

Resident Satisfaction: Tips on carry out a survey

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Session outline

- **Good practice tips**
 - The basics (size, margin of error, survey method)
 - Other considerations
- **Latest news**
 - Changing times & COVID-19
 - HouseMark's update
 - Looking to the future
- Q & A session

Census or sample survey?



Do I need to survey all of our residents?

Well that depends upon...

- Size of organisation
- The survey method
- The purpose of the survey

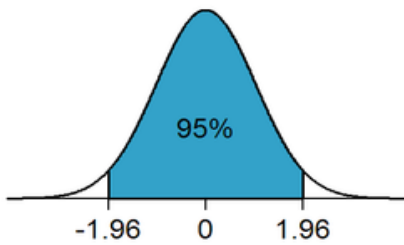
General Rule for STAR surveys:

- Under 1,000 units $\pm 5\%$
- 1,000 to 9,999 units $\pm 4\%$
- Over 10,000 $\pm 3\%$

(at a 95% confidence level)

Under 400 units	Census – need to get at least 100 responses back
400 to 1,000 units	Census is most likely approach
1,000 to 9,999 units	Sample survey becomes best option
Over 10,000 units	Sample

It is also about the margin of error and the reliability you need from the survey!



Margin of error

$$E = z_{\alpha/2} \frac{\sigma}{\sqrt{n}}$$

Sampling error (also known as the margin of error)

- Measures the accuracy of survey results in relation to the total population
- You can use the calculation in two ways:
 - Used in research design
 - To assess the accuracy of the results

You often see “sampling error = ±4% at the 95% confidence level”

- Confidence level – we work at 95% in housing, typically used by researchers but can vary from around 80% to 99%
- Sampling error - population studies often ±2%, while surveys of between 1,000 and 10,000 may have a sampling error of ±4% at the 95% confidence level. For smaller groups or subgroups ±6% to ±10% is often acceptable.



Put simply

If 85% of residents answered “Yes” to a particular question, there are 95 chances out of 100 that the correct figure for all residents – including those who did not respond – would be between 81% and 89%.

Note: Sampling error relevant for quantitative, not small-scale qualitative surveys



Margin of error – look up table

Population	Numbers of achieved responses required to meet sampling errors at 95% confidence level								
	±2.0%	±3.0%	±4.0%	±5.0%	±6.0%	±7.0%	±8.0%	±9.0%	±10.0%
100	96	92	86	80	73	66	60	54	49
200	185	169	150	132	115	99	86	75	65
250	227	203	177	152	129	110	94	81	70
500	414	341	273	217	174	141	116	96	81
1000	706	516	375	278	211	164	131	106	88
2000	1091	695	462	332	236	179	140	112	92
3000	1334	786	500	341	245	184	143	114	93
4000	1501	843	522	351	250	187	145	115	94
5000	1662	880	536	357	253	189	146	116	94
10,000	1936	964	566	370	260	192	148	117	95
20,000	2144	1013	583	377	263	194	149	118	96

**Understanding the margin of error allows you to move away from census surveys
– if your resident population allows it!**

Survey method - Postal, telephone or online surveys

Example 1 - 6,000 properties, one off STAR resident perception survey

- Reliability $\pm 4\%$ at 95% confidence level = 536 responses
- Postal survey - Assume 25% response rate need to send out 2,144 questionnaires, probably need 2 mailouts
- Or you can carry out 536 telephone interviews
- At this scale the price difference is marginal (\approx £500 more for telephone)

Example 2 – 600 properties, one off STAR resident perception survey

- Reliability $\pm 5\%$ at 95% confidence level = 234 responses (39% response rate)
- Postal survey – Should be achievable from 2 full mailouts
- Or if you do not want to include everyone in the research, you can just interview 234 by telephone
- At this scale the price difference is marginal (\approx £500 less for telephone)

What about an online survey?

- What percentage of your residents will respond to an online survey promoted by email or text message?

Which is the best approach?

