

National Customer Satisfaction Survey to Support the Building Standards Verification Performance Framework

2020 National Survey Findings

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Executive Summary

The remit of the building standards system in Scotland is to protect the public interest by setting out the standards to be met when building or conversion work takes place, to the extent necessary to meet the building regulations.

In 2020 the Scottish Government commissioned Pye Tait Consulting to undertake the seventh annual national customer satisfaction survey for building standards.¹ The purpose of the annual survey is to obtain nationally consistent customer satisfaction data across all 32 local authorities in Scotland and to enable comparison analysis between years.

The survey aligns with Key Performance Outcome 4 (KPO4) of the 'Building Standards Performance Framework for Verifiers' (operational from May 2017).² The purpose of KPO4 – titled 'Understand and respond to the customer experience' – is for local authority verifiers to monitor customer satisfaction with the building standards service and ensure it meets or exceeds customer expectations.

Approach to delivering the survey:

- The 2020 survey questionnaire was identical to the 2019 version (a copy is presented in Appendix 2);
- The scope of the survey was all building standards customers between 1st April 2019 and 31st March 2020, defined as:
 - a. Applicants for building warrants (including any agents);
 - b. Submitters of completion certificates (including any agents); and
 - c. Others that have interacted with the building standards service.
- Local authorities supplied their customers' contact details (name and email address only) to Pye Tait Consulting for the express purpose of being invited to participate in the survey;
- The survey opened on 28th September 2020 and closed on 3rd November 2020. It was hosted online and customers with email addresses were directly invited by Pye Tait Consulting to participate;

¹ The sixth national customer survey took place in 2019 and the final report is available at: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/building-standards-verification-performance-framework-national-customer-satisfaction-survey-2019/pages/2/>

² The Scottish Government (2017) Building Standards Performance Framework for Verifiers. Available <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0051/00516415.pdf>

- Local authorities were at liberty to promote the survey link to their own customers (i.e. those within scope) as appropriate;
- For customers of one local authority verifier the survey automatically assigned their responses to that local authority verifier; while customers of multiple local authorities were presented with links for each local authority verifier of which they had been a customer and thus could complete the survey multiple times, once for each local authority verifier.

Achieved sample:

Total email addresses supplied to Pye Tait from local authorities: **26,264**³

Total survey invitation emails sent by Pye Tait: **20,966**⁴

Total survey responses received: **3,037**

Response rate: **14.5%**⁵ (against 20,966 emails sent).

Respondent profile:

- The majority of surveyed customers (74%) stated that they were direct building warrant applicants and/or direct submitters of completion certificates during the 2019/20 financial year (the period in scope of the survey);
- A quarter (25%) classified themselves as agents, i.e. acting on behalf of applicants;
- A small minority (2%) defined themselves as an 'other' customer type;
- The majority of customers (78%) had submitted applications for domestic work only, 11% submitted applications for non-domestic work only and 12% submitted applications for both domestic and non-domestic work.

³ This number includes repeat email addresses supplied by more than one local authority verifier.

⁴ Unique customers, i.e. following a de-duplication of customer email addresses supplied by all 32 local authorities.

⁵ For comparison purposes, the national response rate in 2019 was 15.0%. However, higher volumes of customer email addresses were supplied by local authorities this year than in 2019, resulting in the highest number of responses to date since the survey was first run.

Table 1 2020 headline results and comparisons

Key	Numerical rating questions	Percentage questions
Green (G)	7.5 and higher	75% and higher
Amber (A)	Between 6.5 and 7.4	Between 65% and 74%
Red (R)	6.4 and below	64% and below

Note that the colour-coding metrics used reflect The Scottish Government's updated performance measurement requirements.

Scotland	Scotland 2020	Scotland 2019	Scotland 2018
OVERALL SATISFACTION			
Overall satisfaction with the service (score out of 10)	7.5 (G)	7.4 (A)	7.0 (A)
Extent to which service met expectations (score out of 10)			
Extent to which service met expectations (score out of 10)	7.5 (G)	7.4 (A)	7.0 (A)
Very/fairly satisfied with the timeliness of various aspects of the service	58% (R)	60% (R)	56% (R)
Kept very/fairly well informed about the progress of an application or submission	61% (R)	61% (R)	54% (R)
Strongly agree/agree to some extent that sufficient advice and guidance was received to meet needs			
Strongly agree/agree to some extent that sufficient advice and guidance was received to meet needs	67% (A)	69% (A)	66% (A)
Strongly agree/agree to some extent that building standards service staff were polite and courteous	82% (G)	84% (G)	83% (G)
Yes - an inspection visit was undertaken by building standards staff	52% (R)	66% (A)	64% (R)
Very/fairly satisfied with the quality of the advice and guidance received from inspection staff	55% (R)	77% (G)	83% (G)
Yes – aware of the need to notify the building standards service prior to commencing warrantable work	95% (G)	97% (G)	98% (G)
Satisfied with the accuracy of written information (score out of 10)			
Satisfied with the accuracy of written information (score out of 10)	8.1 (G)	8.1 (G)	7.9 (G)
Satisfied with the quality of written information (score out of 10)			
Satisfied with the quality of written information (score out of 10)	8.0 (G)	8.0 (G)	7.8 (G)
Building standards service staff are accessible if I want to meet them in person			
Building standards service staff are accessible if I want to meet them in person	51% (R)	59% (R)	57% (R)
Building standards service staff are approachable			
Building standards service staff are approachable	72% (A)	74% (A)	73% (A)
Very/fairly satisfied with the reception service			
Very/fairly satisfied with the reception service	86% (G)	87% (G)	84% (G)

1. Introduction

1.1 Background to the survey

The building standards system in Scotland was established under the Building (Scotland) Act 2003. The Act gives powers to Scottish Ministers to make building regulations, procedure regulations, fees regulations and other supporting legislation as necessary to fulfil the purposes of the Act. The purposes include setting building standards and dealing with dangerous and defective buildings.

The remit of the building standards system is to protect the public interest by setting out the standards to be met when building or conversion work takes place, to the extent necessary to meet the building regulations.

The standards are intended to:

- Secure the health, safety, welfare and convenience of persons in or about buildings and of others who may be affected by buildings or matters connected with buildings;
- Further the conservation of fuel and power; and
- Further the achievement of sustainable development.

The role of the building standards verifier is to protect the public interest by:

- Providing an independent check of applications for building warrants to construct buildings, provide services, fittings or equipment in buildings, or to convert buildings;
- Granting or refusing building warrants;
- Carrying out an independent check of construction activities through the process of reasonable inquiry; and
- Accepting or rejecting completion certificates.

Verifiers are appointed by Scottish Ministers and the Act provides for a variety of verifiers should they be required. At present, the only appointed verifiers are the 32 Scottish local authorities, each covering their own geographical area.

In 2011 Pye Tait Consulting, on behalf of the Scottish Government, developed a set of nine national Key Performance Outcomes (KPOs), which were implemented as part of the 'Building Standards Verification Performance Framework' and launched on 1st May 2012. The intention of these was, through more accurate and effective comparisons, to ensure consistency and quality in terms of outputs and overall service, along with a greater focus on peer review, benchmarking and sharing of best practice. Additionally, the KPOs underpinned a strong culture of continuous improvement.

In 2013/14 the Scottish Government commissioned Pye Tait Consulting to develop and run the first national customer satisfaction survey for building standards. This was based on the need to obtain nationally consistent data on customer perceptions of their local authority verifier building standards service. The first survey provided baseline data for trend analysis in subsequent years and was repeated in 2015 and each year since then.⁶

1.2 Changes from May 2017

In 2015, the Scottish Government commissioned Pye Tait Consulting to evaluate the performance of local authorities in their role as verifiers,⁷ with an aim to inform Scottish Ministers in the lead-up to the next appointment of verifiers from May 2017. The evaluation identified various considerations including the scope for a review and refresh of the performance framework.

In 2016, the Scottish Government completed this review in consultation with Local authority Building Standards Scotland (LABSS) and with independent input from Pye Tait Consulting. The 32 local authorities were re-appointed on 1st May 2017 for varying lengths of time based on their prior performance, some of which were subsequently re-appointed for a further period from 1st May 2020. A full review of appointment periods is planned to be undertaken before 1st May 2023.⁸ The new 'Building Standards Performance Framework for Verifiers' was also implemented from May 2017.⁹

Two of the seven new KPOs, categorised under 'Quality Customer Experience', aim to ensure that verifiers adhere to the commitments in the building standards customer charter and meet or exceed customer expectations. The 2020 survey

⁶ The Scottish Government (2014) National Customer Satisfaction Survey to Support the New Verification Performance Framework (Phase 2 report). Available at: www.gov.scot/Resource/0045/00456855.pdf

⁷ The Scottish Government (2016) Evaluation of the performance of local authorities in their role as building standards verifiers. Available at: <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0049/00495402.pdf>

⁸ Further details about the 2017 re-appointment of verifiers are available at: <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Built-Environment/Building/Building-standards/verification/>

⁹ The Scottish Government (2017) Building Standards Performance Framework for Verifiers. Available at: <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0051/00516415.pdf>

aligns with KPO4 – titled ‘Understand and respond to the customer experience’. The purpose of this KPO is for local authority verifiers to monitor customer satisfaction with the building standards service and ensure it meets or exceeds customer expectations.

This report presents the findings from the 2020 national customer satisfaction survey.

1.3 Methodology

The 2020 survey questionnaire was identical to the 2019 version (a copy is presented in Appendix 2).

The scope of the survey was all building standards customers between 1st April 2019 and 31st March 2020, defined as:

- Applicants for building warrants (including any agents);
- Submitters of completion certificates (including any agents); and
- Others that have interacted with the building standards service.

Local authorities supplied their customers’ contact details (name and email address only) to Pye Tait Consulting for the express purpose of being invited to participate in the survey. On advice from the Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO) following GDPR coming into force in May 2018, the national customer satisfaction survey is in the legitimate interests of the buildings standards system and its customers. However, prior to GDPR, customers may have previously opted out of being contacted for the purpose of this survey, and local authorities double-checked with these customers if they still wished to opt out of their details being shared with Pye Tait.

The survey opened on 28th September 2020 and closed on 3rd November 2020. It was hosted online and customers with email addresses were directly invited by Pye Tait Consulting to participate. Local authorities were also at liberty to promote the survey to their own customers (i.e. those within scope) as appropriate, with some promoting the survey via social media channels.

When completing the survey, customers were presented with a link relating to the specific local authority verifier to which their response related. Customers of multiple local authorities were presented with links for each local authority verifier of which they had been a customer and thus could complete the survey multiple times, once for each local authority verifier.

A note about the analysis

For most survey questions, the findings contained within this report have been cross-tabulated by type of customer (see Figure 1). It should be noted that the findings have not been subject to statistical tests to determine the significance of any apparent patterns and should therefore be treated as indicative. Percentages shown in charts and tables may not add up to precisely 100% due to the impact of rounding.

Certain charts in this report refer to a base number of 'respondents' (meaning total customers answering that particular survey question) and others refer to a base number of 'responses' (total boxes ticked for survey questions where customers could choose more than one answer).

2. Achieved Sample and Respondent Profile

2.1 Total survey responses

Total survey responses for Scotland (including the national survey response rate) is shown in Table 2.

Table 2 Achieved sample and response rate

A	Number of customer email addresses supplied by local authorities to Pye Tait Consulting This number includes repeat email addresses, i.e. where the same customer's details were supplied by more than one local authority verifier.	26,264
B	Of these – number of unique customers invited to participate in the survey: This number follows a de-duplication of repeat email addresses where supplied by more than one local authority verifier.	20,966
C	Total survey responses for Scotland: Customers attributed their survey responses to a particular local authority verifier. Respondents could complete the survey more than once to provide feedback about more than one local authority verifier if they had been a customer of multiple local authorities.	3,037
D	Response rate for Scotland (C as a percentage of B):	14.5%¹⁰

A breakdown of the achieved sample and response rates by local authority verifier is provided in Table 3.

NB: The response rate for Scotland is not directly comparable with individual local authority verifier response rates. The response rate for Scotland is based on total unique customers on a national level (i.e. following a de-duplication exercise) whereas the response rate for each local authority verifier is based on total email addresses supplied by that local authority verifier.

¹⁰ For comparison purposes, the national response rate in 2019 was 15.0%. However, higher volumes of customer email addresses were supplied by local authorities this year than in 2019, resulting in the highest number of responses to date since the survey was first run.

Table 3 Achieved sample and response rate by local authority verifier

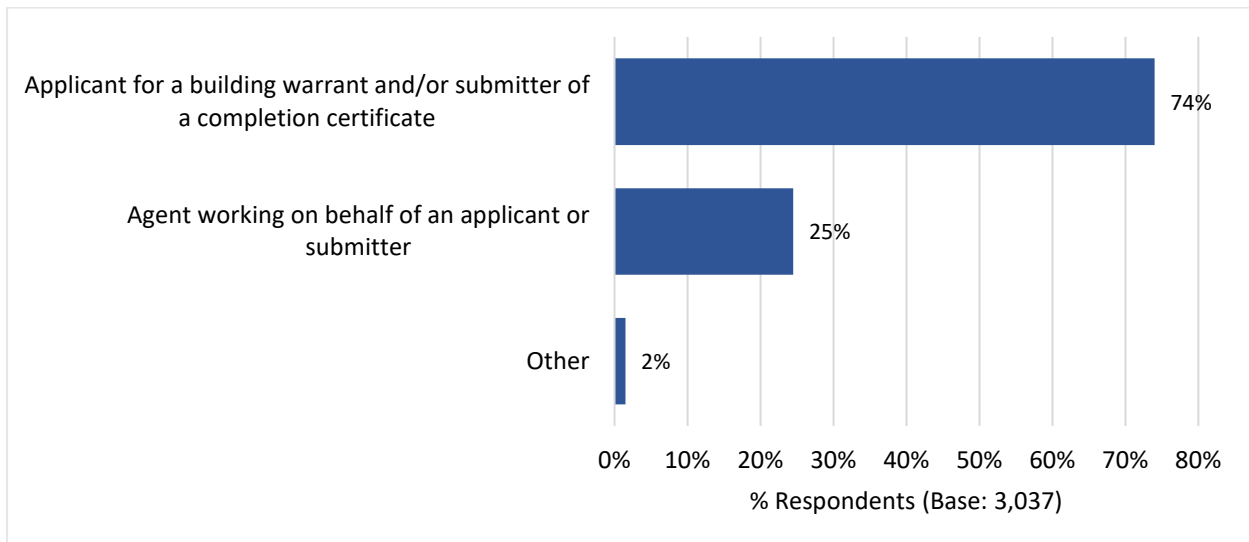
Local authority verifier	A: Total email addresses supplied by local authorities to Pye Tait	B: Total email addresses that were unique to each local authority verifier	C: Actual survey responses attributed to each local authority verifier (self-selected by the customer)	D: Response rate: Actual responses attributed to each local authority verifier (C) as a % of total email addresses supplied by that local authority verifier (A)
Aberdeen City	737	445	60	8.1%
Aberdeenshire	1,657	1,366	214	12.9%
Angus	445	294	63	14.2%
Argyll and Bute	528	303	68	12.9%
City of Edinburgh	3,559	2,798	379	10.6%
Clackmannanshire	237	137	21	8.9%
Dumfries and Galloway	672	573	122	18.2%
Dundee City	637	431	61	9.6%
East Ayrshire	485	367	47	9.7%
East Dunbartonshire	963	645	101	10.5%
East Lothian	468	209	35	7.5%
East Renfrewshire	708	389	71	10.0%
Eilean Siar	269	239	49	18.2%
Falkirk	548	332	67	12.2%
Fife	1,440	1,068	172	11.9%
Glasgow City	1,250	581	100	8.0%
Highland	1,693	1,408	238	14.1%
Inverclyde	131	37	7	5.3%
Midlothian	738	505	91	12.3%
Moray	762	600	107	14.0%
North Ayrshire	568	368	70	12.3%
North Lanarkshire	2,177	1,712	214	9.8%
Orkney	301	283	59	19.6%
Perth and Kinross	878	596	101	11.5%
Renfrewshire	838	465	89	10.6%
Scottish Borders	571	410	65	11.4%
Shetland	172	161	21	12.2%
South Ayrshire	660	481	71	10.8%
South Lanarkshire	354	290	46	13.0%
Stirling	735	497	102	13.9%
West Dunbartonshire	476	311	51	10.7%
West Lothian	607	432	75	12.4%
Customers of multiple local authorities	Included in above totals	+2,233	N/A	N/A
Total	26,264	20,966	3,037	14.5%*

*The total Scotland response rate is determined by calculating column C as a percentage of B.

2.2 Respondent profile

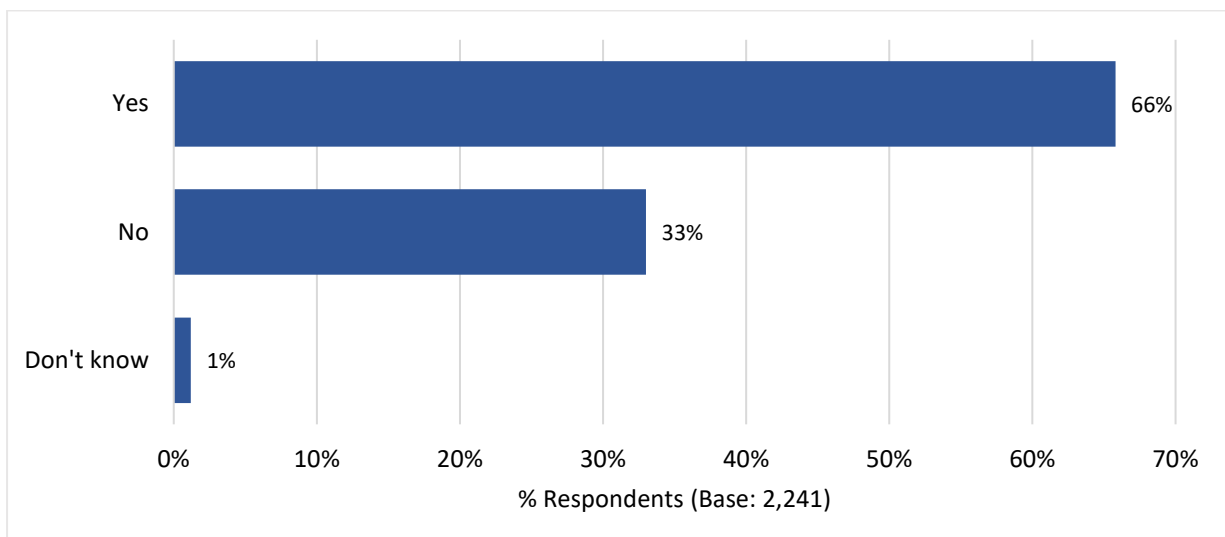
The majority of customers responding to the survey (74%) were direct applicants for building warrants and/or submitters of completion certificates¹¹ in the 2019/20 financial year (the period in scope of the survey). A quarter (25%) were agents acting on behalf of applicants, while the remaining 2% fell outside of these categories (Figure 1).

Figure 1 Customer type¹²



Among direct applicants, two thirds (66%) confirmed that they used an agent to act on their behalf as part of the application process (Figure 2).

Figure 2 Use of an agent (direct applicants/submitters only)



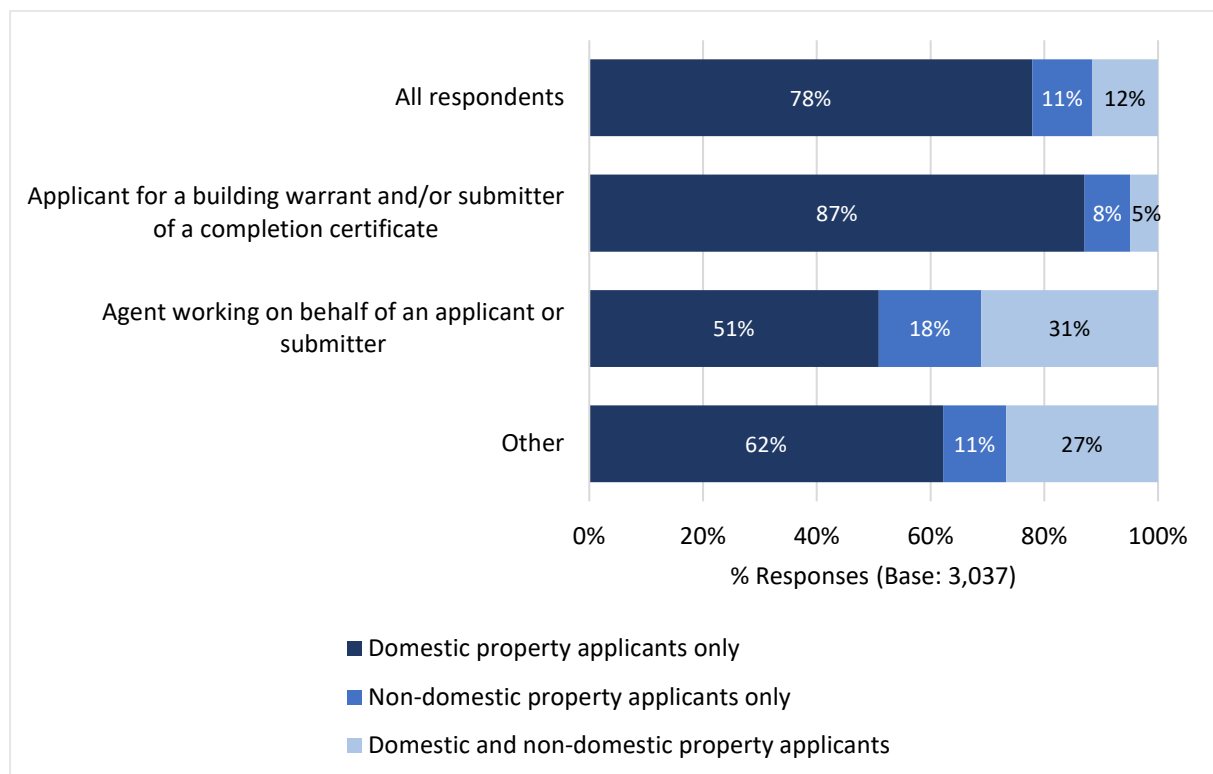
¹¹ From this point forward the term 'direct applicants' is used for ease of reference when referring to direct applicants for building warrant and/or direct submitters of completion certificates.

¹² Proportions in certain Figures and Tables may not add up to exactly 100% due to rounding.

All customers were asked to state the category (or categories) of work for which they had submitted an application. The majority of customers (78%) had submitted applications for domestic work only, 11% submitted applications for non-domestic work only, and 12% submitted applications for both domestic and non-domestic work.

Direct applicants responding to the survey were primarily domestic customers of the building standards system, whereas agents spanned a mix of domestic only, commercial only, and combined (domestic and commercial) customers (Figure 3).

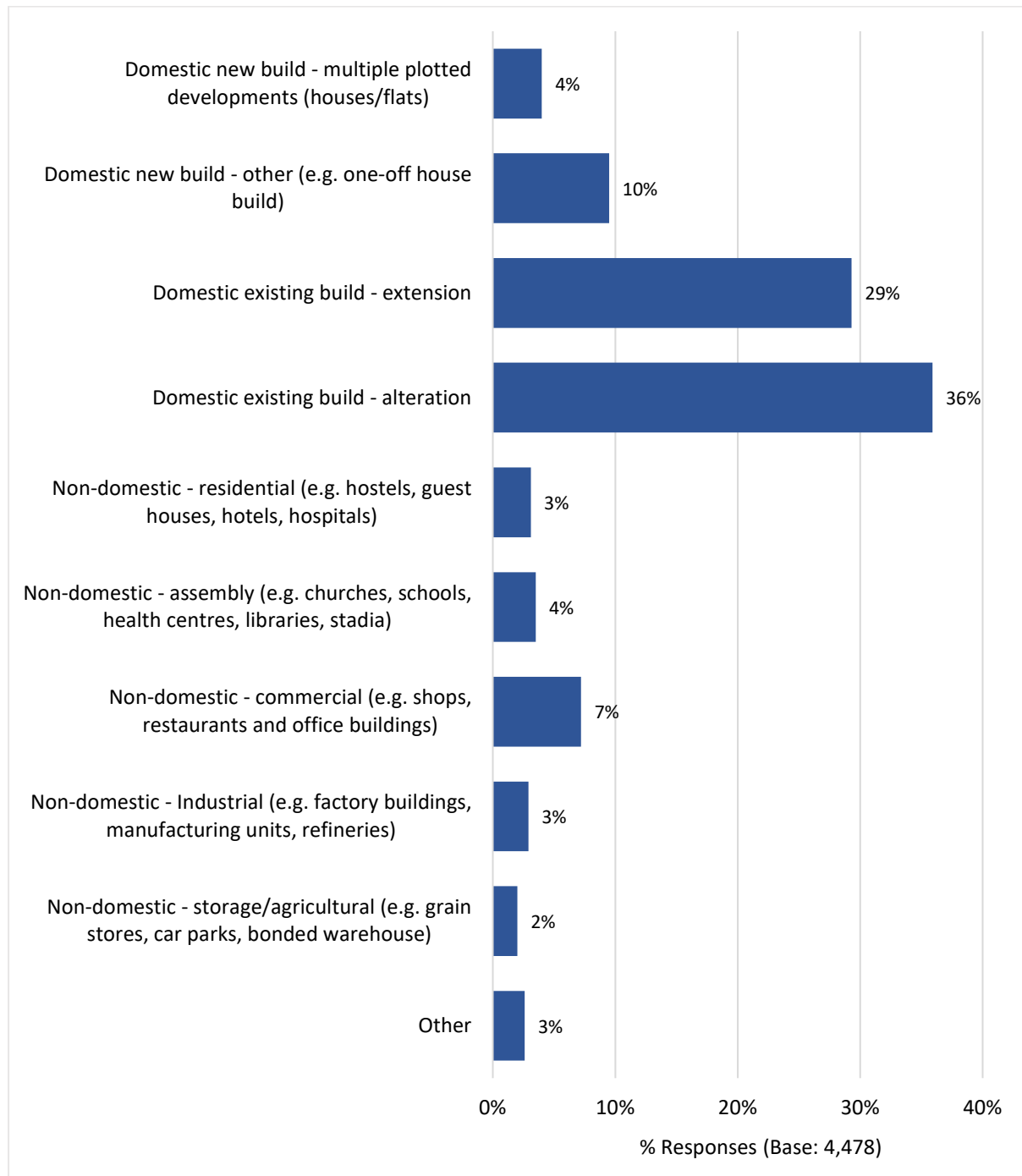
Figure 3 Customer type by category of application



A more detailed breakdown of the categories of building work for which surveyed customers had applied, is shown in Figure 4.

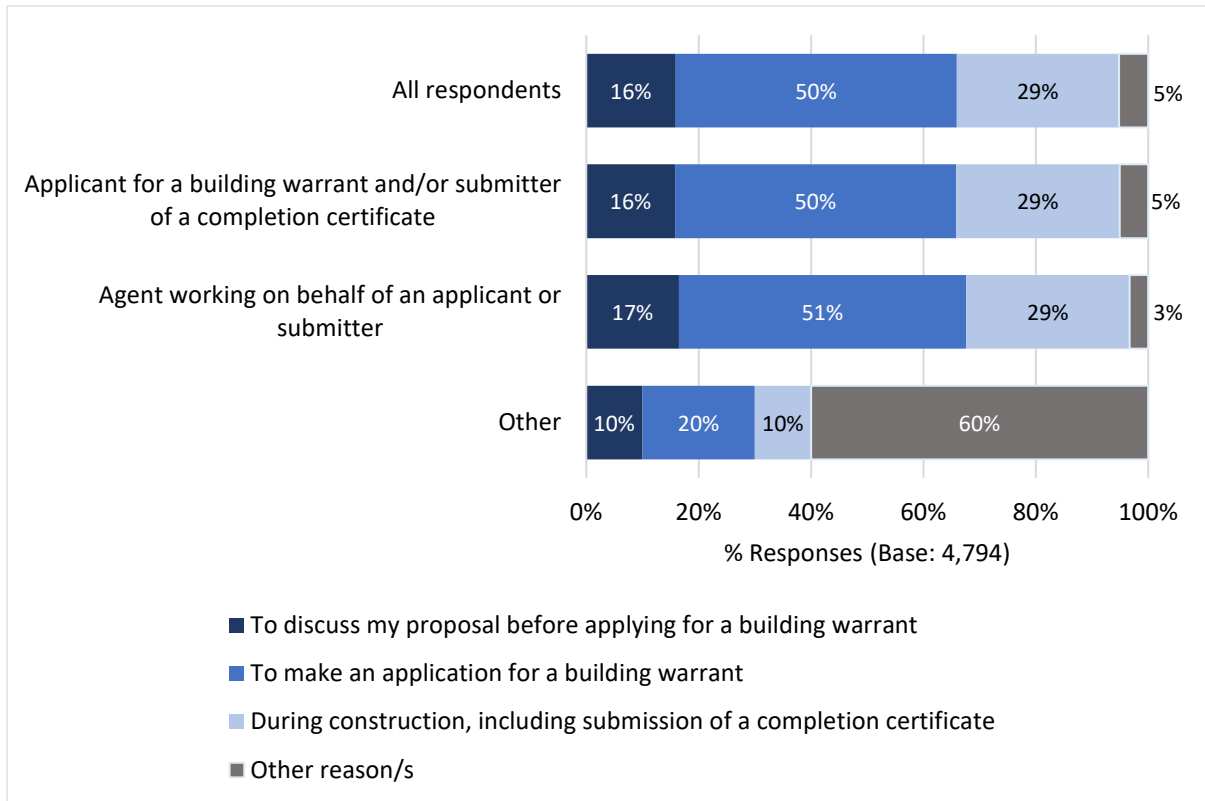
Applications relating to 'Domestic existing build' (either alterations or extensions) account for the majority (65%) of responses.

Figure 4 Categories of building work



The most common reason why surveyed customers made contact with their local authority verifier building standards service was to prepare an application for a building warrant (Figure 5).

