

Woking Borough Council | 2023/2024

# Tenant Perception Survey: Summary of Approach

Shaping the *future* of our borough



## Contents

Introduction.....	3
Sample size.....	4
Failure to meet sample size.....	5
Summary of representativeness .....	7
Survey collection and sampling method .....	8

### Document details

Produced on: 5 June 2024

Author: Rosalynn Funnell, Resident Engagement Team Leader

Signed off on: 7 June 2024

Signed off by: Louise Strongitharm, Strategic Director - Communities

## Introduction

Woking Borough Council implemented a Tenant Satisfaction Survey consisting of all required Tenant Perception questions. The survey was a total of 40 questions long and included sub-questions in some areas. Woking Borough Council Housing stock includes the following:

- LCRA: 2,926 households

LCHO stock was below the minimum levels to be included in the reporting so has not been included in the Tenant Perception Survey for the 2023/2024 reporting year.

Woking Borough Council decided to take a census sampling approach to ensure all 2926 LCRA households were able to participate, if they would like to. Since the housing came back into Woking Borough Council's direct management in 2022 (following a 10-year Managing Agent arrangement with New Vision Homes), there has not been a tenant survey undertaken. It was, therefore, imperative for Woking Borough Council to gain a good understanding of Tenant Perception across all housing stock for the 2023/2024 reporting year to ensure future years can consistently monitor and benchmark performance.

This report details the summary of approach taken by Woking Borough Council regarding the Tenant Perception Survey for the reporting year 2023/2024.

## Sample size

The Tenant Satisfaction Survey took a census approach to all LCRA properties, including General Needs and Sheltered Schemes within the HRA (Housing Revenue Account). This meant that each household was able to respond to the Survey.

Due to the 2926 dwelling units surveyed, there is a required minimum level of statistical accuracy of 95% confidence level and +/-4% margin of error. There is an understanding that 498 survey responses would have been required with an assumed satisfaction score of 50%. This is shown in table 1, below:

Population	Target for minimum levels of statistical accuracy (assumed 50% satisfaction score)	
	Margin of error	Indicative sample size required
2926	95% confidence level with +/- 4%	498

**Table 1:** Minimum Sample size required for Woking Borough Council.

The survey was publicly available to respond to between 16 February 2024 and 25 March 2024 as a single integrated survey exercise. Internally, there was an extension period until 29 March 2024 to allow for any postal responses to be received and input into the system.

The number of responses received over this period was 447. All respondents were asked to provide a reference number or tenancy number when responding. These were then verified to ensure there was only one response per household. There were a number of responses that had to be excluded these are shown in table 2, below:

Reason for Exclusion	Amount
Repeated Household Response	10
Unable to verify tenant household	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>14</b>

**Table 2:** Excluded Tenant Survey responses and reasons.

Where a response was repeated by the household. The first response was kept and the second response was excluded from the overall figures. Where the tenant household was unable to be verified, the information provided did not include a name, contact or (at minimum) tenancy reference that would be able to be cross-referenced in the tenant database to confirm a tenant household undertook the public survey. Therefore, these responses were excluded.

Taking these into consideration, overall, there were 14 responses that were excluded. This meant that the number of responses verified for the overall analysis was **433**.

## Failure to meet sample size

Woking Borough Council was unable to meet the sample size of 498 to ensure a minimum level of statistical accuracy at 95% confidence level and +/-4% margin of error with an assumed satisfaction score of 50%.

Woking Borough Council was expecting that it would be arduous to gain the minimum sample size for statistical accuracy, therefore, a census sampling approach was implemented. There are several factors that have impacted the reputation of Woking Borough Council resulting in a reduced sample size:

- Woking Borough Council was placed under Government intervention in May 2023 and issued a Section 114 Notice in June 2023. This continues to be widely discussed by national and local media outlets.
  - [Council issues Section 114 notice in response to severe financial challenges](#)
  - [The £2.5m bill bankrupt Woking Council could be faced with to fix its finances](#)
- Due to the Section 114 Notice, there have been widespread cuts to public services, many of which have not been well received by residents.
  - [Woking Borough Council Service cuts approved amid protests](#)
  - [Community Asset Transfer Scheme Launched](#)
  - [Council explores options for Pool in the Park to remain open](#)
- Due to the Section 114 Notice, Woking has been able to increase Council tax by 9.9% from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024.
  - [Bankrupt council's tax to increase by nearly 10%](#)
- Due to the Section 114 Notice, Woking Borough Council has decided to end its Sheerwater Regeneration Project development with Thamesway. Over 300 Council tenants had been rehoused in preparation for the regeneration.
  - [Sheerwater residents consulted on the future of regeneration project](#)
- Woking Borough Council self-referred to the Regulator for Social Housing in July 2023 for breaching the Home Standard and was issued with a Regulatory Notice in December 2023 in respect to fire safety.
  - [Council sets out robust action plan in response to Housing Regulatory Notice](#)
  - [Regulatory Notice: Woking Borough Council \(14 December 2023\)](#)
  - [Hundreds of Woking Homes in breach of fire safety standards](#)
- Brockhill Extra Care housing scheme was announced to close in 2024 due to the unviable costs of fire safety remedial works and heating upgrades. This has resulted in the required relocation of Brockhill tenants.
  - [Woking: Sheltered Housing block at risk of closure](#)
  - [Severely vulnerable residents forced to leave Woking Care Home](#)

Many of the above factors have occurred within the 2023/2024 reporting year and have resulted in negative publicity for the Council. Woking Borough Council understands that the above factors also come at a time when residents, particularly Social Housing Tenants, are experiencing the cost-of-living crisis, housing crisis and changes to Housing benefits which will likely result in lower satisfaction and higher frustrations.

