



# SATISFACTION SURVEY PERFORMANCE REPORT

*FOR QUARTER ONE 2008/09*

## RENTS SERVICE

PREPARED BY: SERVICE IMPROVEMENT TEAM

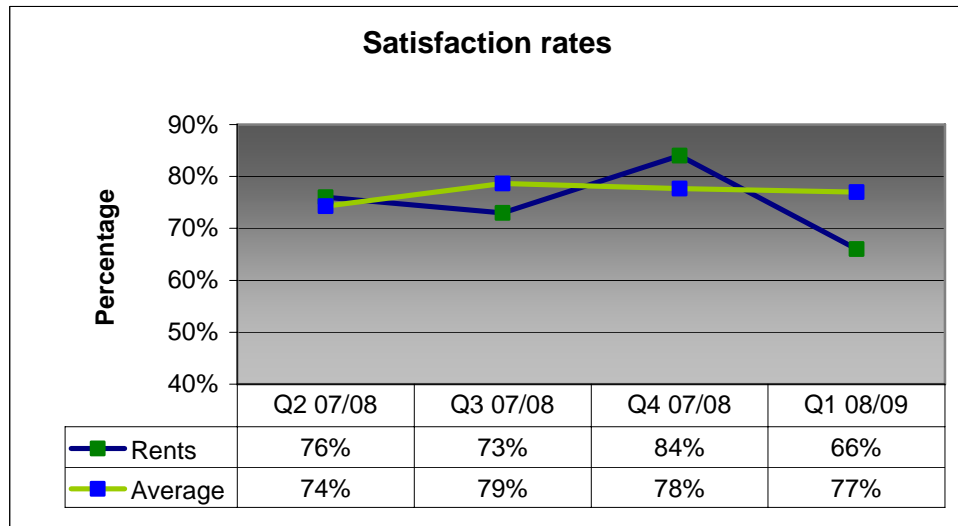


# Rents Satisfaction Survey – Q1 (Apr-Jun) 2008/09

## Main Findings

### Satisfaction with service provided by the Rents team

The overall satisfaction with the Rents service among respondents is at 66%, a significant decrease from the rate last quarter of 84%.



Average = based on average of all surveys in the Quarter

### Profile of Dissatisfied Respondents

A summary of dissatisfied tenants are as follows:

- Fewer dissatisfied respondents (38%) found staff helpful compared with satisfied respondents (96%); and similarly perceptions of politeness were substantially higher for satisfied respondents (93% / 60%).
- Most dissatisfied respondents found it harder to get hold of the right person with just 29% finding it easy, whereas the majority (83%) of satisfied respondents found it easy to get hold of the right person.
- Only 42% of the dissatisfied respondents were offered an opportunity to pay rent in installments, whereas 88% of satisfied respondents were.
- Few dissatisfied respondents felt they were informed about what court action would involve (27%); the majority of satisfied respondents felt they were informed (64%).
- 57% of the dissatisfied respondents had an opportunity to discuss their arrears with the Rents team, whereas virtually all (96%) of the satisfied respondents felt they had the opportunity.
- Females are more likely to be dissatisfied than males (42% / 15%).
- Satisfaction for overall BME respondents (45%) is lower than non-BME (83%).