Figure 5 Reasons for making contact with the building standards service



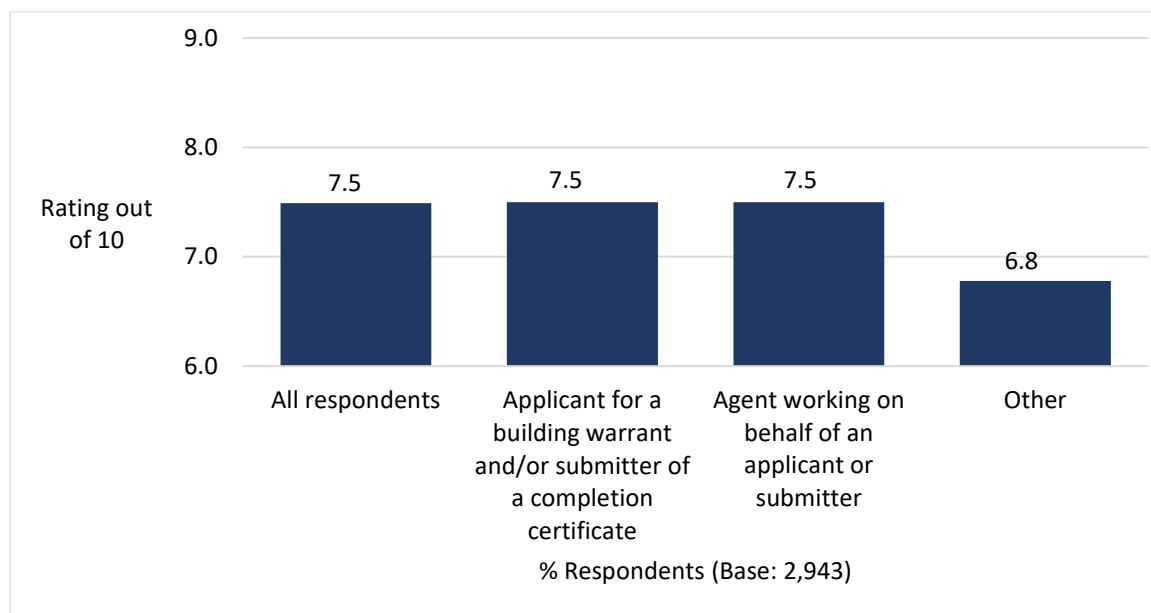
3. Overall Satisfaction

Surveyed customers were asked to rate their overall satisfaction with the local authority verifier building standards service on a scale from 1 'not at all satisfied' to 10 'completely satisfied'.

On the whole, customers are increasingly satisfied, returning an average rating of 7.5 out of 10. This compares with an average score of 7.4 in 2019 and 7.0 in 2018. The most common (modal) rating was the perfect mark of 10 out of 10 (Figure 6).

Agents are now as equally satisfied as direct applicants, with the gap between the two having closed since 2018. The average applicant rating stands at 7.5 (a small decrease from 7.6 in 2019) while the average agent rating has increased to 7.5 (from 7.0 in 2019 and 6.3 in 2018).

Figure 6 Overall satisfaction with the building standards service



Average ratings differ slightly by type of application, being 7.5 for domestic customers only, 7.3 for non-domestic customers only, and 7.5 for mixed (domestic and non-domestic) customers.

The overall satisfaction within each local authority verifier is displayed in Table 4. Average scores range between 5.9 and 8.7, and most local authorities score 7.5 or above; four local authorities score below 6.5, and seven score between 6.5 and 7.4 (inclusive).

Table 4 Overall satisfaction with Building Standards service by local authority verifier

Local authority verifier	Overall satisfaction score 2020	Overall satisfaction score 2019	Overall satisfaction score 2018
Aberdeen City	8.3 (G)	8.0 (G)	8.5 (G)
Aberdeenshire	8.3 (G)	8.6 (G)	8.4 (G)
Angus	8.5 (G)	8.9 (G)	8.3 (G)
Argyll and Bute	8.6 (G)	8.5 (G)	8.1 (G)
City of Edinburgh	6.2 (R)	5.4 (R)	4.3 (R)
Clackmannanshire	8.4 (G)	8.9 (G)	8.7 (G)
Dumfries and Galloway	7.9 (G)	7.1 (A)	6.8 (A)
Dundee City	7.4 (A)	7.6 (G)	7.7 (G)
East Ayrshire	8.7 (G)	8.2 (G)	8.4 (G)
East Dunbartonshire	6.9 (A)	4.8 (R)	6.4 (R)
East Lothian	7.4 (A)	6.9 (A)	6.7 (A)
East Renfrewshire	8.0 (G)	8.1 (G)	8.3 (G)
Eilean Siar	8.6 (G)	8.5 (G)	8.5 (G)
Falkirk	7.4 (A)	7.9 (G)	8.2 (G)
Fife	7.6 (G)	7.5 (G)	6.8 (A)
Glasgow City	6.2 (R)	5.4 (R)	5.3 (R)
Highland	7.6 (G)	7.7 (G)	7.4 (A)
Inverclyde	5.9 (R)	6.3 (R)	6.7 (A)
Midlothian	7.9 (G)	8.8 (G)	7.5 (G)
Moray	7.7 (G)	8.0 (G)	7.6 (G)
North Ayrshire	7.8 (G)	8.6 (G)	8.8 (G)
North Lanarkshire	7.4 (A)	7.5 (G)	7.5 (G)
Orkney	8.3 (G)	8.6 (G)	8.2 (G)
Perth and Kinross	8.1 (G)	8.3 (G)	8.2 (G)
Renfrewshire	6.7 (A)	7.2 (A)	6.2 (R)
Scottish Borders	7.5 (G)	7.4 (A)	7.4 (A)
Shetland	8.2 (G)	7.6 (G)	7.4 (A)
South Ayrshire	7.8 (G)	7.7 (G)	6.7 (A)
South Lanarkshire	8.4 (G)	8.0 (G)	7.8 (G)
Stirling	7.3 (A)	7.4 (A)	7.2 (A)
West Dunbartonshire	6.2 (R)	8.1 (G)	7.8 (G)
West Lothian	8.1 (G)	8.7 (G)	7.6 (G)
Scotland (national comparison)	7.5 (G)	7.4 (A)	7.0 (A)

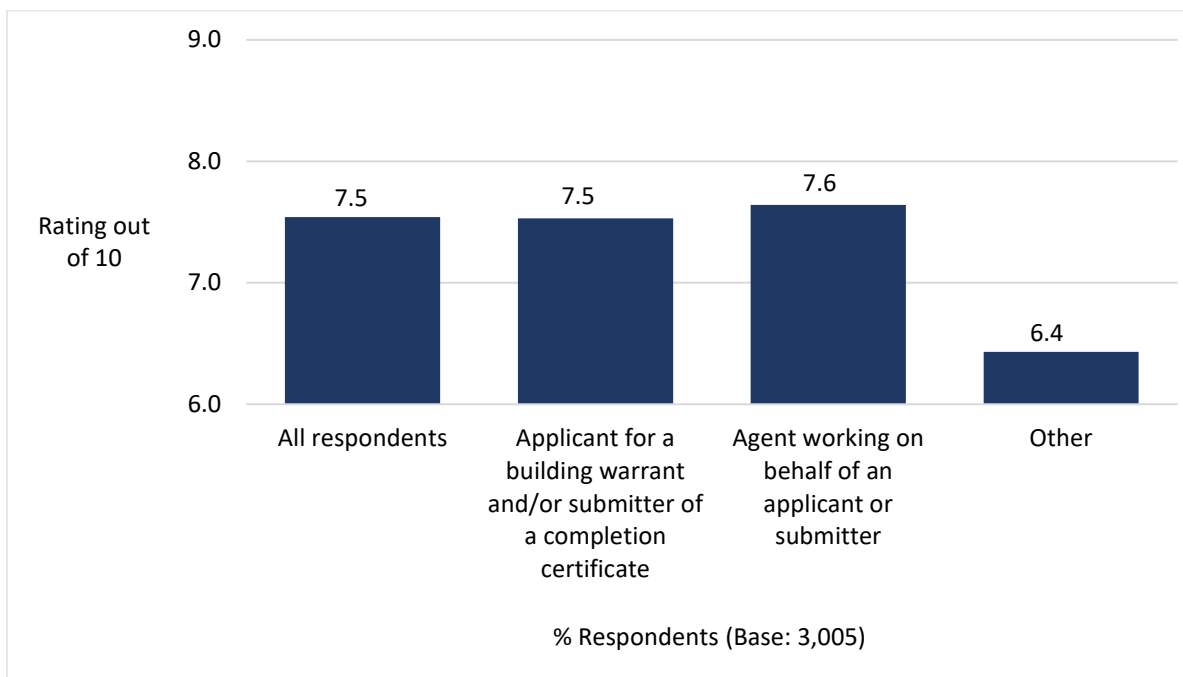
4. Meeting Expectations

Surveyed customers rated the extent to which they felt the local authority verifier building standards service had met their expectations, on a scale from 1 'not at all' to 10 'completely'.

On the whole, expectations appear to have been reasonably well met, with customers returning an average rating of 7.5 out of 10. This is a slight increase from an average rating of 7.4 in 2019. The most common (modal) rating was the perfect mark of 10 out of 10 (Figure 7).

As with the scores for overall satisfaction, the difference between agents and direct applicants has narrowed and the extent to which service meets expectation is now slightly higher for agents than direct applicants. The average applicant rating remains at 7.5 (unmoved from 2019) while the average agent rating is 7.6 (an increase from 7.1 in 2019).

Figure 7 Extent to which service met expectations



Average ratings differ slightly by type of application, being 7.6 for domestic customers, 7.3 for non-domestic customers and 7.5 for mixed (domestic and non-domestic) customers.

Respondents were asked to provide a reason for their rating in response to this question. Analysis involved ordering all responses from highest to lowest score, then dividing them into approximate thirds based on the number of respondents:

- The 'top group' (846 respondents) gave a perfect rating of 10;
- The 'middle group' (868 respondents) gave a rating of 8 or 9; and
- The 'bottom group' (1,011 respondents) gave a rating between 1 and 7.

Reasons for a rating 10 out of 10

The most common reasons for customers providing a rating of 10 out of 10 include:

- Fast, efficient, smooth, seamless and helpful service despite the Covid-19 disruptions;
- Easy, timeous and clear process;
- Excellent and prompt communications;
- Professional and fair approach taken by first-class, knowledgeable and approachable staff, with excellent problem-solving.

As was the case in 2019, these customers complimented the overall speed of service, including granting the building warrant, and the helpfulness of staff throughout the application process. Many respondents were pleasantly surprised how quickly their applications were dealt with considering the impact of the pandemic. Staff are described as helpful, well informed, informative, professional and approachable.

“As I am a complete novice in applying for a building warrant and planning permission, I had to contact the advisors several times. I found them to be very helpful and patient at explaining the procedures.”

Direct applicant

“Communication between myself and the Local authority verifier was excellent. My questions were answered timeously and clearly. I found the people I dealt with to be very professional and kind.”

Direct applicant

“From team leader, surveyors, inspectors, and administration staff, I received helpful and friendly advice and a willingness to answer my phone calls when they were working from home during the recent and current difficult times. Much appreciated.”

Agent

Reasons for rating 8 or 9 out of 10

Most common reasons given for a rating of 8 or 9 out of 10:

- Generally, a good, efficient service, supported by prompt and pragmatic communications and guidance;
- Courteous, knowledgeable and helpful staff;

Negative points generally related to applications and requests taking longer than expected to process (often reported at completion stage) as well as a perceived slowness among local authorities in responding to communications, e.g. email or telephone, however, many respondents acknowledged that this was due to Covid-19 restrictions and lockdown. A number of respondents thought that information was sometimes unclear and ambiguous regarding the process.

“Given good advice although at times guidance was a bit ambiguous.”

Direct applicant

“Good communications with the local authority verifier after initial online application was submitted. The online application is a bit tricky and could be better, but once navigated, the contact from the building control officer was very good and the communications were prompt and concise.”

Agent

“Generally good service... sometimes I was waiting a few days for a call back but otherwise good.”

Agent

Issues raised by respondents providing ratings of 1 to 7 out of 10

The issues raised by respondents giving comparatively lower ratings are similar to previous years. These include “lengthy” timescales taken by local authorities to respond to customer requests and process applications; difficulties faced in being able to contact the building standards service; and apparent inconsistencies in the quality of service both within and between local authorities.

“Timescales were protracted on all applications submitted. Service levels varied, with a lack of consistency between requirements of different Building Control officers.”

Agent

“Very slow response from Building Standards. After making enquiries I eventually found out the officer was/had been off work but no one had taken responsibility for

my application. After many months it was eventually resolved.”

Direct applicant

“Could have sent another reminder to me stating that it could cost me if submission was late so that I would have completed the appropriate documentation in time without having to pay a fee of over £100.”

Direct applicant

“Building Standards office assigned a single officer to oversee all our Building Warrant requirements - which has been a significant number during a major site refurbishment. Although we had no issue with the competency of the officer it was clear that their workload was significant, and they were unable to meet reasonable timeframes to respond to warrants submissions and any follow up communications. This issue was exacerbated as the online portal used to submit formal correspondence added up to a 2-week admin delay for any correspondence to be notified to the officer.”

Direct applicant

“No one answers the phone, emails go unanswered and inspectors are not available for site inspections in accordance with their own requirements.”

Agent

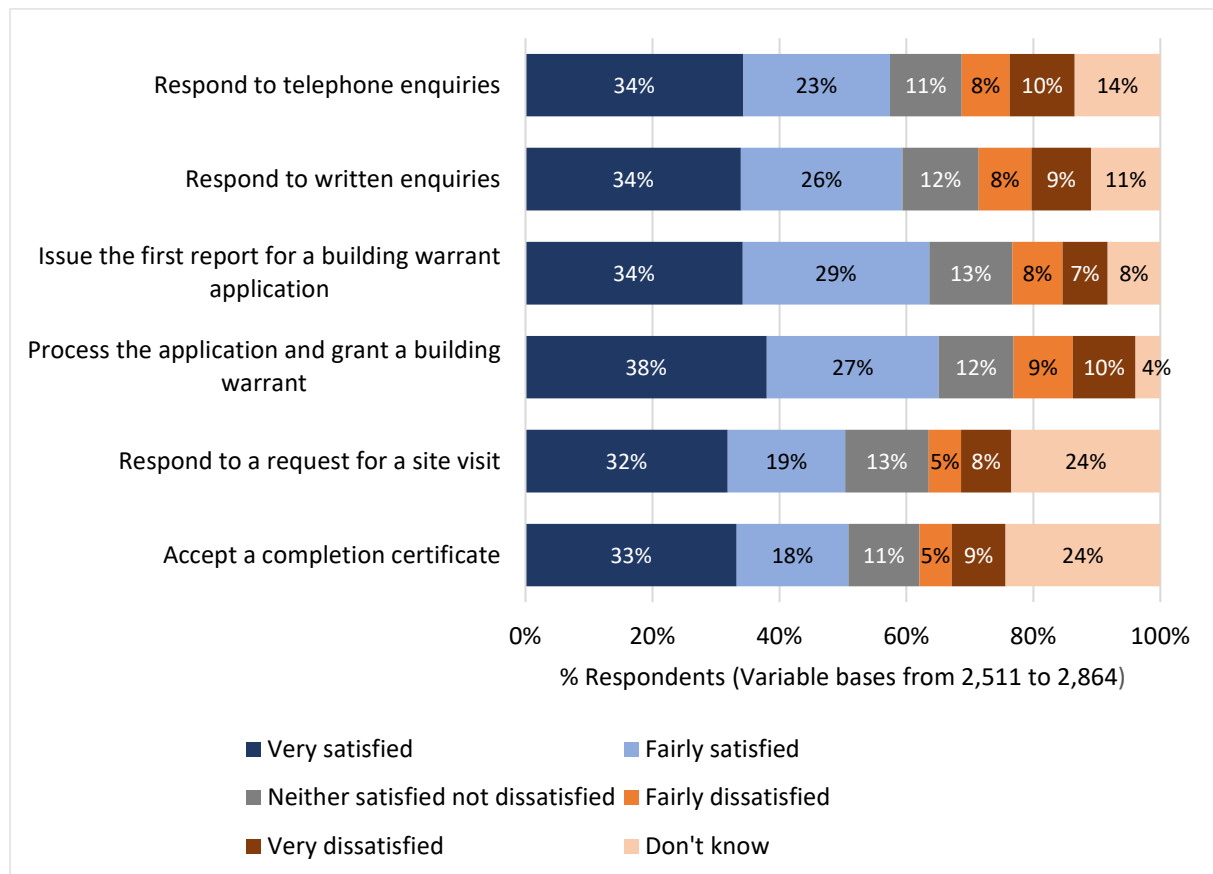
5. Timeliness and Keeping Customers Informed

5.1 Timeliness

Just under three in five customers (58%) are satisfied with the timeliness of various aspects of the service they received, which is a slight decrease from 60% in 2019.

Among the 16% of dissatisfied customers, most criticism relates to 'processing the application and granting a building warrant' (Figure 8).

Figure 8 Timeliness of service aspects (all customers)



In a change to previous years, agents responding to the survey are more satisfied than direct applicants with respect to the timeliness of various aspects of the service. Agents are more satisfied than direct applicants with most aspects, although applicants are more satisfied with the timeliness of 'Response to telephone enquiries' and 'Responding to a request for a site visit'.

The 2020 breakdowns by applicants and agent are shown in Figures 9 and 10, below.

Figure 9 Timeliness of service aspects (direct applicants/submitters)

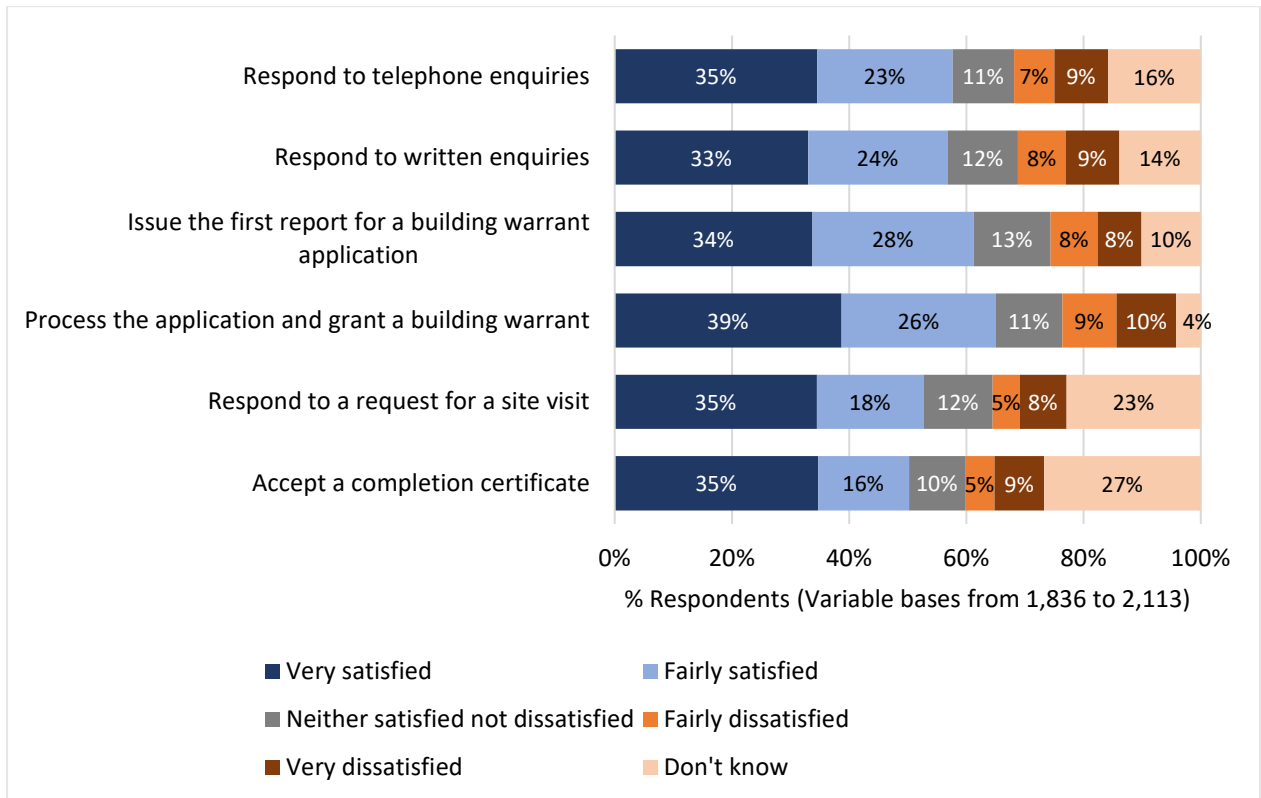
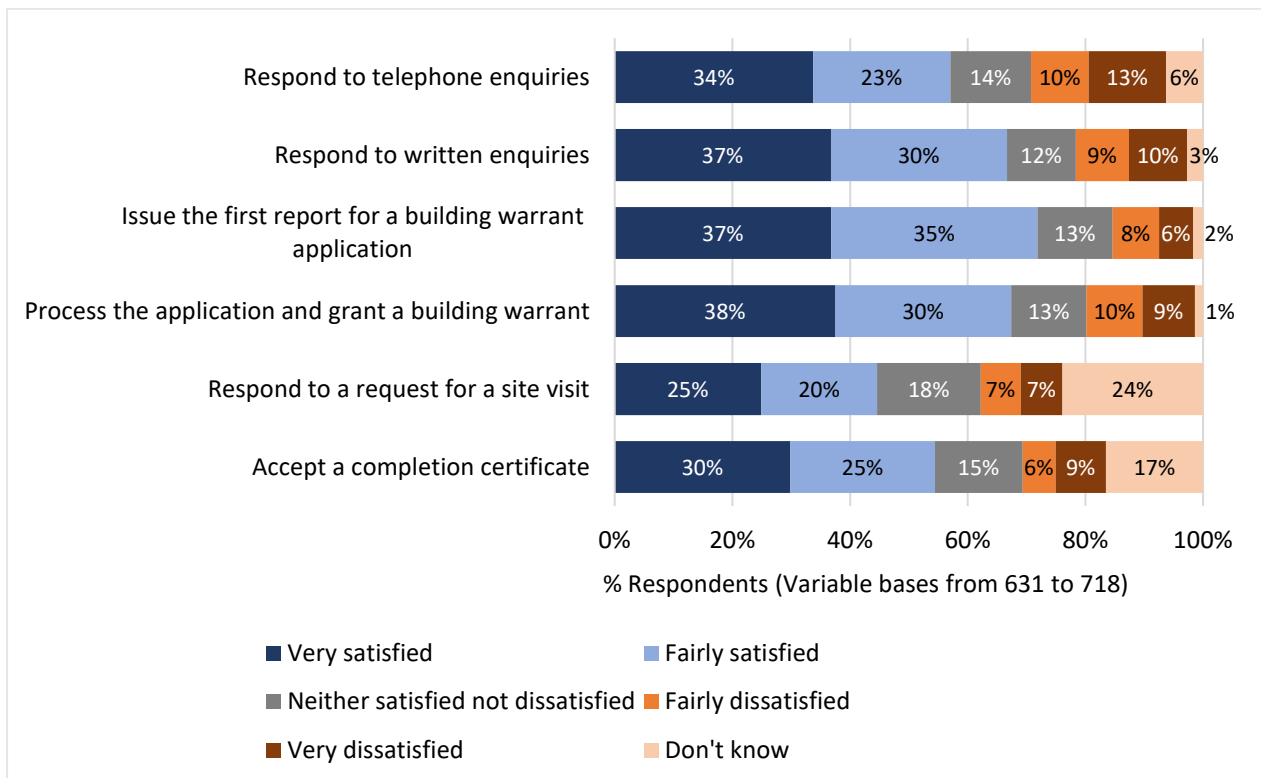


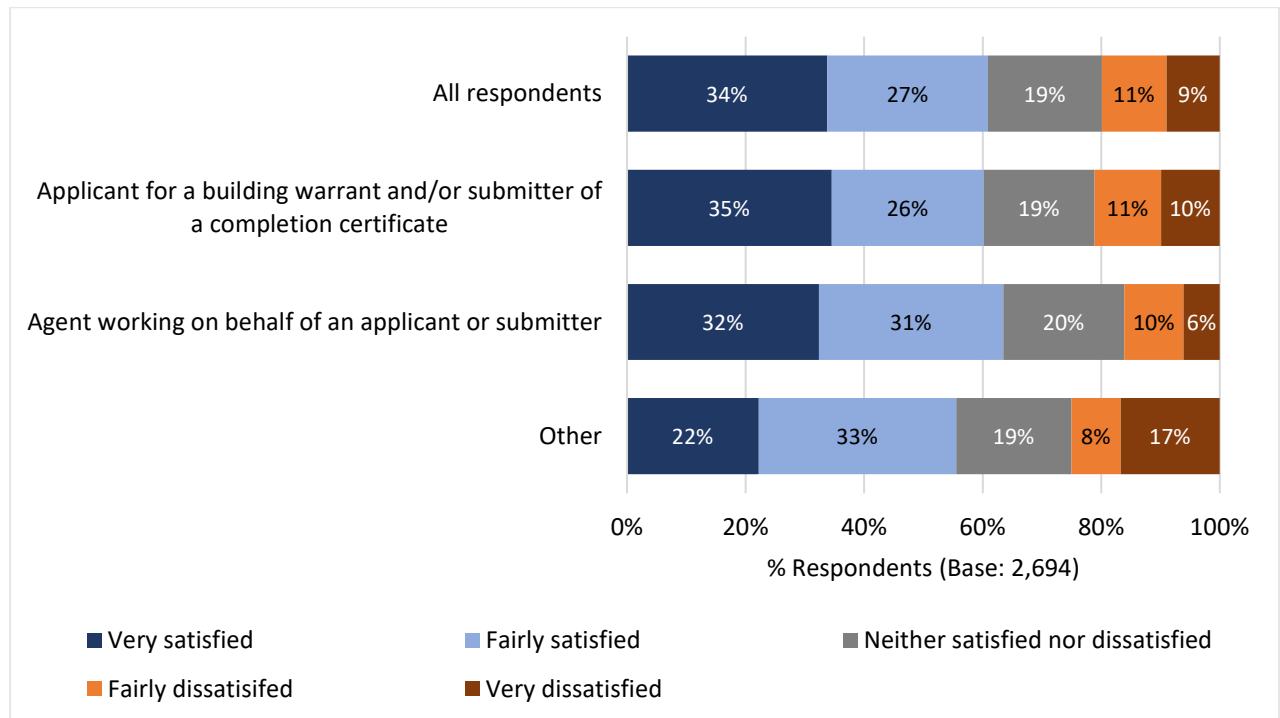
Figure 10 Timeliness of service aspects (agents)



5.2 Keeping customers informed

Just over three in five surveyed customers (61%) are satisfied with the way they were kept informed about the progress of their application or submission. This is the same proportion as in 2019. One in five customers (20%) are not satisfied and this is highest among applicants (Figure 11). This is a continued improvement on the 32% not satisfied in 2017, 27% not satisfied in 2018, and 22% not satisfied in 2019.

Figure 11 Satisfaction with the way kept informed



Among respondents stating 'fairly dissatisfied' or 'very dissatisfied', 479 provided supporting reasons. These customers primarily gave examples relating to communication, either in the initiation of communications or responsiveness. This was consistent between agents and applicants.

The main reported issues include slow, inadequate, and sometimes unhelpful communications, with limited interaction, transparency and guidance from local authorities on progress. Customer perceptions were that resource mismanagement and a lack of resources were the main causes of issues. Staff absence, Covid-19, and the e-portal are cited as common responses from local authorities to justify delays.

"The only way to contact [the] council is via "The Portal". This allows the inspectors to hide behind the system and not engage with their customers. When I did get an email address for one of the inspectors, he just referred me back to "The Portal"."

Agent

“One of my Warrants was 'in limbo' for weeks, and I was informed that was due to a staff shortfall. The officer replied to phone calls, but that did not speed up the process. Not his fault, if there is more work than staff.”

Agent

“A complete refusal to use language that could be understood and when clarification was asked for, exactly the same language and wording was used. In fact when I informed them I did not understand, I was told they were being clear enough.”

Direct applicant

“All deadlines quoted to us were missed by the planning team. Emails were not responded to. We were eventually told that a member of staff who had been handling our case had been placed on long-term sick, but no one appeared to pick up his work until we started to complain about it, causing extensive delays to the application process.”

Direct applicant

“I had no updates whatsoever and when I tried to contact them to enquire about what stage my application was at, they were most unhelpful and very rude on the phone.”

Direct applicant

“I had to constantly chase the application. I kept getting told that there were multiple databases where the form might be and that they were all being searched. I was also told several times to expect a call back within 24 hours, though it never happened on any occasion. I would be given timescales via telephone that were never met. Ultimately, the building warrant copy couldn't be found by the council, but they took my application fee anyway. Not the sign of a great organisation.”

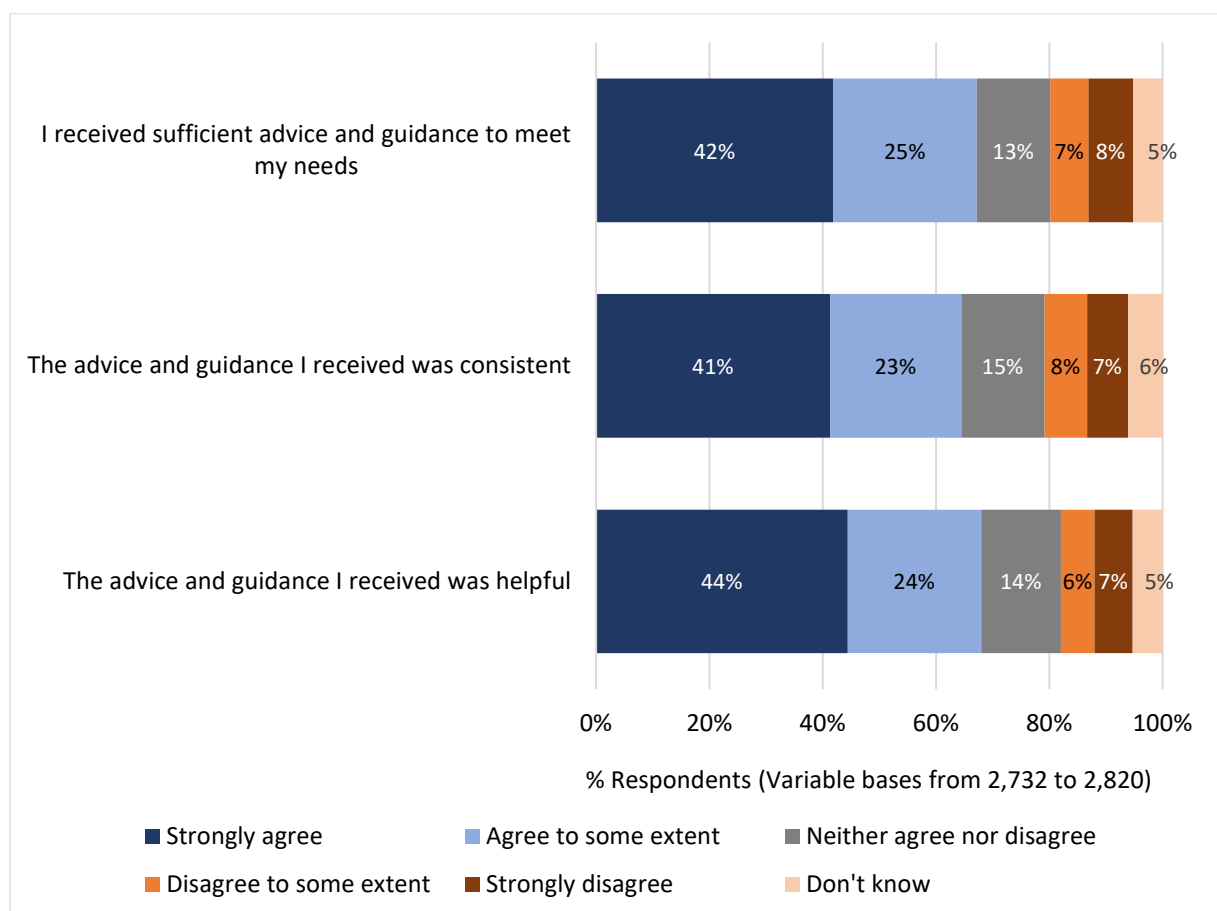
Other

6. Quality of Service

6.1 Advice, guidance and staff service

Around two thirds of surveyed customers (67%) agree that they received sufficient advice and guidance from the local authority verifier building standards service. This is a slight decrease from 69% in 2019. A majority of 64% feel the advice and guidance they received was consistent and 68% found it generally helpful (Figure 12).

