

# ***Charter Housing Association***

*Welsh Housing Quality Standard  
Customer Consultation*

*Tenant Survey Report 2005*



*Prepared by:*  
Priority Research Ltd

© Priority Research Ltd - 2005

*On behalf of:*  
Charter Housing Association



Member of the Seren Group



## **PROVIDERS OF PUBLIC CONSULTATION AND RESEARCH**

---

**Priority Research Ltd, Craven House,  
Manse Lane, Knaresborough HG5 8ET  
Tel: 01423 867955  
Fax: 01423 869876  
e-mail: [info@priority-research.com](mailto:info@priority-research.com)  
internet: <http://www.priority-research.com>**

# Contents

	Page
<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2. Summary of Main Findings</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>3. Survey Results</b>	
- 3.1 Demographic information	9
- 3.2 Adaptations	15
- 3.3 Welsh Housing Quality Standards	19
- 3.4 'Street' properties	27
- 3.5 Priorities for property improvements	31
<b>4. Appendices</b>	
- 4.1 Methodology	47
- 4.2 Sample questionnaire	51
- 4.3 Data summary	65

This page is intentionally left blank

---

# 1. Introduction

# 1. Introduction

## *Background*

Fairlake Properties Ltd, acting on behalf of Charter Housing Association, engaged Priority Research to conduct a survey of tenants during summer 2005. The survey was intended to consult tenants on Charter's proposals for improving its homes to meet the Welsh Assembly Government's Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) by 2012. Tenants' views, aspirations and priorities captured through the survey will be used to shape Charter's WHQS Home Improvement Programme.

## *Aims and objectives*

The main objective was to assess customers' opinions regarding:

- Level of support for Charter's proposals for improving its homes to WHQS
- Support for particularly expensive/disruptive improvement work
- How to deal with older 'street' properties that might not fully meet the standard
- How to deal with the affordability of improving Charter's homes to WHQS

In addition, PRL's unique "Priority Search" methodology would help to establish tenants' priorities for which aspects of the Home Improvement Programme should be done first.

## *The survey*

The questionnaires were distributed to all tenant households during July/August 2005. A reminder questionnaire and a free prize draw were also used to encourage the response rate. A sample of 1750 tenants successfully completed and returned questionnaires by the closing date, a response rate of 48%.

Readers should take care when considering percentage results from some of the sub groups within the main sample, as the base figures may sometimes be small. Due to rounding some graphs may not add up to 100%. Unless otherwise stated, all statistically significant differences are reported at the 95% confidence level. Therefore, a difference between two groups is usually considered statistically significant if chance could explain it only 5% of the time or less. This calculation relies on a number of factors such as the base figure and the level of variance, both within and between sample groups, thereby taking into account more than just the simple percentage difference.

Further details of the methodology can be found in section 4.1.

---

## 2. Summary of main findings

## 2. Summary of main findings

### 2.1 Level of support for the home improvement programme

- 2.1.1 The Welsh Assembly Government's Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) obliges every Housing Association and Local Authority in Wales to bring their homes up to the required standard by 2012, and to consult with their tenants on the specific proposals to do so. The key aspects of Charter's proposed home improvement programme were therefore presented to tenants, and they were asked whether or not they supported each proposal in turn.
- 2.1.2 From the general pattern of results it appears clear that no more than 10% of respondents disagreed with any of the proposals, although in a number of instances the largest single category was those who did not express any opinion at all (p.22-23). In addition, the pattern of support matched reasonably closely with respondents' priorities for which aspects of the improvement work should be tackled first (see p.33).
- 2.1.3 When respondents who disagreed with any of the proposals were asked why they disagreed, for most of the improvements the primary reason given was that they were happy with their home as it was (see p.23-27). This figure was generally around 60%-70%, with typically 20%-30% claiming that the money was better spent elsewhere.
- 2.1.4 Two of the proposals that generated the lowest degree of support were ones which were likely to be particularly disruptive or expensive to implement – namely installing a shed in the back garden of houses and providing a level area of 10m<sup>2</sup> outside (10% and 9% disagreed respectively, p.21).
- 2.1.5 The highest level of support for improvement schemes that might prove problematic was the installation of showers over baths, which over three quarters of the sample supported (76%), including two thirds who strongly supported it (67%). This high level of support was in part influenced by younger respondents, with 82% of the under 40s feeling this way. The majority of the sample (60%) also supported the proposal for renewing fencing between rear gardens (p.21).
- 2.1.6 Changing the layout of kitchens in older street properties, another particularly expensive and disruptive scheme, was less likely to gain support than simply upgrading the units and other fittings (59% and 76% respectively supported these proposals). However, amongst householders living in street properties, the former (changing the layout of kitchens) was more popular (68% supported, 5% did not support, p.22).
- 2.1.7 Those proposals that generated the greatest levels of support unsurprisingly included works to most of the major components of the home such as kitchens, bathrooms and boilers. However, the highest level of support was for doors and windows to be upgraded to the Police 'Secured by Design' standard (79%, including 68% who strongly supported it). Another important result was the prominence given to Charter's proposal to tackle any serious health and safety hazards in the home or garden should they arise, rather than specific component renewals. Three quarters of the sample gave their support to this proposal (including 60% who strongly supported it, p.21).

## 2. Summary of main findings

### 2.2 Specific requirements for street properties

- 2.2.1 Over a quarter of respondents in the sample said that they lived in older properties on residential streets (28%, p.28), and this group were of particular interest because many of them lived in homes where it might prove particularly disruptive or expensive to comply fully with the WHQS.
- 2.2.2 Should any of the WHQS design standards prove impractical to fully achieve, tenants in these properties were much more likely to want to remain in their home regardless rather than move out (75% and 17% respectively). In fact, over half of this group were unequivocal in stating a clear preference for remaining in their current home (55%). This preference was especially marked for those who had lived in their home for 21 years or more (77% would definitely stay, p.30-31).
- 2.2.3 Interestingly, the main reasons given for wanting to stay were all related to the location of the property, either in general (75% mentioned this), or the proximity to family/friends, local facilities or public transport. Tellingly, almost half (45%) also mentioned the sense of community spirit in their area. In all, 93% of those who would want to stay in their home mentioned at least one aspect of the area it was situated in, something that could not necessarily be replicated by fully WHQS compliant properties in an alternate location (p.28).
- 2.2.4 Indeed, when the sample as a whole were asked which way Charter should proceed if the required design standards of their home could not be fully met for whatever reason, the clear consensus was for Charter to focus on what it could afford (77%) rather than for there to be higher rents to cover the cost of the work (9%). Furthermore, this sentiment was even stronger amongst respondents who lived in the street properties most likely to be affected by this (81% and 7% respectively for the two options, p.29).

### 2.3 Specific requirements for adaptations

- 2.3.1 Just less than half of the sample (44%) said that someone in their household had a longstanding illness, disability or infirmity.
- 2.3.2 Over a third (36%) of those households that had a member with a disability or long term illness thought that some adaptations were required, compared to only 11% of that group who already had some adaptations. Indeed, almost half (47%) of those whose home had already been adapted thought that more work was needed, either now or in the future (40 households). In absolute terms, those who felt they needed some adaptations in the home, either now or in the future, represented 16% of the full sample (p.17).
- 2.3.3 The most commonly requested additional adaptation was an accessible shower or bath, which was mentioned by 70% of those who thought some work might need doing (11% of all respondents). Other common adaptations that people thought they might need included mobility aids (27%), stairlifts (22%) or wheelchair access (15%, p.17).

## 2. Summary of main findings

### 2.4 Priorities for the home improvement programme

- 2.4.1 In addition to being asked their support for various proposals all in isolation to one another, respondents were also asked to prioritise the various improvements in comparison with one another. Due to the fact that the target for meeting the standard is 2012, this information would help Charter to schedule its WHQS Home Improvement Programme in line with its tenants' priorities (p.33).
- 2.4.2 The overall order of the priorities was not entirely dissimilar from the levels of support for each of the various proposals, although due to the comparison of the items to one another, there were some variations. The top seven priorities, from a list of eighteen, were as follows:
- "Doors and windows upgraded to Police 'Secured by Design' standard"
  - "Boiler renewed and central heating system upgraded"
  - "Kitchen replaced to modern space & layout standards & not more than 15 years old"
  - "Bathroom suite upgraded to a modern standard"
  - "Serious health and safety hazards dealt with"
  - "Shower installed over the bath"
  - "Electrical safety system and smoke alarm(s) upgraded" (p.33)
- 2.4.3 It is apparent from the results in this section that the appeal of 'Secured by Design' door and window security measures is even stronger than at first indicated. Indeed, 11% of respondents to the Priority Search section of the questionnaire placed 'Secured by Design' as their number one priority, with a third in total (33%) having placed it in their top three (p.32-33)
- 2.4.4 Kitchens and bathrooms were also well represented in the top half of the priority list, as was to be expected. Respondents living in older street properties were the most likely to prioritise kitchen replacements (p.35), bathrooms seemed to be more of an issue in Charter's oldest properties, whilst the desire for a shower over a bath was also particularly marked in smaller properties and/or new build homes (p.36).
- 2.4.5 It was surprising that dealing with general health and safety hazards as part of the home improvement programme was as high as it was in the priority list (fifth place). In fact, just under a quarter of the sample placed it somewhere in their top three priorities (23%). A further insight into this result was that it appeared to be the dominant priority amongst respondents aged 80 or over, although, this was also the joint second highest priority for 16 - 25 year olds (p.42).
- 2.4.6 Obviously, the ordering of priorities overall did not always faithfully represent the agenda of every sub group within the sample, with some of the items that appeared lower or higher in the list for some groups compared to others. Therefore further detailed analysis was also carried out to understand the differing needs of Charter's tenants. This analysis was carried out both on a per improvement basis (p.35-41) and also in terms of the top priorities for specific demographic groups (p.42-45). This included detailed results by lettings area, which will help Charter to understand tenants' priorities at a local neighbourhood level, in addition to this overall summary.

