STAR benchmarking service

Analysis of findings 2012/13

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1. Executive Summary

1.1 Survey of Tenants and Residents

HouseMark offers a free voluntary approach to tenant and resident satisfaction measurement for the social housing sector. It provides social housing landlords with the means to compare satisfaction results.

STAR (Survey of Tenants and Residents) was launched in July 2011 after wide consultation and is available for use by any social landlord. This is the second report to analyse STAR results and is based on surveys conducted by 137 organisations in the 2012/13 financial year.

STAR benchmarking collates responses that can be equated to a five point descriptive scale containing:

Very satisfied
Fairly satisfied
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
Fairly dissatisfied
Very dissatisfied

This scale is used to produce the following three metrics in this report:

Combined positive score – the proportions of fairly and very satisfied added together
Net satisfaction – very and fairly satisfied scores minus fairly and very dissatisfied
Very satisfied – to show the most positive responses

1.2 Key Findings

Survey profile

A wide range of organisations undertook STAR surveys in 2012/13. Postal was the most popular method of surveying residents. Around 82% of participating landlords used a postal method to conduct some or all of their surveys. Over a third of surveys were carried out during the autumn months, with just over a quarter of surveys carried out in summer.

Overall satisfaction

Tenants are more satisfied with the service provided by their landlord than home owners (leaseholders and shared owners), continuing the pattern found in 2011/12. Tenants living in housing for older people accommodation are the most satisfied. Over half of housing for older people and supported housing respondents were very satisfied.

By region, the results show the well documented ‘London effect’. Satisfaction for London based organisations is around 10 percentage points lower than other regions across all quartiles. Outside London, the scores are remarkably consistent, with only a few points separating the regions at each quartile threshold.

By size, medium sized organisations (5,000 to 10,000 units) have the highest combined positive, net satisfaction and “very satisfied” scores. Ratings for medium sized organisations are slightly higher than larger organisations (over 10,000 units), with smaller organisations (under 5,000 units) recording slightly lower ratings. The pattern is different to 2011/12 which found similar scores across all three size bands.

By organisation type, the combined positive scores and net scores were similar across all three types of organisations (local authority, housing association and ALMO), with little variation also for upper and lower quartiles. The latest analysis found that for “very satisfied”, housing associations fare better than ALMOs and local authorities.

Satisfaction with home

Home owners are more satisfied with their home than they are with the service provided by their landlord (satisfaction levels are around 20 percentage points higher). This effect is not seen amongst tenants, where the two scores are quite similar. The level of satisfaction found in 2012/13 for each group of residents is at least as high as the levels found a year ago or slightly higher.

Satisfaction with neighbourhood

Tenants in living in housing for older people accommodation are the most satisfied with their neighbourhood, with similar combined positive scores to general needs and supported housing tenants, and shared owners. Leaseholders are the least satisfied with the neighbourhood as a place to live. Relatively few home owners are “very satisfied” with their surroundings.

Satisfaction that rent provides value for money

Although tenants and shared owners were less satisfied with the value for money they get for their rent than they were with the overall service of their landlord, the difference is not that marked. The only exception is supported housing tenants, where the upper quartile scores (both combined and net) are considerably lower than that for overall satisfaction. This suggests higher levels of confusion, misinterpretation or dissatisfaction about value for money from this group. Shared owners are considerably less satisfied compared with tenants.

Satisfaction that service charges offer value for money

Tenants and residents are less satisfied with value for money of their service charges than with their rents. This is an area of particular dissatisfaction for leaseholders – with some of the lowest median scores of any question in the survey. Dissatisfaction scores with value for money for the service charge were higher than the satisfaction scores among home owner respondents in nearly half of the participating organisations (20 out of 46 organisations).

Satisfaction with repairs

Resident satisfaction with repairs is lower than satisfaction with the overall service. Home owners are considerably less satisfied with repairs than tenants, but the scores are slightly higher than in 2011/12. Compared to satisfaction with the quality of their home, all survey types recorded lower scores at each quartile threshold for repair satisfaction, identical to that found in 2011/12.

Satisfaction that the landlord listens to views and acts upon them

The combined positive scores for this question were fairly low for all survey types. Of housing for older people and leaseholders, respondents recorded the lowest satisfaction scores in this area out of all the benchmarked survey questions. Older tenants and leaseholders appear to be the least satisfied with the degree of influence they have over their landlord.

The latest analysis found that respondents are slightly more satisfied in 2012/13 than those in 2011/12 with their landlord listening to and acting upon their views.

Key drivers of satisfaction

We have used Pearson's correlation coefficient and linear regression analysis[2] to assess how much each benchmarked STAR question influences overall satisfaction.

The analysis found that every core measure is significantly correlated with overall satisfaction, and that this correlation is positive. There is also a lot of inter-correlation between all pairs of measures.

Repairs and maintenance has the biggest influence on overall satisfaction. Landlords whose residents are satisfied in this area tend to have the highest rates of overall satisfaction too.

The next highest influences on overall satisfaction are the quality of the home and the ‘listens and acts’ question. This implies that providing high standard properties and getting resident involvement right are important factors in achieving good overall satisfaction scores.

The influence from ‘neighbourhood’ and value for money are very close to zero and hence negligible.

Satisfaction, costs and performance

Overall, the data shows that the amount a landlord spends on management and maintenance bears little or no relation to satisfaction levels. There appears to be little justification for the maxim that higher costs translate into higher satisfaction.

The analysis found that the total costs of estate services and responsive repairs showed a moderate correlation with satisfaction with the repairs service, value for money of the rent and overall satisfaction.

[2] See Appendix 1 for an explanation of the data analysis used in this report.

Changes from 2011/12

Throughout the report the 2012/13 findings have been compared to those from 2011/12. The comparison reveals that there is often little difference between the two datasets, however where there are slight changes many of them are positive in nature. This similarity between years is expected and follows the pattern found with large data sets. Any significant change may be a reflection of the type of organisations submitting data in that year rather than a change in resident satisfaction.

Of the organisations that submitted data for both 2011/12 and 2012/13 the analysis found that the median net positive score (for general needs and housing for older people combined) had increased by close to one percentage point for overall services and the neighbourhood, whereas satisfaction with the value for money of the service charge had fallen by just over one percentage point.

Information from organisations in 2012/13 show that more are now submitting data from on-going surveys rather than one-off surveys, with around three out of ten organisations running continuous surveys.

Predicting STAR scores

In 2013/14 HouseMark carried out research to identify whether it is possible to predict satisfaction scores solely based on known demographic factors such as resident age and geography. A key part of this analysis involved identifying the drivers of satisfaction for all social landlords regardless of their type, size, location and resident composition.

Using the STAR core questions the research attempted to design a model which could create a new adjusted satisfaction score for the landlord – by taking their actual satisfaction score and amending it to compensate for their particular demographics. A few years ago, Ipsos Mori had attempted a similar exercise with their Frontiers analysis of local authority STATUS satisfaction scores.

However, the current conclusion of our research is that we cannot predict satisfaction scores for individual social landlords. Though there are a number of landlord and respondent characteristics that are significantly related to the core STAR 'overall satisfaction' measure, and also to the other six core STAR measures scores, their predictive strength is poor, and none successfully predict the differences that can be observed between different landlords.

The most notable predictive variable for satisfaction is age: satisfaction does indeed increase with age. The key dividing age lies somewhere between 50 and 65 years. A second important strand of related features is built around location or geography. These also include whether the landlord is a LSVT housing association, whether it is urban or rural, and individual respondents' ethnicity and religion.

While it has not proved possible to predict satisfaction scores on a national level for all social landlords, the research has demonstrated that demographic and other factors do have some influence on satisfaction scores. It is hoped that the research will encourage social housing providers to examine their own data in greater depth and identify their own drivers of satisfaction in an attempt to improve customer insight and service delivery by understanding what matters most to their individual residents.

Widening the Service to encompass optional questions

The STAR benchmarking service initially enabled landlords to benchmark satisfaction data for the seven core questions only. Then in July 2013, HouseMark expanded the STAR benchmarking service to include the most popular optional questions, including the net promoter question (Gen5).

HouseMark's cost, performance and satisfaction benchmarking service (known as core benchmarking) includes the STAR core questions, and will be expanded in 2014 to include net promoter score and satisfaction with the last repair.

Reviewing the listens and acts question

Over the past year a few landlords have raised their concerns about the wording of one of the core seven core questions - satisfaction with listens to views and acts upon them. In developing STAR HouseMark designed this question to replace a similar question which was generally accepted as being unclear and poorly worded. Having reviewed two years' data sets this question set is the least used of the core questions (excluding the service charge question which is not always appropriate to ask) and the proportion for the "neither" category is much higher for this core question than any other. HouseMark hope to carry out a consultation on this question in 2014/15.

2. Introduction

2.1 About STAR

In July 2011 HouseMark launched STAR, which provides a standardised approach to satisfaction measurement that enables social landlords to make meaningful performance comparisons with other landlords working in the sector and monitor trends over time.

HouseMark undertook to develop STAR after being inundated with requests from members to devise a survey that could replace the outgoing STATUS surveys but on a voluntary, self-regulatory basis. The flexibility built into the STAR approach ensures that providers are able to measure what they need in ways that best suit their organisational requirements and those of their tenants and residents.

In the era of big data, access to satisfaction levels has become even more important to social landlords. The absence of close regulatory scrutiny of the consumer regulations or housing inspection means satisfaction measurement is the single most useful source of data for measuring and reporting tenant and resident-focused outcomes and engaging tenants and residents in what their landlord does.