**Key Driver findings**

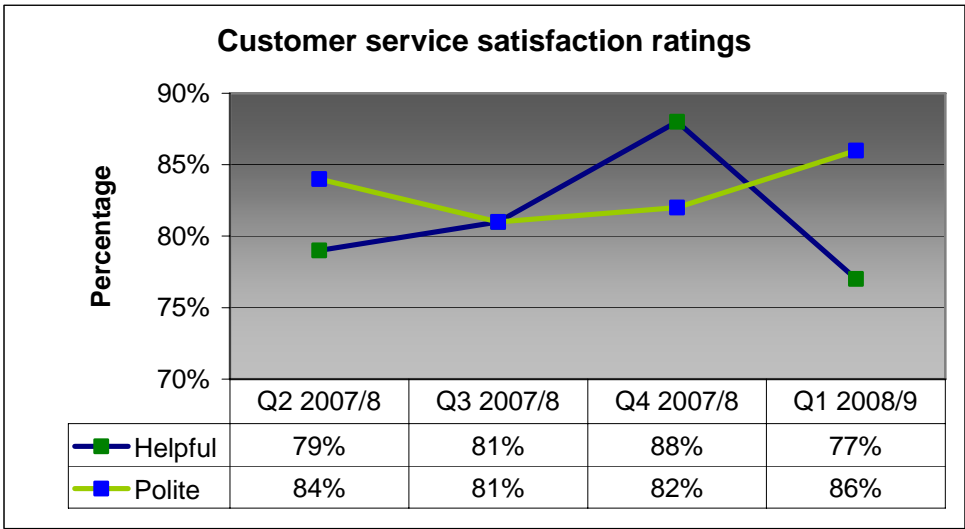
*This is a new section that offers a more directed focus on the factors that show the strongest relationship to overall satisfaction. Though many factors are relevant to the service provided by the Rents team, some have a much stronger link to overall satisfaction than others, and by identifying and targeting these areas a more effective service may be provided to residents which in turn should increase overall satisfaction.*

Analysis was completed recently on the drivers that influence overall satisfaction with the Rents service. Each question was assessed for its correlation to overall satisfaction, indicating areas that are important for Ealing Homes to achieve high satisfaction in to achieve high overall satisfaction. Strong correlations, which require the closest attention, were found in:

- Staff helpfulness
- Staff politeness
- Getting hold of the right person
- Opportunity to pay rent arrears in installments

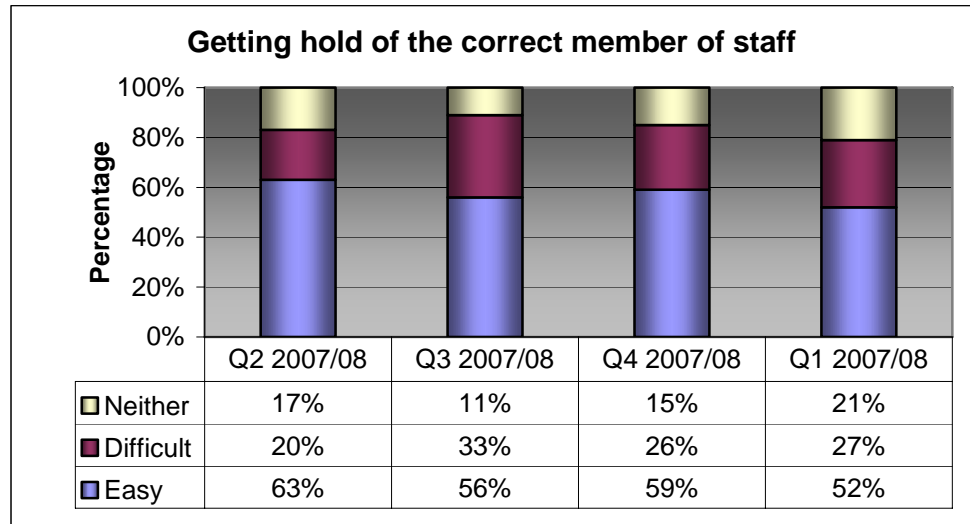
**Customer Service Ratings**

There are mixed results for tenants’ perceptions of the Rents team’s customer service this quarter. While politeness has improved slightly, perceived helpfulness has had a significant drop. Given the strong correlation these factors have with overall satisfaction, it perhaps explains the large decrease in overall satisfaction this quarter.