Figure 12 Quality of advice and guidance received (all customers)



The strength of satisfaction is much higher among applicants than among agents, with over two thirds of applicants (69%) being generally satisfied with the quality of advice and guidance received, compared to just over half of agents (53%) (Figures 13 and 14, respectively).

Figure 13 Quality of advice and guidance received (direct applicants/submitters only)

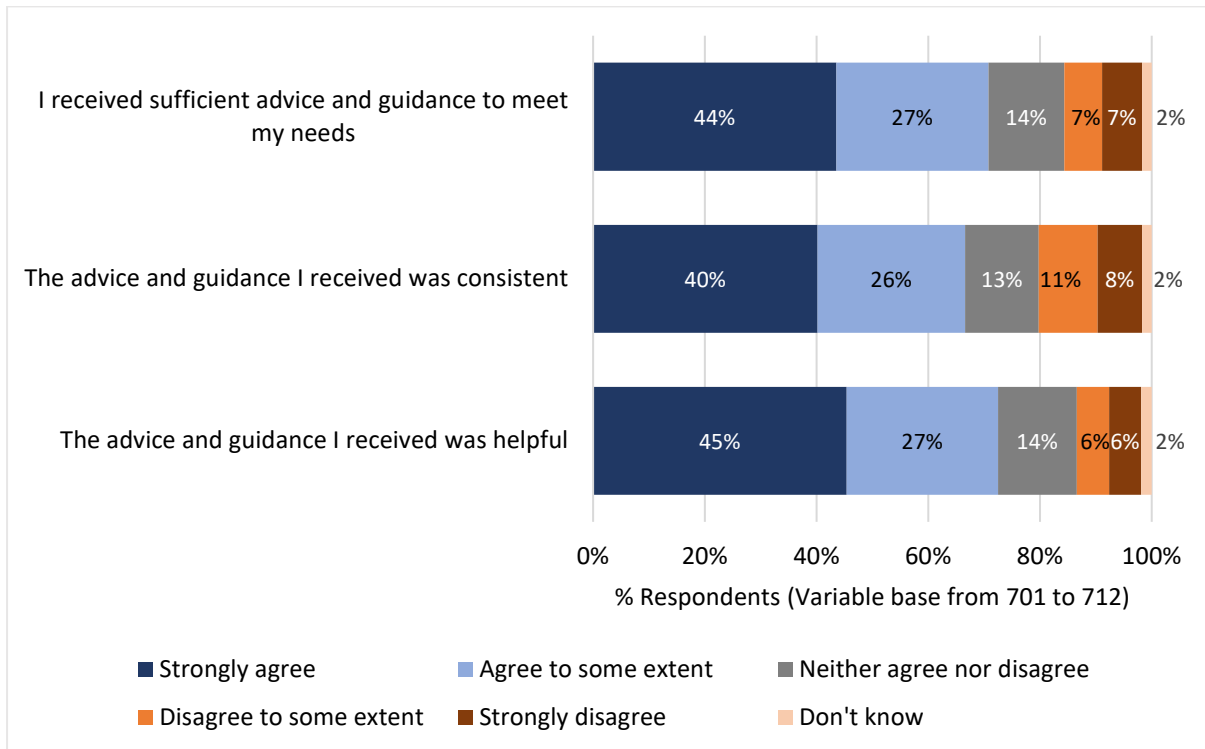
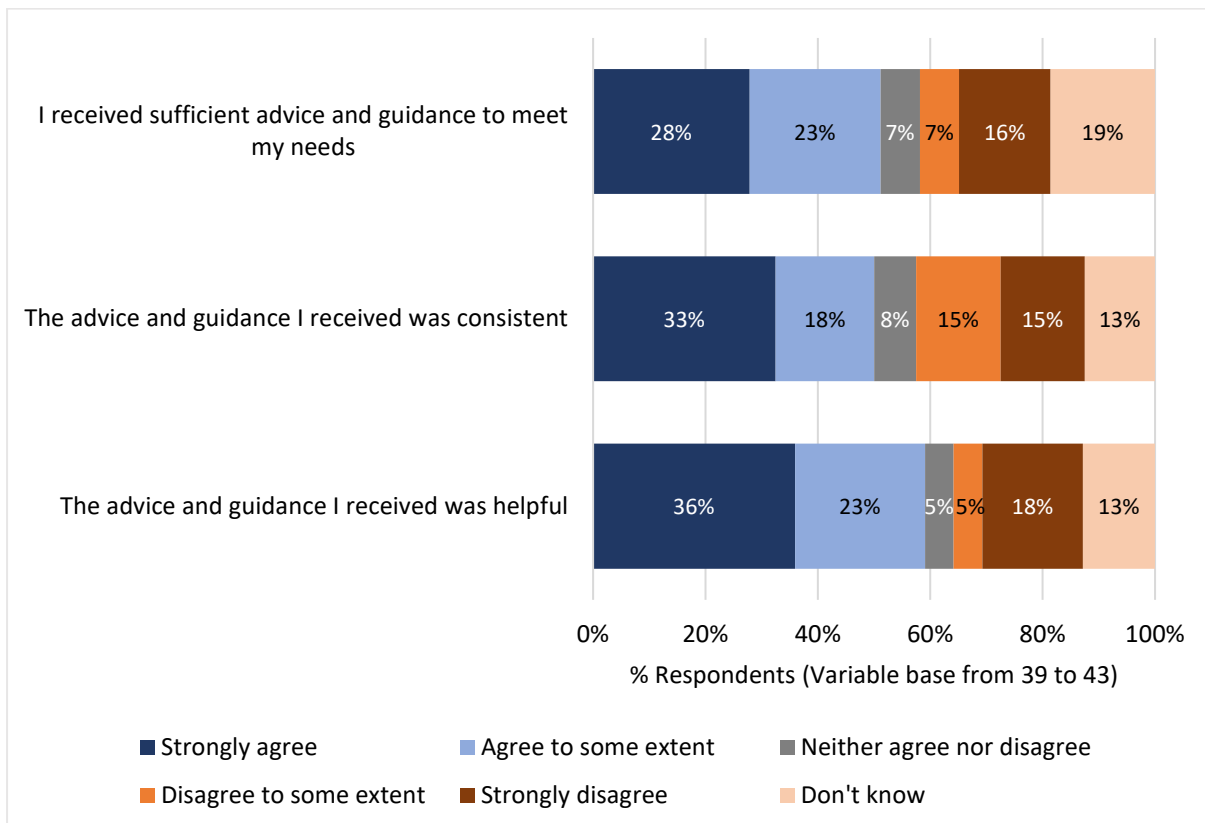
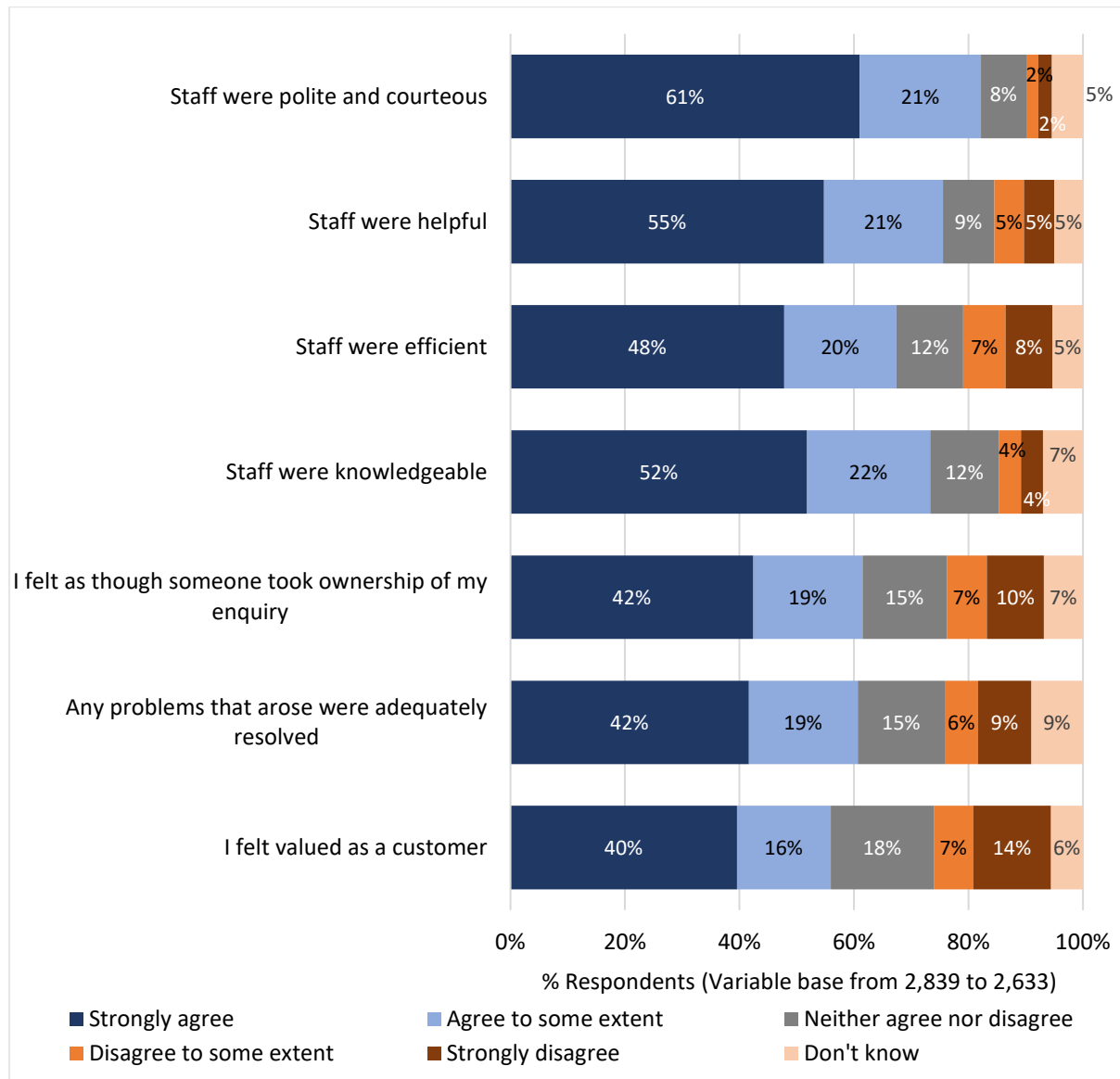


Figure 14 Quality of advice and guidance received (agents only)



The majority of customers (82%) agree that building standards staff were polite and courteous, which is 2% lower than in 2019. The strongest areas of disagreement relate to feeling valued as a customer (21% disagree) and feeling that someone took ownership of the enquiry (17% disagree) – Figure 15.

Figure 15 Quality of staff service



The strength of satisfaction follows a similar pattern between applicants and agents, with higher proportions of agents strongly agreeing and being less prone to disagree than direct applicants, in a switch from previous years (Figures 16 and 17, respectively).

Figure 16 Quality of staff service (direct applicants/submitters only)

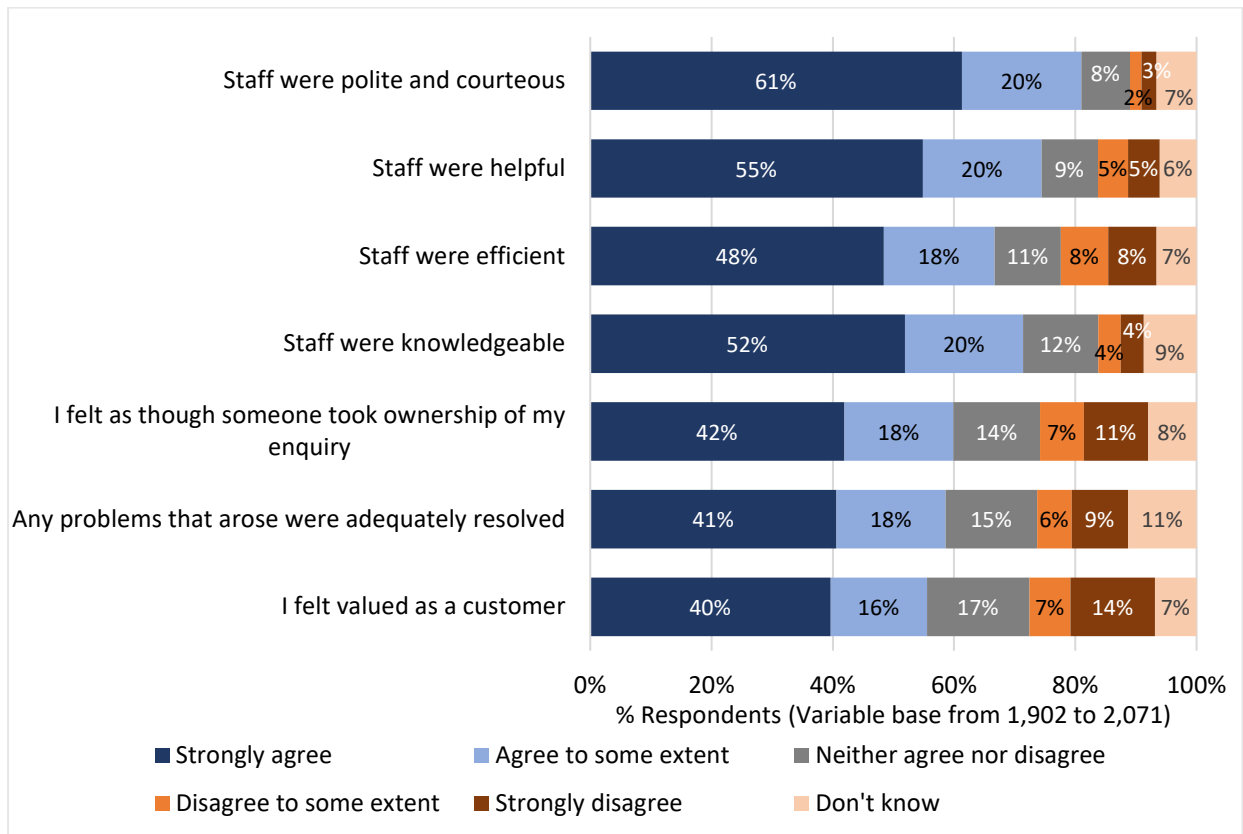
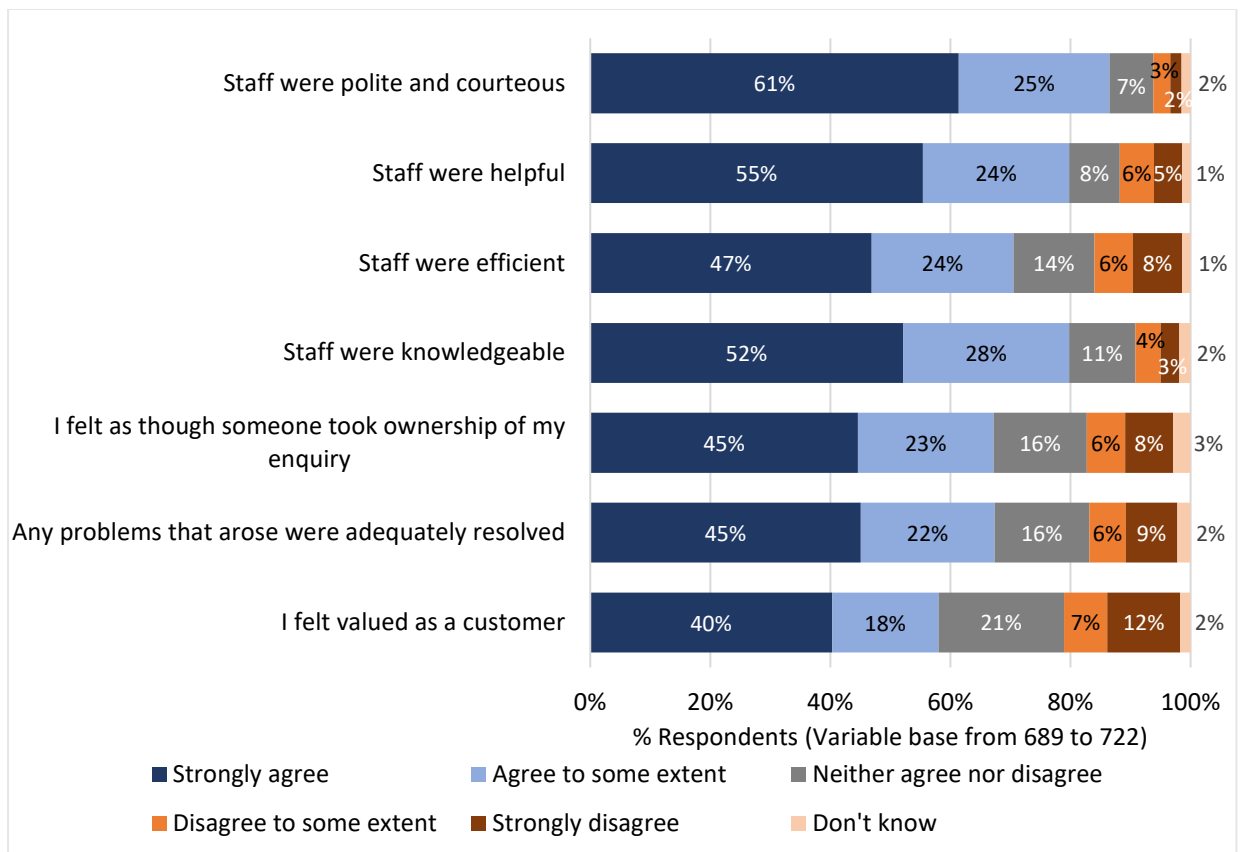


Figure 17 Quality of staff service (agents only)



Customers strongly agreeing and/or strongly disagreeing with at least one of the above statements were asked to provide their reasons.

Customers stating ‘strongly agree’

A total of 1,577 customers provided supporting reasons. The most common adjectives given to describe staff (from most to least cited) are as follows:

- Helpful
- Polite
- Responsive
- Professional
- Prompt
- Quick
- Knowledgeable
- Clear
- Courteous
- Efficient
- Friendly
- Approachable.

A small number of respondents, particularly direct applicants, commended building standards staff for helping them to interpret the standards and regulations and proactively helping customers to resolve any technical issues or sticking points.

“I felt my allocated officer was very knowledgeable and the technical terms I didn’t understand she explained in a language that I did understand.”

Direct applicant

“From the admin staff to the building control officer, everyone provided me with clear and helpful advice.”

Agent

“Everything was done in a timely manner and technical issues were resolved without drama and with mutual respect.”

Direct applicant

Customers stating ‘strongly disagree’

A total of 461 customers provided supporting explanations for their disagreement. Many reiterated concerns raised previously, including lack of responsiveness to queries, inaccessible staff, inefficiency, and inconsistency in the quality of service between different officers in a single local authority verifier.

“I was given guidance on a technical enquiry by one building standards officer prior to submitting a warrant application which was then proved incorrect by the officer dealing with the application. This resulted in a late design change to the building being required.”

Agent

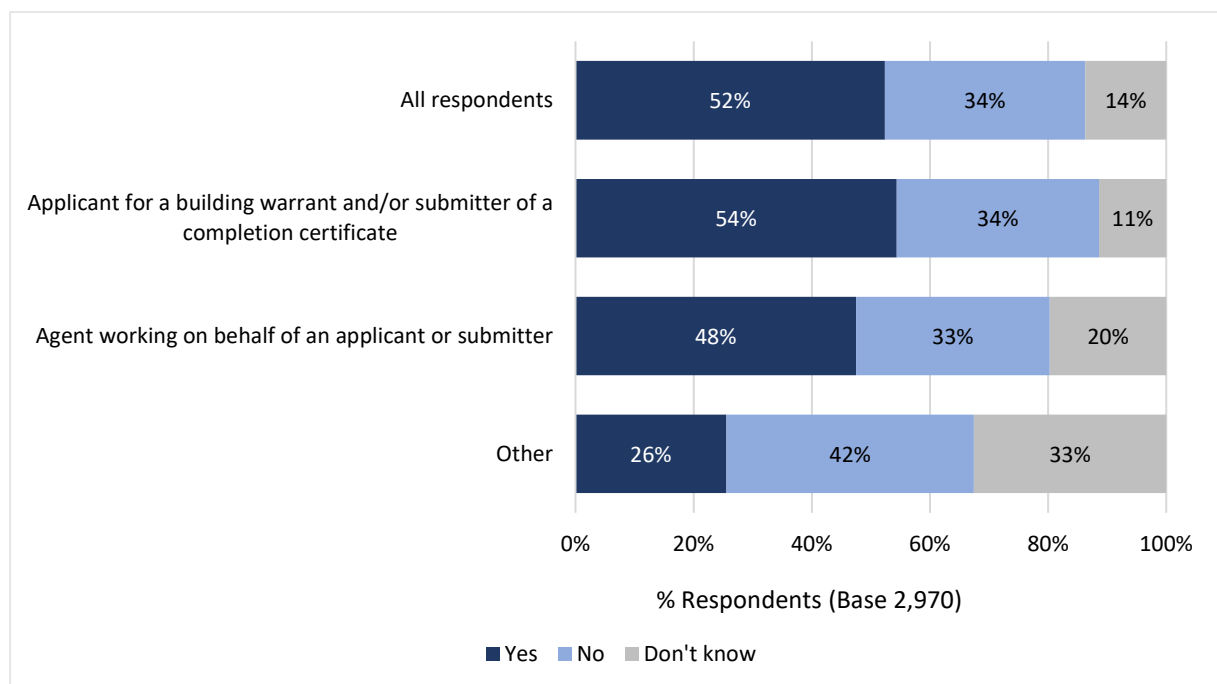
“A detailed application was submitted, the feedback for further information was inconsistent and didn't mirror the application. The period of time between the application and return of information is painfully slow, we chase constantly and do not get any feedback.”

Direct applicant

6.2 Inspection visits

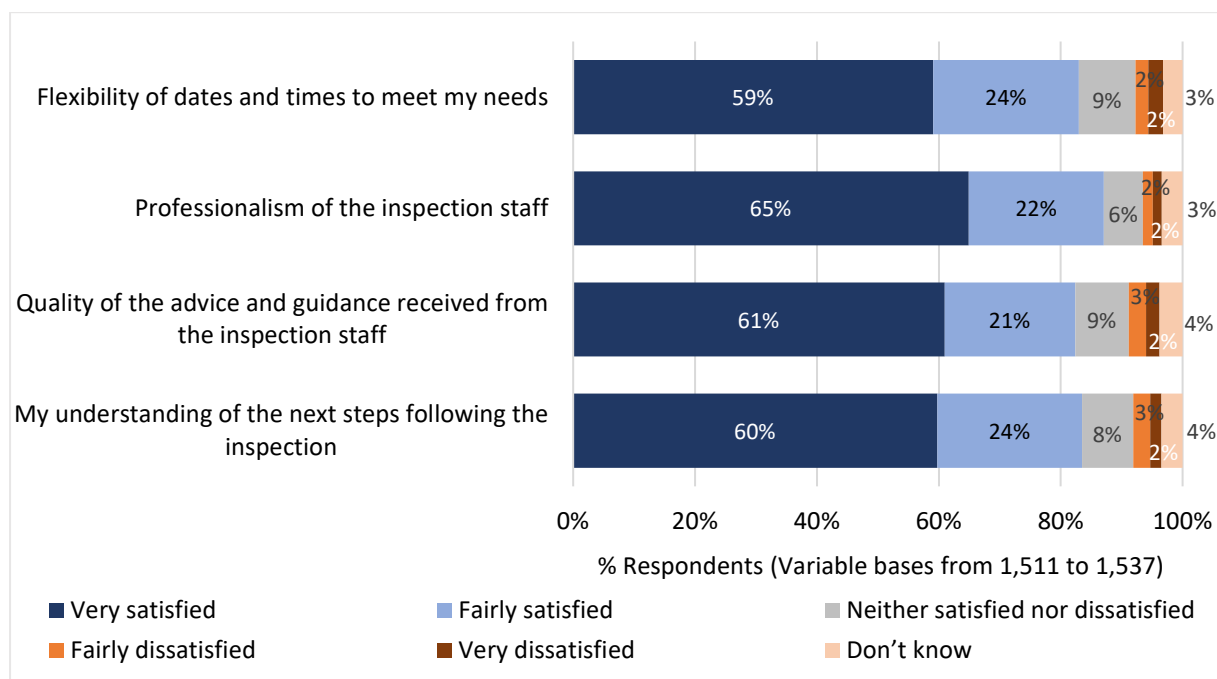
Just over half of customers (52%) confirmed that an inspection visit was undertaken by building standards service staff (Figure 18). This is 14% lower than in 2019.

Figure 18 Whether an inspection was carried out by building standards service staff



Among customers confirming that an inspection visit had taken place, the majority (84% on average) were satisfied with various specific aspects of the visit (Figure 19). This is the same proportion as in 2019.

Figure 19 Satisfaction with inspection visits (all customers)



Satisfaction levels are slightly higher among direct applicants than agents (Figures 20 and 21, respectively).

Figure 20 Satisfaction with inspection visits (direct applicants/submitters)

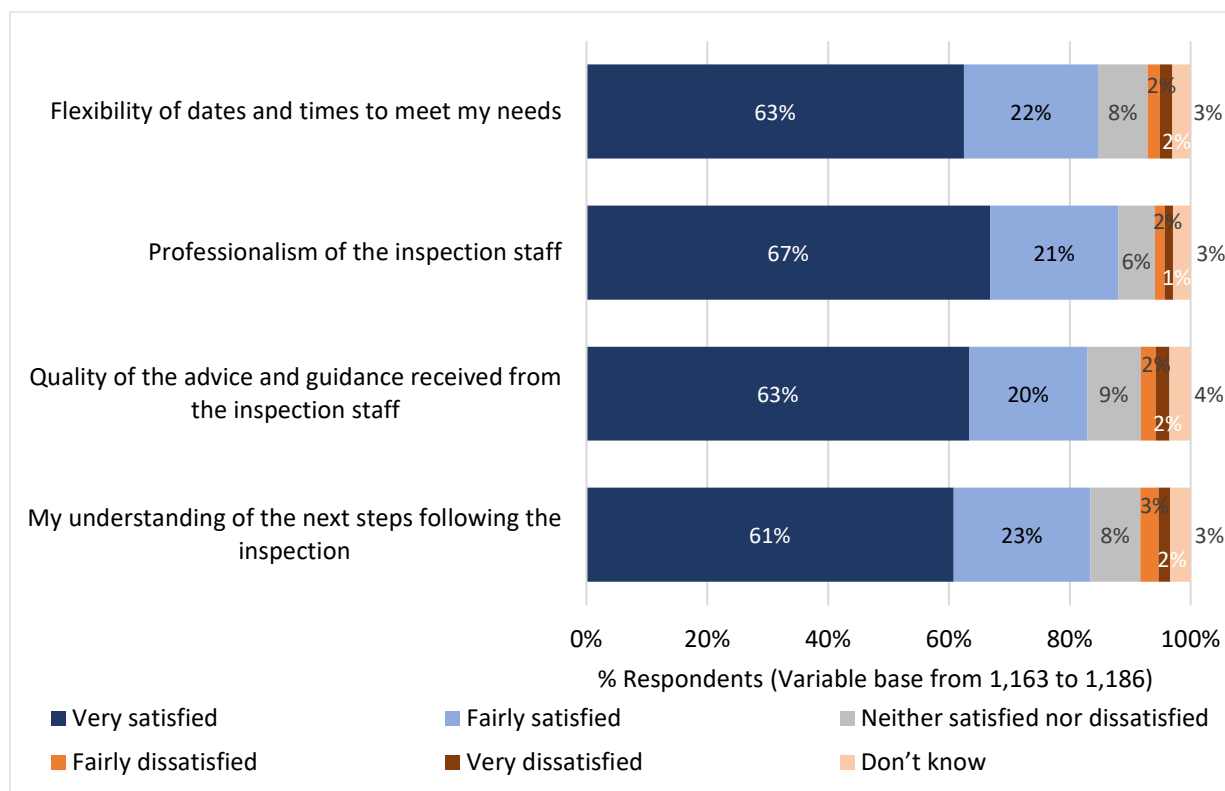
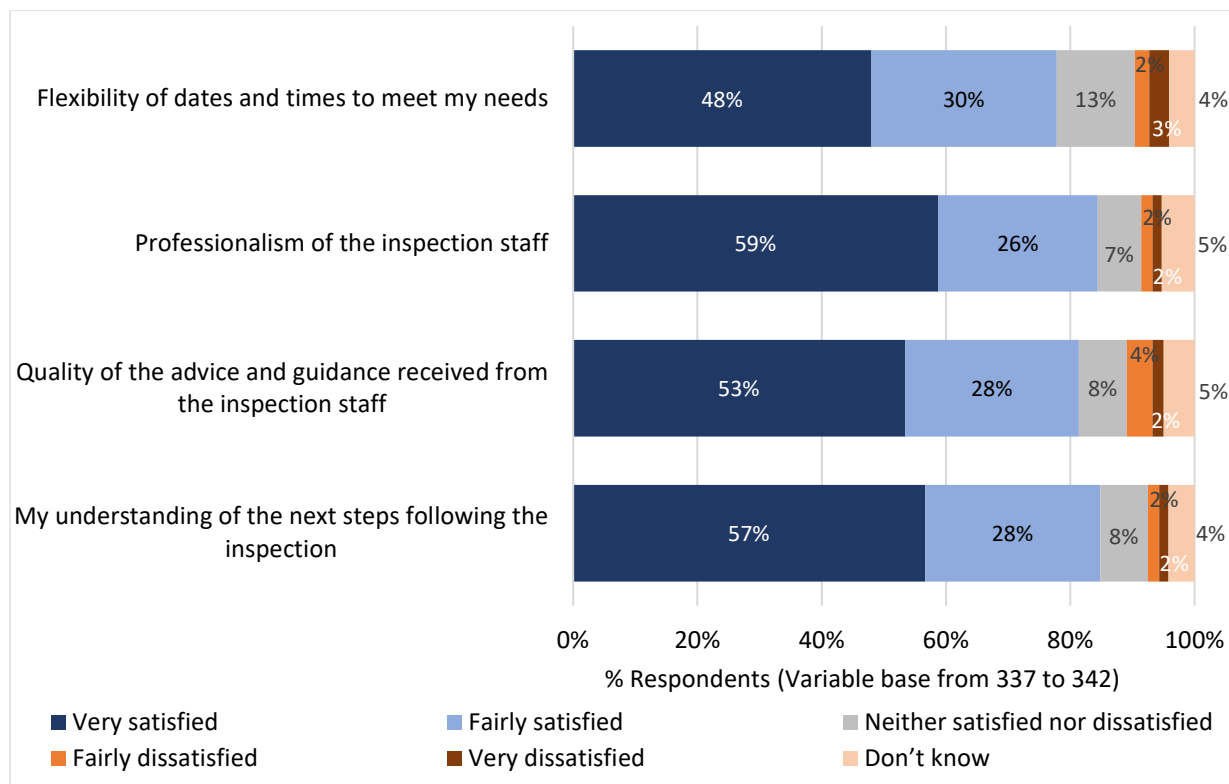


Figure 21 Satisfaction with inspection visits (agents)

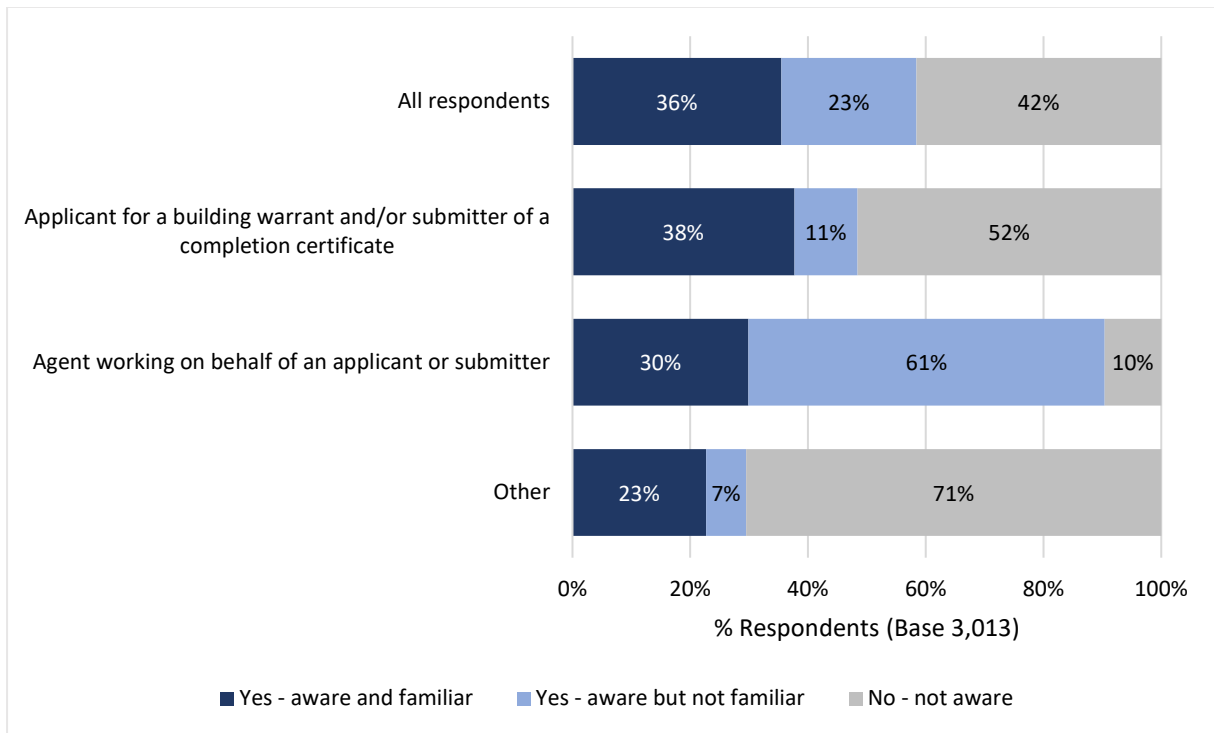


6.3 Meeting the requirements

Almost all surveyed customers (95%) stated that they were aware of the need to notify the building standards service prior to commencing warrantable work. This is a 2% decrease from 2019. Awareness is marginally lower among direct applicants (94%) than agents (over 99%).