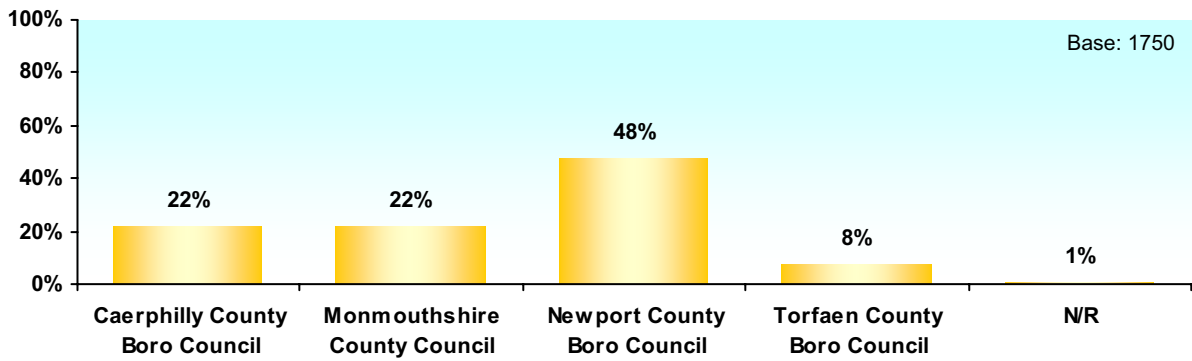
## **Survey results**

---

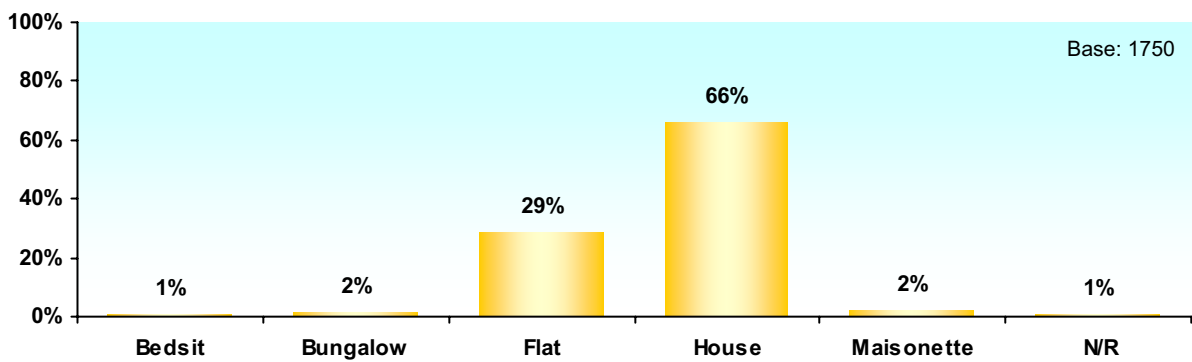
### **3.1 Demographic information**

# 3.1 Demographic information

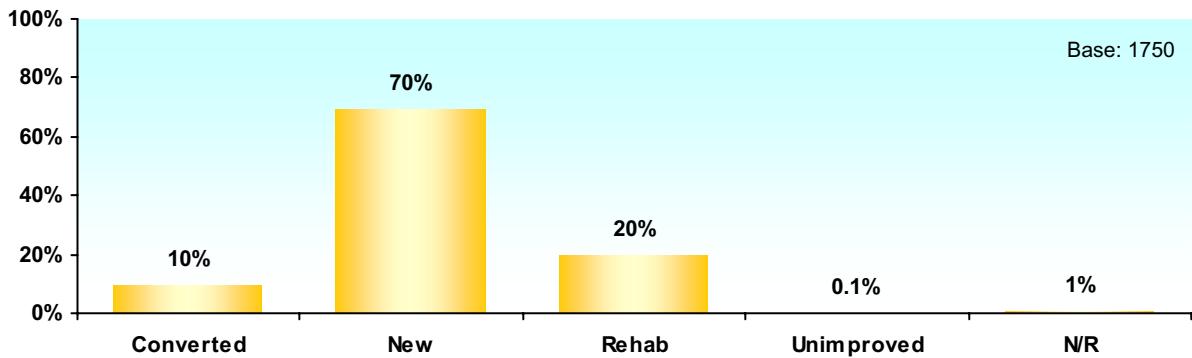
## 3.1.1 Local Authority area



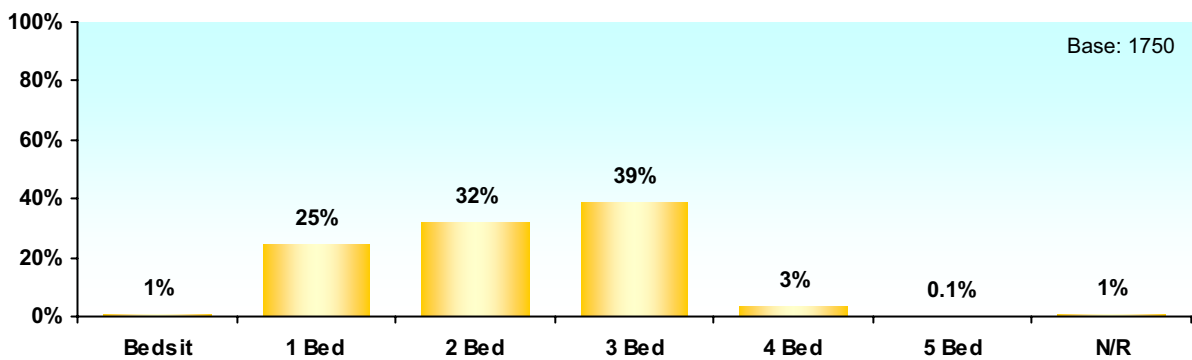
## 3.1.2 Property type



## 3.1.3 Build type

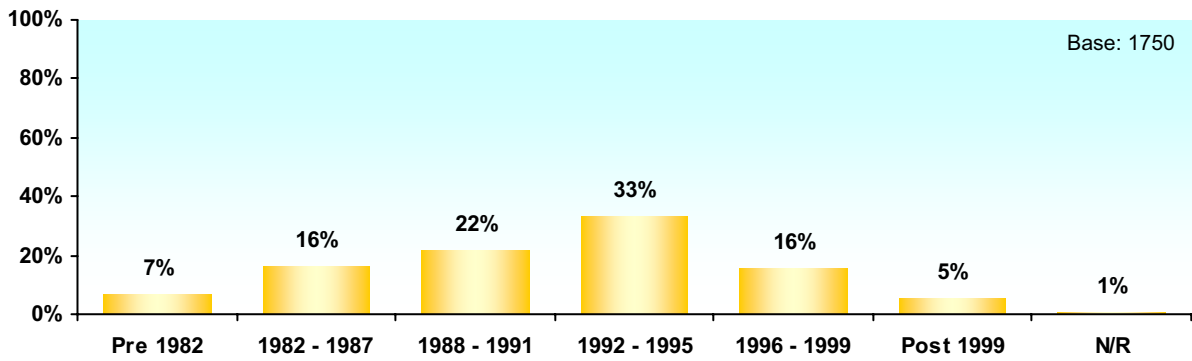


## 3.1.4 Property size

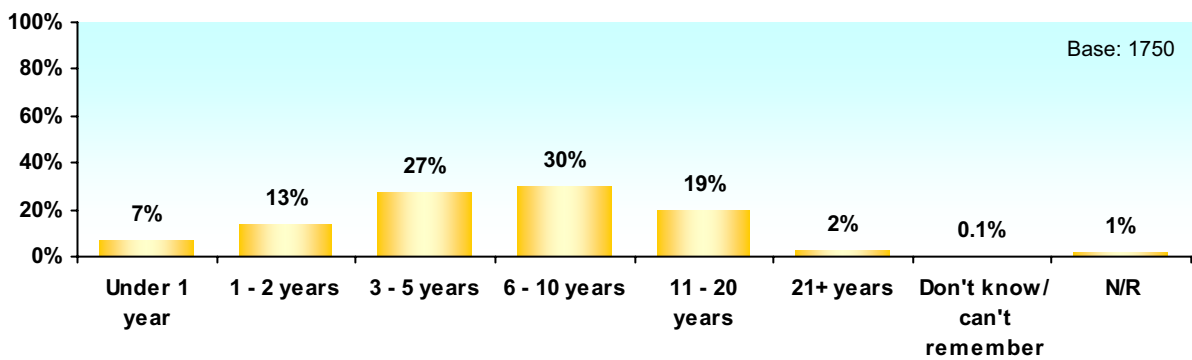


# 3.1 Demographic information

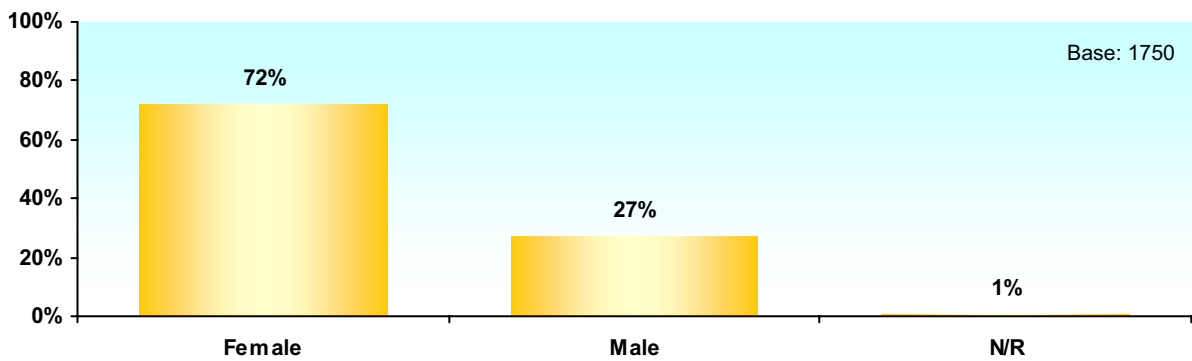
## 3.1.5 Property age



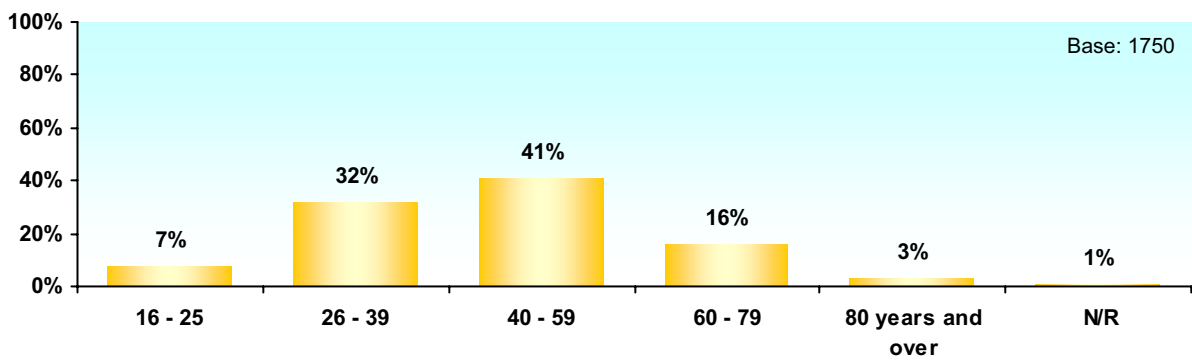
## 3.1.6 How long have you/your household lived in your current home?



## 3.1.7 Gender:



## 3.1.8 Age:

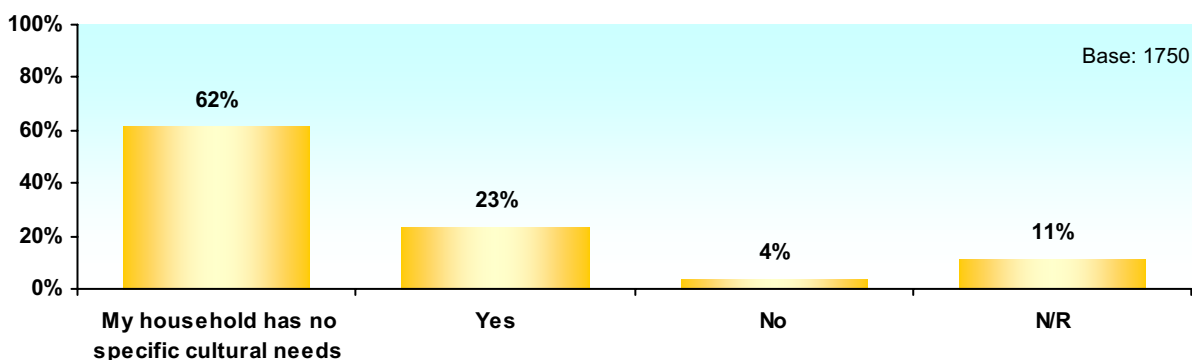


# 3.1 Demographic information

## 3.1.9 Ethnicity

White				Mixed				Asian or Asian British				Black or Black British			Other		N/R	Base
British	Irish	Welsh	Other White	White & Black Caribbean	White & Black African	White & Black Asian	Other mixed	Indian	Pakistani	Bangladeshi	Other Asian	Caribbean	African	Other black	Chinese	Other ethnic group		
44%	0.6%	51%	0.5%	0.4%	0.1%	0.1%	0.2%	0.2%	0.3%	0%	0.2%	0.6%	0.2%	0.1%	0%	0.3%	1.5%	1750

## 3.1.10 Does your home meet the specific cultural needs of your household?



## Commentary

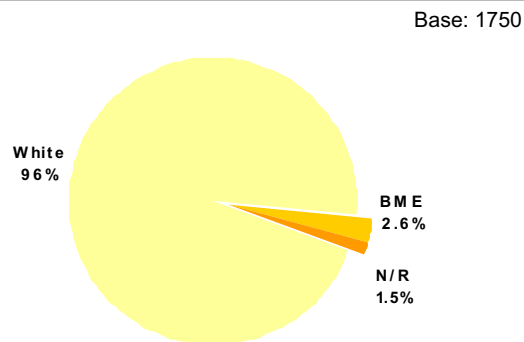
The respondent population predominantly described themselves as White (96%). The remaining 2.6% of tenants who answered the question came from a variety of black and minority ethnic groups (BME), which equated to 46 individuals.

A question was asked of all respondents about whether their home meets the specific cultural needs of the household, which when analysed for the BME respondents in the sample revealed only one respondent who said that this was not the case. This respondent was mixed White and Black Caribbean, and said that their specific cultural need was for a shower over the bath. A further 15 BME respondents (23% of the total) said that they did have specific cultural needs, but that their home was appropriate for these requirements.

This meant that that almost all of the 4% of the sample who claimed that their home did not meet their cultural needs were actually White British or Welsh, and of these 69 respondents only 46 gave a reason for their answer. Virtually all of these reasons were actually just repairs and maintenance requests, although three respondents did mention that they had mixed sex siblings sharing a bedroom. In addition, one White female respondent in her twenties did claim that "the street is far from supportive of our psychological spiritual or family needs".

That there was no strong evidence for any particular problems in meeting the cultural needs of tenants at present was supported by the fact that there was a low level of support for addressing these issues as part of the home improvement programme (see p.20 and 33).

## 3.1.11 Ethnicity

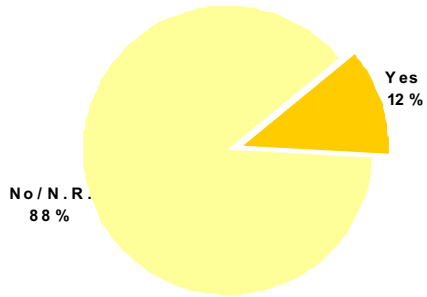


# 3.1 Demographic information

## In your household:

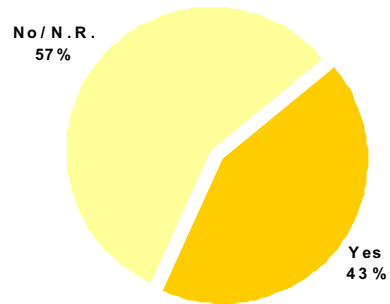
3.1.12 Is anyone aged 65 or over (including yourself)?

Base: 1750



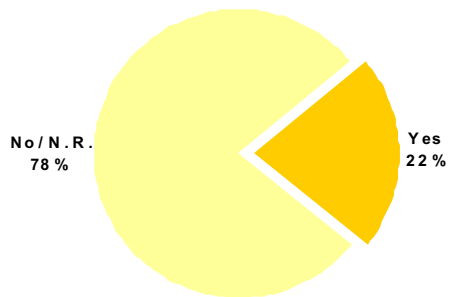
3.1.13 Do you have a child/children aged under 16?

Base: 1750



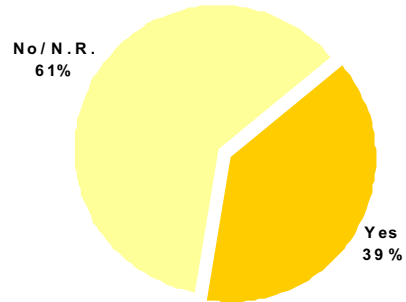
3.1.14 Do you have a child/children aged 16 or over?

Base: 1750



3.1.15 Do you live on your own?

Base: 1750



This page is intentionally left blank

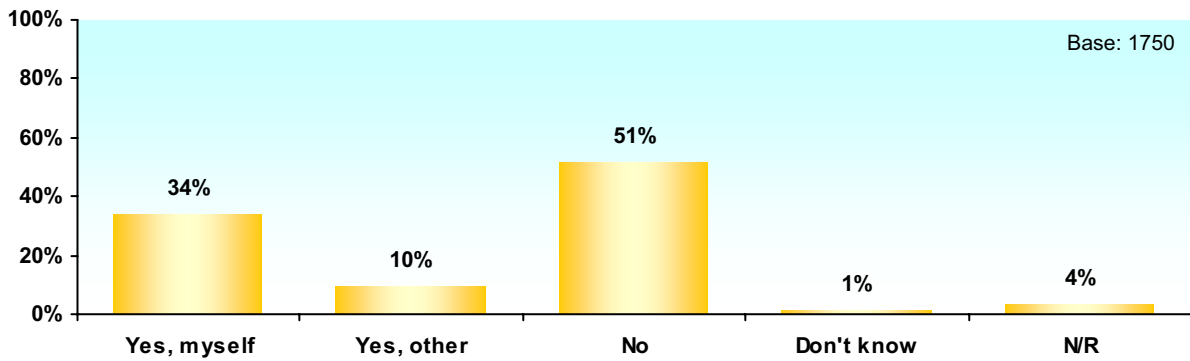
## **Survey results**

---

### **3.2 Adaptations**

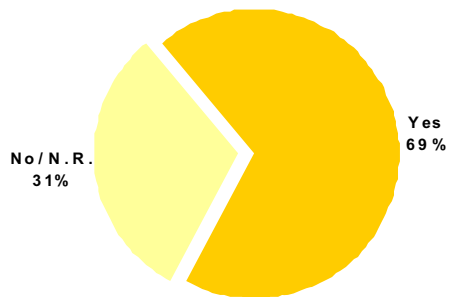
## 3.2 Adaptations

### 3.2.1 Does anyone in your household have any longstanding illness, disability or infirmity?



### 3.2.2 Does this limit their activities in any way?

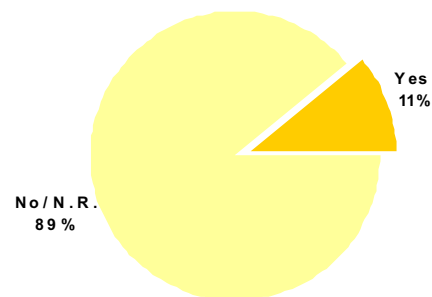
Base: 771



*Note: Respondent households with someone who is long term ill, disabled or infirm*

### 3.2.3 Is your home one which has been specially adapted?

Base: 771



*Note: Respondent households with someone who is long term ill, disabled or infirm*

### 3.2.4 Does your home need further adaptations, now or in the future?

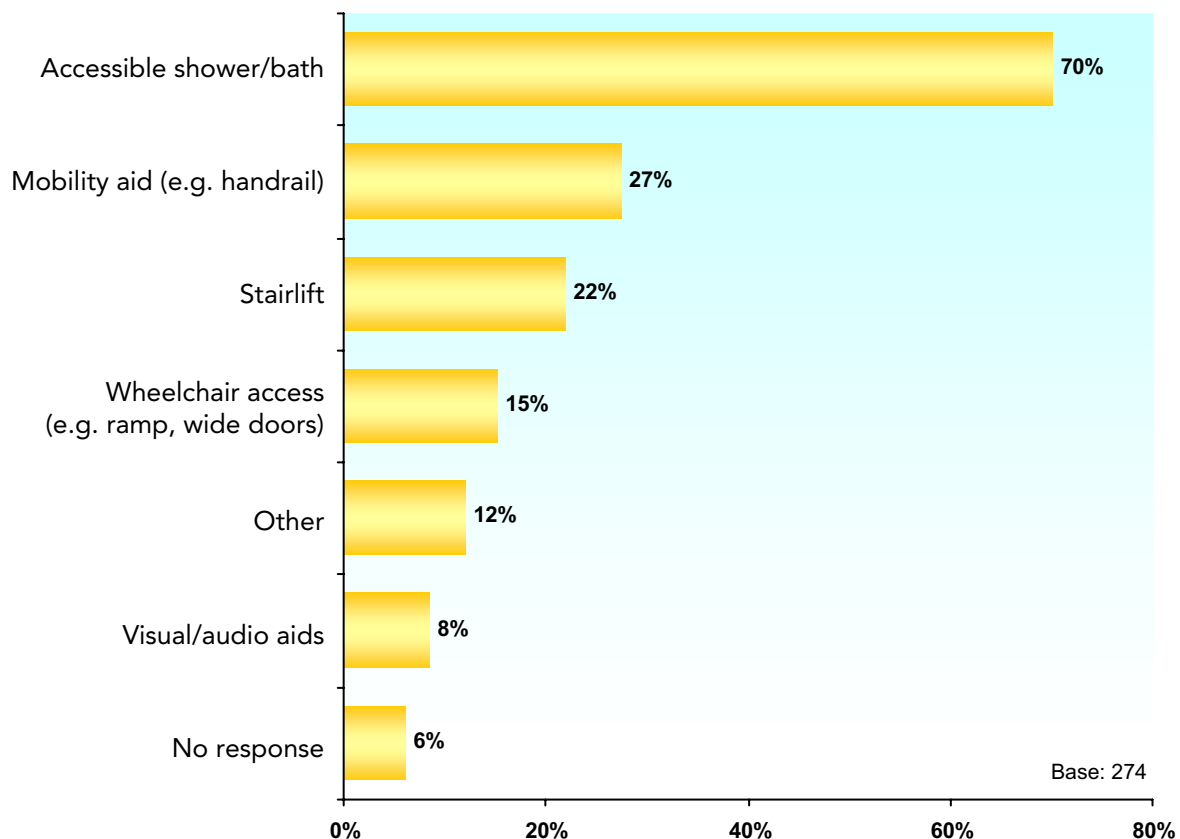
Base: 771



*Note: Respondent households with someone who is long term ill, disabled or infirm*

## 3.2 Adaptations

### 3.2.5 What type of adaptations do you think you might need?



Note: Respondents who feel their home needs further adaptations, now or in the future

### Commentary

Just less than half of the sample (44%) said that someone in their household had a longstanding illness, disability or infirmity. Most of this group said that it put some limits on the activities of that individual (69%), a figure that represented 30% of the entire sample.

