

# London Borough of Tower Hamlets

## Homeless & Housing Advice Services

### Customer Satisfaction Survey Summary

May 2007

#### Introduction

The Homeless & Housing Advice Service values feedback from our service users and use customer comments to improve the way in which we address customer's needs.

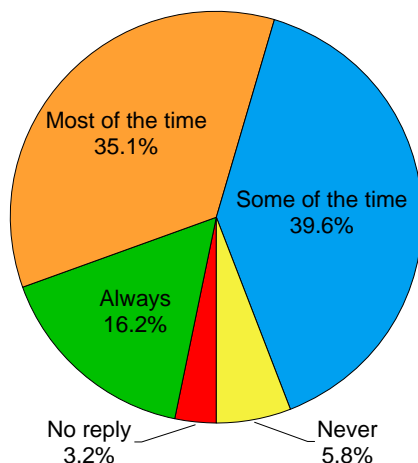
After last year's survey, we have changed a few question areas, to focus on key issues, including domestic violence, children in education and obstacles to employment.

The survey was sent out, by post, to 2500 service users in temporary accommodation and we received around 200 responses, giving a response rate of 8%.

#### How well do we answer your calls?

Our Customer Promise states that we will try to answer telephone calls within 5 rings, so we asked you how often you thought we did this.

Our target is to answer calls within 5 rings. How often do we meet this target when you telephone us?



Just over half of you (51%) thought that we did so either 'always' or 'most of the time', but nearly as many (45%) believe that we only manage it 'some of the time' or 'never'.

To improve how quickly we answer the telephone, we have a new telephone system which allows us to monitor how long it takes a team, or person, to answer.

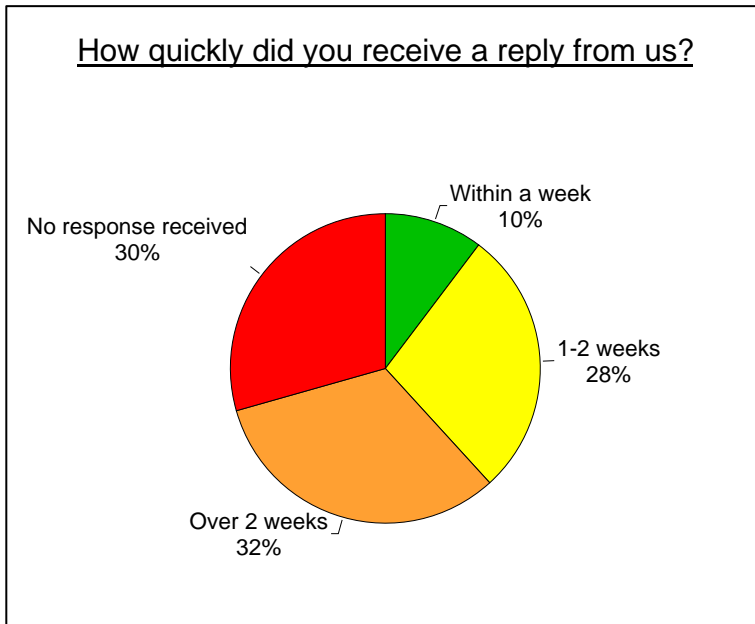
When we asked how satisfied you were with the way we deal with your telephone calls, just under three-quarters (73%) of you were

either 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied', 14% were either 'dissatisfied' or 'very dissatisfied' and the remaining 13% were neutral.

To improve our telephone answering, we are reviewing telephone training for all staff.

## How well do we deal with your letters?

Our Customer Promise states that we will respond to your letters and e-mails within 10 working days, so we asked you how quickly you received a response from us.



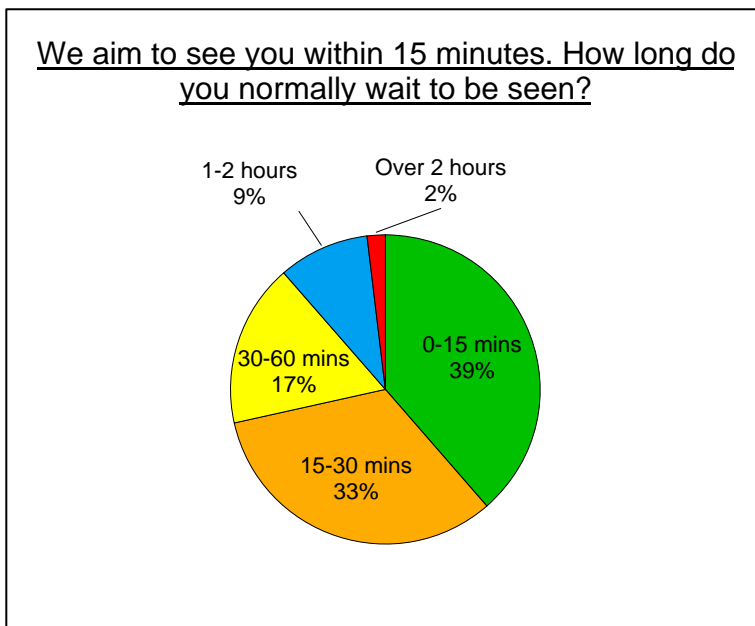
38% of you said that we replied to your letter within 10 working days, but 32% of you said that you received your reply over two weeks later and 30% said that you received no reply at all.

