

BMHT Customer Survey Report

Introduction:

Following completion of the first BMHT schemes (September 2010 to July 2011) tenants were given a 'settling in' period followed by questionnaires and follow up visits by Development Officers.

It is important to us that these new homes meet the expectations of both our tenants and those who chose to buy a home.

This report details the results of the survey comprising 168 tenants.

Background:

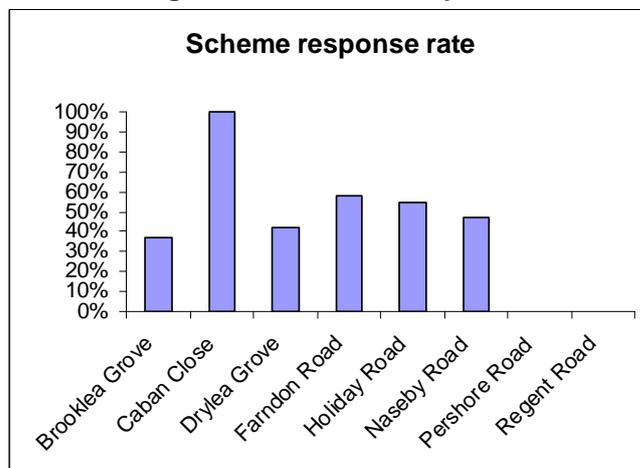
A Post Occupancy Survey (postal) of all 168 BMHT Council homes was carried out during summer 2011. The individual scheme details can be seen in table one.

Table one: properties in each scheme

Scheme	No' properties
Brooklea Grove	43
Caban Close	3
Drylea Grove	36
Farndon Road	12
Holiday Road	9
Naseby Road	15
Pershore Road	33
Regent Road	17

There were 53 responses representing a 31.5 per cent response rate (this represents a statistically accurate response for a postal survey). The response rates for each scheme are shown in figure one.

Figure one: scheme response rate



Given the small numbers of responses from specific schemes (for example a 100 per cent return rate at Caban Close but this is only 3 properties); regard must be taken about how this data is read and used and its significance.

The purpose of the survey was to collect information from residents about their experiences of their new home to date. In so doing, it was intended that residents would be given an opportunity to let the Council know about their thoughts and feelings as customers, whilst also helping the Council understand ways that it can improve the service that is offered in the future. It also provides an opportunity to consider the design of the new and future homes as part of a Service Improvement Plan.



The main objectives were to:

- Find out how satisfied the residents of the first tranches of BMHT homes were with their new home;
- Find out if there were any problems or issues with the new homes;
- Identify any areas of concern and areas for improvement in the future; and
- Give residents the opportunity to tell us what they thought of their homes in their own words.

The questions in the survey covered areas from design of the house including:

- kitchen and lounge,
- garden and outside space
- features of the house
- workmanship
- overall satisfaction.

This report will broadly follow the sections in the questionnaire when analysing the findings.

Findings

This section of the report will look at the overall findings of the survey. First it will highlight the main findings and overall satisfaction with the home alongside the best features and what residents would change. It will then focus on: design of home, workmanship and the garden and outside areas.

The main findings from the survey are shown in table two below.

