

Brent Star Survey Report 2020

Written by Brent Housing Management and the Performance Insight and Improvement Service

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Introduction

The STAR survey is a perception based survey, established by HouseMark to measure tenants and leaseholders views, impressions and opinions about their landlord and the services it delivers. Surveys are usually carried out every two years.

The survey was open from 11th August 2020 to the 16th November 2020. 1,198 surveys were completed in this year's survey either over the phone or online via SmartSurvey. This was comprised of 684 tenants and 514 leaseholders.

For 2020 there were changes to the methodology. Specifically, in 2018 a five point satisfaction scale was mostly used whilst 2020 used ten point happiness scales. This decision was taken so the service could pin point those in the middle as leaning towards satisfied or dissatisfied. To compare results, the 2018 and 2020 scales have been converted to three groups, unhappy, neutral and happy, in line with HouseMark methodology.

For 2018 the following responses were classified as follows:

Quite or Very dissatisfied = Unhappy

Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied = Neutral

Quite or Very satisfied = Happy

For 2020 the following responses were classified as follows:

1, 2, 3, 4 = Unhappy

5, 6 = Neutral

7, 8, 9, 10 = Happy

Overview of the STAR 2020 results

The overall satisfaction slide provides a good overview of the detail in all the other slides: there has been a move to 'neutral', and this tends to have been a move from 'happy'. There are more increases in 'unhappy' than 'happy' although those increases tend to be small.

This is generally true for both key groups – leaseholders and tenants even though:

- They receive a different service (BHM collects rent and provides full landlord services for tenants, but leaseholders are responsible for their own their home and BHM interactions focus more on external areas, communal repairs and major works), and
- They have have different expectations of BHM, and therefore, their perceptions are usually less positive than tenants even when the service and cost is the same, e.g. service charges.

As with all perception surveys some findings will require more investigation, for example:

- Slide 25 (how happy are you with your neighbourhood) shows a 10% move from 'happy' to 'neutral', but Slide 26 (has your neighbourhood improved or declined) shows a 5% (Tenants) and 15% (Leaseholders) increase in those who think their neighbourhood has stayed the same or improved
- Slides 14 and 15 show that people's perceptions of 'the quality of their homes' are not based solely on the physical 'bricks and mortar' but often focus more on other aspect e.g. outside spaces, the people who also live there and the customer services they receive

However, the detailed results still provide clear messages about what needs to improve and drive the action plan:

- For tenants these are: keeping people informed (communication), helpfulness of staff (customer service), complex repairs and visibility on estates.
- For leaseholders these are: keeping people informed (communication), helpfulness of staff (customer service), communal repairs and cost of planned works.

Brent Housing Management highlights - 2020

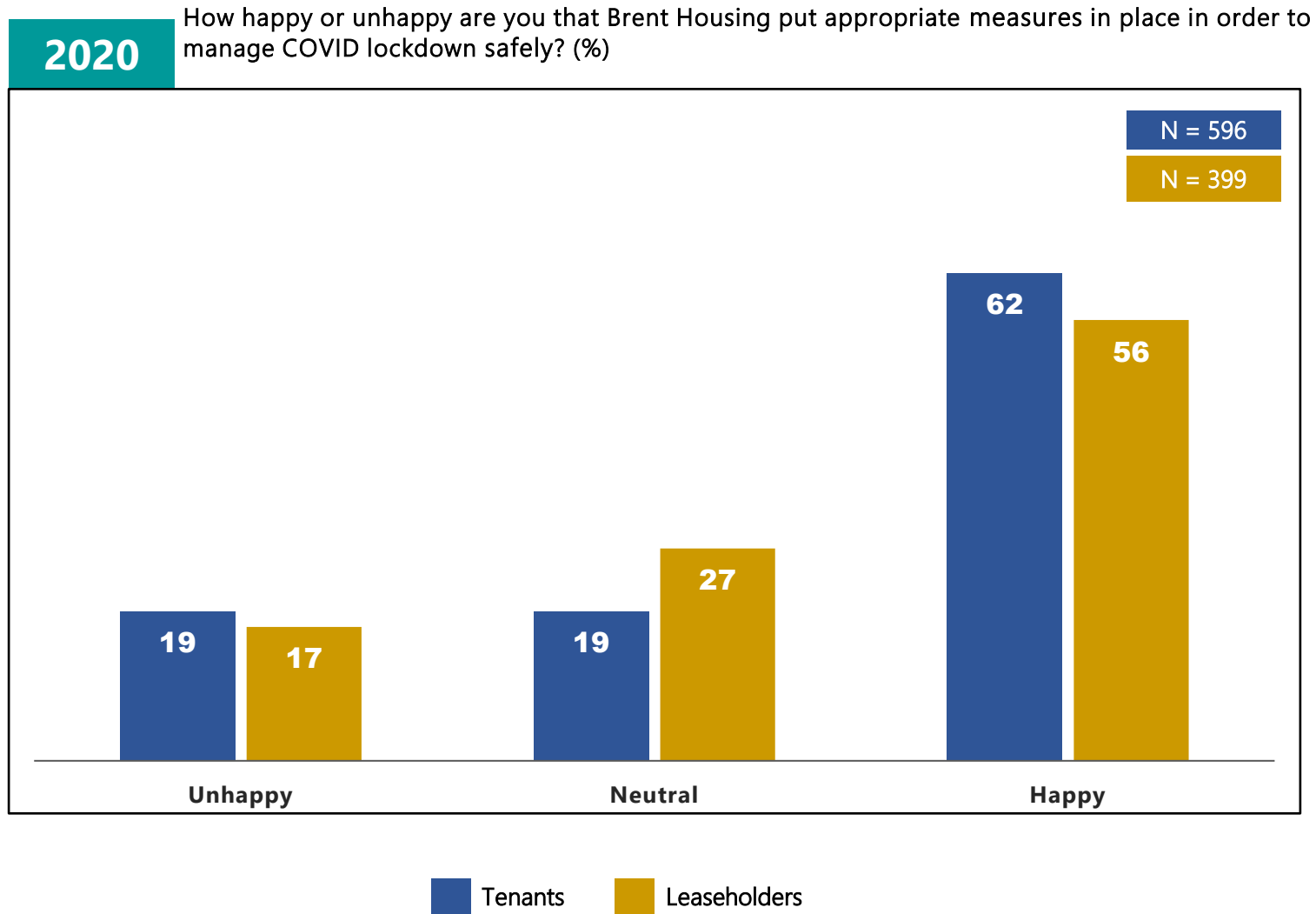
When reflecting on the achievements of the BHM since the survey was undertaken previously in 2018, it is apparent there has been too much focus on areas which do not have a significant impact on perception of the service:

1. Whilst perception has remained the same, the **estate caretaking service** saw a dramatic reduction in the time it takes **to resolve a case in 11 days** (on average) compared to 76 days (on average) under Wettons. This is despite the pressures of Covid-19.
2. All residents in high rise blocks were contacted and **Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans** completed – the approach **now being used** by the LFB **as good practice** for other London Boroughs.
3. Gained approval from Cabinet to end the use of fixed term tenancies and introduce a guaranteed level of security for residents through **life-time tenancies**.
4. Supported an additional **204 households who fell into arrears** during the covid-19 pandemic to access support and advice.
5. Continued to **deliver a full repairs service** throughout the pandemic, providing reassurance to residents on safety measures introduced by contractors and maintained a **high transactional satisfaction** score currently at **86% YTD**.
6. The service **continued** to build upon previous years commitment **to invest in homes**;
 - 789 homes received fire safety and communal decoration works.
 - 133 homes received external fabric refurbishment including new roofs.
 - 1351 homes received an electrical safety inspection and remedial work
7. **Successfully delivered and embedded CRM** across BHM including development of a bespoke rent collection dashboard and for system interface between the contact centre and Wates.

Results: Response to Covid-19

Covid Measures

BHM reacted quickly to the impact of lockdown on residents, by contacting vulnerable residents, taking time during calls to check on well-being and offering financial advice and support. The service received positive feedback throughout the year from residents which is also reflected in the STAR results as shown below.



In the Council wide **Coronavirus Residents Survey**, respondents were asked:

How satisfied or dissatisfied do you feel regarding the services the Council has provided during the pandemic?

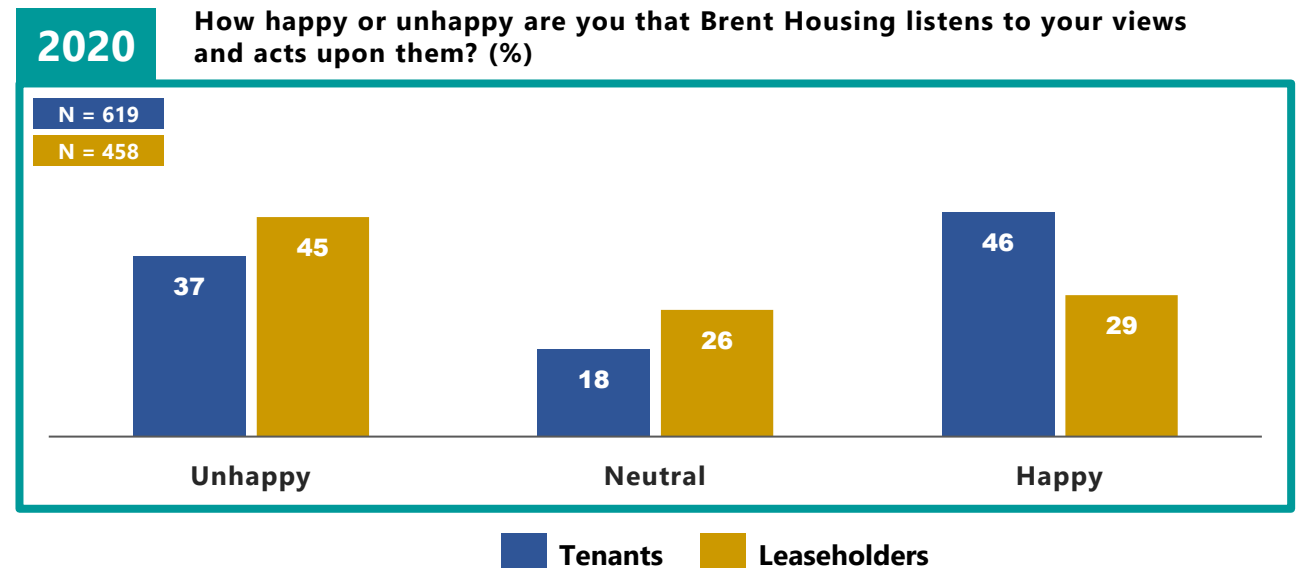
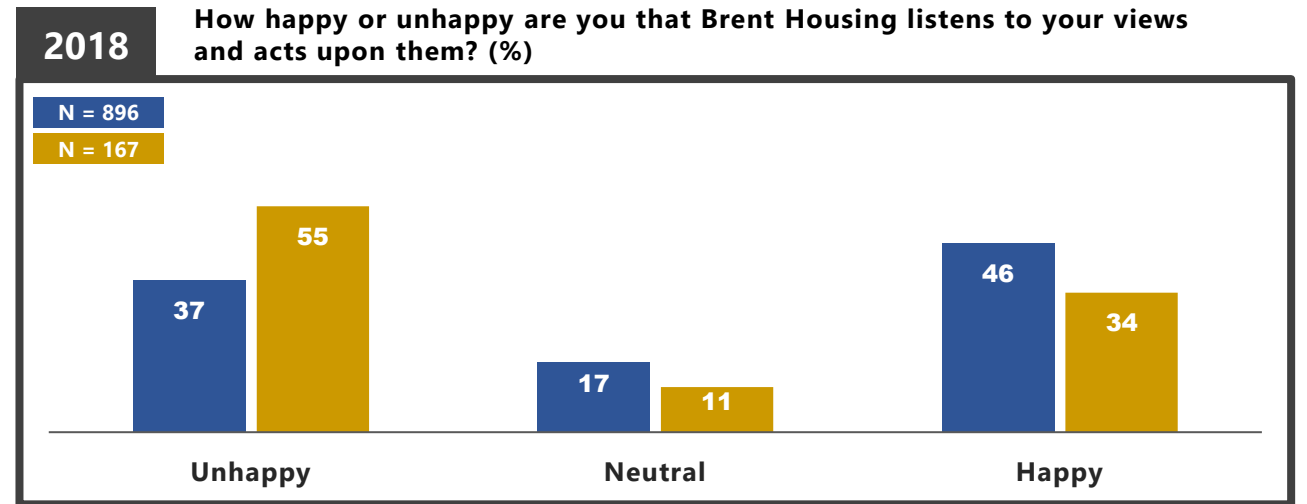
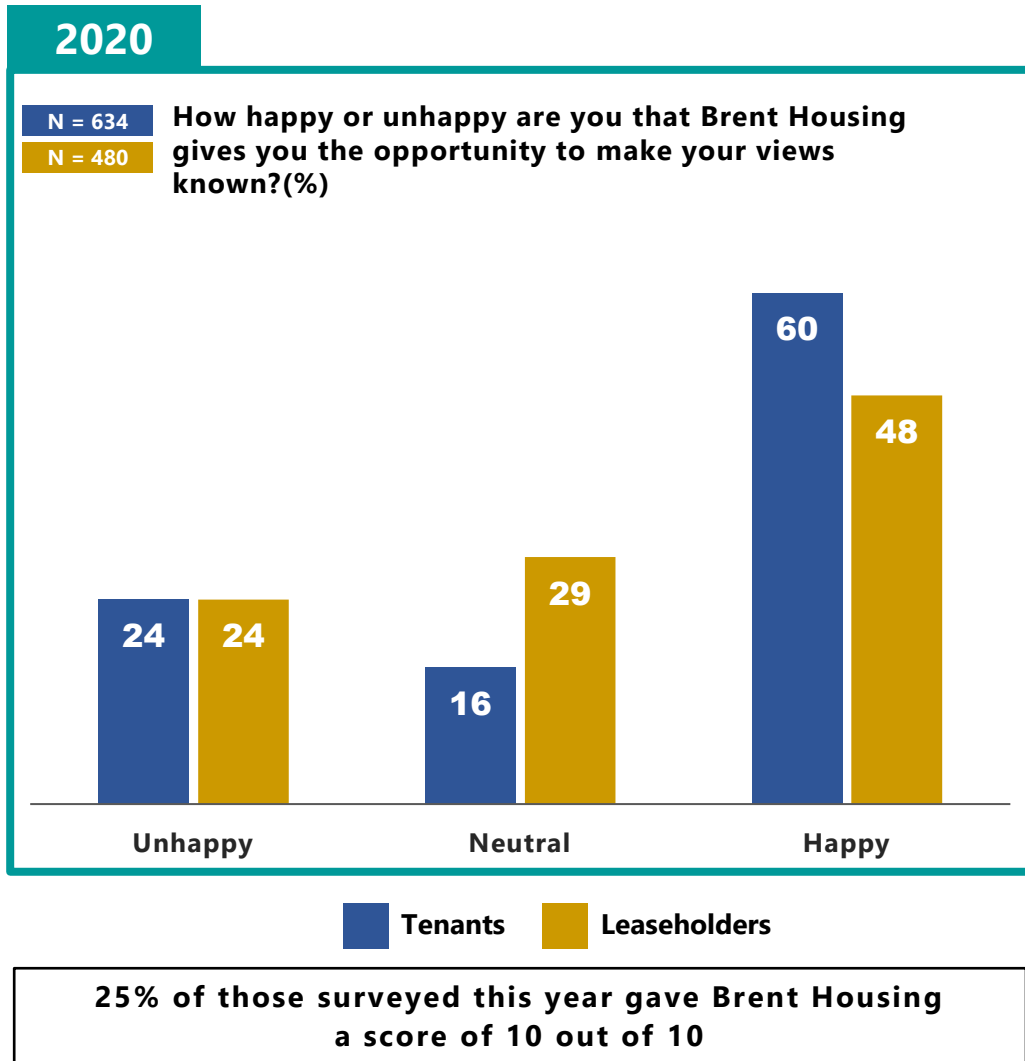
- 40% were Satisfied,
- 42% were Neutral and;
- 18% were Dissatisfied

There were 1,482 responses to that question compared to a total of 995 for BHM.