Satisfaction measurement is also about gathering robust, actionable data to inform business decisions on changes to service delivery. Without subsequent action satisfaction measurement has no purpose; without robustness any action may be misdirected.

Put together with cost and performance data in HouseMark's core benchmarking service, STAR provides the basis upon which to judge value for money and identify the best opportunities for improving performance.

2.2 Benchmarking STAR

HouseMark's website[3] contains details about how to run a STAR survey together with a full set of questions covering the core areas analysed in this report as well as several optional and model questions for specific landlord services.

Once a STAR survey has been conducted and collated, the results can be entered into HouseMark's benchmarking E-form by HouseMark members.

STAR benchmarking data for 2012/13 covers satisfaction with seven core questions:

Cor1 overall
Cor2 home
Cor3 neighbourhood
Cor4 rent
Cor5 service charges
Cor6 repairs

[3] www.housemark.co.uk/star

Cor7 views

These questions must be included in each STAR survey to be in line with its methodology –Cor4 and Cor5 are interchangeable, depending on the group surveyed and the income collection methods of the landlord.

In 2013 at the request of members HouseMark increased the number of questions from the STAR framework it collects from organisations in order to provide a wider benchmarking service. The additional questions are:

Gen 3 Keeping informed
Gen 5 Recommend landlord to family and friends
Per1e Friendly and approachable staff
Cac3b Final outcome of query
Rep2g Keeping dirt and mess to minimum
Rep2h Repair being done "right first time"
Rep2j Repairs service on this occasion
Aas1a Tenant satisfaction with advice and support on claiming housing benefit and other welfare benefits
Aas1b Tenant satisfaction with advice and support on managing your finances and paying rent and service charges

Other questions from the STAR framework are used in HouseMark benchmarking modules including questions for Welsh organisations and themes such as anti-social behaviour, complaints and estate services.

Individual survey data can be entered for up to five groups of tenants and residents:

General needs
Housing for older people
Supported housing
Leaseholders
Shared ownership

There is also a section for combined general needs and housing for older people survey results. This report uses those combined figures to compare to cost information which is also collected on the same stock basis.

Participating organisations complete a number of profile questions, allowing better comparison when benchmarking the results.

Satisfaction data entered in the E-form for general needs tenants needs to be within a maximum margin of error[4]. In practical terms this means achieving the required minimum number of responses relating to overall stock size. For the other survey

[4] between +/-3% and +/-5%

types, we allow more flexibility, because in practice the margins of error can be more difficult to meet[5].

2.3 Feedback surveys

STAR's core questions are intended to provide an overview of tenant and resident satisfaction with the general service they receive from their social housing provider. The core questions are not configured to receive feedback on specific services used by a proportion of tenants or residents. However, a number of STAR questions can be used as models on which to base such 'transactional' surveys.

2.4 Participant profile

At the time of the data extract for this report analysis[6], 137 organisations had submitted STAR data for one or more surveys undertaken in 2012/13. The number of organisations who submitted STAR data was lower than the number who submitted data in 2011/12 (161 organisations). Current guidance is that organisations should carry out STAR surveys at least every two years. The number of organisations who submitted data in 2011/12 could be a peak as many landlords held off undertaking satisfaction surveys until the STAR guidance was published in July 2011.

Fewer organisations have submitted data for general needs and housing for older people, while the amount of leasehold and shared ownership data has increased. The table below shows the sizes of datasets collected for each survey type based on tenure.

Survey type	2012/13 Participants	2011/12 Participants
General needs	127	155
Housing for older people	85	94
Supported housing	23	22
Leasehold	33	26
Shared ownership	19	16
Total[7]	**137**	**161**

[5] Results in STAR benchmarking can be filtered by those that meet the margins or not as required.

[6] February 2014

[7] The numbers don't add up because some organisations submitted data for multiple surveys

The size of each dataset determines the type of analysis conducted in this report. For general needs, it is possible to look at the data by various profile characteristics. The tables below show the types, sizes and regions of organisations taking part.

The largest sector represented is housing associations, which would be expected as there are many more housing associations than ALMOs or local authority landlords.

Approaching half of the organisations who submitted data in 2012/13 are stock transfer organisations (45%), an increase of 8% on 2011/12. The percentage of local authority organisations submitting data has decreased from last year (17% in 2011/12), with the percentage of submissions from traditional housing associations and ALMOs remaining close to the levels found in 2011/12.

Compared with landlords who submitted core benchmarking data to HouseMark for 2012/13, a higher percentage of stock transfer organisations are carrying out satisfaction surveys compared to other types of organisations.

Organisation Type	Total	Percentage
LSVT housing association (stock transfer)	62	45%
Traditional housing association	39	28%
Local authority / public sector	15	11%
ALMO	21	15%
Total	**137**	

The range of stock sizes for organisations submitting STAR data varies depending on size band, with fewer of the largest organisations submitting data compared with those with under 5,000 units.

In 2011/12 the pattern was much more evenly spread. The median stock size of participants is 5,733 only slightly lower than in 2011/12 (5,835 units).

Size band	Total	Percentage of organisations
Over 10,000 units	37	27%
5,000 - 10,000 units	45	33%
Under 5,000 units	55	40%
Total	**137**	

The benchmarking system uses English regions and other UK countries to denote the general location of an organisation. In this report we have grouped some regions: East, East Midlands and West Midlands are ‘Central’; North West, North East and Yorkshire / Humber are ‘North’; and South East and South West are ‘South’.

North, South and Central each account for around a quarter or slightly more of participants. London is the smallest English region included above, but still has 20 active participants. Eight participants are based outside England, 5 in Scotland and 3 in Wales.

Organisations in the North region continue to submit more surveys than any other region as was found in 2011/12, however the percentage of the total surveys has fallen. The other regions and London submitted similar percentages of surveys whereas the percentage of surveys from Scotland and Wales has increased slightly since 2011/12.

Region	2011/12		2012/13	
	Total	Percentage	Total	Percentage
North	50	31%	38	28%
South	42	26%	34	25%
Central	41	25%	37	27%
London	24	15%	20	15%
Scotland	2	1%	5	4%
Northern Ireland	2	1%	0	0%
Wales	1	1%	3	2%
Total	**161**		**137**	

2.5 Survey profile

As part of the STAR benchmarking service, we collect data on the mechanics of undertaking a STAR survey. These fields add some extra context to each organisation and provide assurance to others that they are benchmarking with the appropriate comparator group. These context fields are collected for each survey type.

Season of survey

The largest proportion of general needs surveys were carried out in the Autumn (Sep, Oct, Nov) – 35% of the total were carried out during these months. Spring (Mar, Apr, May) was the second most popular season with 27% of surveys being carried out. Summer (Jun, Jul, Aug) and Winter (Dec, Jan, Feb) were the least popular with 22% and 15% of the total respectively. In the space of one year Winter surveys have gone from being the most popular (30% of the total carried out in 2011/12) to the least popular, with Autumn surveys increasing from 22% to 25%.

Housing for older people surveys followed the same seasonal trends as general needs surveys, with Autumn also the most popular season for supported housing and leaseholder surveys. Summer and Autumn surveys were the most popular season for shared ownership surveys, with very few taking place in Spring and Winter.

Ongoing surveys or one-off surveys

Looking at the information provided by all landlords which have submitted data to STAR benchmarking since its inception in 2011, some 23% reported that they are undertaking on-going surveys rather than one-off surveys. Of those organisations who submitted data specifically for the 2012/13 year, 29% was from an on-going survey, which suggests that the number of landlords who are running continuous surveys is increasing. .

Rating scales

STAR benchmarking collates responses that can be equated to a five point descriptive scale containing:

Very satisfied
Fairly satisfied
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
Fairly dissatisfied
Very dissatisfied

This scale is used to produce the following three metrics:

Combined positive score – the proportions of fairly and very satisfied added together
Net satisfaction – very and fairly satisfied scores minus fairly and very dissatisfied
Very satisfied – to show the most positive responses

STAR allows a couple of minor variations on this five point descriptive scale. Five and ten point numeric scales are accepted as they can be mapped to the scale above. We collect data on rating scales to help users identify who is using which comparable scale.

In 2012/13, as in 2011/12, the overwhelming majority of organisations used the five point descriptive scale – accounting for 96% of all general needs and 93% of housing for older people surveys. The proportions were even higher for the other survey types – every organisation reported using five-point descriptive for leasehold, supported housing and shared ownership.

Survey methods

As long as the requirements for a statistically robust and representative survey are met, STAR can be conducted by post, telephone or face-to-face, or some combination of these methods. While online surveys can also be used, in view of the likelihood that these would not be representative of the wider population, we recommend that they should only be used as a 'top-up' to supplement one of the other three main survey methods.

When benchmarking the results, organisations can record which method or methods they used within each survey and the proportions collected by each method. To help organisations compare results, the system includes a filter on the method used to conduct the survey.

In 2012/13 postal surveys continue to be the most popular, with just under three-quarters of organisations using postal either alone or part of the survey method for general needs surveys (72%), the percentage is some 15% lower than in 2011/12. Use of postal surveys remains high for leasehold (77%), housing for older people surveys (78%) and supported housing surveys (83%)[8].

Of the other methods, telephone was the second most popular method – used either on its own or in addition to other survey methods - in over a third or more of general needs tenants (39%), housing for older people (35%) and shared owner surveys (39%).

Few surveys were carried out using face-to-face interviews, apart from in supported housing where they were used in 13% of the surveys. Online surveys were used most frequently in general needs, supported housing and shared owner surveys. The table below shows the percentage of surveys using different methodologies[9].

