

Mid pandemic residents' survey 2021

Background, methodology and
results

June 2021





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About the survey

This report presents the results of our mid pandemic residents' survey 2021, which explores residents' views about the council, services and the local area. The survey helps us understand how the pandemic has affected our communities so we can plan for the recovery together.

About the survey - overview



Overview

Why run a mid pandemic residents' survey?

We normally carry out an Annual Residents' Survey (ARS) in the winter or spring of each year. In 2020 we had to cancel the survey as the UK went into the first lockdown. We had hoped to carry out our usual ARS again in 2021. Unfortunately, because of the further lockdown in the winter, we had to change our plans again.

During the pandemic we have not been able to engage with residents in the normal way and have had to find new ways of engaging.

Even though we could not carry out our usual ARS, it was still important to us to understand how the

pandemic had affected our communities and their experiences of the local area, council services and other public services.

In the summer of 2020, we asked residents in a self-selecting survey how the pandemic was impacting on them. Recognising that self-selecting surveys only give a limited picture and may not necessarily be reflective of the wider population, we also wanted to complement this with a survey representative of the borough population. In response we commissioned a dedicated mid pandemic residents' telephone survey.

Many council's ask their communities similar questions. This year, some councils decided to ask questions in different ways

while others decided not to carry out surveys.

We wanted to understand how our residents felt at this challenging time so we could work with them and with our partners to address the impacts of the pandemic as we move into the recovery phase.

The purpose of our mid pandemic residents' survey is to give us a snapshot of the pandemic impact and help us plan for the future together.

Because of the differences in methodology and the context in which the survey took place, results should not be compared directly to our normal ARS.



Background

The mid pandemic residents' survey is designed to collect data on resident perceptions about the council, local services and the local area a year into the pandemic. The questions are based on our usual Annual Residents' Survey (ARS) which has been running for 20 years. Unfortunately, because of the difference in methodology due to the survey being carried out during lockdown, results should not be directly compared over time to the ARS. The questions are closely tied to service priorities and are designed to provide us with insight into what matters to our residents as we move into the pandemic recovery.

Fieldwork

The survey took place between 2 February and 30 March 2021, during a period when England was in full lockdown.

The results are based on telephone interviews with a sample of 1,108 residents, representative of the Tower Hamlets population.

The work was carried out on the council's behalf by Westco Trading Ltd., an independent research company. Interviews were carried out by telephone given the restrictions of lockdown. For our usual ARS, interviews are normally carried out face to face.

Implications of a telephone survey

Evidence from various studies comparing survey methods indicates that face to face and telephone surveys result in different response distributions. This means that even if the same questions are used, results cannot be compared directly.

Specifically, research shows that

- It is harder to get a hold of and to engage with participants;
- It takes longer to read questions and response options by telephone; and
- It is harder to obtain a good random location sampling.

Survey content

The questionnaire is based on our ARS questionnaire and comprises core questions and additional questions. The core questions focus on service and council perception. The additional questions reflect current service priorities and areas of interest. We have included questions on friendship group diversity and cohesion, which are important in the context of the pandemic. We had to remove some questions normally included in our ARS (including questions on anti-social behaviour, financial concerns, customer service and cycling habits) because the survey needed to be shorter for telephone interviewing.

Mid pandemic residents' survey 2021

The results of the mid pandemic residents' survey need to be viewed in the context of the pandemic. This has been an extraordinary year. Since March 2020 the council has prioritised supporting our communities through Covid-19 while many of our services were disrupted by the pandemic.

About the survey - a residents' survey in an extraordinary year



We stopped doing some of our 'business as usual activities' so we could adapt quickly to respond to the demands of the pandemic and ensure that particularly our most vulnerable residents were supported.

We could no longer offer customer services in person and we adapted to offering some important services remotely or online. We responded to the huge challenges of the pandemic by mobilising our staff and the voluntary sector in efforts to support those who were shielding. We adapted existing council premises into logistics hubs from which we co-ordinated the distribution of vital food and household supplies to those advised to stay at home.

We continued to run core public services, including waste collections and street cleaning throughout. When schools closed during the lockdowns, we made sure that children were able to access classes, providing the most vulnerable in our communities with laptops so they could access online learning.

Our sports facilities, leisure centres and Idea stores had no option but to close for long periods in order to prevent the spread of the virus.

We moved many services online and we recognise it was difficult for many people to be without public amenities they were used to.

Many of our residents spent more time at home and in their local neighbourhoods. This has made the quality of neighbourhoods even more important. Across the country, use of parks went up by 25% during the last year. In parts of London, the increase in footfall in parks was more than 500%.

The national Covid Social Study identified that across the country, levels of happiness, life satisfaction and confidence in government had seen improvements but remained low during our fieldwork period.

All of this will have had an impact on how residents feel about local services, the council, and the impact of the pandemic on their lives.

We sampled 1,108 Tower Hamlets residents and set quotas to ensure that the sample is representative of the borough. This section explains the survey methodology in more detail, including statistical reliability, sample profiling and weighting.

About the survey - methodology



Methodology

Telephone survey

Due to Covid-19 restrictions, the survey was carried out by telephone instead of face to face. From the 1,108 residents who responded to the survey, 446 were contacted on landline and 662 were contacted on mobile telephones.

Statistical reliability

Survey results are estimates of the results that we would get if we were to survey the entire population in Tower Hamlets. The concept of statistical reliability is based on how confident we are that the sample of individuals we interviewed is representative of the general population.

A sample of 1,108 Tower Hamlets residents was interviewed. With a sample of this size, at a 95% level of confidence, and on a 50% agreement score, the confidence intervals attached to the % ratings is $\pm 3.0\%$. This means that there is a 95% chance that the "true" value will (if we had interviewed the entire population in Tower Hamlets) fall within 47% and 53%.

The confidence intervals depend as well on the result itself: the closer to 50% the wider the confidence interval; the further away from 50% (i.e., closer to 0% or 100%) the narrower the confidence interval.

Sample profile

The methodology is designed to ensure that the sample drawn is representative of the borough's population generally. Sampling quotas were set on ethnicity, age, gender, and working status, to ensure that the sample reflected the characteristics of the population of Tower Hamlets.

If quotas are not reached, weighting is applied. Some of the quotas set were not achieved, particularly in terms of age. For example, fewer than the required 18-34 years old participants were surveyed, and more than the required 35-44 years old participants were surveyed (see table on the next page).