The way we deal with your letters needs to be improved urgently, and we are preparing a 'letter logging' process, which is linked to our new computer system. This system will require all letters to be scanned onto the computer and then e-mailed to an officer who will have a target date put on their calendar, with reminders to respond. We are

currently having problems with the scanners, but once they have been resolved, we expect to dramatically improve on our current performance.

## How long do we keep you waiting at reception?

Our Customer Promise states that we will see you within 15 minutes, so we asked you how long you waited at reception before seeing the officer you came for.



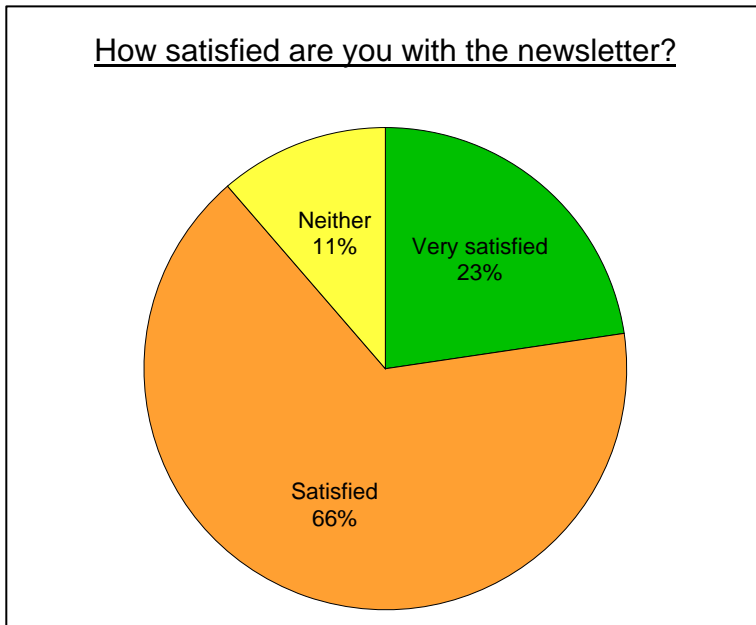
39% of you said you were seen within 15 minutes of arriving and 32% were seen within half an hour. The remaining 29% were seen in more than 30 minutes, with 12% of those being seen in over an hour.

Waiting times need to be reduced, and we expect this to happen when our new computer system is fully deployed, as you will be allocated an officer when you come to reception, and managers will be able to monitor how long it is taking officers to see you.

Now we are at Roman Road, we have a completely reorganised reception area, with vending machines and a children's play area, to make your wait more comfortable, although we will still endeavour to reduce waiting times to an acceptable level.

## How well do we communicate with you?

We aim to keep you informed of developments within the Homeless & Housing Advice Services, and use the 'Your Millharbour' newsletter, (which has been renamed 'In Touch' since the move to Roman Road), to let you know about important issues that may affect you. To find out how good we are at doing this, we asked how satisfied you are with our newsletter.

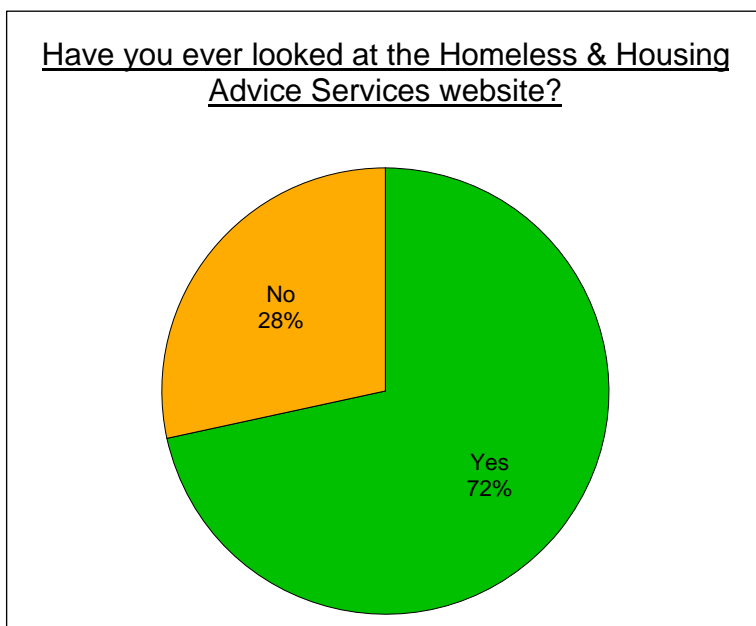


89% of you were 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with our newsletter, with the remaining 11% neutral about it.

No one said that they were dissatisfied with the newsletter, although 23% said that they have not received a copy.