Survey method	General needs	Housing for older people	Supported	Leaseholder	Shared ownership
Face-to-face	3%	4%	13%	3%	0%
Online	16%	6%	9%	3%	11%
Postal	72%	78%	83%	77%	Not available
Telephone	39%	35%	22%	27%	39%

HouseMark is regularly asked to comment on the use of different methodologies to maximise response rates, reach difficult to engage with residents, or to make cost savings. The table below shows the wide range of survey methodologies used in 2012/13.

Survey method	Organisations %
Postal only	51%
Telephone only	24%

[8] Data is not available for Shared Owner surveys

[9] The percentages do not add up to 100% as organisations often used more than one methodology.

Postal + online	8%
Postal + telephone	7%
Postal + online + telephone	5%
Telephone + online	2%
Telephone + face-to-face	1%
Postal + face-to-face	1%
All four	1%
Face-to-face only	1%
Online only	1%

Survey providers

We ask each organisation who carried out their STAR survey as it can be useful for participants to establish whether an organisation has undertaken the work in-house as well as find out who is using the same provider. The analysis in this section has been carried out by HouseMark, not Feedback Services, as it deals with commercially sensitive data.

The questions asks who administered the 2012/13 STAR survey against a list of established providers. The totals are set out in the table below.

Survey provider	General needs	Housing for Older People	Lease-holder	Supported Housing	Shared Owner
In-house (not SNAP)	30	19	7	5	4
In-house (SNAP)	23	22	6	8	6
BMG	26	18	5	1	1
KWEST	20	9	4	4	1
Feedback Services	13	12	3	3	4
ARP Research	9	8	2	3	2
SNAP (not in-house)	6	2	1	1	
Ipsos MORI	4	1	1		
Leadership Factor	2	1	1	2	

Survey provider	General needs	Housing for Older People	Lease-holder	Supported Housing	Shared Owner
Skills & Projects	2	2			1
Other	50	30	10	5	4
Total	**185**	**124**	**40**	**32**	**23**

The largest proportion of surveys were carried out in-house by the social landlord – we have split this out into those using SNAP and those not using SNAP. Altogether, in-house (with or without SNAP) accounts for just over a third of STAR surveys.

By survey type, in-house accounts for 29% of general needs, 33% of housing for older people and leasehold and over 40% of supported and shared owner surveys. This suggests that smaller scale surveys are more likely to be undertaken in-house.

BMG has the largest market share of external providers in the list, accounting for 14% of general needs surveys and 13% overall. Of the 32 organisations submitting supported housing survey data, KWEST is the external provider with the largest market share.

Around a quarter of organisations submitting data stated that their provider was ‘Other’ and not in the list. Survey providers in this list include DJS Research, MEL, RMG Clarity and ORC International.

2.6 Tracking changes from 2011/12 to 2012/13

Some 55 organisations submitted data for both 2011/12 and 2012/13. Of these organisations, the median net positive score (general needs and housing for older people combined) had increased by close to one percentage point for overall services and the neighbourhood, whereas satisfaction with the value for money of the service charge had fallen by just over one percentage point.

3. Overall satisfaction

Taking everything into account, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the service provided by [your social housing provider]?
STAR Question Cor1

This question is aimed at assessing overall satisfaction with the landlord. As it is so wide ranging, it is largely based on perception and is perhaps difficult to influence over a short period of time. In spite of this, it is a very useful measure to gauge residents' reactions to large organisational changes such as rebranding or stock transfer over the medium term.

Combined positive is the most commonly used satisfaction metric in social housing performance measurement. When comparing survey types, tenants are more satisfied than home owners (leaseholders and shared owners), and tenants living in housing for older people and supported housing are more satisfied than general needs tenants. This pattern is mirrored throughout the rest of this report.

The inter-quartile[10] and overall ranges are much smaller for tenants than for home owners. This suggests that leaseholder and shared owner opinions are more polarised. The combined positive scores for home owners are higher in 2012/13 than those submitted in 2011/12, for example the median percentage is 4 percentage points higher for leaseholders and 3 percentage points higher for shared owners.

Combined positive score[11] Cor1	Upper quartile %	Median %	Lower quartile %	Highest %	Lowest %	No. of orgs
General needs	89	85	82	96	64	127
Housing for older people	94	92	88	98	77	85
Supported housing	94	88	83	100	73	23
Leasehold	71	63	53	98	40	33
Shared ownership	72	62	56	86	43	19

The net satisfaction measure takes into account the dissatisfied and neutral responses by subtracting the former and excluding the latter from the equation.

This exemplifies the range of opinions held by home owners – especially leaseholders. At the extreme, some organisations had very few dissatisfied leaseholder respondents, whereas others had more dissatisfied than satisfied leaseholders (hence the minus score).

[10] This is the range between upper quartile and lower quartile points

[11] "Fairly" and "very" satisfied proportions added together.

Net satisfaction[12] Cor1	Upper quartile	Median	Lower quartile	Highest	Lowest	No. of orgs
General needs	83	78	72	93	42	127
Housing for older people	91	87	83	96	60	85
Supported housing	92	82	71	100	53	23
Leasehold	55	37	26	97	-1	33
Shared ownership	60	43	31	75	7	19

The very satisfied measure can be used by organisations with high combined positive scores to really focus on achieving the best satisfaction outcomes. By comparing to the combined positive score, the data shows where there is most room for improvement.

At the median, half or more of the housing for older people and supported housing respondents were very satisfied, this drops to one in seven for leaseholders and one in five shared owners. This shows that the proportion of fairly satisfied residents is reasonably constant between the survey types (a range of 12 percentage points), but the proportion of very satisfied residents varies considerably (a range of 41 percentage points). The percentage of very satisfied residents has increased from the previous analysis for all tenant types (2 to 5 percentage points), with the exception of leaseholders.

Inter-quartile ranges are much larger than those for combined positive scores for the tenant survey types, but less than the range for home owner surveys. The proportion of tenants who feel very satisfied varies quite considerably between survey types, whereas the highest satisfaction levels of home owners fluctuate less.

Very satisfied Cor1	Upper quartile %	Median %	Lower quartile %	Highest %	Lowest %	No. of orgs
General needs	49	42	35	66	16	127
Housing for older people	61	56	49	74	23	85
Supported housing	61	50	43	100	20	23
Leasehold	22	15	11	44	4	33
Shared ownership	26	20	13	40	0	19

[12] Net satisfaction is “very” and “fairly” satisfied scores minus “fairly” and “very” dissatisfied.

The tables below break down the general needs survey data further to show medians for English regions[13], size and organisation type, covering each of the metrics above.

By region, the table shows the well documented 'London effect'. Satisfaction for London based organisations is around 10 percentage points lower than other regions across all quartiles for the combined positive rating. Outside London, the scores are remarkably similar, with only a few points separating the regions at each quartile threshold.

The net satisfaction score amplifies this effect – London organisations at the median and in the lower quartiles are 20 points lower and the upper quartiles are 10 points lower. This indicates that dissatisfaction levels are much higher in the capital than other parts of the country. The pattern is also seen in the percentage of very satisfied scores.

By size, medium sized organisations fare best on combined positive, net satisfaction and "very satisfied". Ratings for medium sized organisations are higher than large organisations and also small organisations, but to a lesser extent.

By organisation type, the combined positive scores and net scores were similar across all three types, with little variation also for upper and lower quartiles. At the median, housing associations fare better than ALMOs and local authorities for very satisfied.

Organisation profile item	Combined positive			Net satisfaction			Very satisfied			No. of orgs
Cor1	UQ	**Med**	LQ	UQ	**Med**	LQ	UQ	**Med**	LQ	
Central	89	**86**	83	84	**78**	73	49	**42**	35	35
London	83	**77**	76	75	**60**	55	37	**33**	29	16
North	91	**87**	82	85	**79**	73	51	**44**	40	38
South	89	**87**	85	84	**80**	77	49	**46**	41	33
Under 5,000	89	**85**	82	83	**77**	73	49	**43**	39	51
5,000 - 10,000	90	**87**	83	84	**79**	73	51	**45**	38	43
Over 10,000	88	**82**	76	81	**74**	59	42	**36**	32	33
Local authority	88	**86**	82	81	**77**	71	45	**40**	32	14
Housing association	89	**85**	82	84	**78**	70	50	**43**	36	94
ALMO	88	**85**	80	83	**77**	71	46	**39**	33	19

[13] The Scotland and Wales datasets were too small to calculate quartiles.

4. Quality of the home

How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the overall quality of your home?

STAR Question Cor2

This question tries to capture residents' feelings about the building fabric, fixtures and fittings provided by the landlord.

The levels of tenants' satisfaction with the quality of their home are quite similar to their overall satisfaction, whereas home owners are much more satisfied with the quality of their home than with the services provided by their landlord (some 13 to 16 percentage points higher).

This could relate to a different interpretation of the question. As home owners have more control over the quality of fixtures and fittings in their home, they are perhaps likely to be more satisfied. Right to buy leaseholders have invested in their home by buying it – they are more likely to be appreciative of it while, possibly being more critical of the services they continue to receive from the landlord.

The level of satisfaction found in 2012/13 for each group of residents is at least as high as the levels found a year ago or slightly higher.

