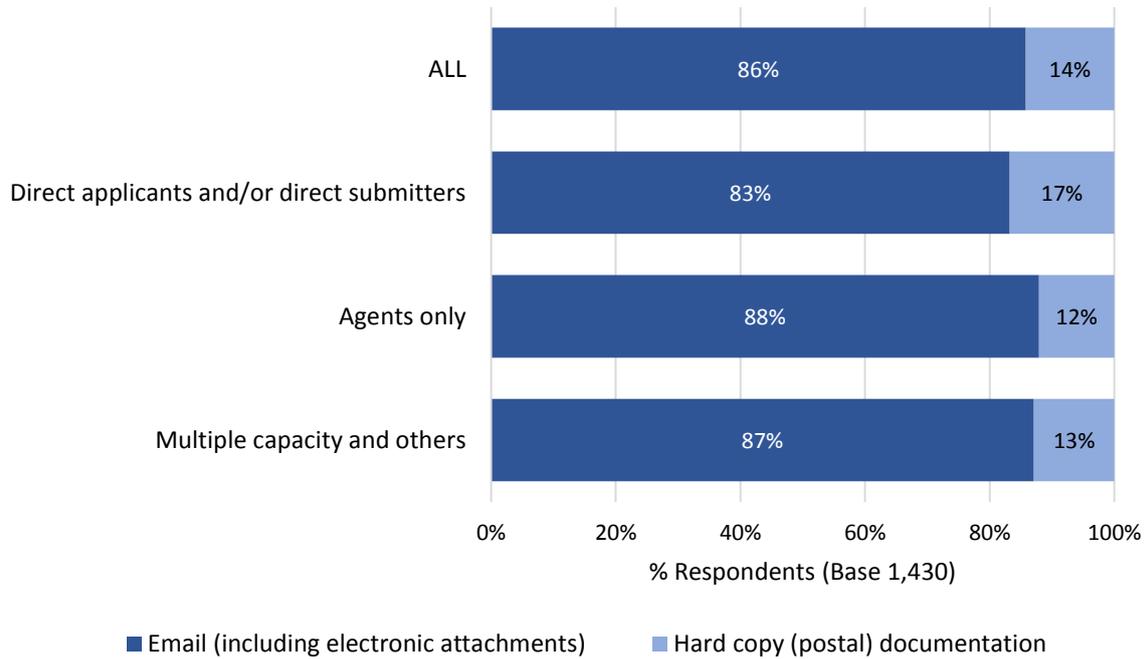
Figure 15 Channels of interaction



The 1% of responses classified as 'other' primarily stem from direct applicants/submitters who referenced interacting with the building standards service via an agent or architect.

Looking towards the future, the majority of customers (86%) would prefer to exchange written communication with building standards via email (including electronic attachments) rather than a postal arrangement. The results are almost identical across all customer types (Figure 16).

Figure 16 Preferred format for exchanging written information in the future

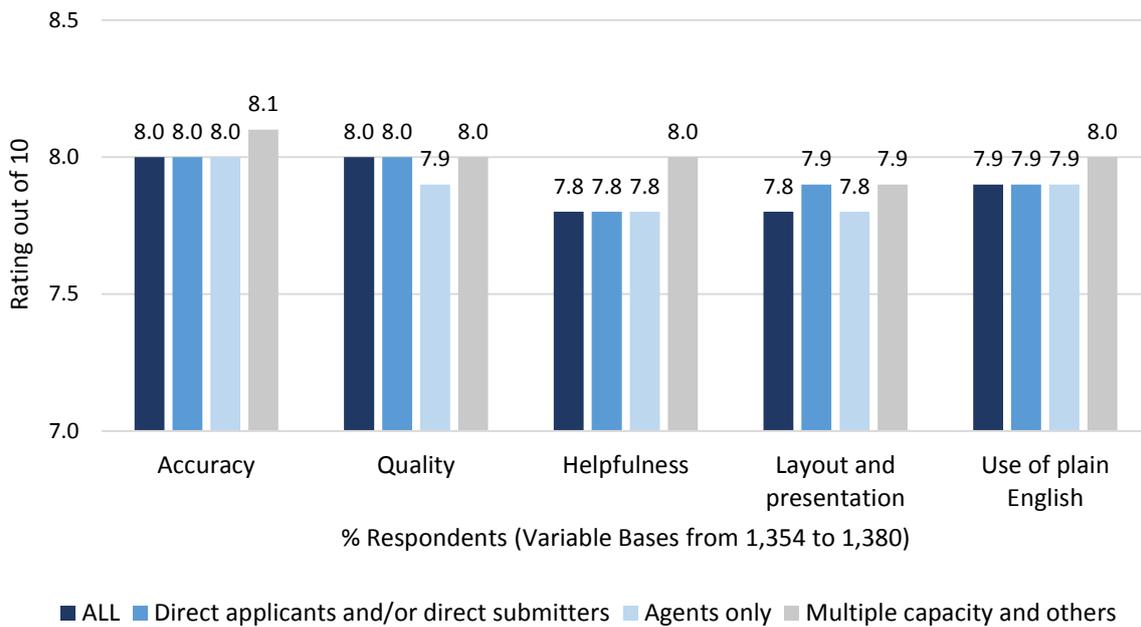


7.2 Written information and documentation

Customers were asked to rate the written information and documentation they received, against several criteria and on a scale from 1 'very poor' to 10 'very good' (Figure 17).

- The results are generally complimentary, with customers returning an average rating of 8 out of 10;
- The ratings are virtually identical across different customer groups; and
- The most common (modal) rating with respect to each criteria was the perfect mark of 10 out of 10.

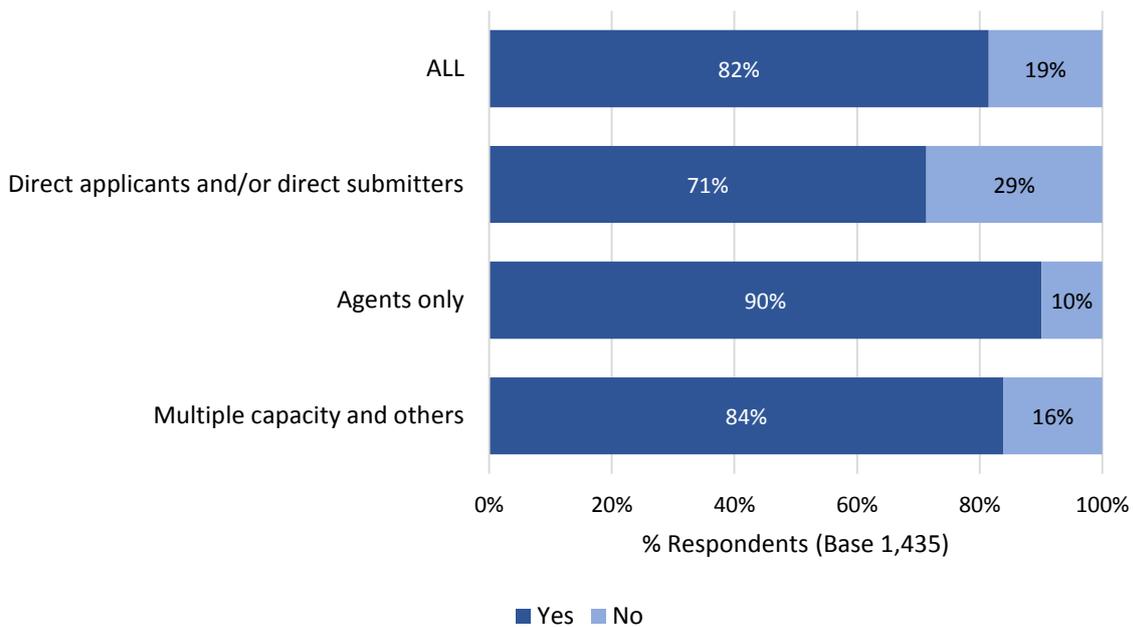
Figure 17 Quality of written information and documentation



7.3 Website information

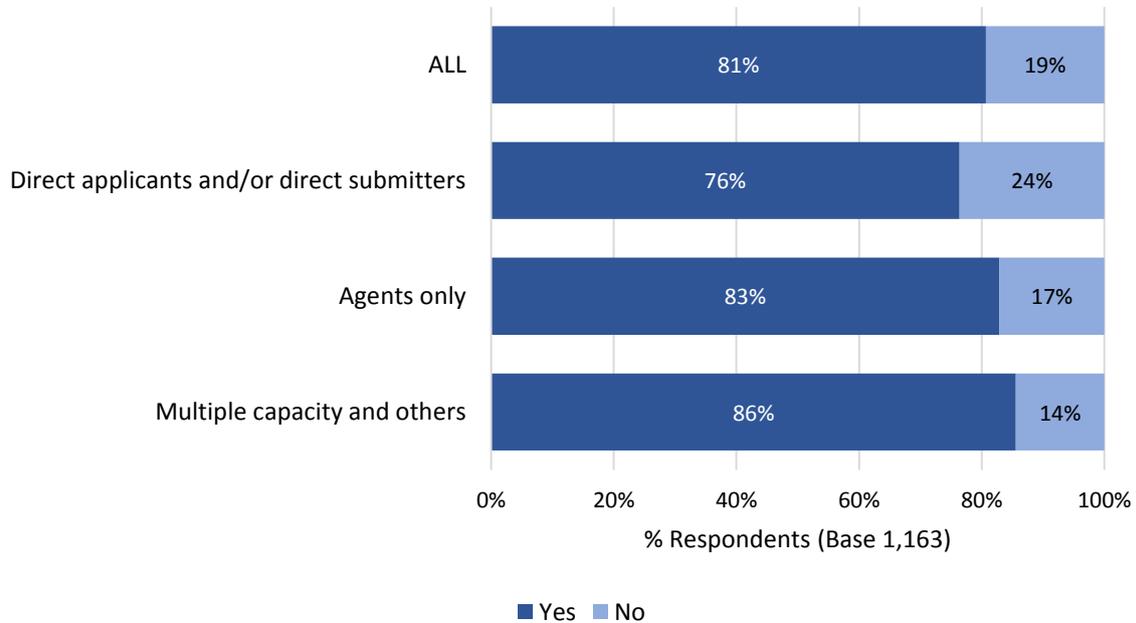
The majority (82%) of customers reported having visited the building standards section of their local authority’s website. This figure is noticeably higher among agents compared with direct applicants/submitters (Figure 18).

Figure 18 Whether visited the building standards section of the local authority website



Of those customers that had visited the website, 81% confirmed that they found the information they were looking for. This figure is slightly lower among direct applicants/submitters (Figure 19).

Figure 19 Whether found the information being looked for on the website



Customers were asked to describe how they felt the building standards section of the local authority website could be improved.

A common call among direct applicants and agents is for an improvement to the layout on the basis they can be difficult to navigate, seemingly unintuitive and not very user-friendly.

Direct applicants in particular feel that language and phrasing should be made easier to understand, along with the inclusion of more and better examples of how to ensure compliance for specific types of work.

“The Regulations and documentation required for an application should be explained in plain English. This would help ordinary house owners”

Direct applicant for a Building Warrant

Other suggestions:

- Introduce online applications;

- Present contact details together on an easily accessed webpage; and
- Improve the search function.

“Make it simple. Presently you can type in a topic in the search box and it may not come up with your requirement. In particular, trying to find historic drainage records is a nightmare unless you know exactly where to go”

Agent applying before and during construction

Several respondents remarked that the ePlanning website⁵ is a good model that could be used to develop the building standards sections of local authority websites.