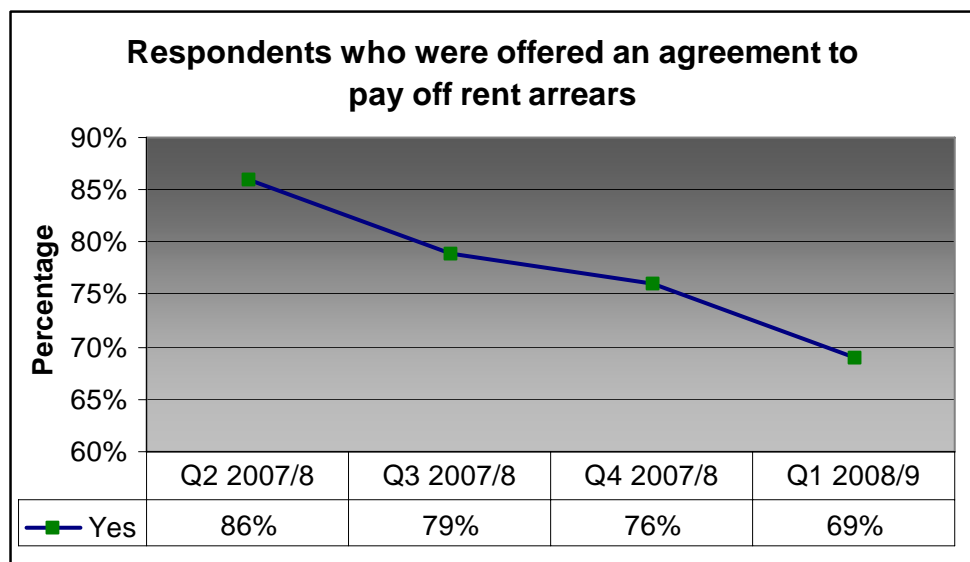
**Getting hold of the right member of staff**

There has been a reduction in the proportion of residents finding it easy to get hold of the correct member of staff. As getting hold of the correct member of staff is a key driver, this result also helps to explain the drop in overall satisfaction.



**Agreements to pay off arrears**

This key driver also sees a negative result this quarter, the pattern for nearly all the key drivers of overall satisfaction with the Rents service. The percentage of respondents who were offered an agreement to pay off their rent arrears continued a pattern over the past year of decreasing proportions of respondents being offered this opportunity.



## Other findings

The remaining questions were not found to be as significant as the questions in the preceding section in correlating to overall satisfaction. They are still nevertheless useful for identifying potential areas of dissatisfaction and trends in perceptions of the Rents service's performance.

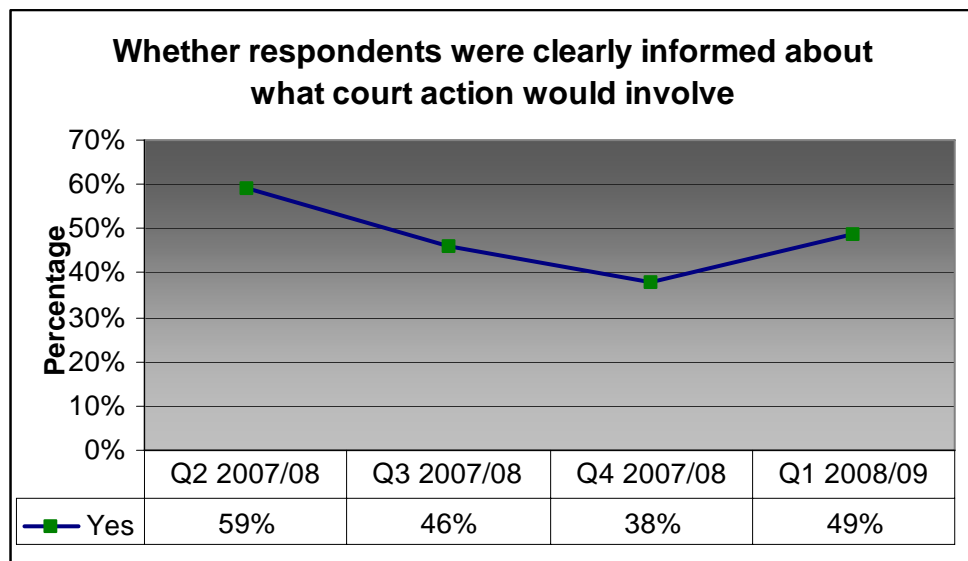
**Was information provided about benefits?**

There were significant increases in the percentage of respondents who felt informed about Tax Credits and Other benefits.