Combined positive score Cor2	Upper quartile %	Median %	Lower quartile %	Highest %	Lowest %	No. of orgs
General needs	87	83	79	94	64	122
Housing for older people	96	94	92	100	79	82
Supported housing	98	89	85	100	70	24
Leasehold	87	82	76	98	57	24
Shared ownership	85	83	76	100	63	17

Net satisfaction scores continue the trend of higher ratings for home owners – with much lower levels of dissatisfaction evident among home owners compared to overall satisfaction.

For general needs tenants, the figures show a greater difference between the combined positive and net scores for this question compared to overall satisfaction. This suggests that this group is more likely to be dissatisfied with their home than with their landlord.

Net satisfaction Cor2	Upper quartile	Median	Lower quartile	Highest	Lowest	No. of orgs
General needs	78	73	67	91	36	122

Housing for older people	93	90	87	100	68	82
Supported housing	96	83	76	100	46	24
Leasehold	79	74	61	97	14	24
Shared ownership	78	72	61	100	44	17

At the median, three out of five tenants living in housing for older people accommodation were very satisfied with the quality of their home and half of supported housing residents are also satisfied. This drops to around two out of five general needs residents and shared owners and is even lower for leaseholders.

The proportion of fairly satisfied and very satisfied residents varies considerably between the survey types.

Inter-quartile ranges are much larger than those for combined positive scores for housing for older people, supported housing tenants and shared owners, but less so for general needs tenants and leaseholders. The proportion of tenants who feel very satisfied varies quite considerably between tenures, whereas the highest satisfaction levels of home owners fluctuate far less.

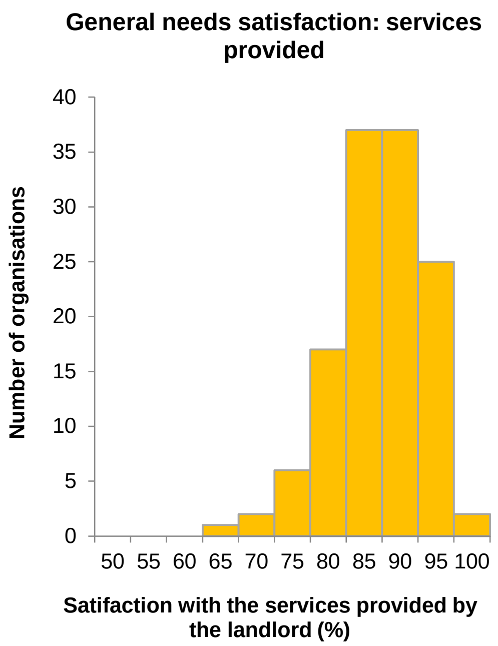
Very satisfied Cor2	Upper quartile %	Median %	Lower quartile %	Highest %	Lowest %	No. of orgs
General needs	45	40	34	62	16	122
Housing for older people	65	60	54	79	30	82
Supported housing	63	48	42	100	27	24
Leasehold	37	29	24	70	13	24
Shared ownership	46	37	26	69	13	17

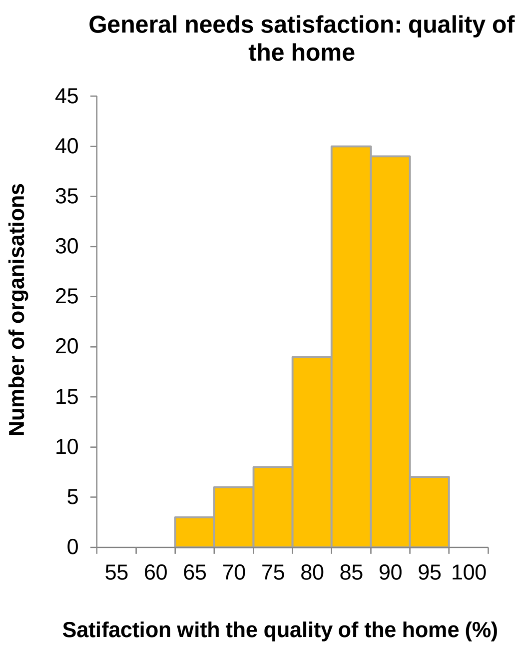
Frequency of satisfaction levels

Histograms show the spread of satisfaction across the full range of scores, rather than just at quartile thresholds. By comparing two histograms it is possible to see differences in the pattern of responses.

The charts below outline the distribution of respondents from the general needs surveys for satisfaction with the services provided and the quality of the home.

It is interesting that both satisfaction with the services provided and the quality of the home are both skewed to the right – although noticeably more for the quality of the home, with both the highest frequencies around the 85% and 90% mark.


General needs satisfaction: services provided
Number of organisations
0
5
10
15
20
25
30
35
40
50 55 60 65 70 75 80 85 90 95 100
Satifaction with the services provided by the landlord (%)


General needs satisfaction: quality of the home
Number of organisations
0
5
10
15
20
25
30
35
40
45
55 60 65 70 75 80 85 90 95 100
Satifaction with the quality of the home (%)

5. Neighbourhood

How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your neighbourhood as a place to live?

STAR Question Cor3

This question is intended to measure how residents feel about the area outside their home and how they feel they are perceived because of where they live. Although satisfaction will be affected by external factors, landlords have some influence on how communal and external areas look and feel – especially on estates.

The combined positive score shows that tenants living in housing for older people accommodation are the most satisfied with their surroundings. All three tenant surveys (general needs, housing for older people and supported housing) recorded very similar levels of satisfaction with the neighbourhood as for the home itself, a pattern which was found in 2011/12 as well.

Leaseholders are the least enamoured with their neighbourhood as a place to live, however the level of satisfaction is noticeably higher than satisfaction with their landlord, but lower than that for the home. It is interesting that only three quarters of leaseholders are satisfied with their neighbourhood, given that they knew the neighbourhood prior to purchasing their home, the possibility exists that the neighbourhood could have changed since the purchase.

At the median level the neighbourhood is more popular with home owners than in 2011/12, however due to the small number of organisations submitting data this could be influenced by organisational factors.

Combined positive score Cor3	Upper quartile %	Median %	Lower quartile %	Highest %	Lowest %	No. of orgs
General needs	87	85	80	93	71	124
Housing for older people	95	93	91	99	73	83
Supported housing	93	88	84	100	56	24
Leasehold	82	77	70	100	61	31
Shared ownership	90	84	81	100	73	18

The median scores for net satisfaction with neighbourhood are very similar to those for the home for all survey types except leasehold – where the median is 11 points lower. This suggests that there is a group of leaseholders that are happier with their home than with their neighbourhood.

Net satisfaction Cor3	Upper quartile	Median	Lower quartile	Highest	Lowest	No. of orgs
General needs	80	75	68	90	52	124

Housing for older people	92	90	86	98	59	83
Supported housing	92	82	75	100	20	24
Leasehold	71	63	51	100	33	31
Shared ownership	82	73	70	100	56	18

Looking at the percentage of "very satisfied" again highlights the difference between tenants and home owners. Leaseholders in particular are the least content with their neighbourhood, at the median level one in four is very satisfied with the area in which they live.

Very satisfied Cor3	Upper quartile %	Median %	Lower quartile %	Highest %	Lowest %	No. of orgs
General needs	51	45	40	68	24	124
Housing for older people	68	63	58	81	33	83
Supported housing	73	51	39	100	13	24
Leasehold	39	28	23	85	13	31
Shared ownership	49	43	38	63	26	18

6. Rent and service charge value for money

How satisfied or dissatisfied are you that your rent provides value for money?

STAR Question Cor4

Questions Cor4 and Cor5 (which relates to service charges) measure how much residents agree with the idea that their accommodation costs represent value for money.

The table below looks at satisfaction that the rent charged provides value for money. They refer only to tenants and shared owners. Note: This question is not relevant to leaseholders.

General needs and supported housing both show a drop in the median scores from overall satisfaction since 2011/12, whereas the level is maintained for housing for older people and shared owners. The biggest fall was recorded in supported housing where the median is 8 percentage points lower. This may indicate a tendency to think of the rent charge and service charge as one payment and for this tenure the charge is often a much higher figure than for general needs or housing for older people[14] , but this doesn't cloud supported housing tenants' overall satisfaction with the landlord.

Combined positive score Cor4	Upper quartile %	Median %	Lower quartile %	Highest %	Lowest %	No. of orgs
General needs	86	81	77	94	56	121
Housing for older people	93	91	88	97	69	82
Supported housing	86	81	79	100	21	21
Shared ownership	68	62	54	88	34	16

The drop between the combined positive and the net scores indicates that the median proportions of dissatisfied tenants are pretty similar to those for overall satisfaction, with the exception of shared owners where the drop is greater.

For supported housing survey respondents, the upper quartile score is considerably lower than that for overall satisfaction. This suggests higher levels of confusion, misinterpretation or dissatisfaction about value for money from this group.

Net satisfaction Cor4	Upper quartile	Median	Lower quartile	Highest	Lowest	No. of orgs
General needs	79	72	66	90	35	121

[14] Although core rents are much the same, the service charge element of supported housing is three or four times higher than general needs. Source: Dataspring

Housing for older people	90	86	83	96	56	82
Supported housing	79	74	68	100	0	21
Shared ownership	47	38	28	80	-1	16

At the median the proportion of very satisfied is close to that for very satisfied overall for all resident groups, as is the upper quartile – with the exception of supported housing where the score is 6 percentage points lower.

For tenants the range between the inter-quartile range and overall range are wider than those for the combined ratings. The proportion of tenants who feel "very" satisfied varies quite considerably between landlords, in contrast to shared owner ratings which fluctuate far less.