“We need the ability to submit online, in a similar way to planning applications, and with online forms that can be completed and submitted to save time”

Agent

A list of desired features (ordered from most to least popular) include:

- Easier navigation to specific forms;
- Continuous updating of content;
- Separate content for frequent and infrequent customers;
- A clearer electronic payment system;
- A function to show the progress of applications;
- An index for the site;
- Better functionality with tablet and mobile devices;
- Information about the location of offices;
- More information about listed buildings;
- A list of warrants approved as well as warrants applied for;
- Access to previously approved drawings;

⁵ The Scottish Government, 2014. *Welcome to ePlanning Scotland*. [Online] Available at: <https://eplanning.scotland.gov.uk/WAM/>. [Accessed 02/06/2014].

- An online discussion or ‘help’ forum, including Live chat; and
- Better information about the sustainability awards.

7.4 Improving communications in the future

Customers were asked in what ways the local authority building standards service could improve its overall communications in the future. Customers primarily described barriers that need to be overcome and there are noticeable differences in the answers given by direct applicants and agents.

Applicants:

The primary concern among applicants is that verification staff can be hard to reach. Three specific issues raised are that:

- Staff can be slow to respond;
- It can be hard to make face-to-face contact with verification staff; and
- It takes too long to arrange and complete visits.

Another common concern is that discussions can sometimes be difficult to understand due to the use of technical terminology.

In addition, applicants frequently remarked that e-mail is not currently used as effectively or frequently as it could be, yet this could potentially speed up correspondence and offer a more convenient means of communication.

“Communications could be improved by responding more promptly to the initial application so that we know what further requirements you have. If there is a problem with the documentation, then contact us immediately before we then have to chase it and seek an explanation for the delay”

Direct applicant before and during construction

Agents:

The most common suggestions for improving communications (ordered from most to least cited) are that:

- E-mail communications should be used more extensively;

- Response times should be faster;
- There should be an electronic system for submitting documents and applications; and
- Regular electronic updates on the progress of applications would be useful.

Agents appear to be less concerned than applicants about matters of language and terminology, most likely due to more experience of coordinating similar types of work.

“It would be better to avoid the need to send full size paper copies of drawings. Emailing documents saves time and costs and also avoids the need for local authorities to scan documents themselves”

Agent applying for a Building Warrant

“Be more responsive to telephone calls, emails and requests to meet”

Agent applying for a Building Warrant

8. Accessibility

8.1 Making contact with the building standards service

Customers were asked to describe how easily they were able to make contact with the local authority building standards service.

A total of 447 customers replied to this question and approximately two thirds provided positive comments, commonly that:

- Staff are generally on-hand and available to answer any questions;
- A direct number is given out by the relevant member of staff;
- It is easy to locate contact details;
- The speed of response to messages or e-mails is swift; and
- It is a benefit to have the office based locally, i.e. as part of the local authority.

“The phone is always answered, even if not by whom I am looking for. My enquiry is dealt with there and then or the person I wanted to speak to will call back as soon as he is available”

Agent

Some customers appear to have had less positive experiences, with negative comments including:

- Not hearing back from staff after leaving a message or sending an e-mail; and
- Staff appearing to be out of the office for too much time (a more commonly cited issue among agents than direct applicants).

“Staff are not always available. Understandably there will be times out on site, but to have no back-up or second person is inconvenient”

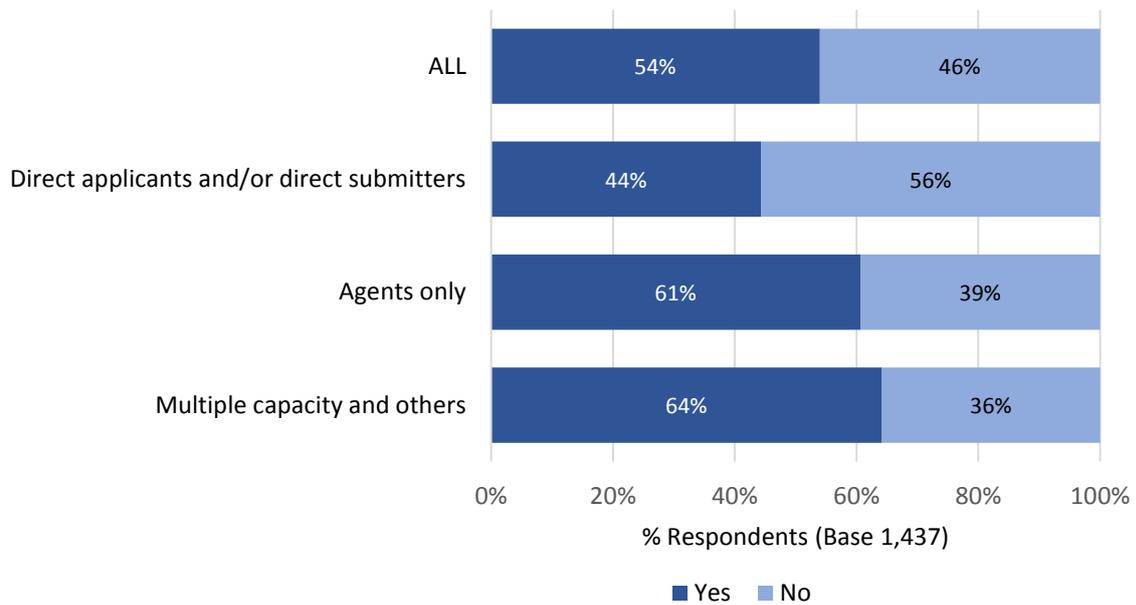
Agent

8.2 Visiting the offices of the building standards service

Just over half of customers (54%) reported having visited the offices of their local authority building standards service (Figure 20).

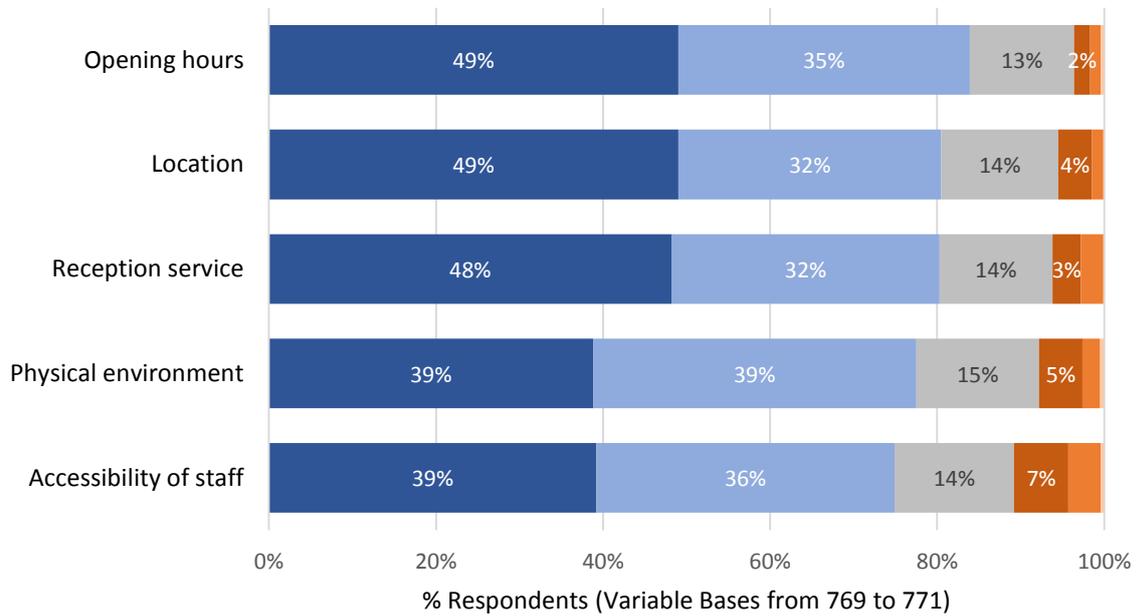
The figure is notably lower among direct applicants/submitters (44%) compared with agents (61%).

Figure 20 Whether visited the offices of the local authority building standards service



Customers who had visited the offices are generally satisfied with various specific aspects of the visit although less than half consider themselves to be 'very satisfied' (Figure 21).

Figure 21 Satisfaction with specific aspects of the building standards service offices



- Very satisfied
- Fairly satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Fairly dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied
- Don't know

9. Conclusions and Findings

9.1 Conclusions

The first national survey of building standards customers in Scotland has achieved a respectable response rate of 18% and has successfully captured the views of different types of customers served by all 32 local authorities in Scotland.

Customers are generally satisfied with the service they have received and the overall satisfaction rating is 7.5 out of 10. Satisfaction levels are very similar between direct applicants and agents, although applicants tend to have slightly more favourable perceptions.

The findings in Appendix 1 (comparisons by size of local authority) suggest that customers of the largest local authorities appear less likely to be very satisfied with various aspects of the service than customers of smaller local authorities. This is particularly the case concerning matters of timeliness.

Analysis of customer comments and feedback reveals that perceptions and experiences in relation to common areas such as speed of service and efficiency of staff are highly variable. This suggests that local authorities may not be providing high quality service on a consistent basis and/or that some local authorities are delivering better customer service than others.

Inconsistent levels of service may be partly attributable to the absence of nationally agreed and measurable customer service benchmarks prior to the establishment of the new performance framework (which is still in its relative infancy). Indeed the findings from phase 1 of this research (development of the survey) revealed disparities in the methods used and extent to which individual local authorities individually measure, monitor and review customer service delivery at a local level⁶.

What is clear is that customers value an efficient service by friendly and knowledgeable staff. It is important to customers that contact points within the service (or their nominated representatives) are available to respond to queries and that any issues associated with applications should be flagged up swiftly. Where these ingredients have come together, customers appear to be more satisfied, while others have pinpointed these missing factors as being a cause of dissatisfaction.

Looking towards the future, customers demand a 21st century building standards service with the ability to submit and progress applications, and to communicate and interact with verifiers, electronically, rather than necessarily via hard copy documentation. This is important to customers in the interests of convenience, efficiency and with a view to shortening application processing timescales.

⁶ Cf. The Phase 1 report for further information about approaches used by individual local authority building standards services to measure customer satisfaction.

9.2 Findings

As this is a national survey report, the following findings are for the Scottish Government (Building Standards Division) to consider taking forward in conjunction with local authorities.

Any decisions about specific mechanisms for improving customer service need to be considered in relation to local authorities' individual customer service scores (specific strengths and weaknesses), their unit resources, capabilities and business priorities.

Specific findings:

1. The results at local authority and consortium level (reported separately) as well as groupings by size of local authority (Appendix 1) enable:
 - a. comparisons to be made with the national picture to pinpoint where customer service performance is relatively strong or weak;
 - b. individual local authorities and consortium groups to determine what action to take;
2. The results allow core indicators to be defined for customer satisfaction that will provide a baseline for future performance measurement and continuous improvement;
3. The results allow Scottish Government, Local Authority Building Standards Scotland (LABSS) and Building Standards Managers (BSMs) to:
 - a. consider national and local customer service performance benchmarks against which future performance can be measured;
 - b. stimulate and encourage dialogue about customer service performance, with a view to sharing good practice, identifying and prioritising issues to be overcome and developing action plans, as appropriate;
 - c. discuss what impact the first national survey is expected to have on existing local customer service monitoring activities, for example whether these may need to continue, reduce, change in nature, or cease;
4. Core indicators (including latest scores against target benchmarks) could be embedded within the national performance framework returns and/or within the Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP) template;

5. The report supports the move towards a national 'e-building standards' service that responds to customer expectations by improving efficiency of communications, application processing and response timescales;
6. Referring to the Phase 1 report (Section 6 'Summary and Forward Planning' and Appendices), this report helps to inform decision-making on the preferred approach for delivering the next national customer survey, with particular consideration to the following:
 - a. If the next survey is to be owned and run by the Scottish Government (with or without the expertise of a third party consultancy), this could make establishing the national position easier than if responsibility for the survey is placed with local authorities;
 - b. Contracting of a reputable third party will ensure a fully impartial and nationally consistent survey, using professional software and intelligent mailing systems. This approach would require local authorities to continue running the opt-out process to enable sharing of contacts with the appointed third party;
 - c. If responsibility for conducting the survey is placed in the hands of local authorities, this would negate the need for a preliminary opt-out process (i.e. contacts will not be shared outside of the local authority) but may necessitate survey software expenditure, staff training and resource planning to ensure a successful and nationally consistent approach to delivery. However this could impact on establishing the national picture.
7. Local authorities should be capturing and recording customer email addresses to better enable electronic communications in the future, and to provide a larger potential sample size for future national surveys;
8. Local authorities should ensure they are providing customers with the opportunity to opt out of future national survey mailings (for example by placing Privacy Notices on application forms) and that the latest consent status provided by each customer is recorded by the local authority using a suitable local system;
9. Consideration should be given to what additional IT requirements would be needed to support a resource-efficient opt-out recording process within local authorities, for example electronic form scanning and automatic updating of customer contact preferences.