Benefit	Q2 2007/8	Q3 2007/8	Q4 2007/8	Q1 2008/9
Housing Benefit	82%	61%	74%	70%
Tax Credits	33%	33%	39%	61%
Other benefits	23%	21%	14%	50%

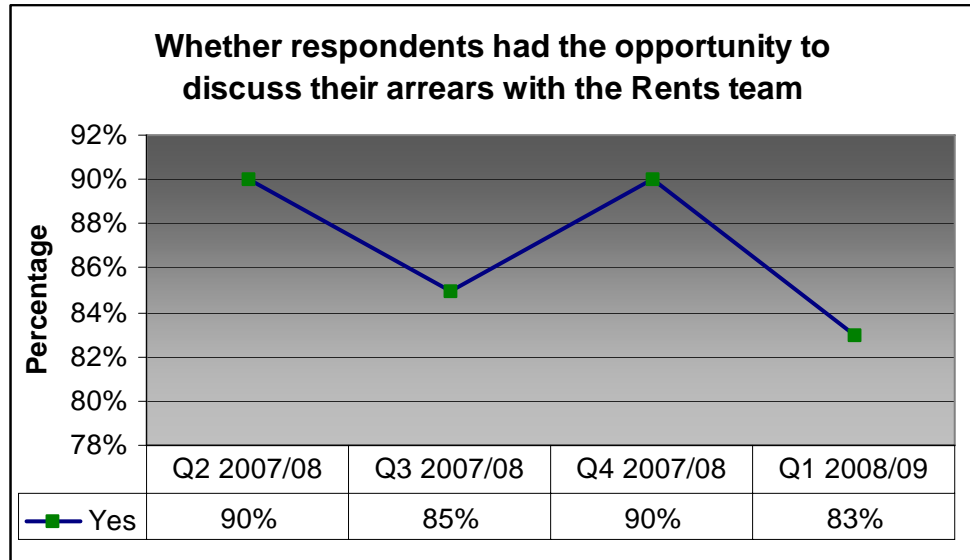
**Legal proceedings**

This quarter saw an increase in the percentage of respondents who felt they were informed about what court action would involve. Notably most dissatisfied respondents didn't feel informed, where a majority of satisfied respondents did.



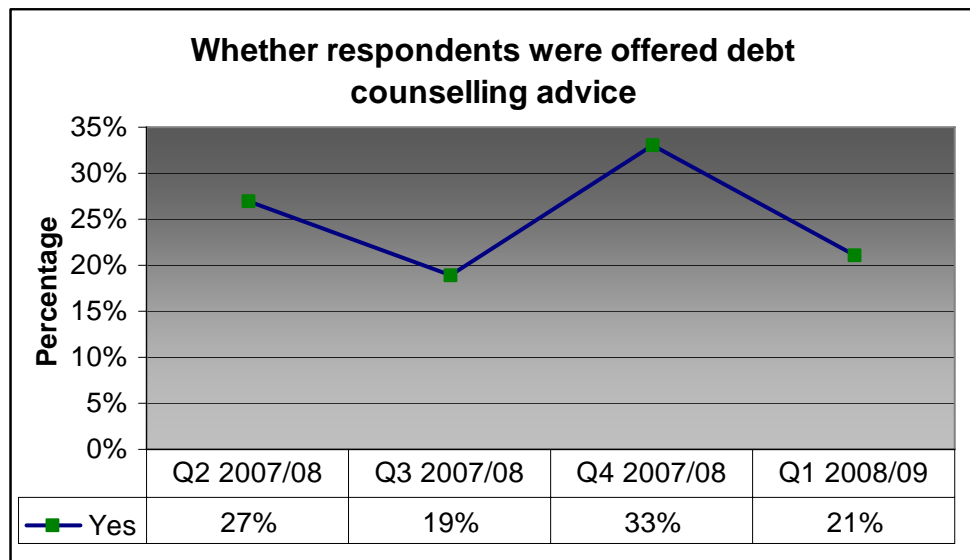
**Accessibility of Rents team**

This quarter saw a reduction in the percentage of respondents who felt that they had the opportunity to discuss their arrears situation with the Rents team, down to 83%. All satisfied respondents felt they had the opportunity, whereas almost half of dissatisfied respondents did not.