Very satisfied Cor4	Upper quartile %	Median %	Lower quartile %	Highest %	Lowest %	No. of orgs
General needs	47	40	35	67	13	121
Housing for older people	62	55	51	78	12	82
Supported housing	55	51	39	100	0	21
Shared ownership	28	22	15	40	12	16

How satisfied or dissatisfied are you that your service charges provide value for money?

STAR Question Cor5

This question looks at the value for money of the service charge only. This is an area where residents may directly relate the amount they are charged to the efficiency and effectiveness of those services included in the service charge.

This survey question is applicable to tenants, leaseholders and shared owners, although it is omitted for tenant surveys if the landlord does not differentiate between rent and service charges.

Satisfaction that service charges offer value for money is considerably lower than satisfaction with rent for most survey types (excluding supported housing where it is only 2 percentage points lower). At the median, the biggest drop between satisfaction with rent VFM and service charge VFM is for shared owners – with a 22 percentage point difference.

Service charge satisfaction is generally lower than overall satisfaction with services for all for survey types, particularly leaseholders. Home owners are, perhaps predictably, the least satisfied, with only a minority of organisations finding that over half of leaseholders feel they receive value for the service charges they pay.

Combined positive score Cor5	Upper quartile %	Median %	Lower quartile %	Highest %	Lowest %	No. of orgs
General needs	75	70	65	86	47	87
Housing for older people	89	84	81	97	71	58
Supported housing	81	79	73	100	65	17
Leasehold	54	50	37	67	21	29
Shared ownership	57	40	34	86	19	17

The net satisfaction scores produced a wide range of results. The inter-quartile ranges and the overall ranges are wider for all survey types – when compared to satisfaction with rent and overall satisfaction. This indicates a much broader range of opinions from residents about the services they receive for specific charges.

This is an area of particular dissatisfaction for home owners – with the lowest median scores of any question in the survey. There was a majority of dissatisfied home owner respondents in nearly half of the participating organisations (20 out of 46 organisations).

Net satisfaction Cor5	Upper quartile	Median	Lower quartile	Highest	Lowest	No. of orgs
General needs	64	57	48	82	24	87
Housing for older people	83	76	70	94	51	58
Supported housing	75	69	60	100	49	17
Leasehold	24	10	-12	47	-38	29
Shared ownership	23	4	-10	75	-41	17

At the median, housing for older people and supported housing are the only groups that have anywhere near half of respondents very satisfied with the value for money of the service charge. Compared with the proportion of very satisfied with the value for money of the rent, the proportion of general needs and housing for older people tenants dropped the most, each falling by 9 percentage points at the median.

The overall range varied considerably among tenants, but there was less fluctuation among home owners, with no organisations having more than two out of five very satisfied home owners.

Very satisfied Cor5	Upper quartile %	Median %	Lower quartile %	Highest %	Lowest %	No. of orgs
General needs	38	31	24	54	10	87

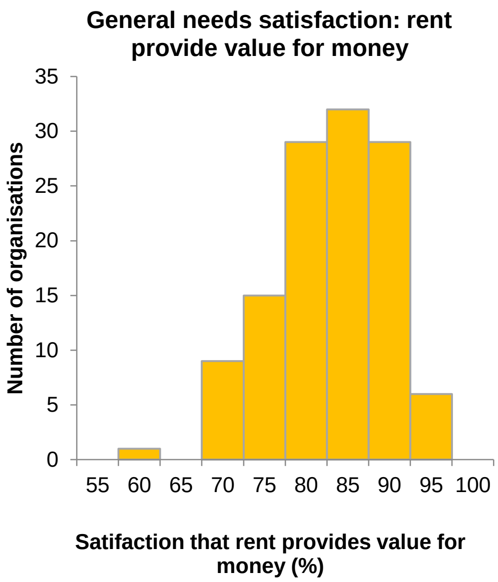
Housing for older people	54	46	40	72	13	58
Supported housing	54	46	42	100	20	17
Leasehold	17	10	6	39	0	29
Shared ownership	18	14	10	31	0	17

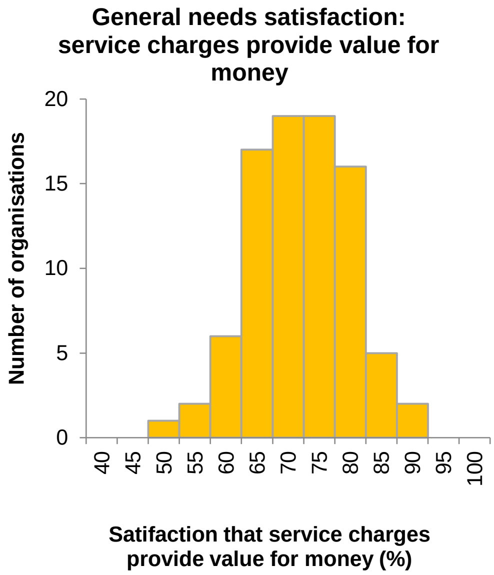
Frequency of satisfaction levels

The charts below outline the distribution of the two value for money questions for respondents of general needs surveys.

Considering the two questions both measure satisfaction with value for money for services provided, the distributions are very different. Satisfaction with rent is skewed to the right – there are few outliers at the top and bottom end of the scale with the highest frequencies around the 85% mark. Satisfaction with service charge has a much more 'normal' shape with a few outliers at the top and bottom and the highest frequencies in the middle.

Comparing the two questions shows that most general needs tenants are happier with the value for money of their rent rather than service charges. The patterns found are similar to 2011/12.





7. Repairs and maintenance satisfaction

Generally, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way [your social housing provider] deals with repairs and maintenance?

STAR Question Cor6

Repairs and maintenance is a key service provided by landlords and is included as a core question in STAR to reflect its importance. It should be noted that repairs satisfaction collected through Cor6 will be largely based on respondents' perception rather than experience of having repairs work carried out. STAR Questions[15] contains a range of optional satisfaction questions to measure transactional satisfaction about specific repair jobs.

The repairs satisfaction scores are close to those awarded for overall satisfaction for tenants, unlike the 2011/12 results which found much lower repairs ratings in relation to overall satisfaction, suggesting that gap has narrowed between the two measures. At the median, the ratings from general needs and housing for older people residents are 1 percentage point higher than 2011/12, while the rating from supported housing residents has slipped 3 percentage points.

Less than half of shared owners are satisfied with the repairs service. Home owners are more satisfied in 2012/13 than the levels found in 2011/12, however they are far less satisfied with repairs than tenants and the ratings are lower than those for overall satisfaction. The repairs service for home owners is usually limited to what is allowed for in the lease and will mainly cover external and internal repairs to communal buildings and areas. This differs for tenants where the service covers the majority of all home repairs and therefore usual to see considerable disparity in these satisfaction ratings.

Compared to satisfaction with the quality of their home, all survey types recorded lower scores at each quartile threshold. This suggests that residents are less satisfied with the repairs and maintenance services their landlord provides than the properties their landlord build or acquire.

Combined positive score Cor6	Upper quartile %	Median %	Lower quartile %	Highest %	Lowest %	No. of orgs
General needs	85	80	75	95	51	121
Housing for older people	92	89	85	98	70	81
Supported housing	88	81	74	100	47	23
Leasehold	55	49	43	78	28	27
Shared ownership	45	38	30	59	20	14

[15] See http://bit.ly/VTFKuH

The net scores highlight the amount of dissatisfaction with repairs in the lower quartiles across all survey types. At the lower quartile threshold there is a drop of between 9 and 18 points between the combined positive and net scores for tenants and 43 points for homeowners.

Net satisfaction Cor6	Upper quartile	Median	Lower quartile	Highest	Lowest	No. of orgs
General needs	76	67	57	91	20	121
Housing for older people	88	83	76	96	51	81
Supported housing	83	66	58	100	14	23
Leasehold	26	13		56	-22	27
Shared ownership	16	2	-13	25	-17	14

As in 2011/12 there is remarkably little change between the very satisfied scores for repairs and maintenance, satisfaction with home and overall satisfaction across each tenants' survey. This suggests that tenants who are very satisfied overall are likely to be very satisfied with their home and very satisfied with the repairs service.

The home owner proportions are much lower than those for overall satisfaction and the quality of home.

Very satisfied Cor6	Upper quartile %	Median %	Lower quartile %	Highest %	Lowest %	No. of orgs
General needs	49	43	37	66	18	121
Housing for older people	61	55	49	75	29	81
Supported housing	68	46	35	100	19	23
Leasehold	13	10	7	22	0	27
Shared ownership	16	12	8	25	0	14

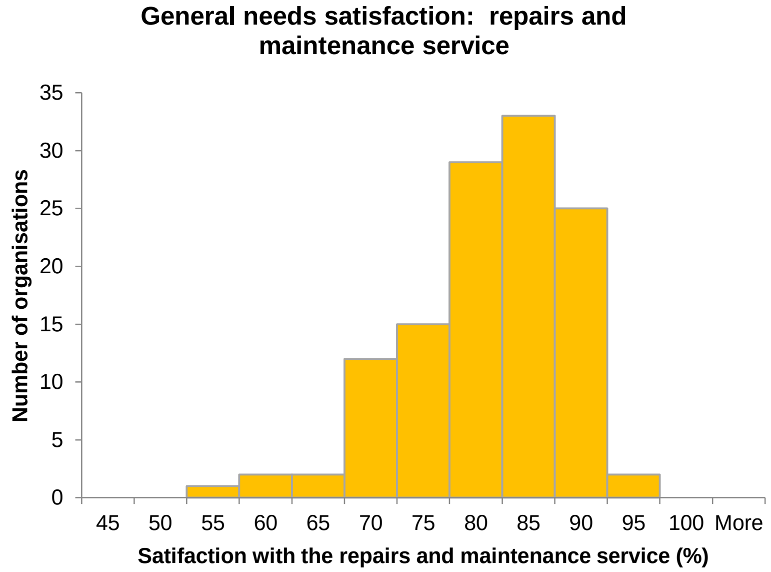
This table below shows the breakdown of repairs and maintenance satisfaction of general needs tenants by organisation characteristics.