Appendix 1: Analysis by Size of Local Authority

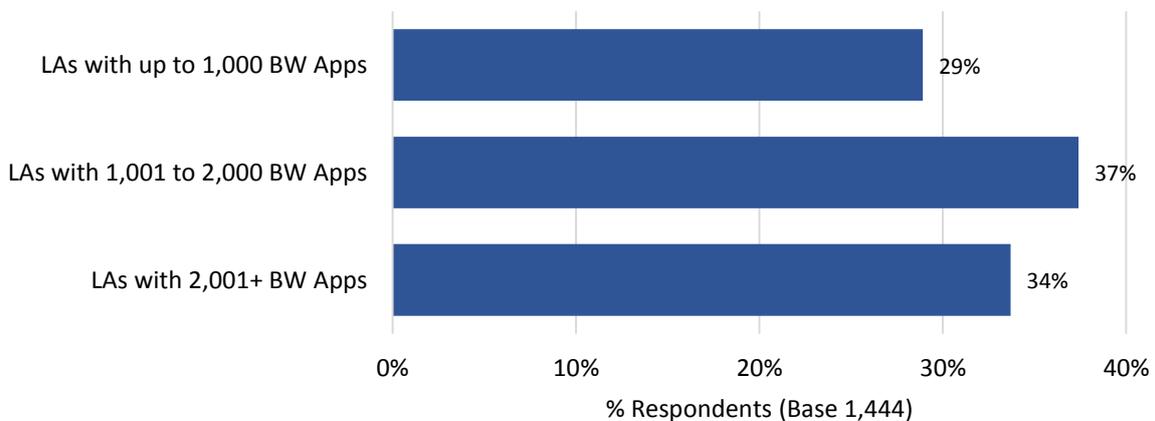
The charts in this section present the main survey data according to the size of the local authority.

In this context, size is defined as the number of building warrant applications made by customers within the 2011-2012 financial year.

Three size bandings have been derived, as follows:

Small - Up to 1,000 applications	Medium - 1,001 to 2,000 applications	Large - 2,001+ applications
Angus Clackmannanshire Comhairle nan Eilean Siar Dundee City East Ayrshire East Dunbartonshire East Lothian East Renfrewshire Falkirk Inverclyde Midlothian Moray Orkney Shetland Islands South Ayrshire Stirling West Dunbartonshire	Aberdeen City Argyll & Bute Dumfries & Galloway North Ayrshire North Lanarkshire Perth & Kinross Renfrewshire Scottish Borders South Lanarkshire West Lothian	Aberdeenshire City of Edinburgh Fife Glasgow City Highland

Figure A1.1 Total respondents



OVERALL SATISFACTION AND MEETING EXPECTATIONS

Figure A1.2 Overall satisfaction with the building standards service

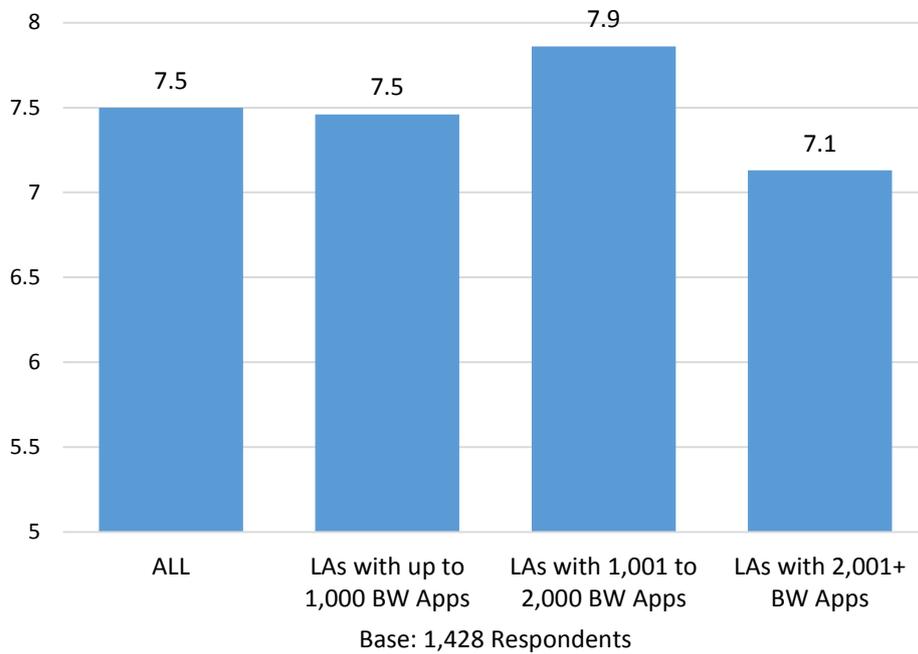
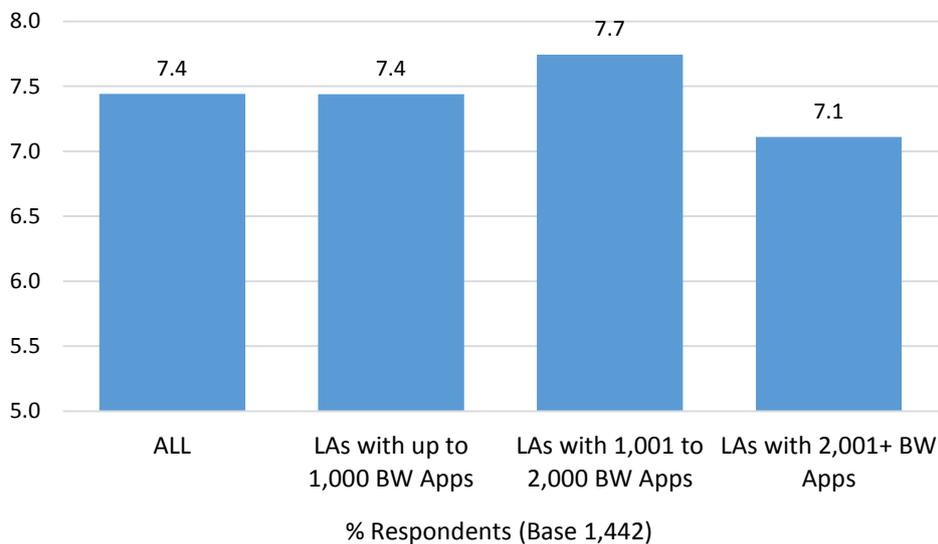