Results: Contacting Us

Views Listened to and Acted on

BHM has invested in a strong network of resident associations which offers regular forums for both tenants and leaseholders to share their views. Despite these and increase in consultation, tenants satisfaction with their views being listened to and acted on has remained the same. There has however been a slight improvement in leaseholders feeling listened to.

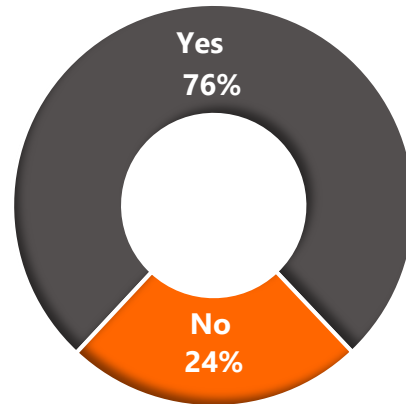


Communication

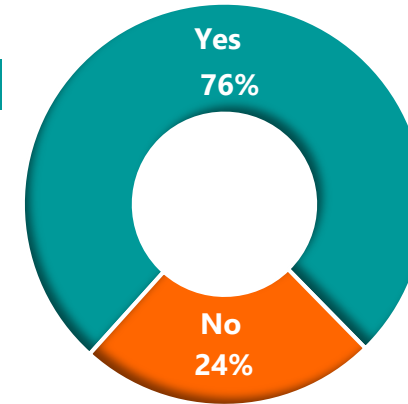
Volumes of contact in 2020 have stayed the same, but there has been a slight increase in channels such as email or via the website. Whilst digital channel usage is increasing, the data shows that resident's experience when using these channels is poorer. The key challenge for this year is to increase use of other channels to provide residents with more flexible access and ensure it is a positive experience.

Have you contacted Brent Housing in the last 12 months? (%)

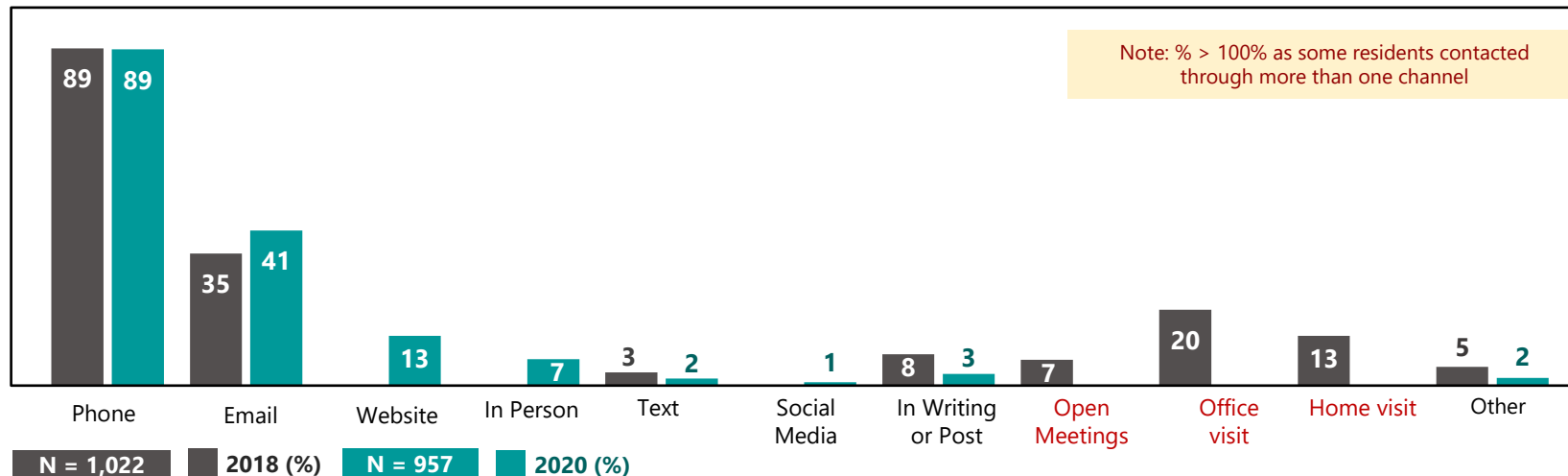
2018
N = 1,137



2020
N = 1,198

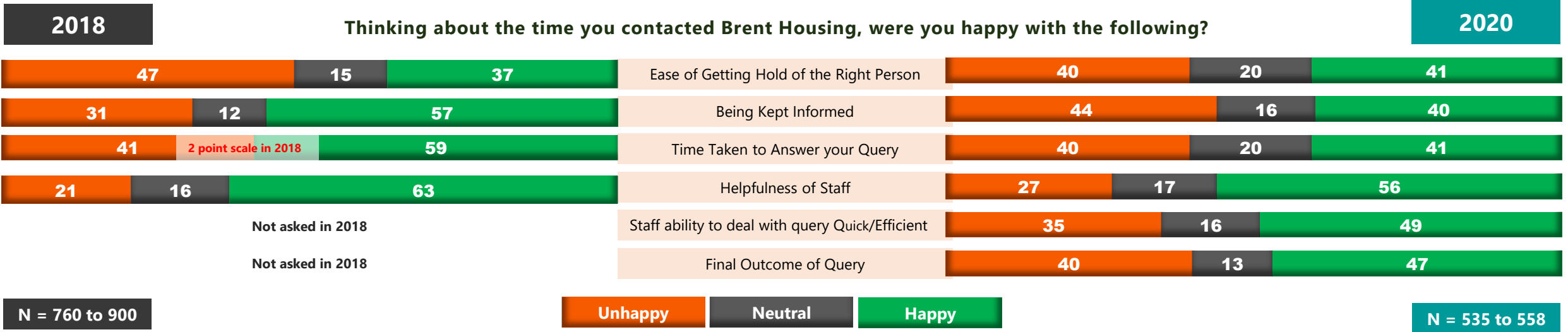
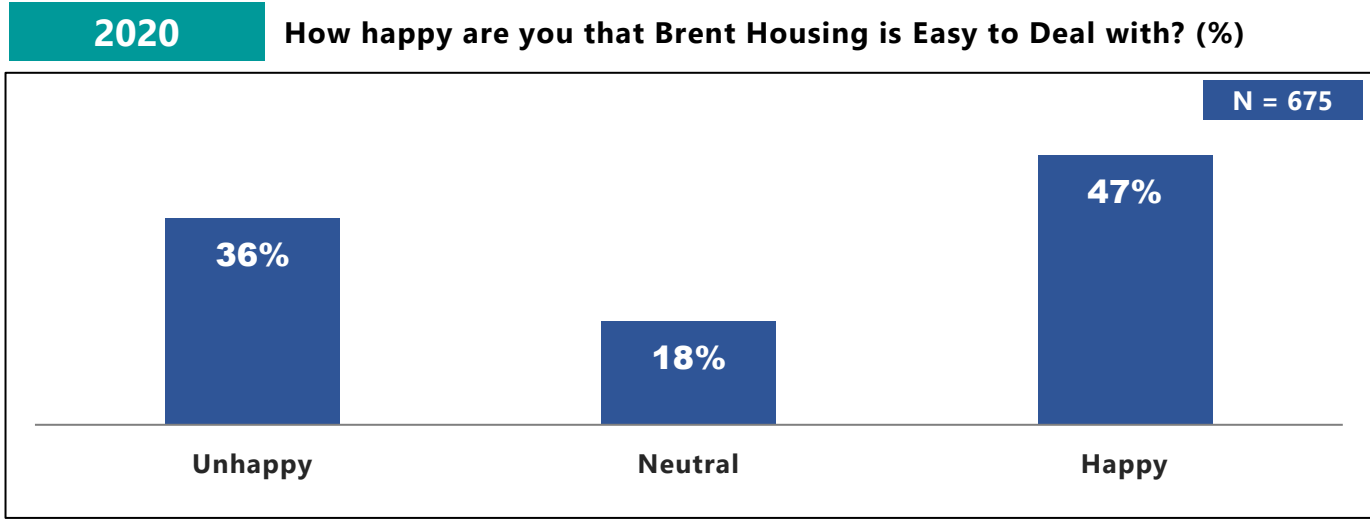


If so how have you contacted us (%)



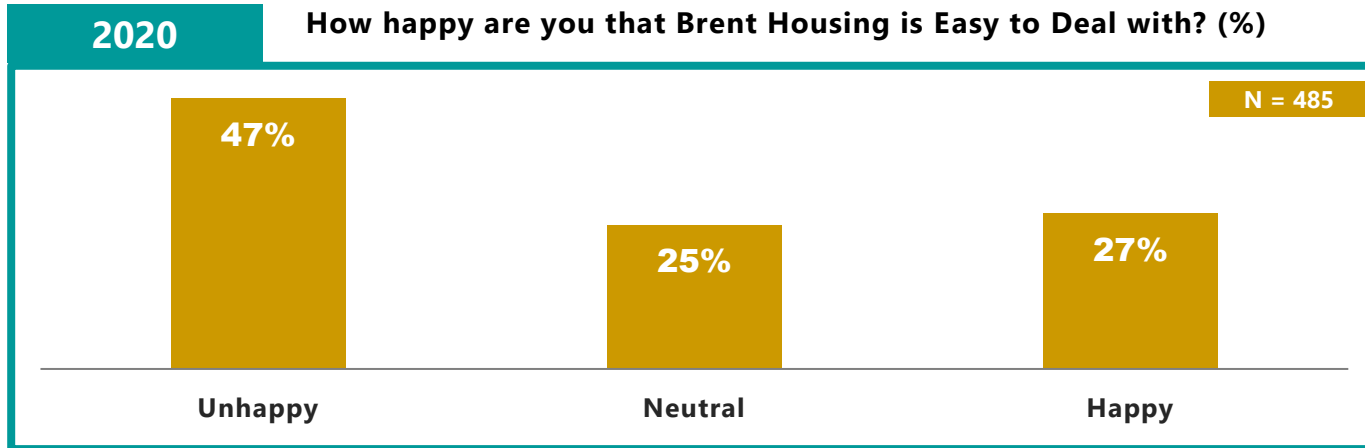
Contacting us: Tenants

More tenants are happy than unhappy that BHM is easy to deal with, but there has been no positive improvement since 2018 and 'being kept informed' and 'helpfulness of staff' have had notable drops. Improving this is a priority, and the key actions are auditing live cases with Housing Officers, launching the housing portal, and using complaints to identify systemic issues e.g. succession cases. The aim is to reduce the percentage of tenants who are unhappy to less than 25%. This target requires the service to work towards a significant reduction in dissatisfaction.



Contacting us: Leaseholders

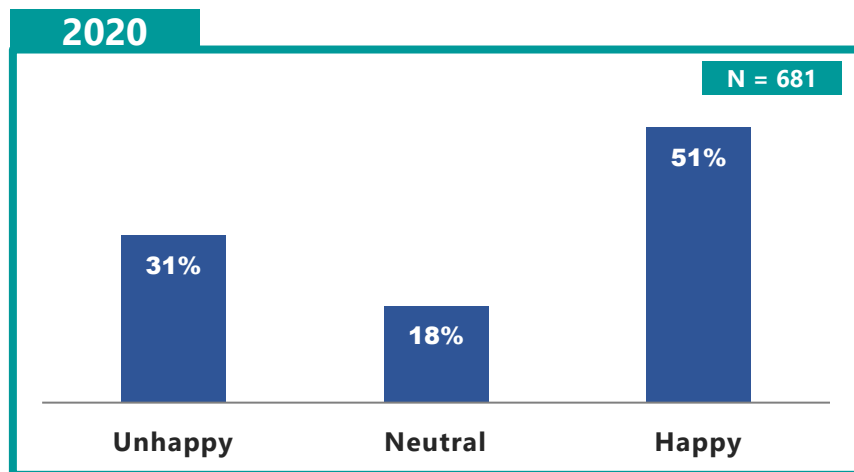
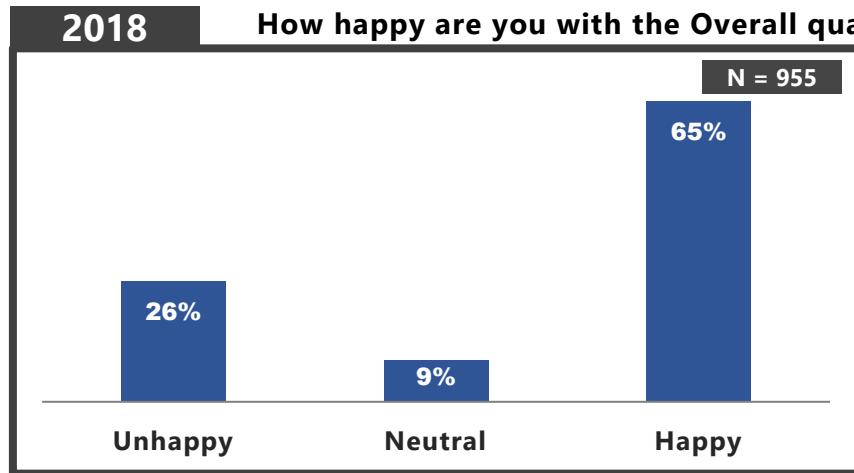
Leaseholder dissatisfaction is higher than tenant dissatisfaction both overall and against individual factors for BHM 'being easy to deal with'. There has been a slight dip across all areas since 2018. The biggest dips are in the same place as for tenants: 'being kept informed' and 'helpfulness of staff'. We think this is driven by the fact that enquiries are complex and usually require more than one team and the way BHM is set up does not respond well to this. The restructure proposes a leaseholder team to provide a clear focus for leaseholders and a clear point of accountability for us. For Leaseholders the aim is to reduce percentage to less than 35%. This takes into consideration that leaseholders are less satisfied generally than tenants.



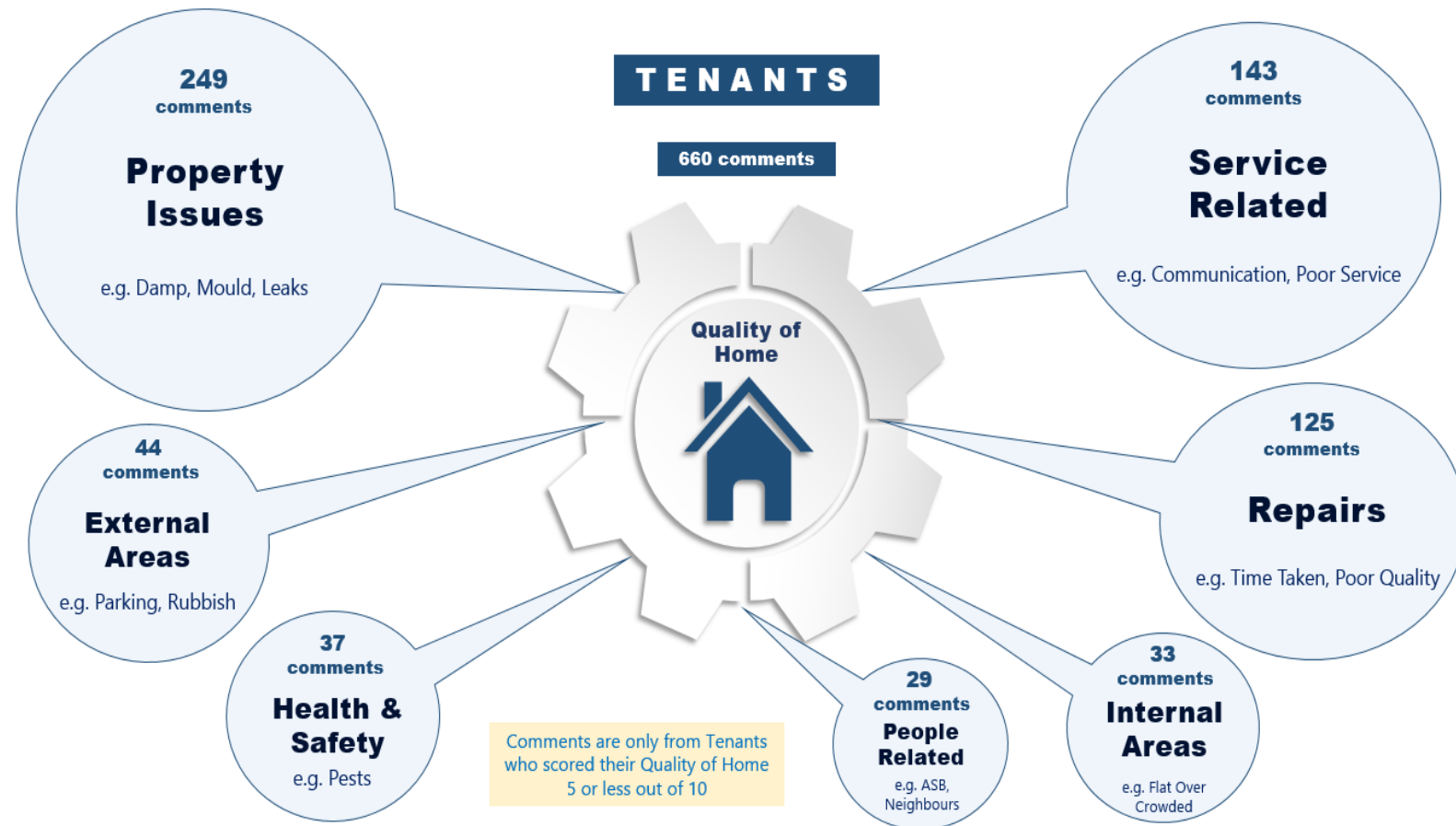
Results: Your Home

Quality of Home: Tenants

There has been a reduction in satisfaction with the quality of home. Analysis of comments shows that how tenants feel about the quality of their home isn't solely based on the physical 'bricks and mortar' but includes other aspect e.g. outside spaces, the people who also live there and the services they receive. We are confident that the actual quality of BHM homes has improved and will continue to improve through the Major Works and Fire Safety Programme, however, not all improvements (e.g. external works) provide tangible benefits to tenants and as such do not influence perception.