Over a third (36%) of those households that had a member with a disability or long term illness thought that some adaptations were required, compared to only 11% of that group who already had some adaptations. Indeed, almost half (47%) of those whose home had already been adapted thought that more work was needed, either now or in the future (40 households). In absolute terms, those who felt they needed some adaptations in the home, either now or in the future, represented 16% of the full sample.

The most commonly requested additional adaptation was an accessible shower or bath, which was mentioned by 70% of those who thought some work might need doing (11% of all respondents). The importance of this type of adaptation for those people who needed it was made particularly clear by the fact that this group placed having a "shower installed over the bath" higher in their list of priorities for improvement compared to average (p.36). Indeed, it was the second highest priority for this group.

Other common adaptations that people thought they might need included mobility aids (27%), stairlifts (22%) or wheelchair access (15%). In addition, 12% of those who answered the question suggested adaptations that were not mentioned on the questionnaire. These were mainly more specific examples of the broad categories within the questionnaire, with the accessibility of shower and bath facilities again featuring strongly. However, a number of respondents mentioned a downstairs toilets (7 people), whilst 3 mentioned that they might need taps that were easier to use.

Some of the other adaptations that were mentioned included 5 people who wanted their garden to be more accessible, and 7 who wanted more appropriate kitchens for their needs with lower cupboards and worktops. In addition, 5 respondents mentioned specific problems with accessibility and storage of power scooters.

This page is intentionally left blank

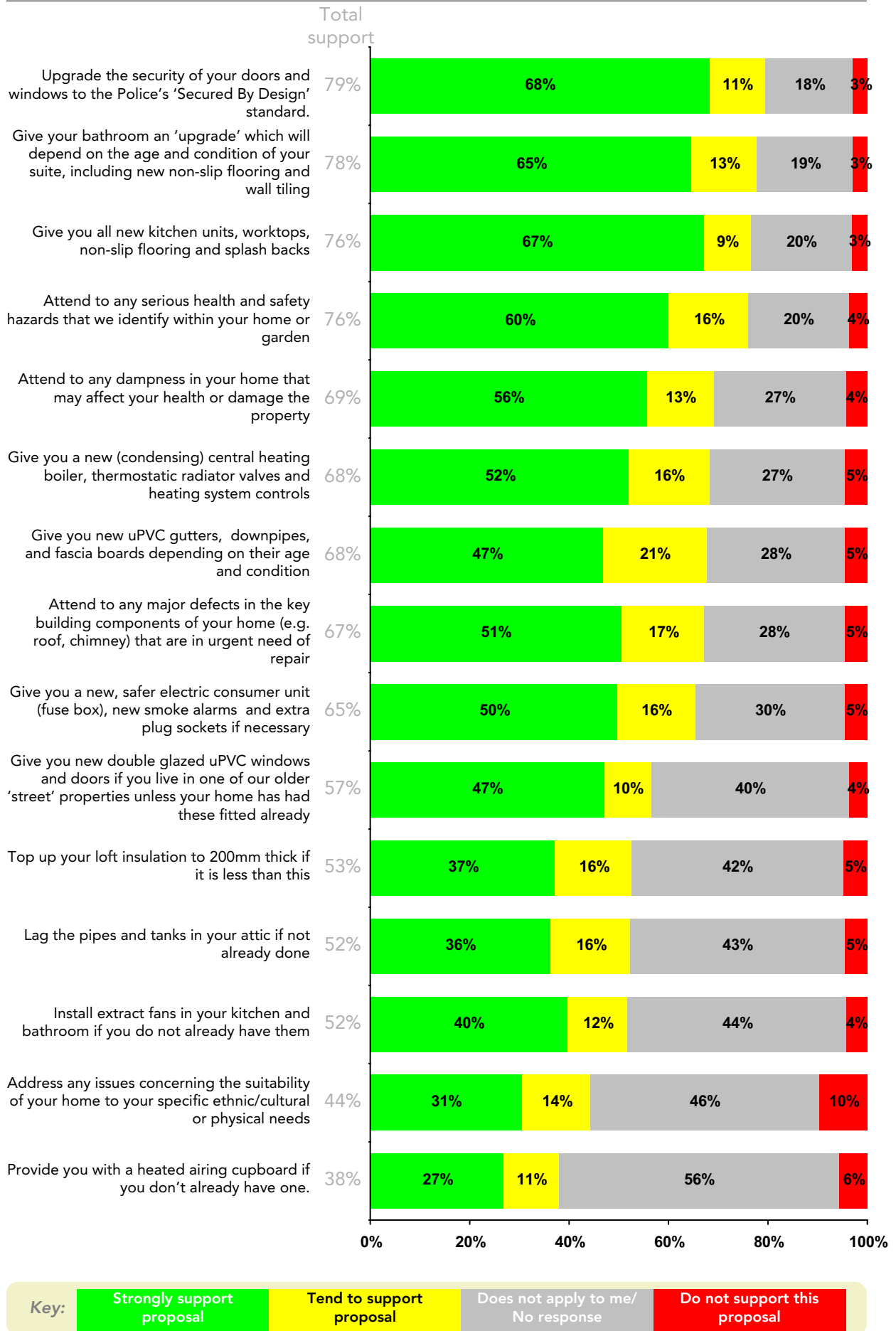
## **Survey results**

---

### **3.3 Welsh Housing Quality Standards**

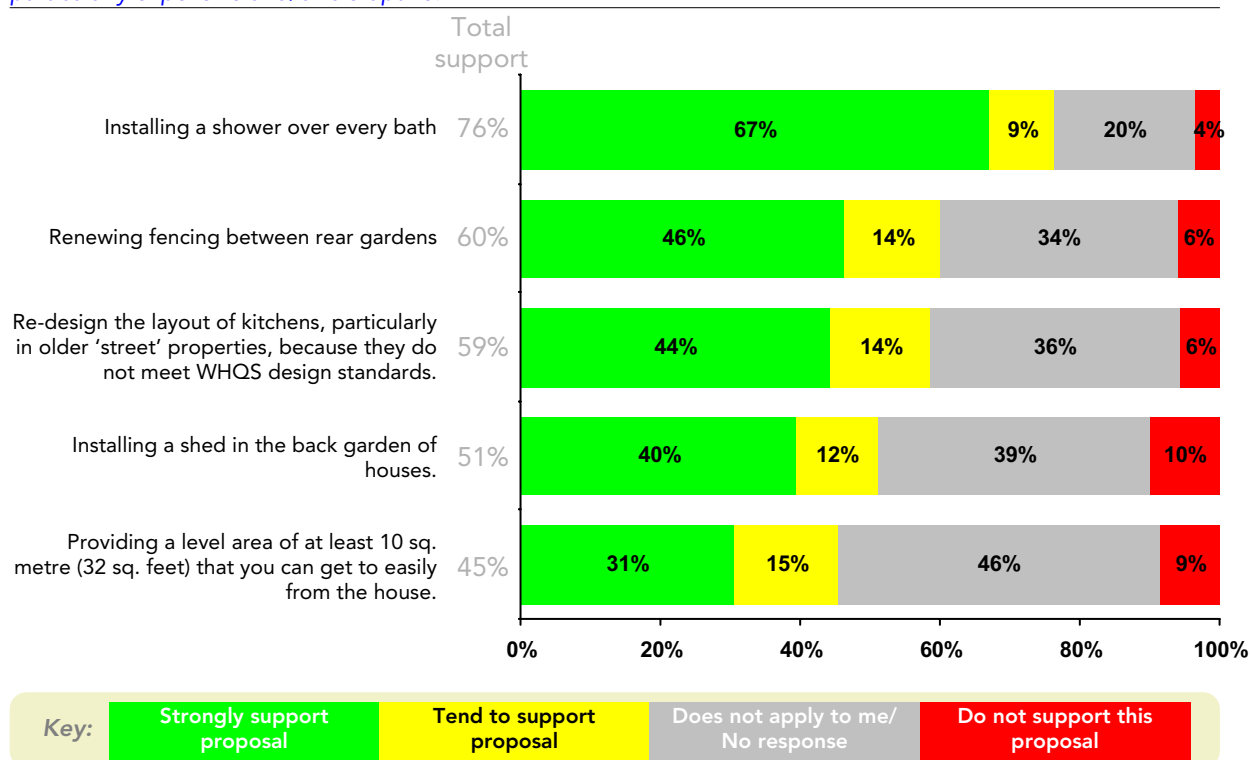
# 3.3 Welsh Housing Quality Standards

## 3.3.1 Please tell us whether you support these proposals for improvements to your home:



## 3.3 Welsh Housing Quality Standards

### 3.3.2 Please tell us whether you support these proposals for improvements to your home, which are likely to be particularly expensive and/or disruptive:



### Commentary

The Welsh Assembly Government's Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) obliges every Housing Association and Local Authority in Wales to bring their homes up to the required standard by 2012, and to consult with their tenants on the specific proposals to do so. The key aspects of Charter's proposed home improvement programme were therefore presented to tenants, and they were asked whether or not they supported each proposal in turn.

From the general pattern of results it appears clear that no more than 10% of respondents disagreed with any of the proposals, although in a number of instances the largest single category was those who did not express any opinion at all. In addition, the pattern of support matched reasonably closely with respondents' priorities for which aspects of the improvement work should be tackled first (see p.33), albeit with some differences resulting from the fact that in this section, respondents were considering each improvement in isolation.

When respondents who disagreed with any of the proposals were asked why they disagreed, for most of the improvements the primary reason given was that they were happy with their home as it was (see p.23-27). This figure was generally around 60%-70%, with typically 20%-30% claiming that the money was better spent elsewhere. The improvement works that were most likely to make people say that they did not support the proposal due to the disruption it would cause were kitchen and window renewals (both 15%).

The cost of the proposed works was least likely to be a reason for putting people off when it came to damp or major defects in key building components (both under 9%). In contrast, it was interesting to note that the cost was much more likely to be a factor in the improvements that were most likely to have prohibitive costs attached, namely showers, fences, sheds and 10m<sup>2</sup> level areas. In particular, over half of those who disagreed with the proposal to put a shed in the back garden of houses did so because they thought that the money could be better spent elsewhere (53% of that group, p.17).

Furthermore, the three proposals that generated the lowest degree of support included two which were likely to be particularly disruptive or expensive to implement – namely installing a shed in the back garden of houses and providing a level area of 10m<sup>2</sup> outside (10% and 9% disagreed respectively). Sheds were more popular amongst some, especially households with children, those living in two bed properties and/or homes built between 1992 and 1995 (p.40). Fencing upgrades were also more popular for those living in homes of that era, along with householders with children, although the single group most likely to prioritise it were those living in Croespenmaen.

continued on page 22

## 3.3 Welsh Housing Quality Standards

continued from page 21

Considering the cost they would entail, it is certainly interesting to note that both fencing and sheds appeared in the bottom half of the overall priority list for respondents (p.33). However, kitchen layout changes and the installation of showers were much more popular, despite the cost and disruption they might cause.

Changing the layout of kitchens in older street properties was less likely to gain support than simply upgrading the units and other fittings (59% and 76% respectively supported these proposals). However, the former was actually more popular amongst householders who might be affected, namely those living in street properties (68% supported, 5% did not support). Conversely, tenants in street properties were less likely to support the proposal for new uPVC doors and windows in their properties, but this was mainly because over half (52%) felt that it did not apply to them.

The highest level of support for improvement schemes that might prove problematic was the installation of showers over baths, which over three quarters of the sample supported (76%), including two thirds who strongly supported it (67%). This high level of support was in part influenced by younger respondents, with 82% of the under 40s feeling this way. In addition though, having an accessible shower or bath was the main adaptation that people with a disability or infirmity anticipated they might need in their home (p.17), and this group of respondents were also more likely to agree with the proposal (85%). As a result of the high levels of support, installing showers also appeared in the top half of the priority list (p.33)

Conversely, the provision of a level area of 10m<sup>2</sup> easily accessible from the home was far less likely to receive positive support (45%), whilst 9% of the sample actively disagreed with the idea. Nevertheless some groups were more likely to say that such work should be done, including those in Llanmartin (86%), Bulward (inc. Thornwell) (65%) and Blackwood, Fairview, Clos Trefin (60%). Unsurprisingly, there was also higher support amongst those respondents who thought their home needed adaptations for wheelchair access, either now or in the future (60%).

Other proposals for which there were relatively low levels of interest included having a heated airing cupboard (38% supported) and addressing the suitability of people's homes for specific ethnic/cultural or physical needs (44% supported, 10% against). The latter was also the lowest priority for future work (p.33). The support that there was for this proposal seemed mainly to concern the physical needs of respondents rather than their ethnic/cultural component. This was because 64% of those who said that their home needed adapting agreed, whilst there did not seem to be any strong feeling that cultural needs were not already being addressed, especially not amongst BME respondents (p.12).

Moving on to consider those proposals that generated the greatest levels of support, these unsurprisingly included works to most of the major components of the home such as kitchens, bathrooms and boilers. However, the highest level of support was for doors and windows to be upgraded to the Police 'Secured by Design' standard (79%, including 68% who strongly supported it). Furthermore, this idea was also the clear top priority when compared with all of the other proposals for improvement work (p.33). This was also a particularly popular idea amongst younger tenants (87% of the under 40s), but was still a priority for virtually all of the subgroups within the sample (p.32).

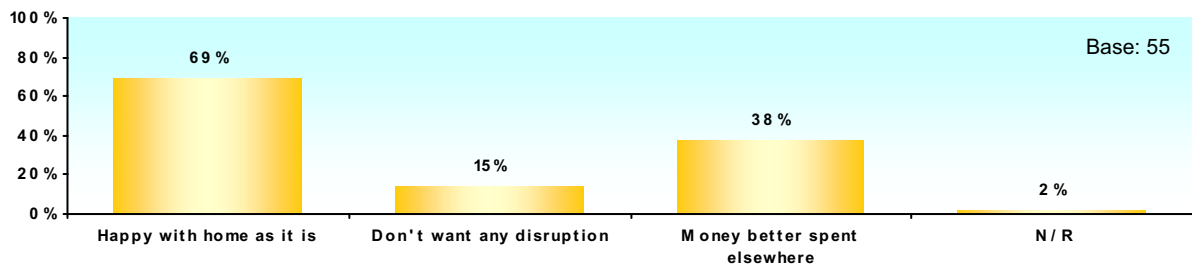
Another somewhat surprising result was the prominence given to general health and safety hazards, rather than specific component renewal programmes. Three quarters of the sample gave their support to this proposal (including 60% who strongly supported it), and it was also the fifth highest priority for dealing with promptly within the programme of updates (p.33). Young people were the most likely to support this as a proposal (88% of the under 40s), with the lowest level of support from 80+ year olds (54%). However, in terms of its relevance to the individual, it was actually the top priority for those aged 80 or over (p.42).

Otherwise, items such as bathroom upgrades, boilers, dealing with dampness and other major defects in key components were similarly high in the priority list as reflects the high level of stated support. However, one notable difference between these results and the priority agenda was regarding the renewal of uPVC gutters, downpipes and fascia boards. Relative to its position in the priority list (13<sup>th</sup> out of 18, p.33), this item appeared much higher when the level of support for each proposal was ranked. The obvious explanation for this would be that when considering their own properties, fewer people felt that the external plastics were in need of priority work (with some exceptions, see p.39).

It was clear, therefore, that the majority of the sample supported most of the proposed aspects of the improvement programme, with the modal view for the remainder being indifference. It is therefore important for Charter to understand how to best allocate limited resources in order to tackle the most important improvements early in the programme, which is the value of the prioritisation exercise carried out later in the questionnaire (p.33). This also allowed different types of respondents to express their own needs for the improvement work, not just whether they supported it in principle.