Figure A1.3 Extent to which the service met expectations



TIMELINESS

Figure A1.4 Responding to telephone enquiries

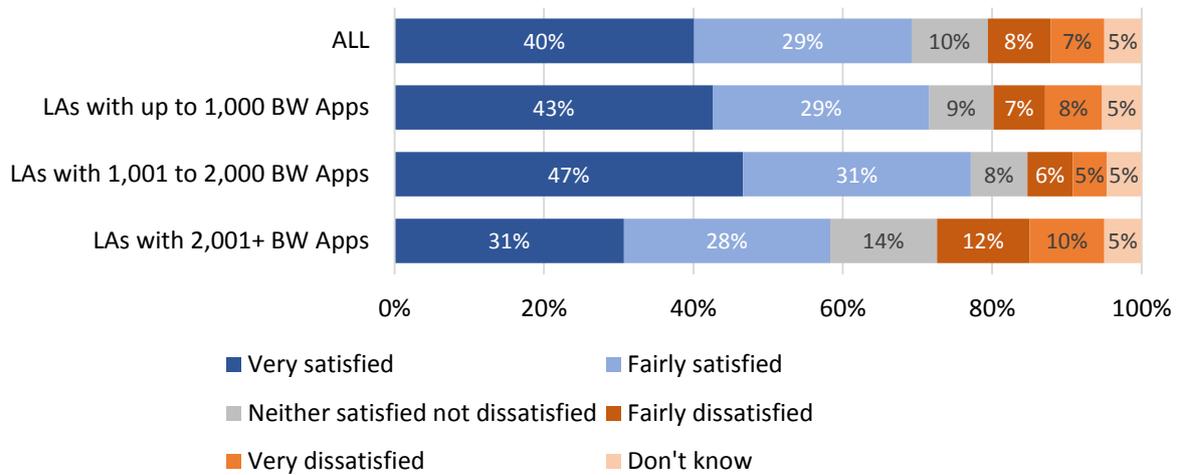


Figure A1.5 Responding to written enquiries

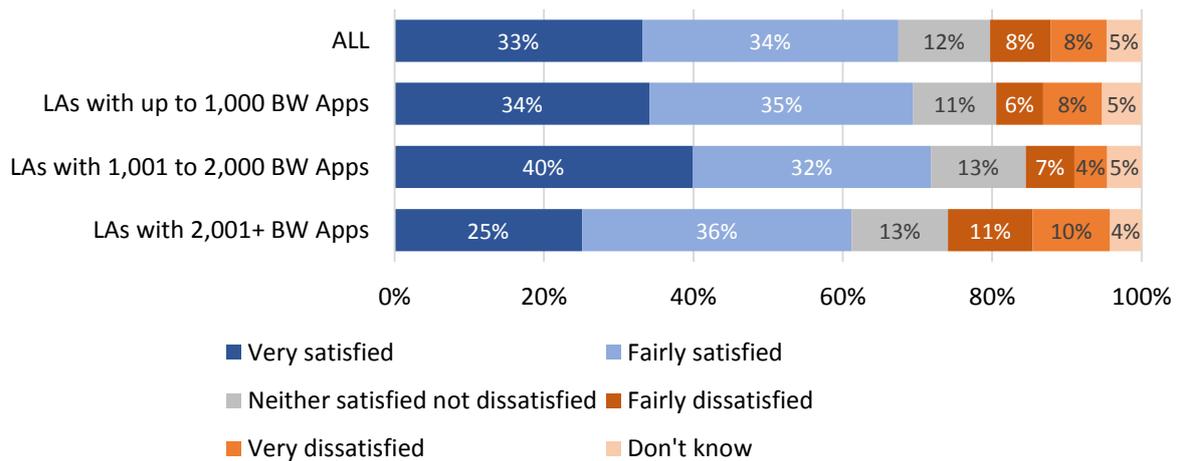


Figure A1.6 Issuing the first report for a building warrant application

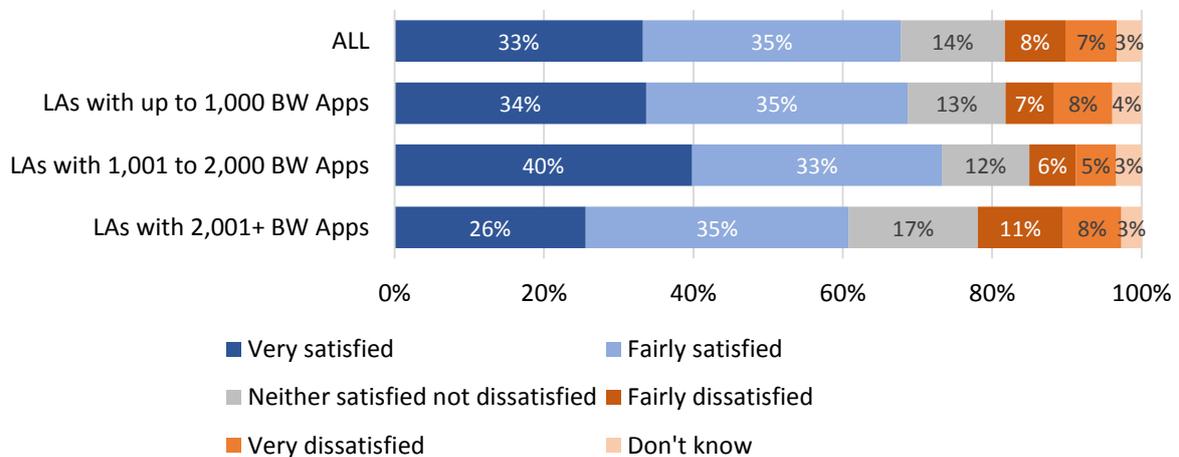


Figure A1.7 Processing the application and granting a building warrant

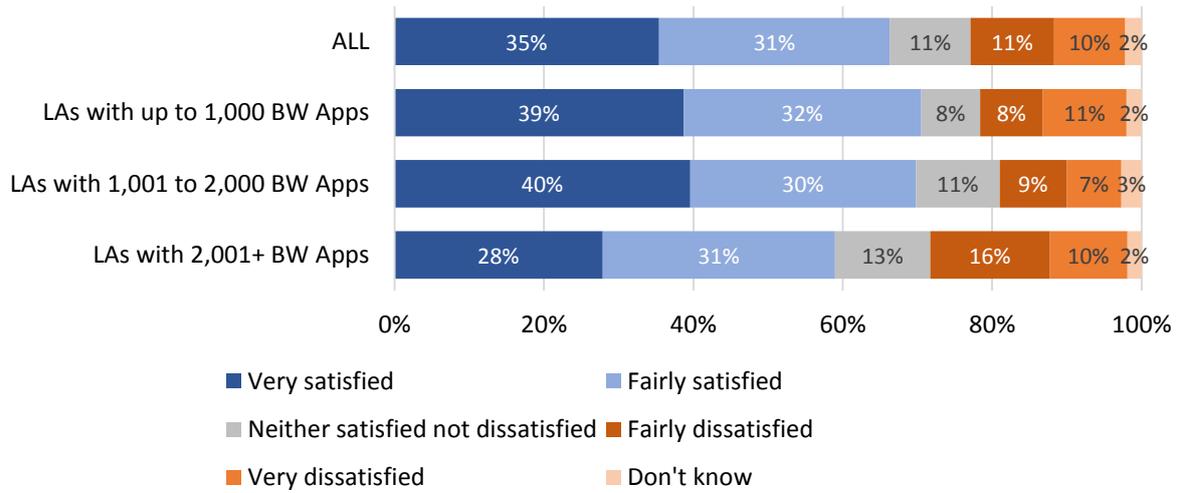


Figure A1.8 Responding a request for a site visit

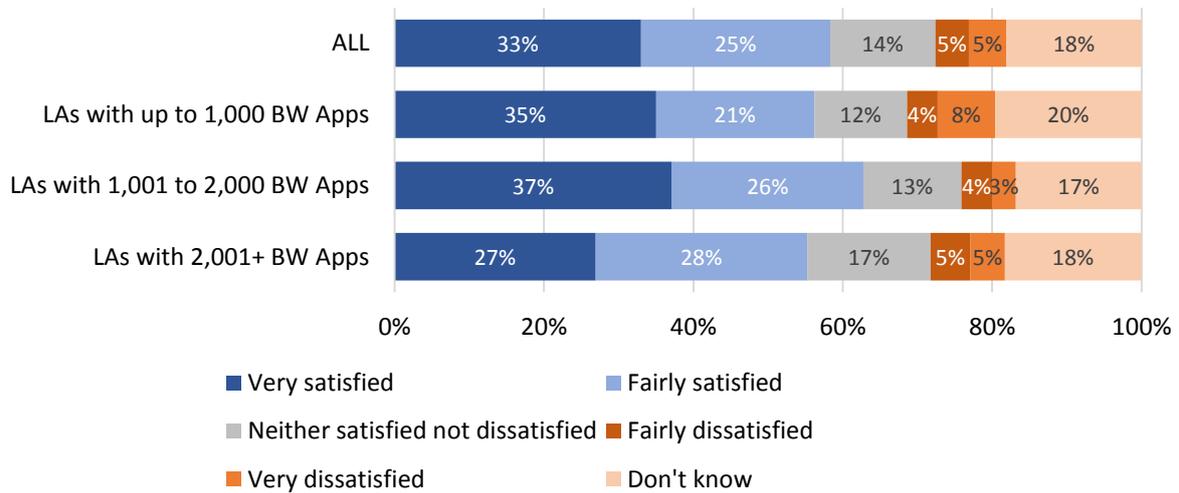


Figure A1.9 Accepting a completion certificate

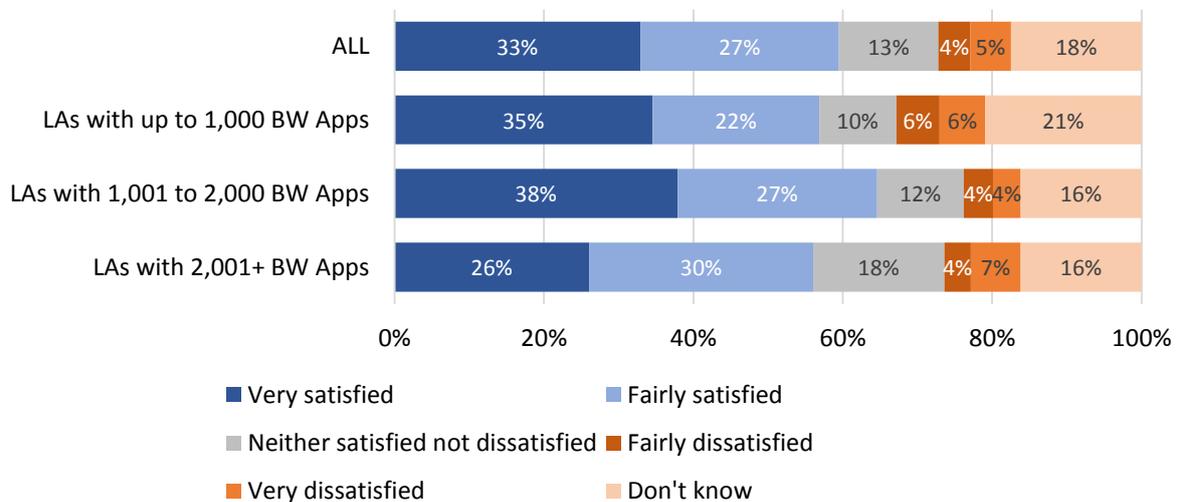
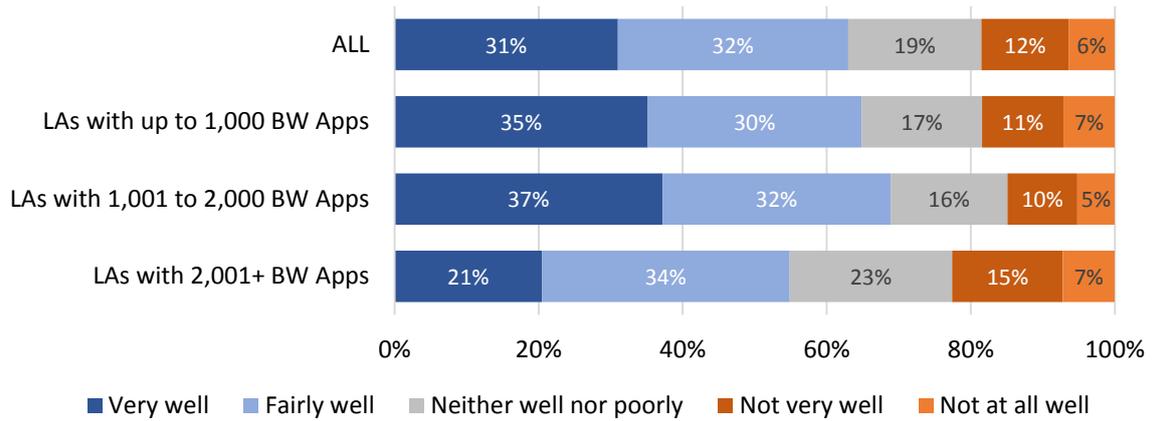