Transactional surveys

6,000 residents	Annual Service Users	Census or sample	Method	Survey frequency	Reporting frequency	Average per quarter	Margin of error Quarter	Total per year	Margin of error per year (±)	Percentage surveyed each year
Repairs (responsive repairs)	10,000	Sample	Telephone	Weekly	Monthly	300	5.6%	1200	2.7%	12%
ASB	250	Census	Telephone	Monthly	Quarterly	35	15.4%	140	5.5%	56%
New tenants	200	Census	Telephone	Monthly	Quarterly	40	13.9%	160	3.5%	80%
Complaints	120	Census	Telephone	Monthly	Quarterly	15	23.7%	60	8.9%	50%

Population	Numbers of achieved responses required to meet sampling errors at 95% confidence level								
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Margin of error – important to understand when comparing surveys over time

Satisfaction (%)	All tenants 2018	All tenants 2020	Difference (2020 – 2018)
Overall services provided	78%	83%	5%
Quality of home	83%	90%	7%
Customer service	72%	84%	12%
Value for money	88%	80%	-8%
Neighbourhood as a place to live	81%	83%	2%
Estate services	95%	95%	0%
Responsive repairs service	82%	88%	6%
Quality of repair	80%	85%	5%
% residents who are promoters	92%	91%	-1%
Listen to views and acts	85%	80%	-5%
Kept informed	84%	87%	3%
Margin of error	±3%	±3%	

Other questions

Do incentives make a difference?

Impossible to measure
Still popular with postal, not often used in telephone surveys

When is the best time to run a survey?

One that fits in with organisational requirements
Gaming on the seasons – no statistical evidence that any season/month is better than any other > stick to same time

What is the best survey method?

Whatever will get the best response from residents!
Personalisation of services
- Find out your residents preferred method of responding

What is a good response rate?

Depends on the survey method

- Postal - 25% to 60%
- Online – 5% to 30%
- SMS/ Text survey – 5% to 15%
- Telephone survey – n/a look at refusal rates

Call statistics	No.	%
Telephone interview completed	250	5%
Answer machine	630	13%
No answer	444	9%
Opt out - this time	36	1%
Busy	31	1%
Insufficient English	27	1%
Hung-up	19	0%
Opt-out permanent	8	0%
Loaded (and not called)	3284	69%
Total valid sample	4729	100%
Invalid sample		
Interviewed in last 12 months	721	15%
Invalid number	42	1%
Excluded / Opted out previously	35	1%
Total invalid sample	798	17%

Survey method (STAR surveys)

Telephone	Postal	Online	SMS/Text survey
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More reliable results as quotas are used to ensure representative of resident population (important for informing service reviews) • Ability to probe where dissatisfaction is found and capture the information in the voice of the tenant • Do not have to “disturb” as many residents – for example only call 500 rather than mailout to around 2000 • Customer recovery – live flagging of dissatisfied residents or those who need a call back • Most popular method with social landlords (around 75% are now telephone) • Much quicker – only in the field for two weeks (not four with a postal survey) • Works well with tracking surveys (survey ¼ required number of residents every three months – finger on the pulse survey) and combine results for the year to provide reliable benchmarking results – very popular • Ability to probe using routing • Needs to be shorter than postal survey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to offer everyone a chance to respond • Often most suitable for smaller landlords and those who want to be inclusive • Survey bias often found due to over response from highly satisfied older people • Survey purpose - There may be instances where you want to survey all residents – wide consultation, have not carried out a survey for a while, tenant profiling, too small to track <p>But:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Response rates are falling • Cost is increasing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quick and low cost • Preferred by some residents • Depends on response rate (5% - to 30%) • Can be carried out in advance of telephone or postal survey • Need high levels of email addresses or mobile numbers • Excludes non-digital tenants • Survey bias can be very problematic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quick & Cheap • Popular with some residents • Response bias • Low response • 3 – 5 questions max • Good for time critical process surveys

Unless you have close to 100% of residents phone and email addresses surveying all residents might have to be done postally – which might not be what you want

Multi-mode?

Any questions?

Developing survey questions

1. Consider including HouseMark/SPBM core questions
2. Consider including HouseMark's recommended questions
3. What did you ask last time, repeat to measure trend if important
4. What do you, your staff, management, stakeholders and residents want to know, understand or consult on
5. Questions around re-designing service delivery
6. Identifying vulnerable clients or those with support needs
7. What about resident involvement questions?
8. Open questions and probing = actionable insight
9. Customer recovery - ensure resources are available after survey
10. Correct permission questions in place

Spend time developing the questions, get help if needed

Build the survey:

Group the questions into themes and put in a logical order

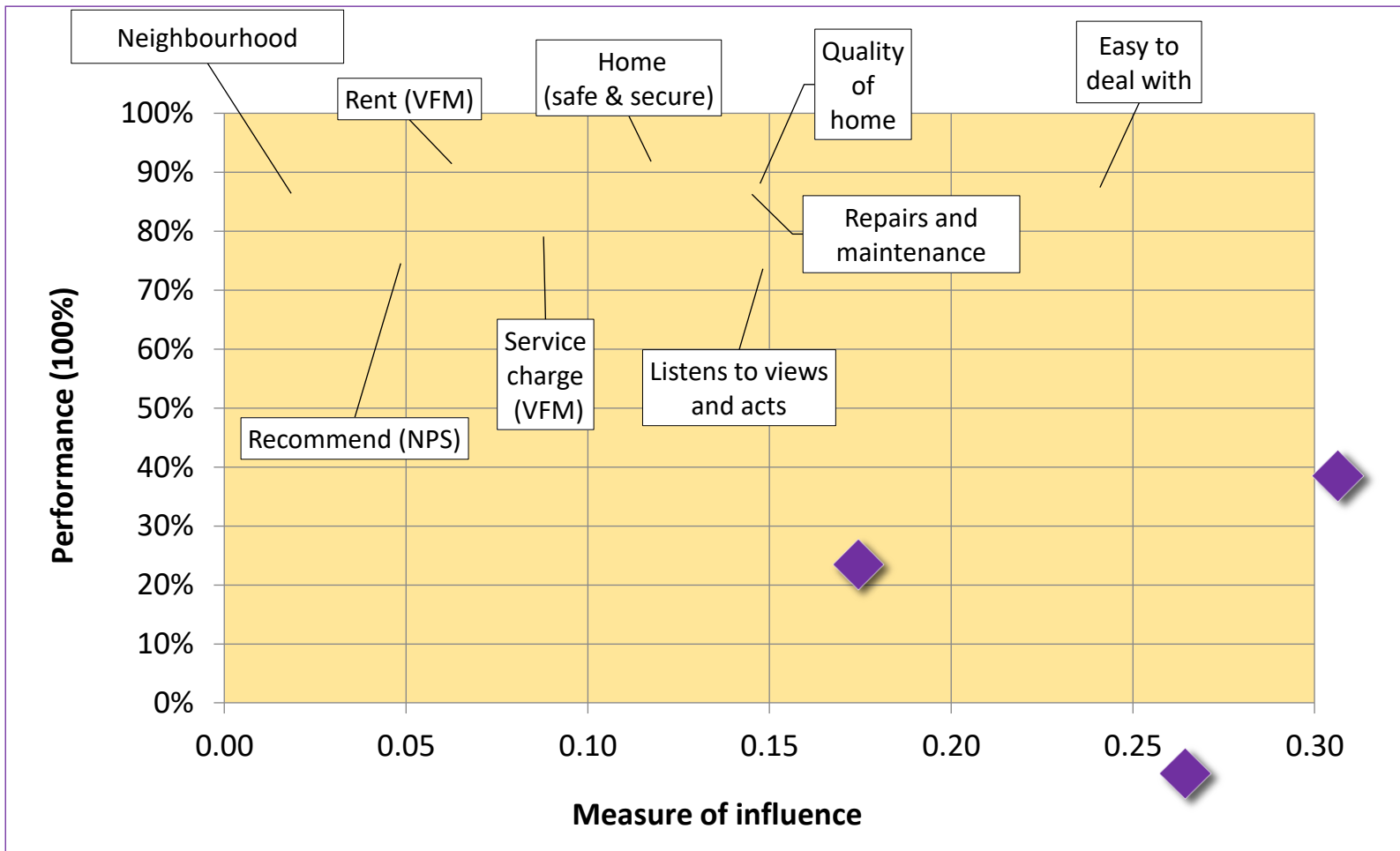
Consider putting any topical/emotive questions towards the end so do not influence questions that follow

Pilot the questions with staff or residents & time how long it takes to complete

Check you are going to actually use all of the questions

Number of Qs? Influenced by survey method

What really matters to residents - understand what sits below the topline figures and drives overall satisfaction



Frequency and timing

STAR surveys

- Frequency (Weekly, Monthly, Quarterly, Every four months, Six-monthly, Annual, Every two years, Every three years, Never!)
- Standalone or tracking – weigh up the advantages and disadvantages to both approaches
- Time of year - ideally consistent approach each time
- 2020/21
 - Are you writing it off?
 - You can survey now – there are lots of great reasons to do so!