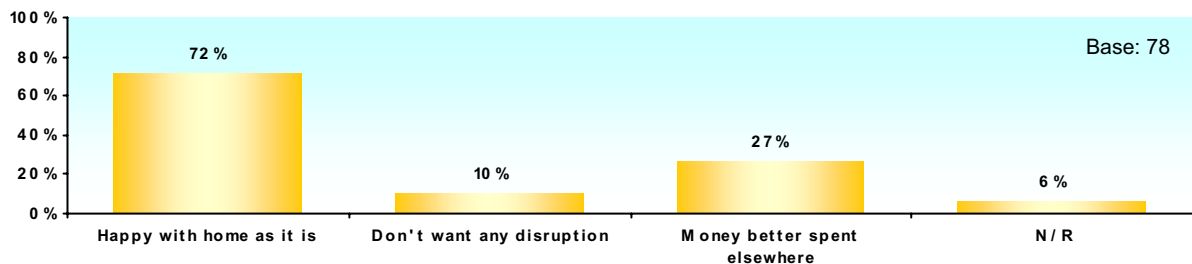
## 3.3 Welsh Housing Quality Standards

### 3.3.3 Give you all new kitchen units, worktops, non-slip flooring and splash backs



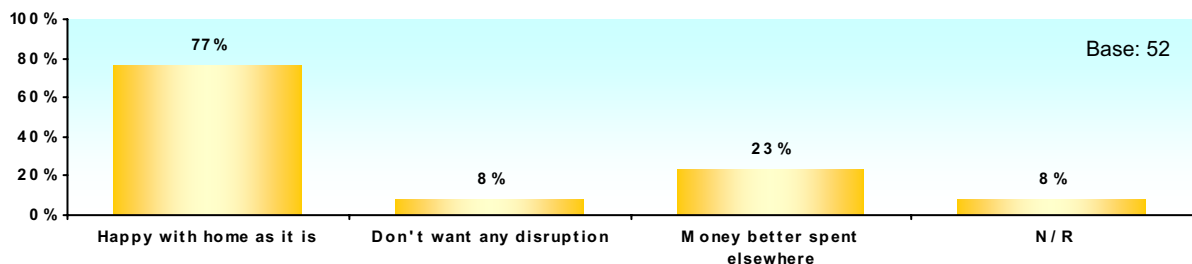
Note: Respondents who do not support this proposal

### 3.3.4 Give you a new, safer electric consumer unit (fuse box), new smoke alarms and extra plug sockets if necessary



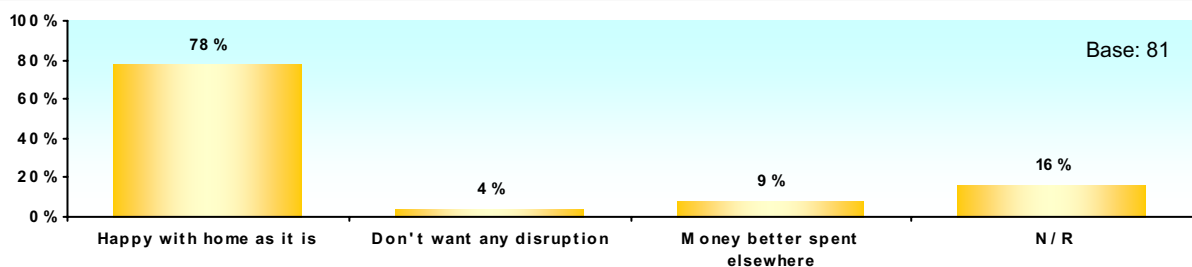
Note: Respondents who do not support this proposal

### 3.3.5 Upgrade the security of your doors and windows to the Police's 'Secured By Design' standard



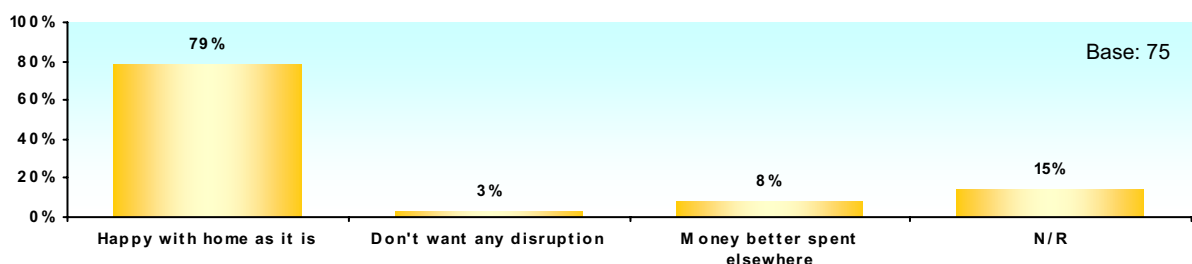
Note: Respondents who do not support this proposal

### 3.3.6 Attend to any major defects in the key building components of your home (e.g. roof, chimney) that are in urgent need of repair



Note: Respondents who do not support this proposal

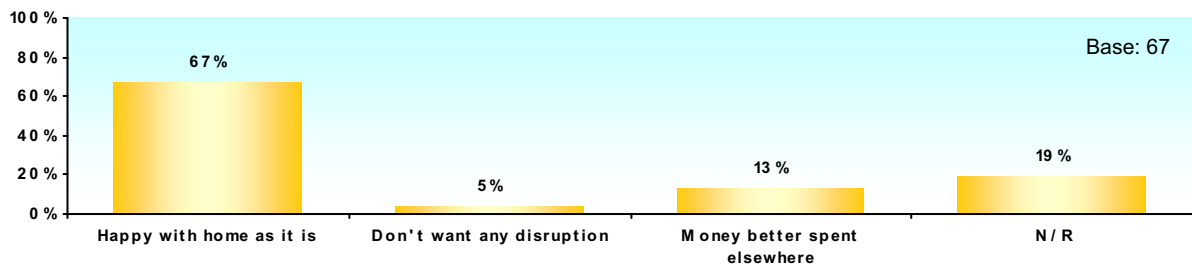
### 3.3.7 Attend to any dampness in your home that may affect your health or damage the property



Note: Respondents who do not support this proposal

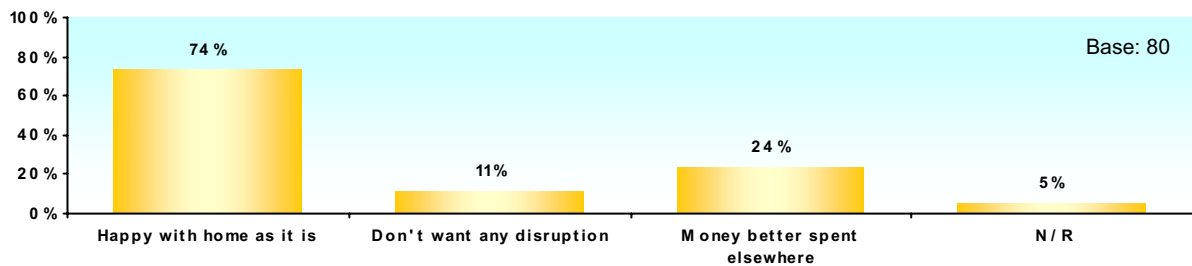
## 3.3 Welsh Housing Quality Standards

### 3.3.8 Attend to any serious health and safety hazards that we identify within your home or garden



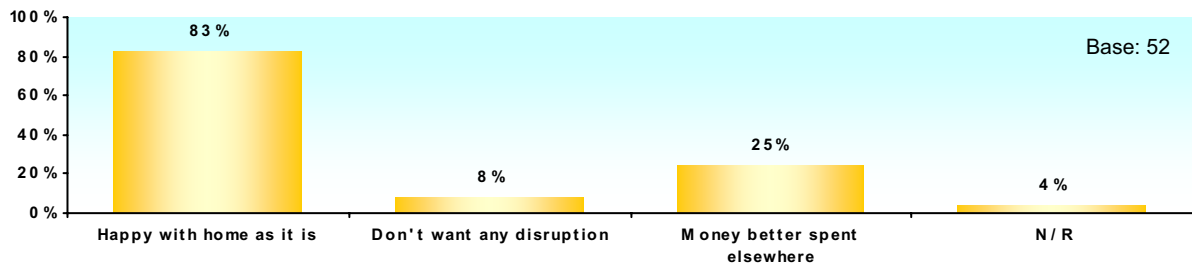
*Note: Respondents who do not support this proposal*

### 3.3.9 Give you a new (condensing) central heating boiler, thermostatic radiator valves and heating system controls



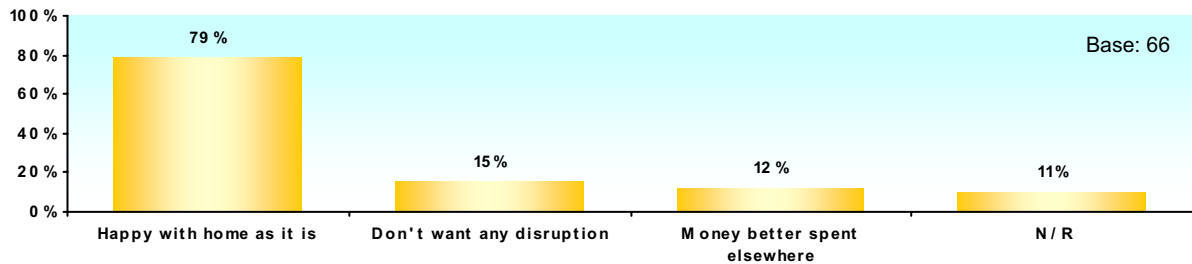
*Note: Respondents who do not support this proposal*

### 3.3.10 Give your bathroom an 'upgrade' which will depend on the age and condition of your suite, including new non-slip flooring and wall tiling



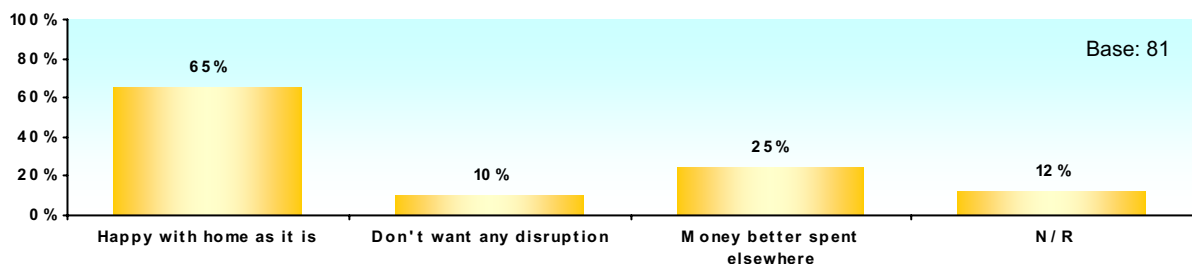
*Note: Respondents who do not support this proposal*

### 3.3.11 Give you new double glazed uPVC windows and doors if you live in one of our older 'street' properties unless your home has had these fitted already



*Note: Respondents who do not support this proposal*

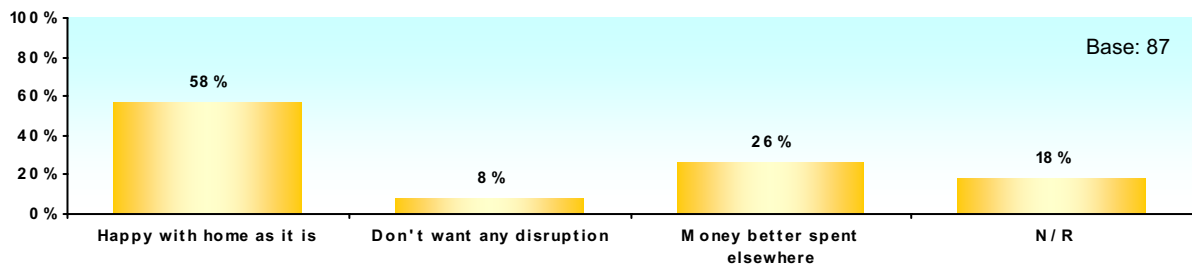
### 3.3.12 Give you new uPVC gutters, downpipes, and fascia boards depending on their age and condition



*Note: Respondents who do not support this proposal*

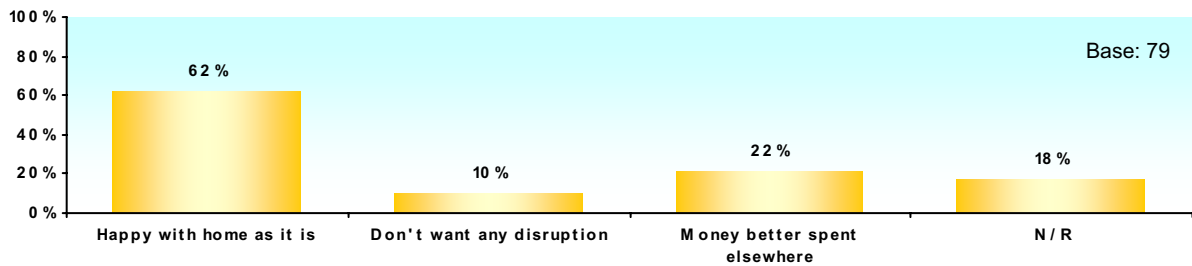
## 3.3 Welsh Housing Quality Standards

### 3.3.13 Top up your loft insulation to 200mm thick if it is less than this



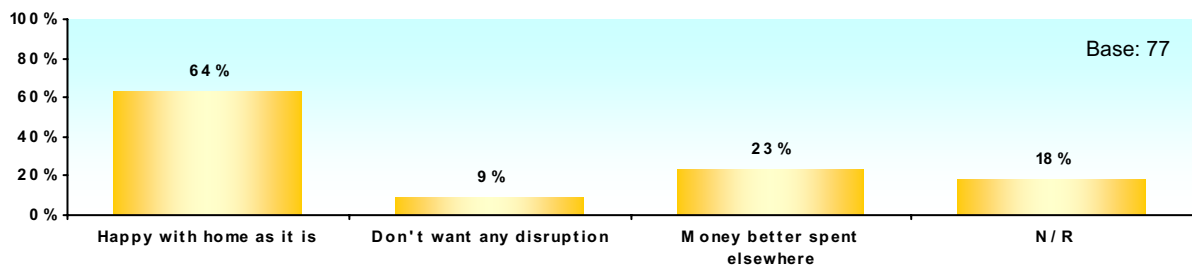
Note: Respondents who do not support this proposal

### 3.3.14 Lag the pipes and tanks in your attic if not already done



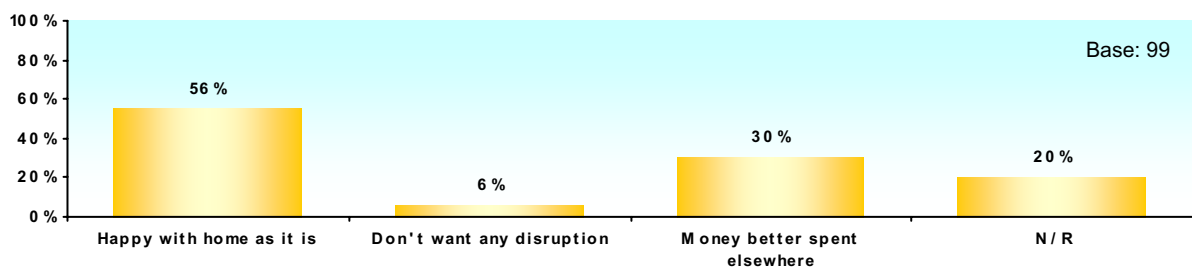
Note: Respondents who do not support this proposal

### 3.3.15 Install extract fans in your kitchen and bathroom if you do not already have them



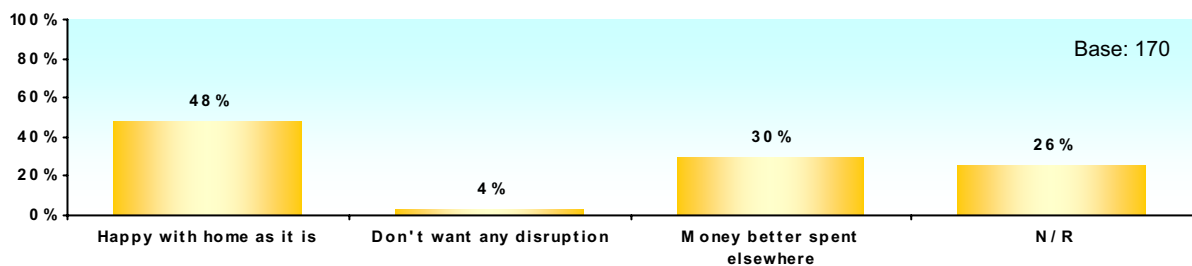
Note: Respondents who do not support this proposal

### 3.3.16 Provide you with a heated airing cupboard if you don't already have one



Note: Respondents who do not support this proposal

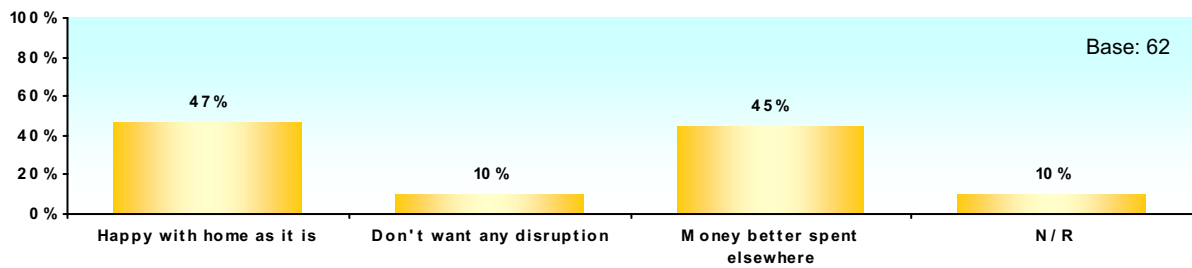
### 3.3.17 Address any issues concerning the suitability of your home to your specific ethnic/cultural or physical needs