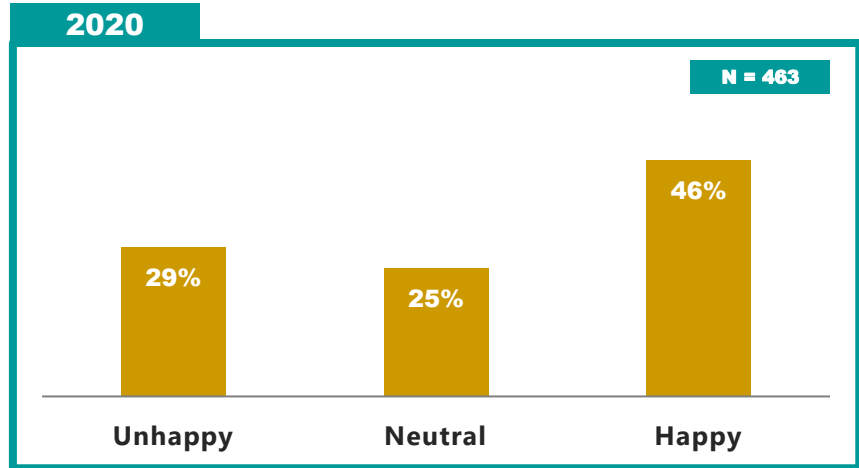
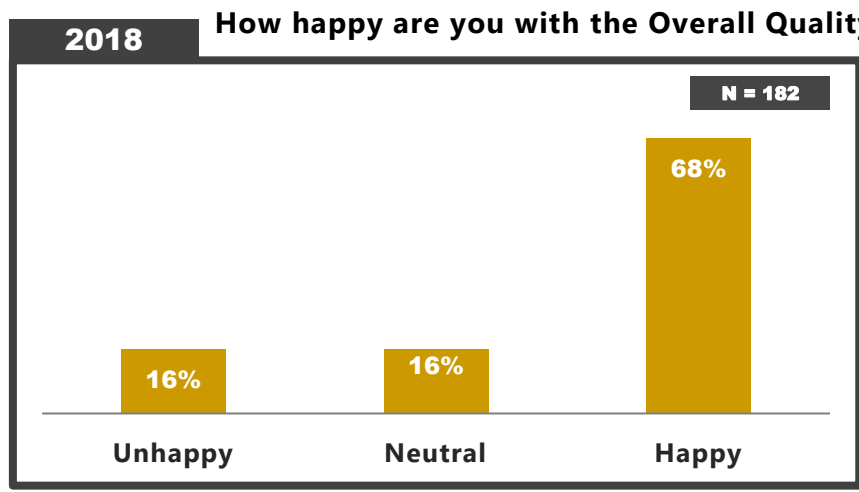


Tenants

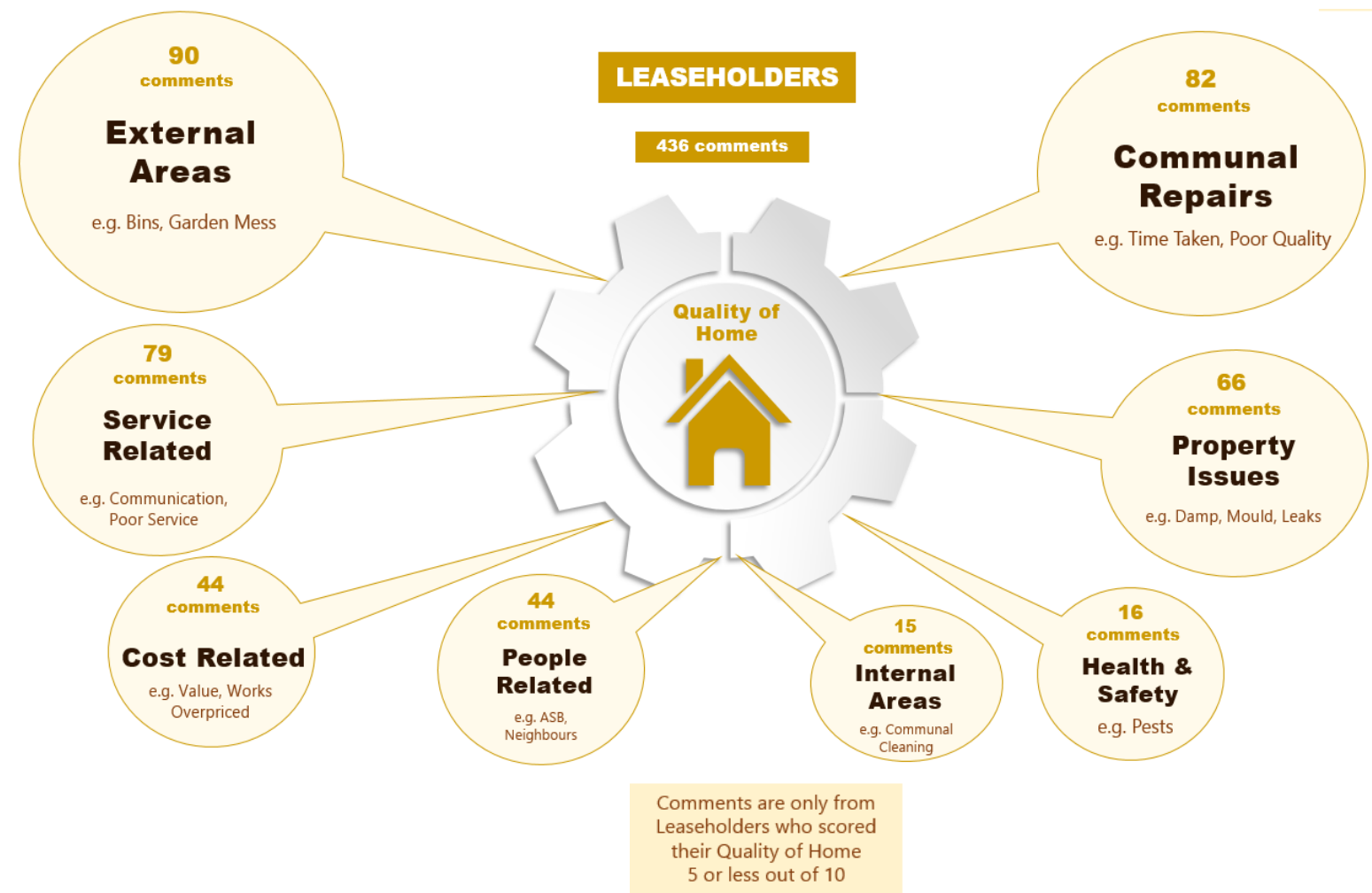


Quality of Home: Leaseholders

Leaseholders are responsible for the maintenance of their own homes. These results are based on how we maintain and invest in communal spaces both internal and external and the physical block. This slide shows again factors such as customer service influence leaseholders perception of the quality of their home, as well as the building itself.



Leaseholders

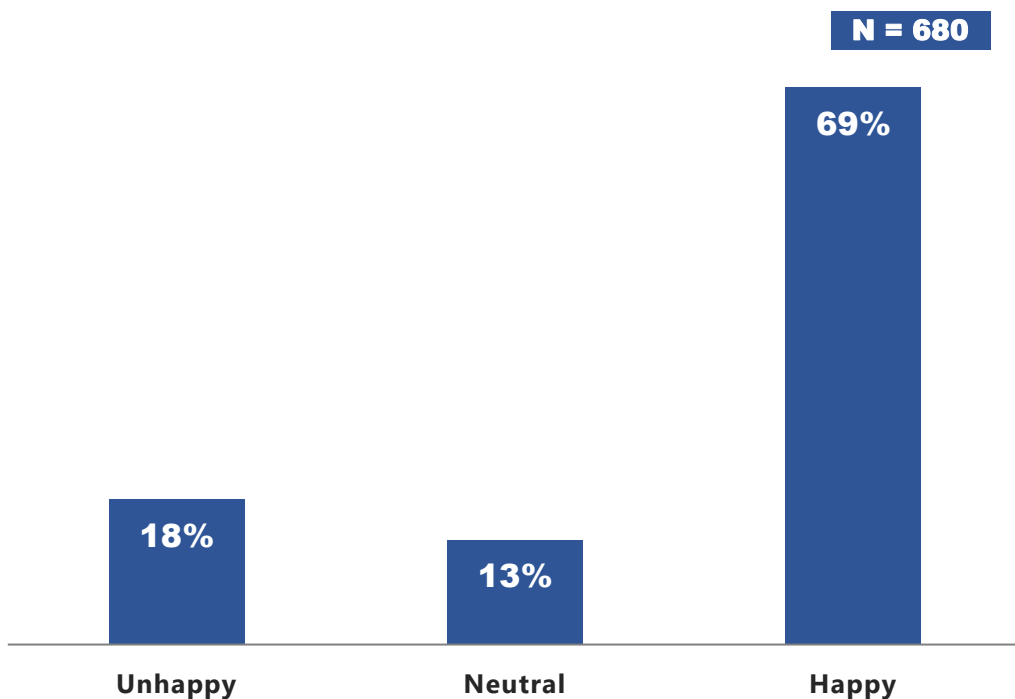


Safety: Tenants

Tenants are happier than leaseholders. BHM has successfully delivered a comprehensive fire safety programme to improve the safety of tenants' homes, the cost of which is covered by their rent, and has put in place Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans for all who need them. The transactional questions shown on the right of the slide, however, show that we need to do more, including to communicate these improvements, which is even more important because of the greater awareness about the risk of fire since Grenfell.

2020

How happy or unhappy are you that Brent Housing provides a home that is Safe and Secure? (%)



29% of Tenants surveyed gave Brent Housing a score of 10 out of 10

The Risk of fire in my home or building is low (%)



Brent takes residents Health and Safety seriously (%)



Disagree Neutral Agree

Are you happy that you know what to do in the Event of a Fire? (%)



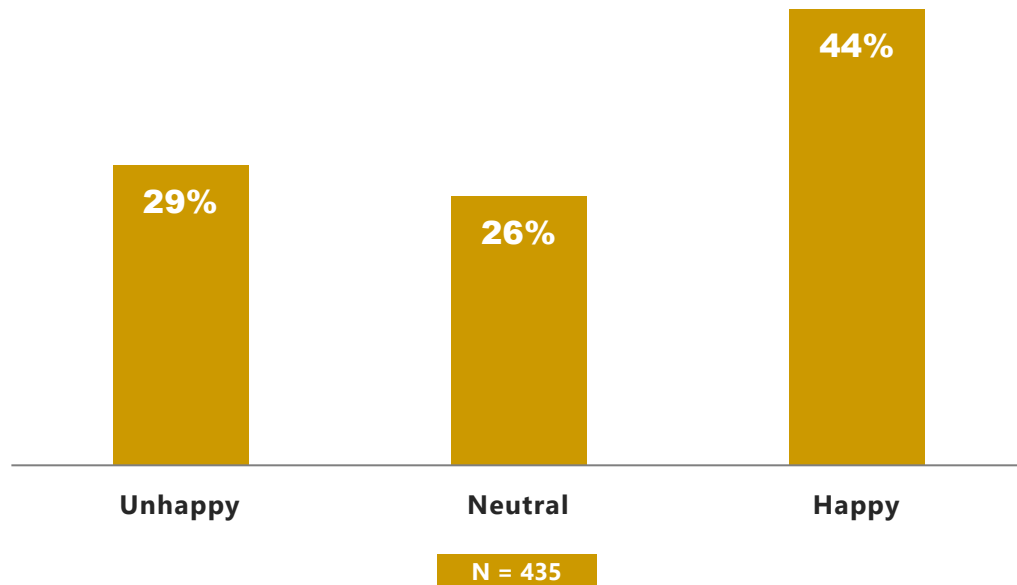
Unhappy Neutral Happy

Safety: Leaseholders

Leaseholders are by law responsible for ensuring the required fire safety measures for their home are in place and contribute to block wide fire safety improvements. For this reason there is less day to day engagement with leaseholders, and leaseholders are more likely to live in flats, are probably factors in why leaseholder satisfaction is lower than tenants. To support leaseholders we have developed an offer for leaseholder for the Council to replace their fire door and they can spread the payments interest free for a period of 24 months, and through the new leaseholder team we will need to focus on improving leaseholder specific communication relating to safety.