Transactional surveys

- Repairs (every 1 – 2 weeks)
- Lettings (4 to 6 weeks)
- ASB and complaints (within a month of closure)



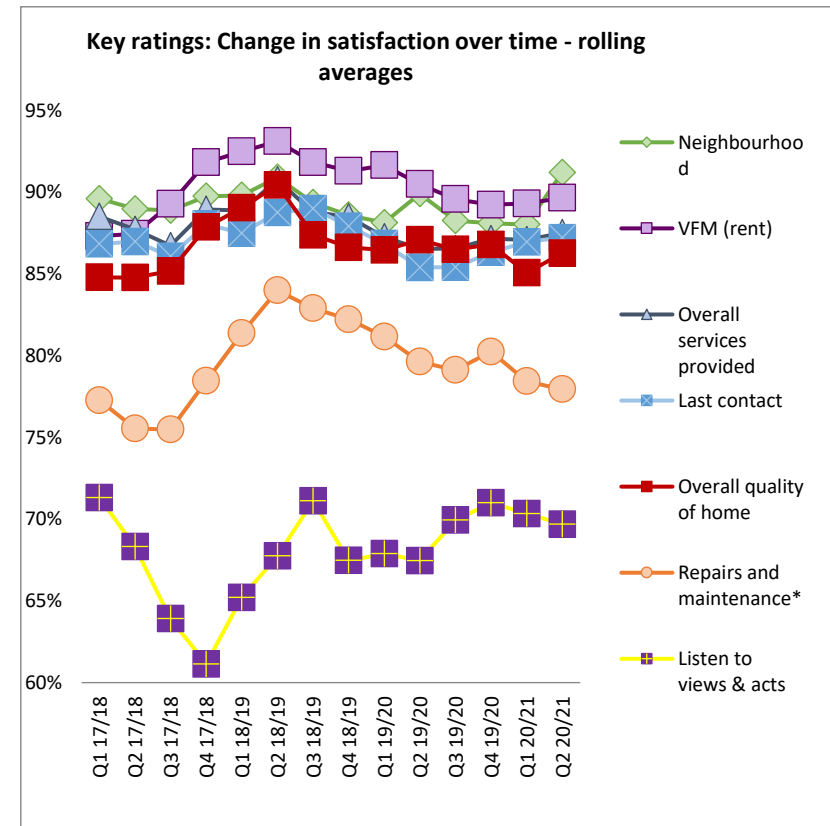
Tracking surveys – STAR surveys

Advantages

- Regular feedback – “finger on the pulse”, fit with reporting cycles
- Flexible questions – hot topics
- Customer recovery is easier due to smaller numbers
- Using rolling averages you can take out fluctuations