Mid pandemic residents' survey 2021

This is a normal result of conducting surveys by telephone, which makes it harder to get a hold of and to engage with participants, particularly younger residents and newer residents who may not have landline numbers or may be less likely to answer a call on their mobile from numbers they do not recognise.

Weightings

To minimise effects of the survey design and data collection mode on the results, data has been weighted to the known profile of Tower Hamlets residents on ethnicity, age, gender and working status.

This ensures that the views

About the survey - methodology



of hard-to-reach demographic groups are still considered at an equal proportion to the population in the final data.

Other notes on the results

Unless otherwise indicated, results are based on all

respondents. Answers with a base size of less than 100 are indicative only and should be treated with caution.

Results may not add up to 100% as percentages are rounded to the nearest integer.

GROUP	QUOTAS	SAMPLE ACHIEVED	DIFFERENCE
Gender Male	53% (583)	48% (528)	-5%
Gender Female	47% (517)	52% (580)	+5%
Age 16-34 years old	48% (528)	32% (354)	-16%
Age 35-44 years old	23% (253)	34% (378)	+11%
Age 45-59 years old	17% (187)	18% (196)	+1%
Age 60+ years old	12% (132)	16% (180)	+4%
Working status – Working full time	51% (561)	46% (506)	-5%
Working status – Not working full time	49% (539)	54% (602)	+5%
Total	100% (1,100)	100% (1108)	

Mid pandemic residents' survey 2021

About the survey – methodology participants (before weighting)



Gender	Sample
Male	501 (45.2%)
Female	554 (50.0%)
Prefer not to say	53 (4.8%)

Age group	Sample
18-24	94 (8.5%)
25-34	215 (19.4%)
35-44	327 (29.5%)
45-59	159 (14.4%)
60-64	28 (2.5%)
65+	128 (11.6%)
Prefer not to say	157 (14.2%)

Working full time (30+ hrs)	Sample
Yes	482 (43.5%)
No	526 (56.5%)

Home ownership	Sample
Owner	272 (24.5%)
Housing association	277 (25.0%)
Rent from council/ THH	333 (30.1%)
Rent privately	150 (13.5%)
Other	25 (2.3%)
Prefer not to say	51 (4.6%)

Time of residency in Tower Hamlets	Sample
Up to 1 year	8 (0.7%)
Between 1+ and 2 years	16 (1.4%)
Between 2+ and 5 years	78 (7.0%)
Between 5+ and 10 years	125 (11.3%)
Between 10+ and 20 years	271 (24.5%)
More than 20 years	589 (53.2%)
Don't know	21 (1.9%)

Social grade	Sample
A – High managerial, administrative or professional	65 (5.9%)
B – Intermediate managerial, administrative or professional	161 (14.5%)
C1 – Supervisory, clerical and junior managerial, administrative or professional	228 (20.6%)
C2 – Skilled manual workers	190 (17.1%)
D – Semi and unskilled manual workers	125 (11.3%)
E – State pensioners, casual workers, long term unemployed or workless	232 (20.9%)
Prefer not to say	107 (9.7%)

Ethnicity	Sample
White - British	392 (35.5%)
White - Irish	17 (1.5%)
White - Gypsy / Roma	6 (0.5%)
Any other white background	143 (12.9%)
TOTAL WHITE	558 (50.3%)
Mixed - White and Black Caribbean	6 (0.6%)
Mixed - White and Black African	3 (0.3%)
Mixed - White and Asian	13 (1.2%)
Any other mixed background	12 (1.1%)
TOTAL MIXED	35 (3.2%)
Asian - Indian	15 (1.4%)
Asian - Pakistani	5 (0.5%)
Asian - Bangladeshi	344 (31.1%)
Any other Asian background	22 (2.0%)
TOTAL ASIAN	387 (34.9%)
Black - Caribbean	23 (2.1%)
Black - African	31 (2.8%)
Black - Somali	7 (0.6%)
Any other Black background	3 (0.3%)
TOTAL BLACK	64 (5.8%)
Chinese	1 (0.1%)
Any other background	18 (1.6%)
TOTAL OTHER	19 (1.7%)
Prefer not to say	26 (2.3%)
Missing	19 (1.7%)
TOTAL UNKNOWN	45 (4.0%)



Results

Image of the council

Respondents were asked to what extent they agree or disagree with 15 different statements related to the image of the council.

Image of the council



These questions cover five different themes:

Trust and transparency

- Trust in the council
- The council is open and transparent about its activities
- My council doesn't do enough for people like me

Communication and involvement

- My council keeps residents informed
- My council listens to concerns of local residents
- My council involves residents when making decisions

Customer service

- My council has staff who are friendly and polite
- My council is difficult to get through to on the phone
- My council responds quickly when asked for help