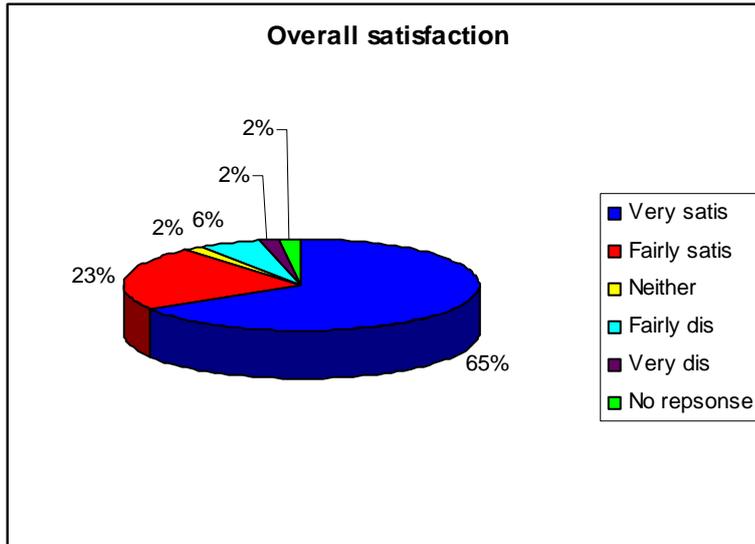
Table two

Main Findings
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) 88 per cent of respondents are satisfied with their new homes.2) Almost half of all respondents gave their new home a score of ten out of ten.3) A quarter of respondents felt the kitchen was the best feature.4) Many respondents could not think of anything that would make their property better. For some it would be a level garden, more storage space, bigger rooms and improved security.5) Overall respondents were happy with the design of their home, some issues highlighted were:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Location of back door;• Storage space;• Sound insulation; and• Radiator size and location.6) Size and shape of living rooms was an issue for Brooklea Grove, Drylea Grove, Farndon Road and Naseby Road respondents. This issue is not specific to corner house types.7) 15 per cent of respondents were unhappy with the finish of kitchen and bathroom floors; stating they are difficult to clean and only half tiled with the rest bare concrete.8) Over 90 per cent of respondents are satisfied with their garden, but the patios not being flat were mentioned.9) Garden fences are too low presenting a perceived security risk.10) Sheds raise particular issues such as position, amount of space taken up and blocking out natural light.11) Access to back gardens is an issue for residents in Drylea Grove.12) Some respondents felt the car parking space provided was too small.13) Eighty per cent of respondents were satisfied with the workmanship, but, the finishing, for example of floors and paint work, was highlighted as an issue.

Overall Satisfaction

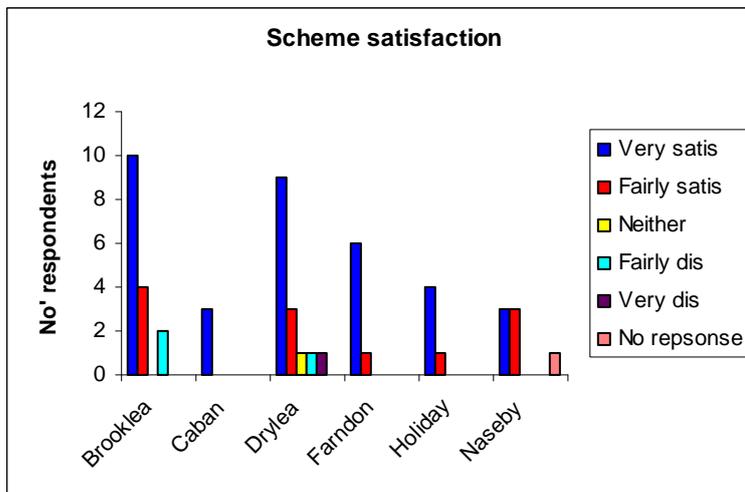
Figure two shows the overall satisfaction rates of respondents with their new homes, whilst figure three illustrates satisfaction levels for each scheme.

Figure two: satisfaction rates



Around 88 per cent of respondents are satisfied with their new home; indeed 66 per cent are very satisfied. Less than ten per cent are dissatisfied overall. When asked to rate their new home out of a score of ten 49 per cent of respondents gave it a ten. Only 19 per cent of respondents rated their new home five or below. Figure three illustrates satisfaction levels within each scheme.