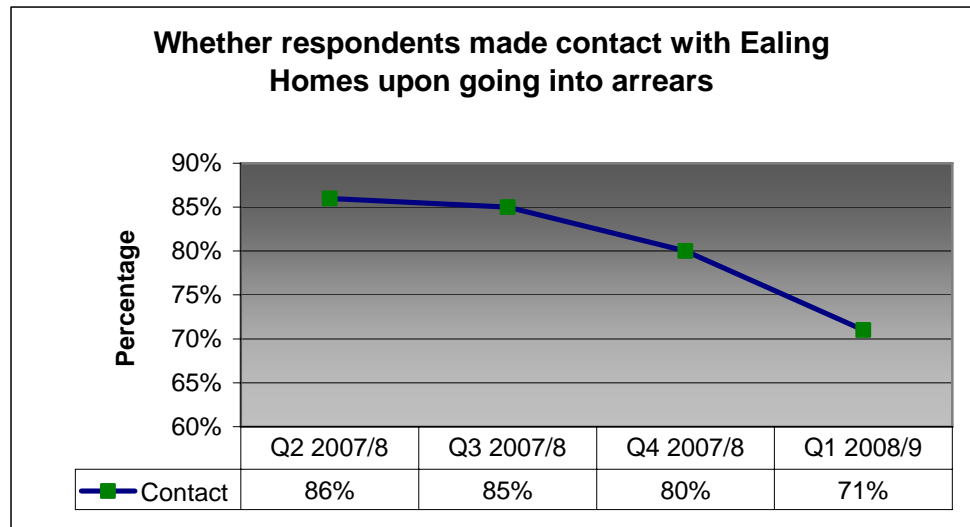
**Offer of debt counseling**

The trend of tenants being offered debt counseling has worsened in quarter 1 from 33% down to 21% of respondents.



**Contacting the Rent team when in arrears**

The percentage of respondents who contact the Ealing Homes Rents team when in arrears has dropped by 9 percentage points.



**Reasons for going into arrears**

Delay in claiming their housing benefit and changes in circumstances represent the primary reasons for respondents' accounts going into arrears.

<b>Reasons for Going into Arrears</b>	<b>Q3 2007/08</b>	<b>Q4 2007/08</b>	<b>Q1 2008/09</b>
Delay in Claiming Housing Benefit	21%	13%	25%
Change in benefits being claimed	13%	9%	14%
Non-dependent charge for children	3%	0%	0%
Change in circumstances e.g. new jobs	29%	27%	25%
Change in family circumstances	18%	18%	20%
Other	16%	33%	16%

## Feedback/Improvements/Actions

### Areas of concern

The following are areas of concern:

- The overall satisfaction level has dropped dramatically from 84% to 66%
  - Perceived helpfulness has significantly decreased this quarter, likely contributing to the reduction in overall satisfaction
  - Also strongly correlated to satisfaction is the reduction in the percentage of respondents who find it easy to get hold of the right person
  - A continual drop in percentages of a range of debt arrangement measures, specifically people being offered agreements for paying off their arrears, having the opportunity to discuss their arrears or being offered debt counseling
  - Fewer residents choosing to contact Ealing Homes when they go into arrears
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### Areas of improvement

The following are areas of improvement:

- Politeness, which is a strongly related factor to overall satisfaction, has increased this quarter
  - More people felt informed about benefits available, particular tax credits and other benefits; and more felt informed about what legal proceedings would involve
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### Actions from Quarter 4

The following actions were highlighted by the line manager in quarter 4:

- Dissatisfaction amongst a small number of Tenants of the East Area is a concern – although East Area Tenants are traditionally more vocal. Housing Officers have been reminded at the last Team meeting and will be reminded again at forthcoming team meetings that it is essential that whilst they have to be firm in many cases-they must always be seen to remain polite whilst doing so. Officers have also been offered Customer Care training as part of the JPS appraisals.
- The increased overall satisfaction however, is to be welcomed and is a testament to the hard work being put in by Officers in being proactive in contacting tenants and increasingly offering money and benefit advice.
- Recent take up campaigns and newsletters promoting the services offered by the Rents Teams-should help encourage further contact from tenants
- The number of Respondents being offered debt counselling has also improved-and this should be a pattern which continues to improve in future surveys-as Officers are increasingly proactive in this area, the Rents Service have produced publicity promoting the availability of money advice. Officers have also been set challenging targets in this area which are being closely monitored, and we have recently produced leaflets which are now available on money and welfare benefits advice.
- With regards to Respondents stating court action was not clearly explained-this has also been noted from previous surveys and the Rents Team Leader is in the process of drafting a leaflet explaining court action, which will be sent with all letters notifying of Legal proceedings-this is a service plan task.

**Feedback from  
Manager for  
Quarter 1**

The drop in satisfaction this quarter can be directly linked to the refurbishment of West Area Housing Office. The Rents Team was displaced and worked from up to three alternative sites. Problems with the initial setups of PCs, telephones and printers made matters even more difficult. The Rents service has now moved past this transition period and has a robust and hard-driving strategy in place.

We have started our Summer campaign in the East and West area offices and officers are cold-calling and carrying out home visits during evenings and weekends. We anticipate an improvement in perception for the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter as all the mechanisms for providing better and more efficient services are in place.

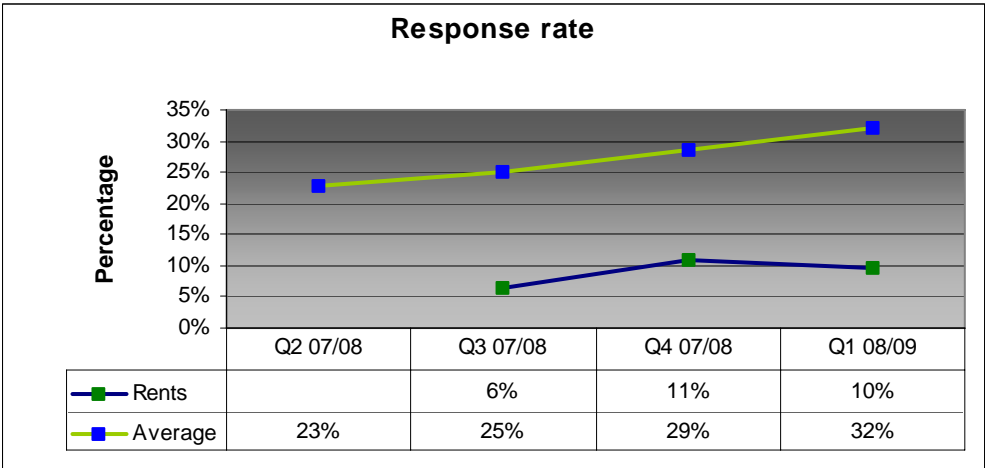
We note the increase in the percentage of those who go into arrears due to a delay in claiming the Housing Benefit, and have taken appropriate steps to counter this by initiating a drive of early contact with tenants whose claims have been suspended during last two weeks.

Another point to note is that the age of the survey respondents this quarter is slightly skewed towards respondents aged 21-39 when compared to the tenant population, which might impact upon satisfaction results.

**Methodology**

**Method used** The Customer satisfaction survey is based on the STATUS survey. Residents were selected randomly by their postcode, and a postal survey was conducted. The survey was carried out during Quarter 1 2008/09. All responses to the survey have been included.

**Response Rate** Quarter 1 had a 10% (52/536) response rate, a slight decrease from 11% response last quarter.



**Diversity information** The table below shows a breakdown of respondents by selected strands of equality.

Diversity strand		Survey sample	Tenant population
Ethnicity		51% BME	61% BME
Disability		30%	24%
Gender		67% Female	63% Female
Age	21-39	46%	33%
	40-59	33%	36%
	60-70	7%	15%
	71+	6%	14%