2020

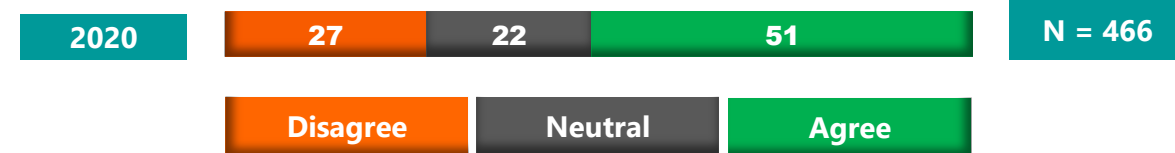
How happy or unhappy are you that Brent Housing provides a home that is Safe and Secure? (%)



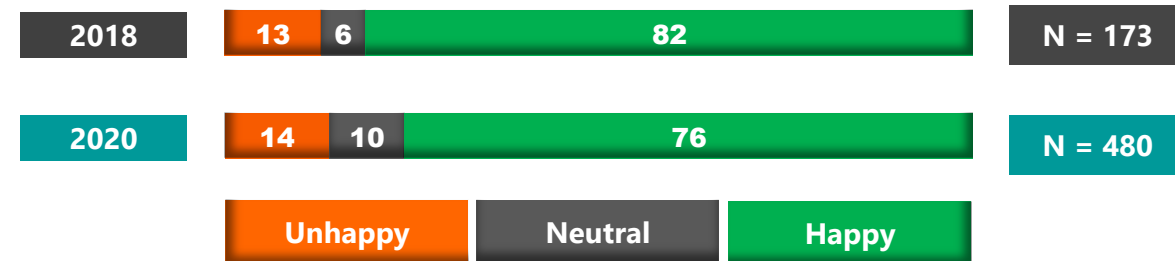
The Risk of Fire in my home or building is low (%)



Brent takes residents Health and Safety seriously (%)



Are you happy that you Know What To Do in the event of a Fire? (%)



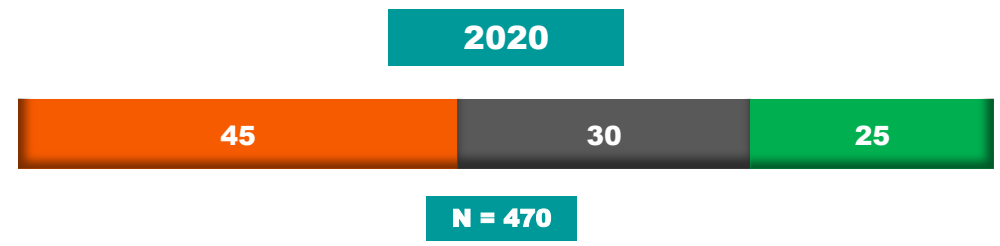
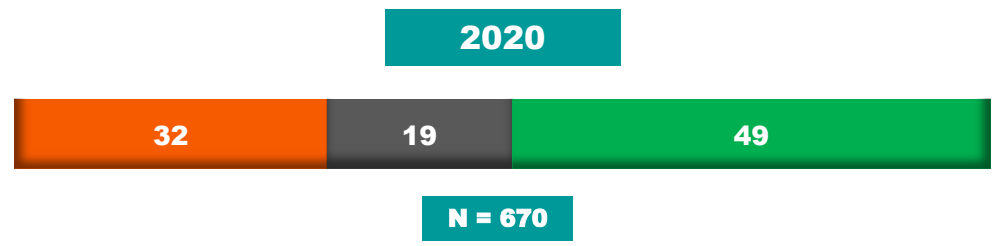
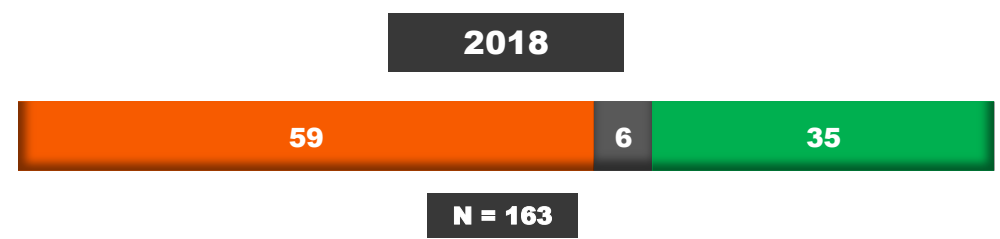
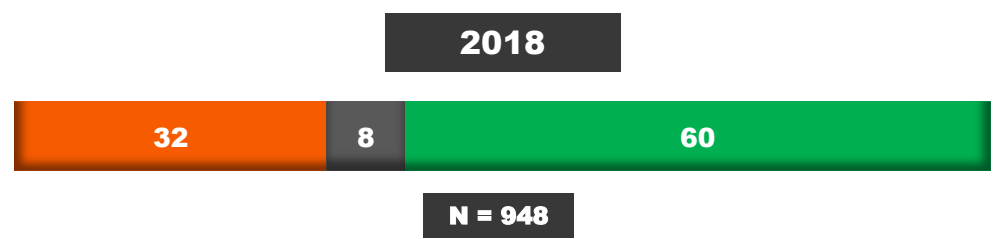
Repairs and Maintenance: Tenants and Leaseholders

Transactional surveys carried out immediately after repairs has shown continuous increases in satisfaction for the past 18 months. This slide shows that the general perception of residents does not match the transactional surveys. Two factors are driving this: this slide reflects perception whether or not they have had a repair recently, and this includes communal repairs, which are not in the core repairs KPI. Therefore, this highlights the need to better communicate improvements, and to focus in the action plan to be on complex and communal repairs – through clear actions and performance reporting.

TENANTS

Generally, how happy are you with the way Brent Housing deals with Repairs and Maintenance? (%)

LEASEHOLDERS

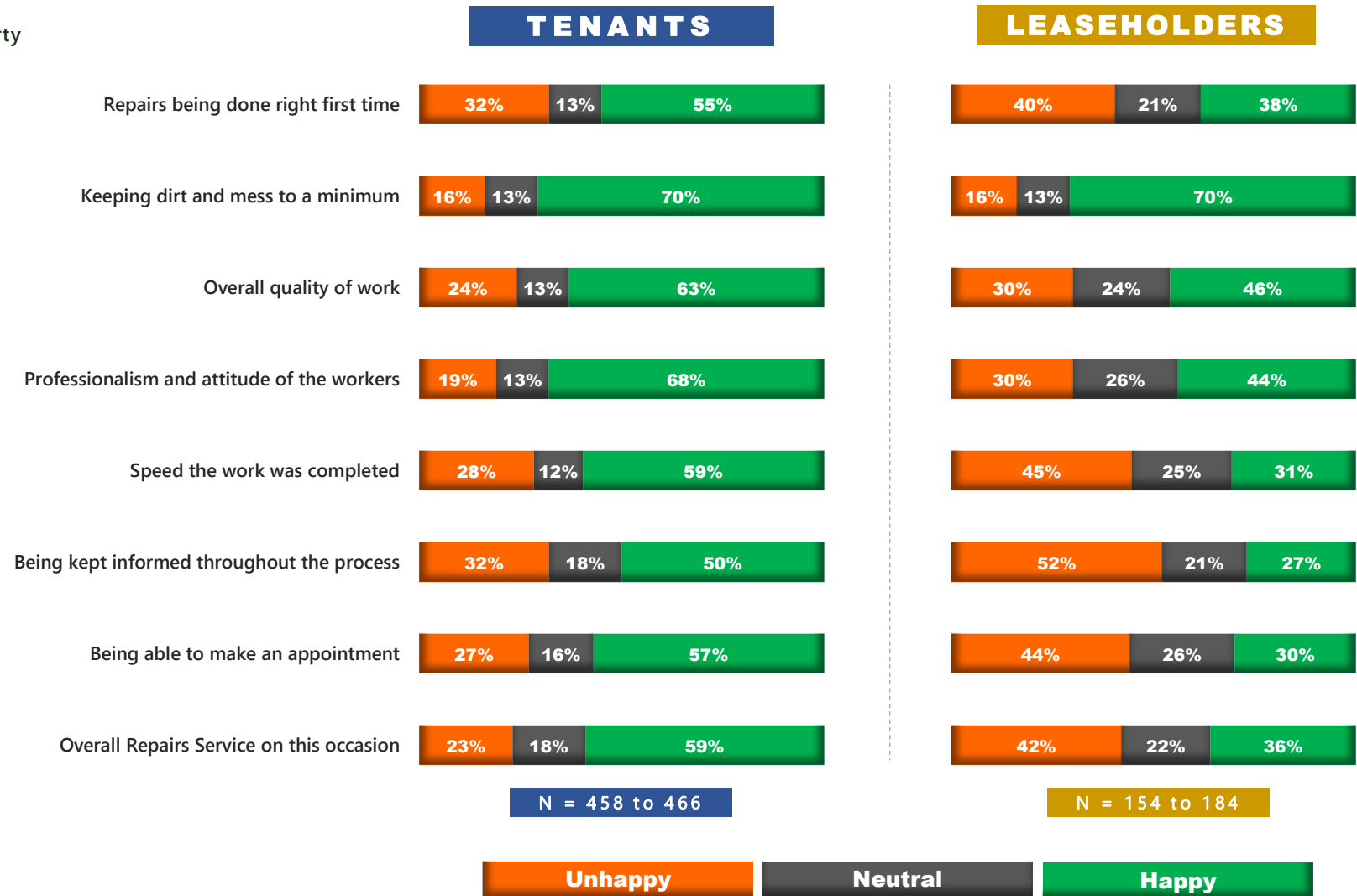
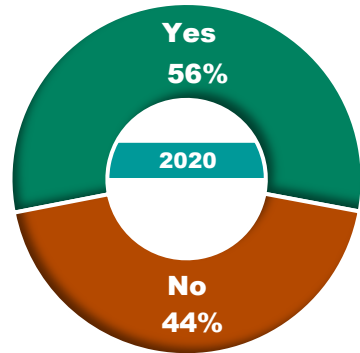


Repairs and Maintenance: Tenants and Leaseholders

This slide shows satisfaction improves when both tenants and leaseholder are asked to reflect on a recent experience rather than their overall perception of the service. 'Being kept informed' is identified as the main area for improvement, again this slide shows the attitude and being respectful by keeping dirt and mess to a minimum received the highest levels of satisfaction. The housing portal will deliver a series of improvement specifically for reporting communal repairs including all residents ability to view communal repairs reported for the block. Again, this slide includes all types of repairs but is more comparable to the transactional surveys completed in year by BHM.

Have you had any repairs carried out in your property in the last 12 months?

N = 1,198



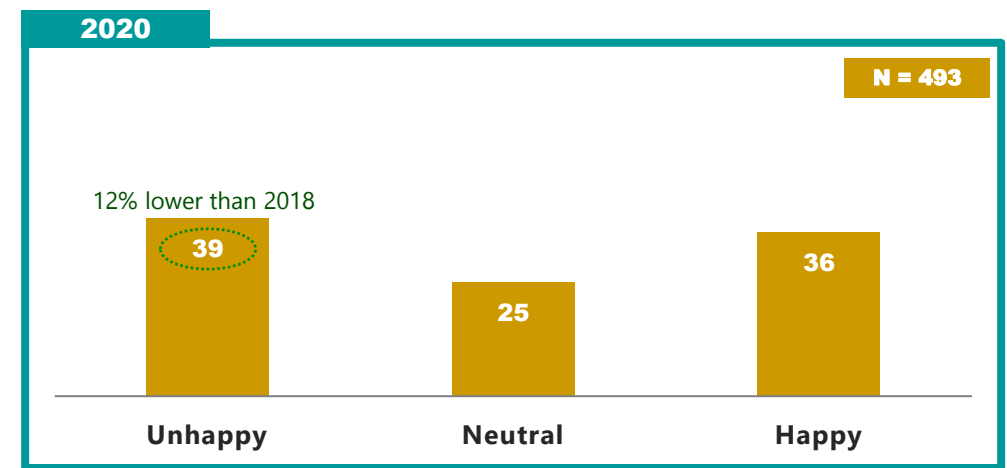
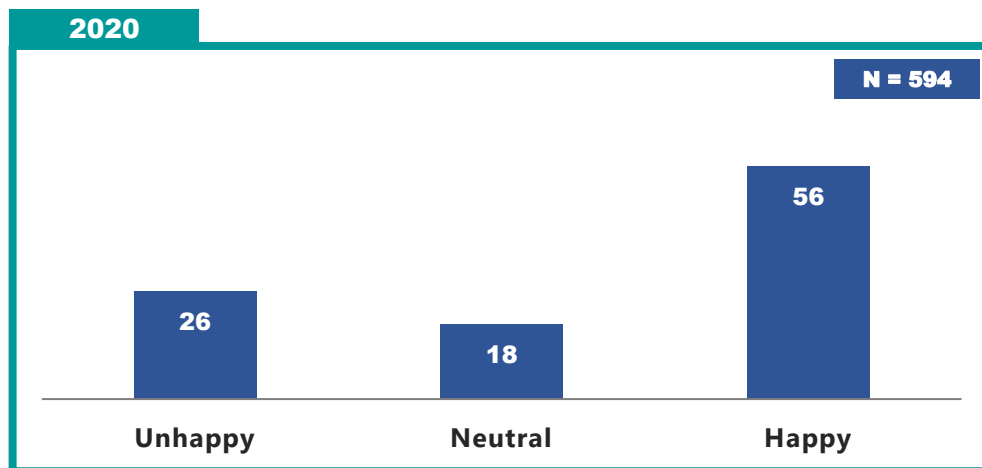
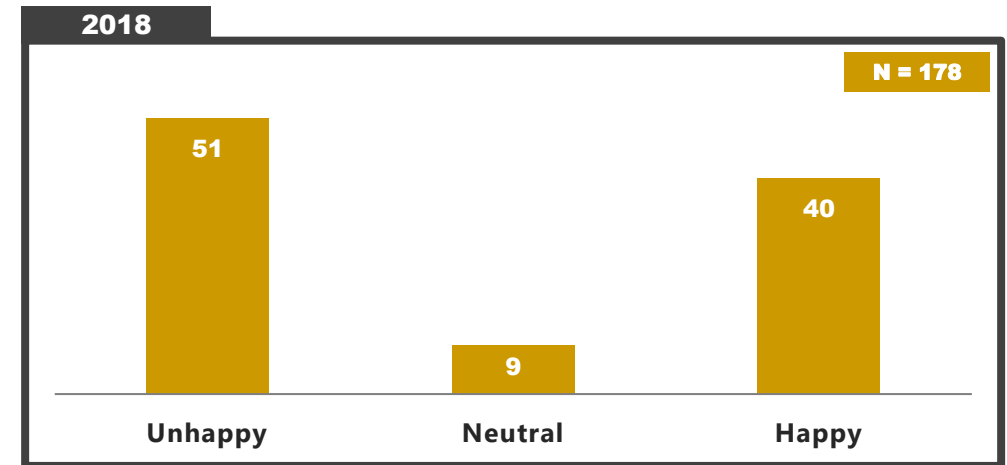
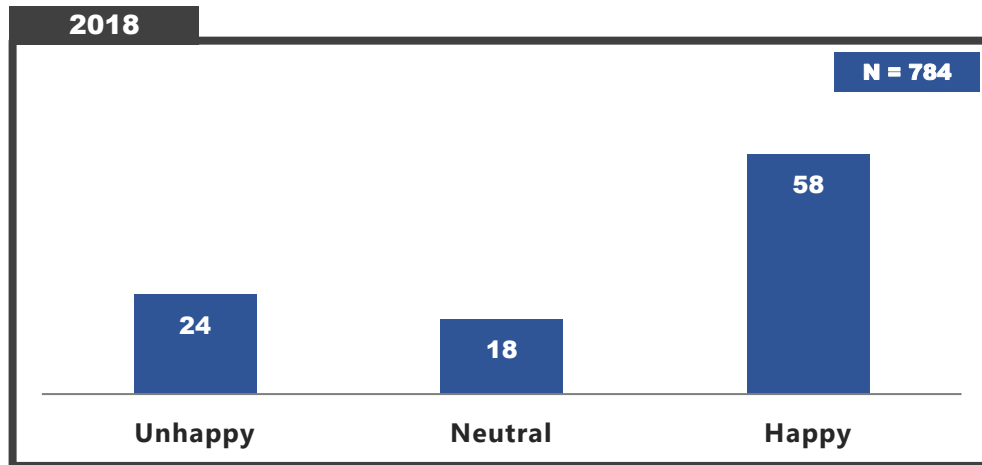
Results: Value for Money

Value for Money: Service Charges (*Tenants and Leaseholders*)

This slide presents tenants and leaseholder satisfaction with service charges side by side because they receive the same service. Despite this, there are higher levels of dissatisfaction for leaseholders than tenants. The main change since 2018 is a slightly positive move from unhappy to neutral for leaseholders, this is despite service charges being increased over the last two years, to move towards full cost recovery.