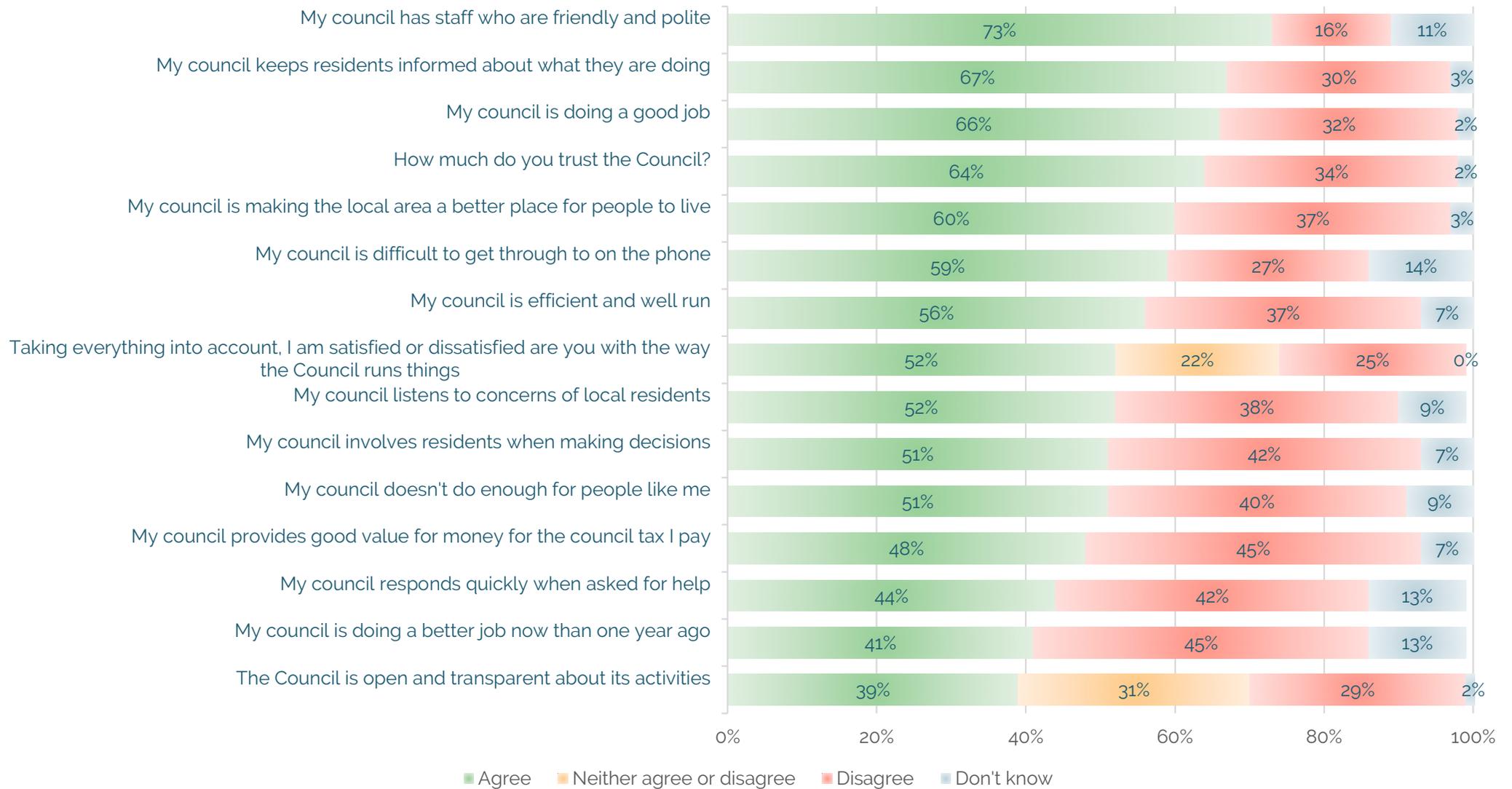
Efficiency

- My council is efficient and well run
- My council provides good value for money for the council tax I pay
- My council is making the local area a better place for people to live

Delivery

- My council is doing a good job
- My council is doing a better job now than one year ago
- Satisfaction with the way the council runs things

The chart on the next page shows the percentage of residents who agree, disagree and neither agree nor disagree with each statement.



Note: Results may not add up to 100% as each percentage was rounded to the nearest integer. Questions are answered in a 4-points response scale: 1) a great deal, 2) to some extent, 3) not very much, 4) not at all. The first 2 response options were merged into "agree" and the last 2 into "disagree". Exceptions are "Satisfaction with how the Council runs things" and "The council is open and transparent", which include a middle point in the response scale.



Results

Use of services

Mid pandemic residents' survey 2021

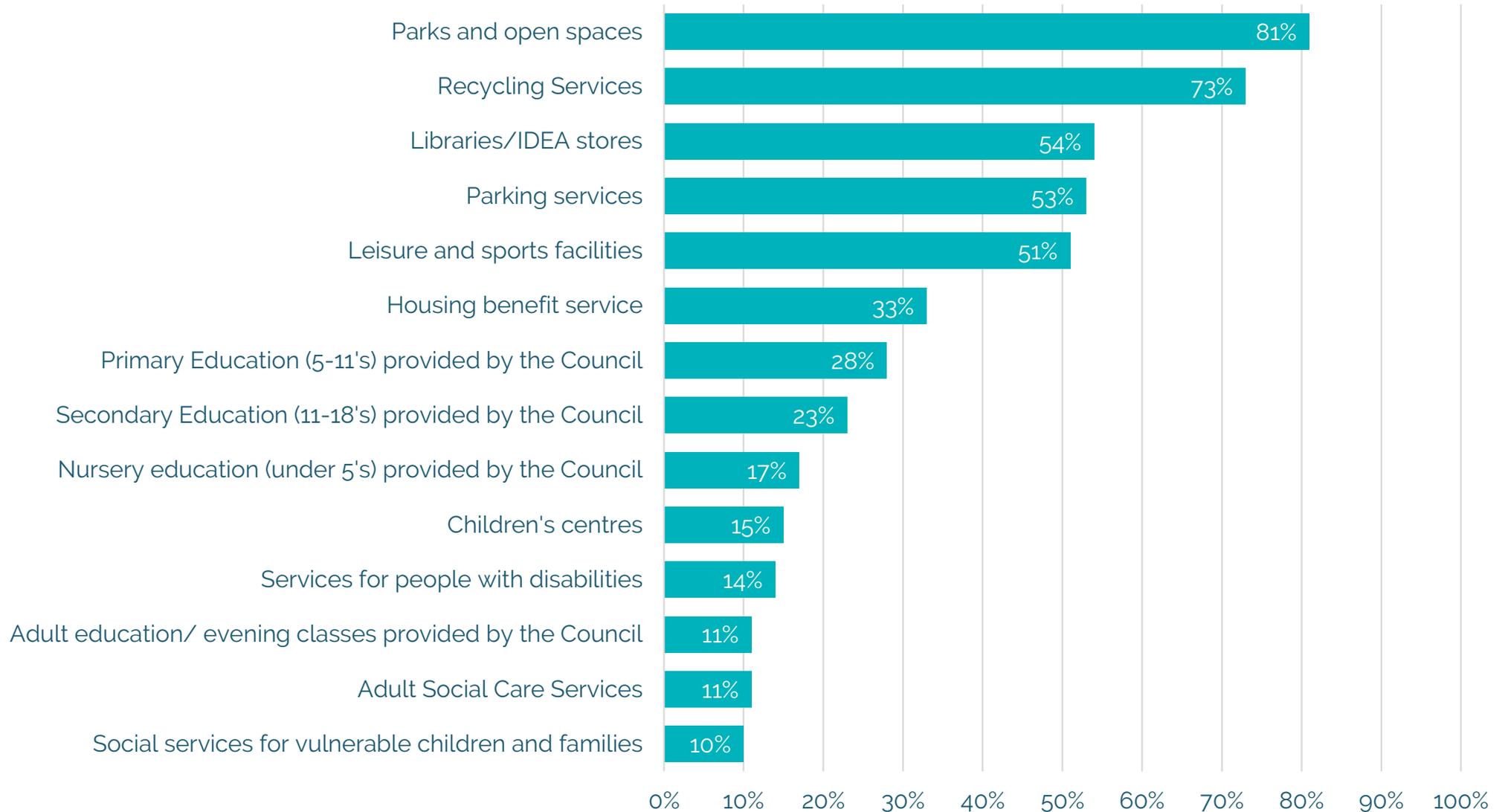
The survey asks respondents “Which of these services provided locally do you or members of your household use nowadays?”. Respondents are given a list of 14 services. The answer is given as yes or no.