Figure A1.10 How well customers were kept informed



ADVICE AND GUIDANCE

Figure A1.11 I received sufficient advice and guidance to meet my needs

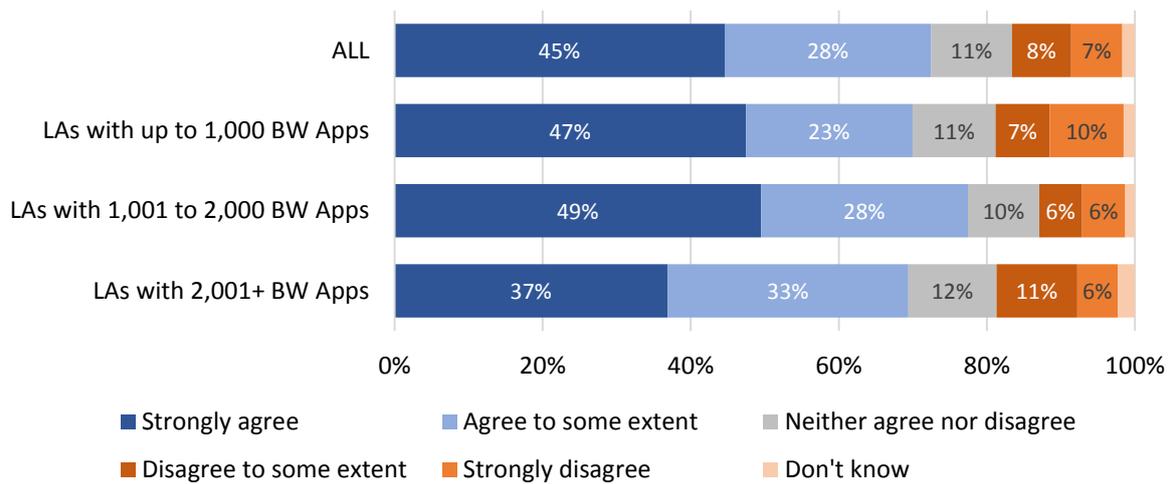


Figure A1.12 The advice and guidance I received was consistent

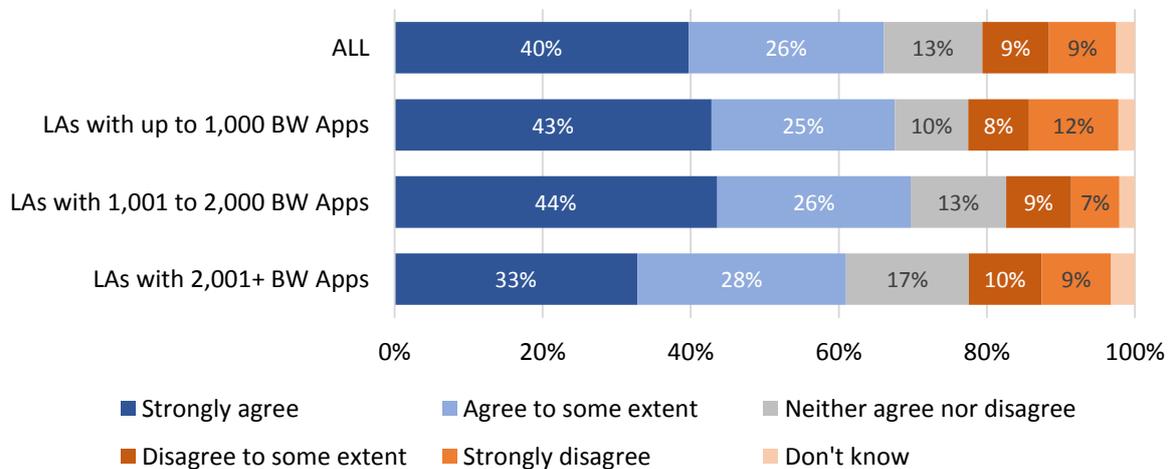
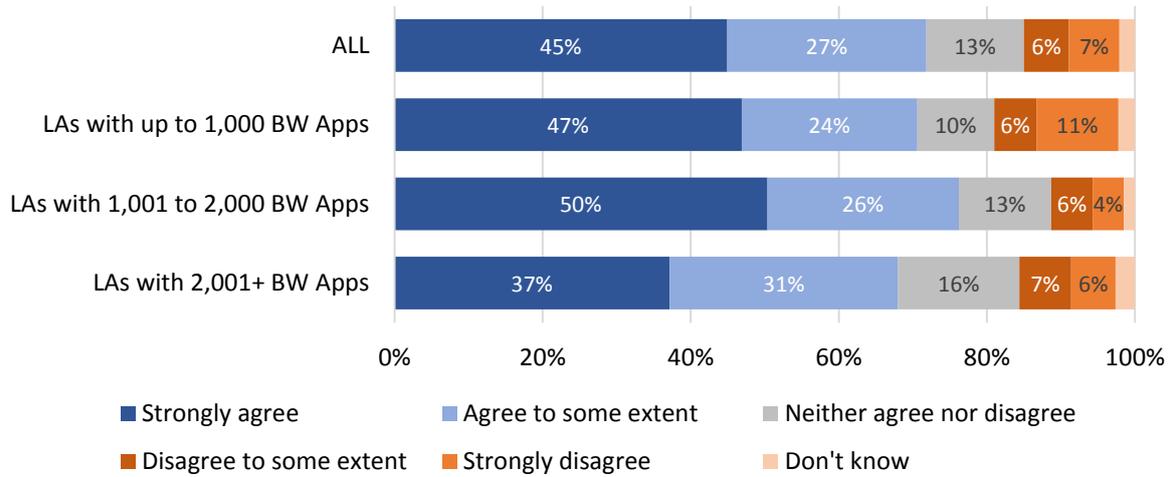