Note: Respondents who do not support this proposal

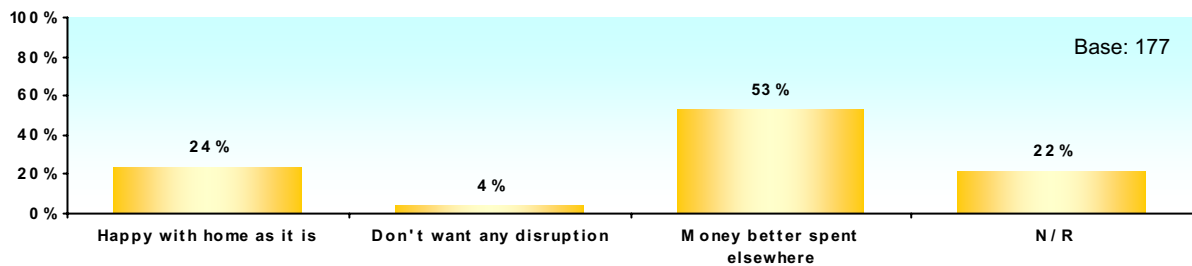
## 3.3 Welsh Housing Quality Standards

### 3.3.18 Installing a shower over every bath



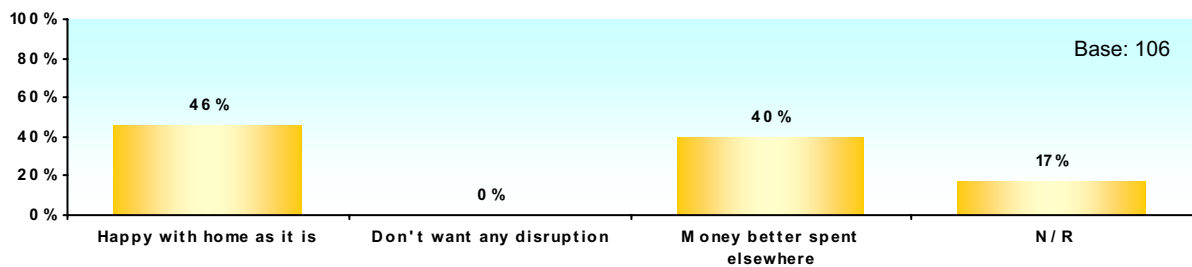
Note: Respondents who do not support this proposal

### 3.3.19 Installing a shed in the back garden of houses



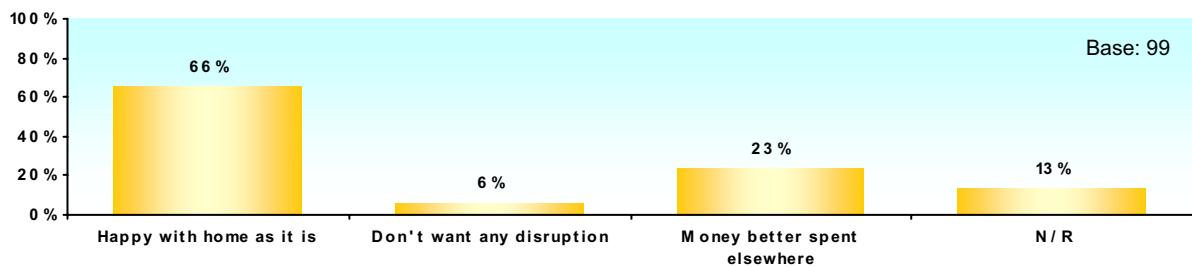
Note: Respondents who do not support this proposal

### 3.3.20 Renewing fencing between rear gardens



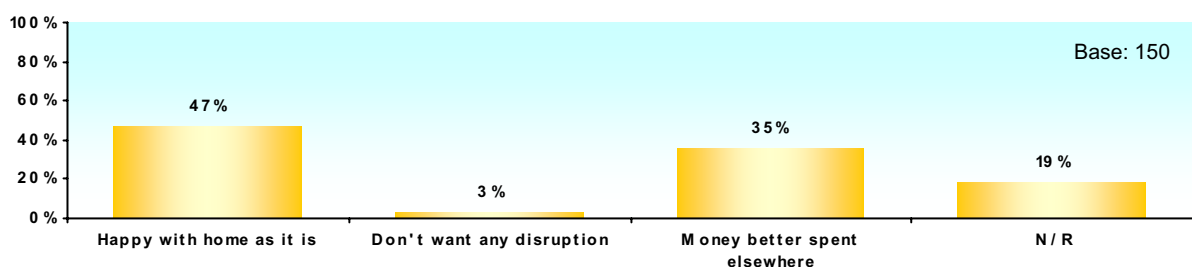
Note: Respondents who do not support this proposal

### 3.3.21 Re-design the layout of kitchens, particularly in older 'street' properties, because they do not meet WHQS design standards



Note: Respondents who do not support this proposal

### 3.3.22 Providing a level area of at least 10 sq. metre (32 sq. feet) that you can get to easily from the house



Note: Respondents who do not support this proposal

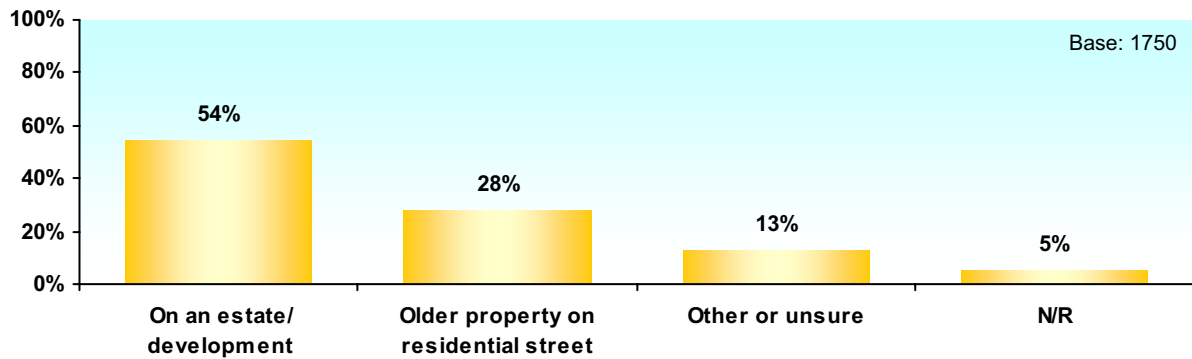
## **Survey results**

---

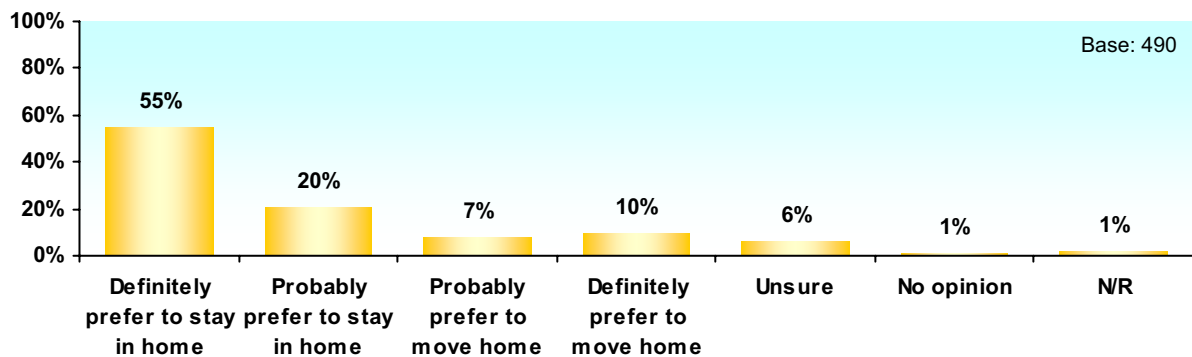
### **3.4 'Street' properties**

## 3.4 'Street' properties

3.4.1 Do you live in a home on a housing estate/development, or is your home an older property on a residential street?

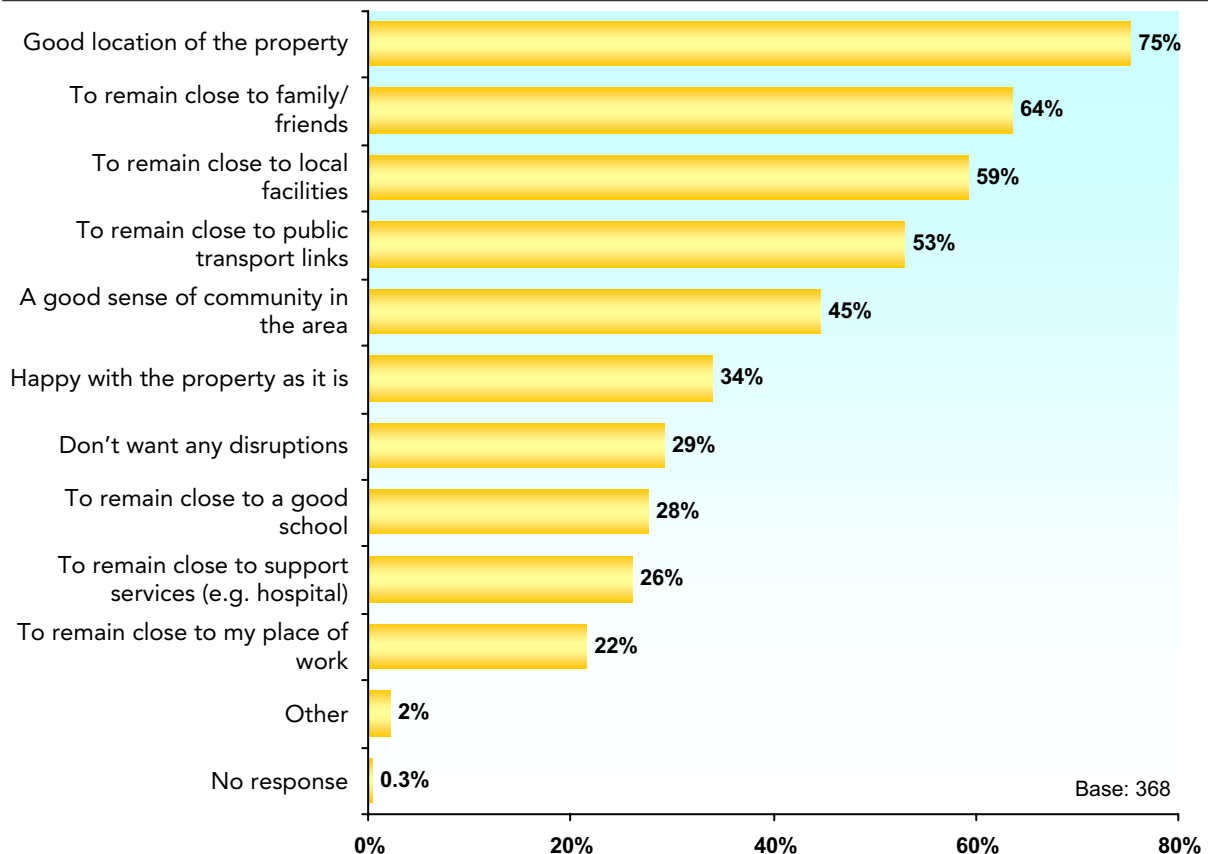


3.4.2 If it was impractical for Charter to bring your home fully into line with some of the specific design standards, would you prefer to stay in that home regardless or move to a different Charter property that fully met the standards?



Note: Respondents who live in an older property on a residential street

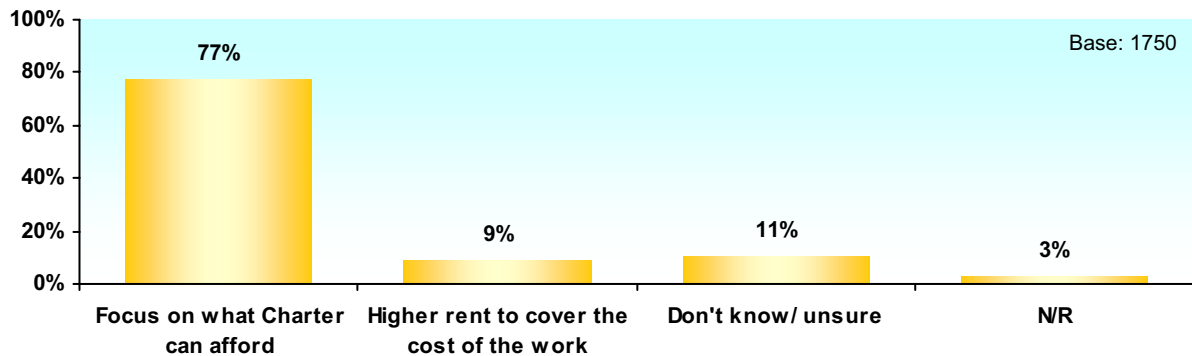
3.4.3 What are your main reasons for wishing to stay in your current home, even if in the future it fails to meet all of the required design standards?



Note: Respondents who would prefer to stay in their current home. Respondents could give more than one answer

## 3.4 'Street' properties

3.4.4 If Charter could not afford to fully meet the required design standards for your home, would you prefer us to just focus on what we could afford to do, or would you prefer to see your rent go up to pay for the extra work?



### Commentary

Over a quarter of respondents in the sample said that they lived in older properties on residential streets (28%), and this group were of particular interest because many of them lived in homes where it might prove particularly disruptive or expensive to comply fully with the WHQS.

One of the main components of the home that might be affected by this work was the kitchen, in particular the fact that some street properties might need substantial work to alter the whole layout of the kitchen in order to achieve the WHQS standard. Nevertheless, respondents in these homes placed "kitchen replaced to modern space and layout standards and not more than 15 years old" as their top priority for improvement (p.35 & 43), and were also more likely to agree with the proposal for re-designing the kitchen layout of older properties (68%, p.22).

Respondents living in street properties were also significantly more likely than average to prioritise improvements to their bathrooms (p.36), work to resolve damp problems and major defects in key building components (p.37), along with improved mechanical ventilation (p.38).

However, should any of the WHQS design standards prove impractical to fully achieve, tenants in these properties were much more likely to want to remain in their home regardless rather than move out (75% and 17% respectively). In fact, over half of this group were unequivocal in stating a clear preference for remaining in their current home (55%). This preference was especially marked for those who had lived in their home for 21 years or more (77% would definitely stay).

Interestingly, the main reasons given for wanting to stay were all related to the location of the property, either in general (75% mentioned this), or the proximity to family/friends, local facilities or public transport. Tellingly, almost half (45%) also mentioned the sense of community spirit in their area. In all, 93% of those who would want to stay in their home mentioned at least one aspect of the area it was situated in, something that could not necessarily be replicated by fully WHQS compliant properties in an alternate location.

Indeed, when the sample as a whole were asked which way Charter should proceed if the required design standards of their home could not be fully met for whatever reason, the clear consensus was for Charter to focus on what it could afford (77%) rather than to for there to be higher rents to cover the cost of the work (9%). Furthermore, this sentiment was even stronger amongst respondents who lived in the street properties most likely to be affected by this (81% and 7% respectively for the two options).

This page is intentionally left blank

## **Survey results**

---

### **3.5 Priorities for property improvements**

## 3.5 Priorities for property improvements

### *Notes on the presentation of data*

The chart opposite represents the prioritised agenda of respondents to the 'Priority Search' paired comparison section of the questionnaire. It shows the *relative* importance that they as a whole placed on each of the issues they were asked to rank.

The numbers at the end of each bar show the percentage of respondents who placed that item in the top third of their preferences, minus the percentage who placed it in their bottom third. The result is that if a bar projects to the right, the respondent group illustrated favours that item. If the bar projects to the left, the item is regarded as less important by that group. The "least significant differences" (LSDs) quoted give the minimum figure by which any two values must differ in order for the difference to be statistically significant at the 99.9%, 99% and 95% confidence levels.

For a more detailed explanation of the 'Priority Search' methodology, please see appendix section 4.1.

### Commentary

In addition to being asked their support for various proposals all in isolation to one another (p.20-22), respondents were also asked to prioritise the proposed WHQS improvements in comparison with one another. Due to the fact that the target for meeting the standard is 2012, this information would help Charter to schedule its WHQS Home Improvement Programme in line with its tenants' priorities.

The Priority Search methodology that was used ensured that the list in chart 3.5.1 was a genuine reflection of tenants' priorities, relative to one another, across all 18 items. As such, it is important to remember that even those items towards the bottom of the list were not necessarily considered bad ideas by respondents, merely that the others in the list were more important to the majority of tenants.

Obviously, the ordering of priorities overall did not always faithfully represent the agenda of every sub group within the sample, therefore further analysis was also carried out to understand the differing needs of Charter's tenants. This analysis was carried out both on a per improvement basis (p.35-41) and also in terms of the top priorities for specific demographic groups (p.42-45).