Use of services



The chart on the next page shows the percentage of residents who use each of the services.

The most used services in 2021 are parks and open spaces (81%), recycling services (73%), libraries/IDEA stores (54%), parking services (53%) and leisure and sports facilities (51%).





Results

Opinion of services

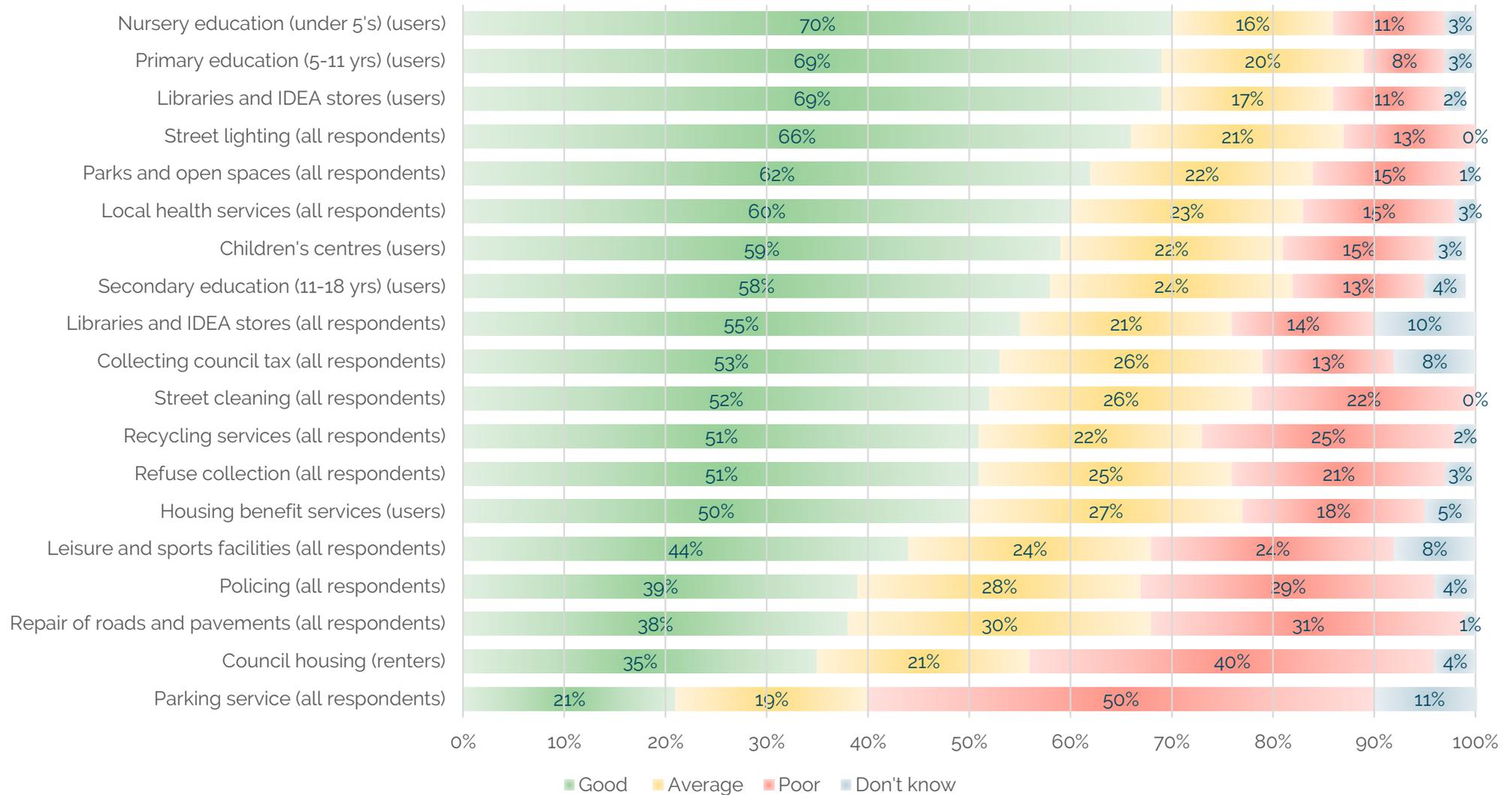
Respondents were asked about their opinion on the quality of different services, from extremely poor (1) to excellent (7).

Opinion of services



The chart on the next page shows the percentage of those who rated services as good (including excellent, very good, and good), average and poor (including extremely poor, very poor, and poor), arranged in order of highest to lowest positive rating.

Primary schools, secondary schools, Idea Stores and libraries were the highest rated services.



Note: Results may not add up to 100% as each percentage was rounded to the nearest integer. Questions are answered in a 7-points response scale: 1) excellent, 2) very good, 3) good, 4) average, 5) poor, 6) very poor, 7) extremely poor. The first 3 response options were merged into "good" and the last 3 into "poor".



Results

Concerns

Mid pandemic residents' survey 2021

We asked respondents "Which three of these are you personally most concerned about?".

Respondents were asked to select their three top concerns from a list of 15 concerns.

Top 3 concerns



The chart on the next page shows the percentage of respondents who selected each of the concerns as their top 3, from the most frequently selected concern to the least frequently selected concern.

The results show that the three top concerns are crime and anti-social behaviour, lack of affordable housing and litter and dirt in the streets.