Figure A1.13 The advice and guidance I received was helpful



QUALITY OF SERVICE

Figure A1.14 Staff were polite and courteous

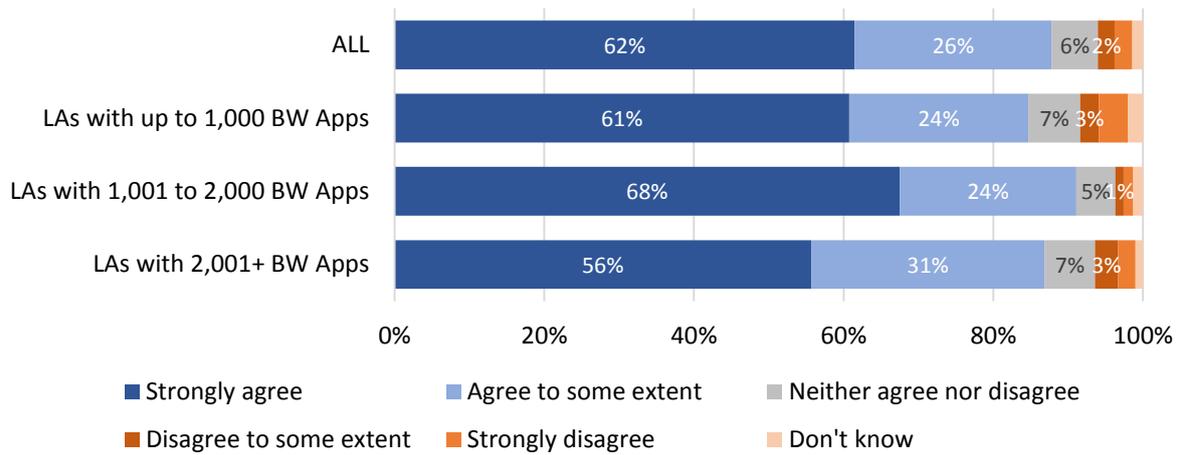


Figure A1.15 Staff were helpful

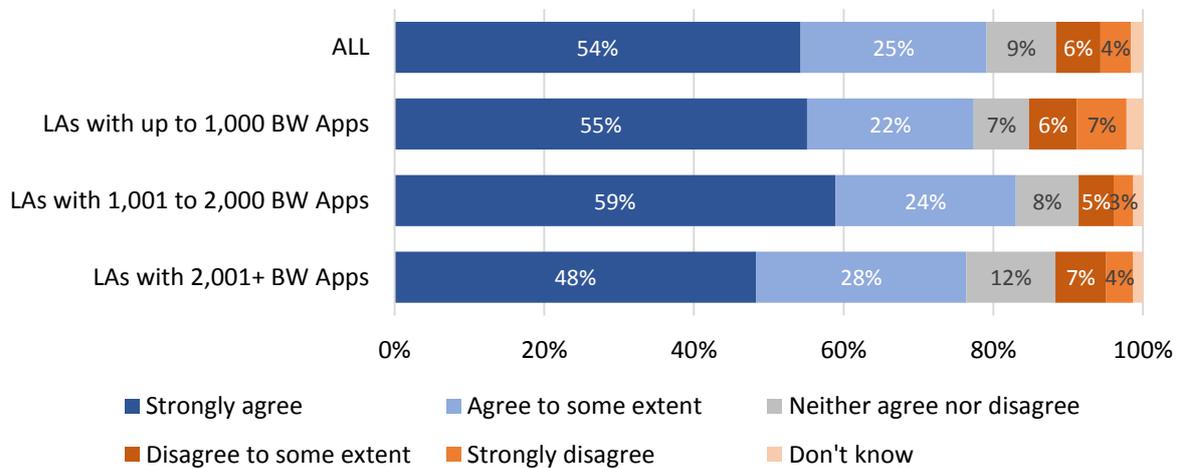


Figure A1.16 Staff were efficient

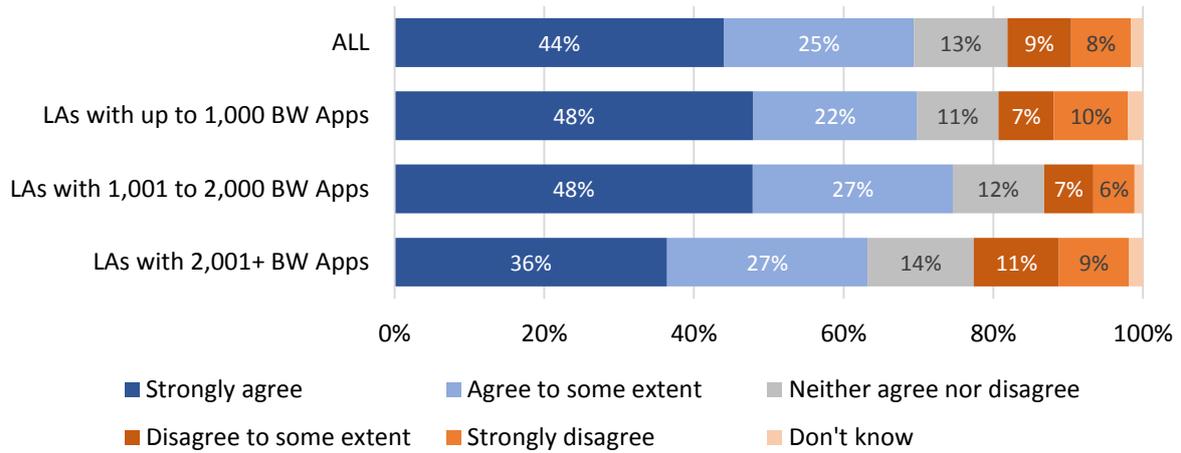


Figure A1.17 Staff were knowledgeable

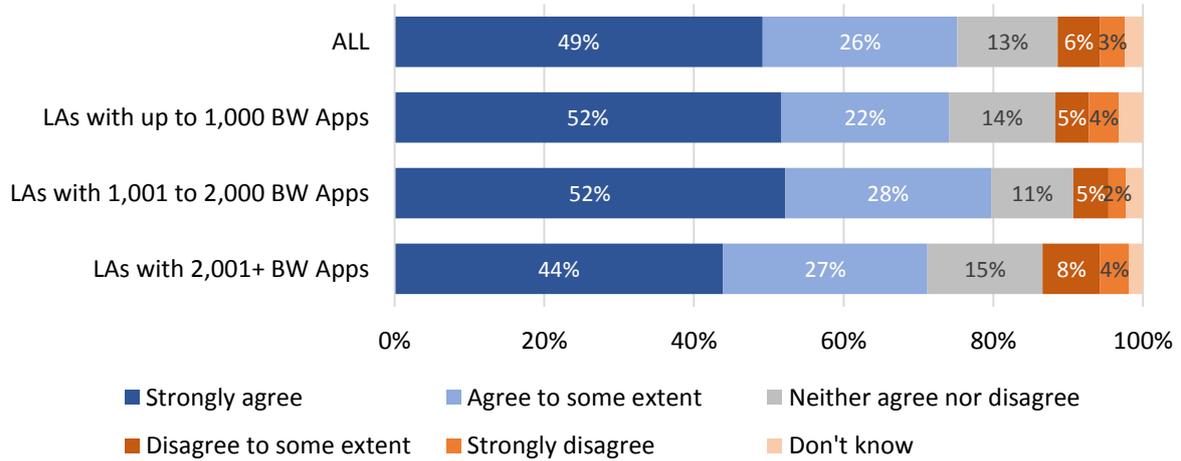


Figure A1.18 I felt as though someone took ownership of my enquiry

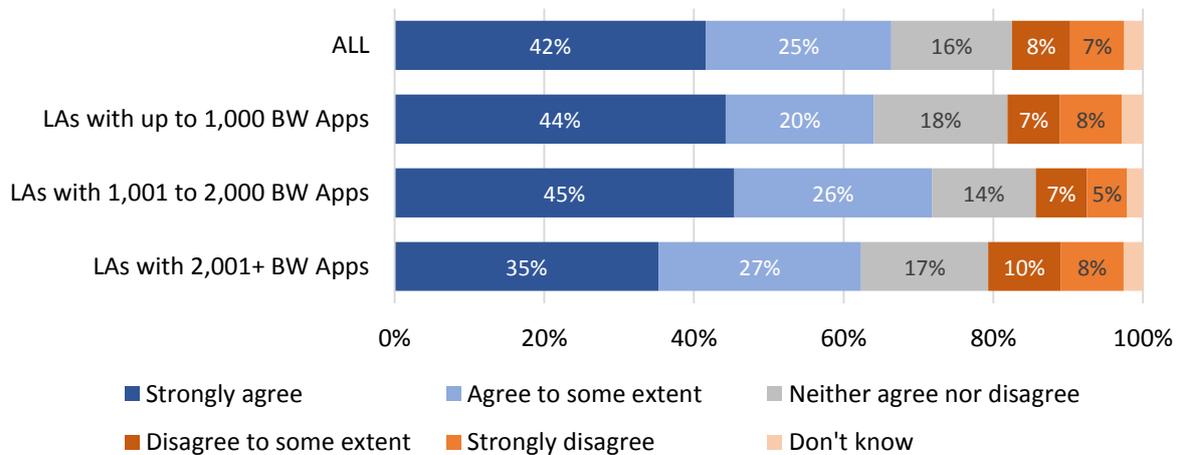


Figure A1.19 Any problems that arose were adequately resolved

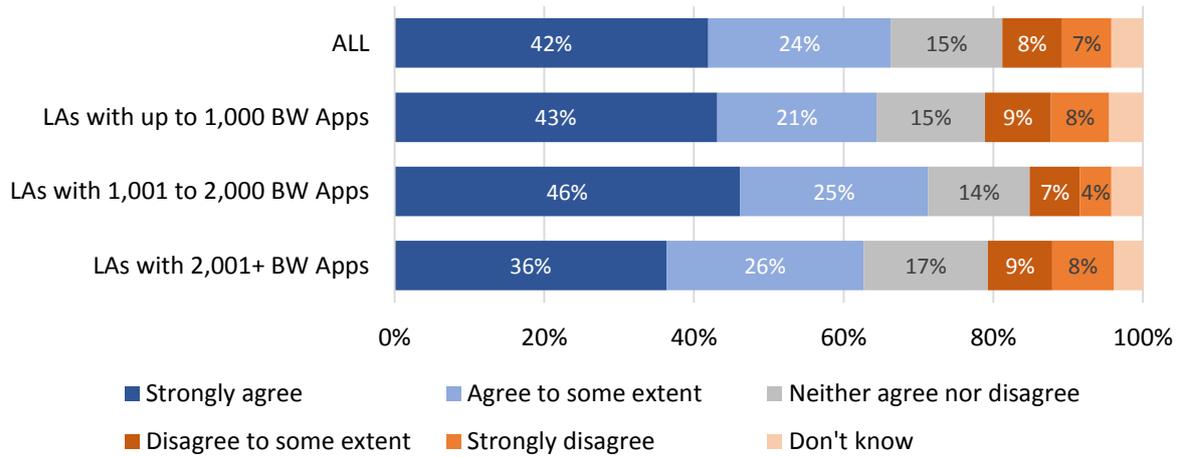


Figure A1.20 Whether an inspection was carried out by building standards service staff

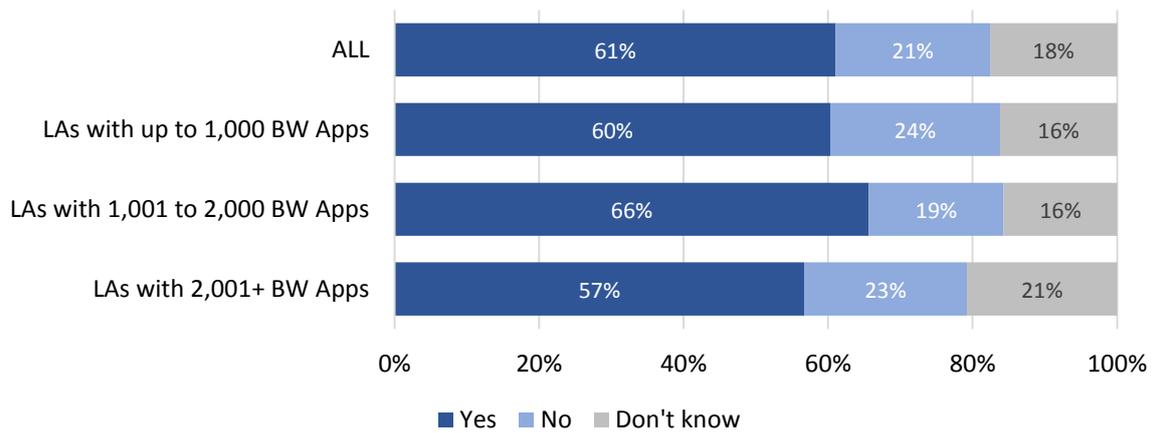


Figure A1.21 Flexibility of dates and times to meet my needs

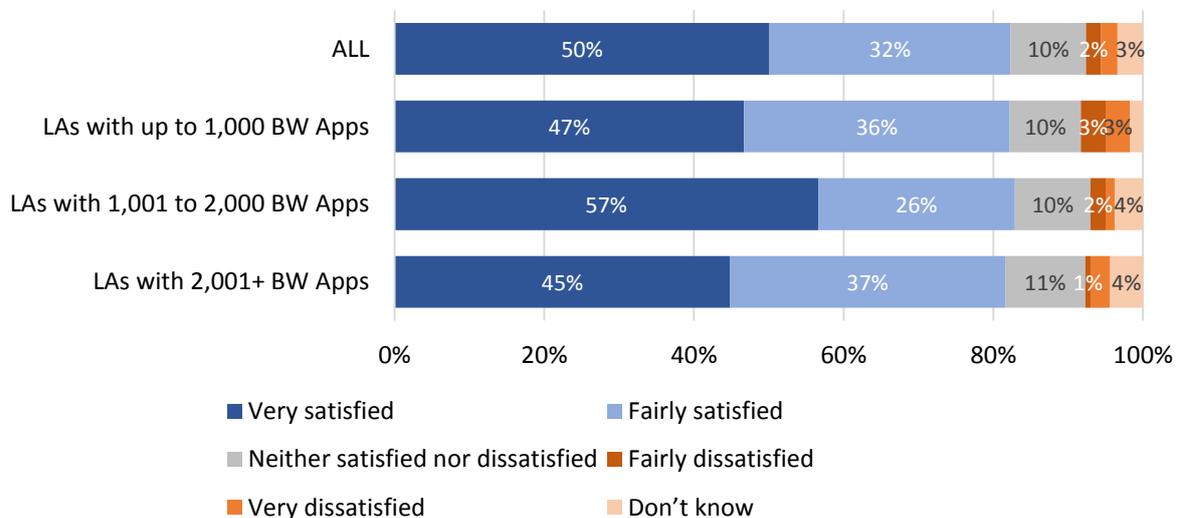


Figure A1.22 Professionalism of the inspection staff

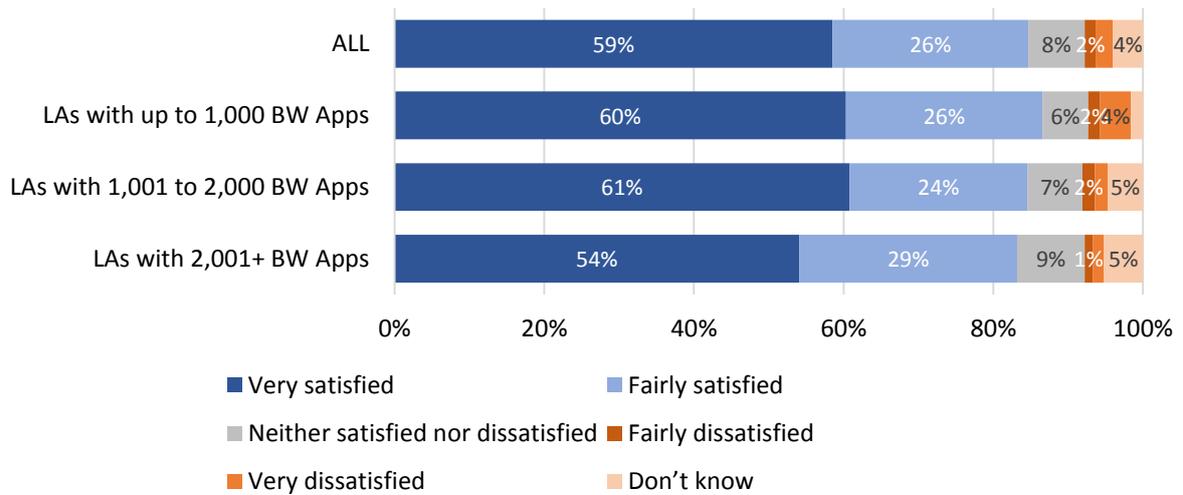


Figure A1.23 Thoroughness of the inspection

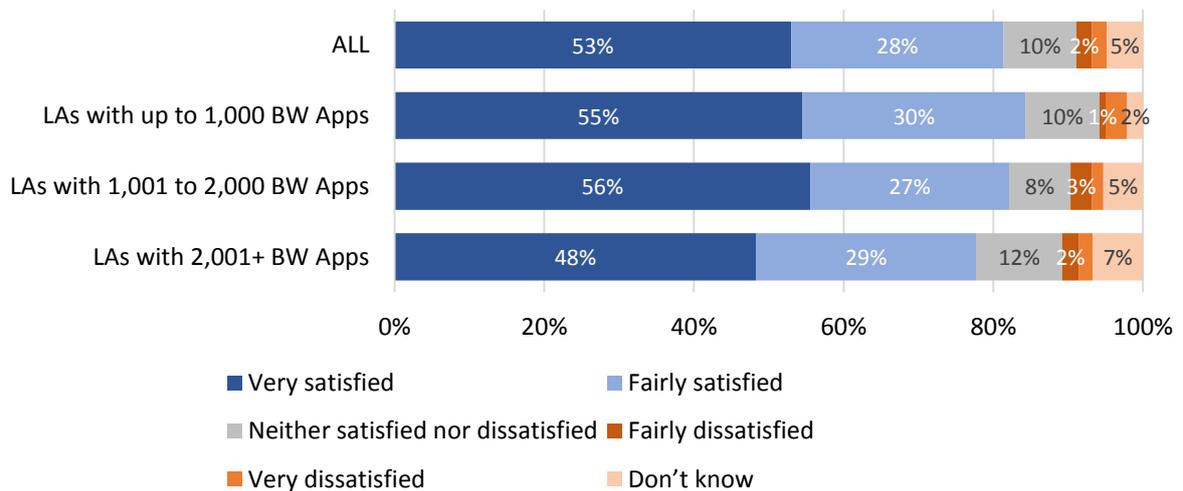
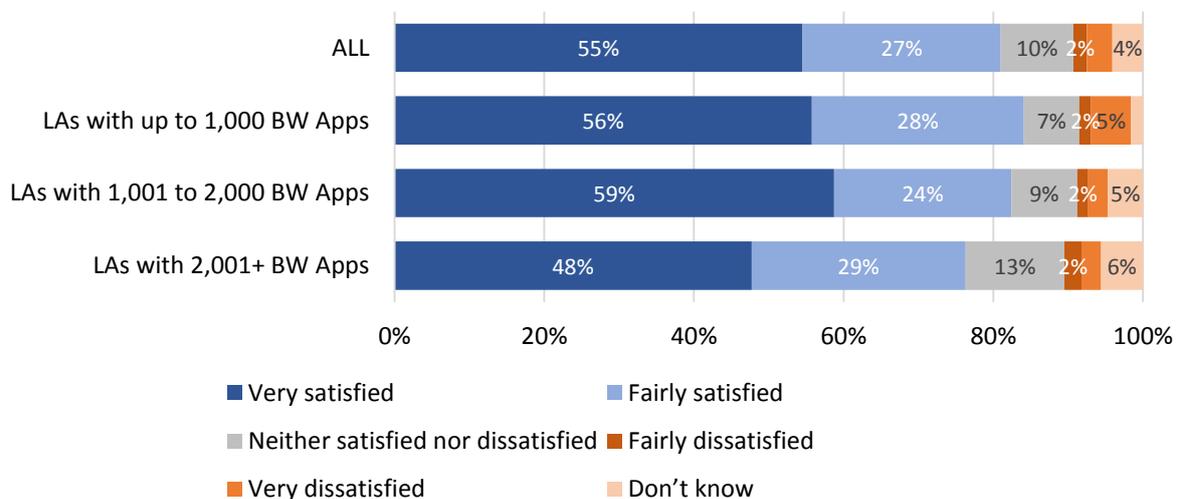