As mentioned previously in the report, the overall order of the priorities was not entirely dissimilar from the levels of support for each of the various proposals, although due to the comparing of the priorities items to one another, there were some variations.

The first thing that becomes apparent from the results in this section was that the appeal of 'Secured by Design' door and window security measures was even stronger than it first appeared. Although this proposal also received the highest level of support (79%, p.20), when taken in isolation other improvements seemed almost as popular, it was only when the proposals were compared with one another that 'Secured by Design' came out as the clear winner. Indeed, 11% of respondents to the Priority Search section of the questionnaire placed 'Secured by Design' as their number one priority, with a third in total (33%) having placed it in their top three. It also was sufficiently popular to appear at or towards the top of the priorities for most of the sub groups within the sample, although it seemed to be particularly important for tenants in new build properties built in the 1990s (p.35).

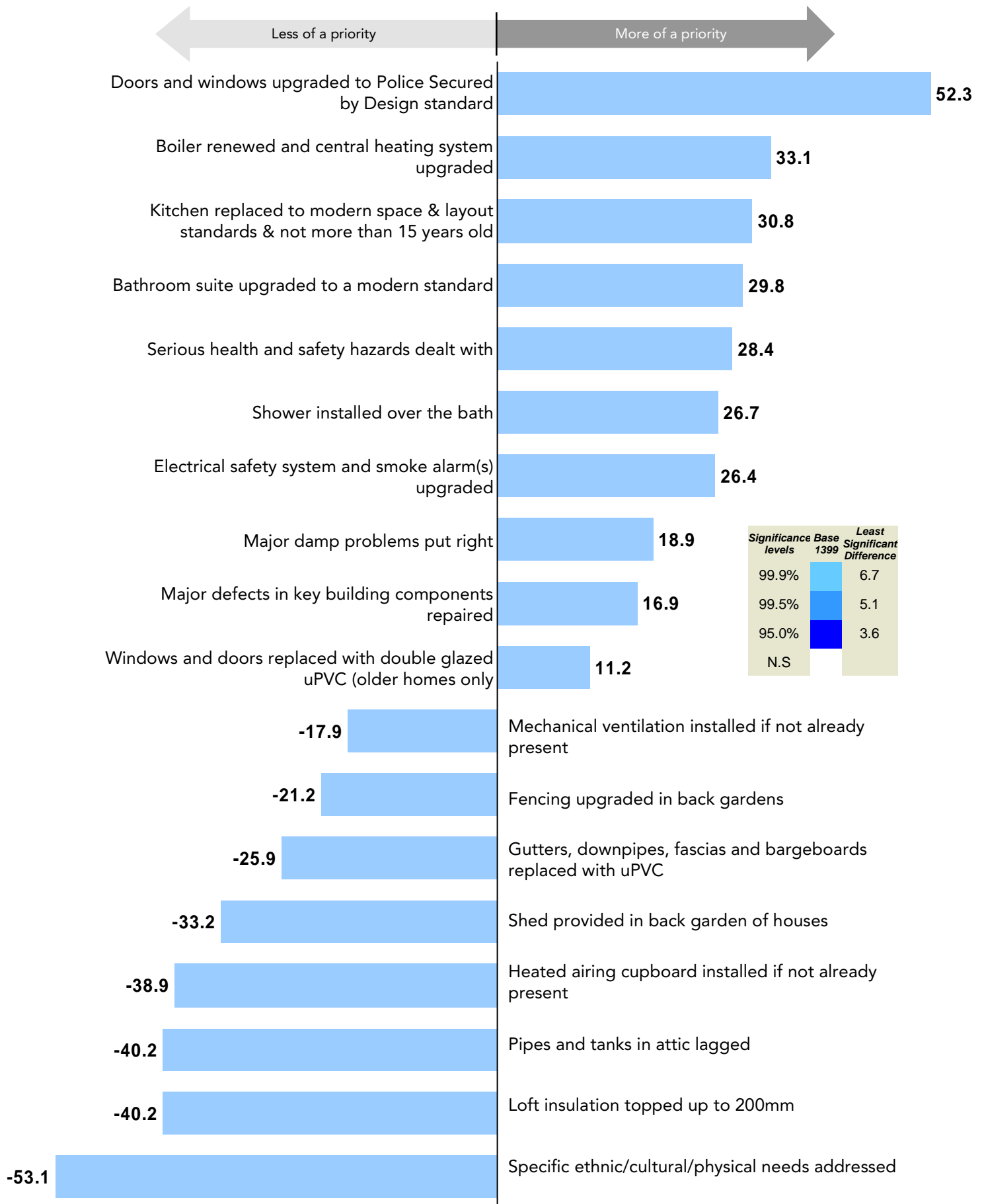
After 'Secured by Design', there were a cluster of items that appeared very close together in the priority list with little to choose between them, in fact items four through to seven were sufficiently close together as a group that the difference between any of them was not significant (in chart 3.5.1, the ranking scores for two bars have to be separated by at least 3.6 to be considered as significantly different).

The second highest priority, boiler and heating system renewal, was slightly ahead of the rest of the top cluster. The importance rating was reasonably consistent across the demographic groups, although it did seem clear that respondents in the Cwmfelin, Ynysddu area were especially eager for such improvements (p.35).

continued on page 34

# 3.5 Priorities for property improvements

## 3.5.1 Overall priorities for the future



## 3.5 Priorities for property improvements

continued from page 32

Kitchens and bathrooms were also well represented in the top half of the priority list, as was to be expected. Respondents living in rehab properties were the most likely to prioritise kitchen replacements, which explains why the one lettings area where this was significantly higher was in Markham, where all of the properties are rehab. It was also a higher priority in those properties with kitchens that had not quite yet reached the 15 year cyclical replacement window (built 1992 - 1995, p.35).

Bathrooms seemed to be more of an issue in Charter's oldest properties (especially Stow Hill/York PI), with the desire for a shower over a bath also particularly marked in smaller properties and/or new build homes (p.36). Having a shower over the bath was the highest placed item in the priority list from amongst the five Charter had highlighted as being particularly expensive or disruptive to achieve (p.21). Part of the reason may be that 16% of the sample felt that they were likely to need adaptations to their home at some point, of which accessible showers or baths were most frequently mentioned (p.17). Accordingly, that group were also more likely to prioritise an overbath shower (p.36).

Interestingly, upgrading the bathroom suite was the only priority item that was significantly more popular for those respondents living in street properties who would prefer to pay a higher rent to cover the cost of all the work proposed for their homes (p.36).

As has already been mentioned, it was surprising that dealing with general health and safety hazards as part of the home improvement programme was as high as it was in the priority list (fifth place). In fact, just under a quarter of the sample placed it somewhere in their top three priorities (23%). A further insight into this result was that it appeared to be the dominant priority amongst respondents aged 80 or over, although it is important to note that this represented a reasonably small group of respondents to the Priority Search (29 people). However, this was also the joint second highest priority for 16 - 25 year olds, equal to another safety related item, namely electrical systems and smoke alarms (p.42). It was also notable that electrical and safety systems were the highest priority in the Hatherleigh, Newport lettings area (p.44).

There were many other variations by area and sub group as detailed in the graphs throughout the rest of this section. These specific differences are too numerous to cover in depth, but the most striking significant differences in the results for individual items included: Maindee, where damp problems were a very high priority (p.37), respondents in Gaer who were particularly eager for uPVC windows and doors (p.37), the need for better mechanical ventilation in the few bedsit properties (p.38), the high priority given to upgrading fencing in Croespenmaen (p.39), replacement external plastics required in Hollybush and Llanmartin (p.39), and the desire in Manor Court, Usk for heated airing cupboards (p.40).

## 3.5 Priorities for property improvements

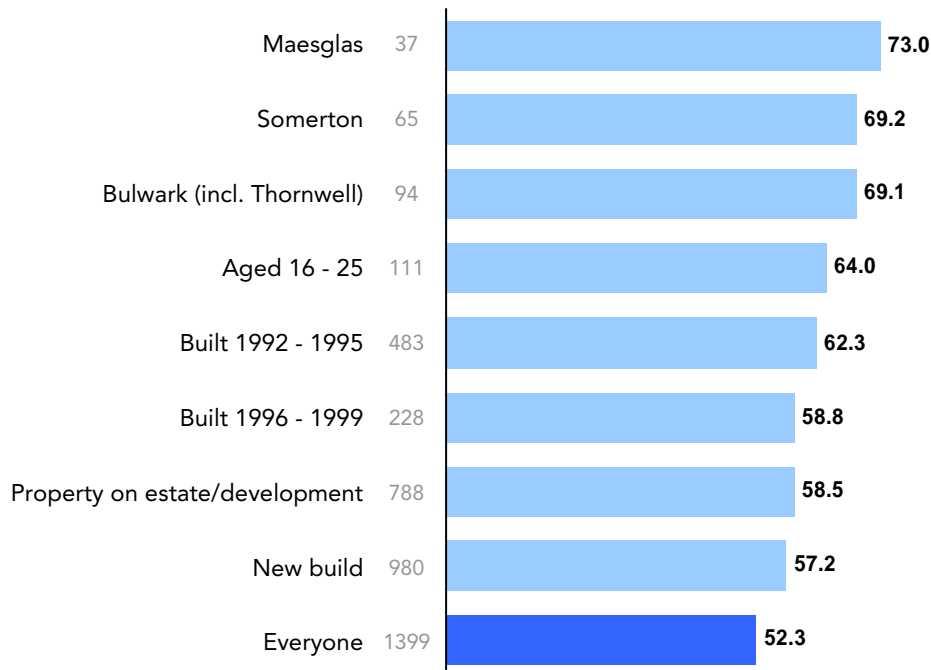
### Notes on the presentation of data

The charts below and on the following pages show how different demographic groups relate to the items in the Priority Search. The information displayed is calculated as for the bipolar chart shown on page 35, and shows how different groups relate to each item. Groups which attach a higher importance to this item to a statistically significant extent are shown in light blue, while the average value for the population overall is shown as a dark blue bar.

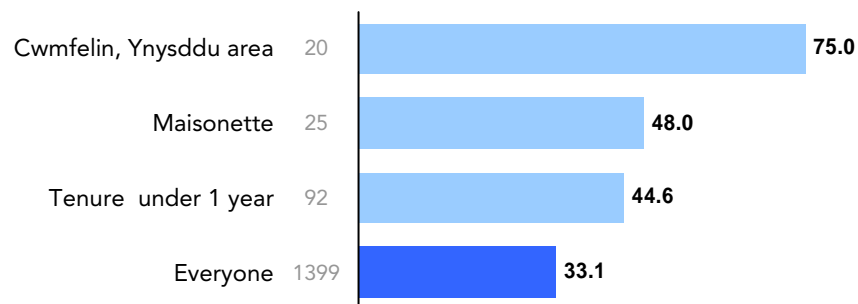
1) The charts display differences which are *statistically significant*. If a group does not appear in a chart (those in a certain age group, for example) it is because the importance they attached to the item did not differ significantly from average.

2) Figures in grey represent the total number of respondents who gave each particular answer.

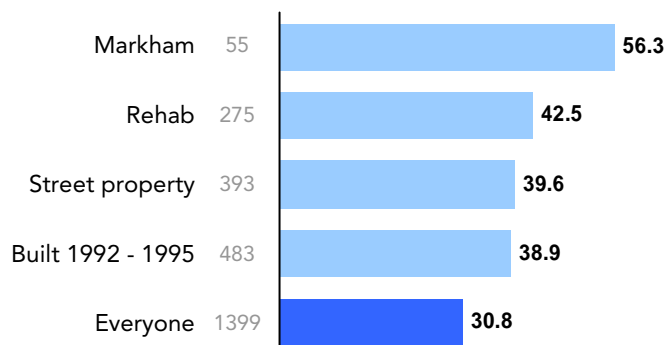
### 3.5.2 Doors and windows upgraded to Police Secured by Design Standard



### 3.5.3 Boiler renewed and central heating system upgraded

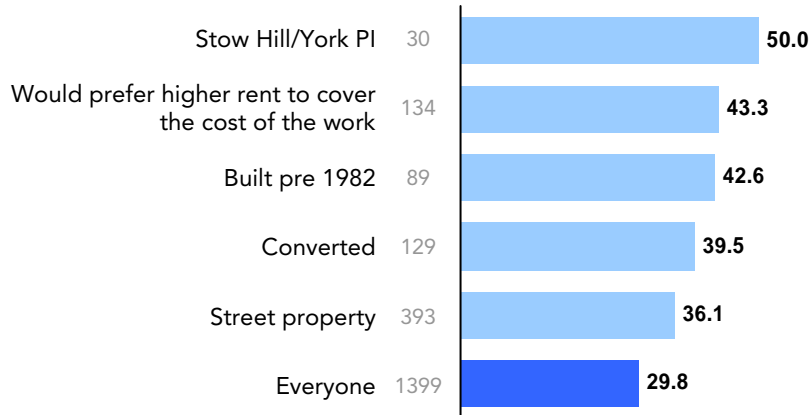


### 3.5.4 Kitchen replaced to modern space & layout standards & not more than 15 years old

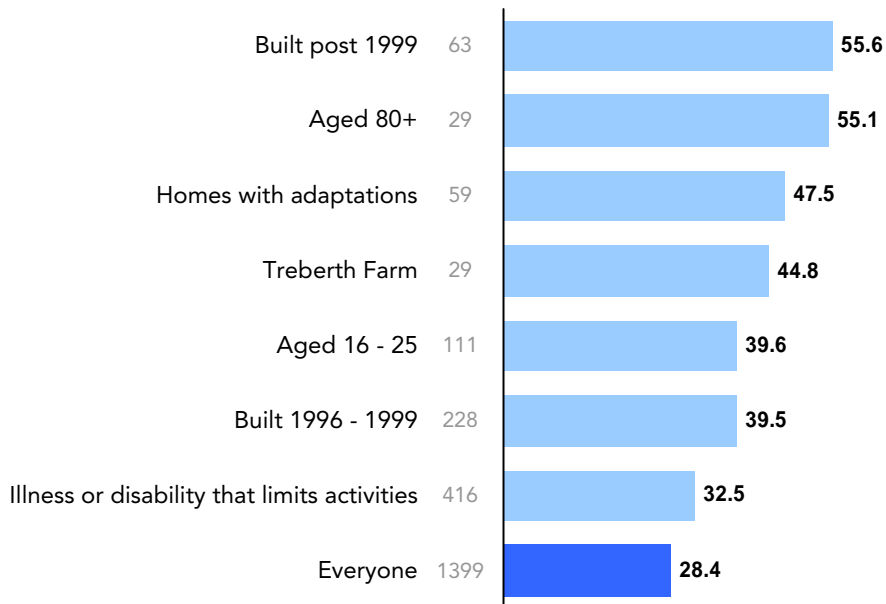


# 3.5 Priorities for property improvements

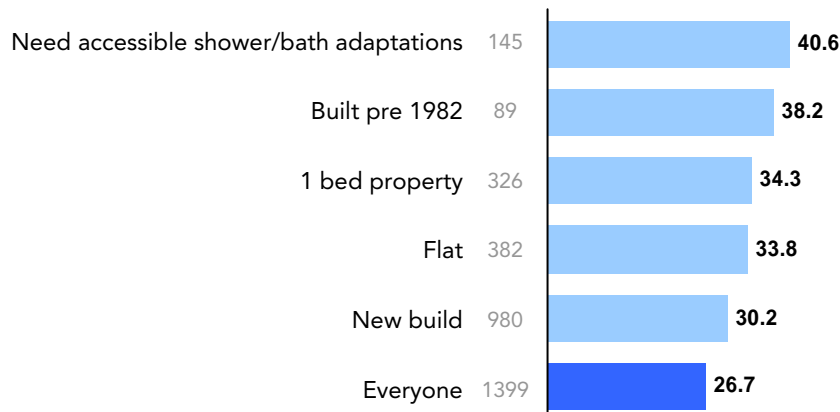
## 3.5.5 Bathroom suite upgraded to a modern standard



