

London Borough of Tower Hamlets

Homeless & Housing Advice Service

Customer Satisfaction Survey Summary

November 2009

Introduction

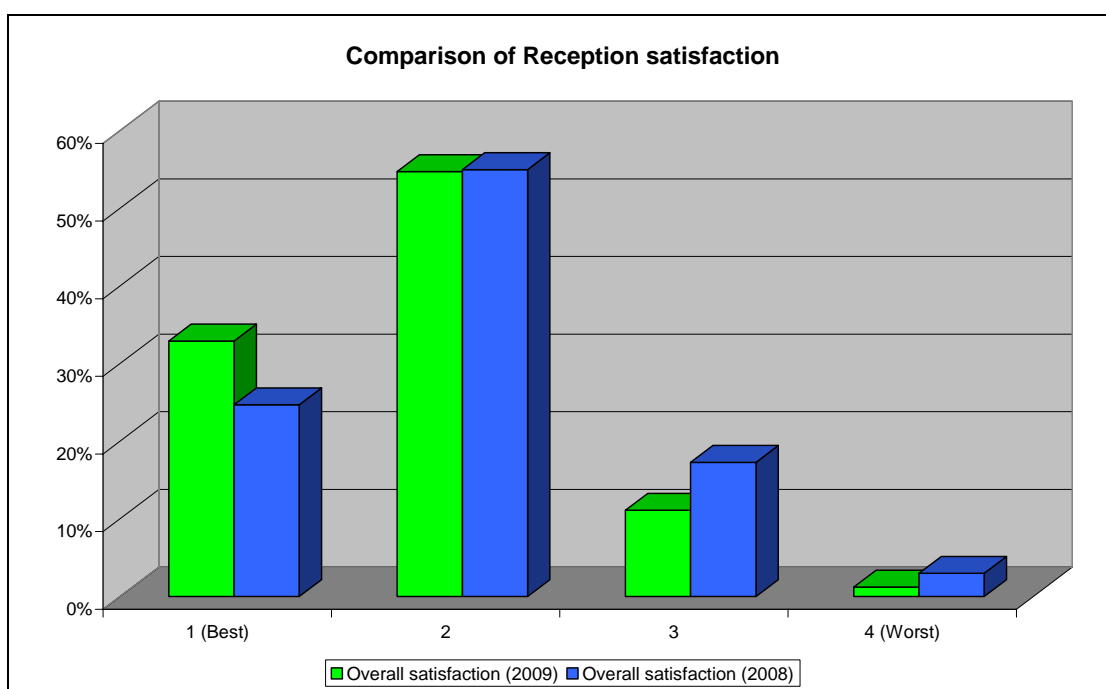
This document is the summary of the results from our fourth annual Customer Satisfaction Survey (CSS), conducted in July 2009, and presents key results from each of the seven topics contained within the survey.

The CSS is our main method of service user consultation, being sent to nearly 2400 temporary accommodation tenants this year. With an incentive of entry into a £250 prize draw, we received nearly 370 responses, equalling a response rate of just over 15% - our best yet - and another welcome improvement in service user engagement levels.

Our Reception

72% of respondents had visited HHAS in the previous six months, with 89% saying they had been treated in a 'polite and helpful way' (the same result as last year), 86% saying that 'the officer(s) they saw understood their situation' and 84% stating that our opening times were convenient for them.

Compared to last year, overall satisfaction with our reception area has increased, as shown in the graphs below:



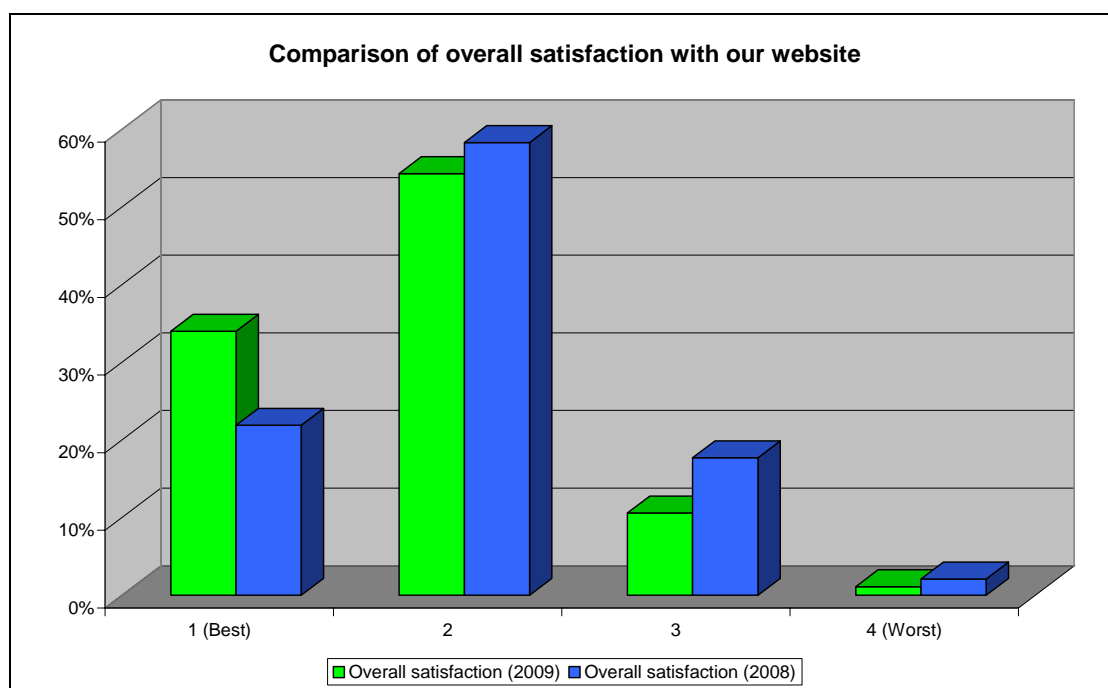
How we communicate

We generally communicate with service users by letter, telephone call and by using information contained on our website – the related survey questions help to validate the effectiveness of each of these communication channels.

When asked, 64% of respondents had called HHAS in the previous six months, down from 76% in the 2008 survey. 87% stated that their call had been handled 'politely and helpfully' which is a massive increase on last year's result of 39%, and 83% of respondents said that the officer they spoke to had understood their situation.

Only 19% of respondents had written to HHAS, a drop of 5% from last year's results, with 70% receiving a response to their letter and 89% of those saying that the response was clearly written and easy to understand.

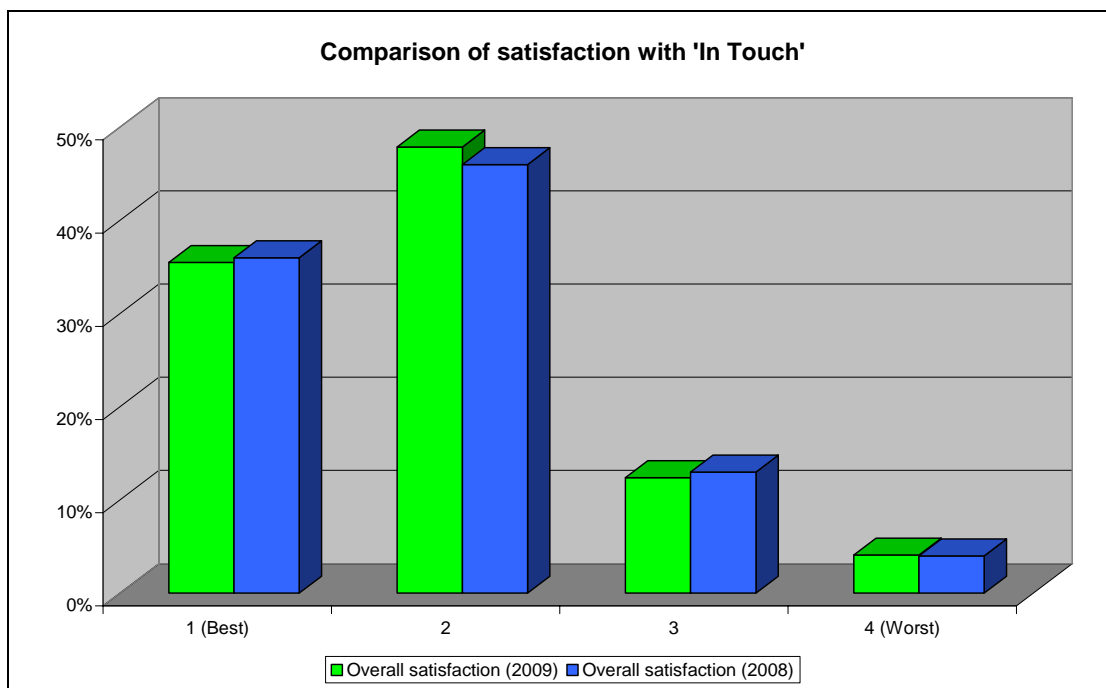
56% of respondents said that they used the internet, an increase of 2%, with 50% of those having used it to view our web pages, an increase of 16%. The graph below compares overall satisfaction response rates:



How we consult

Our quarterly service user newsletter, 'In Touch', is the main way by which we circulate important information about events, services and developments, and the percentage of service users claiming to have received it has increased from 36% to 39%.

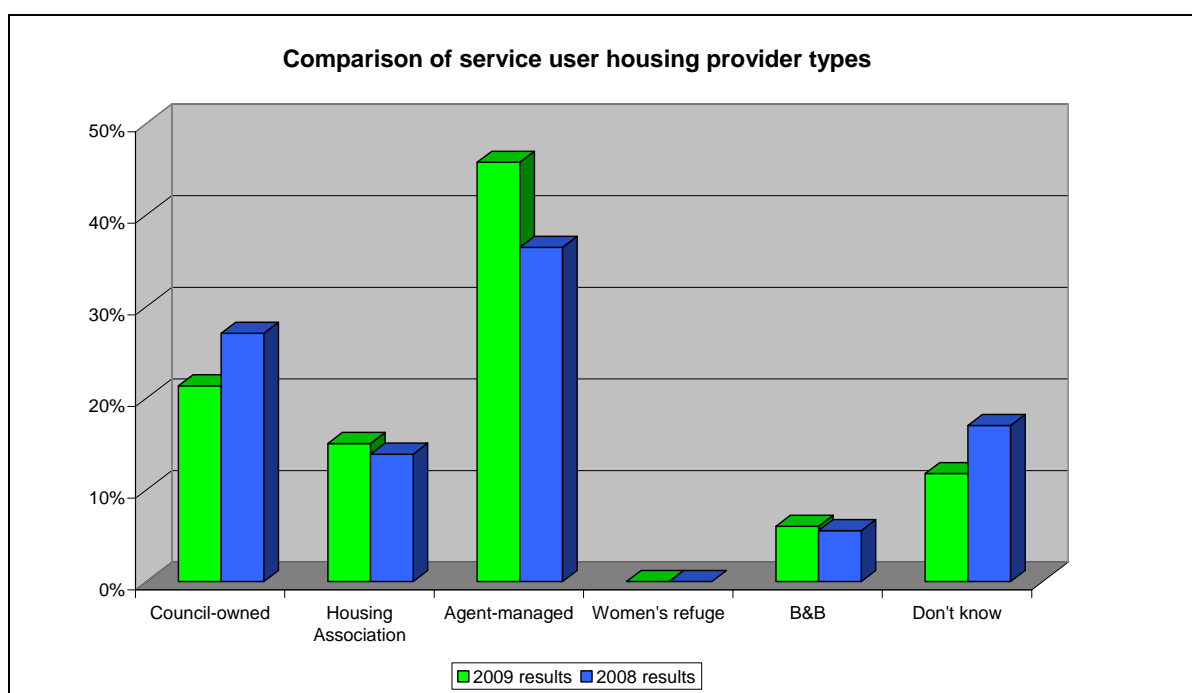
The graph overleaf highlights the similarity in satisfaction with 'In Touch', which indicates a slight improvement in perception of the quality in content. Despite rising numbers of recipients, we are still having great difficulty in getting service user contributions to the newsletter.



We also hold quarterly Homeless Service User Panels, where we discuss service improvement ideas and acquire feedback on proposed developments. The percentage of respondents who have heard of HSUP has risen from 17% to 26%, indicating some success with the raising of the panel's profile.