Figure A1.24 Quality of advice and guidance received from inspection staff



COMMUNICATIONS

Figure A1.25 Channels of communication

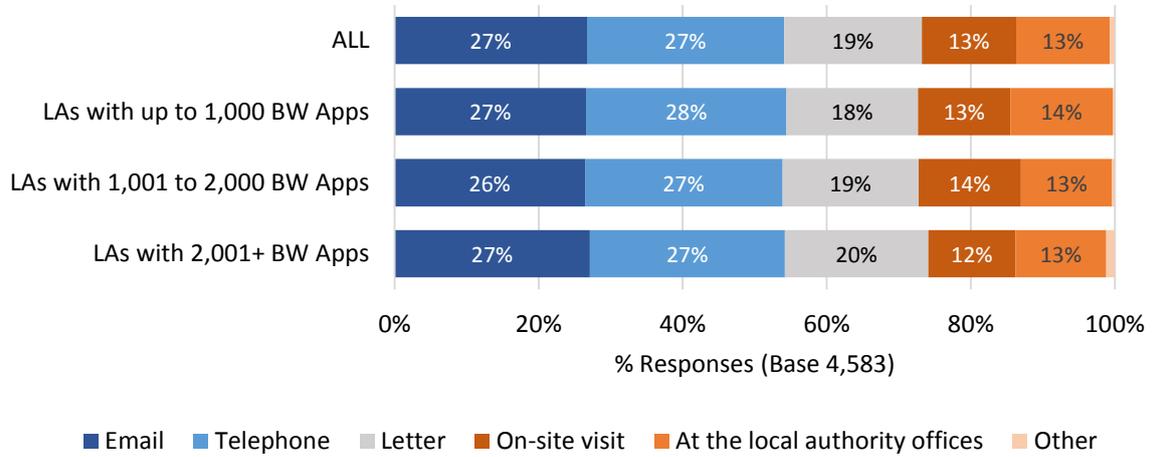


Figure A1.26 Preferred format for exchanging written information in the future

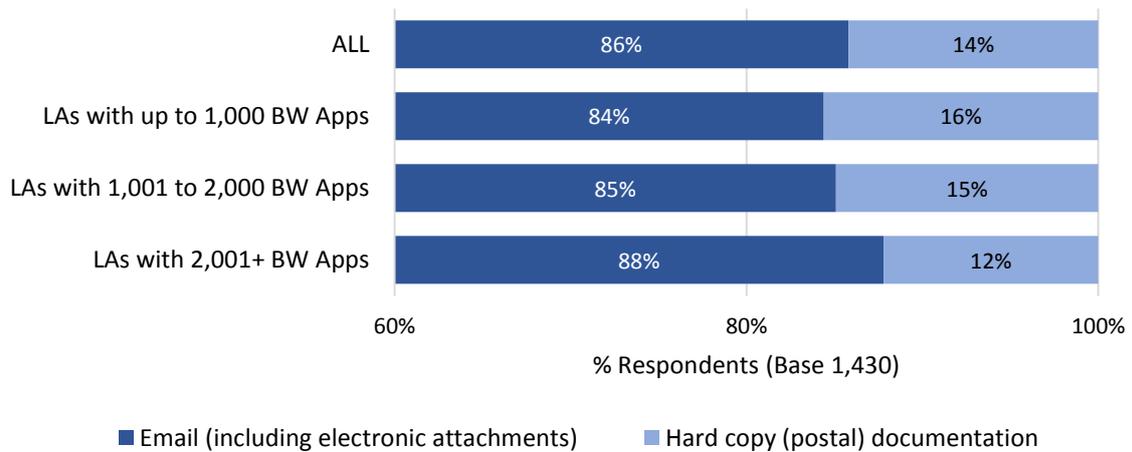


Figure A1.27 Quality of written information and documentation

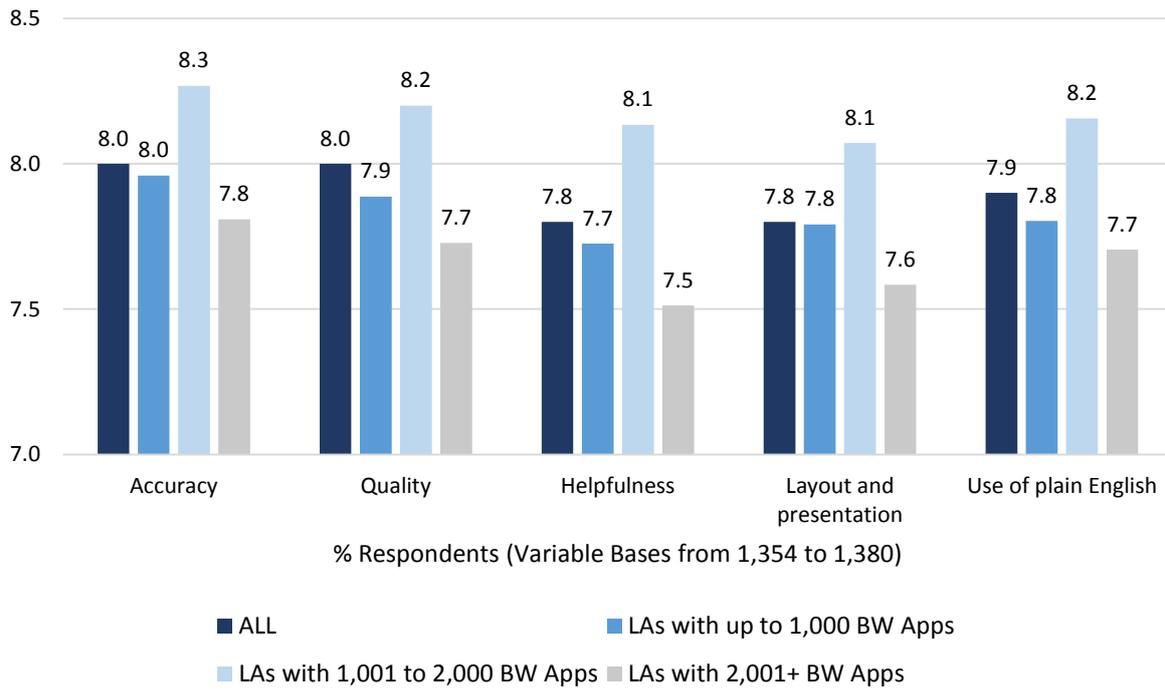


Figure A1.28 Whether visited the building standards section of the local authority website

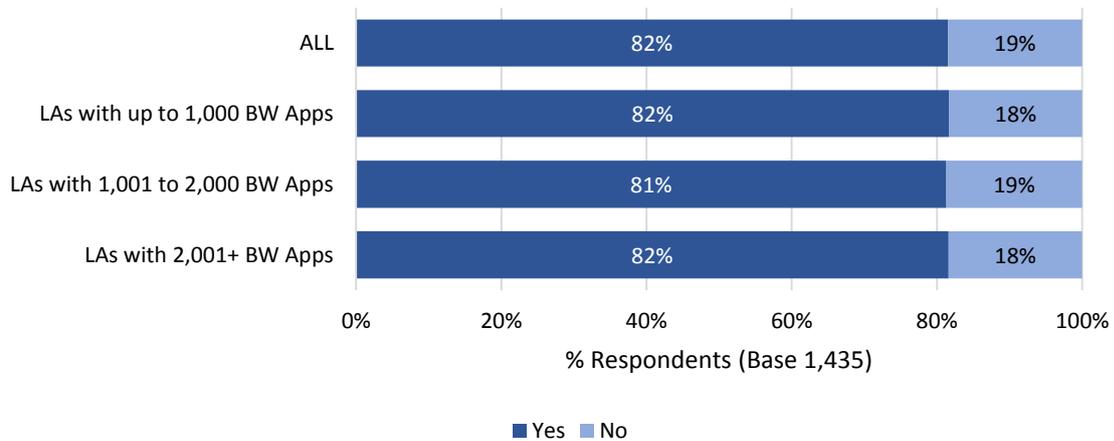


Figure A1.29 Whether found the information being looked for on the website

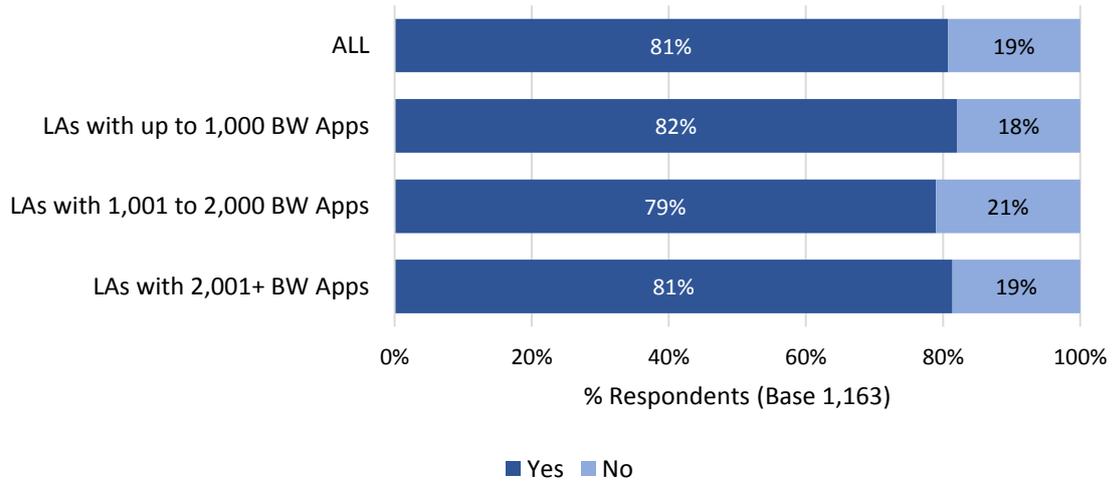
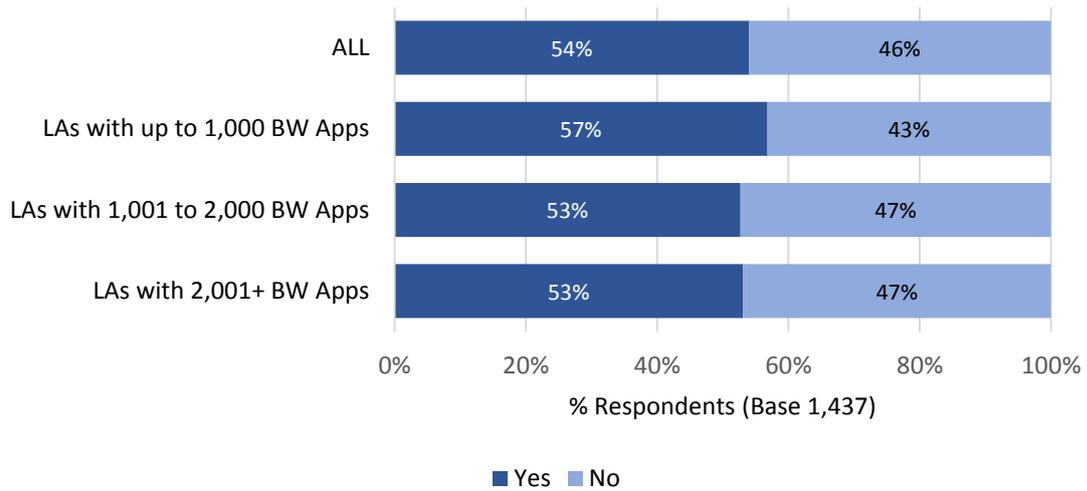


Figure A1.30 Whether visited the offices of the local authority building standards service



ACCESSIBILITY

Table A1.1 Satisfaction with specific aspects of the building standards service offices

LAs with up to 1,000 BW Apps						
	Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Don't know
Opening hours	50.9%	31.5%	13.8%	1.7%	1.7%	0.4%
Location	55.8%	24.9%	13.3%	4.3%	1.7%	-
Reception service	51.7%	27.6%	13.8%	3.9%	3.0%	-
Physical environment	41.7%	32.8%	14.9%	6.0%	3.8%	0.9%
Accessibility of staff	44.0%	31.5%	12.5%	6.0%	6.0%	-

LAs with 1,001 to 2,000 BW Apps						
	Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Don't know
Opening hours	55.3%	32.3%	10.6%	1.4%	0.4%	0.4%
Location	50.0%	31.3%	14.1%	3.9%	0.7%	0.1%
Reception service	50.7%	27.3%	15.6%	2.8%	3.5%	0.1%
Physical environment	42.7%	37.4%	13.9%	4.6%	1.4%	0.5%
Accessibility of staff	45.4%	36.5%	11.7%	4.6%	1.8%	0.4%

LAs with 2,001+ BW Apps						
	Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Don't know
Opening hours	40.5%	40.9%	13.2%	2.7%	1.9%	0.8%
Location	41.6%	37.7%	14.4%	3.9%	1.9%	0.4%
Reception service	42.4%	41.2%	11.0%	3.5%	1.6%	0.4%
Physical environment	31.9%	45.7%	15.4%	5.1%	1.2%	0.8%
Accessibility of staff	28.1%	38.7%	18.8%	9.0%	4.3%	1.2%

Appendix 2: National Survey Questionnaire

Customer Satisfaction Survey for Building Standards *Please tell us what you think*

Introduction

The Scottish Government would like to obtain your views and feedback about the local authority Building Standards service in Scotland. This is a national survey that is being administered separately to customer feedback questionnaires issued by individual local authorities.