Figure three: scheme satisfaction levels

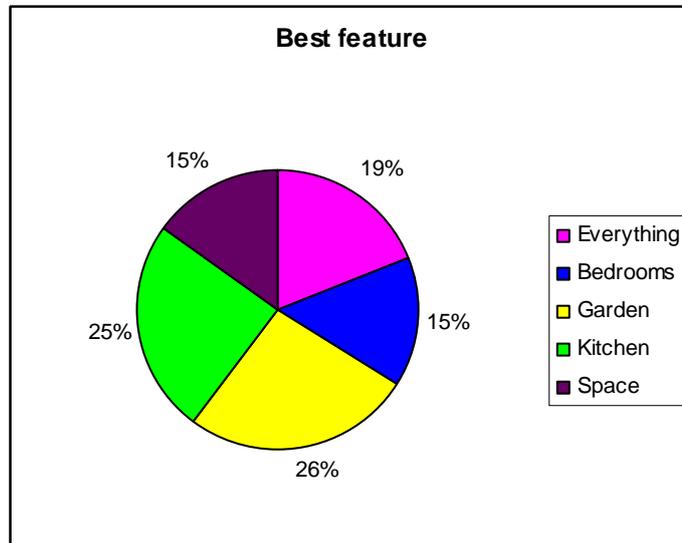


Most respondents are satisfied with their new homes, but in Brooklea Drive 12.5 per cent are dissatisfied and Drylea Grove 13 per cent. When asked to score their new homes out of ten only respondents in Brooklea Grove, Drylea Grove and Farndon Road gave a score less than five.

Best feature about your home

Respondents were asked what they thought was the best feature of their new home. Many said more than one and figure four shows the main features that were chosen as the best.

Figure four: best feature



A quarter of respondents felt that the kitchen was the best feature including size and layout. 26 per cent of respondents said the garden was the best feature, although when specific questions about the garden were analysed many respondents felt that the shape and slope of the garden was an issue.

Around 19 per cent of respondents felt that everything was the best feature with one respondent commenting:

"I love everything about my new home internally and externally. It is perfect"

One thing to improve in your home

Respondents were asked "If there was one thing that could make your home better what would it be"?

Many of the responses were that there was nothing that would make their home better. The main features that were mentioned were:



- A level garden;
- More storage space;
- Bigger rooms including living room and bedrooms; and
- Security issues such as a different lock on the front door, railings for the front garden and higher fences in the back garden.

Design of home

Respondents were asked to comment on the design features of their home and how satisfied there were. Whilst the overall levels of satisfaction were positive, there did appear to be concerns raised by respondents:

- **Sound insulation**

Whilst half of respondents chose 'very satisfied' with the sound insulation around 19 per cent were dissatisfied. When asked to comment across all of the schemes residents pointed out that they could hear their neighbours, especially going up the stairs. In one case they commented that they could hear the voices and teeth brushing of their neighbours. Examples of this are:

"I can hear neighbours talking and loud noise when someone goes up and down the stairs" (Drylea Grove two bed)

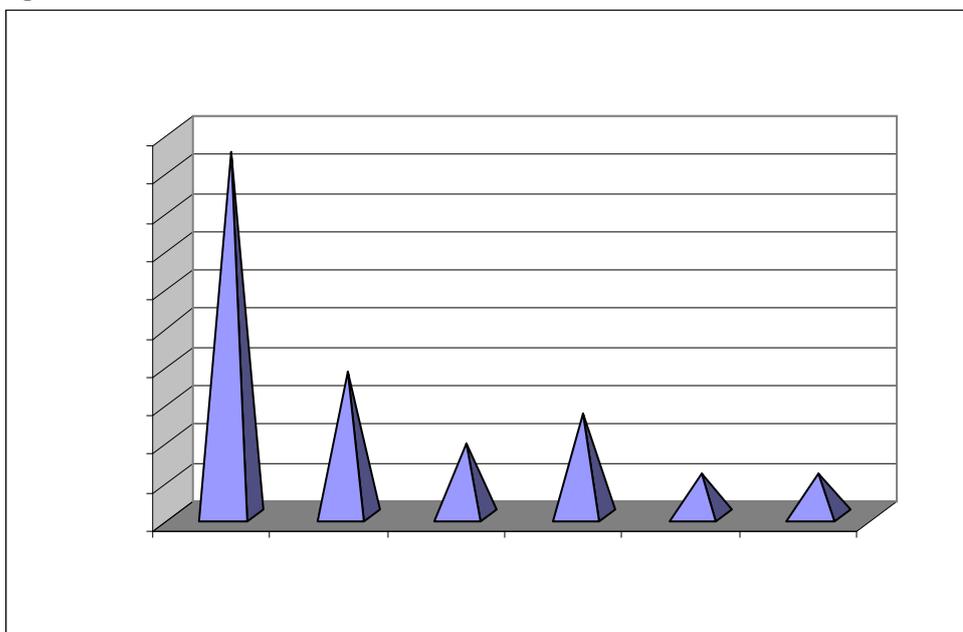
"Can hear neighbours brushing teeth and the taps Downstairs". (Naseby Road three bed)