The table breakdown is similar to that for overall satisfaction. For instance, the 'London effect' on the net satisfaction is around 20 points – similar to overall satisfaction and the combined positive is around 10 percentage points lower. The difference between local authority, housing association and ALMO combined positive scores is one percentage point difference, identical to that for overall satisfaction.

Organisation profile item Cor6	Combined positive			Net satisfaction			Very satisfied			No. of orgs
	UQ	**Med**	LQ	UQ	**Med**	LQ	UQ	**Med**	LQ	
Central	86	**81**	76	77	**69**	61	51	**45**	40	35
London	77	**71**	67	62	**48**	40	37	**33**	27	15
North	85	**81**	76	75	**68**	60	49	**43**	38	34
South	87	**83**	77	77	**72**	61	51	**46**	41	32
Under 5,000	85	**81**	76	75	**68**	59	49	**43**	39	49
5,000 - 10,000	85	**81**	77	76	**69**	62	50	**45**	40	39
Over 10,000	85	**77**	70	75	**62**	48	48	**38**	32	28
Local authority	83	**81**	77	74	**69**	63	47	**44**	40	12
Housing association	85	**80**	74	75	**66**	58	49	**43**	38	87
ALMO	87	**81**	74	80	**69**	56	49	**42**	33	17

Frequency of satisfaction levels

The histogram for repairs satisfaction is skewed to the right but with many more outliers at the lower end of the spectrum. The higher frequency results fall in the 80% to 90% groups, with a sharp fall above this level.



8. Responding to residents' views

How satisfied or dissatisfied are you that [your social housing provider] listens to your views and acts upon them?

STAR Question Cor7

This question seeks residents' views on how much influence they feel they have on the actions and decisions of their landlord.

The combined positive scores for this question were fairly low for all survey types. Of particular note is housing for older people and leaseholders, these respondents recorded the lowest satisfaction in this area out of all the benchmarked survey questions. Older tenants and leaseholders appear to be the least satisfied with the degree of influence they have over their landlord.

The latest survey found that respondents are slightly more satisfied in 2012/13 than those in 2011/12 with their landlord listening to and acting upon their views. Small increases in satisfaction were recorded for all residents (1 to 3 percentage points higher) and especially shared owners (6 percentage points higher).

Combined positive score Cor7	Upper quartile %	Median %	Lower quartile %	Highest %	Lowest %	No. of orgs
General needs	74	69	64	93	45	116
Housing for older people	82	77	72	94	57	78
Supported housing	91	77	65	100	53	23
Leasehold	55	43	36	78	25	31
Shared ownership	53	43	36	80	19	19

The lowest median net satisfaction scores for resident involvement are awarded by general needs and housing for older people. The levels of dissatisfaction taken into account in the net scores show that only service charge value for money received similar low ratings (supported housing) or lower satisfaction scores (home owners) than listening to views for some survey types.

The net scores across all survey types are lower than the corresponding figures for overall satisfaction, home and the neighbourhood, but were higher than those awarded by home owners for the repairs service.

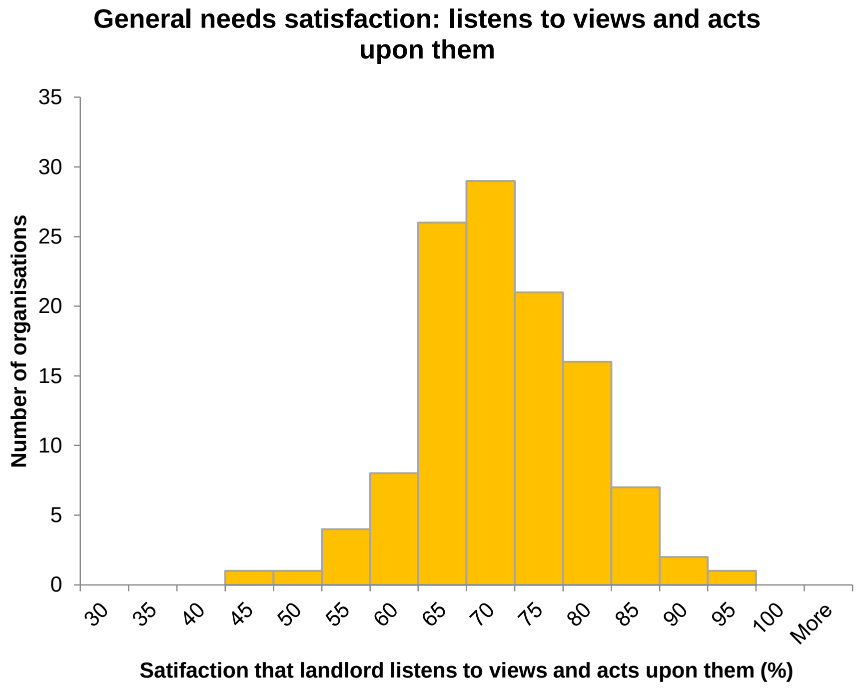
Net satisfaction Cor7	Upper quartile	Median	Lower quartile	Highest	Lowest	No. of orgs
General needs	64	55	48	87	15	116
Housing for older people	74	69	61	92	43	78
Supported housing	83	69	50	100	20	23

Leasehold	34	17	-1	71	-22	31
Shared ownership	33	15	1	61	-13	19

The low satisfaction scores shown for this question are reflected in the number of respondents stating they are very satisfied. Again housing for older people survey respondents recorded the largest drop – at the median this is 20 percentage points lower than the proportion of very satisfied respondents overall. At the median point the percentage of very satisfied residents has fallen some 23 percentage points from the 2011/12 results.

Very satisfied Cor7	Upper quartile %	Median %	Lower quartile %	Highest %	Lowest %	No. of orgs
General needs	36	30	24	61	12	116
Housing for older people	43	36	32	62	20	78
Supported housing	47	35	31	100	25	22
Leasehold	17	10	7	39	2	31
Shared ownership	19	11	9	27	0	19

The frequency of general needs survey scores plotted in a histogram produces a more 'normal' distribution than other questions. This shows that most organisations' satisfaction levels for this were in the middle, with a small number of outliers recording high and low satisfaction.



The wording of this type of question has been the subject of discussion for a number of years. Survey respondents may answer the question in relation to their experience when making a request, reporting a repair, making a complaint or a general consultation exercise – or (as evidenced in the high number responding "neither") consider that they have not had occasion to express their views.

In recognition of landlords' concerns HouseMark are hoping to carry out a consultation exercise on this questions in 2014/15.

9. What drives satisfaction?

Many market research companies that provide STAR services offer clients ‘key driver analysis’ as a way of investigating which factors of a resident’s experience have an influence on overall satisfaction.

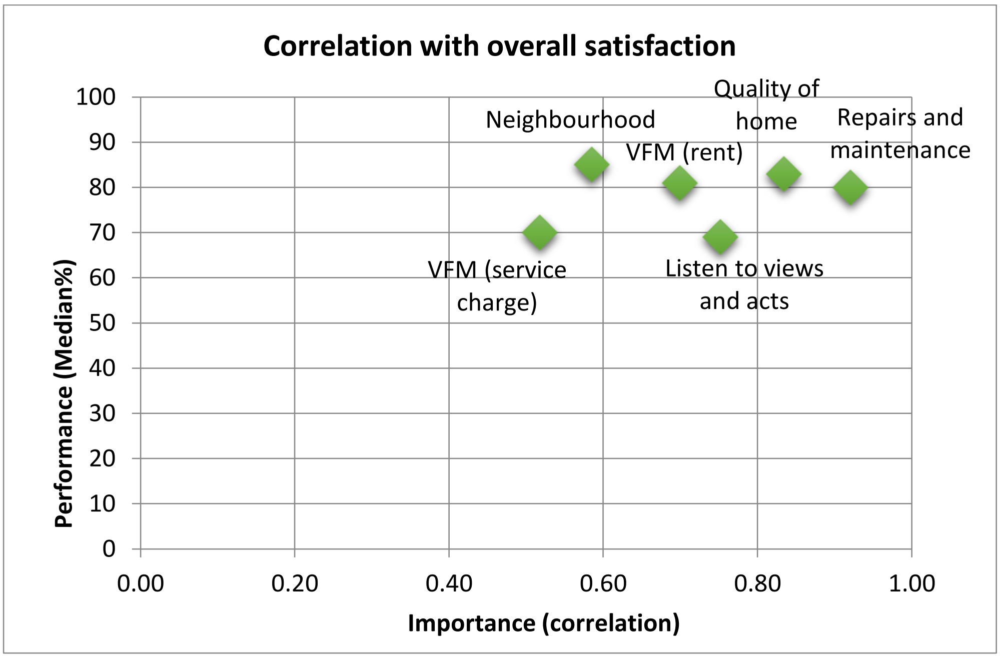
‘Key driver analysis’ has no precise statistical definition but is used as an umbrella term in the market research industry to cover a range of procedures.