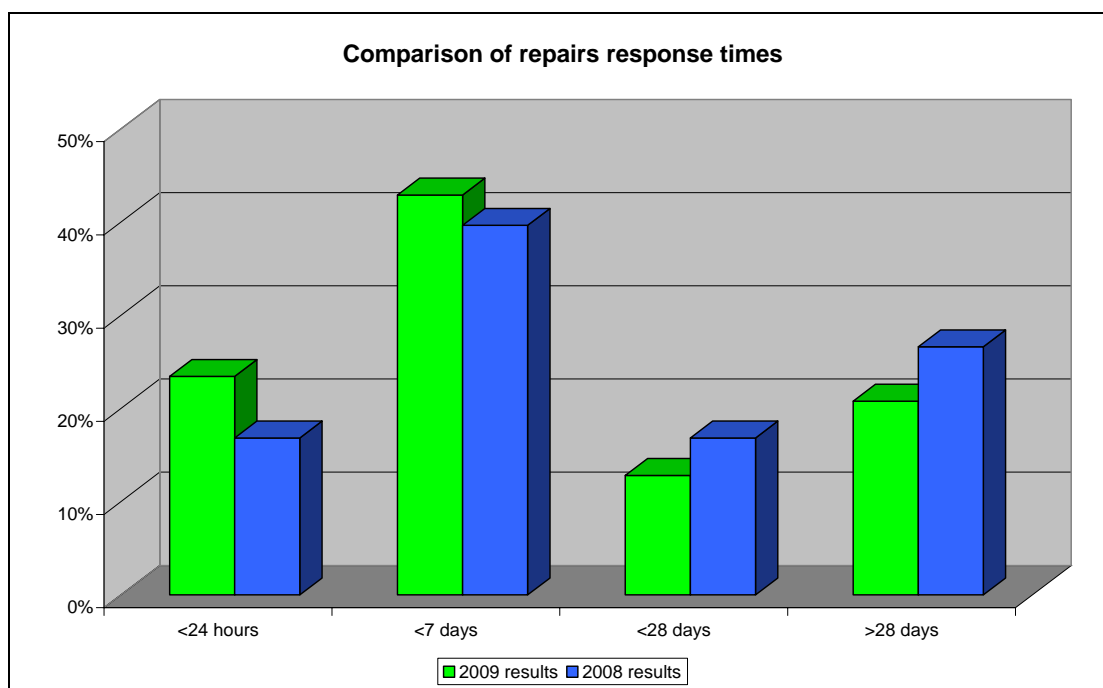
Where you live

Our service users live in a range of properties, which are managed by various agencies, i.e. Housing Associations, Local Authority, managing agents, etc. The following graph compares the distribution of our service users by accommodation type:



There has been a noticeable increase in agent-managed properties, with an accompanying decrease in the number of service users in Council-owned properties and, more importantly (from a 'provision of clear information' perspective), the number of service users stating that they didn't know their accommodation type.

In terms of repairs, the time taken for reported property repairs to be completed has decreased, as shown in the graph below:



Service users were asked to report their satisfaction with various aspects of their property, and the responses are shown in the table below:

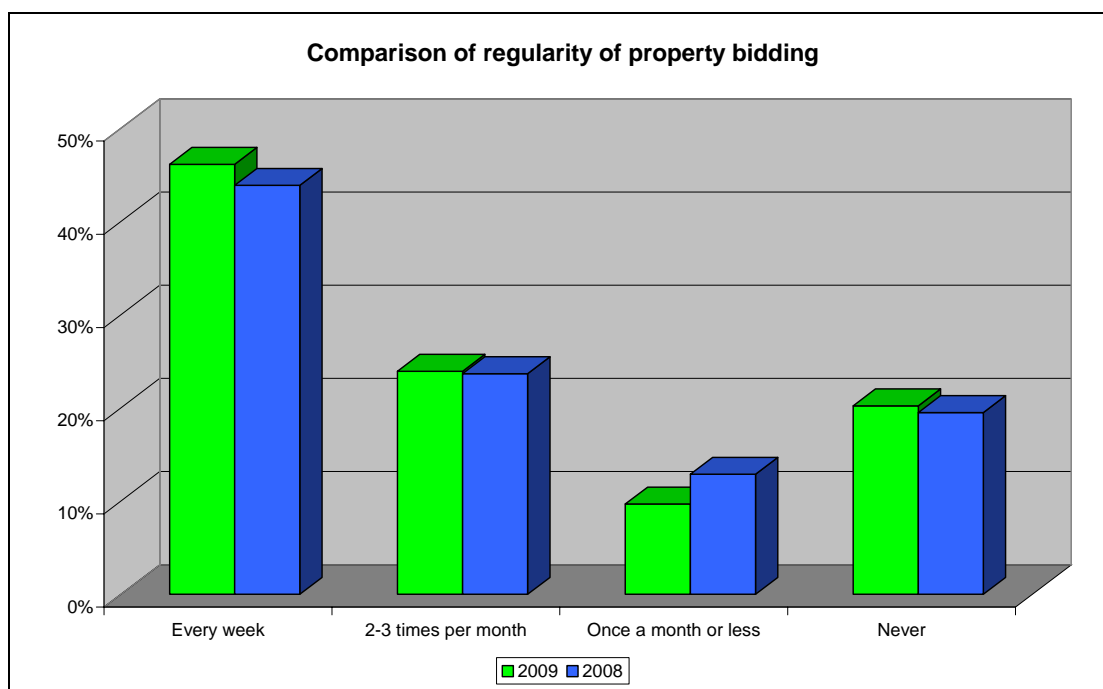
	1 (Best)		2		3		4 (Worst)	
	2009	2008	2009	2008	2009	2008	2009	2008
Location	36.7%	32.9%	39.0%	34.6%	13.9%	18.7%	10.4%	13.8%
Condition	17.6%	19.2%	45.6%	39.1%	22.5%	25.6%	14.3%	16.4%
Repairs	14.6%	15.2%	39.9%	26.3%	25.0%	25.3%	20.4%	33.3%
Management	20.7%	16.4%	38.9%	42.9%	25.4%	28.2%	15.0%	12.5%

These results show that service user satisfaction has increased for all of the identified aspects, though satisfaction for management of temporary accommodation properties has increased by the lowest amount (0.3%).

How you bid

Ensuring our service users bid regularly, and appropriately, is a priority for HHAS, to prevent 'blockages' caused by tenants remaining in their temporary accommodation. We asked service users a number of questions about how they bid, to help form a picture of the issues surrounding the bidding process.

Initially, we asked service users if they knew how to bid – the percentage of service users responding positively increased by 1.2%, to 86%. We then asked how regularly do service users bid for permanent properties, for which the results, compared to last year's survey results, are shown in the graph below:



The increase in the percentage of service users bidding weekly and, to a lesser extent, bidding 2-3 times per month a positive development, countered by a slight increase in the percentage of service users who never bid (which is nearing 20%).

The service users who bid (80%) were then asked how they placed their bids, as bidding can be registered using a paper coupon, by calling the bidding hotline or by bidding online. We recently installed two internet-enabled kiosks to enable visiting service users to access online services, hoping to increase online bidding. The following table compares the usage of bidding channels for the current and previous survey results.

	2009 results	2008 results
Coupon	23.2%	21.3%
Telephone	38.6%	30.0%
Online	54.3%	48.7%

Although the figures do not total to 100%, this is due to service users being able to select more than one bidding channel to reflect their preferences in the 2009 survey, and the results show the largest increase is in telephone bidding.

Giving feedback

We are interested in three types of feedback: complaints, comments and compliments. To help capture these, we have put customer feedback cards in our

reception area, in addition to the LBTH complaints forms occasionally received and correspondence received from service users.

When asked, 34% of respondents said that they knew about the feedback cards, but only 27% of those had completed one. Despite this, 89% of all respondents gave positive responses to the question "How important do you think it is to give feedback that can improve this service?"