It may be useful to cross check the design/location of the housing for a number of issues:

- 1) Where complaints are about noise on stairs, is this due to no carpet or floor covering?
- 2) Is the home detached/semi detached or located within a terrace?
- 3) Is the noise from outside also a problem?

Figure five shows the satisfaction levels for sound insulation.

Figure five: satisfaction sound insulation



- **Storage space**

Whilst the majority of respondents reported that they were 'very satisfied' or 'fairly satisfied' with storage in their property, 12 per cent were dissatisfied with the space available. Half of the dissatisfied respondents lived in four bed houses and stated that it would be nice to be able to use the loft for storage space. Figure six illustrates the satisfaction levels with storage space and figure seven the satisfaction levels for each scheme.

Figure six: satisfaction storage space

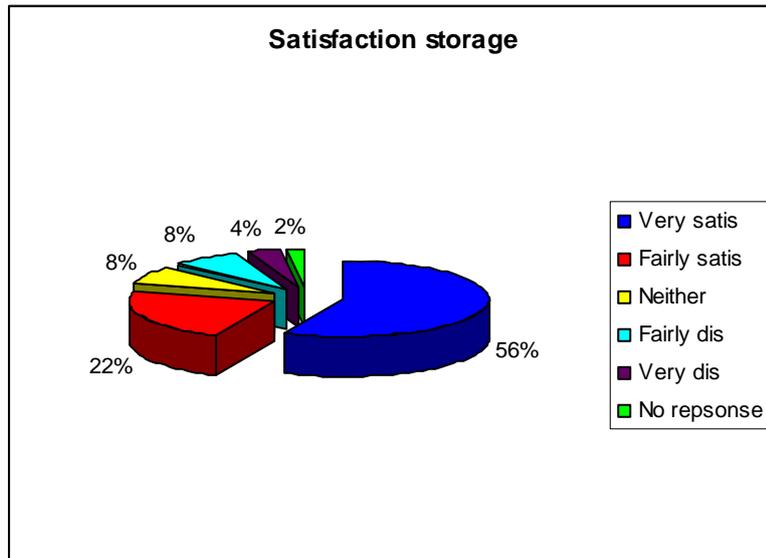
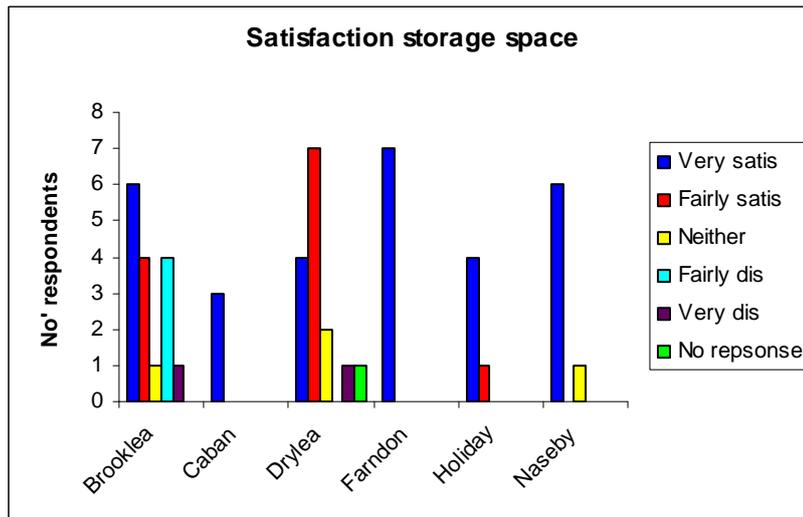