At a simple level, you can use the results from the optional STAR question Ser1 to plot the frequency by which a service appears in the top three priorities against combined positive satisfaction for that service. This method does not require any specialist statistical software or knowledge, but does have drawbacks:

- the analysis is restricted to the services covered in the survey question about priorities.
- forcing the selection of a ‘top three’ can be crude and arbitrary. What if the respondent has fewer or more priorities? This could result in an important factor being dropped or a forced random choice of a less important factor.
- the output plot is not directly related to overall satisfaction.

An alternative starting point is to look at the correlation between the different core questions for general needs tenants. This tells us whether there is a relationship between overall satisfaction and the other core measures (and between the core measures themselves), but not whether the relationship is causal.

The chart below shows that every measure is significantly correlated with overall satisfaction, and that this correlation is positive. There is also significant inter-correlation between all pairs of measures (not shown on the chart).

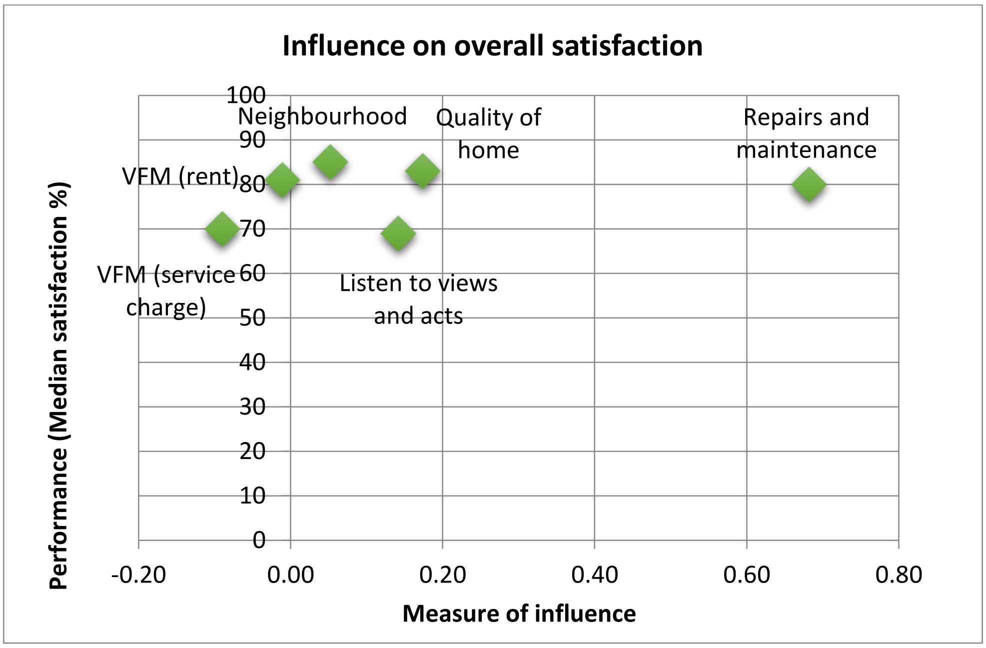


Note: Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Taking this a step further, we use linear regression analysis to assess the causal relationship. Does each of the other core measures affect overall satisfaction, and how large is that effect, if any? The analysis looks at the relationships that each question has with the others and with the overall satisfaction scores.

In this regression analysis, each question area is assigned a value of how much influence it exerts on overall satisfaction (see appendix for further details). The values can then be plotted on a graph showing their relative effect on overall satisfaction against the median satisfaction level for each question area.

The resulting plot for general needs surveys in HouseMark's STAR benchmarking dataset for 2012/13 is outlined below.



This shows that repairs and maintenance has the biggest influence on overall satisfaction, and is identical to the finding in 2011/12. Organisations whose residents are satisfied in this area tend to have the highest rates of overall satisfaction too.

The second highest contribution comes from 'quality of home'. This is highly correlated with the repairs and maintenance service but further analysis suggests that both should be in the model.

The third highest influence on overall satisfaction comes from the 'listens and acts' question, even though its level of median satisfaction is the lowest of the group of core questions. This implies that getting resident involvement right is an important factor in achieving good overall satisfaction scores, as the lower levels of scores this achieves is reducing the overall satisfaction scores. The neighbourhood has a lesser impact on overall satisfaction, and influence from value for money of the rent is very close to zero and hence negligible[16].

[16] The negative element of the measure of influence for VFM are likely to be caused by the interaction between the core questions, and its affect is already accounted for in the other questions – see appendix for further details.

10. How do costs relate to satisfaction?

This section compares the satisfaction and cost levels in organisations that conducted a STAR survey in 2012/13 and have submitted data for the same year to HouseMark's core benchmarking exercise. Core benchmarking does not literally measure the cost of satisfaction, but it can be used to assess whether higher costs relate to better quality as measured through STAR surveys.

The analysis in this section looks at the correlation between cost and performance measures and combined general needs tenants and housing for older people satisfaction levels. At the time of writing this report, 115 organisations who submitted core benchmarking data to HouseMark (i.e. including cost data) had also submitted STAR satisfaction data for surveys conducted in the 2012/13 year.

The tables below use Pearson's correlation coefficient[17] to identify a link between two sets of data. The coefficient for some measures (such as cost) shows as a negative – where lower costs correlate to higher satisfaction.

Overall satisfaction

Looking at headline cost indicators, there are only weak correlation coefficient scores for total cost per property[18] of housing management and the total cost per property of responsive repairs scores, suggesting that there is little relationship between the cost of management and maintenance and the level of satisfaction. The strongest correlation was with the total cost per property of estate services.

Cor1 Overall satisfaction	Coefficient score	Strength
Total cost per property of estate services	-0.43	Moderate
Total cost per property of responsive repairs & void works	-0.29	Weak
Percentage of units at affordable rent	-0.16	Weak
Total cost per property of housing management	-0.11	Weak

Quality of the home

The coefficient score for this question and the total number of units in management produced the strongest correlation in the grouping. Although it is still moderate in

[17] 1 or -1 are the strongest correlations, 0 is no correlation. See Appendix 1 for further details.

[18] This includes all direct management / maintenance costs as well a proportion of overheads such as IT, Human Resources, Governance etc.

strength, there appears to be some relationship with how satisfied tenants are with their homes.

In relative terms, satisfaction with home has a stronger correlation with repairs and maintenance cost than it does with housing management costs where no correlation was found.

Cor2 satisfaction with home	Coefficient score	Strength
Total number of general needs and housing for older people units managed	-0.30	Moderate
Total cost per property of responsive repairs & void works	-0.29	Weak
Percentage of units at affordable rent	-0.07	No correlation
Total cost per property of housing management	-0.03	No correlation

Neighbourhood as a place to live

Again, the total number of units in management appears with the strongest coefficient. The two headline cost measures have weak or no correlation to satisfaction levels with the neighbourhood.

Cor3 satisfaction with neighbourhood	Coefficient score	Strength
Total number of general needs and housing for older people units managed	-0.31	Moderate
Total cost per property of responsive repairs & void works	-0.15	Weak
Percentage of units at affordable rent	-0.03	No correlation
Total cost per property of housing management	-0.01	No correlation

Value for money (rent)

The strongest correlation for value for money for rent was with estate services and the total number of units in management. The link with estate services is unexpected as this is often charged separately from the core rent. Although the correlation is only moderate, it could suggest that tenants don’t always differentiate between the value for money of rent and that of service charges as they pay just one total sum.

The moderate correlation with the response repairs & void works suggests that residents take this service into account when evaluating value for money.

Cor4 satisfaction that rent provides VFM	Coefficient score	Strength
Total number of general needs and housing for older people units managed	-0.37	Moderate
Total cost per property of responsive repairs & void works	-0.32	Moderate
Total cost per property of estate services	-0.30	Moderate
Percentage of units at affordable rent	0.07	No correlation
Total cost per property of housing management	0.03	No correlation

Value for money (service charge)

The strongest correlation for this question is with a rent arrears measure. It shows a strong correlation and suggests good performance on income management as a whole is likely to raise satisfaction with value for money from the service charge element of a tenant's payment to their landlord.

A moderate link was found with the total cost per property and a weaker correlation with the cost of responsive repairs & void works.

Cor5 satisfaction that service charge provides VFM	Coefficient score	Strength
Current tenant rent arrears as a percentage of the rent due (excluding voids)	-0.50	strong
Total cost per property	-0.30	Moderate
Total cost per property of responsive repairs & void works	-0.27	Weak
Percentage of units at affordable rent	0.04	No correlation
Total cost per property of housing management	-0.01	No correlation

Repairs and maintenance service

One of the strongest relationships in this area was the total cost per property for repairs, however the correlation was not quite as strong as that for the total cost per property of estate services.

Cor6 satisfaction with repairs	Coefficient score	Strength
Total cost per property of estate services	-0.37	Moderate
Total cost per property of responsive repairs & void works	-0.33	Moderate
Average number of repairs per property	-0.20	Weak
Percentage of units at affordable rent	-0.14	Weak
Total cost per property of housing management	-0.10	Weak
Percentage of repairs completed on time	0.06	No correlation

Listens to views and acts upon them

Satisfaction in this area produced the weakest correlations out of any question. This could be due to tenants basing the question purely on perceptions that can't be related to actual costs or performance.

Cor7 satisfaction that landlord listens to views and acts upon them	Coefficient score	Strength
Total cost per property of responsive repairs & void works	-0.18	Weak
Percentage of units at affordable rent	-0.13	Weak
Total cost per property of resident involvement	0.11	Weak
Total cost per property of housing management	0.08	No correlation

Correlation summary

Overall, the data shows that the amount a landlord spends on management and maintenance bears little or no relation to satisfaction levels. There appears to be little justification for the maxim that higher costs translate into higher satisfaction.