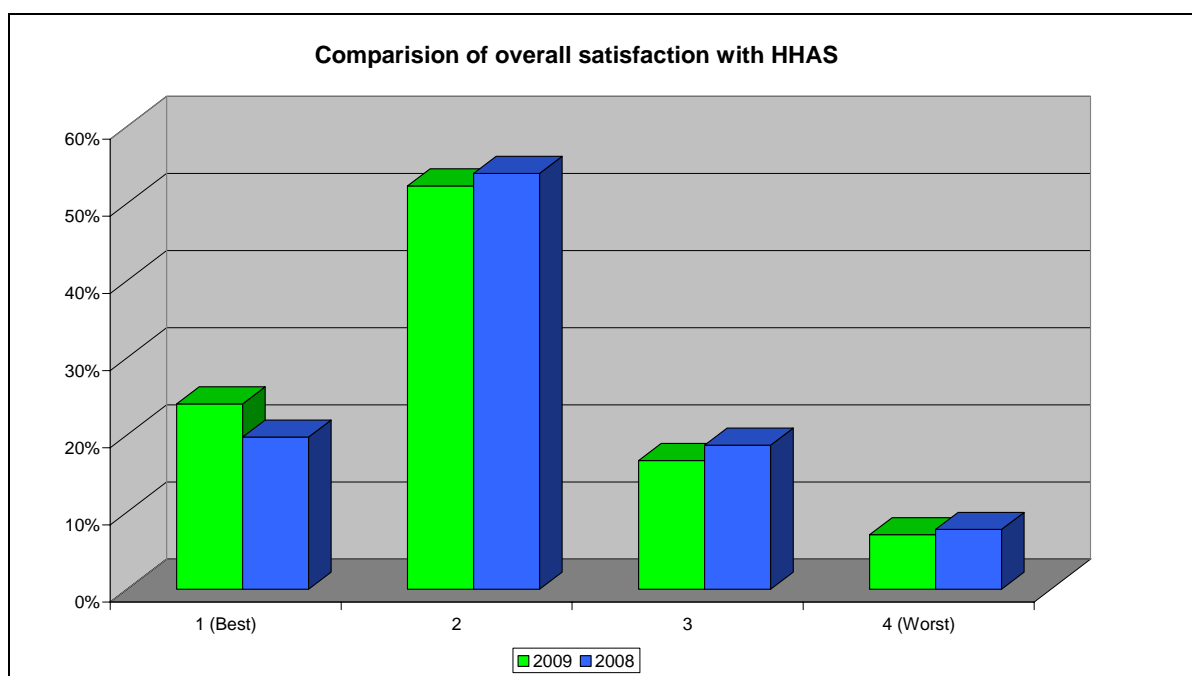
As the complaints process is our most established way of receiving feedback, we asked if service users knew how to make a complaint, and whether they had made a complaint, with results shown in the table below:

	2009 results		2008 results	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Do you know how to make a complaint?	51.8%	48.2%	35.8%	64.2%
Have you ever made a complaint?	20.9%	79.1%	12.9%	87.1%

The results show that the percentage of service users who know how to make a complaint has risen substantially, (by 16%), and the percentage of people who have made a complaint has risen by 8%.

Overall satisfaction

To conclude the survey questions, we asked service users to tell us how satisfied they were with HHAS overall, with the graph below comparing the results from this, and the previous, year's surveys:



Service users responded positively, with a 4.3% increase in the '1 (Best)' response category, which accounts for the slight (1.6%) decrease in the '2' category. Dissatisfaction levels have decreased, demonstrating an improvement in service user satisfaction with the service we provide.

What next?

The findings from the CSS will be fed back to our Management Team, along with recommendations for further service improvement projects. We will also conduct more service user consultation, with our annual Reception exit poll and Interview Quality audit surveys also feeding into our identification of service improvement projects.

From the CSS 2009 results, we have identified the following areas for focus and have listed them by survey topic:

Our Reception

- No improvements identified - further information to be gathered from Reception and Interview Quality monitoring surveys.

How we communicate

- Investigate how we can send text message appointment reminders - we are in the process of rolling out a new telephone system, which may have the capacity for us to explore SMS messaging to service users.

How we consult

- Improve the percentage of service users receiving 'In Touch' from 39%.
- Continue to raise the profile of HSUP from 26%.

Where you live

- Further improve the percentage of service users who are satisfied with the managing agents of their temporary accommodation.

How you bid

- Reduce the percentage of non-bidders from 20%.
- Increase the profile of the Rent Deposit Scheme from 44%.

Giving feedback

- Raise the profile of reception comment cards from 34%.
- Improve the way in which we handle complaints, reducing negative comments from 46%.

Overall satisfaction

- Continue to implement service improvement projects to maintain improvement in satisfaction with HHAS.