Figure seven: scheme satisfaction storage space



Other concerns rose included:

- **Location of the back door**

Some respondents were unhappy with the location of the back door and were concerned with its location in the living room. A respondent in a three bed home in Caban Close stated:

“I don’t like the back door in the living room”.



Some gardens had to be accessed from the front of the house i.e. going out the front door and round to the back. As one respondent in Drylea Grove stated:

“Garden entrance from outside was useless as it was not secure to let the children go outside alone to enter the garden”.

This issue was specific to Drylea Grove where five properties have a rear door in the living room that opens out at the side of the property within the second car parking space in the car port. The fence and gate to the rear garden is behind the car parking space and there is no direct access out of the property into the rear garden. This house type obtained secure by design accreditation and a mortice lock has now been installed in lieu of a bolt to the rear garden gate.

- **Radiators**

Some respondents commented that the radiators were too small in Brooklea Grove and Drylea Grove and that the location was not appropriate. For example in a four bed home in Brooklea Grove the living room radiator was located close to the TV socket which could present a potential hazard.

- **Size and shape of living room**

Seventy five per cent of respondents were satisfied with the shape and size of the living room. But 17 per cent were dissatisfied, with eight per cent being very dissatisfied. The main dissatisfaction with the size and shape of the living room is that the shape is unusual making it difficult and expensive to carpet and that the room is too small or narrow. The most dissatisfaction is with two bed properties and being too small is the main reason for dissatisfaction with three bed or larger properties.

“It’s a weird shape and very expensive to carpet”. (Brooklea Grove 2 bed).

Respondents in Drylea Grove were most dissatisfied with the shape and size of the living room.

- **Kitchen and dining room**

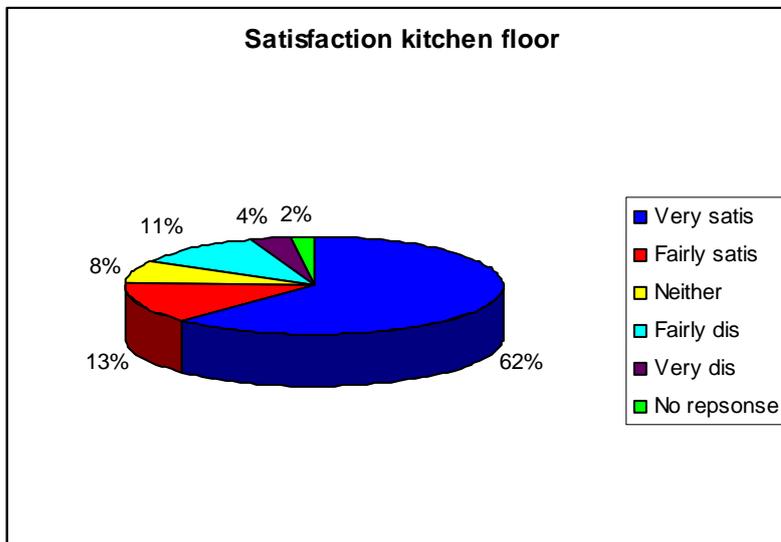
Only two respondents were dissatisfied with the kitchen and dining area overall, but there were specific issues raised regarding the kitchen floor as 15 per cent of respondents were unhappy with this feature. 11 per cent of respondents commented that the floor was difficult to clean as the surface was not smooth and hence attracted dirt. This was an issue highlighted in both Brooklea Grove and Drylea Grove. In addition a few respondents commented that it would have been nice for the floor to be complete as one section was left as plain concrete. As a resident in Brooklea Grove stated:



*“Floor was concrete, not even tiled and had to go into debt to carpet!”
(2 bed)*

Figure eight shows the satisfaction levels with the kitchen floors.