Woking Borough Council residents have also been encouraged to get involved in multiple consultations and respond to numerous surveys about public services since the Section 114 Notice. This is likely to cause survey fatigue resulting in a reduced number of respondents.

There is a planned improvement journey ahead for the Housing Service. The monitoring of this is through the Housing Improvement Board and Council's Improvement and Recovery Board, which both meet monthly. The Housing Improvement Programme has seven workstreams to action the planned improvements. The workstreams are:

- Homes and Safety
- Housing Finance
- Tenants and Communities
- Resident Engagement and Consultation
- Data and Insight
- Tools and ways of working
- Staffing and Culture

The results of the Tenant Perception Survey will be shared with tenants, councillors and staff. Actions from the survey will be produced to feed into the improvement workstreams. The Housing Improvement Board will continue to monitor progress.

## Summary of representativeness

Woking Borough Council has reviewed the representativeness of the Tenant Perception Survey. The following characteristic of stock type has been considered against the relevant tenant population. Table 3, below, shows the stock type represented in the Tenant Survey:

	<b>Relevant Tenant Population (dwelling units, % total)</b>	<b>Total survey responses (% total)</b>
<b>LCRA</b>	2926 (100%)	433 (100%)
<b>General needs Housing</b>	2445 (84%)	368 (85%)
<b>Sheltered Housing</b>	481 (16%)	65 (15%)

**Table 3:** Stock Types represented in the Tenant Survey

Overall, the total survey responses confirm that the stock type of respondents are representative to the Tenant Population. This indicates that the responses do not require weighting for stock type.

Woking Borough Council understands that age of respondents, ethnicity, building type, property/household size and geographical area are other characteristics of measure. Woking Borough Council does not have any high-rise building types and therefore, this analysis would not be worthwhile.

Under the census approach taken in this survey, it can be more complex to analyse the other characteristics without using a systematic or stratified sampling approach. Woking Borough Council aimed to ensure participation from as many households as possible for the 2023/2024 reporting year due to a lack of Tenant Surveys in recent years, so did not feel it was appropriate to target certain households due to the characteristics they hold.

In using the census approach, age groups and ethnicities were recorded for the respondents. Although these have not been used in the representativeness assessment for this survey, they have been seen as a starting point and are being reviewed and analysed internally to indicate opportunities for targeted engagement over the next reporting year. Other sampling types and characteristics for representative assessments will also be considered in future Tenant Satisfaction Measure surveys to ensure representativeness.

## Survey collection and sampling method

Woking Borough Council used a census approach to the Tenant survey. The survey included the required Tenant Perception questions and a number of survey questions to help Woking Borough Council understand overall performance, impact the service improvement plans and benchmark against other housing providers.

There were several survey collection methods available including telephone, internet, face to face and Postal. The survey collection methods of the 433 responses are shown in Table 4, below:

Survey Method Type	Number of respondents
Telephone	0
Internet	236
Face to Face	0
Postal	197

**Table 4:** The survey collection methods used by respondents

At the start of the surveying period, all Households were provided with a physical survey sent to their address with a freepost option to send their survey back to the Civic Offices. This physical survey was also sent with the Woking@Home newsletter, where the Housing Portfolio holder addressed the surveys in his article, encouraging responses and discussing why responses were important for performance benchmarking. The survey was also advertised on the Woking Borough Council Website and e-newsletter in a [news article](#).

During the surveying period, two email marketing campaigns went out to consenting tenants to encourage responses. All Housing staff members were asked to update their email signatures with a link to the online tenant survey. A video podcast by the Housing Portfolio Holder was also issued via social media channels to encourage participation. The Resident Engagement Team also completed several door-knocking exercises to remind tenants to respond, alongside inviting tenants to an upcoming drop-in fire safety event. However, the team were advised not to request verbal survey responses at doors as there was a concern that this could result in the respondent not being honest or feeling pressured. The Resident Engagement Team were able and available to take survey responses over the phone, but this was not taken up by respondents.

There were no external contractors used in collecting, generating or validating the reported perception measures. This was carried out by 2x staff members within the Resident Engagement Team. The Resident Engagement Team was set up in February 2024 so were able to take an unbiased view when processing, validating and analysing the perception results for the 2023/2024 year.

When processing all postal responses, the Resident Engagement Team input these through the online internet survey. This ensured all responses were collected and input into the same database. All physical surveys provided were processed, locked securely in the office, and disposed of once information was input.

Woking Borough Council offered incentives for those responding to the survey. All respondents were entered into a draw to win 5x £100 Supermarket Vouchers and 1x £250 Supermarket Voucher. The winner of the £250 Supermarket Voucher was chosen from those



completing the survey online. This was to encourage the use of the online internet survey as an alternative method to the physical postal surveys.

Woking Borough Council aims to increase the variety of response methods in future surveys, ensuring that responding is not a barrier.