Respondents were also asked if they were aware of and/or familiar with the Construction Compliance Notification Plan (CCNP), which is issued by the local authority verifier at the same time as the building warrant is granted. The majority of agents said that they are aware (90%), which is an increase of 4% from 2019. Less than half of direct applicants are aware (48%), which is a small decrease of 1% from 2019. Familiarity has decreased from 38% in 2019 to 36% this year (Figure 22).

Figure 22 Awareness of Construction Compliance Notification Plan (CCNP)



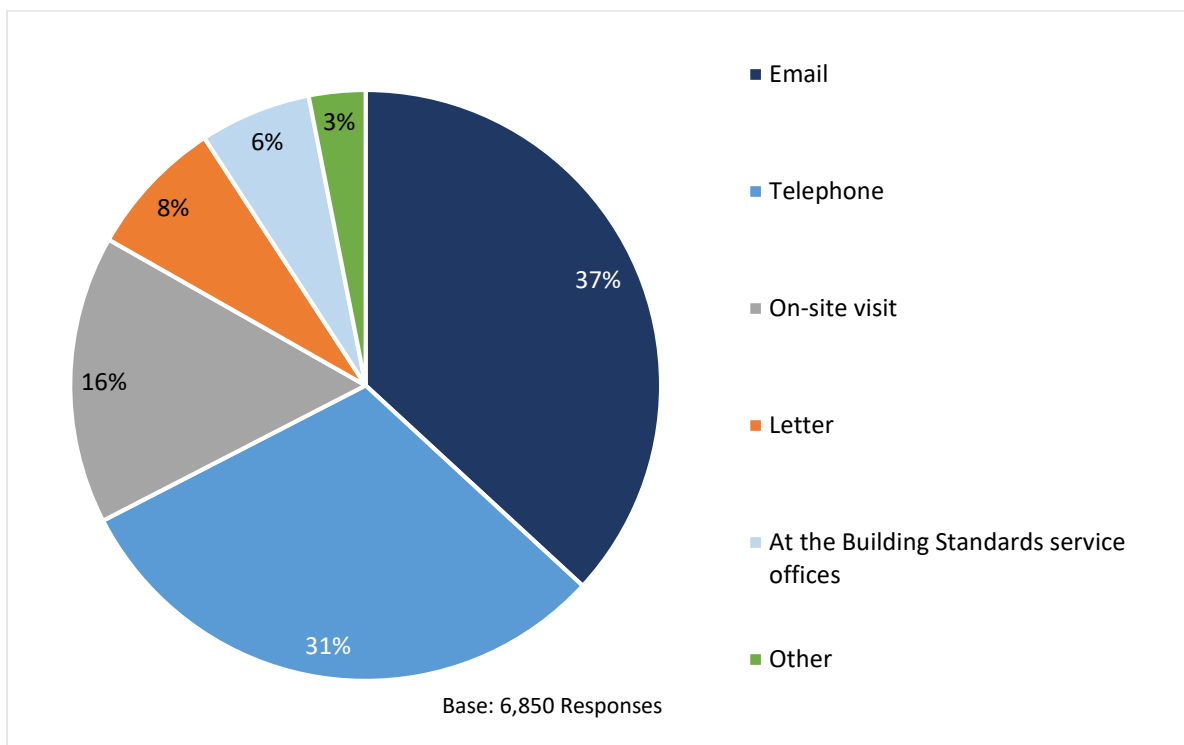
7. Communications

7.1 Channels of communication

Surveyed customers have interacted with local authority verifier building standards using a variety of channels. Telephone and email communications are the most popular forms (together accounting for 68% of responses) followed by hard-copy letters and on-site visits (Figure 23). These results are similar to previous years, although email has become slightly more popular.

On average, customers reported using 2.3 channels of communication and the proportional mix is broadly similar between applicants and agents, although direct applicants are more likely to interact via an on-site visit (17%) compared to agents (12%).

Figure 23 Channels of interaction



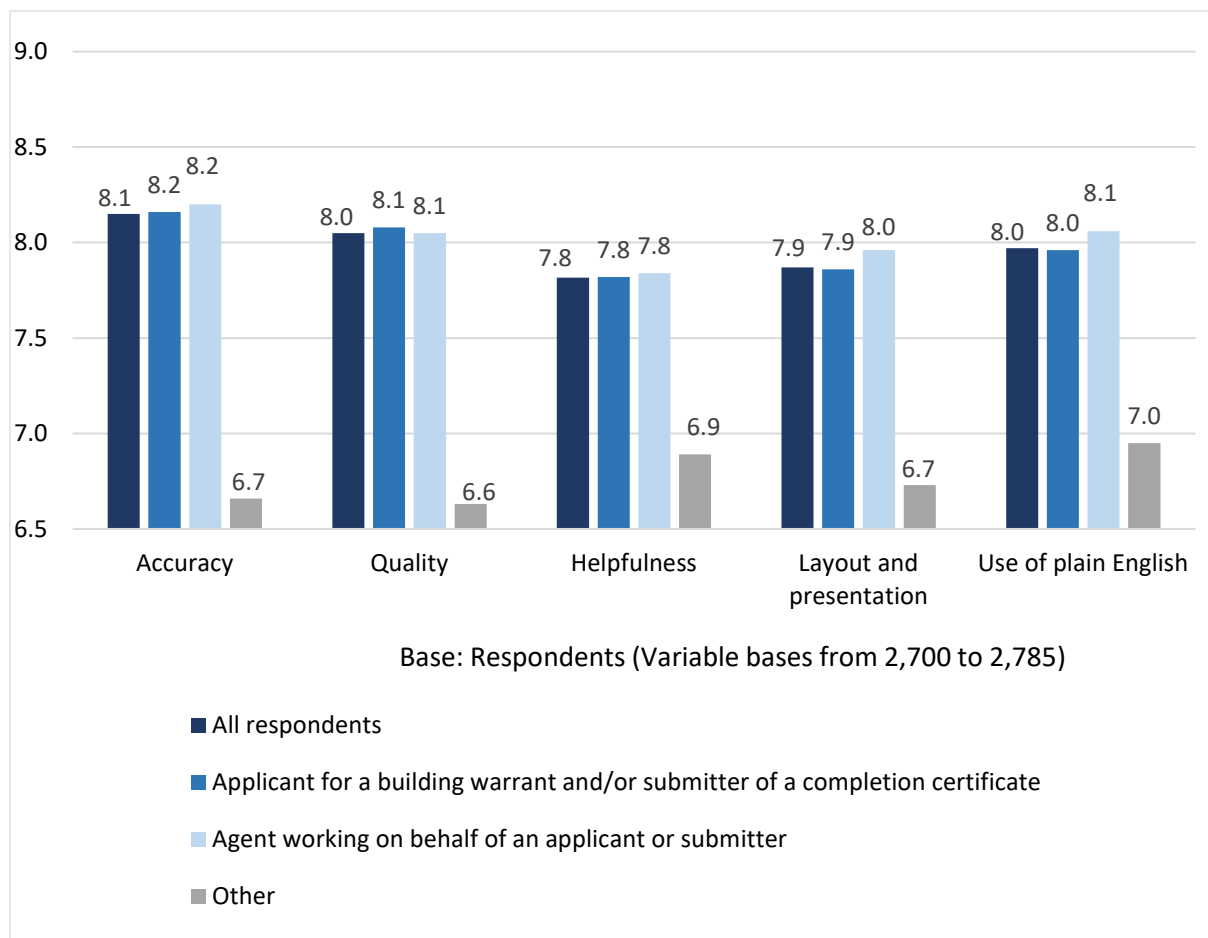
The 1% of responses classified as 'other' primarily stem from direct applicants interacting with the building standards service via an agent, architect or builder. Both agents and direct applicants using the e-portal and attending meetings, pre-Covid-19, were also stated. Due to Covid-19, agents and applicants also used online video conferencing platforms that replaced sites visits and inspections. The most popular platform cited for these purposes was Microsoft Teams.

7.2 Written information and documentation

On a scale from 1 'very poor' to 10 'very good', customers were asked to rate different aspects of the written information and documentation they received from their local authority verifier.

The resulting average ratings fall between 7.8 and 8.2 out of 10, demonstrating a continued increase on figures of between 7.7 and 8.1 in 2019 and between 7.6 and 7.9 in 2018 (Figure 24).

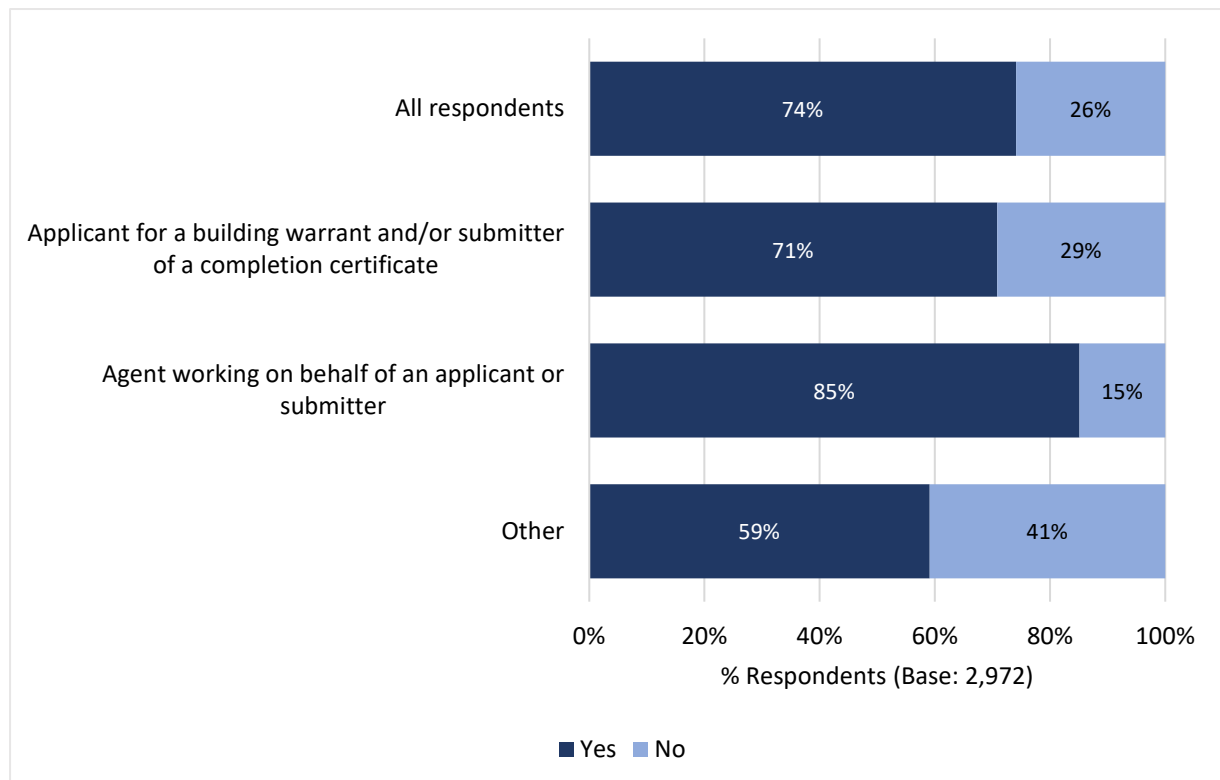
Figure 24 Quality of written information and documentation



7.3 Electronic communications

Just under three quarters of customers (74%) reported having visited the building standards section of their local authority verifier’s website. This is the same level as in 2019. Instances of visiting the website are higher among surveyed agents (85%) than direct applicants (71%) and again this is similar to 2019 – Figure 25.

Figure 25 Whether visited the building standards section of the local authority verifier website



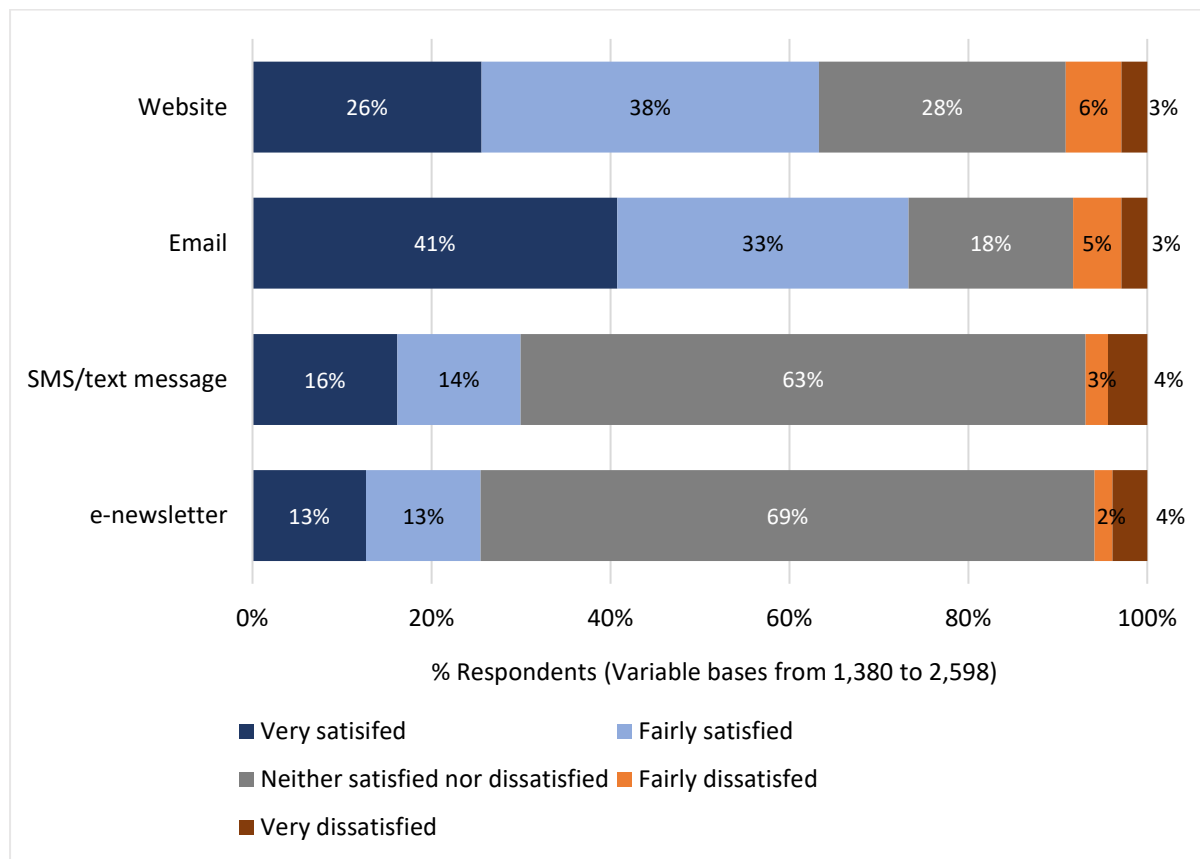
Customers were asked to rate their satisfaction with specific forms of electronic communication made available by their local authority verifier building standards service.

Just under three quarters (73%) are satisfied with email communications – a decrease of 2% from 2019. Around two thirds (63%) are satisfied with the local authority verifier’s website – a slight fall from 66% in 2019.

The base number of respondents rating their satisfaction with SMS/text message and e-newsletter communications is about half that of other forms, indicating that these methods of communication are not as widespread¹³ (Figure 26).

¹³ It is possible that some customers may have stated ‘neither satisfied nor dissatisfied’ with respect to SMS/e-newsletter communications where they had not actually experienced these communications, as opposed to leaving the question blank.

Figure 26 Satisfaction with electronic communications



Customers stating ‘very/fairly dissatisfied

Respondents stating ‘fairly dissatisfied’ or ‘very dissatisfied’ with respect to at least one of the above forms of electronic communication were asked to give their reasons.

Based on 336 responses, the main themes echo those raised over the past five years. In particular:

- Emails are not always answered, or the speed of response is slow;
- Websites are confusingly laid out and unintuitive, making it difficult to find the information needed, and some information is significantly out of date.

“Email is not the preferred or respected method of communication with the Council. In addition, the Council’s website and links in their emails/letters do not lead to the correct website locations, such as when clicking on links to download approved documents. The approved documents section of the Council’s website has been saying that it is updating/moving/changing for months. The approved document section of the website could be better.”

Agent

“Email communications were slow and provided incorrect information.”

Direct applicant

There were very few reasons provided by customers dissatisfied with SMS/text message and e-newsletter communications. Most seemed unaware that communications might be available through these channels. Some respondents received emails stating staff are working from home due to the Covid-19 pandemic and can therefore accept that there will be delays, however some are left waiting months for a response.

7.4 E-building standards

Whilst a direct question was not asked on the topic of e-building standards, there has been some feedback consistent with reports in 2017, 2018 and 2019.

The small number of customers commenting on the e-building standards portal note that it could be altered so as to be simpler and more intuitive to use, and that accompanying guidance would be beneficial. Some suggest that the portal could be extended to automatically include all correspondence related to an application.

7.5 Improving communications in the future

Customers were asked in what ways the local authority verifier building standards service could improve its overall communications in the future. The main suggestions include:

- Returning phone calls and emails more efficiently and timeously, with many respondents suggesting this is non-existent;
- Improving response times on applications, or providing a more realistic timescale at the outset;
- Providing a capability to effectively track applications and responses;
- Being more proactive, customer oriented and commercially aware;
- Employing more staff;
- Ensuring greater consistency and clarity in the knowledge and quality of service from all staff, within and between local authorities;
- Improving navigability and functionality of the website to ensure it is more user-friendly;

- Using clearer (plain) English in written documents;
- Providing clearer and more specific instructions for the actions that applicants need to take;
- Providing relevant and up-to-date information, especially online.

Respondents did acknowledge that responses to emails and phone calls may have been delayed because of the Covid-19 pandemic and were generally accepting of this. A number of respondents stated that they would prefer to meet with someone face to face to discuss their application and building process rather than rely on online or telephone communications.

“Be more accurate with emails. I was asked to confirm that I had supplied information as requested on the email, by phone call to a telephone number on the email. I called the number only to be told that the number was only for reporting dangerous buildings.”

Direct applicant

“A tracker to show when officers are engaging with information and a step by step progress bar for those unfamiliar with the processes.”

Agent

“Easier access to BC officers i.e. by telephone and quicker email responses to queries pre/post submission. Online application form is a pain - particularly attaching documents which are done one by one. This takes ages and can time out in areas where the internet is poor.”

Agent

“Clear flow diagram / layout of what needs to happen when, in each process with plain English used.”

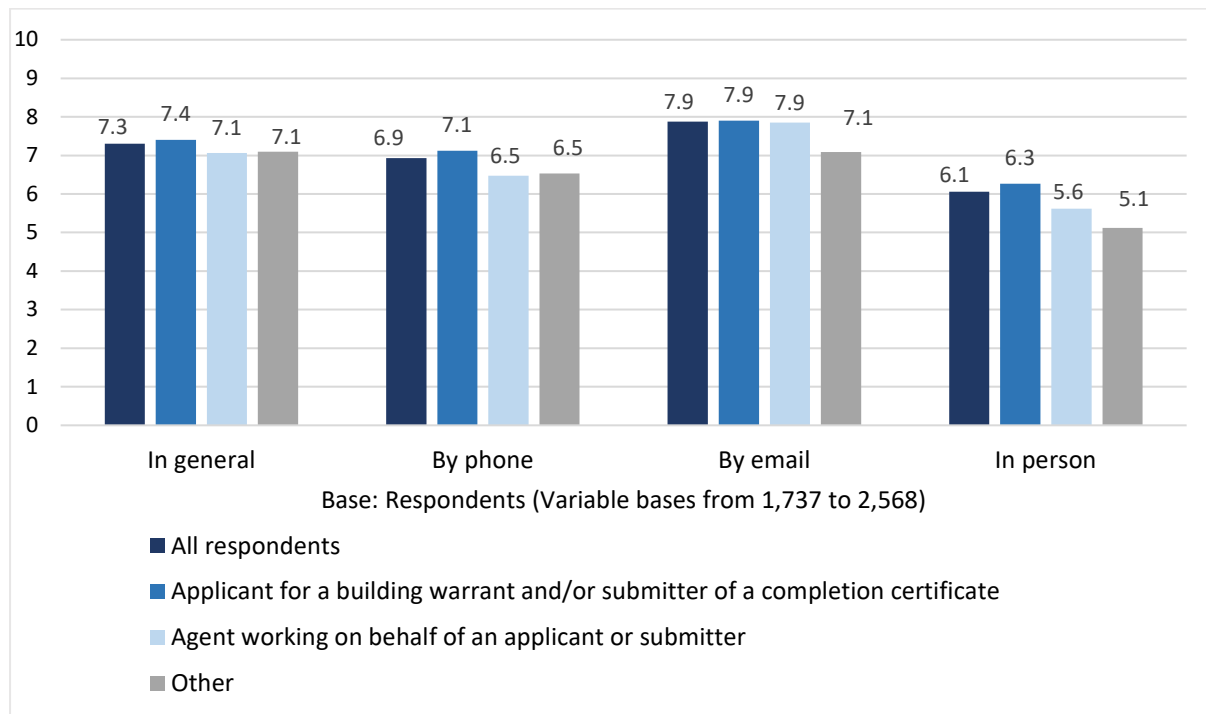
Direct applicant

8. Accessibility

8.1 Making contact with the building standards service

On a scale from 1 'very difficult' to 10 'very easy', customers were asked to rate how easy they found making contact with their local authority verifier building standards service. Average ratings are broadly similar for each contact channel, with email appearing to be the easiest.

Figure 27 Ease of contacting the local authority verifier building standards service

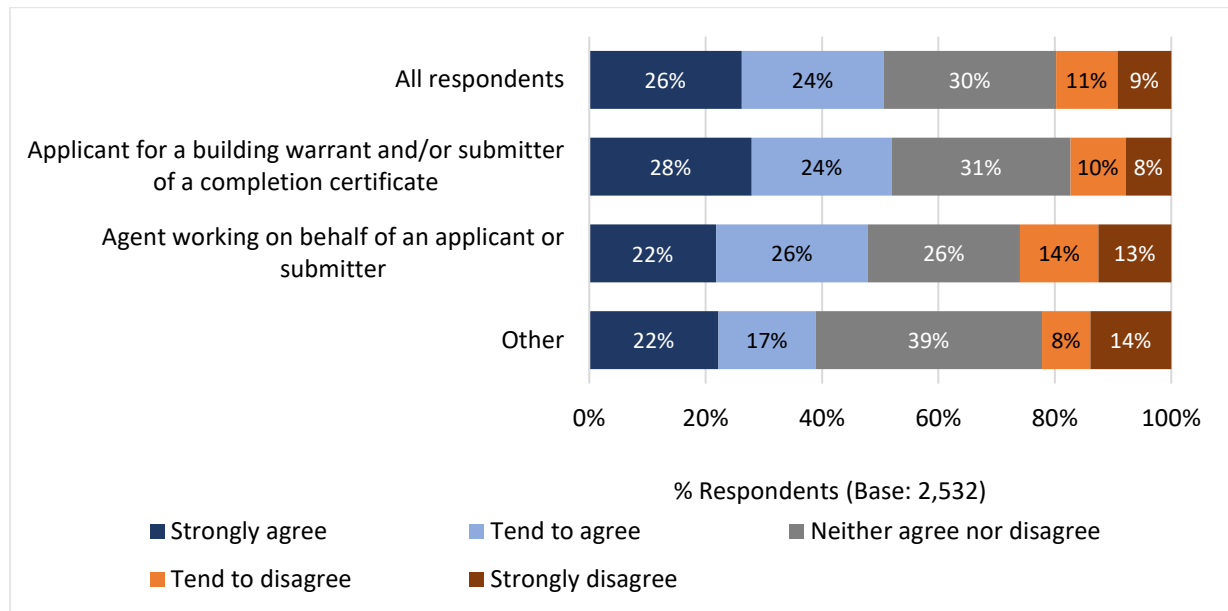


Those customers finding it generally easy to make contact described an efficient service with few or no issues, supported by helpful, prompt and approachable staff.

Customers providing lower ratings have had opposing experiences referring to unanswered emails, slow response times to communications, staff not being available and phones going to voicemail and messages being unanswered. Many customers put these issues down to staffing issues in the service and staff starting to work from home due to the Covid-19 lockdown. The impact of Covid-19 also meant that meeting staff in person could not go ahead but instead some inspections and site visits took place using online video conferencing platforms.

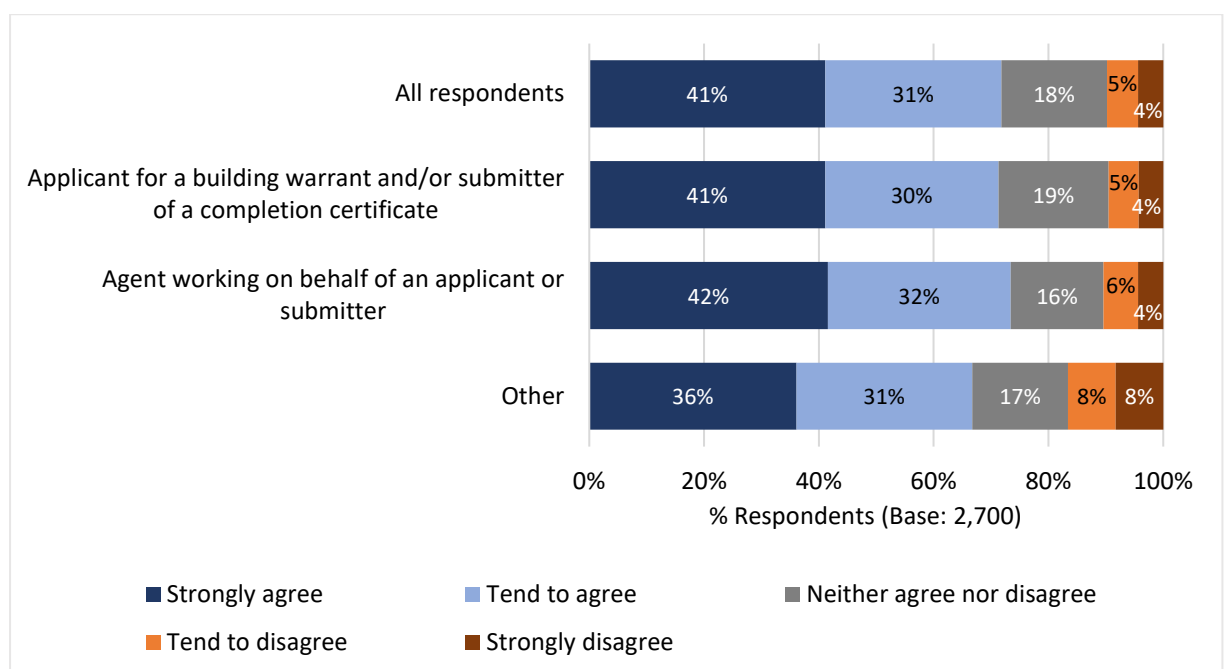
Half of surveyed customers (51%) agree that building standards service staff are accessible if they want to meet with them in person. This is a decrease from 58% in 2019. Applicants are more satisfied than agents, with 52% and 48% in agreement, respectively (Figure 28).