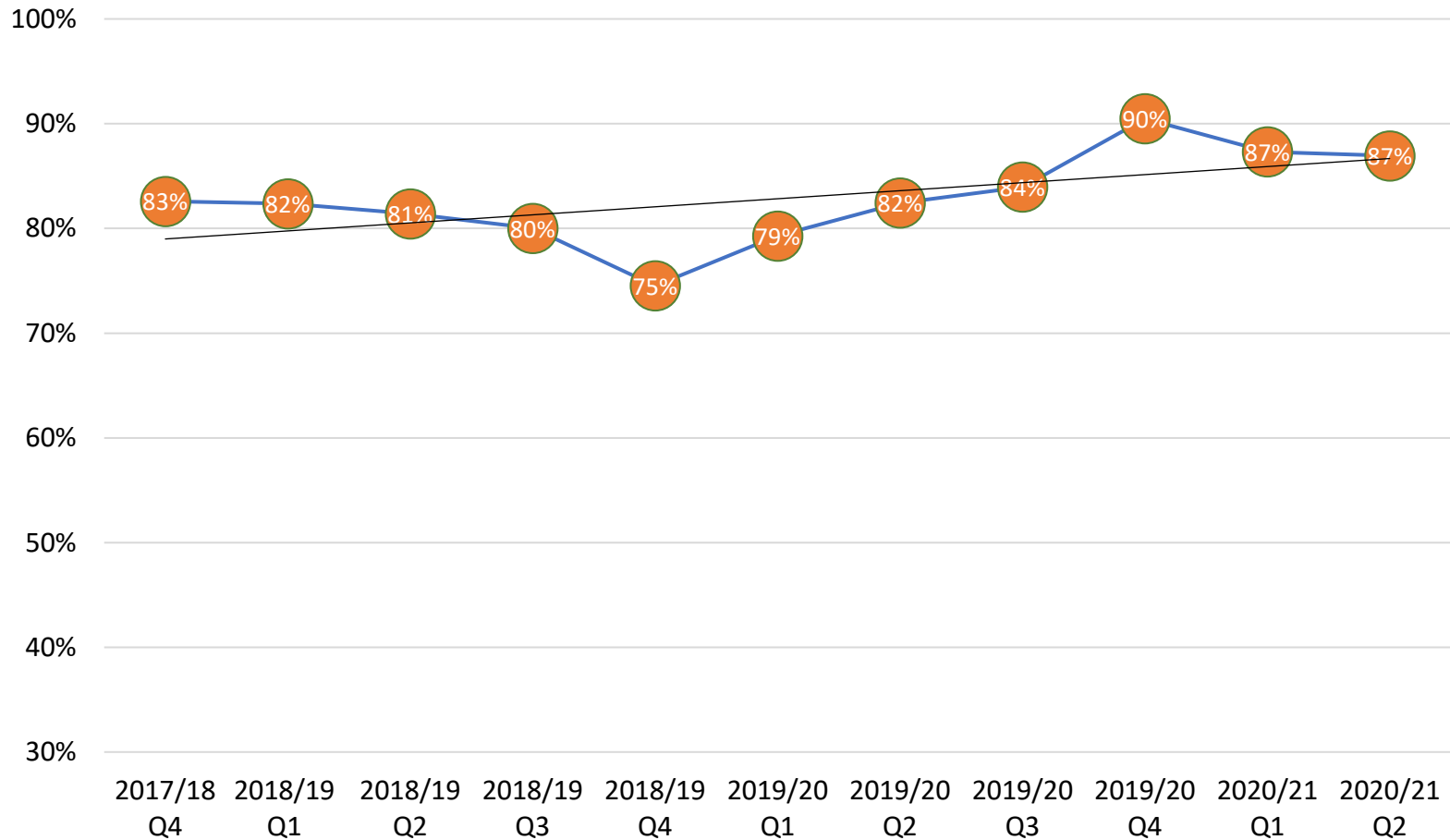
Disadvantages

- Can be slightly more expensive
- Quarterly data is less reliable, danger of knee-jerk reactions, but rolling averages help
- Difficult if under 1,000 residents but not impossible



Tracking surveys – transactional repairs survey

Rolling 12 month average satisfaction with responsive repairs (420 interviews per year)



Customer insight – Open text questions and probing dissatisfaction

Key findings from Deep Dive into Responsive repairs comments

Diagnosis - Listening properly to the issue and then sending the right worker to fix the problem. *“They need to apply the right people and expertise for the right job. For example, they sent out multiple workman to sort out the one job”.*

Appointments - Not being able to make appointments at the right times to fit in with work commitments or that they are not kept. Sense that the system is not flexible enough to account for tenants who work and have limited opportunities to take time off. *“They don't consider when we have work. I don't mind taking the time off work, but when I have booked the time off work in the past, they've cancelled or changed it at the last minute.”*

Finishing off work - Times where an inspector has looked at the problem but then the tenant hears nothing further. *“When they come to do repairs, they need to spend more time and make sure the problem is actually fixed. Sometimes, they leave the property; and you have the same problem again. With my boiler and radiator, they came to fix the problem, yet when he left the radiator was still not working and I had to call them back”.*

Difficult contact and communication - Tenants complain that they can wait a long time to get through on the phone to the repairs department but can then be cut off. *“When you call for a repair, it's always “you are fifth in the queue”, and you could stay for one hour on the phone and when you do get to 'number one' they hang up and you have to call back.”*

Waiting too long - A common complaint from tenants is that repairs take too long to complete once reported. Tenants want to know when the job will be done and then expect it to be done properly at that time. *“Respond to jobs quicker. I am still waiting for my bath panel to be replaced. This was six months ago now and I am still waiting”.*

Plumbing - Issues across different trades, but plumbing issues are mentioned more often.