The analysis found that the total costs of the estate services and responsive repairs showed a moderate correlation with satisfaction with the repairs service, value for money of the rent and overall satisfaction.

It is also interesting that although not associated to costs, the size of an organisation had some influence over satisfaction with the home, neighbourhood and value for money of the rent.

11. Is it possible to predict STAR scores?

Aims of the research

In 2013/14 HouseMark carried out research to identify whether it is possible to predict satisfaction scores solely based on known demographic factors such as resident age and geography. A key part of this analysis involved identifying the drivers of satisfaction for all social landlords regardless of their type, size, location and resident composition.

Using the STAR core questions the research attempted to design a model which could create a new adjusted satisfaction score for the landlord – by taking their actual satisfaction score and amending it to compensate for their particular demographics. A few years ago, Ipsos Mori had attempted a similar exercise with their Frontiers analysis of local authority STATUS satisfaction scores.

Detailed analysis

Using the STAR data from 22 individual landlord datasets a large dataset of over 1.3 million individual data points was created. The data was first subjected to a preliminary data analysis (summary statistics, cross-tabulations and correlations). The analysis then progressed to multivariate approaches (variables are considered in combination, not individually or in pairs) such as factor analysis and regression.

Research findings

The current conclusion of our research is that we cannot predict satisfaction scores for individual social landlords. Though there are a number of landlord and respondent characteristics that are significantly related to the core STAR ‘overall satisfaction’ measure, and also to the other six core STAR measures scores, their predictive strength is poor, and none successfully predict the differences that can be observed between different landlords.

The most notable predictive variable for satisfaction is age: satisfaction does indeed increase with age. The key dividing age lies somewhere between 50 and 65 years. Many of the other observed relationships are themselves related to age – health problems, long term conditions and disability, older person / sheltered / supported housing, bungalows.

A second important strand of related features is built around location or geography. These also include whether the landlord is a LSVT housing association, whether it is urban or rural, and individual respondents’ ethnicity and religion.

Though the respondent characteristics are not good predictors of ‘overall satisfaction’, or indeed any of the *individual* seven core STAR measures, they are significantly and more strongly related to the mean score of the seven core STAR questions.

Exploring your own data

The research has demonstrated that demographic and other factors do have some influence on satisfaction scores. It is hoped that the research will encourage landlords to examine their own data in greater depth and identify their own drivers of satisfaction in an attempt to improve customer insight and service delivery by understanding what matters most to their individual residents.

Further information

A technical report summarising the work and conclusions reached in the research will be available from HouseMark in April 2014. The report explains in full the purpose of the analysis and the detailed findings.

12. Other HouseMark services available to understand satisfaction

Knowledge base

HouseMark's Knowledge Base is a searchable database, containing over a hundred articles specifically relating to satisfaction with links to all major organisations providing services to landlords.

Forum

HouseMark's forum is the liveliest place on the web for discussion with other housing practitioners. If a colleague can't help you, our forum experts are on hand to answer the most difficult queries relating to satisfaction surveys or analysis.

PI Finder

PI Finder provides an easily-accessible, searchable directory of Performance Indicators. It includes all the measures used in this report as well as detailed definitions of cost and performance metrics used in our benchmarking systems.

Consultancy

HouseMark's housing consultancy team and associates are respected and trusted individuals. They have a wide range of experience and knowledge and are experts in their fields.

Dovetailing with STAR, HouseMark's consultancy offer supports you to better understand your tenants and tailor your services to meet their needs. We can help you with the following:

- achieve a deeper analysis of satisfaction data from satisfaction benchmarking and your own surveys
- look at how satisfaction data can be used as a sanity check against performance and cost information within the organisational context
- provide advice on how to use triangulated data as a business intelligence tool for targeting areas of performance and service improvement
- advise on ways of increasing customer satisfaction (including implementing best practice, service reviews and improvement, increased resident involvement, improved customer communication/marketing)
- develop your performance staff's analysis capability so that they can interpret satisfaction information in comparison to peers
- facilitate workshops with staff, tenants/residents, board members and councillors to develop a common understanding of your satisfaction data and develop proposed actions
- draft action plans and prioritise.

13. Appendices

Appendix 1: Explanation of how the STAR data has been analysed

Using quartiles and medians

Quartile information has also been used to analyse the data. This is an effective way of ranking performance and satisfaction data.

When the data is ranked in ascending / descending order, the median is the value at the mid-point. It can be used to give landlords an idea of how close to ‘the norm’ their figures are.

The upper quartile value ‘cuts off’ the highest 25% of the data (eg lowest cost or best performance). If a landlord’s performance is in the top 25% of landlords in the sample, it will be in the upper quartile.

The lower quartile value ‘cuts off’ the lowest 25% of the data (eg highest cost or worst performance). If a landlord’s performance is in the bottom 25% of landlords in the sample, it will be in the lower quartile.

Regression analysis

In this report, a regression analysis has been carried out to understand how overall satisfaction, known in this type of analysis as the dependent variable, changes in response to other variables, known as independent variables. In particular we wanted to understand which of a set of independent variables (the core satisfaction scores other than overall satisfaction) are related to overall satisfaction and the nature of the relationship.

We have assumed a linear regression, which can be depicted mathematically by a formula of the form:

$$Y=\beta_0+\beta_1X_1+\beta_2X_2+\beta_3X_3+\ \ldots+\varepsilon$$

where Y is the dependent variable, the Xs denote the independent variables and ε is an error term. The measure of influence from each independent variable is denoted by the beta-coefficients. It is these beta-coefficients that are plotted against median satisfaction scores in the chart in section nine.

A complication with this type of regression analysis is multicollinearity - the independent variables may be too highly correlated. Multicollinearity can lead to misleading effects such as negative values for certain beta coefficients.

A common method for reducing multicollinearity is to eliminate one of a pair of highly correlated variables. This can be achieved by creating new variables from the highly correlated variables (it was not appropriate in this analysis).

A regression analysis has a number of underlying assumptions associated with it. We tested the robustness of our final model against these assumptions. We also used a test of the ‘variance inflation factor’ being less than five to confirm that the most severe multicollinearity problems had been addressed, and checked that none of the tolerance values are close to one, which could indicate that the measures were not linearly related.

Correlation

Pearson's correlation coefficient measures the strength of association between two indicators (eg the relationship between two cost and satisfaction indicators). For this type of analysis, the closer the correlation coefficient gets to +1 or -1, the stronger the correlation (relationship) between the two indicators.

We have interpreted the strength of the coefficient scores in the following way:

- 0.50 to 1.0 Strong
- 0.30 to 0.49 Moderate
- 0.10 to 0.29 Weak
- 0 to 0.09 No correlation

Note: the scale is the same for negative scores.

The analysis excluded some correlations where either the range or the dataset were too small to produce a reliable figure.

For further information on the statistical analysis, please contact Vicki Howe, HouseMark Business Data Analyst on 024 7646 0500 or email vicki.howe@housemark.co.uk.

Using and interpreting the data

The key benefit of this analysis report is the direction that it points you in. It paints a picture of what is ‘normal’ in the sector and where the differences lie at a UK wide level. The baseline set by this report should be cross referenced with your own situation and experiences to inform your service plan and improve the business.

Appendix 2: Validation

HouseMark's Data services team undertakes validation checks on STAR benchmarking data to ensure the results are robust and consistent. They carry out a number of checks and, if necessary, seek clarification or amendment from participating organisations.

The checks include:

- That the survey was carried out using a random sample and that the response numbers are sufficient to meet the required margin of error.
- That the core questions are consistent with the published wording and use appropriate responses.
- That the profile information has been fully completed.
- That the results have been entered correctly for each tenure type used.

If the results do not meet the required margin of error they will still be recorded but will be flagged as not meeting this; results can then be benchmarked and filtered by those that meet the margins or not as required.

Appendix 3: Future developments to the STAR Benchmarking Service

Measuring and comparing trends over time

As this is the second report to analyse STAR results, limited trend data is now available and will continue to develop over subsequent reports. Landlords are able to use the STAR benchmarking service to input their latest results of STAR surveys which will establish a greater bank of information and trends.

Widening the Service to encompass optional questions

The service initially enabled landlords to benchmark satisfaction data for the seven core questions only. HouseMark has now expanded the STAR benchmarking service in 2013 to include the most popular optional questions, including the net promoter question (Gen5).

Reviewing the listens and acts question

Over the past year a few landlords have raised their concerns about the wording of one of the core seven core questions - satisfaction with listens to views and acts upon them. In developing STAR HouseMark designed this question to replace a similar question which was generally accepted as being unclear and poorly worded. Having reviewed two years data sets this question set is the least used of the core questions (excluding the service charge question which is not always appropriate to ask) and the proportion of “neither” category is much higher for this core question than any other. HouseMark hope to carry out a consultation on this question in 2014/15.

We are always open to suggested improvements and responsive to new ideas. Please contact benchmarking@housemark.co.uk or telephone 024 7647 2707 with your comments and suggestions on how the service may be improved

Appendix 4: Disclosure of information

The information and data contained in this report are subject to the following clauses in HouseMark members' subscription agreements. These refer to future and further use of the information.

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Further information

For further information visit our website
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About HouseMark

HouseMark is the leading provider of performance improvement and value for money solutions to the social housing sector and is jointly owned by the Chartered Institute of Housing and the National Housing Federation; two not-for-profit organisations which reinvest their surpluses in the social housing sector.