Figure eight: satisfaction kitchen floor



- **Bathrooms and WC**

Overall 81 per cent of respondents were happy with the bathroom and WCs, but 13 per cent were unhappy with the floor. The comments were similar to those for the kitchen floor in that it is not easy to clean. Twenty eight per cent of respondents commented on the bathroom and over half stated that there were issues with the fittings such as: toilet sink being too small, floor covering being raised, tiles being cracked and fittings falling off.

- **Bedrooms**

Satisfaction levels were high for bedrooms, but there were a few comments that rooms were too small and a difficult shape to carpet. The problem seemed to be that in the smallest bedroom there was only room for a bed and chest of drawers, no wardrobe. This was a particular problem for a household where there are three adults and where children have to share a room. Size was an issue for three, four and five bed homes and shape for two, four and five beds.

Garden and outside area

- **Garden**

Over 90 per cent of respondents were satisfied with their back gardens, though comments were made that the garden, and in one case the patio, was not flat so they could not use garden furniture.



- **Car parking & kerbs**

Some respondents felt that the car parking space provided was too small (11 per cent) and that a drop kerb at Naseby Road would have been useful (note dropped kerbs are being provided in this scheme but have been delayed).

- **Garden fences**

84 per cent of respondents were satisfied with the fence/walls, but there were concerns about the height which allows children to walk on or jump over them. *“Walls in front too small so kids walking and jumping over them everyday”. (Naseby 3 bed)*

“Fences are low so kids can climb and jump over”. (Drylea 5 bed)

The height of the walls and fencing complies with Secure by Design criteria for new homes and planning requirements. Walls/railings to front gardens act as a physical demarcation between public and private space and are designed to deter people from sitting on them. Fencing to perimeters of rear gardens are 1.8m high. Privacy panels between adjacent properties are 1.8m high for a distance of 2m and the remaining dividing boundary is a lower height to allow interaction between neighbours and natural surveillance.

Two respondents stated that the fences were cracked and panels loose with nails sticking out

- **Garden shed**

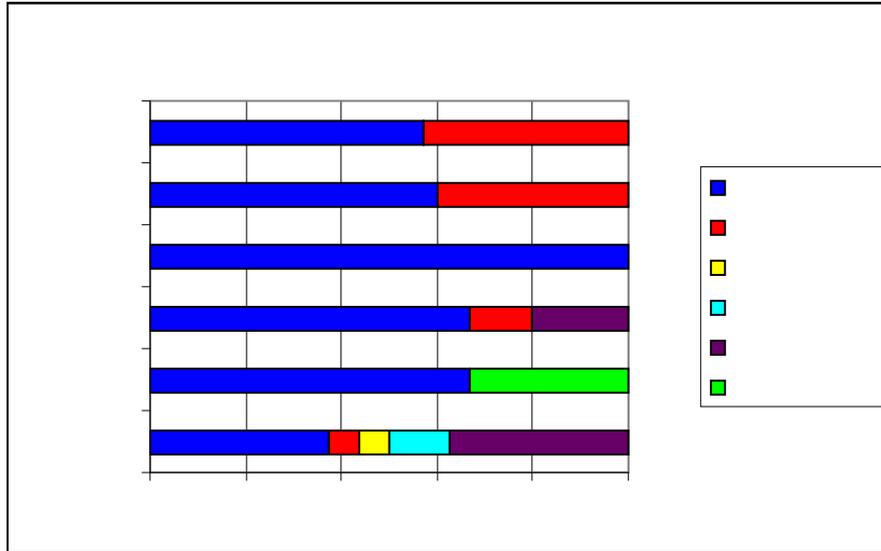
Although 75 per cent of respondents were satisfied with the shed 21 per cent expressed some dissatisfaction. The position of the shed appeared to be an issue in that it was either too close to the home, left in the middle of the garden or by the back door and took up a lot of space. Some respondents were seeking to move the shed themselves.