Figure 28 Building standards service staff are accessible to meet in person



Just under three quarters of customers (72%) agree that building standards service staff are approachable. This is a slight decrease from 75% in 2019. Agents (73%) are slightly more likely than applicants (71%) to agree on this (Figure 29).

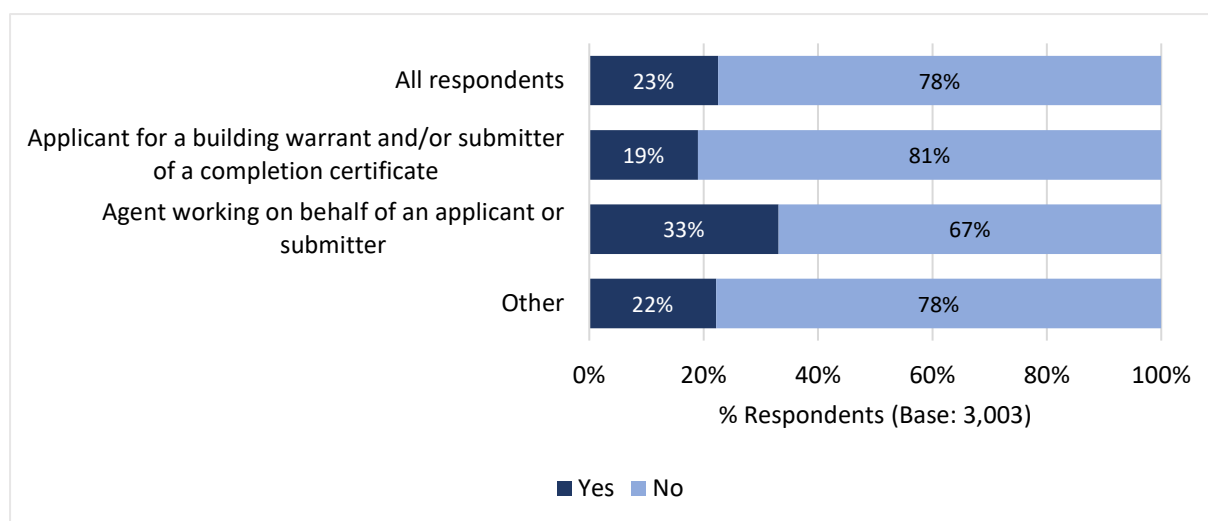
Figure 29 Building standards service staff are approachable



8.2 Visiting the offices of the building standards service

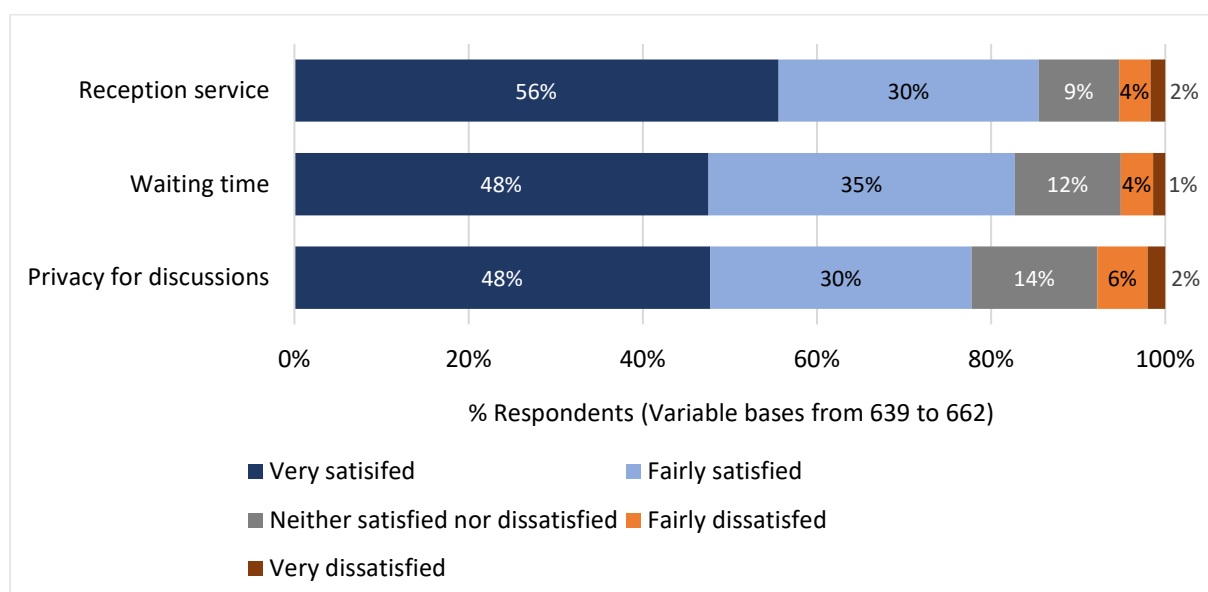
Fewer than a quarter of surveyed customers (23%) reported having visited the offices of their local authority verifier building standards service – a continued decrease from 33% in 2019 and 42% in 2018. Instances of customers visiting the offices has decreased among direct applicants (19%, down from 27% in 2019) and agents (3%, down from 46% in 2019) – Figure 30.

Figure 30 Whether visited the offices of the local authority verifier building standards service



The majority of those customers who visited the offices of their local authority verifier building standards service (82%) are satisfied with various specific aspects of their visit (Figure 31). This is the same level as in 2019.

Figure 31 Satisfaction with specific aspects of the building standards service offices



9. Conclusions and Findings

9.1 Conclusions

The seventh annual national survey of building standards customers in Scotland has achieved a respectable overall response rate of 15% and has successfully captured the views of different types of customers served by all 32 local authorities. Higher volumes of customer email addresses were supplied by local authorities this year than in 2019, and the survey was once again promoted via social media channels, resulting in the highest number of responses to date since the first survey was run six years previously.

Across several headline measures, customer satisfaction with the building standards service has risen slightly in Scotland over the past year, with the overall score standing at 7.5 out of 10, compared with 7.4 in 2019. The gap between direct applicants and agents has narrowed over the past two years, with agents' satisfaction increasing and now being equal to that of applicants.

Over the years since the survey began, customer expectations of the service have not generally changed, with the most important aspects being speed of response, efficiency and clarity of communications, ease of access to friendly and knowledgeable staff, as well as consistency in the quality of service within and between local authorities.

Most customers are generally complimentary about the service, either experiencing no issues or the satisfactory resolution of any queries or problems arising over the course of an application. However, it seems clear from the feedback that customers' emails, phone calls and voice messages are not always being answered in what they perceive as a reasonable timeframe, and that the length of time taken by local authorities to process building warrant applications (including cases that some agents consider to be 'straightforward') is often beyond what customers deem acceptable. This is a particular problem where delays can have a knock-on impact on applicants' plans and/or wider development activity. This has been a recurring issue within customer feedback for several years now, and suggests that customer expectations could be managed more effectively.

The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic can be clearly seen, with volumes of inspections and site visits down, and an increase in use of electronic communication and inspection. It is, as yet, unclear whether this is working to the benefit of customers, with some favouring this approach, and others preferring face-to-face resolution. Customers are broadly understanding that processes may take longer than normal with staff based at home, but some note that not all issues are resolved in an adequate timeframe.

A minority of customers are concerned that the level of service provided by their local authority verifier is not sufficiently customer-focused and they largely put this down to under-resourcing. There are also suggestions that some customers are afraid to voice their concerns for fear that this could be to the detriment of their application.

Customers also commented that staff should be more understanding of their needs and offer greater levels of guidance and support when required as they move through what can be a stressful process. Customers requested improved clarity and guidance on the process as a whole (and associated terminology) to promote a more supportive journey for them.

Disparities prevail between different local authority verifiers and satisfaction levels are lowest among the largest local authority verifiers, although larger local authority verifiers' satisfaction levels have increased since 2018 (see Appendix 1). It would therefore appear that Scottish Ministers' decision (from 2017) to re-appoint some local authorities as verifiers for shorter periods than others based on past performance and reported levels of customer service is having the impact intended.

Finally, customer feedback on the e-building standards system suggests that the portal would benefit from continuing review and development to incorporate the latest technology available. Customers believe this will ensure it is simple and intuitive to use, particularly if accompanied by guidance for customers, and if portal traffic has increased due to Covid.

9.2 Forward considerations

These considerations are for the Scottish Government (Building Standards Division) to consider taking forward in conjunction with Local authority Building Standards Scotland (LABSS) and Building Standards Managers (BSMs) across the 32 local authority verifiers and are based on customer feedback and suggestions to this survey.

Additionally, the separate consortium reports (x7) and individual local authority verifier reports (x32) will help to pinpoint where customer service performance is relatively strong or weak.

The results enable customer satisfaction performance to be measured against the previous year, as well as future years, in the interests of continuous improvement. Any proposed mechanisms for improving customer service would need to be considered in relation to local authority verifier resources, which have been placed under additional strain in 2020 due to Covid-19.

On the back of the 2020 findings, it would appear that customer satisfaction and associated measures are moving in the right direction, but that ongoing work is required to embed improvements further and deeper. Specific considerations for improving the customer experience are broadly similar to 2019 and continue to apply as guiding principles for improvement and embedding change.

1. Identify ways of reducing the time taken for processing building warrant applications and completion certificates, particularly with staff adapting to new ways of working.
2. Whilst it may not always be possible to keep customers regularly updated on the progress of their application, ensure that customer email and telephone queries are responded to within an acceptable period of time (i.e. those stated in local authorities' customer charters).
3. Proactively manage customer expectations around response timescales from the outset. Clear explanations should be provided to customers as to why applications may need to take a particular length of time, including reasons for any envisaged delay to services.
4. Where customer feedback points to concerns that a local authority verifier service is not meeting customer expectations, use this evidence to make a business case to senior Council leaders for more and better resourcing.
5. Continue to explore and identify best practices among those local authority verifiers with higher overall satisfaction scores. Consider what opportunities exist and what challenges need to be overcome to share best practices and embed these more widely across Scotland.
6. Ensure that where building standards staff members change (or are absent for any reason), contingency procedures are in place to pick up cases or that there is a handover so that delays are minimised.
7. Maintain local ownership for improving the customer experience through effective use of Continuous Improvement Plans (CIPs) and updating local customer charters.
8. Continue to identify ways of working smarter and to ensure processes set out in legislation can be enacted with optimum efficiency.
9. Customers note their experience could be improved if the functionality of the eDev (eBS) portal is developed to provide a more efficient and intuitive experience, as well as ensuring that local authority verifiers use the system to its full advantage. Customers' suggested system and process enhancements

include allowing the upload of multiple drawings at once and – ideally – enabling customers to log in and check on the progress of an application.

Binding these considerations together is the need for a customer-focused approach to be at the heart of all behaviour, and for this to be embedded through continuous improvement.

Some specific considerations relating to the delivery of any future national customer satisfaction survey for building standards are similar to 2019 and act as guiding principles, and also link into future considerations around the Performance Framework and the global coronavirus pandemic.

1. Local authority verifiers should continue to capture, record and update customer email addresses to better enable electronic communications in the future, and to provide a larger potential sample size for future national surveys.
2. The e-building standards portal provides an additional opportunity to maximise the volume and accuracy of customer email addresses collected and held by local authority verifiers. With development, it could also standardise data capture to make national reporting easier, more efficient, and more accessible.
3. The current methodology has successfully captured the views of thousands of building standards customers to provide accurate and robust data on customer satisfaction.
4. As evidenced from the 2020 survey findings – in which customers in the period of 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020 were surveyed – there is a significant lag between customer interaction and reporting, with many responses noting the impact of Covid-19, despite the UK impact only occurring from late March 2020. This suggests that some customers may have been contextualising their responses to the current climate and/or referring to more recent interactions rather than just those which took place in the timeframe specified by the research. This is arguably a natural human tendency and may also have been the case in previous years to an extent, albeit impossible to truly quantify. Whilst year-on-year tracking is still perfectly valid, there may be a case to consider a more dynamic approach to obtaining feedback with a faster turnaround from experience to response.
5. After seven years, a review is required to ensure it provides value and remains fit for purpose, and this could form part of the anticipated, wider review of the Performance Framework.

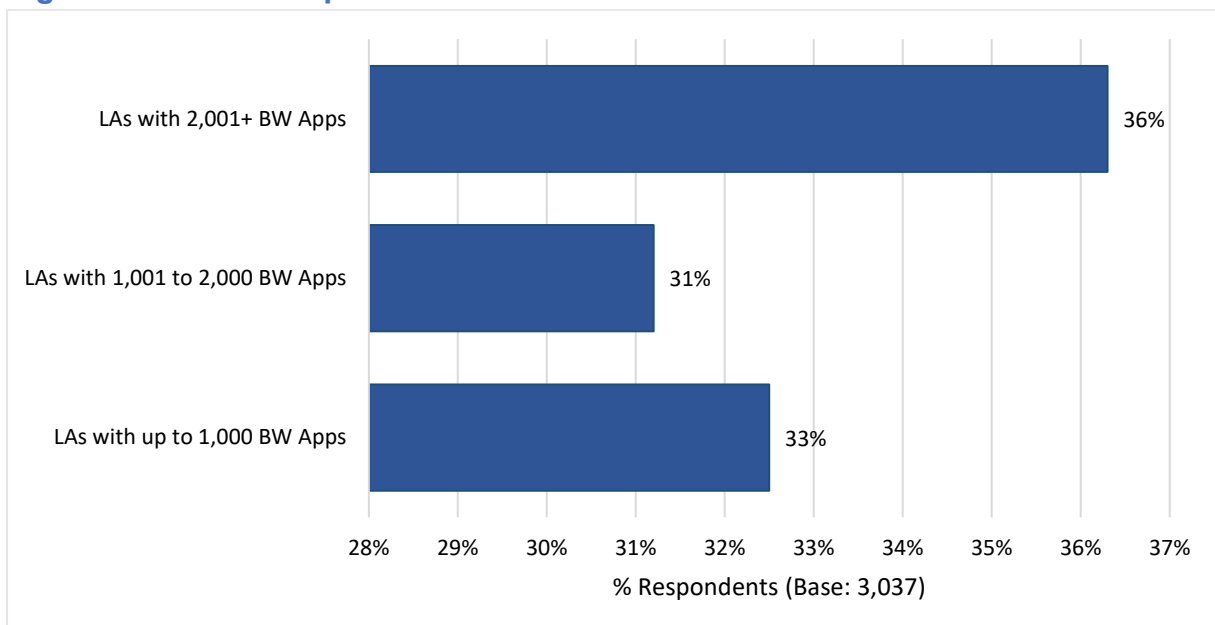
Appendix 1: Results by Local authority verifier Size

The charts in this section present the main survey data according to the size of the local authority verifier. In this context, size is defined as the number of building warrant applications made by customers within the 2019-2020 financial year.

Three size bandings have been derived, as follows:

Small - Up to 1,000 applications	Medium - 1,001 to 2,000 applications	Large - 2,001+ applications
Angus Clackmannanshire Dundee City East Ayrshire East Lothian East Renfrewshire Eilean Siar Falkirk Inverclyde Midlothian Moray North Ayrshire Orkney Scottish Borders Shetland Stirling West Dunbartonshire	Aberdeen City Aberdeenshire Argyll & Bute Dumfries & Galloway East Dunbartonshire Perth & Kinross Renfrewshire South Ayrshire South Lanarkshire West Lothian	City of Edinburgh Fife Glasgow City Highland North Lanarkshire

Figure A1.1 Total respondents



OVERALL SATISFACTION AND MEETING EXPECTATIONS

Figure A1.2 Overall satisfaction with the building standards service

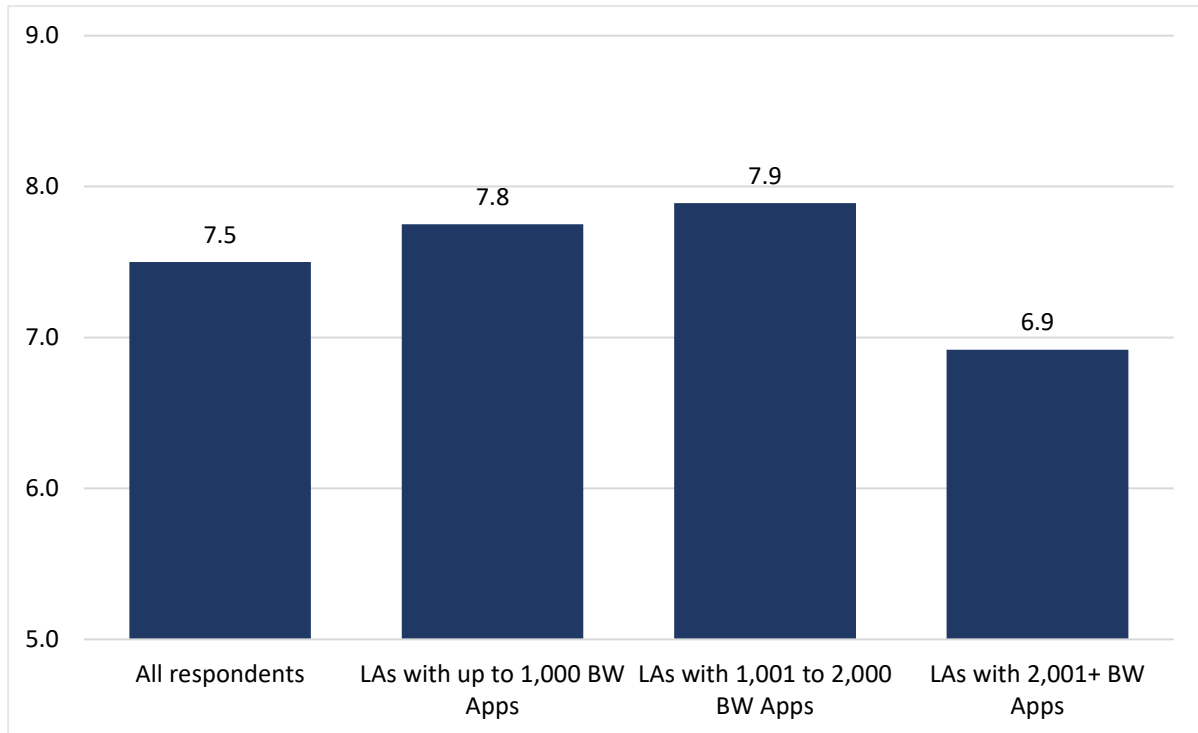
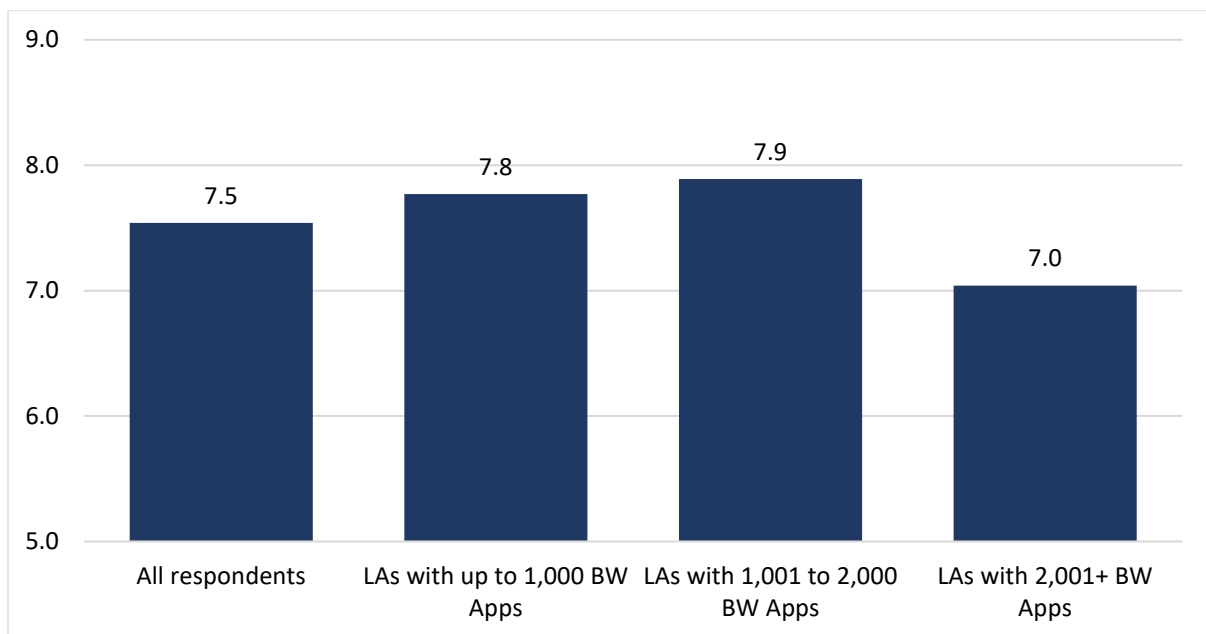


Figure A1.3 Extent to which the service met expectations



TIMELINESS

Figure A1.4 Timeliness – LAs with up to 1,000 building warrant applications

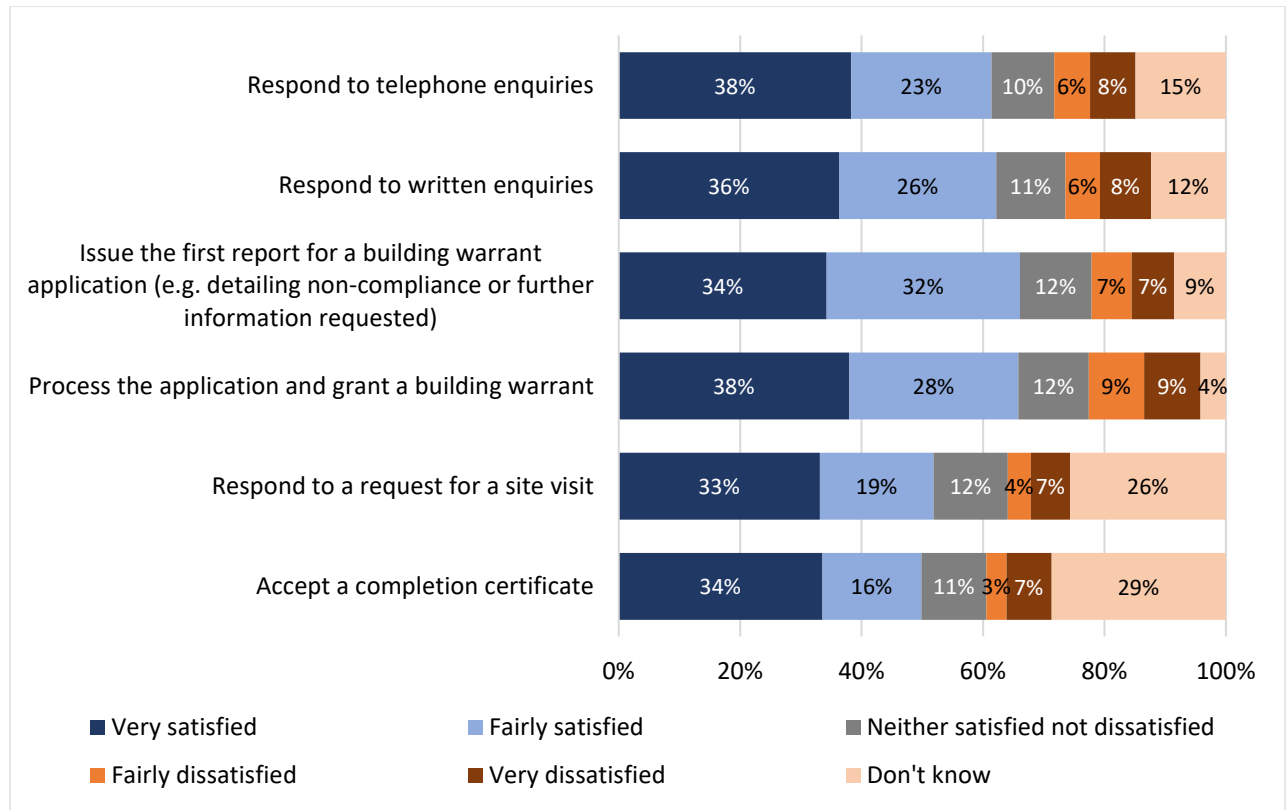


Figure A1.5 Timeliness – LAs with 1,001-2,000 building warrant applications

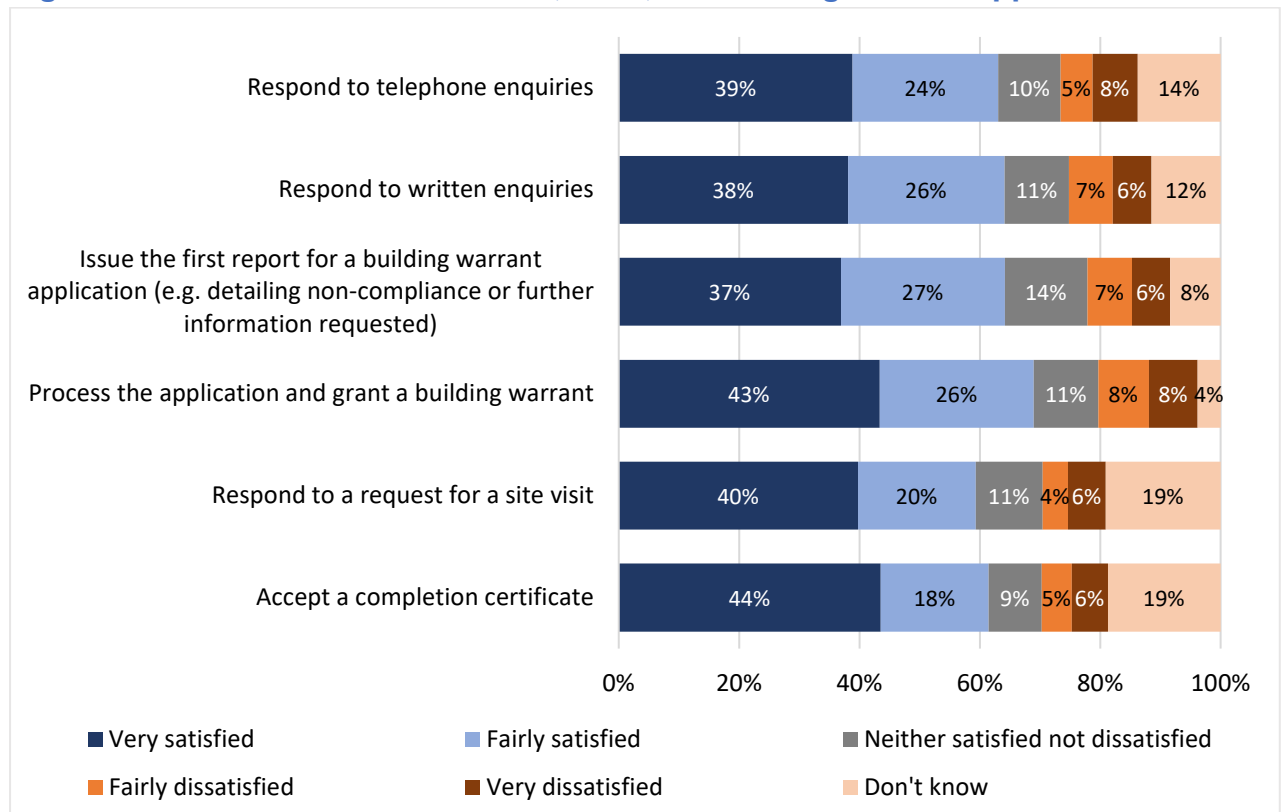


Figure A1.6 Timeliness – LAs with 2,001+ building warrant applications

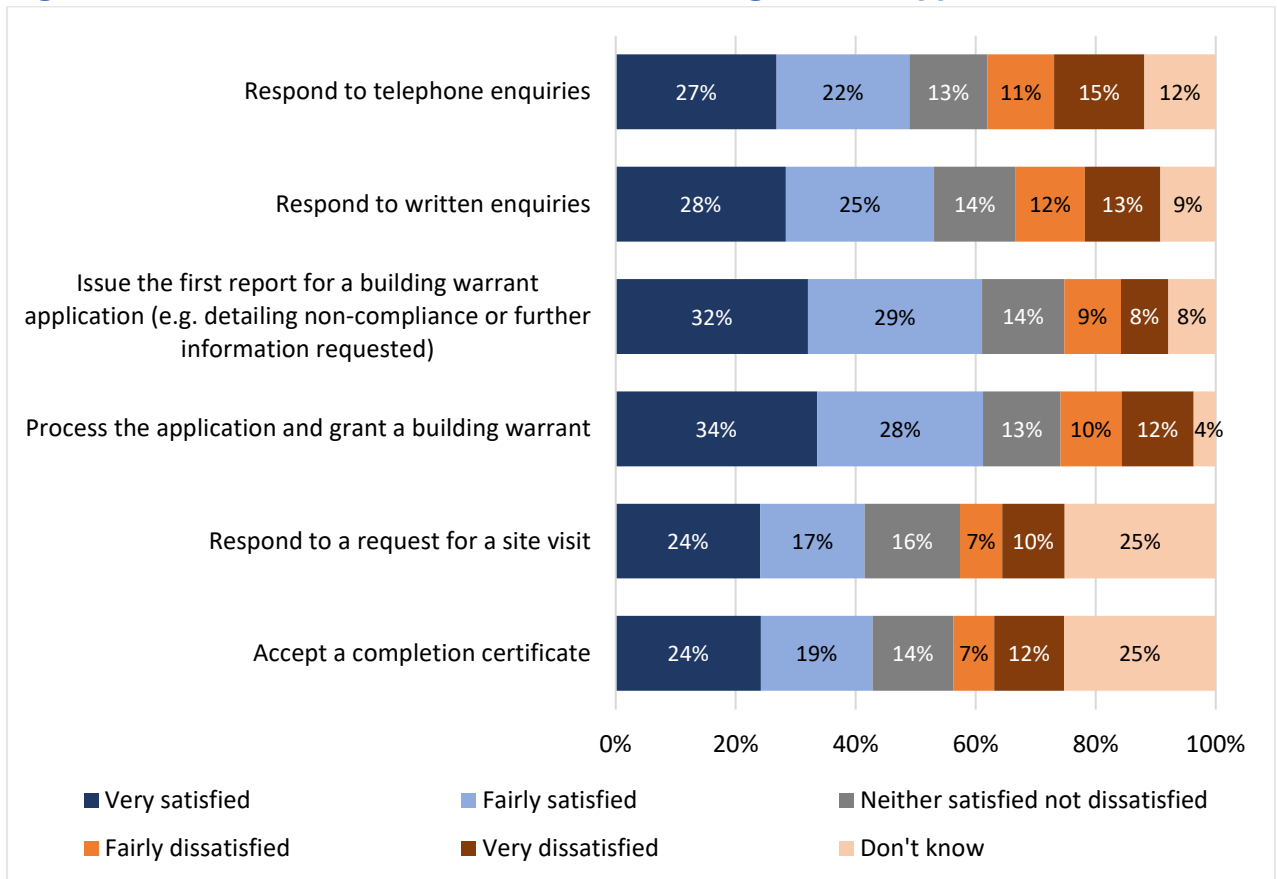
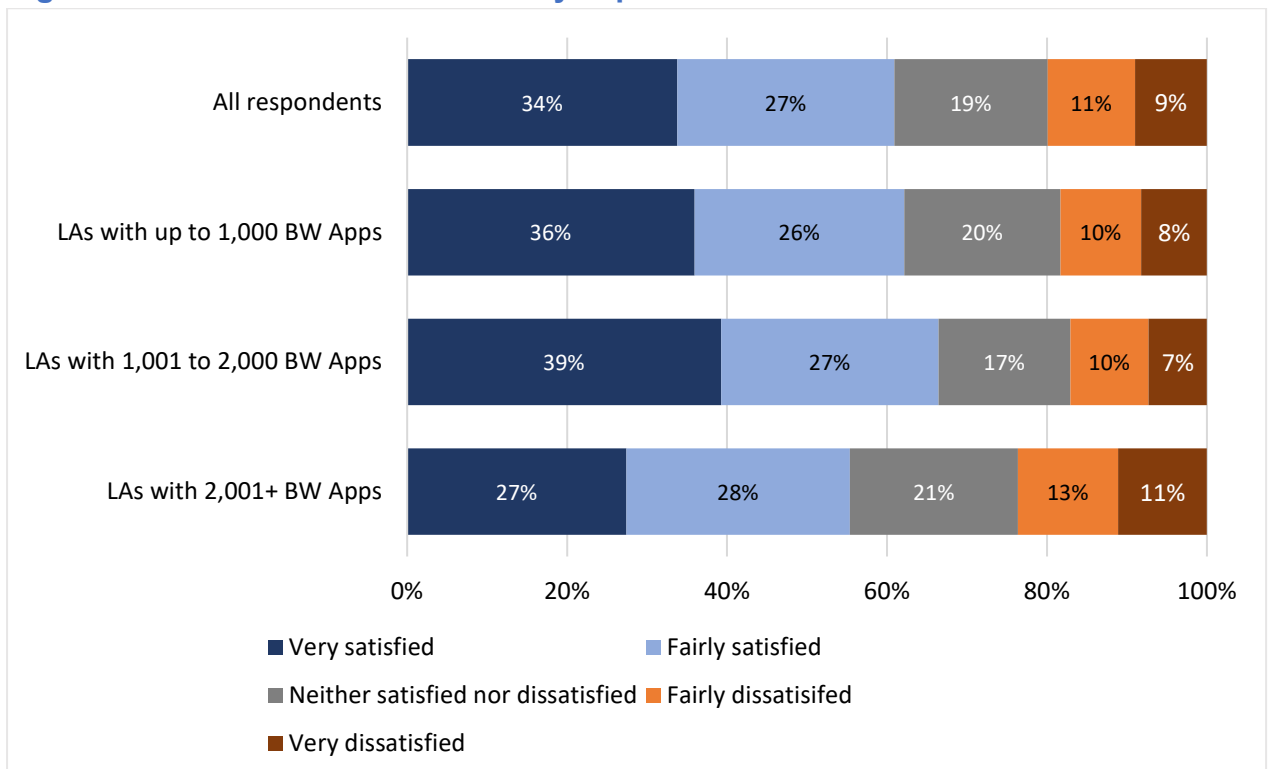