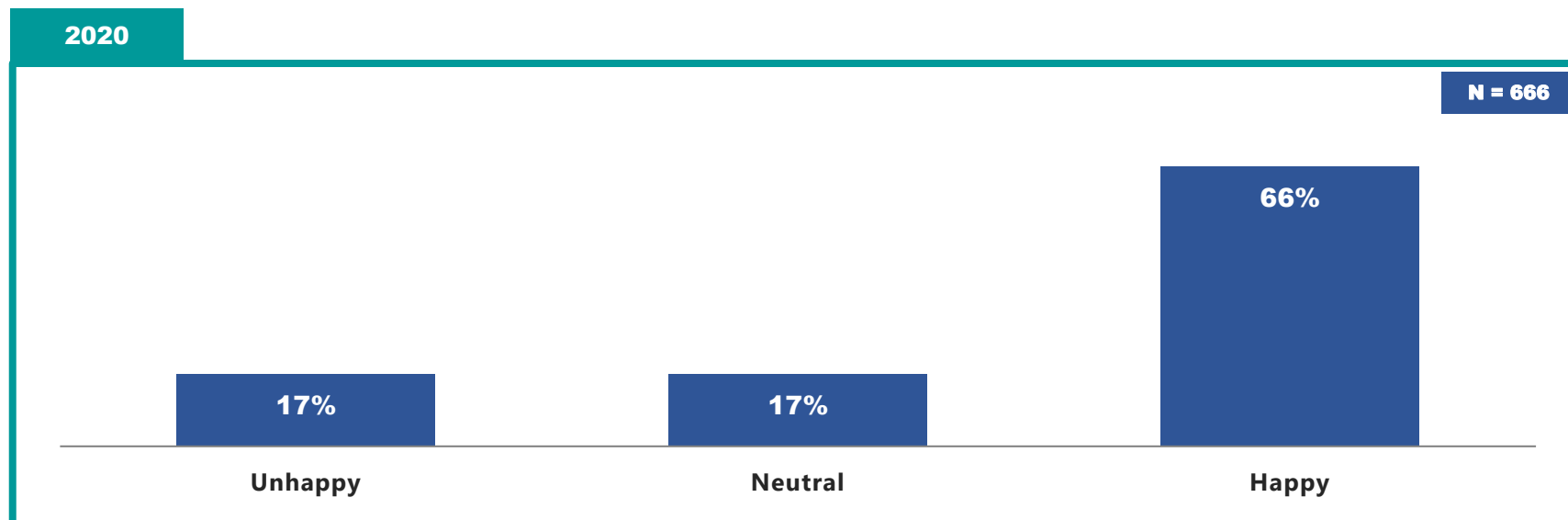
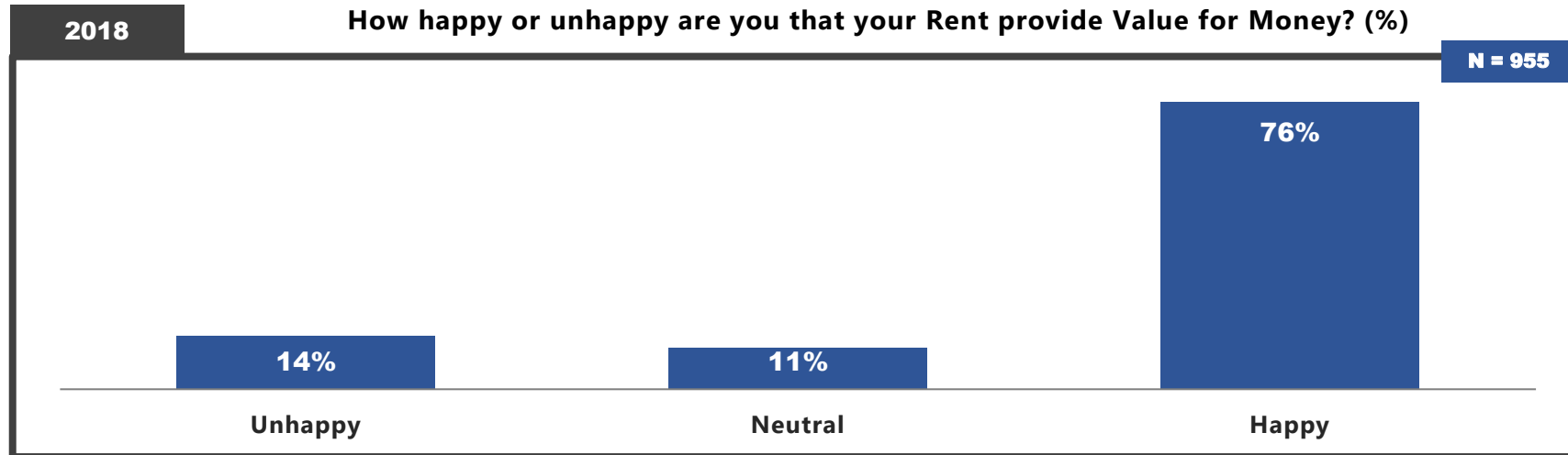
How happy are you that your Service Charge provides Value for Money? (%)

Tenants Leaseholders



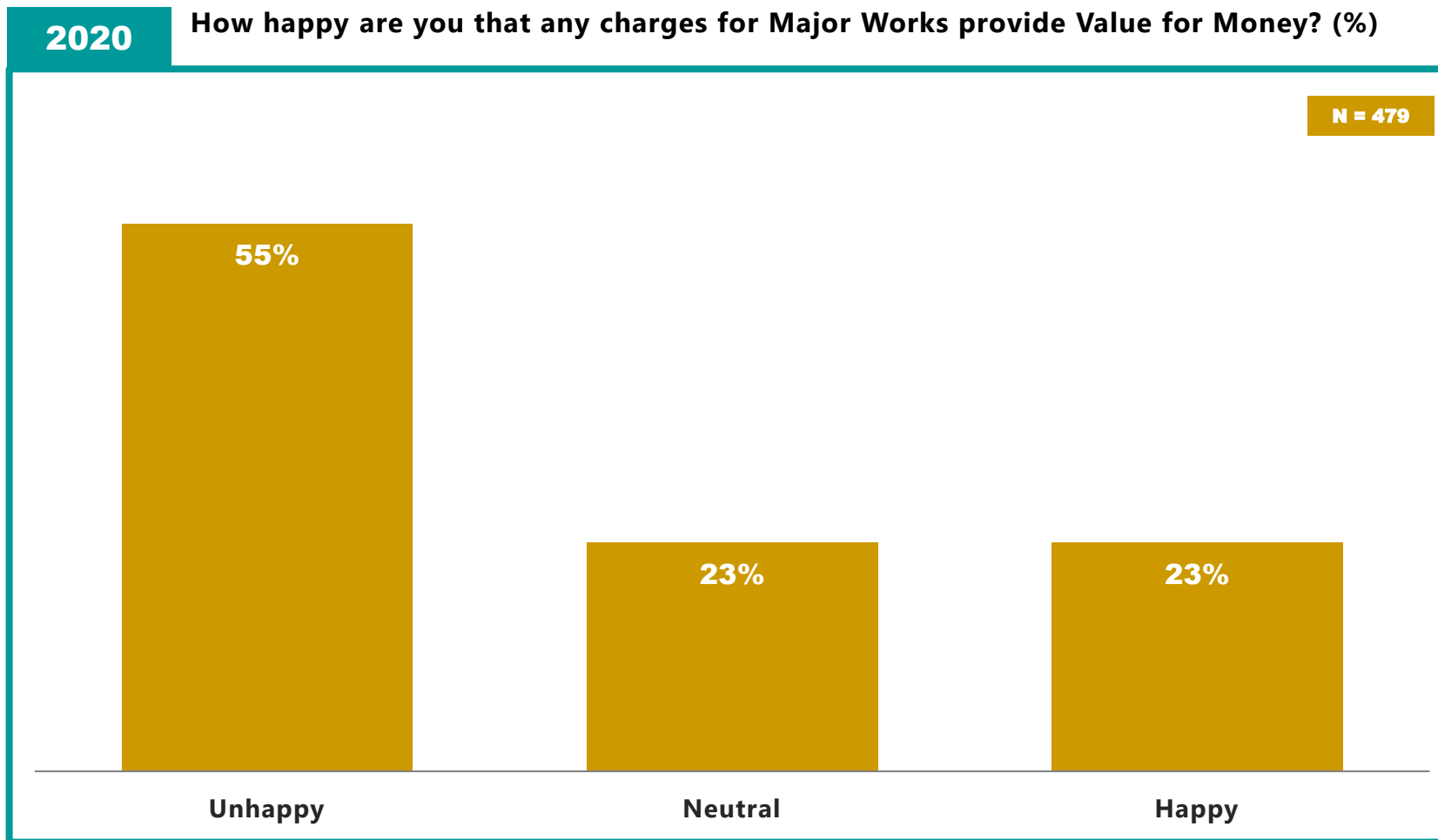
Value for Money: Rent (*Tenants only*)

Satisfaction with rent providing value for money has decreased slightly. 3% more are unhappy, and the percentage that are neutral has increased by 6%. This is likely to be because 2020 was the first time in 4 years that tenants' rent was increased following the -1% annual rent reduction introduced in 2016, and influenced by the wider concerns with the service.



Value for Money: Major Works

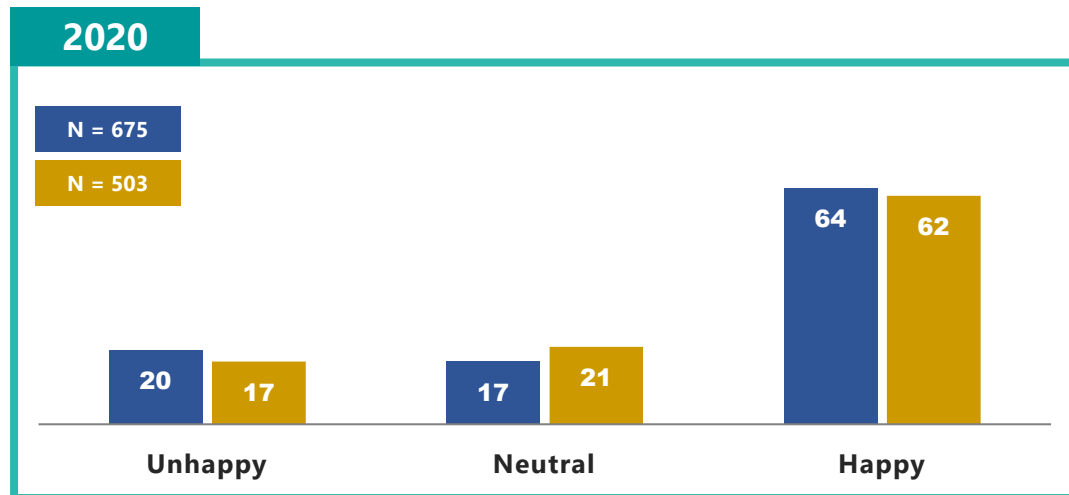
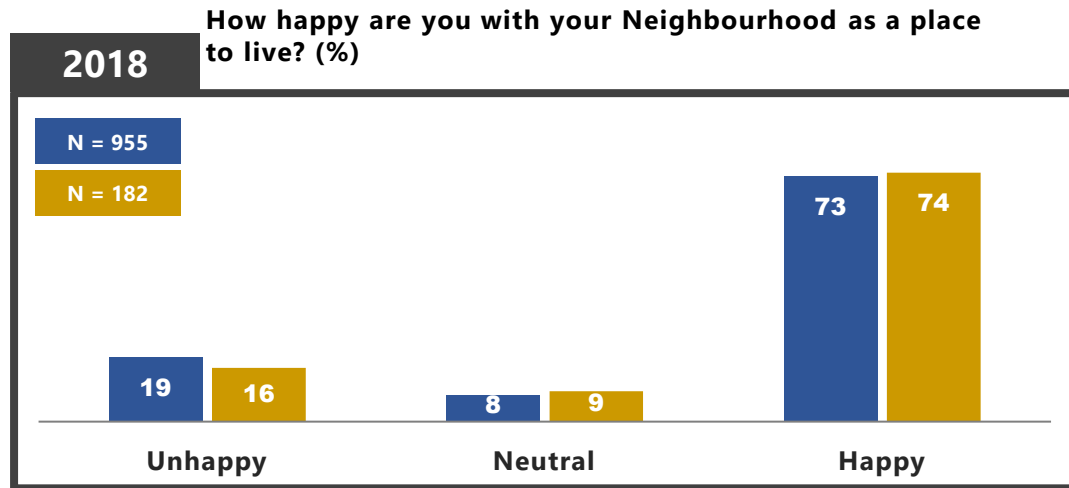
This slide demonstrates that leaseholders are unhappy with charges for major works. However, leaseholder satisfaction with the costs of major works is poor across the housing sector. Leaseholders are bound to Council contractors and have minimal say in setting the scope of works plus when and how it is carried out despite formal consultation processes. We have introduced a more meaningful engagement process, which goes beyond the statutory consultation. We believe this should help improve satisfaction and a target of 40% unhappy is realistic. This question was new for 2020.



Results: Your Neighbourhood

Neighbourhood as a place to live

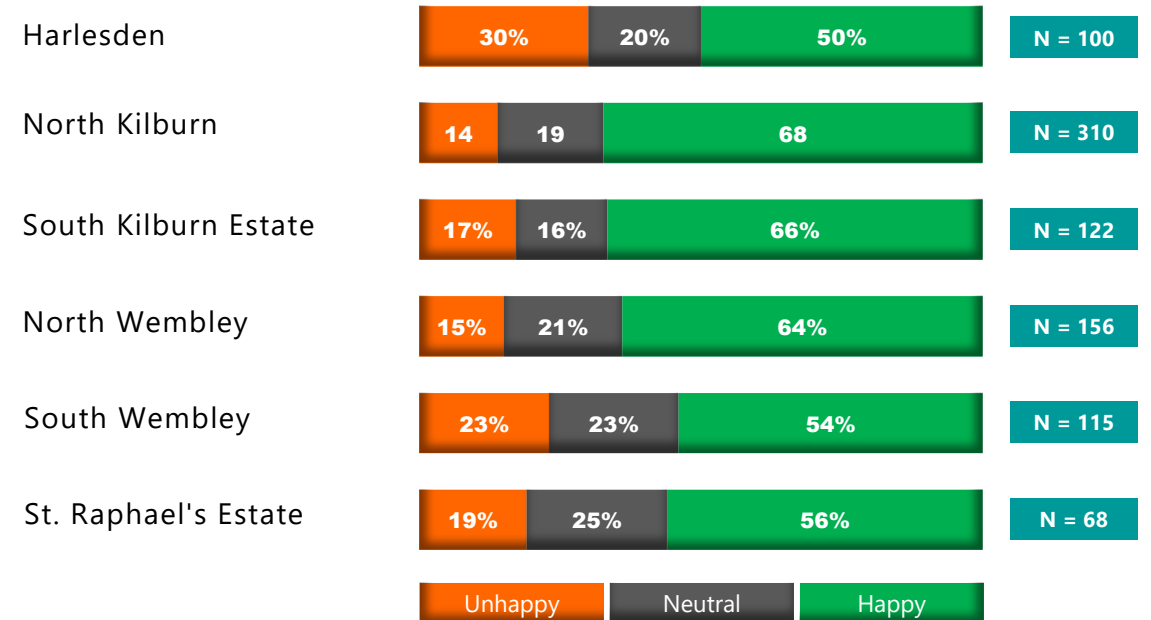
There has been a shift from tenants and leaseholders from 'happy' with their neighbourhoods and a place to live to 'neutral'. As the survey was completed between August – October 2021, we believe this has been influenced by the amount of time people are spending in their homes due to lockdown, specifically those who live in flats. The service is investing in outdoor communal spaces for tenants and leaseholders to enjoy with £1m investment planned over the next 2 years and we are engaging them in decisions on what to prioritise.