Responsive repairs service (Day to day)

Service

- Operative attitude
- Missed appointment
- Quality of Repair

Policy

- Timescale to complete repairs
- Replace not repair
- Repairs not covered
- More chargeable repairs services

Communication

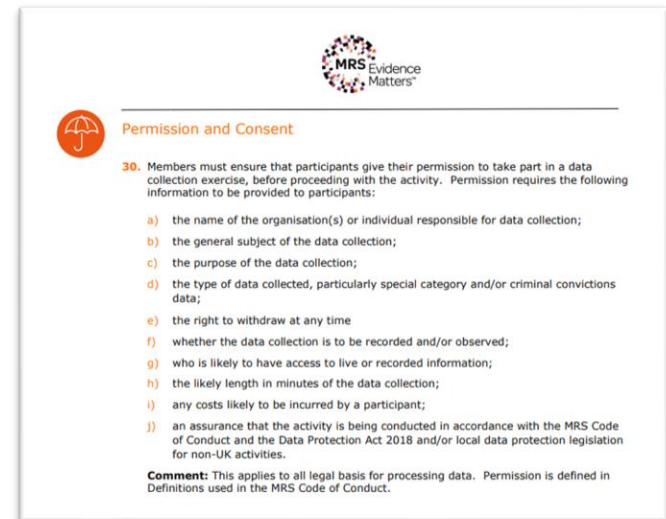
- Communicating appointment times
- Follow up works communication
- Internal communication breakdown
- Communicating service standards
- Ease of reporting repair
- Insufficient job details shared with operatives
- Returning calls

Informing residents, anonymity, legitimate interest, storing data and customer recovery

- Legitimate interest to carry out surveys
- Privacy policy

When carrying out a survey

- MRS code of conduct - clear information
- Confidentiality and anonymity
- Contract with market research companies (sub-contractor)
- Customer recovery
- Access to the results



MRS Evidence Matters

Permission and Consent

30. Members must ensure that participants give their permission to take part in a data collection exercise, before proceeding with the activity. Permission requires the following information to be provided to participants:

- a) the name of the organisation(s) or individual responsible for data collection;
- b) the general subject of the data collection;
- c) the purpose of the data collection;
- d) the type of data collected, particularly special category and/or criminal convictions data;
- e) the right to withdraw at any time
- f) whether the data collection is to be recorded and/or observed;
- g) who is likely to have access to live or recorded information;
- h) the likely length in minutes of the data collection;
- i) any costs likely to be incurred by a participant;
- j) an assurance that the activity is being conducted in accordance with the MRS Code of Conduct and the Data Protection Act 2018 and/or local data protection legislation for non-UK activities.

Comment: This applies to all legal basis for processing data. Permission is defined in Definitions used in the MRS Code of Conduct.

Permission & confidentiality

34 Anon HA would welcome the opportunity to see your individual answers and comments. Would you therefore be happy for your individual responses to be attributed to you when being passed back to Anon HA? Tick one box only