Figure A1.7 Satisfaction with the way kept informed



ADVICE AND GUIDANCE

Figure A1.8 Advice and guidance – LAs with up to 1,000 BW applications

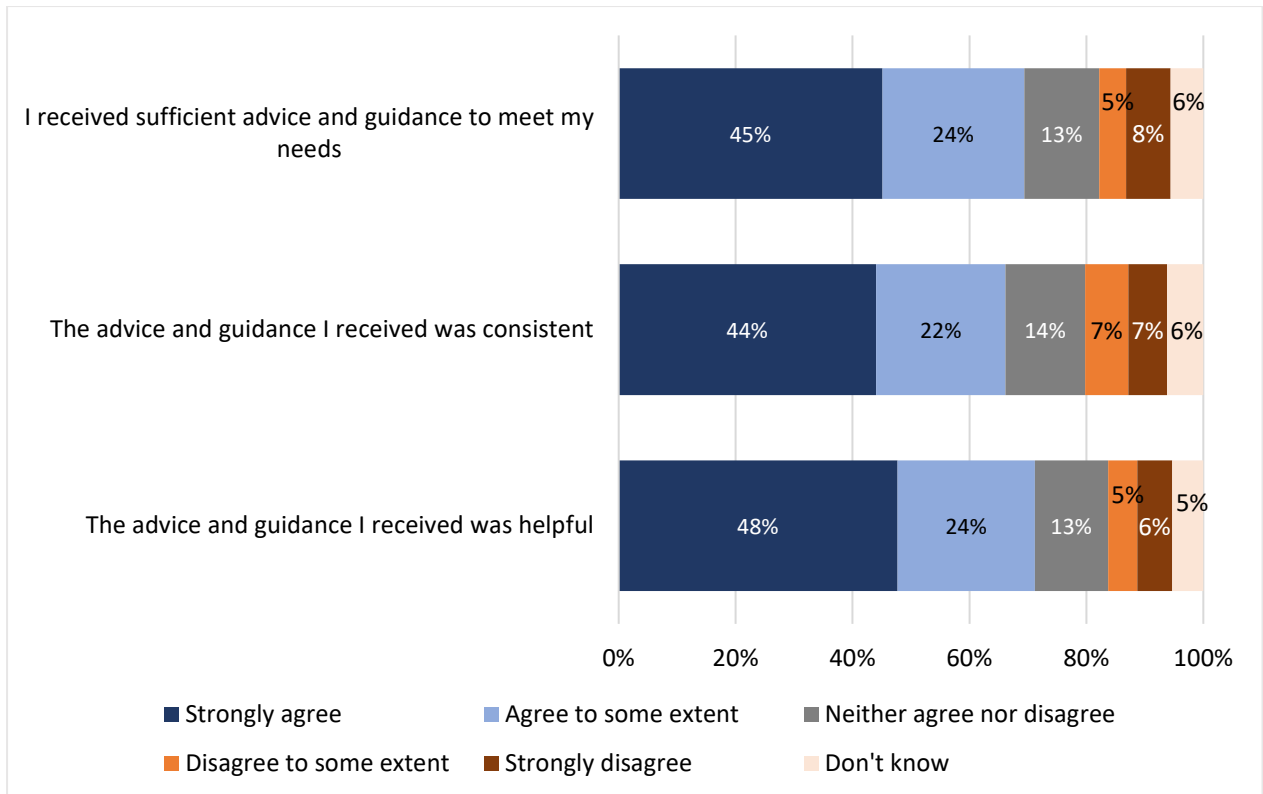


Figure A1.9 Advice and guidance – LAs with 1,001-2,000 building warrant applications

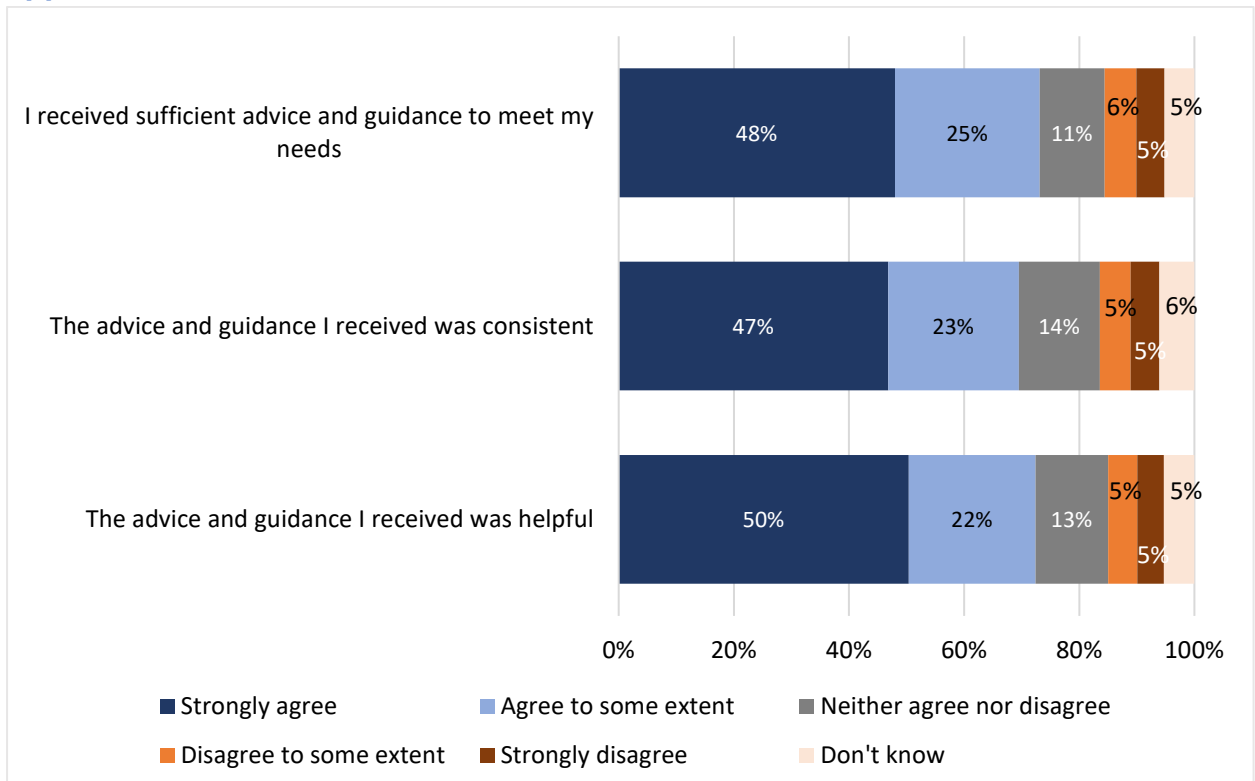
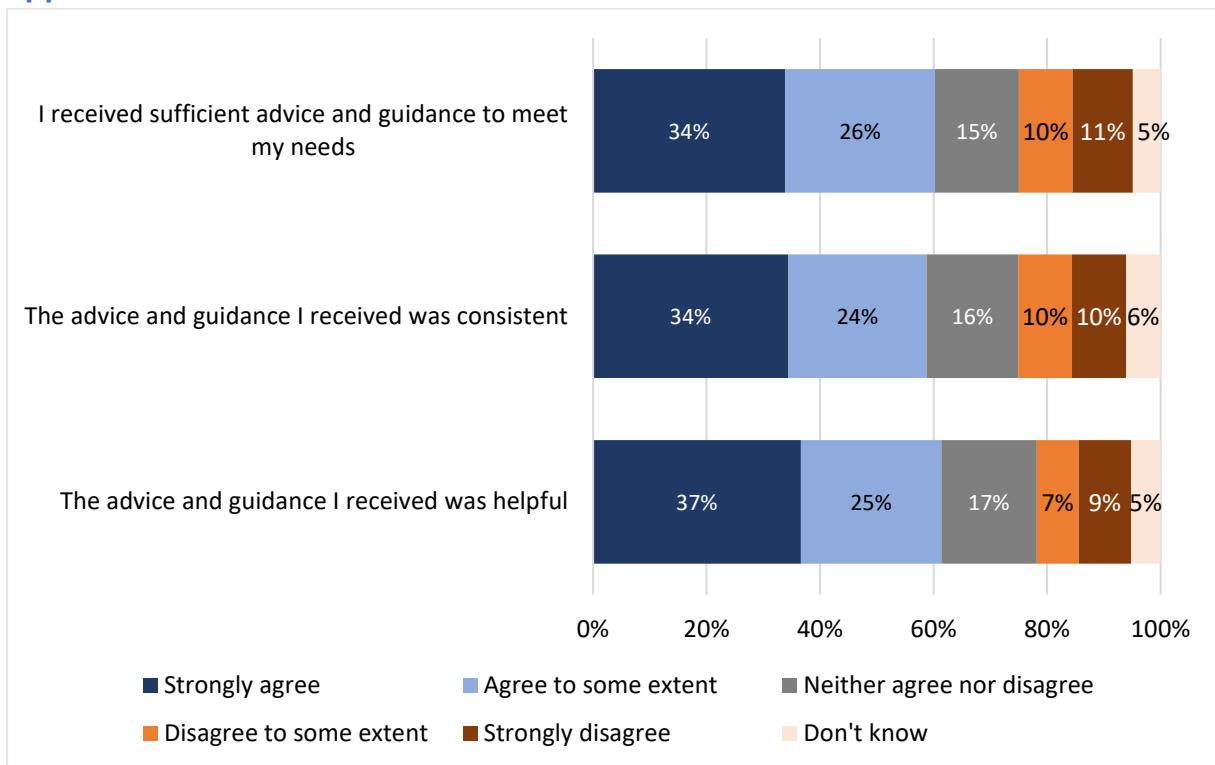


Figure A1.10 Advice and guidance – LAs with 2,001+ building warrant applications



QUALITY OF SERVICE

Figure A1.11 Quality of service – LAs with up to 1,000 BW applications

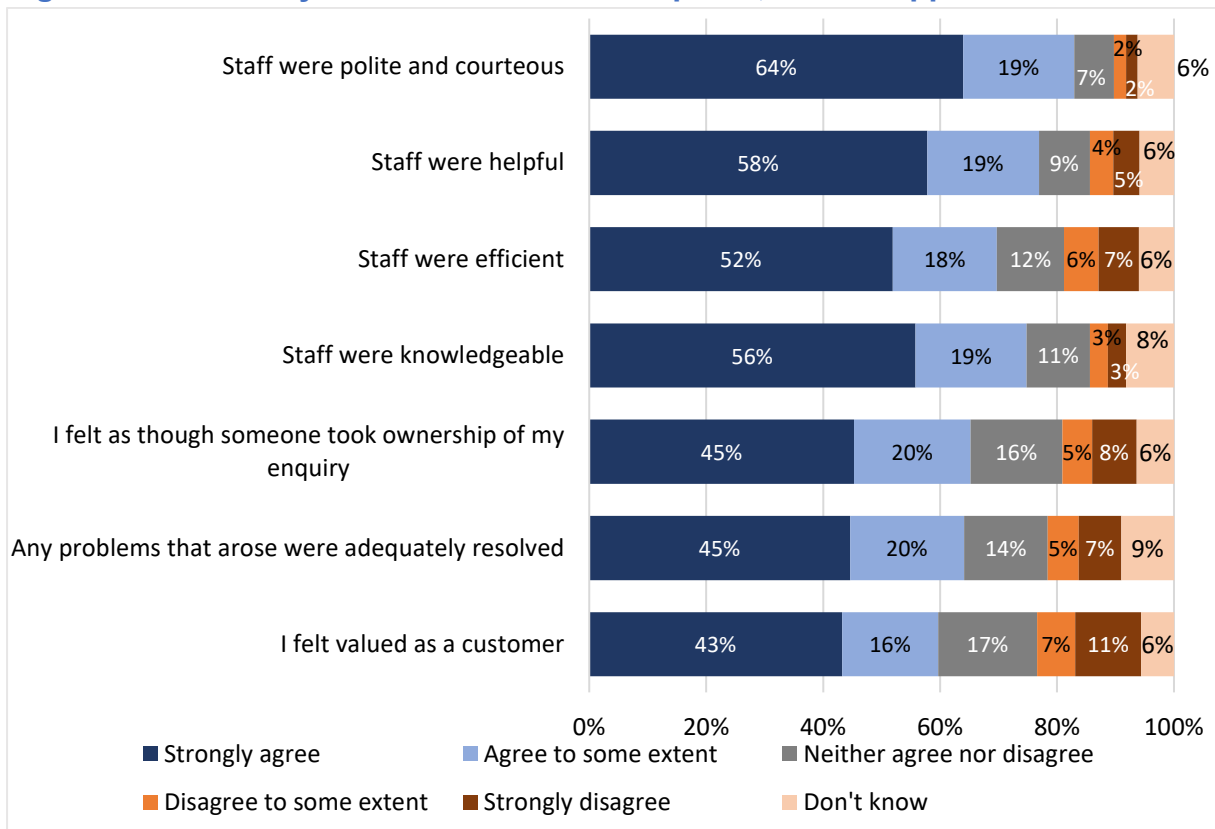


Figure A1.12 Quality of service – LAs with 1,001-2,000 building warrant applications

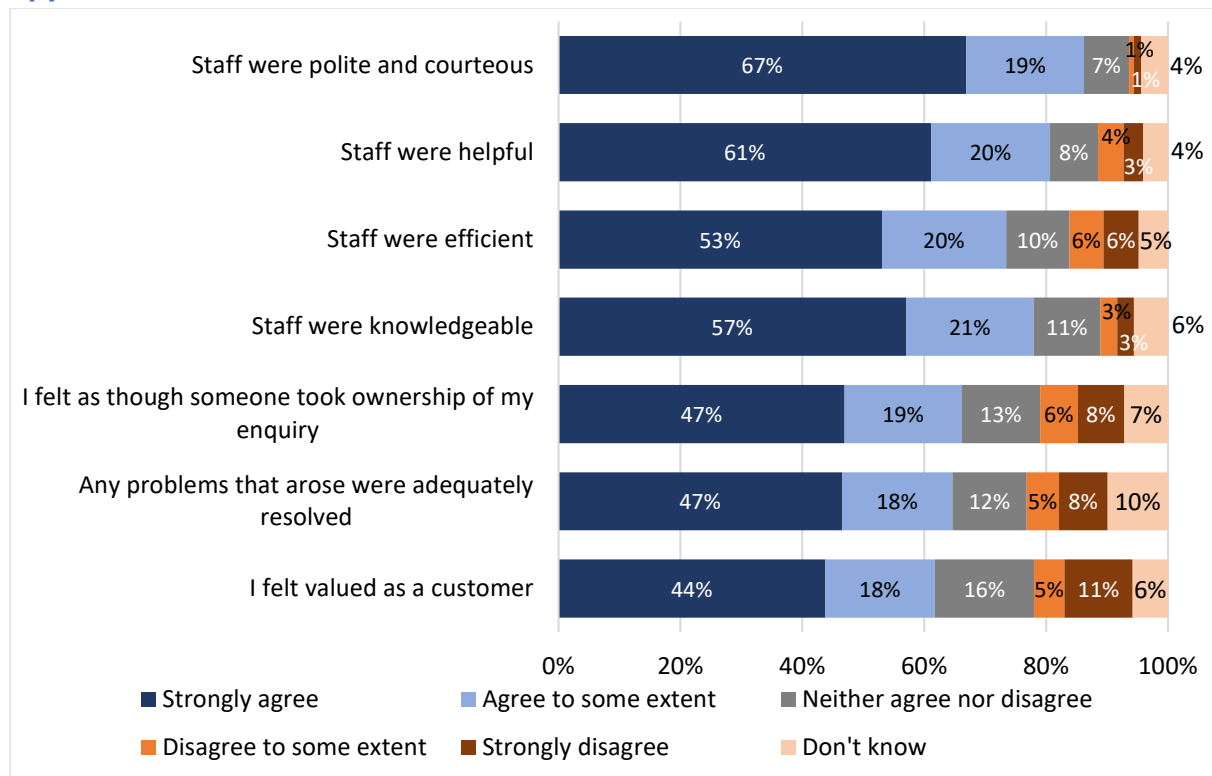


Figure A1.13 Quality of service – LAs with 2,001+ building warrant applications

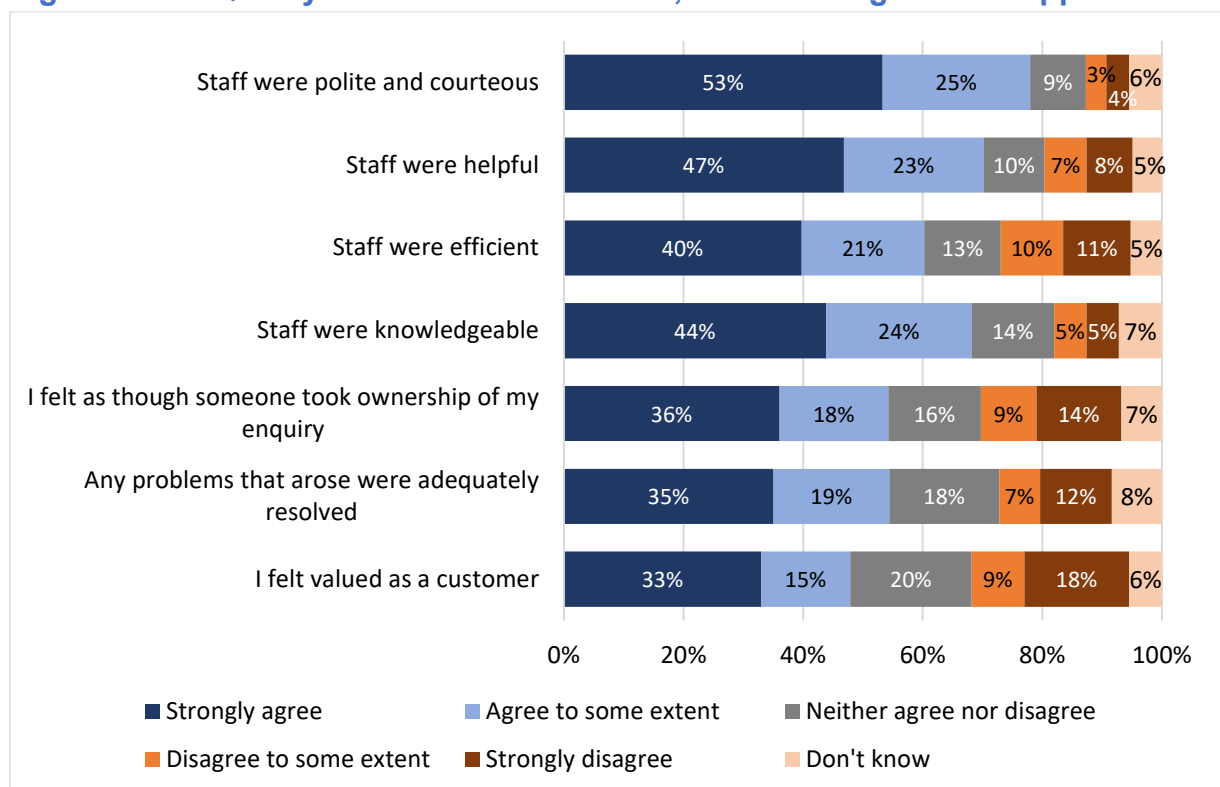


Figure A1.14 Awareness of the need to notify the building standards service

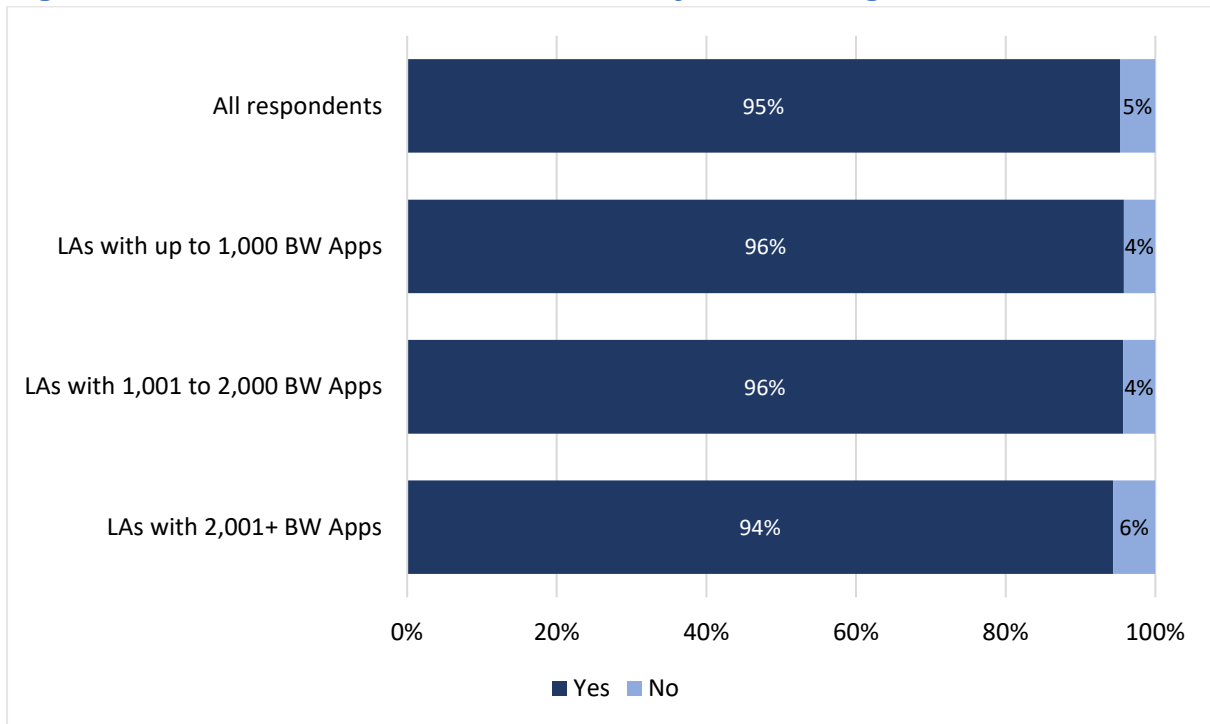


Figure A1.15 Awareness of the new Construction Compliance Notification Plan (CCNP)

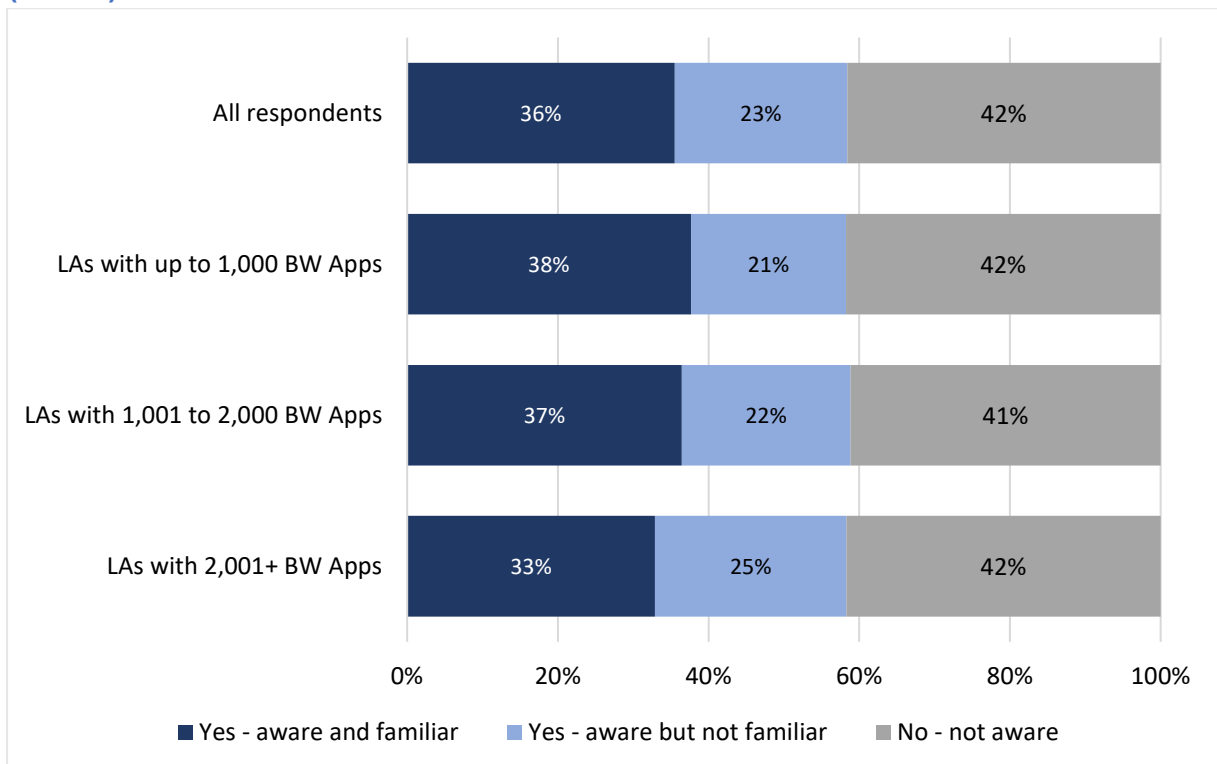


Figure A1.16 Whether an inspection visit was undertaken

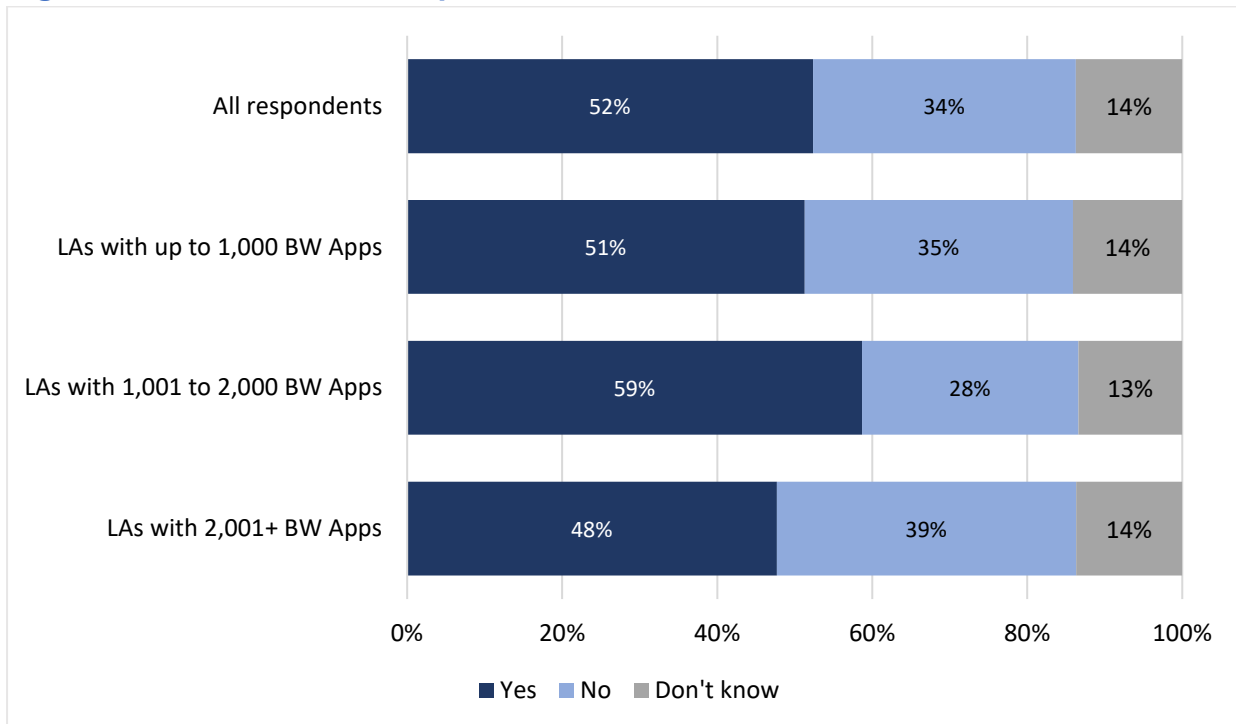


Figure A1.17 Satisfaction with aspects of inspection visit – LAs with up to 1,000 building warrant applications