Tenants Leaseholders

2020

How happy are you with your Neighbourhood as a place to live – by Estate (%)

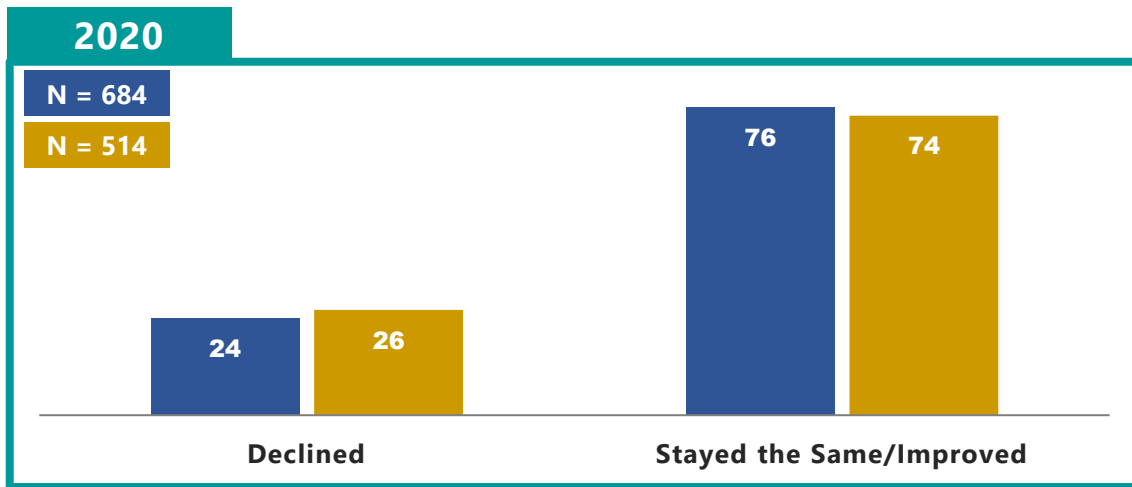
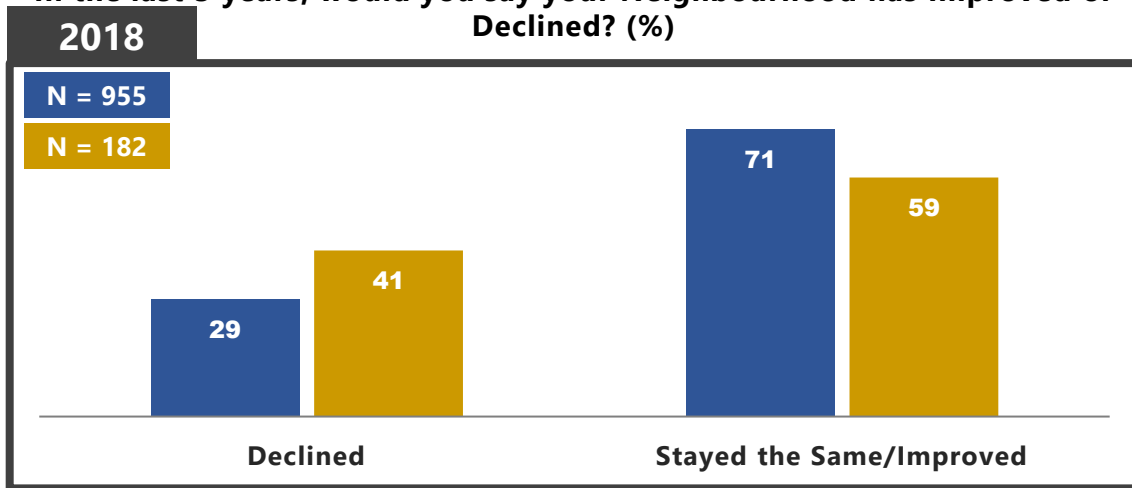


In the **2018 Residents Attitude Survey**, respondents were asked: *Thinking about your local area, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with this area as a place to live?* **76% were Satisfied, 14% were Neutral and 11% were Dissatisfied**

Neighbourhood Improvement

There has been an increase in tenants and leaseholders who think their neighbourhood has 'improved or stayed the same' and a reduction of 15% in the number who think it has got worse. We know caretaking and specifically removing fly tipping contributes significantly to leaseholders perception of their neighbourhoods. We believe improvements made in this service has likely resulted in the decrease in dissatisfaction.

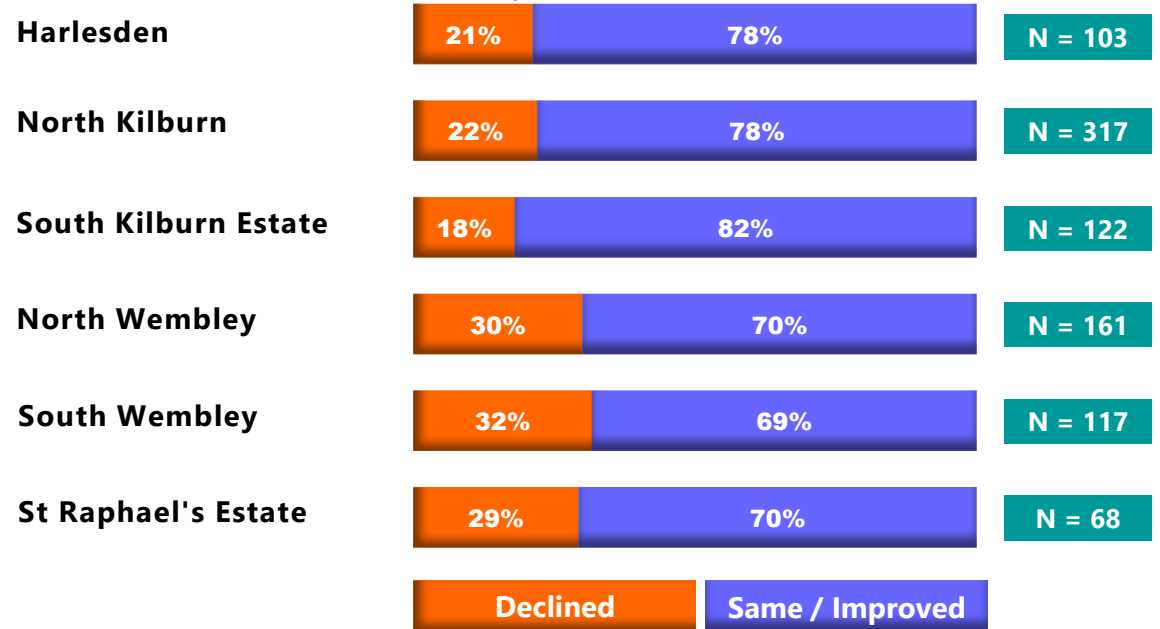
In the last 3 years, would you say your Neighbourhood has Improved or Declined? (%)



Tenants Leaseholders

2020

In the last 3 years, has your Neighbourhood has Improved or Declined – by Estate



In the 2018 Residents Attitude Survey, respondents were asked: Over the past 4 years, has your local area got better, worse, or not changed much?

66% Better/Not Changed, 33% Worse

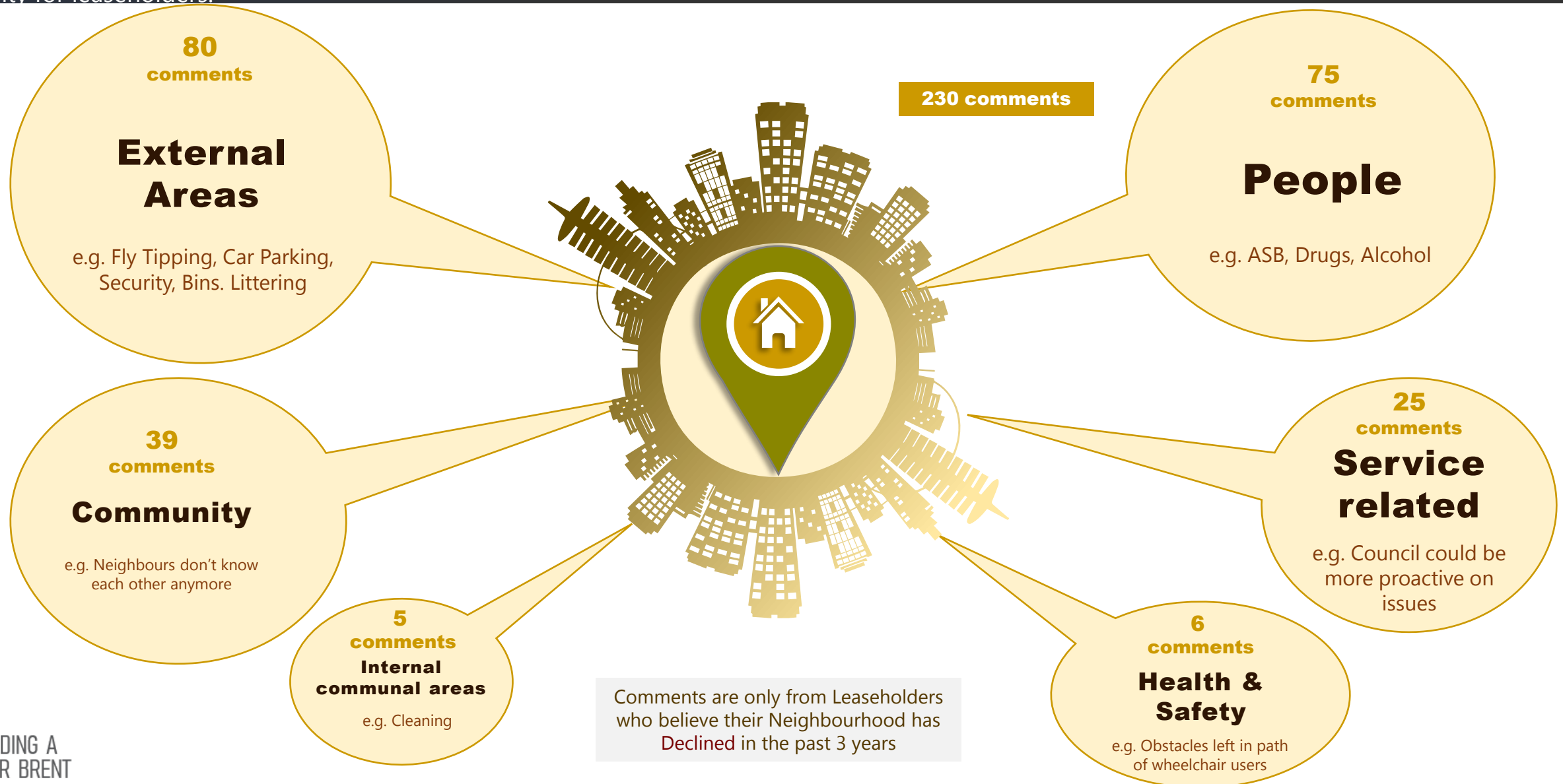
Neighbourhood Decline: Tenants Comments

The headlines below summarise the feedback of tenants and why they feel their neighbourhood has declined in the past three years. These issues are explored further in slide 29 and 30. Tenants raised similar issues to leaseholders but also included poor customer service from BHM.



Neighbourhood Decline: Leaseholder Comments

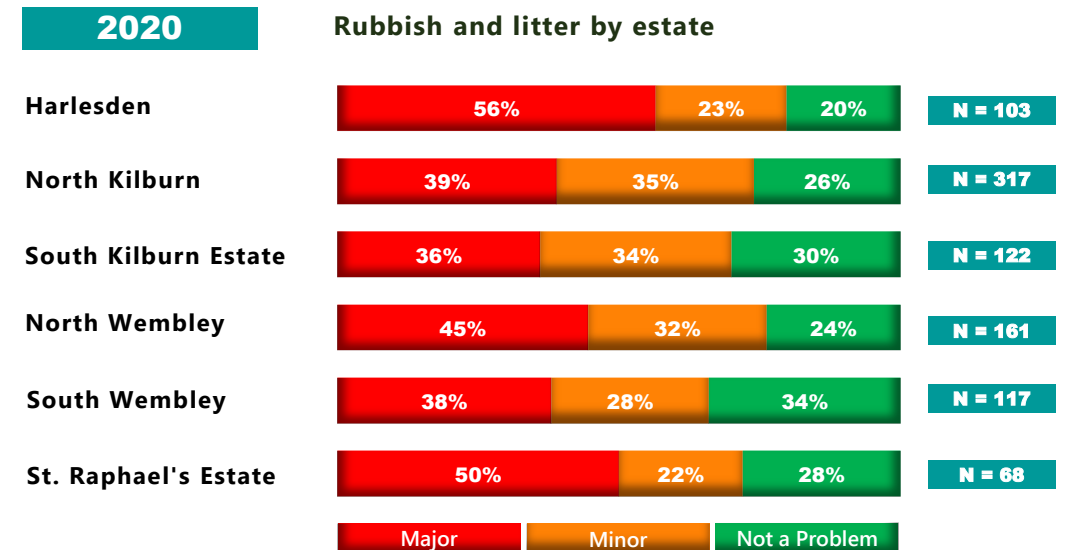
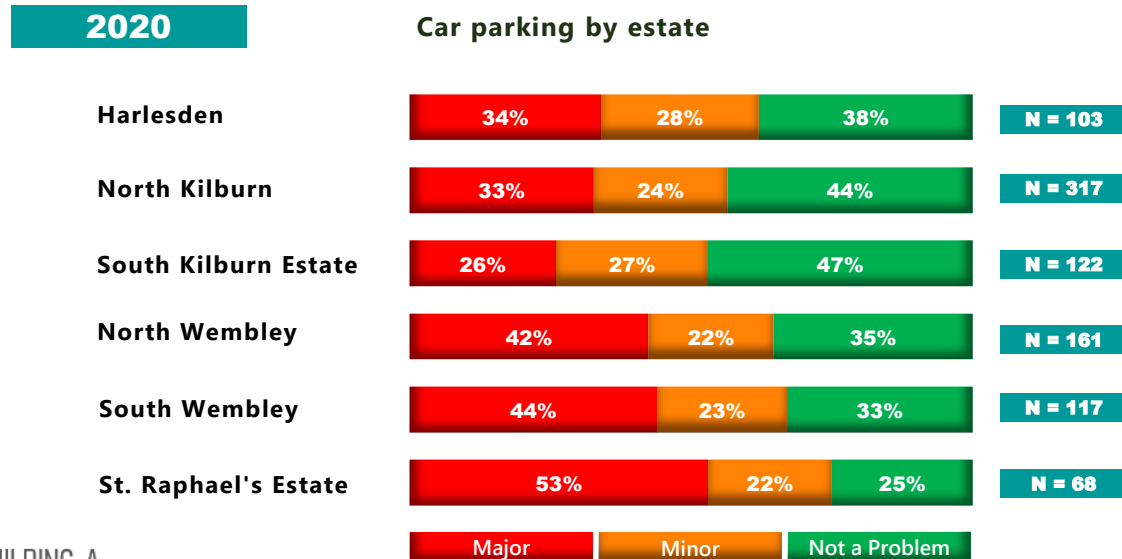
The headlines below summarise the feedback of leaseholders and why they feel their neighbourhood has declined in the past three years. These issues are explored further in slide 29 and 30. Leaseholders raised similar issues to tenants although a sense of community and knowing their neighbours was a priority for leaseholders.



Neighbourhood Issues

The three issues presented on this slide are under the direct influence of BHM or a contractor acting on behalf of BHM. The service is in the process of implementing traffic management order for five pilot BHM estates with the aim to roll this out to all estates. Additionally the service has completed a recent audit of bin capacity and is investing £300K to address the gaps found. BHM are working with R&E to highlight contractual issues to be managed with Veolia such as contaminated waste.

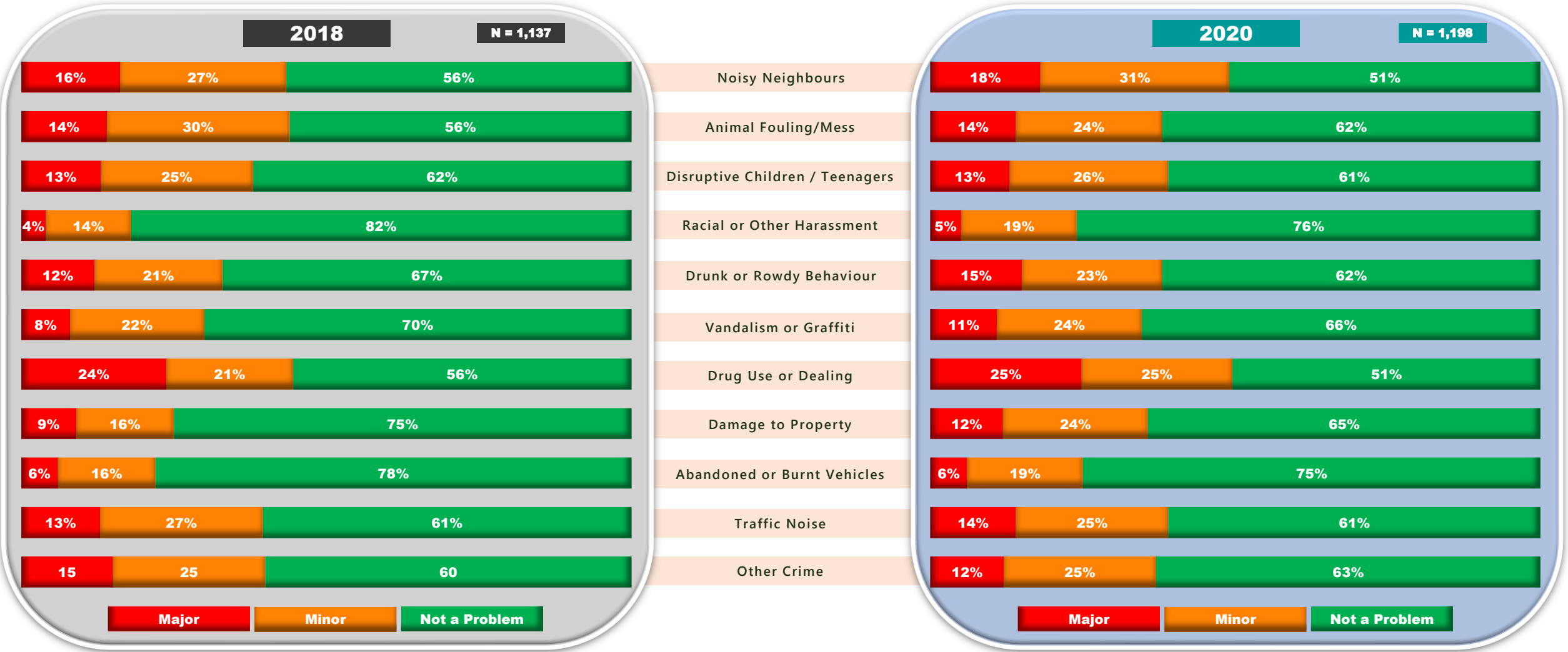
To what extent are any of the following a problem in your neighbourhood (BHM direct management or contract in place):



Neighbourhood Issues

The issues below do not come under the role of BHM as a landlord but continue to impact tenants and leaseholders in their homes. Tackling these issues require partnership working with other corporate teams such as Community Safety and the Police. Overall, the percentage of people who feel each issue is a problem has remained the same compared to 2018.