“By the back door and blocks out light”. (Brooklea Grove 2 bed)

The shed being too close to the home or taking up a lot of space was a particular issue for respondents in Drylea Grove.

Figure nine shows satisfaction levels with the garden shed for each scheme.

Figure nine: satisfaction garden sheds



- **Access**

Access to the garden was an issue for two respondents in Drylea Grove. Some households have to access their garden through a gate at the side of the house.

Features

Most respondents were happy with the features of their new homes, but 13 per cent were unhappy with the television reception and 11 per cent with the rotary clothes dryer.

Eight respondents reported problems with television reception, with a major issue being that the digital areas have not yet been sorted and there is limited terrestrial provision. Also, some cable access is located by a radiator presenting a potential fire hazard. In addition some respondents pointed out that cable television is very expensive.

In respect of the rotary dryers some respondents found that they were not sturdy or had not been fitted into the ground properly.

In respect of solar panels four respondents stated that they had yet to make a difference to their electricity bill. When asked for general comments about their new home it was solar panels that were mainly mentioned. In general there was confusion around the solar panels and how to use them correctly and that electricity bills were still high.

Workmanship

Nearly 80 per cent of respondents were satisfied with the workmanship in their home, but 14 per cent were dissatisfied. The areas of dissatisfaction were mainly related to the finishing of the properties. Respondents felt that the standard of finish was poor, some commented there were cracks in the walls and the paintwork was not complete.

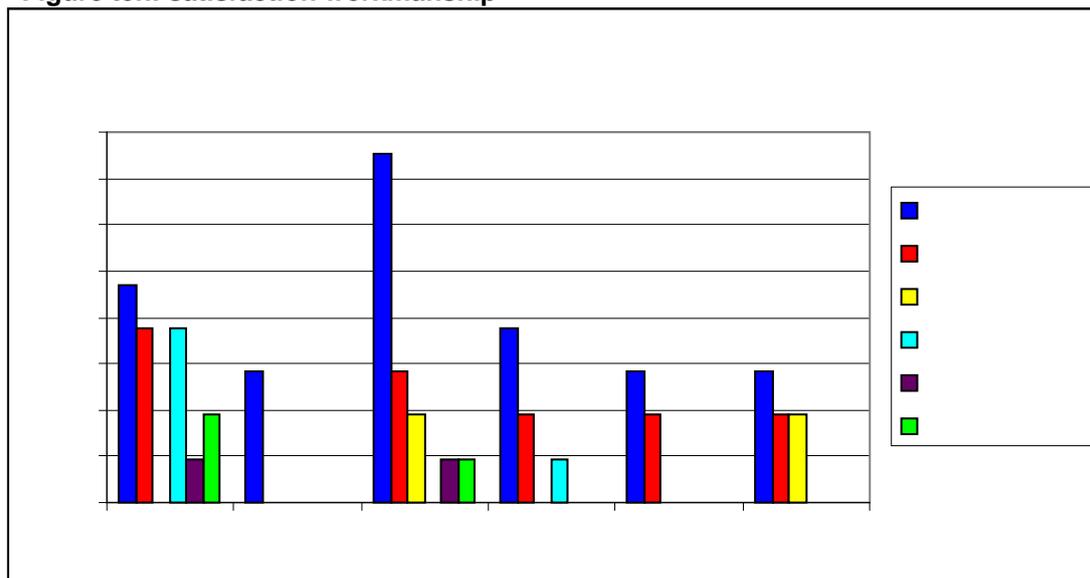
“Think whole project was rushed and not completed to standard stated”. (Brooklea Grove 2 bed)

“Building is excellent, but we have to get workmen back on a regular basis as jobs weren’t finished”. (Brooklea Grove 3 bed)

Twenty four per cent of respondents commented on the workmanship and the majority were to do with completion of minor jobs and the finishing.