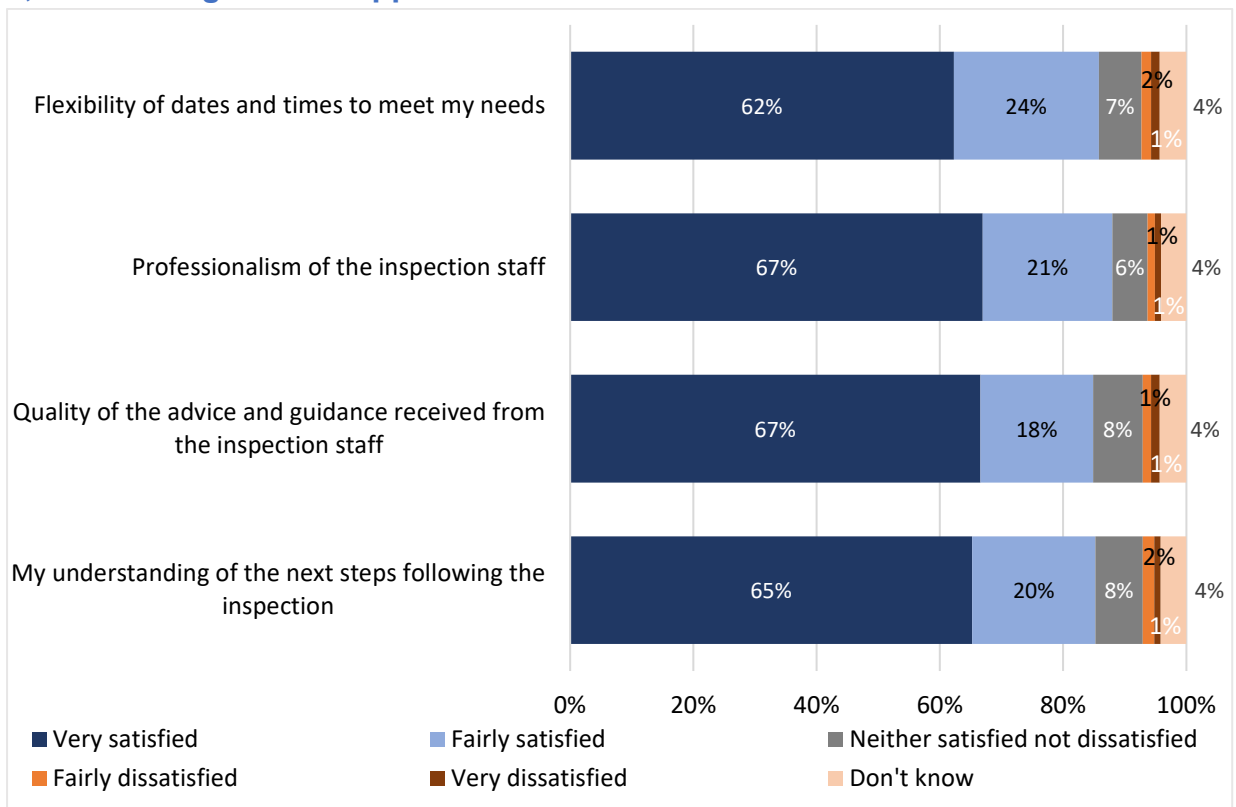


Figure A1.18 Satisfaction with aspects of inspection visit – LAs with 1,001-2,000 building warrant applications

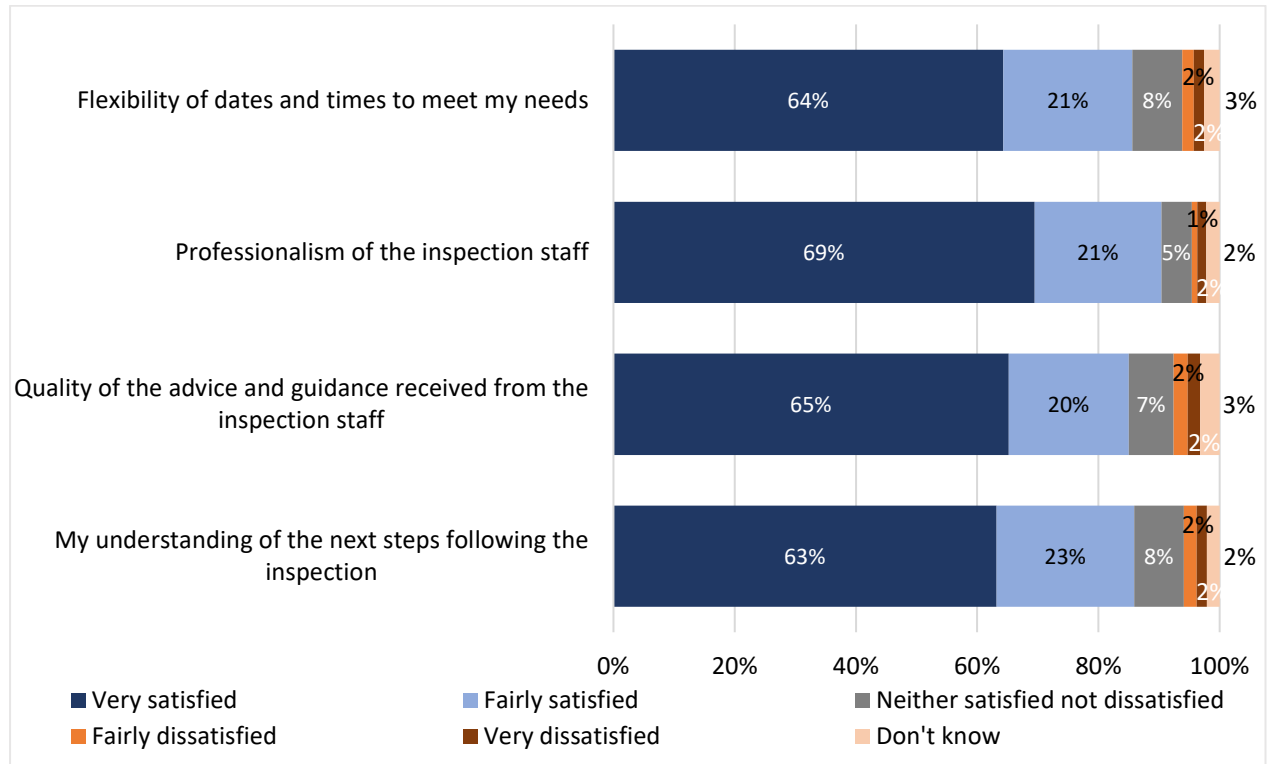
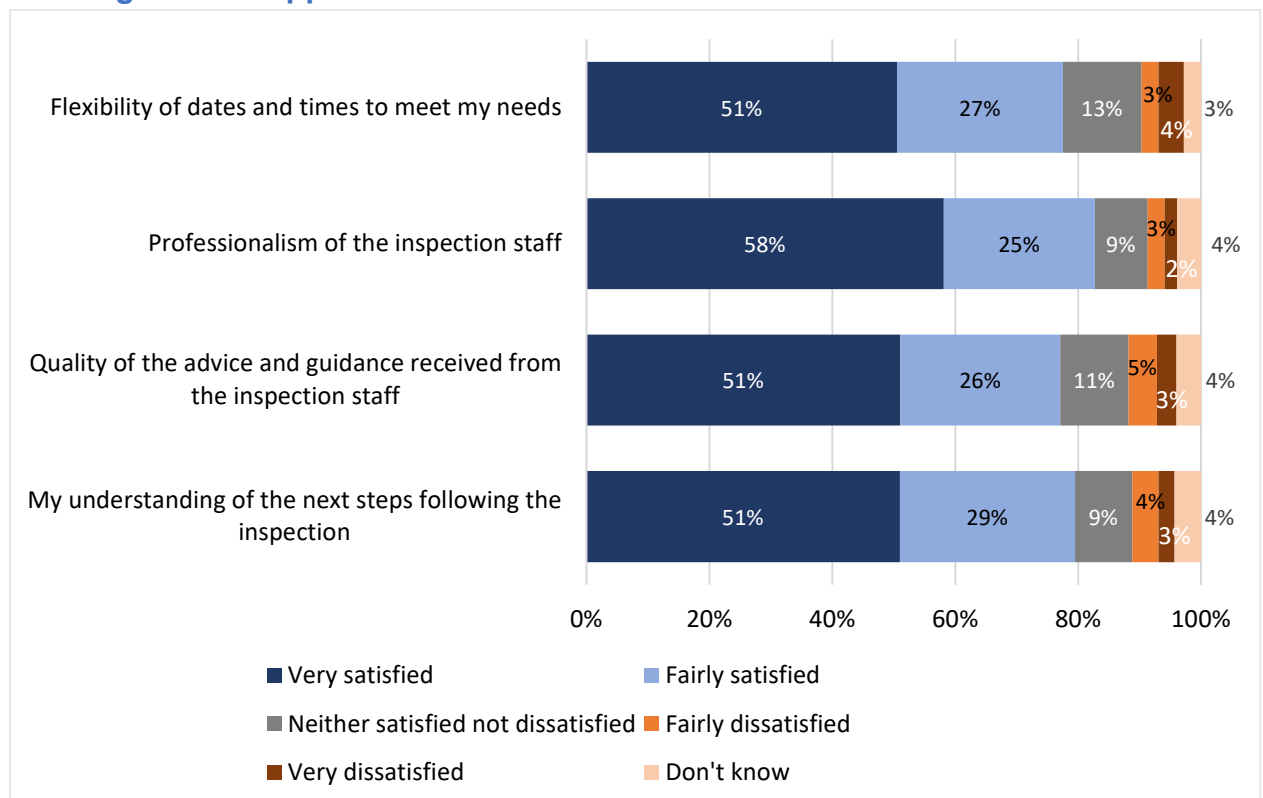


Figure A1.19 Satisfaction with aspects of inspection visit – LAs with 2,000+ building warrant applications



COMMUNICATIONS

Figure A1.20 Channels of interaction

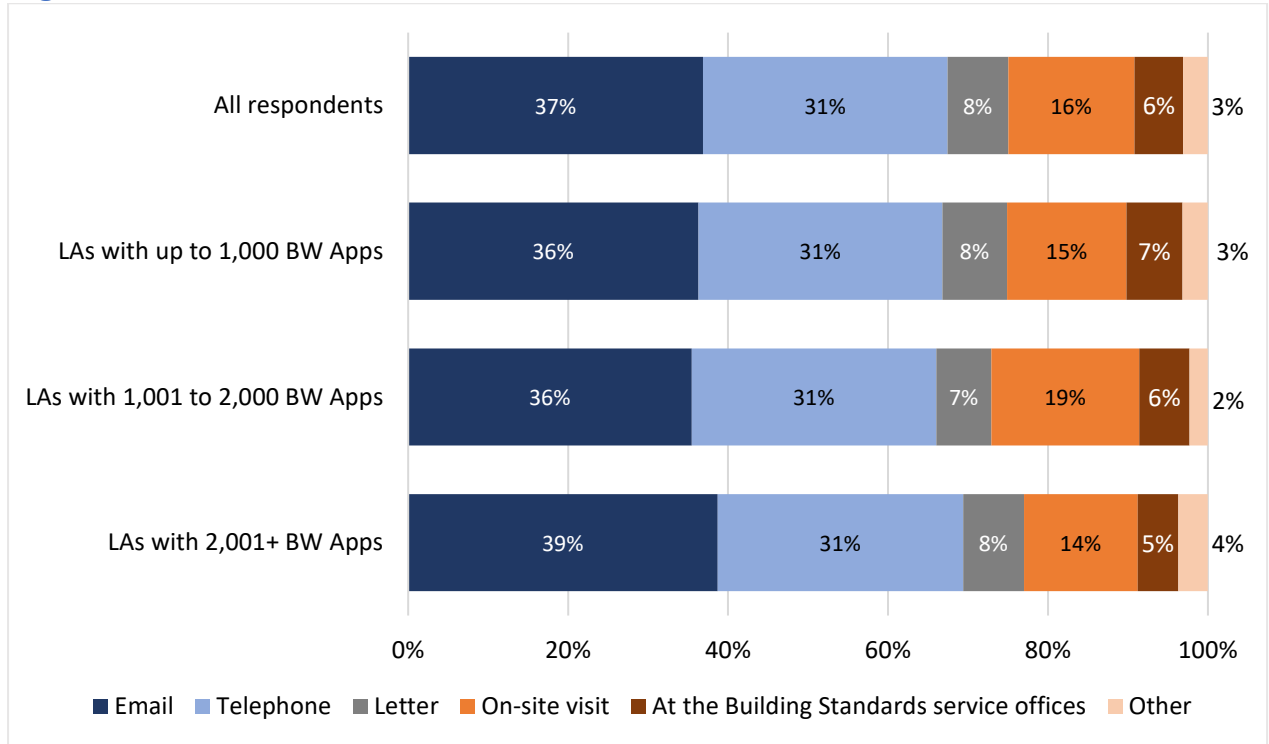


Figure A1.21 Quality of written information and documentation

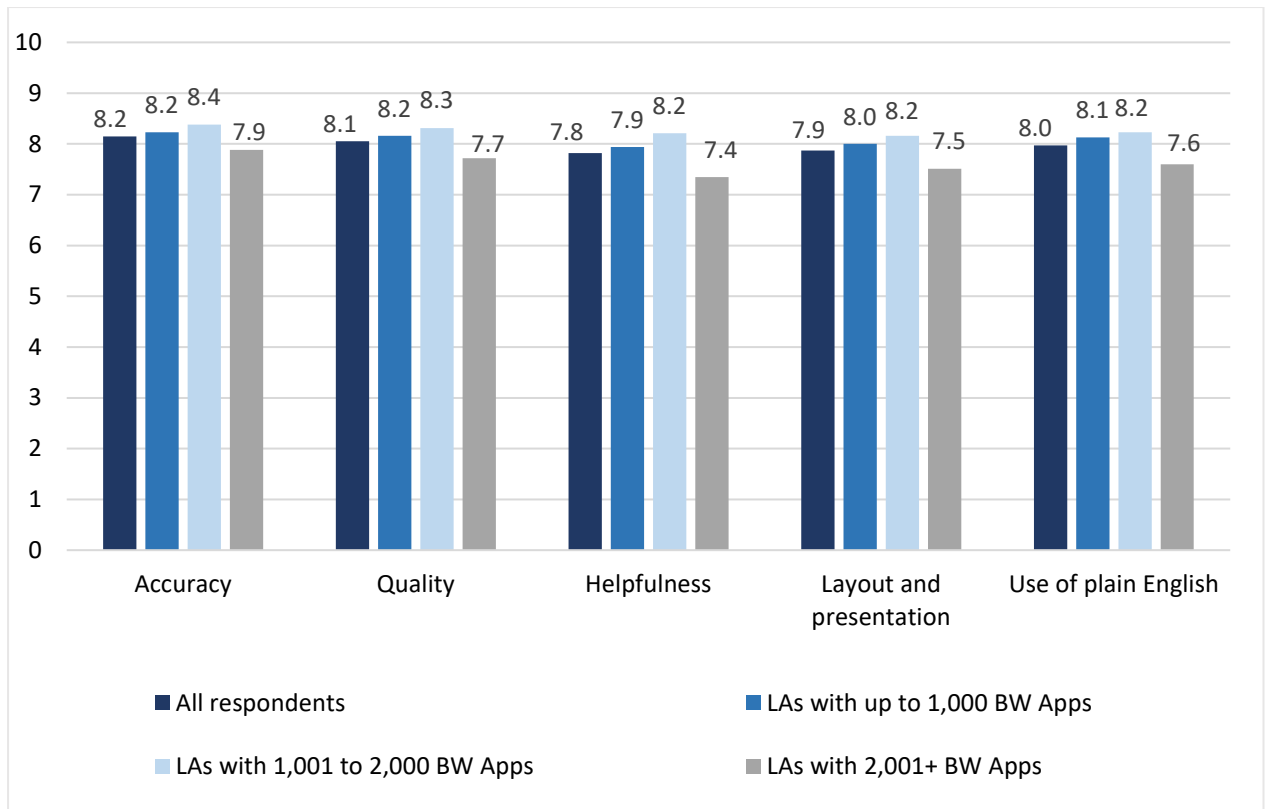


Figure A1.22 Whether visited the building standards section of the local authority verifier website

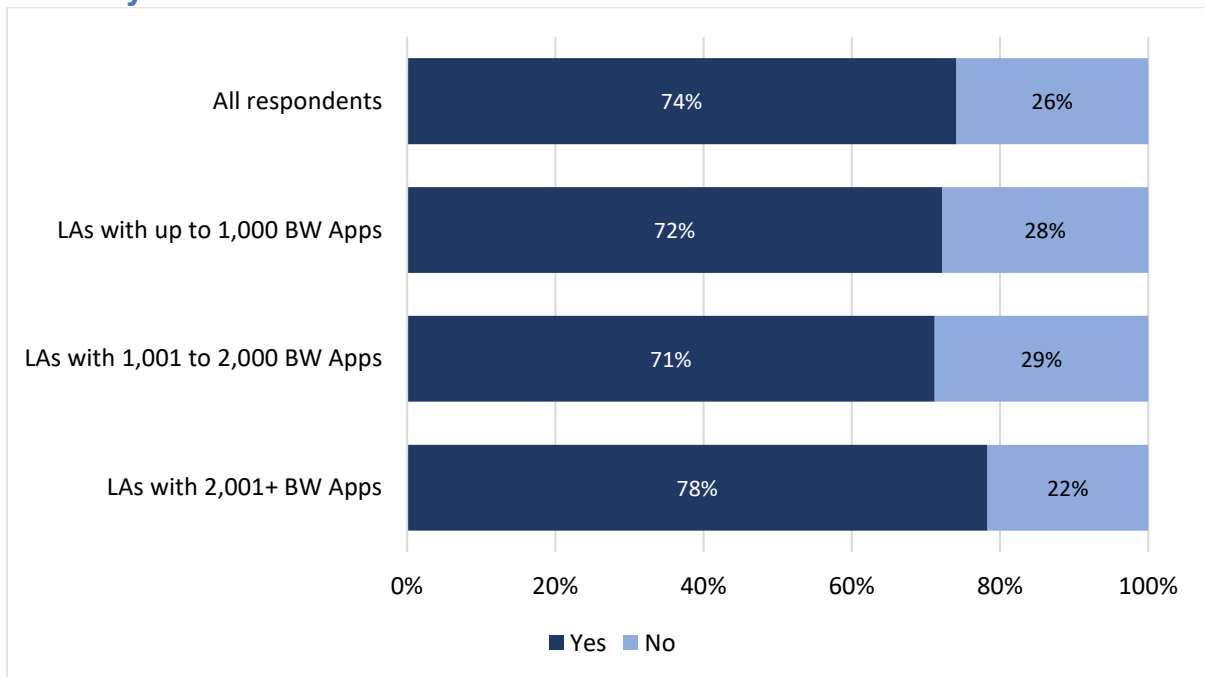


Figure A1.23 Satisfaction with electronic communication forms – LAs with up to 1,000 building warrant applications

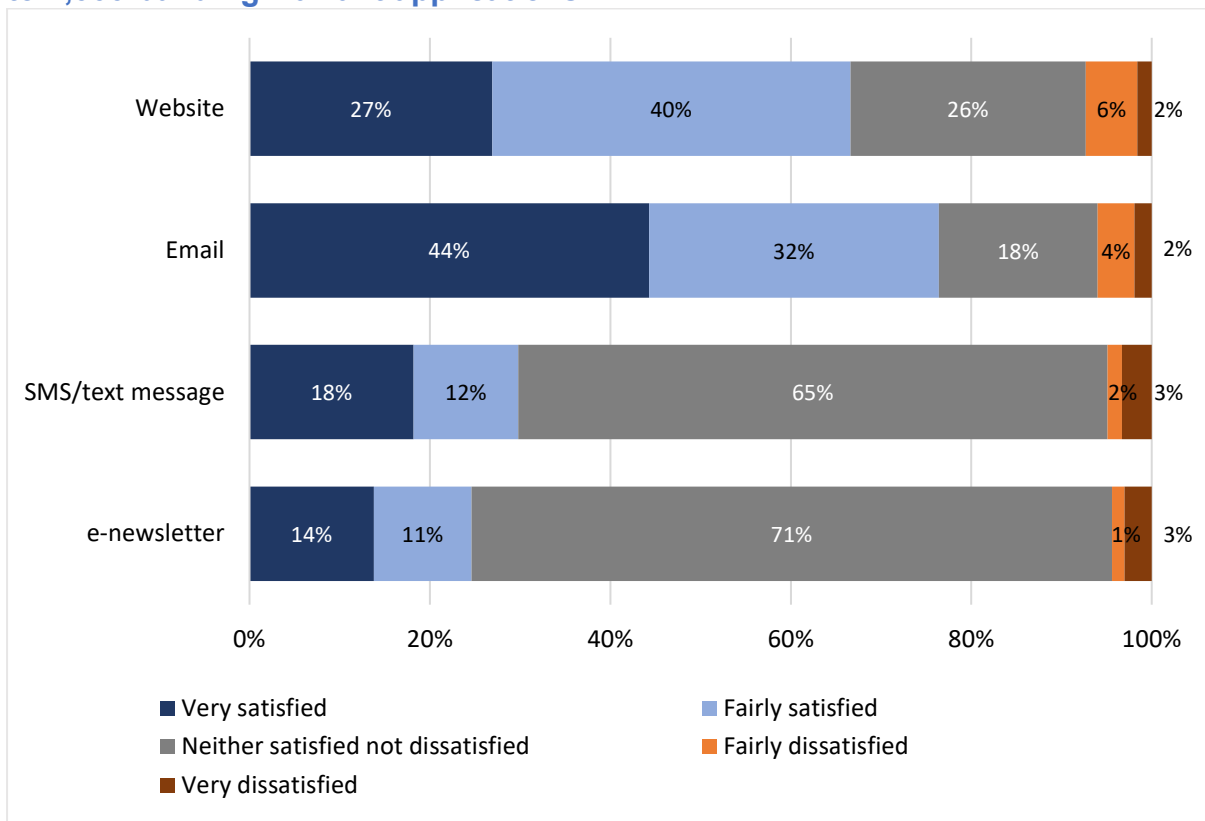


Figure A1.24 Satisfaction with electronic communication forms – LAs with 1,001-2,000 building warrant applications

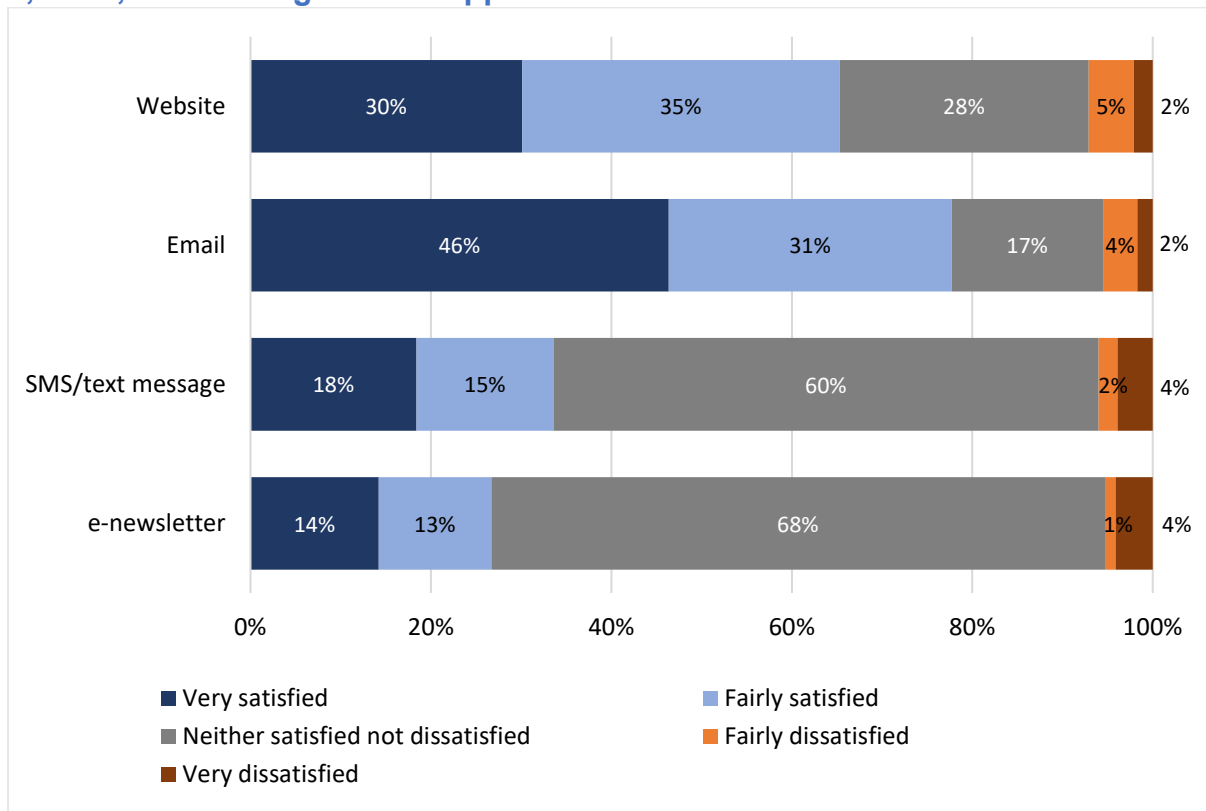
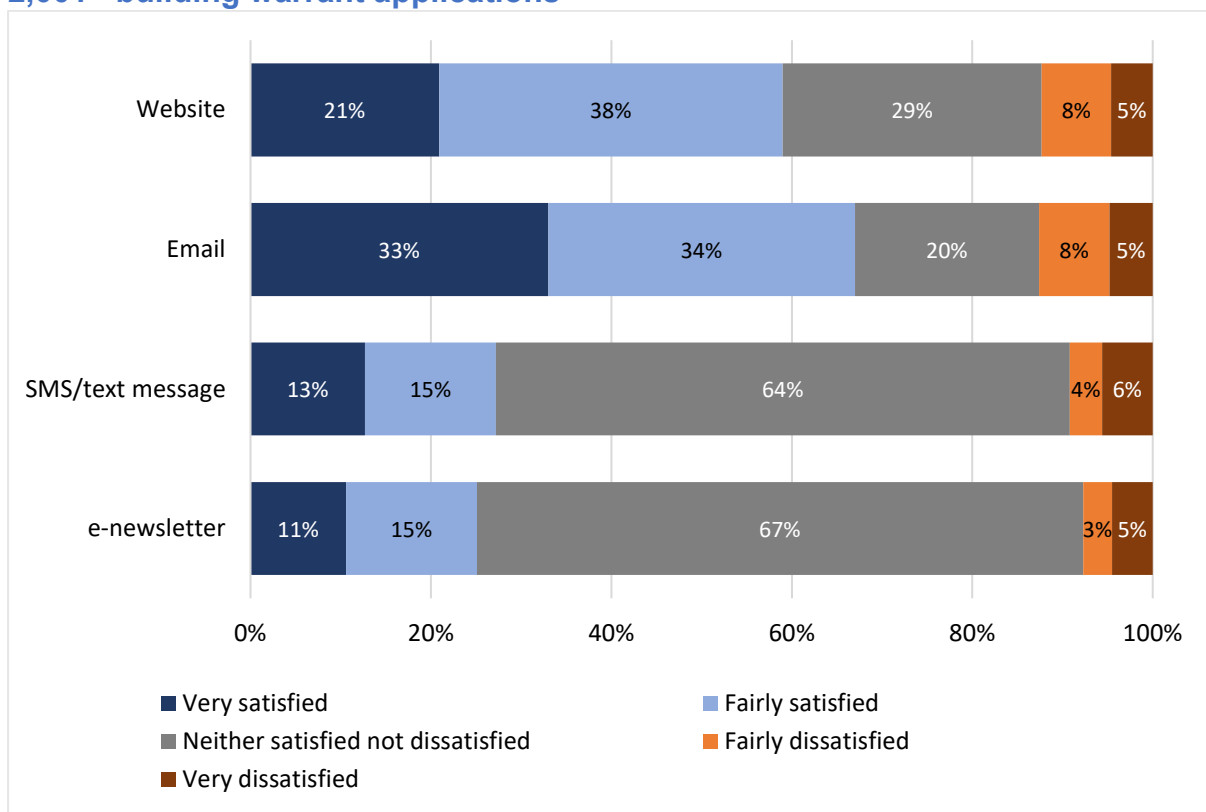


Figure A1.25 Satisfaction with electronic communication forms – LAs with 2,001+ building warrant applications