To what extent are any of the following a problem in your neighbourhood:



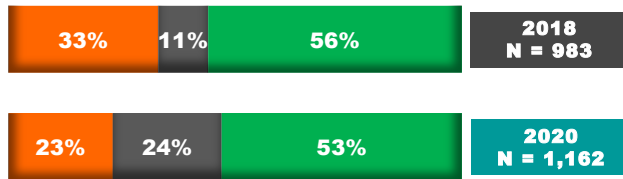
Major **Minor** **Not a Problem**

Major **Minor** **Not a Problem**

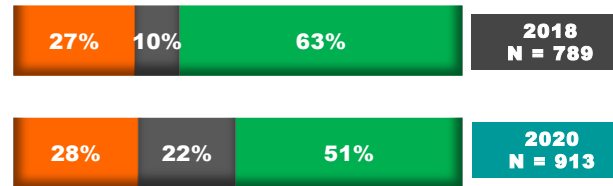
Estate Cleaning

BHM completed a 1-year review of the Estate Caretaking Service and there has been a notable improvement in response times to deal with and a reduction in complaints on the year before. This slide shows the shift in perception towards the middle when compared to 2018 with some reduction in dissatisfaction for leaseholders.

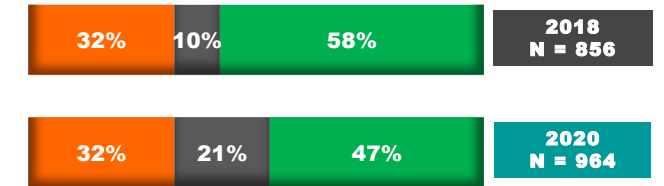
How happy are you with the Grounds Maintenance, such as grass cutting, in your area?



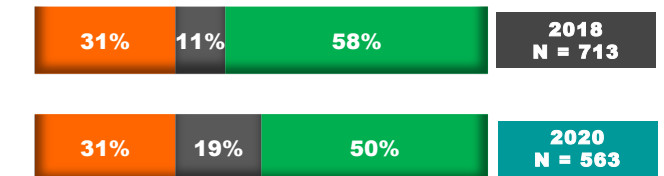
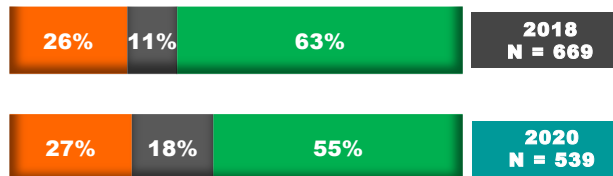
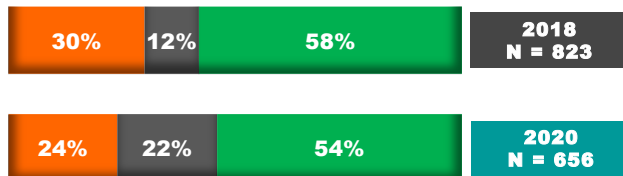
How happy or unhappy are you with the cleaning of Internal communal areas?



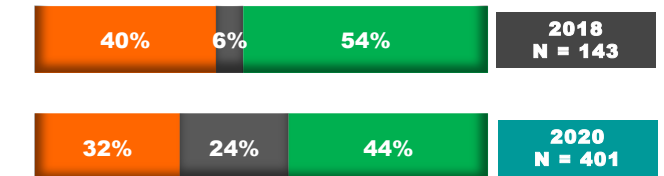
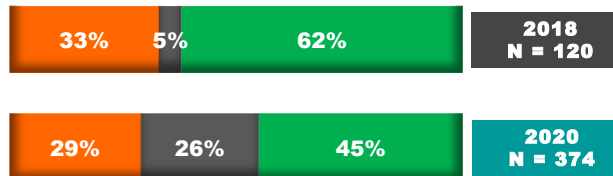
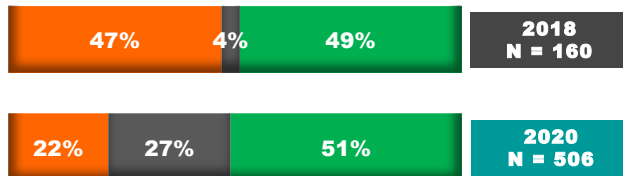
How happy or unhappy are you with the cleaning of External communal areas?



Tenants



Leaseholders

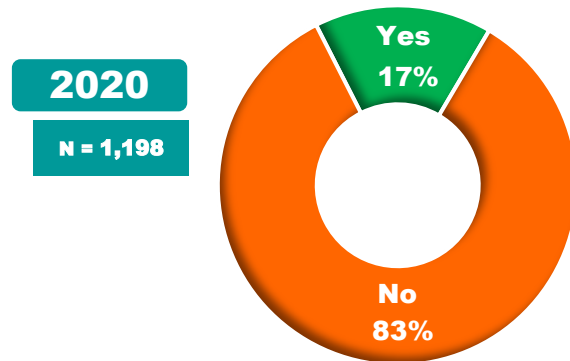


Note: The Estate Cleaning One Year In-house Review shows that efficiency has improved since these services came in-house

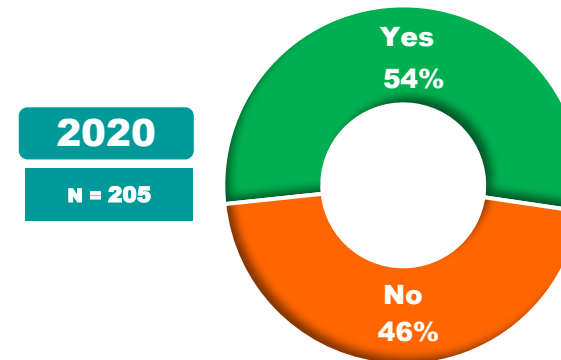
Anti Social Behaviour: *Tenants and Leaseholders*

Nearly a fifth of tenants and leaseholders who responded to this survey had reported ASB in the past 12 months. BHM knows that improvements need to be made in the handling of these cases but work also needs to be carried out to manage expectation of what is ASB and the proportionate response. There is a reduction of 20% for dissatisfaction (although still high) when the case is completed showing the impact the situation as it happens has on the individual and their perception of the service.

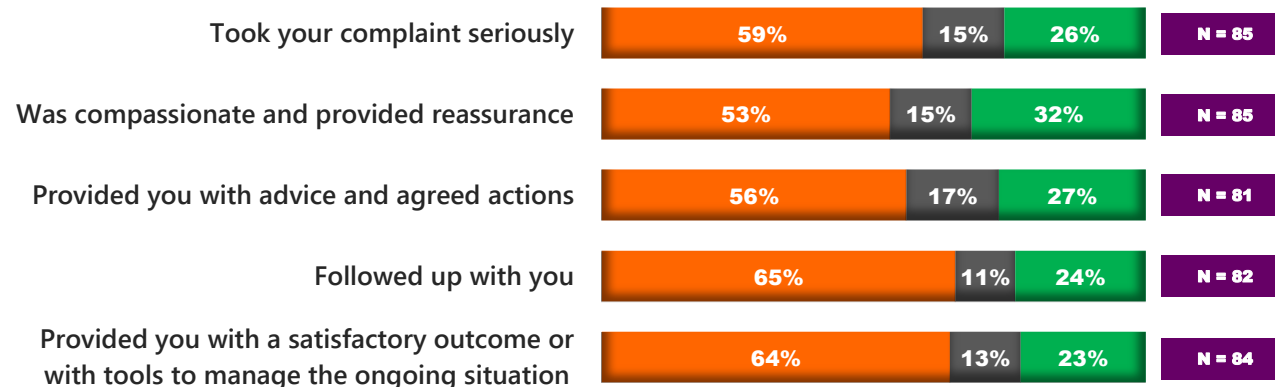
Have you reported Anti-Social Behaviour to Brent Housing within the last 12 months? (%)



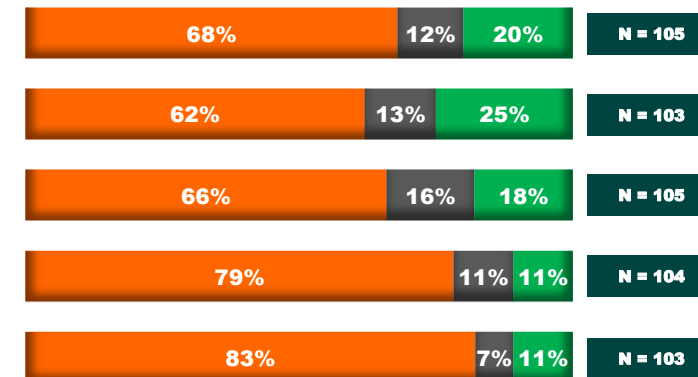
Is the Complaint Ongoing? (%)



Completed Cases



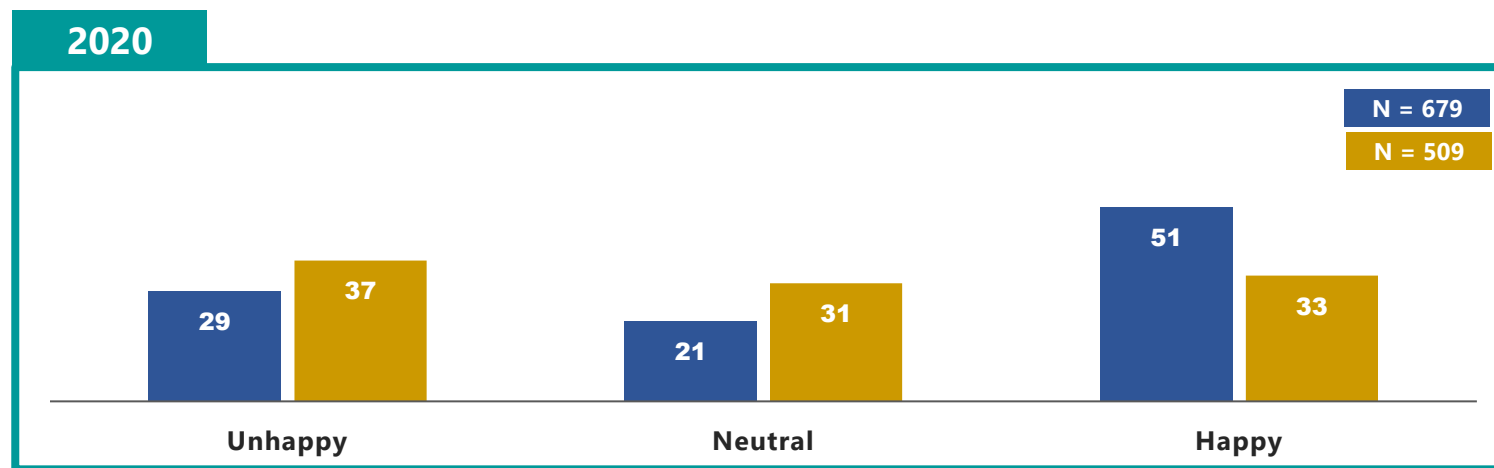
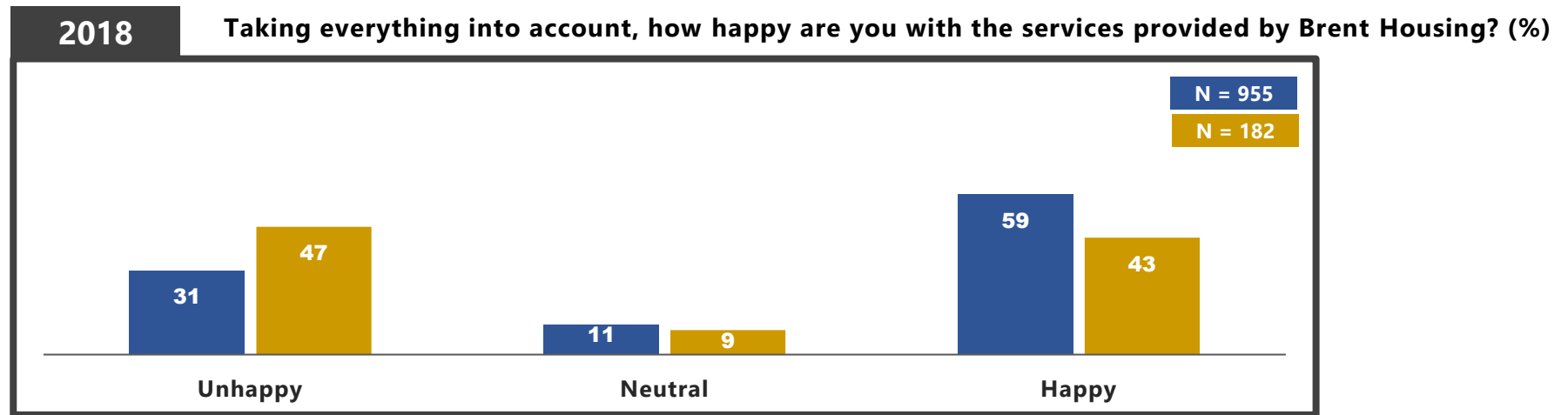
Ongoing Cases



Results: Overall Satisfaction

Overall Satisfaction

Dissatisfaction has reduced. However, we have seen a shift to the middle for both tenants and leaseholders rather than an increase in satisfaction. This pattern has been common throughout the other responses. Addressing areas such as communication, customer service and repairs (both communal and responsive) will be key to increasing happiness with the service.