We will be checking our mailing list to make sure that everyone who says that they haven't received a newsletter as yet will receive one, as we feel it is very important that everyone is aware of the changes that are happening.

To make it easier to find out information regarding homelessness and housing options, we have a web site which has links to a number of important sites, for bidding, repairs and changes of address. To see how effective it was, we asked you if you ever looked at the website.



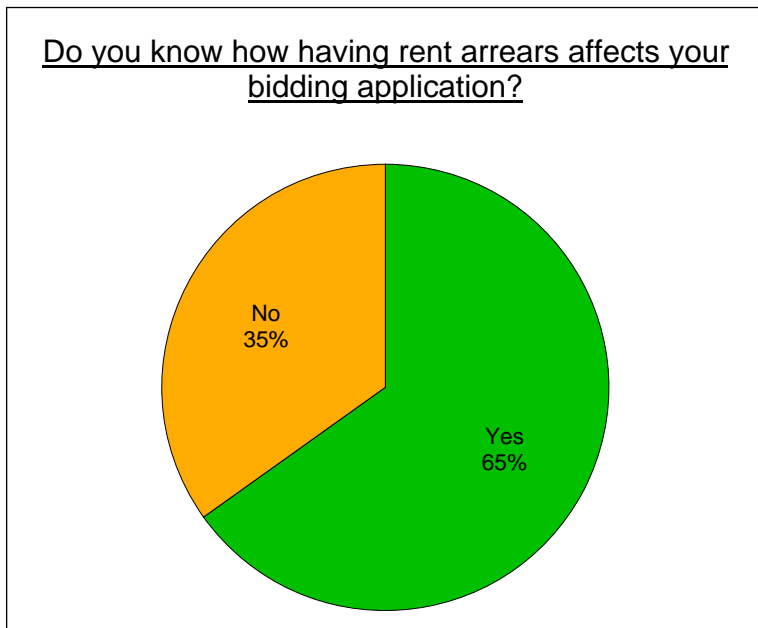
Web site usage has grown by nearly 50% from last year's survey and, as more public buildings get public-use PCs installed, we feel that this percentage will increase again for next year's survey.

We are looking at expanding the web site further, by adding more links to related organisations and making it easier to use, as 10% said that they found the website poor for 'finding what you want to know'.

**Have we explained bidding and rent arrears to you properly?**

We believe it is important that you know how to bid for a permanent property, and how having rent arrears affects any successful bids you make, so we asked you if you knew how to bid for a property. 13% said that you did not, so we are producing a leaflet which will be sent to everyone in temporary accommodation, explaining the process.

We then asked if you knew how having rent arrears affects your bidding application.

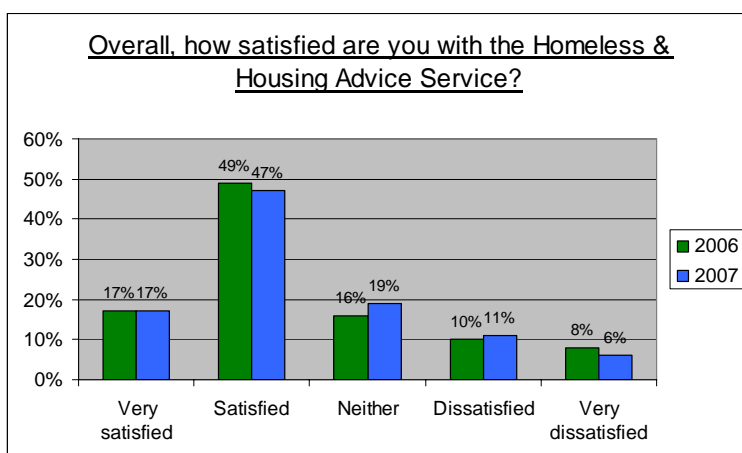


35% said that they did not know how rent arrears affected bidding, and this is something that needs to be improved upon. If you have not made arrangements to repay rent arrears, you will not be offered a property even if your bid is successful, so we are emphasising the importance of keeping up to date with your rent payments and not ignoring rent arrears.

We will continue to write articles about rent arrears in the newsletter, and will include a section on rent arrears in the bidding information leaflet.

**How satisfied are you with our service?**

The Homeless & Housing Advice Service is constantly trying to improve the way we deal with customers, and a good measure of how well we are doing is to ask you how satisfied you are with the service you receive.



Compared to last year's figures, overall satisfaction ('satisfied' and 'very satisfied') has dropped by 2% to 64%, although the percentage of people either 'dissatisfied' or 'very dissatisfied' has dropped by 1%.

Satisfaction levels have remained fairly stable over the last year, so there is still more work to do to reduce the number of dissatisfied service users.

We have listed all the actions that we intend to take to improve the service in our Customer Satisfaction Survey report, and you can ask for one of these by calling us on **020 7364 7474**. Thank you for reading this summary, and please call the Quality team if you have any questions about, or suggestions for, improving our Service.