

MARCHES HOUSING ASSOCIATION STATUS SURVEY 2004

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

Marches Housing Association commissioned **mrug** social research to conduct its 2004 Tenants Survey designed to update and track tenants' views and opinions against the previous survey of 2002.

The survey was conducted based on the standard STATUS format using a postal self-completion methodology. Questionnaires were sent to all tenants of the Association and after the use of reminders some 877 tenants responded representing a response rate of some 35%.

Detailed analysis of the survey outcome is provided in the main report. However, the following represents a summary of the key findings to emerge:

Key Indicators

- A significant majority of respondent tenants (80%) express overall satisfaction with Marches Housing Association as their Landlord. This level has increased from 74% in 2002. 80% also express satisfaction with the overall service provided compared to only 9% who express specific dissatisfaction.
- Nearly three quarters (73%) think the rent they are paying represents good value for money. Only 10% believe it is poor value. Again, this represents a slight improvement on the equivalent findings in 2002 (72% and 14% respectively).
- Overall satisfaction with the repairs and maintenance service remains at 73% with some 16% expressing dissatisfaction.
- The majority (79%) of respondent tenants say that Marches Housing Association is good at keeping them informed about things that might affect them as a tenant whereas only 10% say the Association is poor in this respect.
- Overall, 84% think Marches Housing Association take tenants' views into account to some extent (35% say "a lot" and 49% say "a little") when making decisions. Just over half (55%) say they are satisfied with opportunities for participating in managing and decision-making. While only 9% specifically say they are dissatisfied the remainder do not express a view either way.

Property

- Consistent with the previous survey - 86% of respondent tenants are satisfied with their accommodation and 84% consider their home to be in good condition. Overall, the vast majority (81%) feel their home has the right amount of rooms for their requirements.

Sheltered Housing

- Some 82% of those respondent tenants resident in Sheltered Housing are satisfied with the services provided by the Warden/Scheme Manager (8% specifically say they are dissatisfied). 87% express satisfaction with the Care Call/Warden Call System. Levels of dissatisfaction do not exceed 11% and are primarily related to security issues and frequency of resident meetings.
- Whilst the vast majority (89%) of sheltered housing respondents believe that having a resident warden is essential, just over three quarters agree that a non-resident warden would be acceptable (whilst retaining a clear preference for a resident warden). In comparison – just over half think that a visiting warden is a good idea.
- Some 44% think wardens/scheme managers should be available more hours during the day than they are at present (23% disagree with this view).

Tenant Involvement

- Typically over 200 respondents chose not to answer questions about tenant involvement. Of those who did between 18% - 20% would consider getting involved in more 'passive' ways (i.e. being consulted by telephone, joining a Neighbourhood Scheme or attending meeting of tenants. Other more active forms of involvement tended to interest no more than 5% - 10%.

Local Area

- Overall, 84% of all respondent tenants are satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live and this represents a 10% increase since the 2002 survey.

- The most serious 'problems' identified within local areas include litter and rubbish (21%); dogs (19%); drug dealing (11%) and noise/problems with neighbours (11%).

Contact With Marches

- Three quarters (75%) of respondents said they had contacted the Association in the last twelve months for reasons other than to pay rent (this level has reduced from 89% in 2002). The majority of those made contact by telephone. The main reason for contact is related to repairs.
- In considering various aspects of the service provided by telephone the majority of respondents do not think the service has changed over the last 12 months. However, just over one quarter (26%) think the phone is answered more quickly. Between 14% - 20% think the service has become worse in relation to ease of talking to the person tenants want to contact; how long it takes to deal with enquiries and how long it takes before staff call back (the equivalent range of those who think these aspects have improved is between 22% - 23%).
- The vast majority (84%) of tenants would prefer to have a dedicated telephonist answering the phone than the automated system currently in place.
- Just over half (57%) felt it was easy to get hold of the right person when they last contacted the Association. This proportion has dropped by some 12% since the 2002 survey (when the equivalent figure was 69%).
- Respondents remain very positive about helpfulness of staff with 81% expressing the view that staff are helpful (only 7% say staff are unhelpful).
- While the majority (67%) of respondent tenants are satisfied with the overall outcome of their contact this level has dropped by 13% (from 80%) when compared to the 2002 survey.

Repairs

- More than two thirds (68%) reported repairs in the last 12 months and 64% actually had repairs completed in that period.
- Satisfaction with various aspects of repair work (i.e. speed of completion) remain consistent with the previous survey (typically between 80% - 90%).

Respondent Characteristics

- The single highest proportion of respondents (44%) comprised pensioner households, with 25% families and 25% adult only (non pensioner) households.
- Just less than one third (31%) are economically active (i.e. in work or unemployed and seeking work). Some 53% are either wholly retired from work and/or permanently sick/disabled. 13% are looking after their family and home.
- 37% have a weekly household income of between £100 - £159 with 21% having an income of £200 - £299 at their disposal. Overall income levels show a modest upward trend when compared to findings in 2002.
- Principal sources of income include state/work pensions; earnings from employment; income support and benefits.
- The ethnic profile shows the vast majority (96%) of respondents to be of White British origin with 3% Irish. Less than 1% are of Black Minority ethnic origin.

Conclusions

The 2004 survey has revealed a measure of consistency and general improvement in views and satisfaction levels expressed by tenants – particularly in relation to key performance indicators. Marches Housing Association will take encouragement from this. However, a notable exception to this trend are some issues related to contact with the Association which will provide a key focus for action planning.