Figure ten illustrates the satisfaction levels for each scheme with workmanship.

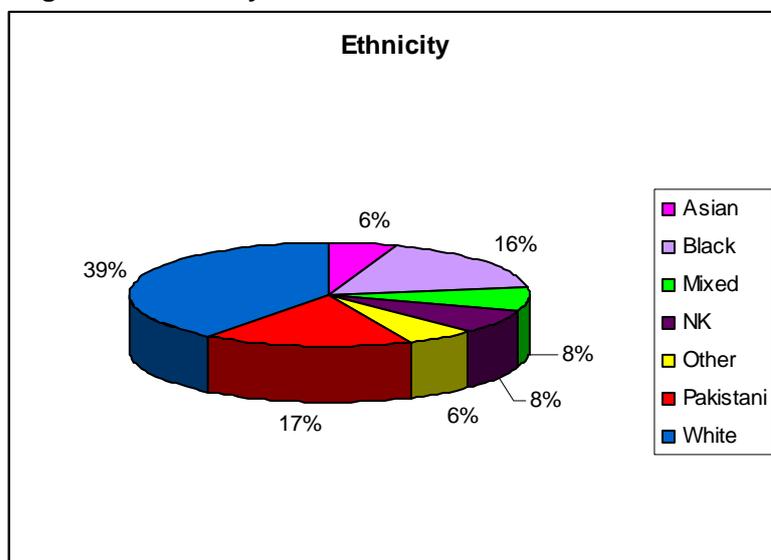
Figure ten: satisfaction workmanship



Ethnicity

Figure 11 illustrates the ethnic breakdown of respondents.

Figure 11: ethnicity



Overall there were no specific differences between the ethnic groups in their satisfaction levels and views of their new homes. This is probably related to the number of respondents which when broken down into ethnic groups becomes statistically unreliable.

Overall most respondents were satisfied with their new homes, but it is the White group who were more likely to be dissatisfied. (Note, it was only three respondents).

In respect of sound insulation of those dissatisfied 50 per cent are White.

Of those most dissatisfied with their patio, 77 per cent are White.

Conclusion

Overall most respondents were satisfied with their new home. Any dissatisfaction appears to be related to the finishing of homes, the shape and size of rooms, the position of sheds, the height of fences and sound insulation. It is these issues that respondents have told us about in their own words that are important and can help to shape and improve future schemes.

A Service Improvement Plan has been developed to implement changes to the specification, where possible, to ensure that the lessons learned from the survey are acted upon. It will not always be possible to design out all of the issues raised, for example, room sizes, as the BMHT homes are built to HCA standards and our ability to increase house sizes would be dependent on additional funding being available. One option, however, in relation to 3 and 4 bedroom accommodation might be to design for a lower occupancy. This

would mean building 3 bedroom 4 person and 4 bedroom 5 person houses to equalise the size of the bedrooms.

Garden shapes and sizes, similarly, are a result of the location of the development, and it is not always possible to have square, level gardens. In this case, it is important that these matters are raised at letting stage to ensure prospective tenants are happy before agreeing to let the property. The new BMHT Landscape Design Guide has been developed alongside colleagues in Landscape Practice Group and Planning to assist developers who build the homes to pay more regard to hard and soft landscaping on future schemes.

With regard to dropped kerbs, it is acknowledged that there has been a problem with the provision of these at Naseby and Farndon Roads and this is to be rectified by the contractor in collaboration with the Council. Similarly, with the standard of workmanship at some schemes, it is acknowledged that standards were lower than would normally be acceptable and this was as a result of practical completion and letting being required in order for the Council to claim funding by the deadline date, and was exacerbated by inclement weather in late 2010/early 2011.

It is intended that a report of these findings will be sent to all construction partners on the forthcoming Contractors Framework to ensure that they also embed the learning from tenant's views.

If you live in a BMHT home and would like to tell us what you think about it, please contact us at the following address, your feedback is welcomed:

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