1. Crime and anti social behaviour

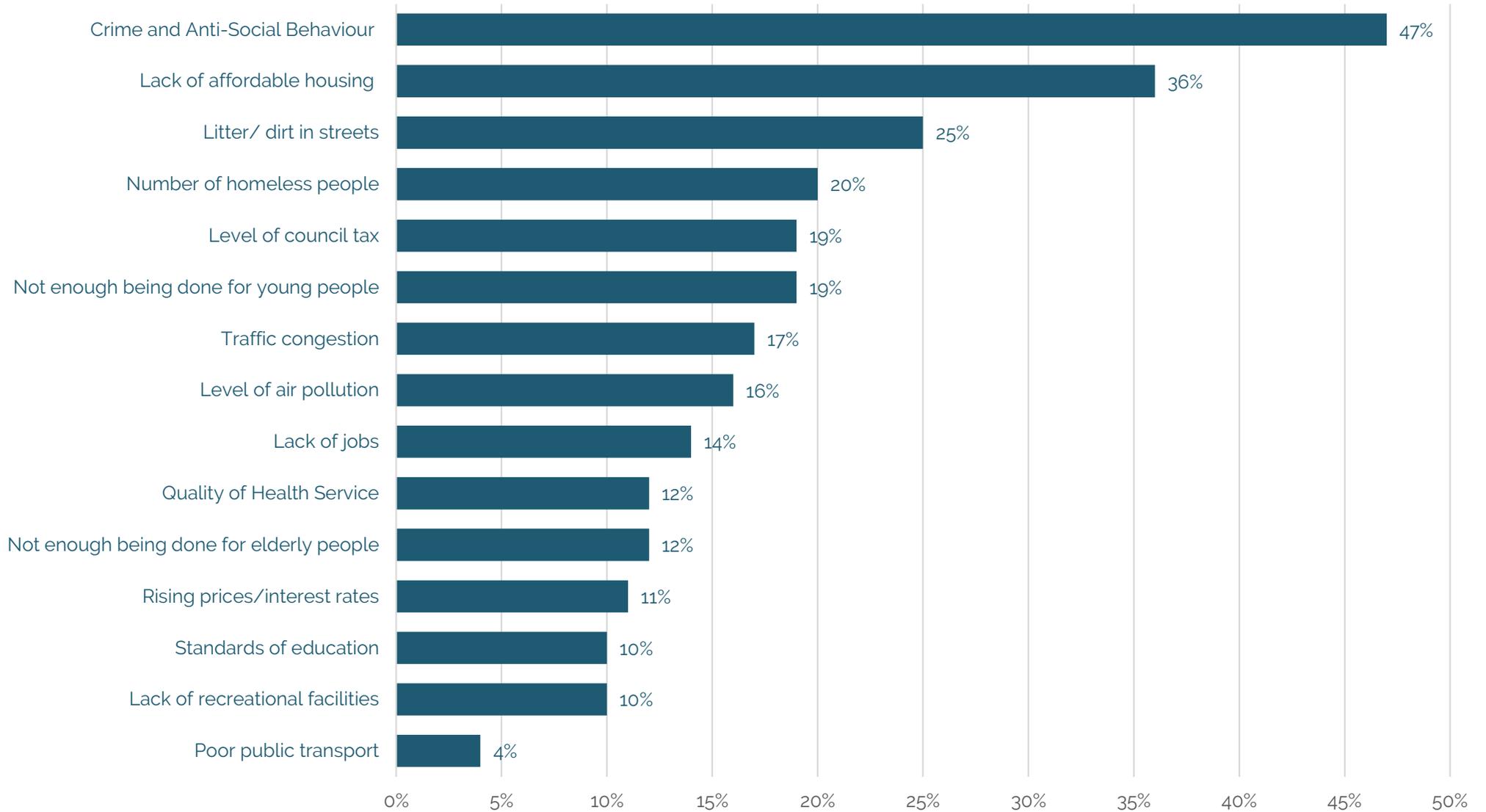
47%

2. Lack of affordable housing

36%

3. Litter/dirt in the streets

25%





Results

Well-being, sense of belonging and perceptions of the local area

Mid pandemic residents' survey 2021

We asked respondents questions about their well-being, sense of belonging to the communities of Tower Hamlets, and how they felt about the borough as a place.

Well-being, sense of belonging and perceptions of the local area



The questions covered health, loneliness, levels of physical activity and volunteering, community connections, diversity, and satisfaction with the local area and safety

The charts on the next pages show the results for these questions..

Mid pandemic residents' survey 2021

Good health

74%

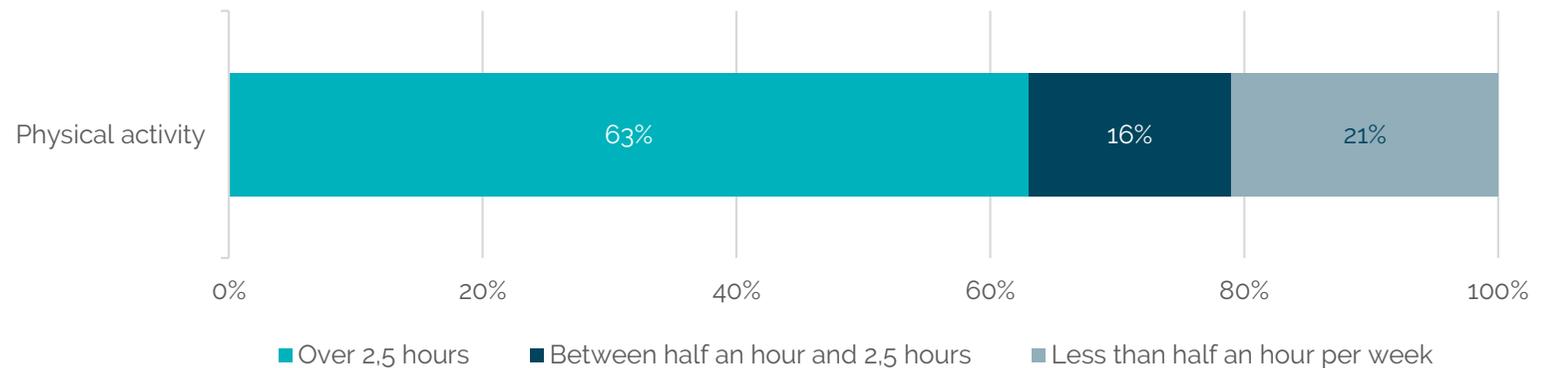
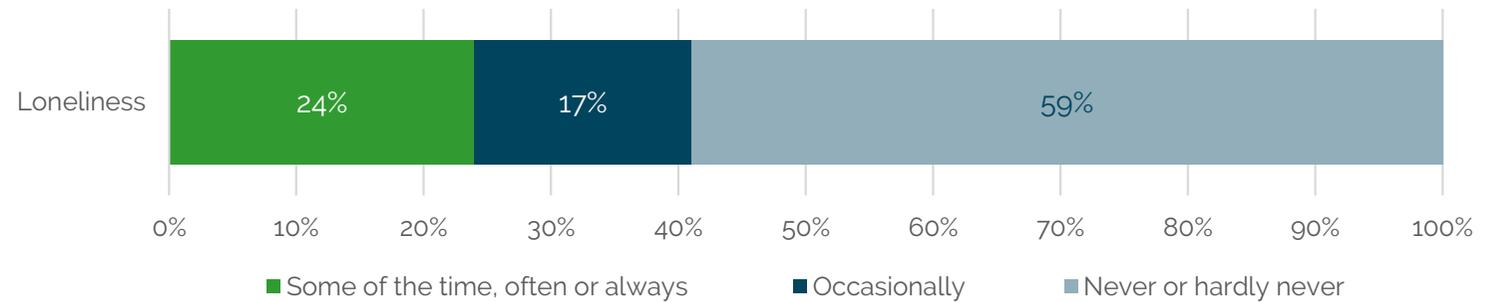
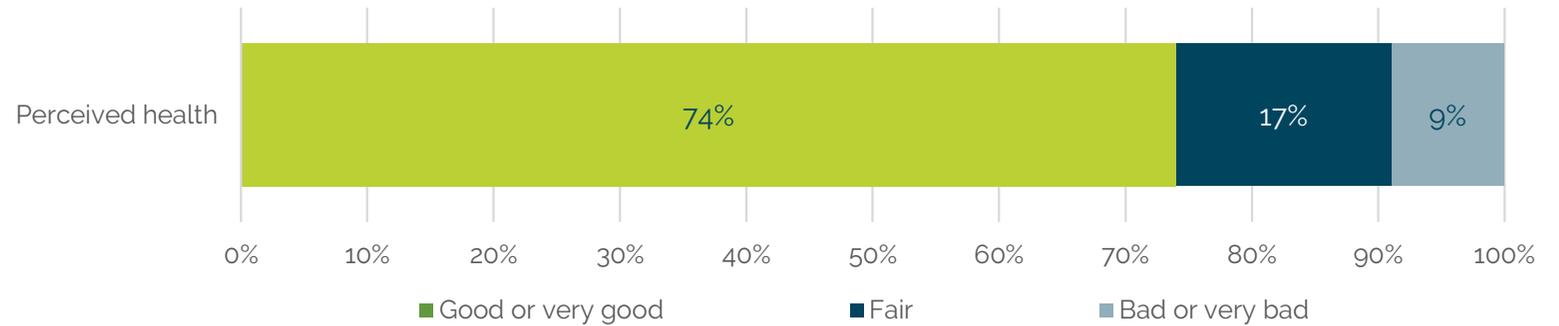
Loneliness, all or some of the time