ACCESSIBILITY

Figure A1.26 Building standards service staff are accessible to meet in person

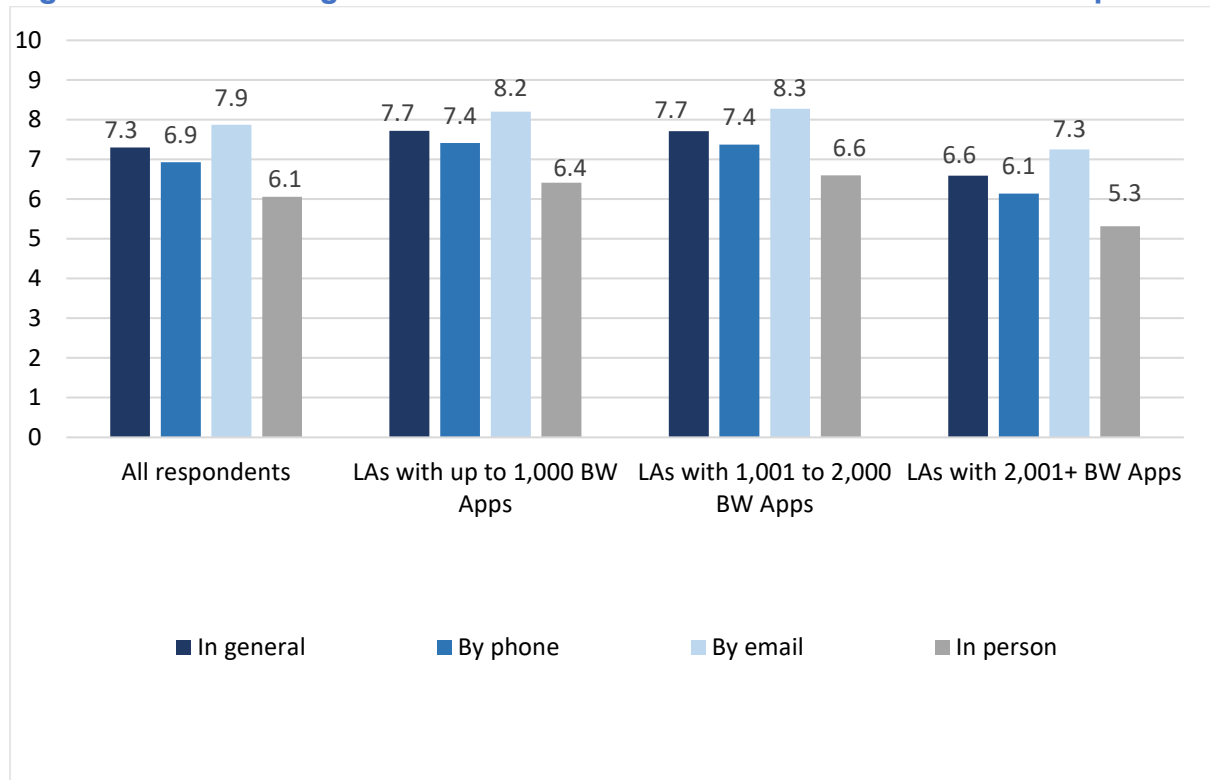


Figure A1.27 Building standards service staff are accessible to meet in person

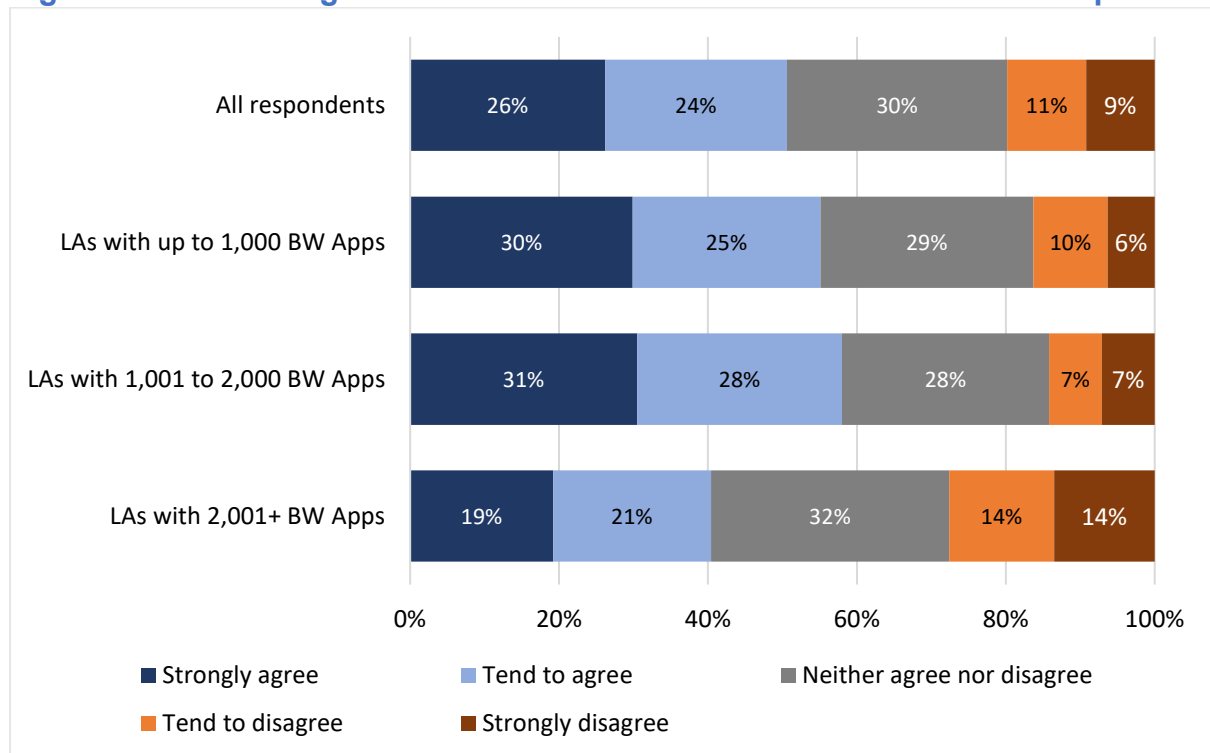


Figure A1.28 Building standards service staff are approachable

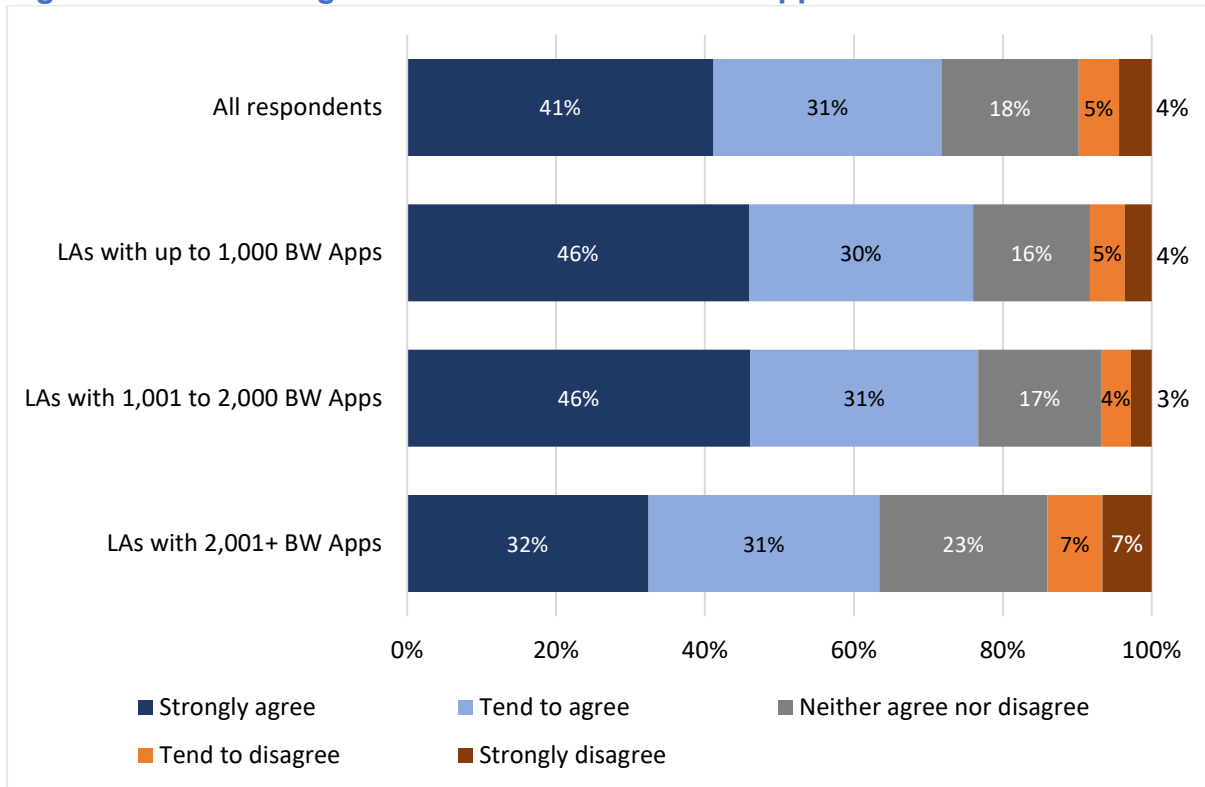


Figure A1.29 Whether visited the offices of the building standards service

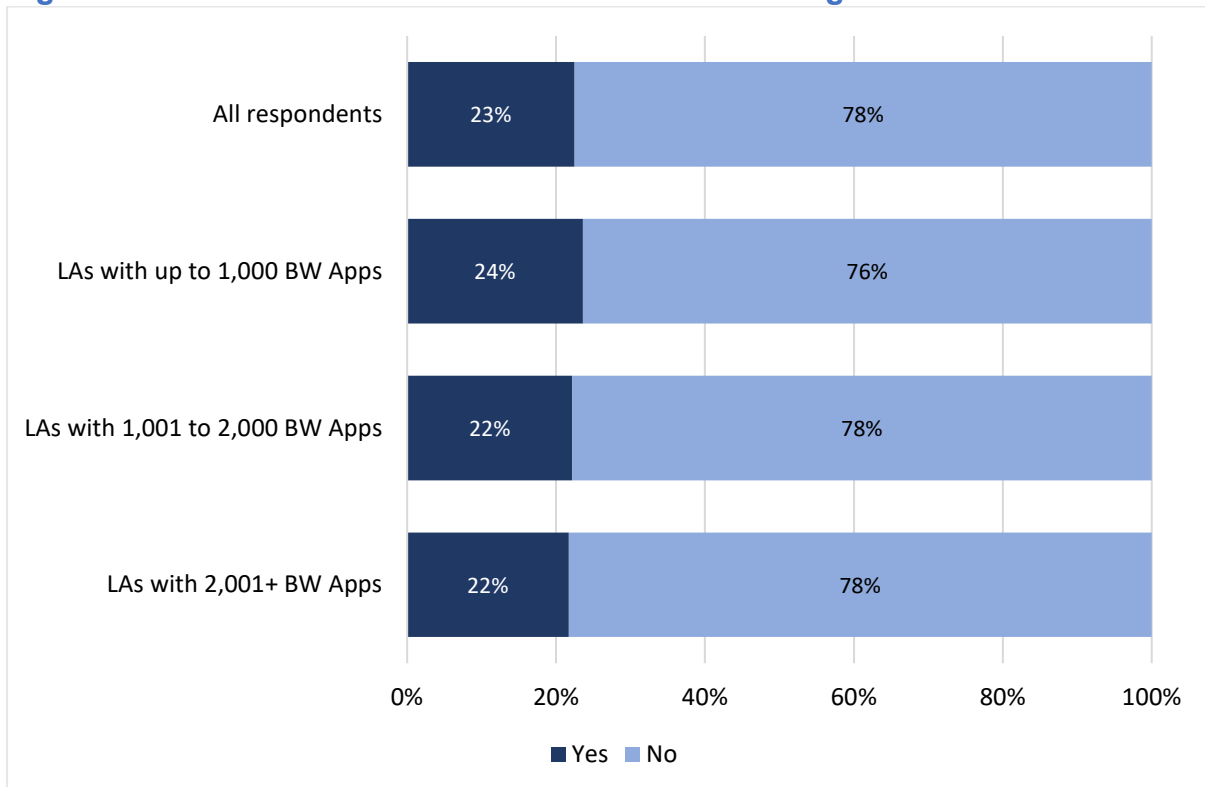


Figure A1.30 Satisfaction with specific aspects of the building standards service offices – LAs with up to 1,000 building warrant applications

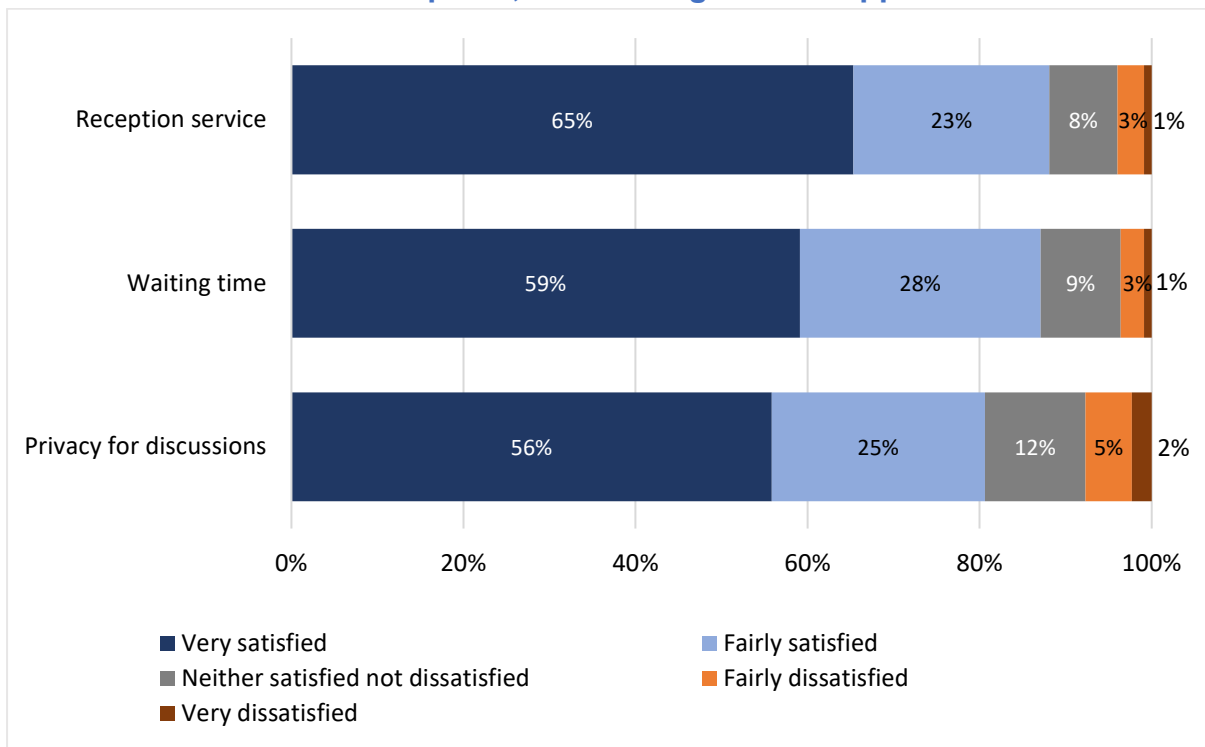


Figure A1.31 Satisfaction with specific aspects of the building standards service offices – LAs with 1,001-2,000 building warrant applications

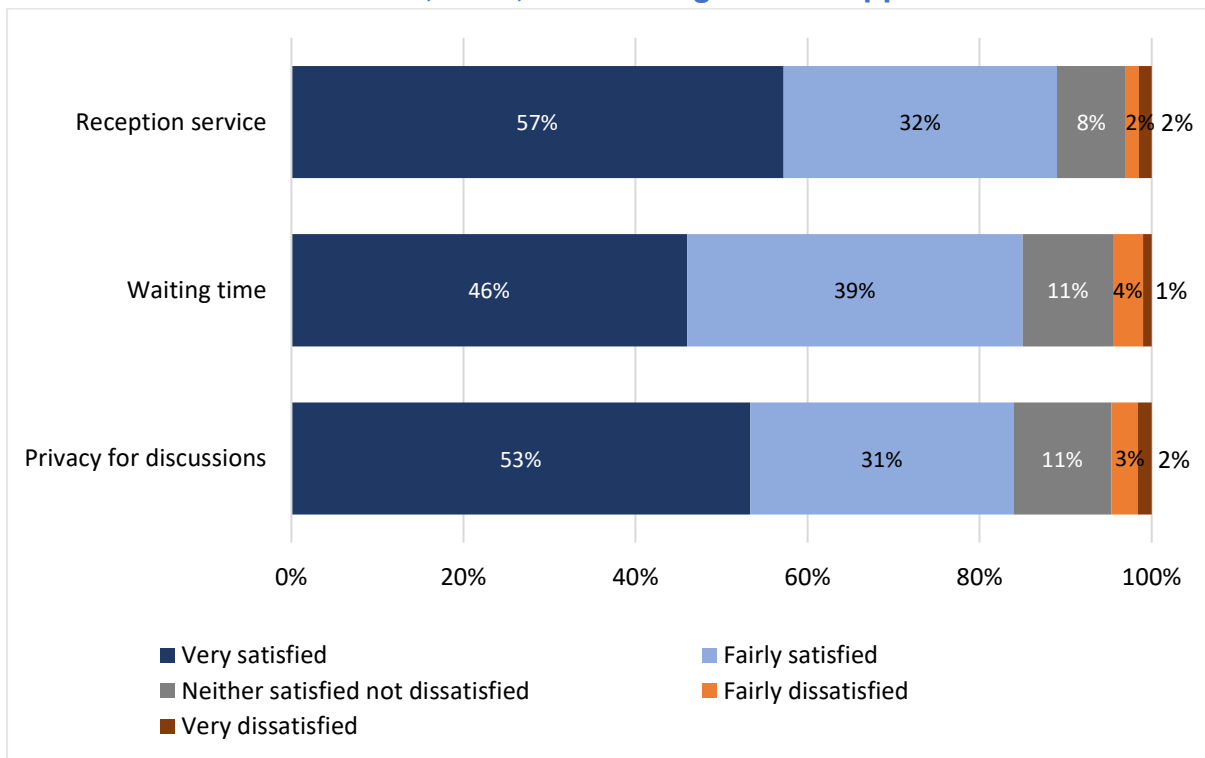
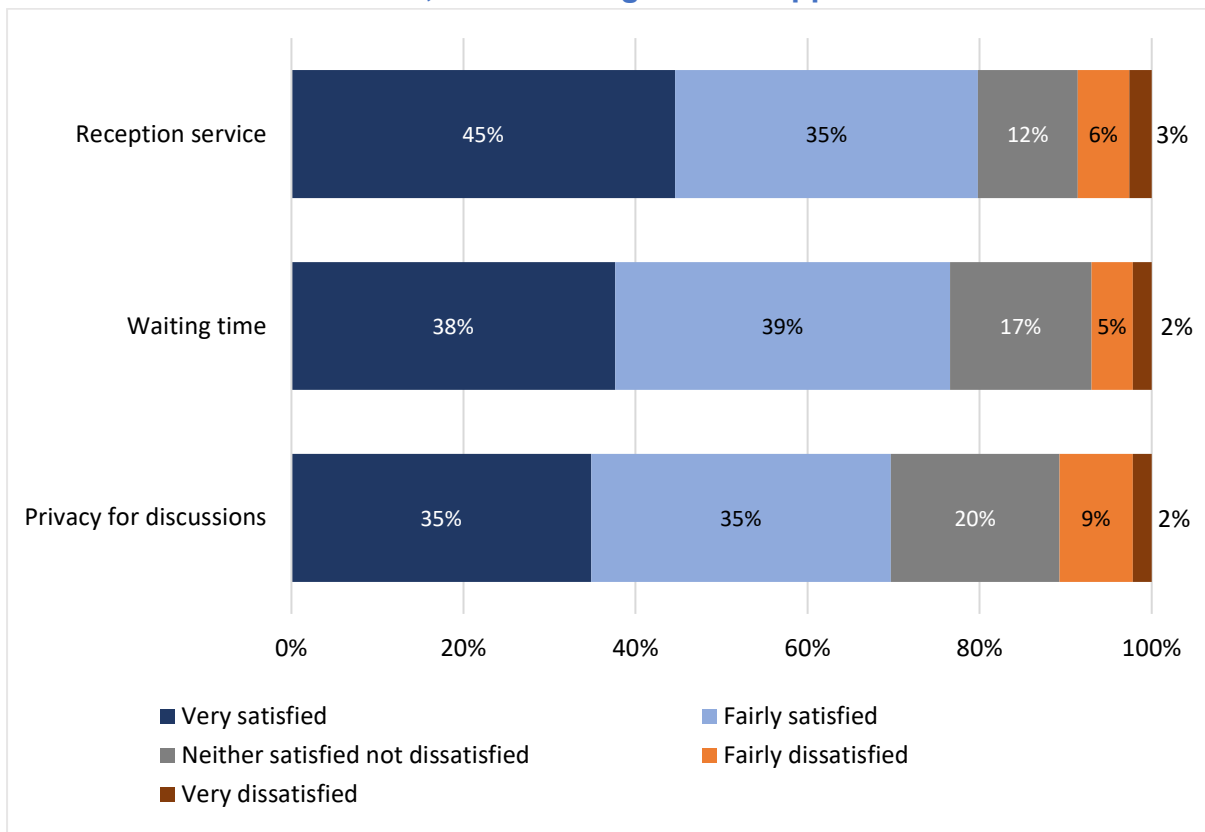


Figure A1.32 Satisfaction with specific aspects of the building standards service offices – LAs with 2,001+ building warrant applications



Appendix 2: National Survey Questionnaire

2020 Customer Satisfaction Survey for Building Standards Please tell us what you think

Introduction

The Scottish Government (Building Standards Division) would like to obtain your views and feedback about the local authority verifier Building Standards service in Scotland. This is a national survey that is being administered separately to customer feedback questionnaires issued by individual local authorities.

As a Building Standards customer since April 2019, we would like to hear about the quality of service you have received, for example when applying for a building warrant and/or submitting a completion certificate. We are interested in your views on the customer service you have experienced as opposed to the actual decision made in response to an application.

How to complete the survey

You will be asked to identify which local authority verifier your feedback relates to. If you have been a customer of more than one local authority verifier and would like to provide additional feedback, please complete a separate survey.

The survey should take approximately 10 minutes to complete (this may take a little longer depending on how much feedback you wish to give). Please note, the final question asks you for any additional comments or feedback not covered by the previous questions.

As you progress through the survey, you will only be presented with those questions that are relevant to you. If you are unable to answer any questions, or if you feel they are not applicable, please leave them blank.

Reassurance

Pye Tait Consulting is carrying out this survey independently on behalf of the Scottish Government and all 32 local authorities in Scotland. The findings from the survey will be treated confidentially and reported anonymously by Pye Tait Consulting under the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Market Research Society (MRS) Code of Conduct.

If you have any queries, please contact Tom Wilson at Pye Tait Consulting, via [t.wilson\[at\]pyetait.com](mailto:t.wilson@pyetait.com) or by telephoning 01423 509433

Thank you for taking the time to complete this online survey. To continue, please select a local authority verifier to provide your views and feedback. Please note that after you press 'submit' at the end of this survey, you will return to this page and your response for this local authority verifier will be marked as 'completed' (below).

PART 1: About you and your application: [Local authority verifier selected]

Q1. In order to minimise selection error, customers were no longer presented with this drop-down list of 32 local authorities to manually select which to provide feedback about. Instead, this information was either pre-filled (for customers of one local authority verifier) or a dynamically controlled reduced list was presented for customers of more than one local authority verifier (typically agents).

Which ONE of the following local authorities are you responding about in this survey? (Please tick the appropriate box and complete a separate survey for any other local authorities of which you have been a customer since April 2019).

	Aberdeen		Highland
	Aberdeenshire		Inverclyde
	Angus		Midlothian
	Argyll and Bute		Moray
	City of Edinburgh		North Ayrshire
	Clackmannanshire		North Lanarkshire
	Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar		Orkney
	Dumfries and Galloway		Perth and Kinross
	Dundee		Renfrewshire
	East Ayrshire		Scottish Borders
	East Dunbartonshire		Shetland
	East Lothian		South Ayrshire
	East Renfrewshire		South Lanarkshire
	Falkirk		Stirling
	Fife		West Dunbartonshire
	Glasgow		West Lothian

Q2. In what capacity have you been a customer of the Building Standards service? [Tick one only]

	Applicant for a building warrant and/or submitter of a completion certificate (e.g. building owner/tenant)
	Agent working on behalf of another applicant/submitter
	BOTH of the above, i.e. direct applicant/submitter AND agent
	Other

If 'Other' – please specify: _____

Q3. [Only asked if Option 1 selected to Q2] Did you use an agent to act on your behalf as part of the application process?

	Yes
	No
	Don't know

Q4. For which of the following reasons did you make contact with your local authority verifier Building Standards service? [Tick all that apply]

<input type="checkbox"/>	To discuss your proposal before applying for a building warrant
<input type="checkbox"/>	To make an application for a building warrant
<input type="checkbox"/>	During construction, including submission of a completion certificate
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other reason/s

If 'Other' – please specify: _____

Q5. For which of the following categories of work have you submitted an application? [Tick all that apply]

<input type="checkbox"/>	Domestic new build – multiple plotted developments (houses/flats)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Domestic new build – other (e.g. one-off house build)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Domestic existing build - extension
<input type="checkbox"/>	Domestic existing build - alteration
<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-domestic – residential (e.g. hostels, guest houses, hotels, hospitals)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-domestic – assembly (e.g. churches, schools, health centres, libraries, stadia)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-domestic – commercial (e.g. shops, restaurants and office buildings)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-domestic – Industrial (e.g. factory buildings, manufacturing units, refineries)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-domestic – storage/agricultural (e.g. grain stores, car parks, bonded warehouse)

If 'Other' – please specify: _____

PART 2: Meeting your expectations: [Local authority verifier selected]

Q6. Overall, to what extent did the service you received from the local authority verifier Building Standards service meet your expectations? Please rate on a scale from 1 'not at all' to 10 'completely'?

Q7. Please provide your reasons for this rating:

PART 3: Progressing your application: [Local authority verifier selected]

Q8. How satisfied were you with the time taken by the local authority verifier Building Standards service to undertake each of the following? [Leave any statements blank if don't know or not applicable]

	Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
Respond to telephone enquiries					
Respond to written enquiries					
Issue the first report for a building warrant application (e.g. detailing non-compliance or further information requested)					
Process the application and grant a building warrant					
Respond to a request for a site visit					
Accept a completion certificate					

Q9. How satisfied are you with the way you were informed about the progress of your application? [Leave blank if don't know or not applicable]

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

Q10. [Only asked if 'fairly dissatisfied' or 'very dissatisfied' to Q9] What are your reasons?

PART 4: Quality of service: [Local authority verifier selected]

Q11. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about the advice and guidance you received from local authority verifier Building Standards service staff? [Leave any statements blank if don't know or not applicable]

	Strongly agree	Agree to some extent	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree to some extent	Strongly disagree
I received sufficient advice and guidance to meet my needs					
The advice and guidance I received was consistent					
The advice and guidance I received was helpful					

Q12. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about the quality of service received from Building Standards service staff? [Leave any statements blank if don't know or not applicable]

	Strongly agree	Agree to some extent	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree to some extent	Strongly disagree
Staff were polite and courteous					
Staff were helpful					
Staff were efficient					
Staff were knowledgeable					
I felt as though someone took ownership of my enquiry					
Any problems that arose were adequately resolved					
I felt valued as a customer					

Q13. [Only asked if 'Strongly Agree' to any components of Q11 or Q12] You have stated **STRONGLY AGREE** to at least one of the above statements with respect to the advice, guidance and quality of service you have received. Please can you explain what was particularly good?

Q14. [Only asked if 'Strongly Disagree' to any components of Q11 or Q12] You have stated STRONGLY DISAGREE to at least one of the above statements with respect to the advice, guidance and quality of service you have received. Please can you explain your reasons?

--

Q15. Are you aware of the need to notify the Building Standards service before warrantable work commences?

	Yes
	No

Q16. Are you aware of the new Construction Compliance Notification Plan (CCNP) which is issued by the local authority verifier at the same time as the building warrant is granted?

	Yes – aware but not familiar
	Yes – aware and familiar
	No – not aware

Q17. Did you have an inspection visit by Building Standards service staff?

	Yes	Route to Q18
	No	Route to Part 5
	Don't know	Route to Part 5

Q18. How satisfied were you with each of the following aspects of the inspection visit?
[Leave any statements blank if don't know or not applicable]

	Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
Flexibility of dates and times to meet my needs					
Professionalism of the inspection staff					
Quality of the advice and guidance received from the inspection staff					
Your understanding of the next steps following the inspection					

PART 5: Communications: [Local authority verifier selected]

Q19. In which of the following ways did you interact with the local authority verifier Building Standards service? [Tick all that apply]

	Email
	Telephone
	Letter
	On-site visit
	At the Building Standards service offices
	Other

If 'Other' – please specify: _____

Q20. On a scale from 1 'very poor' to 10 'very good' - how would you rate each of the following aspects of the local authority verifier's written information and documentation:

	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10
Accuracy	
Quality	
Helpfulness	
Layout and presentation	
Use of plain English	

Q21. Have you visited the Building Standards section of the local authority verifier's website?

	Yes
	No

Q22. How satisfied are you with each of the following forms of electronic communication made available by the local authority verifier Building Standards service? [Leave any statements blank if don't know or not applicable]

	Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
Website					
Email					
SMS/text message					
e-newsletter					

Q23. [Only asked if 'fairly dissatisfied' or 'very dissatisfied' to any of Q22 A to D] You stated FAIRLY DISSATISFIED or VERY DISSATISFIED to at least one of the options in the last question about electronic communication. What are your reasons?

Q24. Generally, in what ways (if any) do you think the local authority verifier Building Standards service could improve its communications?

PART 6: Accessibility: [Local authority verifier selected]

Q25. How easy was it to make contact with the local authority verifier Building Standards service via each of the following methods? Please rate on a scale from 1 'very difficult' to 10 'very easy'

	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10
In general	
By phone	
By email	
In person	

Q26. Please provide reasons for your ratings:

Q27. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements in relation to the local authority verifier Building Standards service? [Leave any statements blank if don't know or not applicable]

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree
Building Standards service staff are accessible if I want to meet with them in person					
Building Standards service staff are approachable					

Q28. Did you visit the offices of the local authority verifier Building Standards service?

Yes	Route to Q29
No	Route to Q30

Q29. How satisfied are you with each of the following aspects of the Building Standards service offices? [Leave any statements blank if don't know or not applicable]

	Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
Reception service					
Waiting time					
Privacy for discussions					

PART 7: Overall satisfaction and final comments: [Local authority verifier selected]

Q30. Overall, how would you rate your satisfaction with the Building Standards service? Please rate on a scale from 1 'not at all satisfied' to 10 'completely satisfied'

Finally, do you have any final comments about how you believe the local authority verifier Building Standards service could be improved in the future?

Appendix 3: Survey Invitation Email

Email subject: Building Standards in Scotland – Customer Feedback Questionnaire

Dear {Name}

We are writing to you as a customer of the local authority verifier Building Standards service in Scotland.

This means that since 1st April 2019 you may have submitted a building warrant application, completion certificate, used the services of your own agent, or made other enquiries through your local authority verifier Building Standards service. You may also have been an agent acting on behalf of an applicant.

The Scottish Government would like to obtain your views and feedback on the customer service you received. This will help identify which aspects are working well and any areas where improvements need to be made in the future.

We would be grateful if you would spare 5 or 10 minutes to complete the online survey.

If you have been a customer of more than one local authority verifier Building Standards, you will have the opportunity to provide feedback on the service provided by each.

PLEASE CLICK HERE TO START THE SURVEY

Your feedback is important to us, even if you are not able to answer all questions or have had limited contact with the local authority verifier Building Standards service.

Further information, including our contact details, can be found via the survey link (above).

Many thanks for your time and contribution.

Kind regards,

Pye Tait Consulting (on behalf of the Scottish Government, Building Standards Division)

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