As a Building Standards customer since April 2013, we would like to hear about the quality of service you have received, for example when applying for a building warrant and/or submitting a completion certificate. We are interested in your views on the customer service you have experienced as opposed to the actual decision made in response to an application.

When answering the questions you will be asked to identify which local authority you are providing feedback on. If you have been a customer of more than one local authority and would like to provide additional feedback, please complete a separate survey.

The survey should take approximately 10 minutes to complete.

If you are unable to answer any questions, or if they are not applicable to you, please leave them blank.

Reassurance

Pye Tait Consulting is carrying out this survey independently on behalf of the Scottish Government and all 32 local authorities in Scotland.

The findings from the survey will be treated confidentially and reported anonymously by Pye Tait Consulting under the Data Protection Act 1988 and the Market Research Society (MRS) Code of Conduct.

If you have any queries, please contact Adrian Smith at Pye Tait Consulting, via a.smith@pyetait.com or by telephoning 01423 509433.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this online survey.

Please click the 'Next' button, below, to continue.

PART 1: About your application

Q1. Which ONE of the following local authorities are you responding about in this survey? (Please tick the appropriate box and complete a separate survey for any other local authorities of which you have been a customer since April 2013).

<input type="checkbox"/>	Aberdeen	<input type="checkbox"/>	Highland
<input type="checkbox"/>	Aberdeenshire	<input type="checkbox"/>	Inverclyde
<input type="checkbox"/>	Angus	<input type="checkbox"/>	Midlothian
<input type="checkbox"/>	Argyll and Bute	<input type="checkbox"/>	Moray
<input type="checkbox"/>	City of Edinburgh	<input type="checkbox"/>	North Ayrshire
<input type="checkbox"/>	Clackmannanshire	<input type="checkbox"/>	North Lanarkshire
<input type="checkbox"/>	Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar	<input type="checkbox"/>	Orkney
<input type="checkbox"/>	Dumfries and Galloway	<input type="checkbox"/>	Perth and Kinross
<input type="checkbox"/>	Dundee	<input type="checkbox"/>	Renfrewshire
<input type="checkbox"/>	East Ayrshire	<input type="checkbox"/>	Scottish Borders
<input type="checkbox"/>	East Dunbartonshire	<input type="checkbox"/>	Shetland
<input type="checkbox"/>	East Lothian	<input type="checkbox"/>	South Ayrshire
<input type="checkbox"/>	East Renfrewshire	<input type="checkbox"/>	South Lanarkshire
<input type="checkbox"/>	Falkirk	<input type="checkbox"/>	Stirling
<input type="checkbox"/>	Fife	<input type="checkbox"/>	West Dunbartonshire
<input type="checkbox"/>	Glasgow	<input type="checkbox"/>	West Lothian

Q2. In what capacity have you been a customer of the building standards service? [Tick all that apply]

<input type="checkbox"/>	Direct applicant for building warrant, for example building owner
<input type="checkbox"/>	Direct submitter of completion certificate, for example building owner
<input type="checkbox"/>	Agent working on behalf of an applicant or submitter
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other

If 'Other' – please specify: _____

Q3. For which of the following reasons did you make contact with your local authority building standards service? [Tick all that apply]

<input type="checkbox"/>	Application for a building warrant (including any pre-application discussion)
<input type="checkbox"/>	During construction, including submission of a completion certificate
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other reason/s

If 'Other' – please specify: _____

Q4. [Asked if Q3 = building warrant] How many building warrant applications have you submitted to this local authority since April 2013? If you are unsure, please provide a best estimate.

Q5. [Asked if Q3 = completion certificate] How many completion certificates have you submitted to this local authority for acceptance since April 2013? If you are unsure, please provide a best estimate.

Q6. For which of the following categories of work have you submitted an application? [Tick all that apply]

<input type="checkbox"/>	Domestic new build – multiple plotted developments (houses/flats)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Domestic new build – other (e.g. one-off house build)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Domestic existing build - extension
<input type="checkbox"/>	Domestic existing build - alteration
<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-domestic – residential (e.g. hostels, guest houses, hotels, hospitals)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-domestic – assembly (e.g. churches, schools, health centres, libraries, stadia)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-domestic – commercial (e.g. shops, restaurants and office buildings)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-domestic – Industrial (e.g. factory buildings, manufacturing units, refineries)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-domestic – storage/agricultural (e.g. grain stores, car parks, bonded warehouse)

If 'Other' – please specify: _____

PART 2: Meeting your expectations

Q7. Overall, to what extent did the service you received from the local authority building standards service meet your expectations? Please rate on a scale from 1 'not at all' to 10 'completely'.

Q8. Please provide your reasons for this rating:

PART 3: Timeliness

Q9. How satisfied were you with the time taken by the local authority building standards service to undertake each of the following? [Leave any statements blank if not applicable]

	Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Don't know
Respond to telephone enquiries						
Respond to written enquiries						
Issue the first report for a building warrant application (e.g. detailing non-compliance or further information requested)						
Process the application and grant a building warrant						
Respond to a request for a site visit						
Accept a completion certificate						

Q10. How well did the local authority keep you informed about the progress of your application/submission (if applicable)?

	Very well
	Fairly well
	Neither well nor poorly
	Not very well
	Not at all well

PART 4: Advice, guidance and quality of service from building standards service staff

Q11. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about the advice and guidance you received from local authority building standards service staff?

	Strongly agree	Agree to some extent	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree to some extent	Strongly disagree	Don't know
I received sufficient advice and guidance to meet my needs						
The advice and guidance I received was consistent						
The advice and guidance I received was helpful						

Q12. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about the quality of service received from building standards service staff:

	Strongly agree	Agree to some extent	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree to some extent	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Staff were polite and courteous						
Staff were helpful						
Staff were efficient						
Staff were knowledgeable						
I felt as though someone took ownership of my enquiry						
Any problems that arose were adequately resolved						

Q13. [Only asked if 'Strongly Agree' to any of Q12 A – F] You have stated **STRONGLY AGREE** to at least one of the above statements with respect to the advice, guidance and quality of service you have received. Please can you explain what was particularly good?

Q14. [Only asked if 'Strongly Disagree' to any of Q12 A – F] You have stated STRONGLY DISAGREE to at least one of the above statements with respect to the advice, guidance and quality of service you have received. Please can you explain your reasons?

--

Q15. Are you aware of the need to notify the building standards service before warrantable work commences?

	Yes
	No

Q16. Did you have an inspection visit by building standards service staff?

	Yes	Route to Q17
	No	Route to Part 5

Q17. How satisfied were you with each of the following aspects of the inspection visit:

	Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Don't know
Flexibility of dates and times to meet my needs						
Professionalism of the inspection staff						
Thoroughness of the inspection						
Quality of the advice and guidance received from the inspection staff						

PART 5: Communications

Q18. In which of the following ways did you interact with the local authority building standards service? [Tick all that apply]

	Email
	Telephone
	Letter
	On-site visit
	At the building standards service offices
	Other

If 'Other' – please specify: _____

Q19. On a scale from 1 'very poor' to 10 'very good' - how would you rate each of the following aspects of the local authority's written information and documentation:

	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10
Accuracy	
Quality	
Helpfulness	
Layout and presentation	
Use of plain English	

Q20. Have you visited the building standards section of the local authority's website?

	Yes	Route to Q21
	No	Route to Q23

Q21. Did you find all the information you were looking for on the website?

	Yes
	No

Q22. In what ways, if any, do you think the building standards section of the local authority's website could be improved?

Q23. In terms of how you would like to communicate with the local authority building standards service in the future – please rate the following forms of communication from 1 ‘most preferred option’ to 5 ‘least preferred option’.

Email	
Telephone	
Letter	
On-site visit	
At the building standards service offices	

Q24. In what ways, if any, do you think the local authority building standards service could improve its communications?

PART 6: Accessibility

Q25. How easy was it to make contact with your local authority building standards service? Please rate on a scale from 1 ‘very easy’ to 10 ‘very difficult’

Q26. Please provide your reasons for this rating:

Q27. Did you have reason to visit the offices of the local authority building standards service?

	Yes	Route to Q28
	No	Route to Q29

Q28. How satisfied are you with each of the following aspects of the building standards service offices:

	Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Don't know
Opening hours						
Location						
Reception service						
Physical environment						
Accessibility of staff						

PART 7: Overall satisfaction and final comments

Q29. Overall, how would you rate your satisfaction with the building standards service? Please rate on a scale from 1 'not at all satisfied' to 10 'completely satisfied'

Q30. Your views are important and the local authority would like the opportunity to contact you to discuss your feedback further. In order to do so, we require your consent to share your individual responses with them, along with your contact details. Are you happy for us to do so?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	Route to Q31
<input type="checkbox"/>	No – I wish to remain anonymous	Route to Q34

Q31. [\[Only asked if Yes to Q30\]](#) Please provide your contact name:

Q32. [\[Only asked if Yes to Q30\]](#) Please provide your email address:

Q33. [\[Only asked if Yes to Q30\]](#) Please provide your contact telephone number:

Q34. Finally, do you have any final comments about how you believe the local authority building standards service could be improved in the future?

<Submit button> and thank you page.

Appendix 3: Survey Invitation Email

Email subject: Building Standards in Scotland – Customer Feedback Questionnaire

Dear [Name]

We are writing to you as a customer of the local authority Building Standards service in Scotland. This means that since 1st April 2013 you may have submitted a building warrant application, completion certificate, used the services of your own agent, or made other enquiries through your local authority Building Standards service. You may also have been an agent acting on behalf of an applicant.

The Scottish Government would like to obtain your views and feedback on the customer service you received. This will help identify which aspects are working well and any areas where improvements need to be made in the future.

We would be most grateful if you would spare 5 or 10 minutes to complete the online survey by clicking the link below:

[\[Link\]](#)

Your feedback is important to us, even if you are not able to answer all questions and/or have had limited contact with the local authority Building Standards service.

Further information, including our contact details, can be found via the survey link.

Many thanks for your time and contribution.

Kind regards,

[Name]

You may choose not to receive further e-mails about this research from [Name] simply by clicking [UNSUBSCRIBE](#). [Name/Registered Address]