24%

Active (over 2,5h of physical activity in a typical week)

63%

Well-being – physical and mental wellbeing



Mid pandemic residents' survey 2021

Volunteering 1 time over the last 12 months

25%

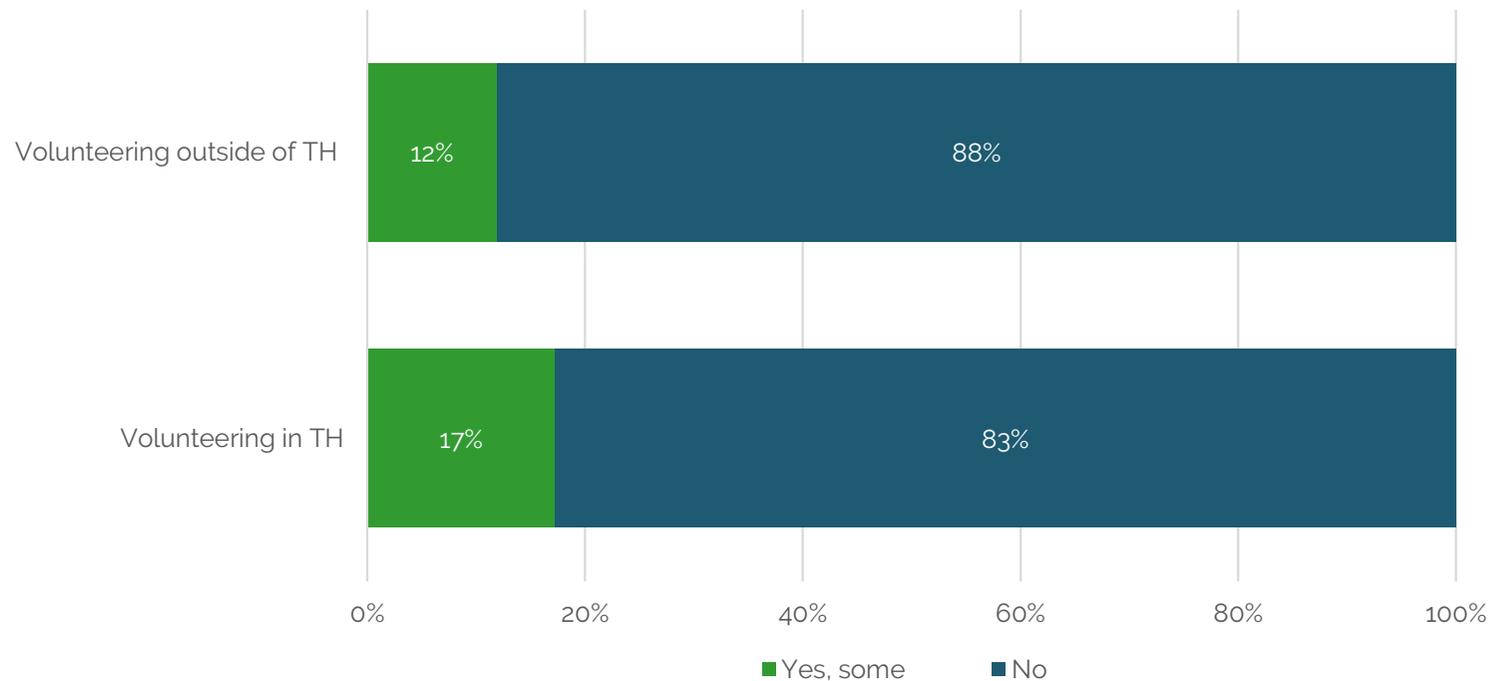
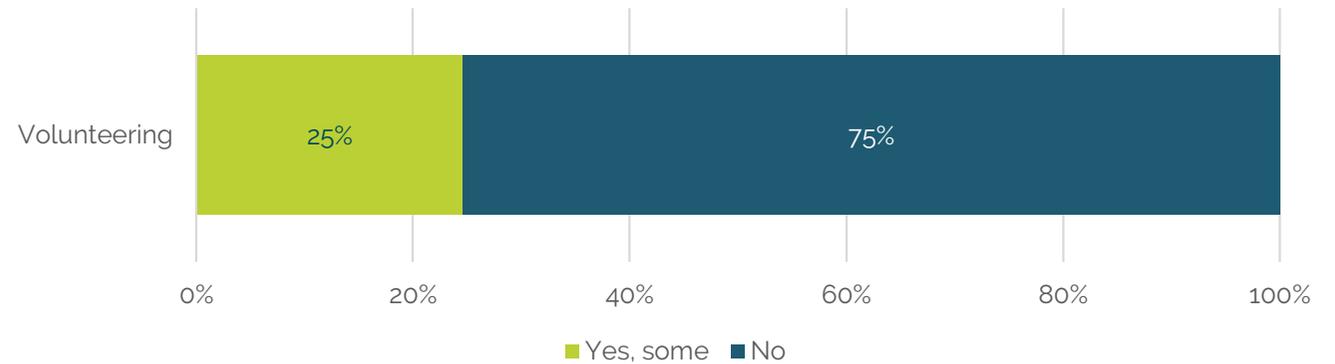
Volunteering outside Tower Hamlets at least 1 time over the last 12 months