Tenants Leaseholders

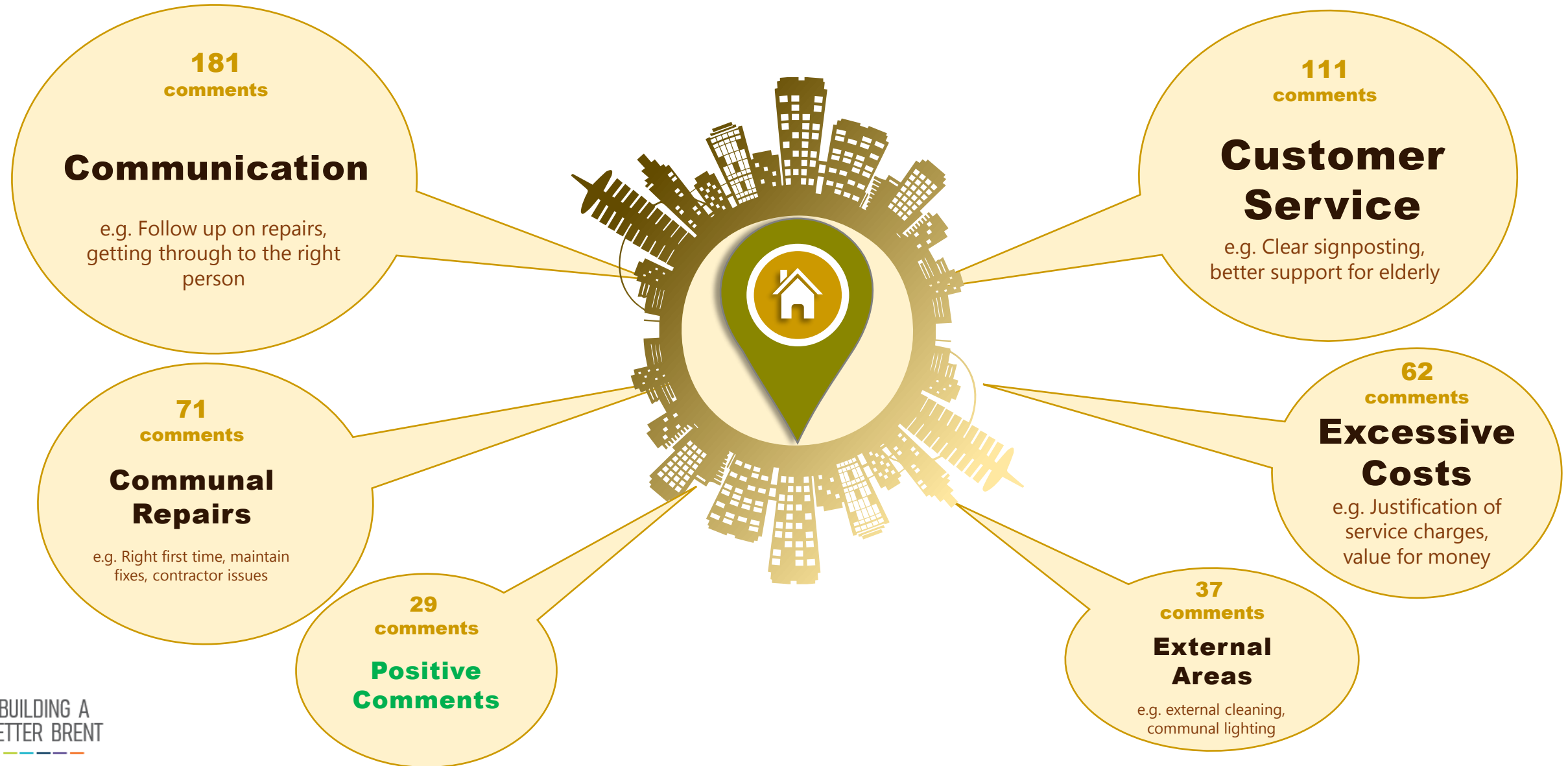
Improvements: Tenants Comments

The headlines below summarise the top areas tenants would like to see an improvement in from BHM. Communication and customer service has been a consistent theme for tenants throughout the results and feature heavily in the action plan.



Improvements: Leaseholder Comments

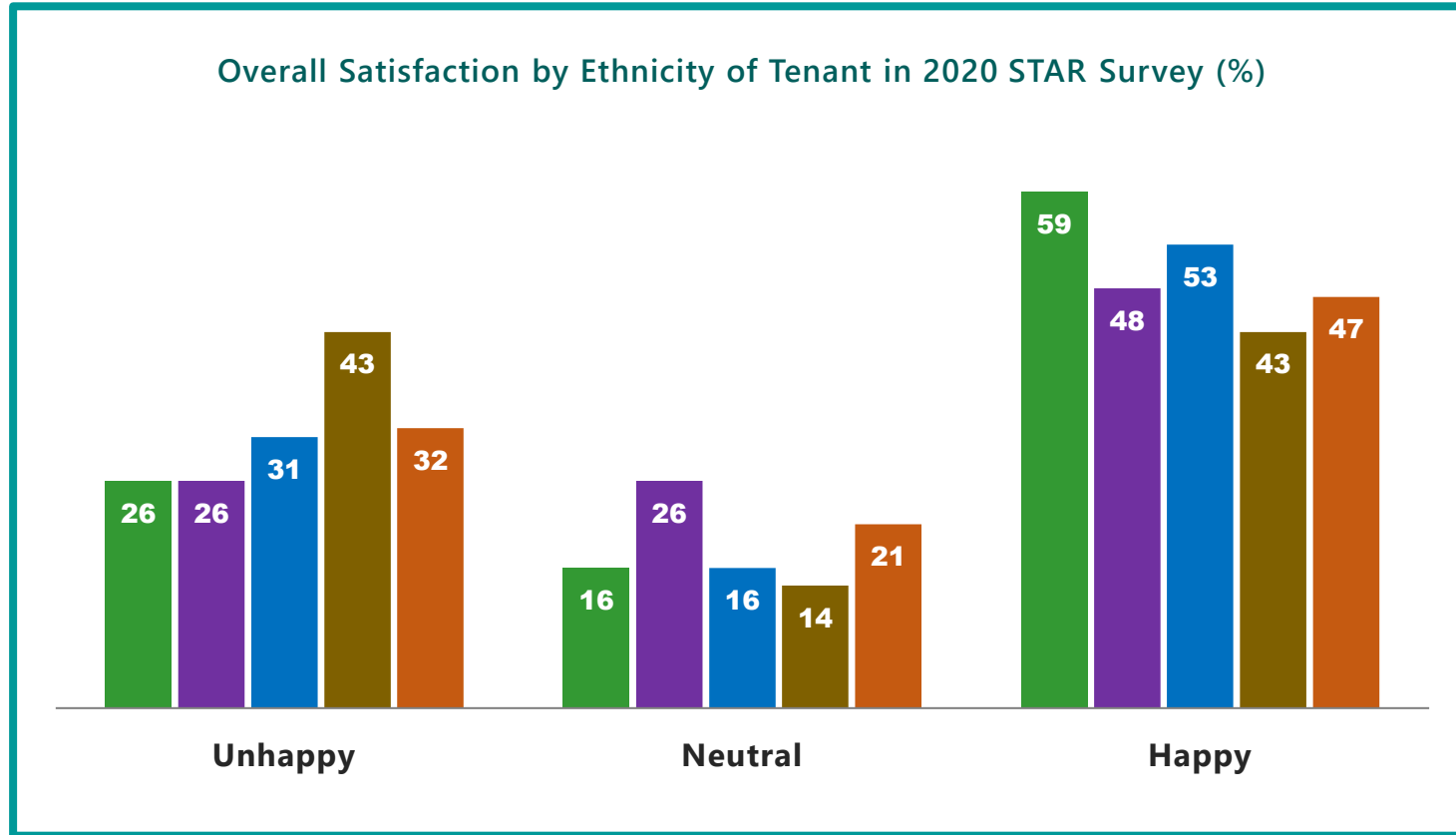
Similar to tenants, communication and customer service also featured high on the areas for BHM to improve for leaseholders. This feedback is key insight into how the service can improve areas such as perception of major works proving value for money as the results suggest the experience is just as important to leaseholders as the actual cost.



For information: Equality and Diversity data

Overall satisfaction by ethnicity of tenant

Tenants who took part in the STAR survey reflected the ethnic make up of the tenant population across BHM based on current data held by the service. Over half of BHM tenants are black. Of the responses given, black tenants reflected this shift to the middle with a higher percentage opting for neutral than another other ethnicity. Further analysis of data will be carried out to understand the experience of specific ethnic groups when engaging with BHM.



Asian	Black	White	Mixed	Other
N = 70	N = 244	N = 161	N = 7	N = 19
14%	49%	32%	1%	4%

Table showing Ethnicity of current tenancies on 21/12/20

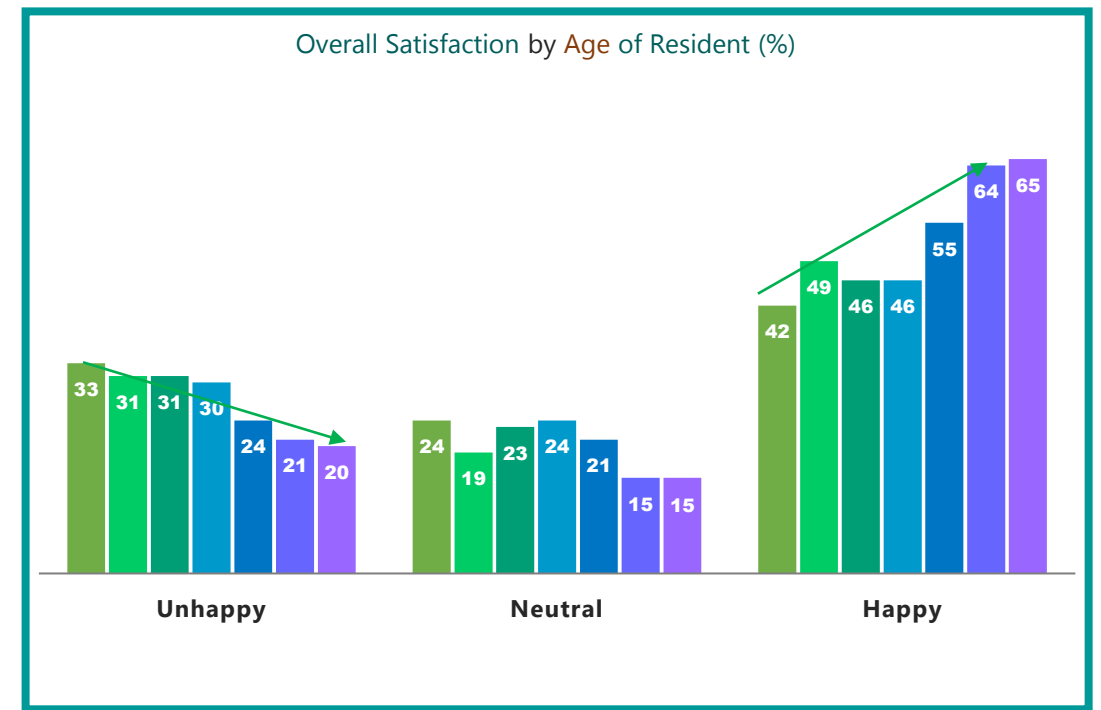
Ethnicity	Number of Tenancies	%
Black	3,246	52.9
White	1,956	31.9
Asian	789	12.9
Mixed	103	1.7
Other	43	0.7
Total	6,137	100%

Note:

In total there were 8,241 current tenancies listed on 21/12/20 however there were no ethnicity data recorded for 2,051 of them (24.9% of total) and 53 refused (0.6% of total)

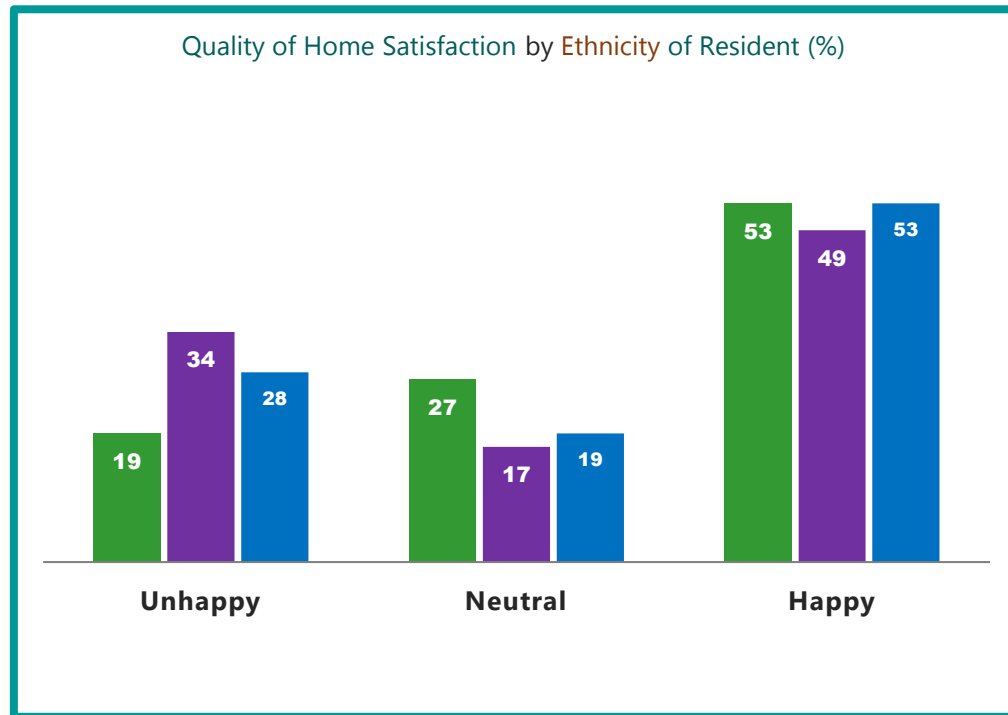
Equality and Diversity: Overall satisfaction

Analysis of the respondents ethnicity shows dissatisfaction is higher amongst White residents, that Black residents are more likely to feel neutral, and that levels of satisfaction are highest for Asian residents. For age, there are higher levels of satisfaction among older residents, where as younger residents had high levels of dissatisfaction with the overall service.

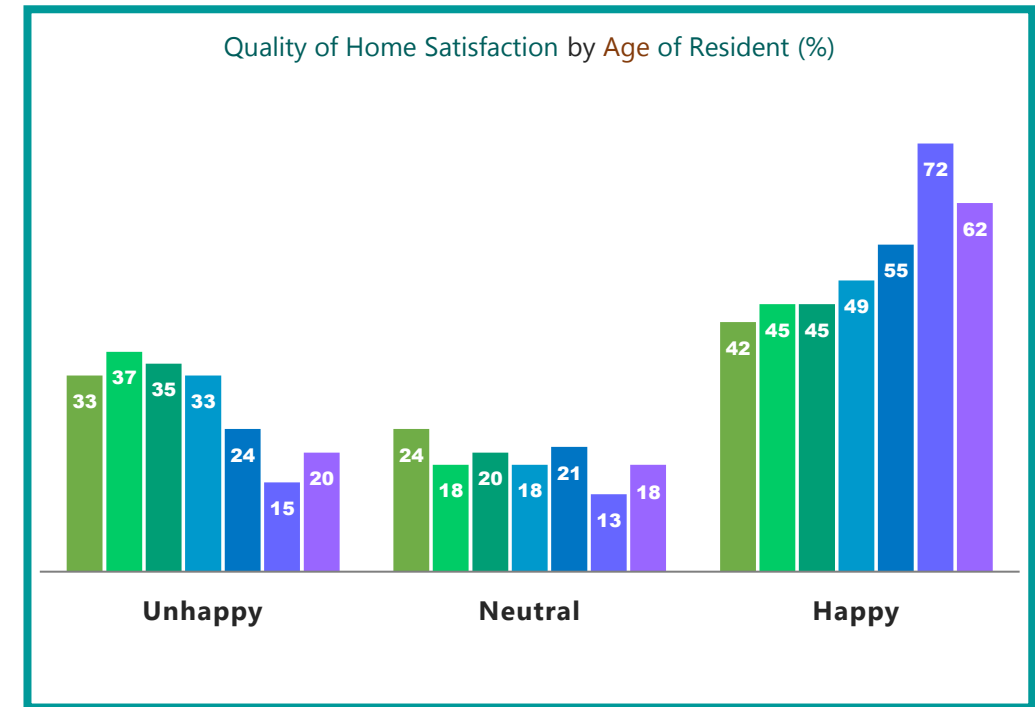


Equality and Diversity: Quality of home

Black residents had higher levels of dissatisfaction with the quality of home. White and Asian residents are equally satisfied however Asian residents were more likely to give a neutral answer rather than dissatisfied when compare to white residents who had higher levels of dissatisfaction. Again, older residents were more satisfied with the quality of their home, and younger residents less satisfied.



Asian N = 73
Black N = 267
White N = 167



20 - 29 N = 33
30 - 39 N = 124
40 - 49 N = 138
50 - 59 N = 204
60 - 69 N = 119
70 - 79 N = 68
80+ N = 45

The End



If you require any further information, please contact:

customer-insight@brent.gov.uk