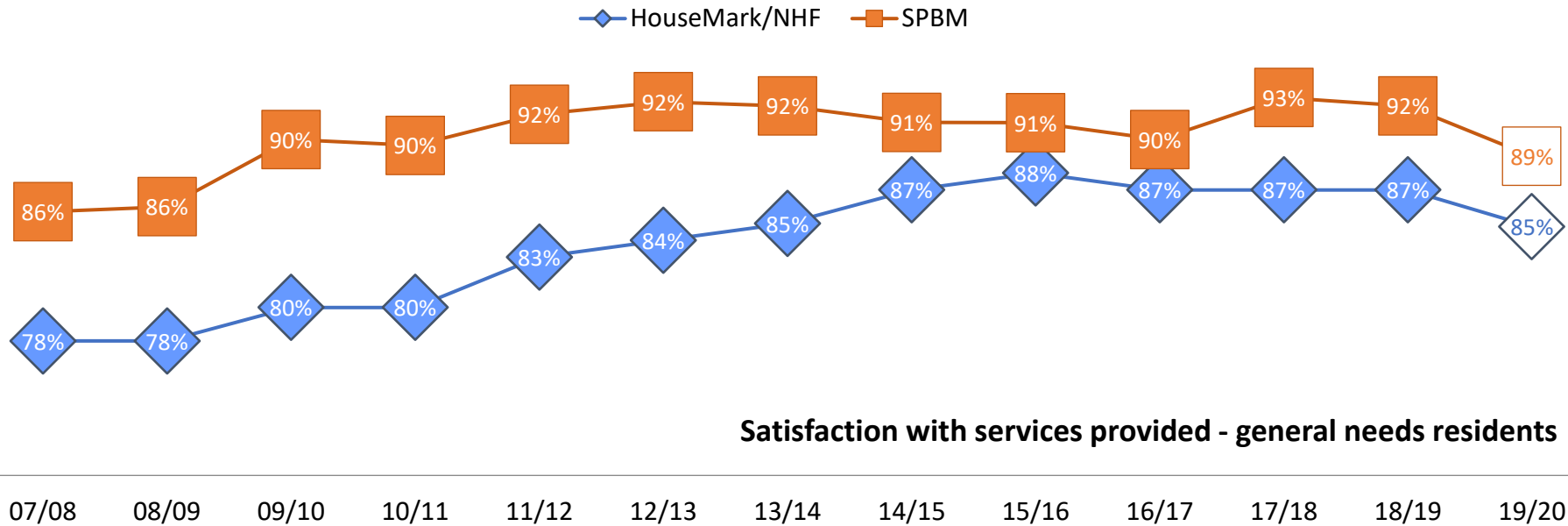
Yes No

35 Are you happy for Anon HA to contact you regarding any information you have provided in this survey? Tick one box only

Yes No

Any questions?

Satisfaction levels over time



Satisfaction with services provided - general needs residents

2019/20 Lower satisfaction scores are becoming common - why?

- ❖ Decline in service / offer?
- ❖ Change in resident population?
- ❖ Higher expectations?
- ❖ Difficult operating environment?
- ❖ Mood of the country / residents – EU/Brexit, general election, climate crisis, cuts to local authority services, Trust issues - Grenfell etc.?



Impact of COVID-19 on satisfaction surveys

RECAP

Recap

The COVID-19 pandemic

At the onset of the pandemic, some landlords paused satisfaction surveys to focus on core service delivery. Others proceeded surveys for two reasons:

- Gather invaluable feedback on resident perception of landlord during crisis
- Mechanism to gather intelligence on resident vulnerability

Improved satisfaction in times of crisis

Landlords who carried out satisfaction surveys during this period reported results that were on average 8% higher than their previous survey.

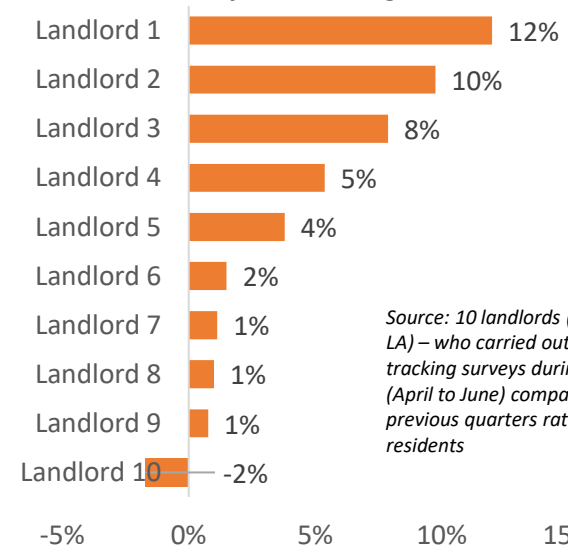
This reflects:

- Historic trend of increased satisfaction with key public service providers in times of crisis
- Suspension of routine repairs service delivery (often a cause of dissatisfaction)
- Significant efforts landlords made to contact and support residents during this period.

Acuity found:

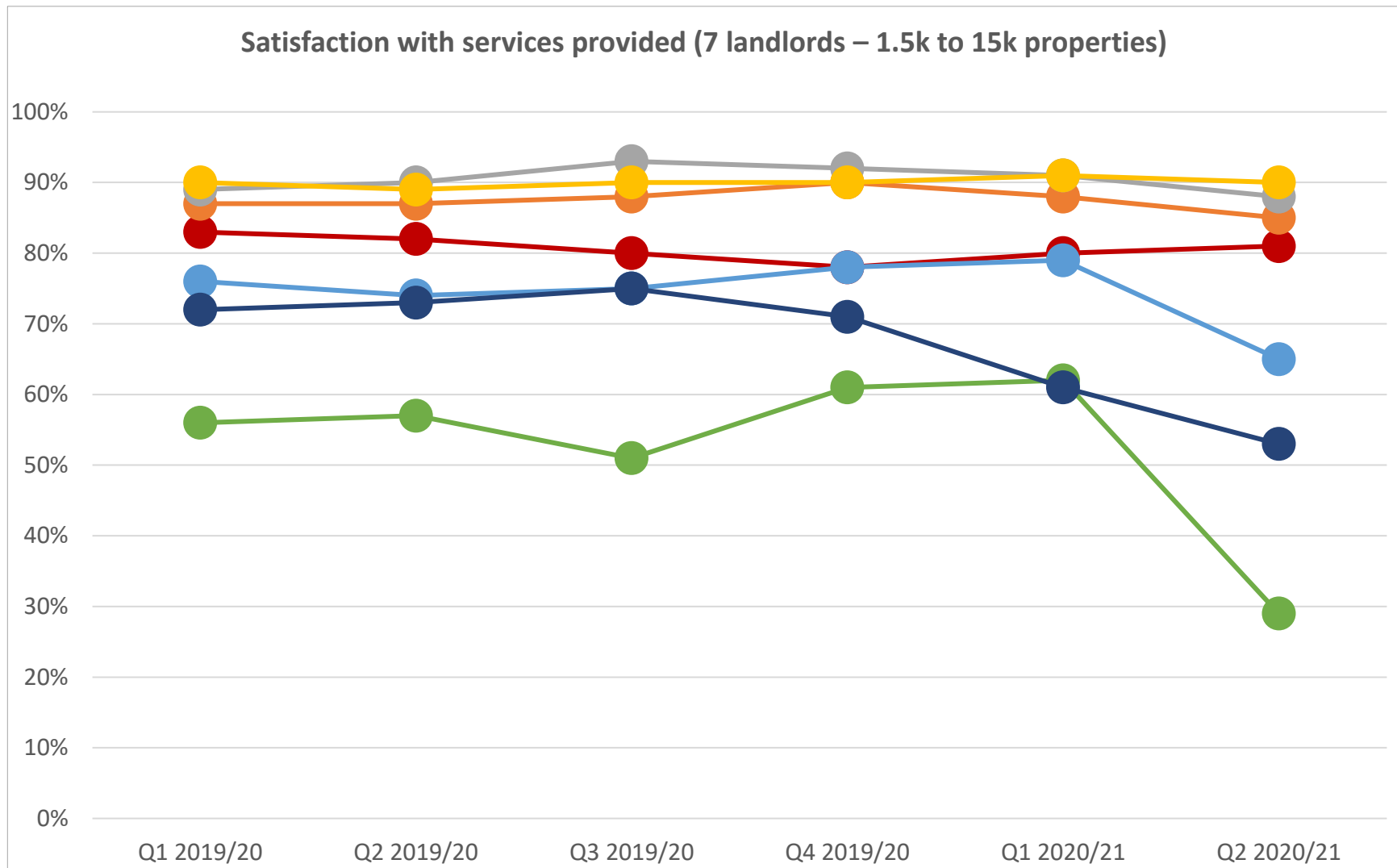
- ❖ Evidence suggests residents highly satisfied with landlord's response to pandemic and measures put in place
- ❖ Satisfaction levels are looking higher than “normal”
- ❖ ASB has been an issue for some residents
- ❖ Concern from some landlord's gains may be lost as landlords tackle repairs backlog

STAR Tracker Surveys - Percentage increase



Source: 10 landlords (9 HAs and 1 LA) – who carried out STAR tracking surveys during lockdown (April to June) compared to previous quarters rating, 2979 residents

Impact of COVID-19 on satisfaction surveys



- HouseMark STAR (voluntary best practice framework)
- Landlords will be able to access 20/21 results soon
- HouseMark full guides + STAR ratings – still to be released
- Latest analytical tools (work in progress)
- White paper and consumer standards



Looking to the future - What next?

- Increasing use of digital surveys
- Telephone interviews gaining traction (over postal surveys)
- More regular surveys / real time feedback
- Most clients have re-started their tracking surveys
- Some postal surveys have been put back to next year
- COVID-19 questions in many surveys
- 2021 Census – some demographic questions have changed slightly (<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2020/560/schedule/2/made/d/ata.pdf>)
- Emerging themes – identifying vulnerable residents, contact preferences, feedback on how services are now delivered, organisational values, Green Agenda
- 2020/21 Satisfaction levels – anyone's guess!





Any questions?

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Thank you!

And do drop me an email if there is anything else you would like me to cover in any future session.