12%

Volunteering in Tower Hamlets at least 1 time over the last 12 months

17%

Sense of belonging – community engagement



Note: Volunteering questions are answered in a 4-points frequency response scale: 1) yes, at least once a week, yes, less than once a week but at least once a month, 3) yes, less often, 4) I have not done any volunteering over the last 12 months. The first 3 response options were merged into "yes, some".

Mid pandemic residents' survey 2021



Sense of belonging – use of internet

Access to the internet

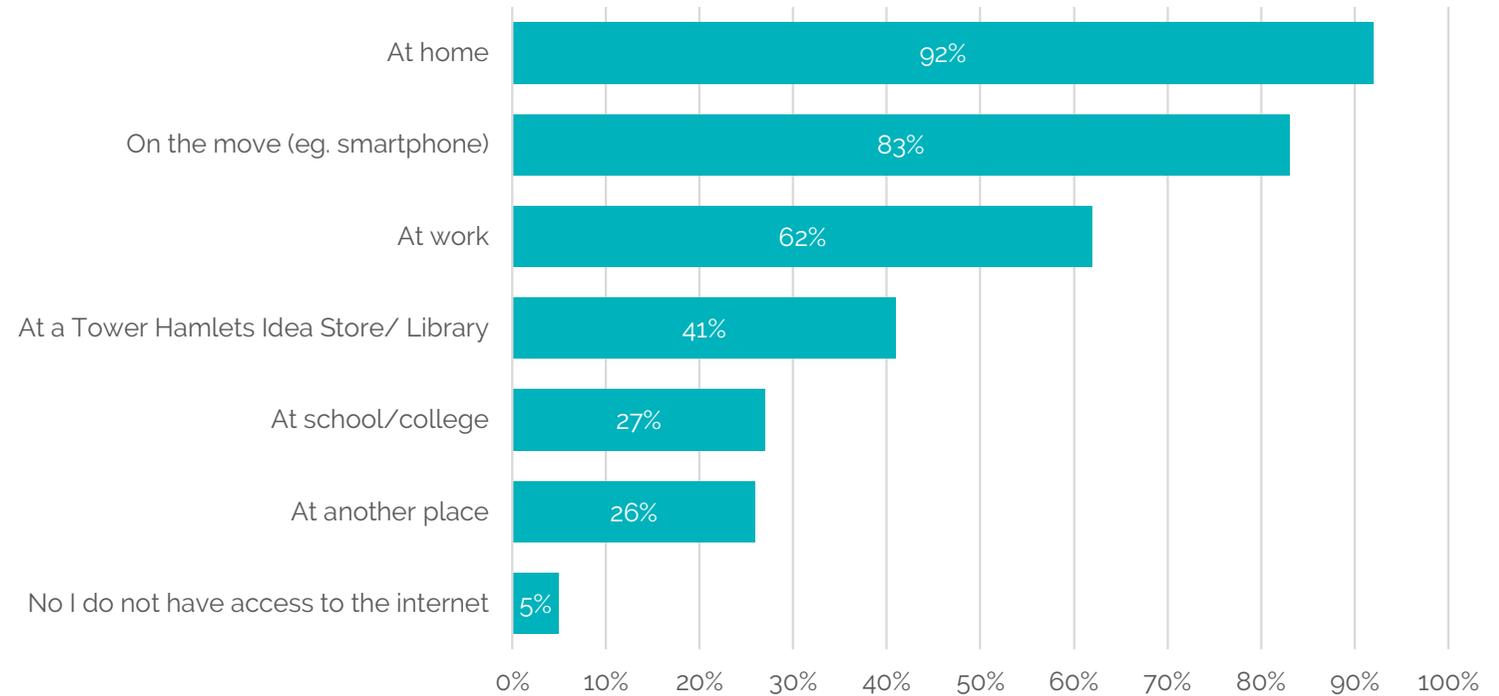
95%

Access to the internet at home

92%

Use of email

94%



What do you use the internet for?	%
Emails	94%
Browsing for information about goods and services	92%
Internet banking	86%
Telephoning or making video calls over the internet (eg. Skype)	85%
Buying or selling goods and services online	81%
Online news, newspapers or magazines	79%
Playing or downloading games, films or music	74%

Mid pandemic residents' survey 2021

Sense of belonging – diversity and inclusion



People from different backgrounds get on well together

79%

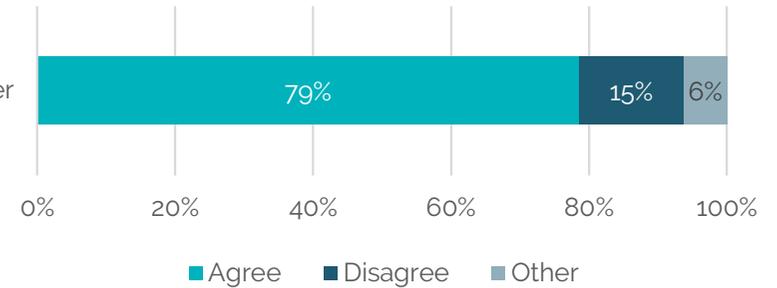
At least some friends from a different ethnicity