## 3.5.6 Serious health and safety hazards dealt with

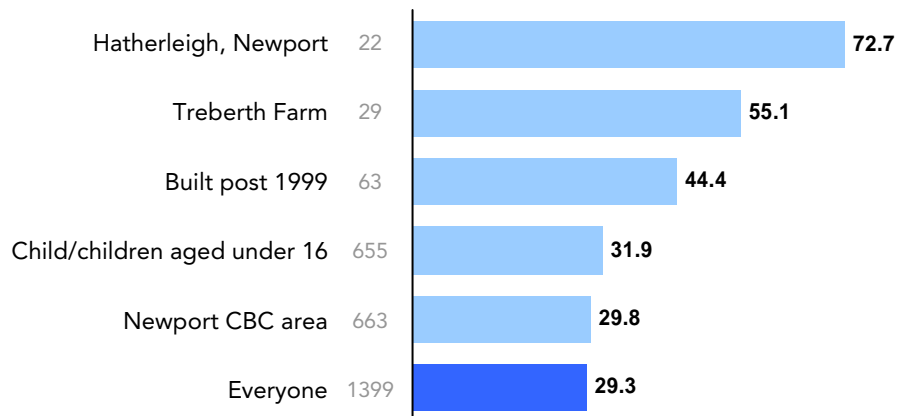


## 3.5.7 Shower installed over the bath

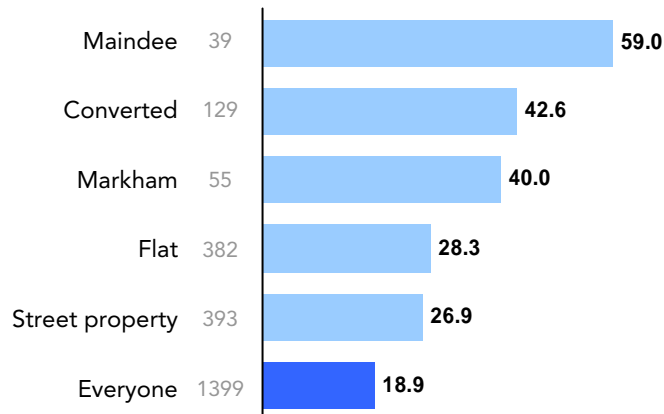


## 3.5 Priorities for property improvements

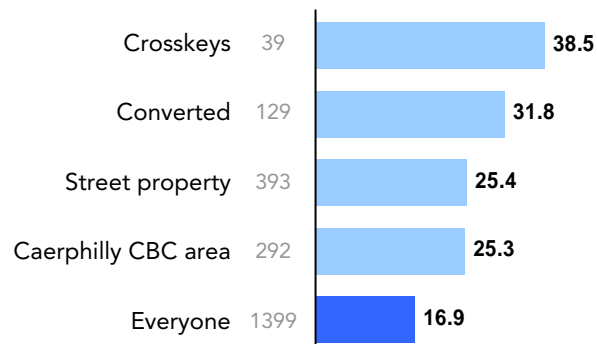
### 3.5.8 Electrical safety system and smoke alarm(s) upgraded



### 3.5.9 Major damp problems put right

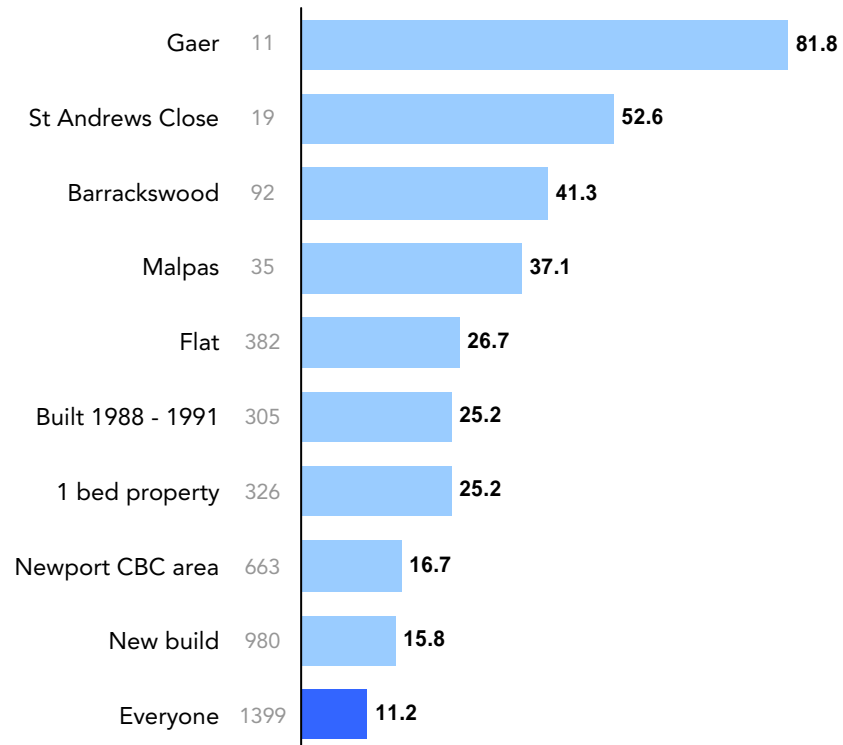


### 3.5.10 Major defects in key building components repaired

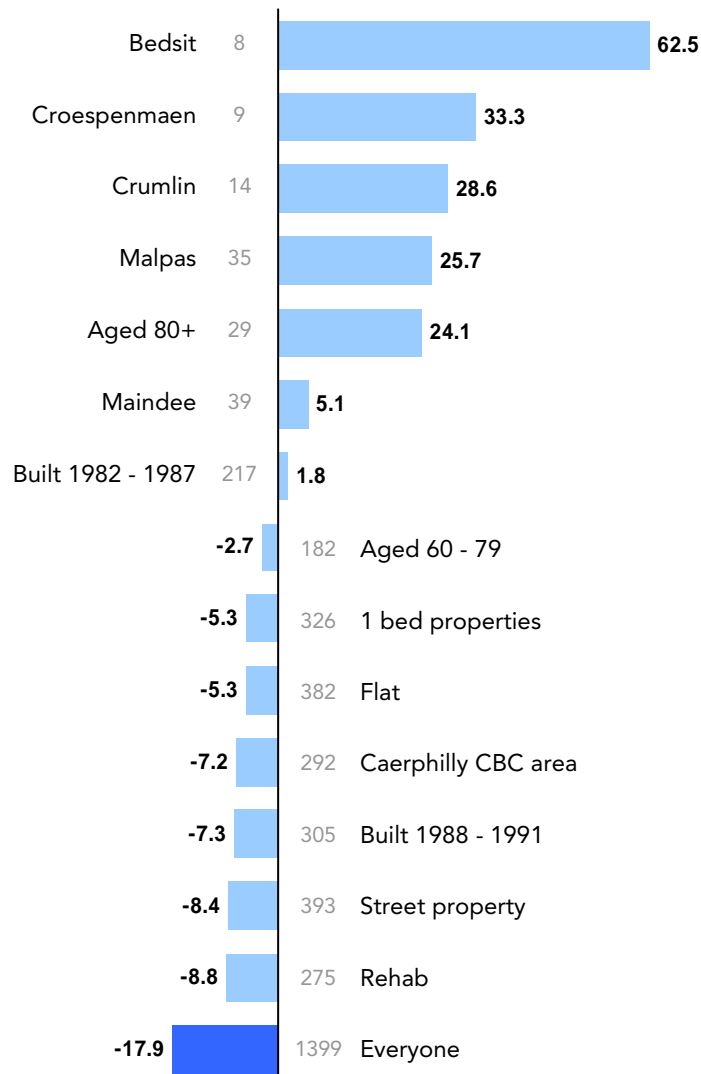


## 3.5 Priorities for property improvements

### 3.5.11 Windows and doors replaced with double glazed uPVC (older homes only)

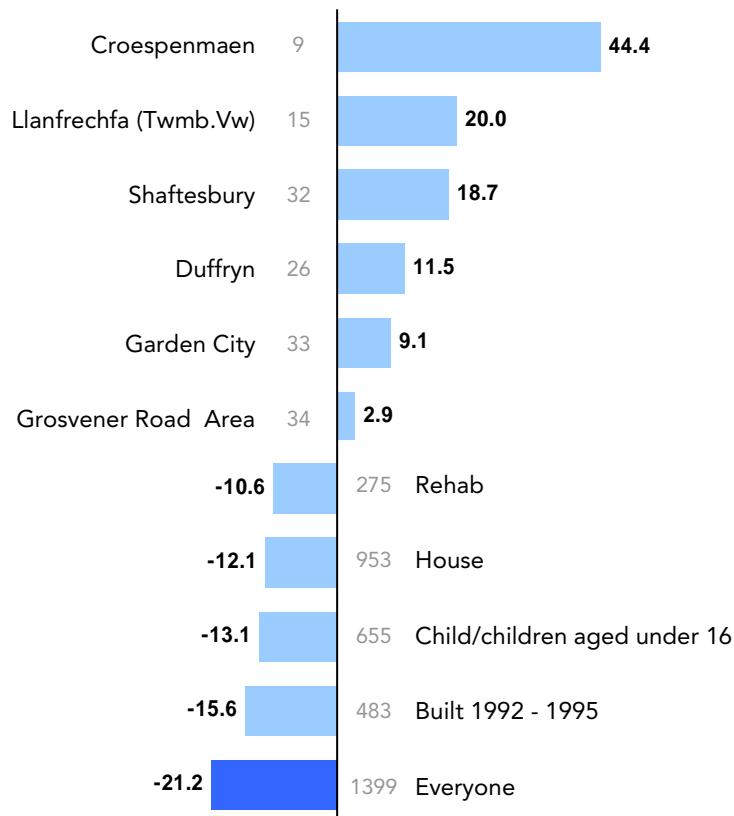


### 3.5.12 Mechanical ventilation installed if not already present

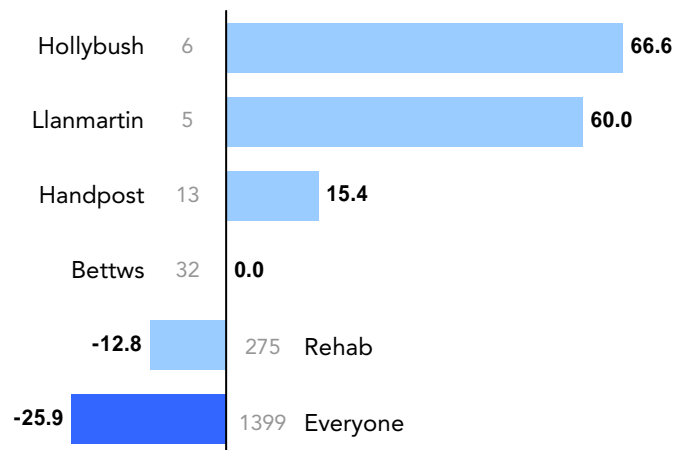


## 3.5 Priorities for property improvements

### 3.5.13 Fencing upgraded in back gardens

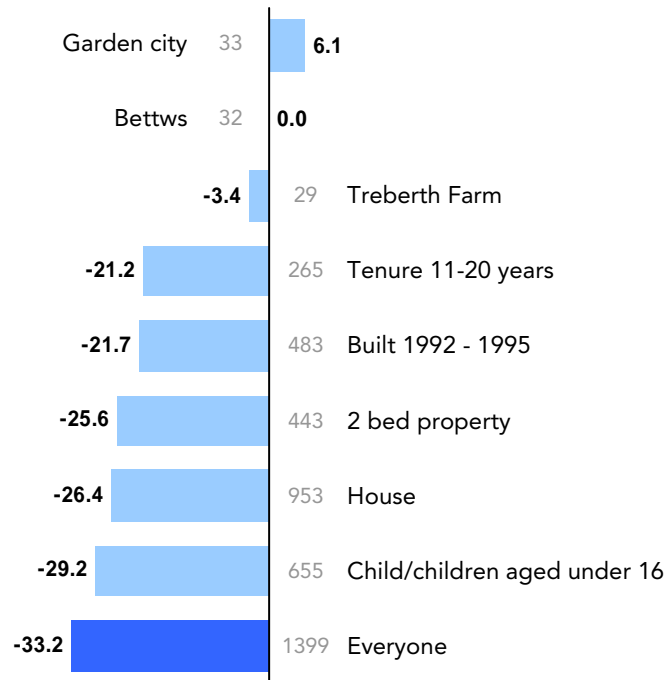


### 3.5.14 Gutters, downpipes, fascias and bargeboards replaced with uPVC

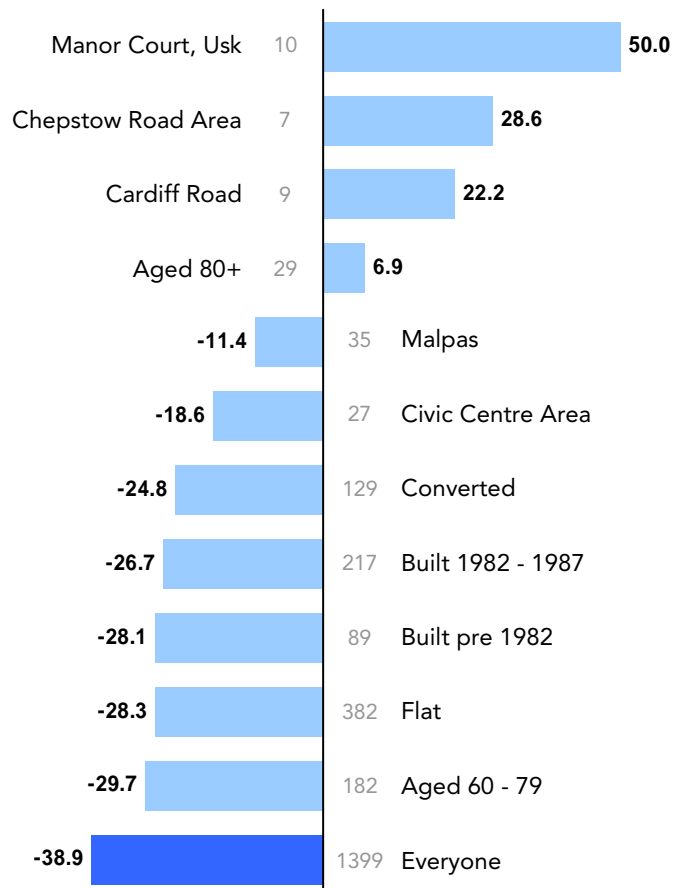


## 3.5 Priorities for property improvements

### 3.5.15 Sheds provided in back garden of houses

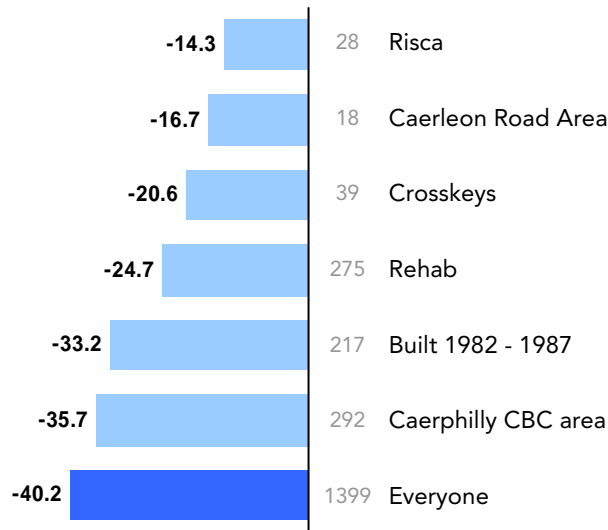


### 3.5.16 Heated airing cupboard installed is not already present

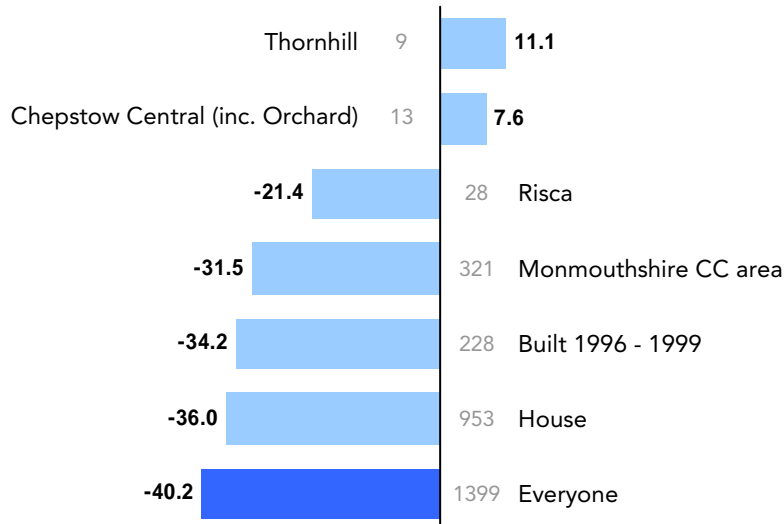


## 3.5 Priorities for property improvements

### 3.5.17 Pipes and tanks in attic lagged



### 3.5.18 Loft insulation topped up to 200mm



### 3.5.19 Specific ethnic/cultural/physical needs addressed



# 3.5 Priorities for property improvements

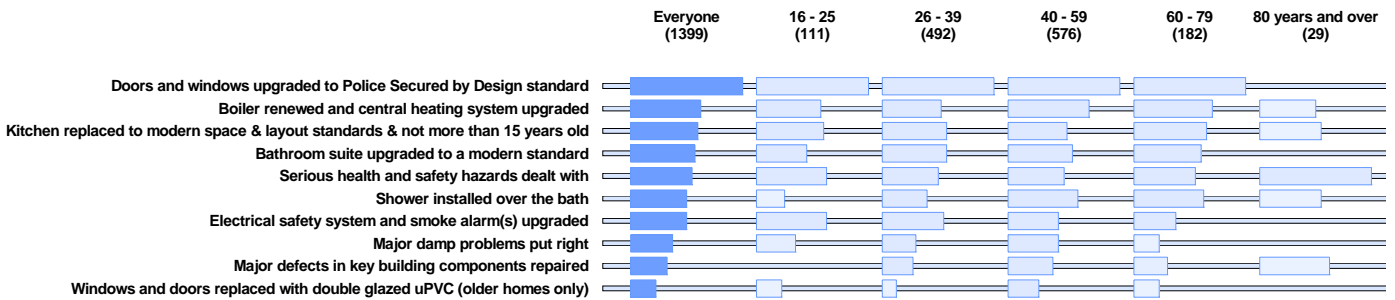
## Notes on the presentation of data

On the following pages the results are shown using bar graphs to compare the preferences of various demographic groups. The information displayed is calculated as for the bipolar chart shown on page 35, and shows the top items for each selected demographic group. The results for the total sample population are shown in the first column, and subsequent columns then show the significant priorities of particular groups in the sample. This helps the reader to make comparisons across the groups.