76%

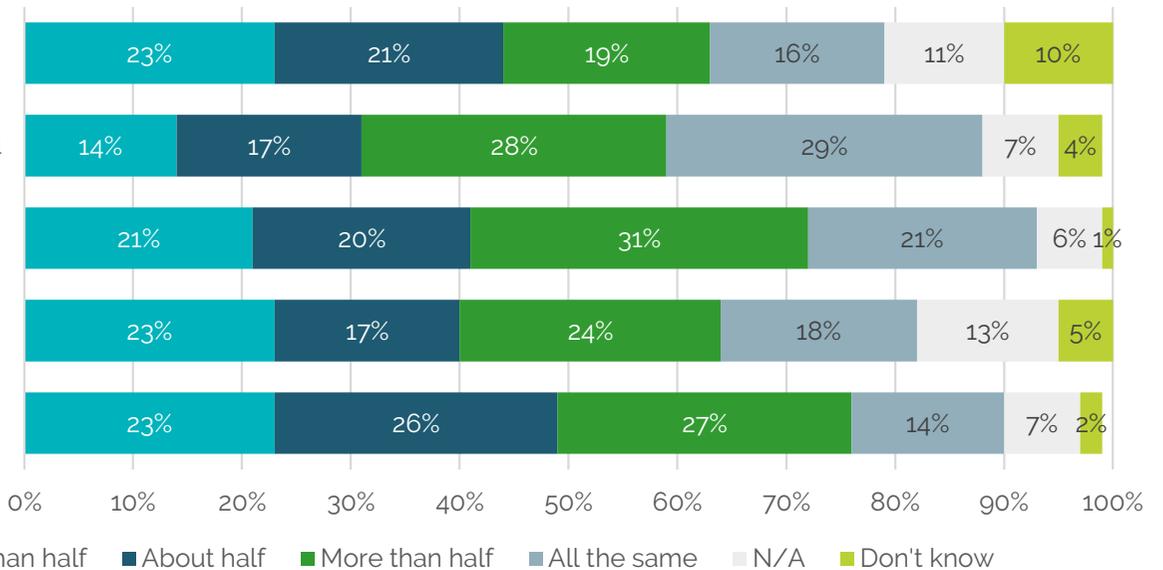
Most friends (all or more than half) with similar education level

57%

People from different backgrounds get on well together



Similar income
Similar education level
Same age
Same religion
Same ethnicity



Note: Results may not add up to 100% as each percentage was rounded to the nearest integer. People get on well together was answered in a 4-points agreement response scale: 1) definitely agree, 2) tend to agree, 3) tend to disagree, 4) definitely disagree. The first 2 response options were merged into "agree" and the last 2 were merged into "disagree". "Other" includes "too few people in local area", "all same backgrounds" and "don't know".

Mid pandemic residents' survey 2021

Satisfaction with local area

74%

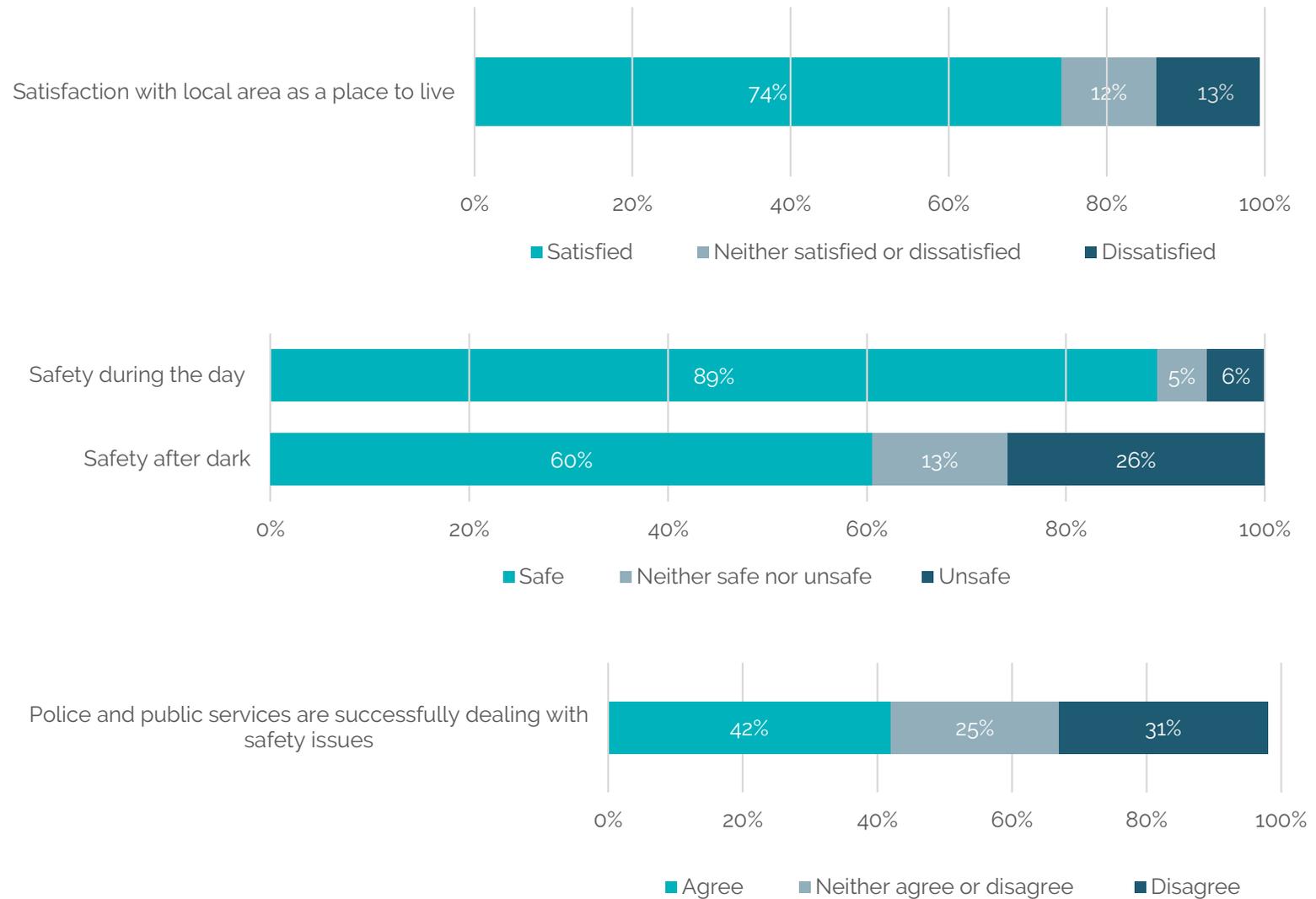
Safety during the day / after dark

89% / 60%

Police and other local public services dealing with safety issues

42%

Perceptions of the local area



Note: Results may not add up to 100% as each percentage was rounded to the nearest integer. All these questions were answered in a 5-response scale. The first 2 response options were merged into "satisfied/safe/agree" and the last 2 were merged into "dissatisfied/unsafe/disagree".