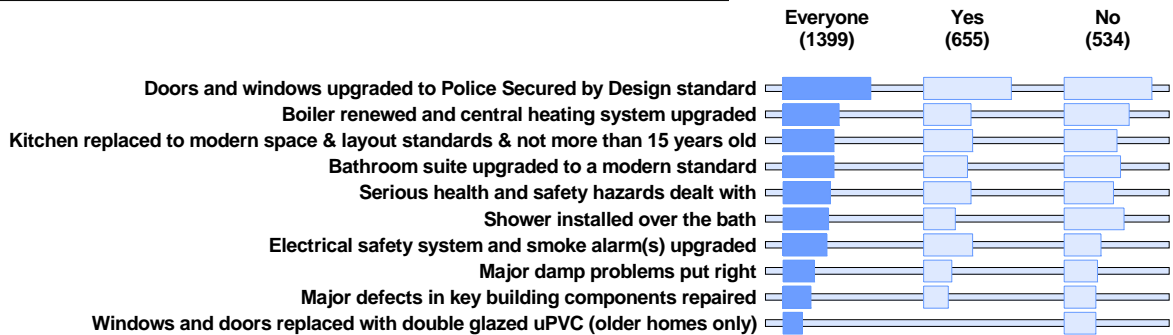
1) Groups which have only a few members will necessarily show fewer items which reach *statistical significance* than will larger groups. When two groups have a similar number of members, the one in which there is a greater diversity of opinion will show fewer significant items.

2) The numbers which appear immediately above each column of preference charts represent the number of respondents in that particular group.

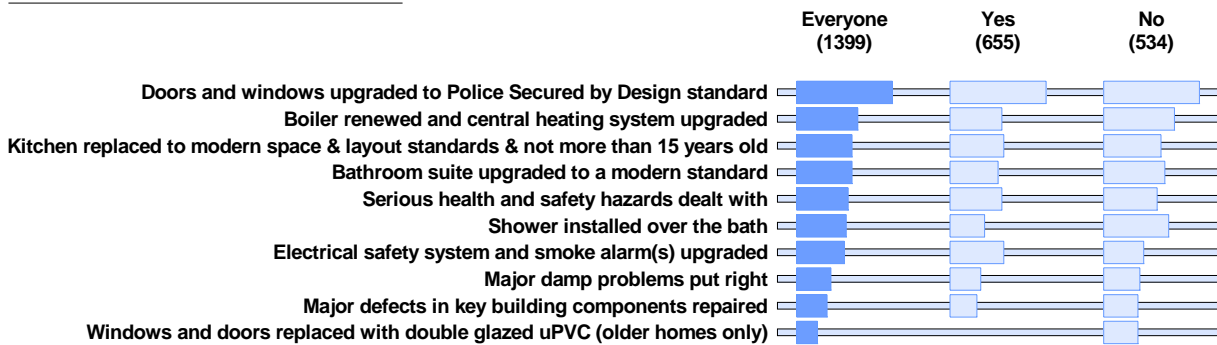
### 3.5.20 Priorities by respondent age



### 3.5.21 Priorities by households with or without children aged under 16

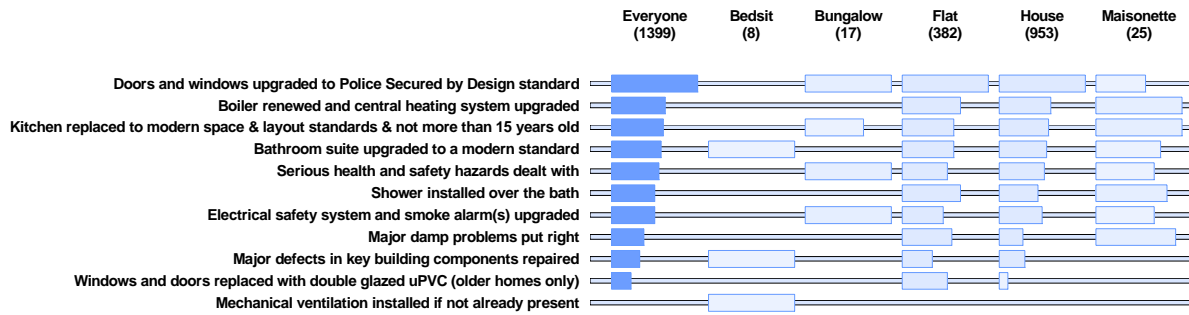


### 3.5.22 Priorities by length of tenure

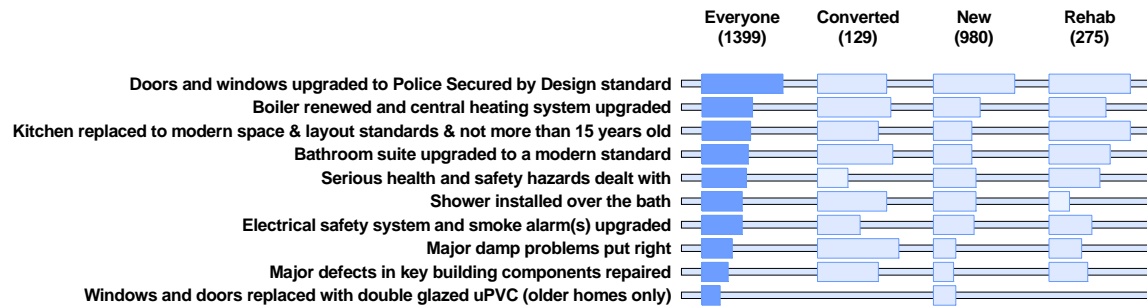


# 3.5 Priorities for property improvements

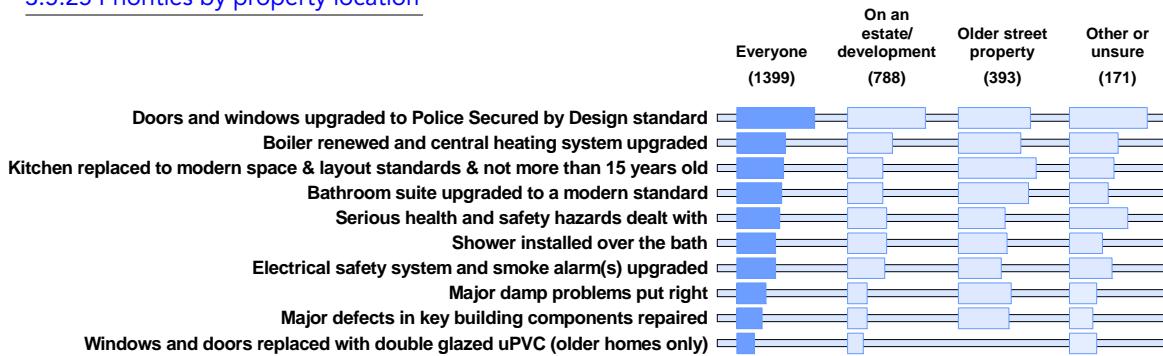
## 3.5.23 Priorities by property type



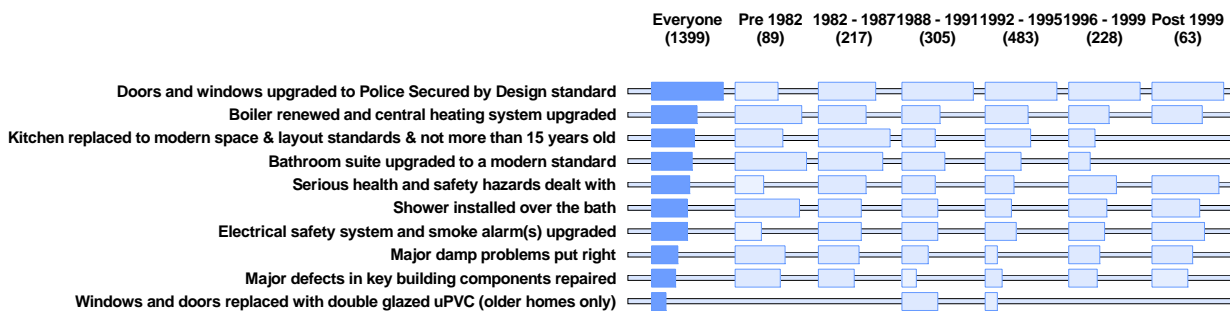
## 3.5.24 Priorities by build type



## 3.5.25 Priorities by property location

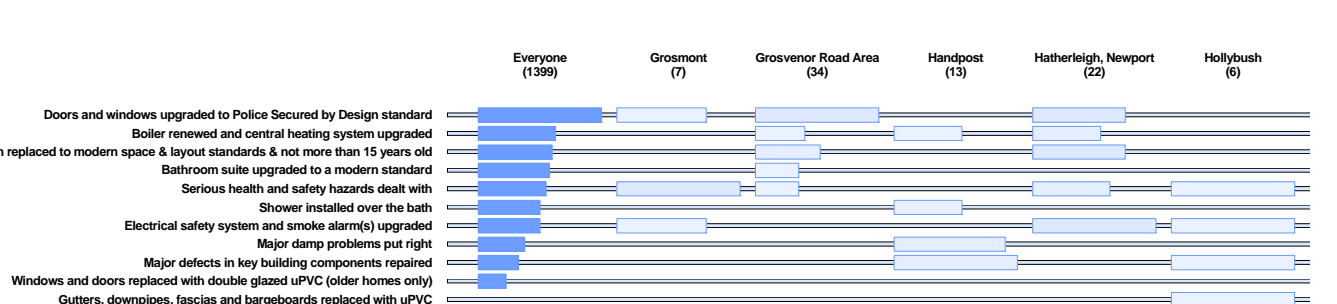
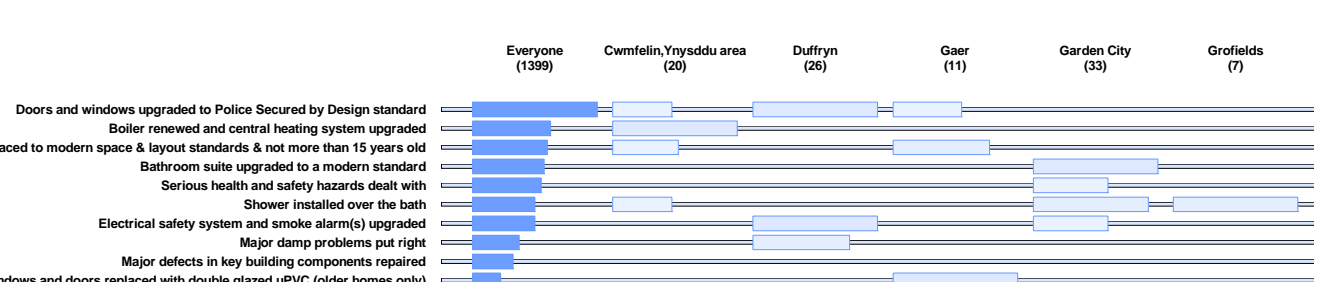
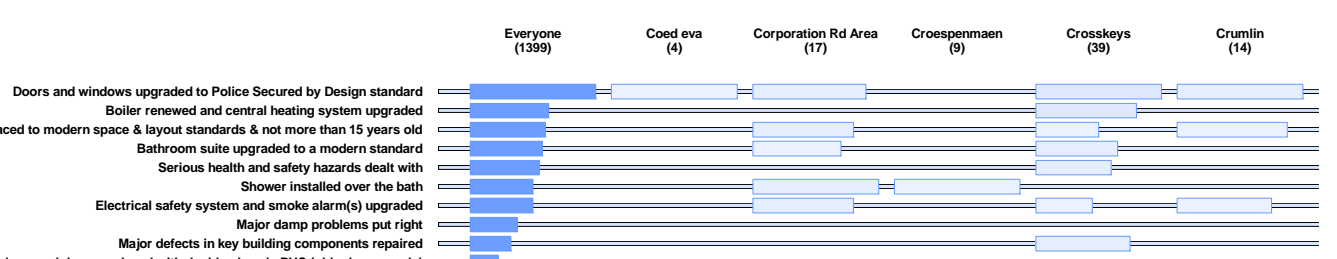
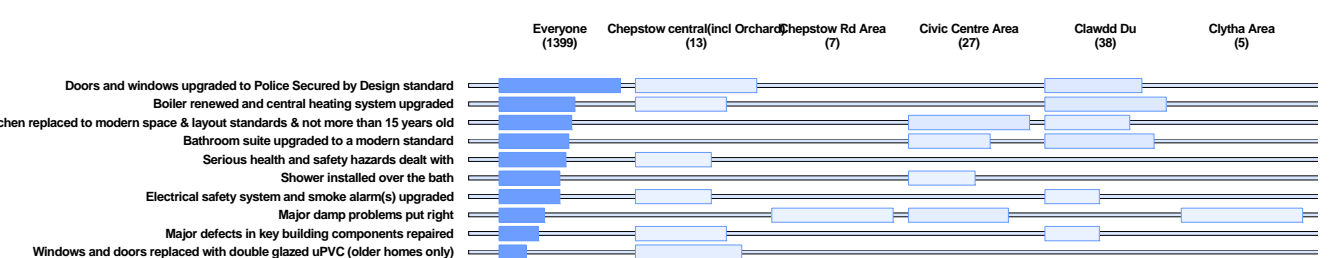
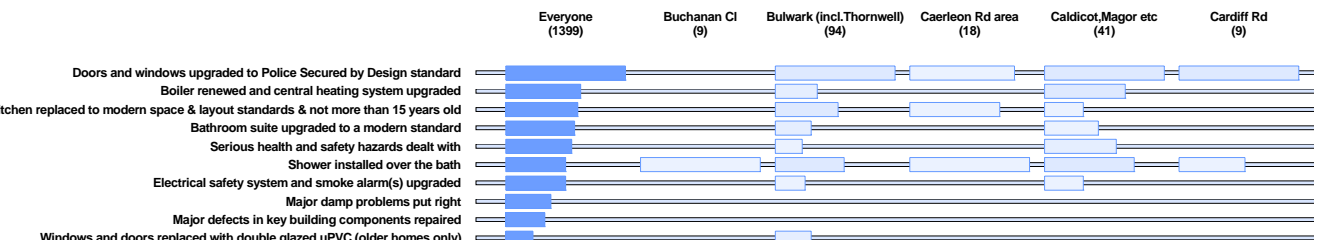
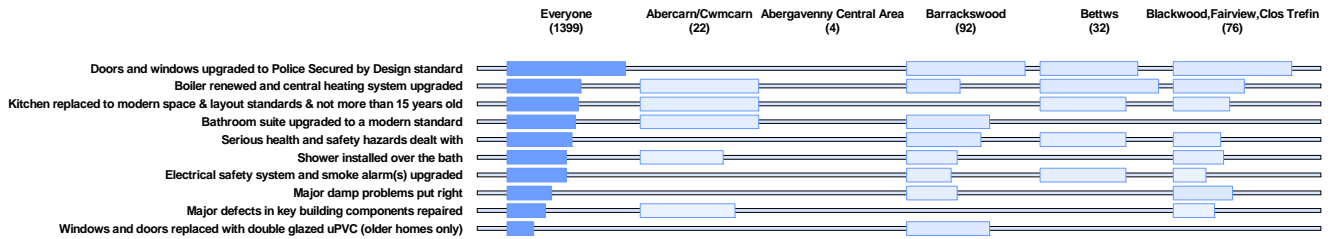


## 3.5.26 Priorities by property age



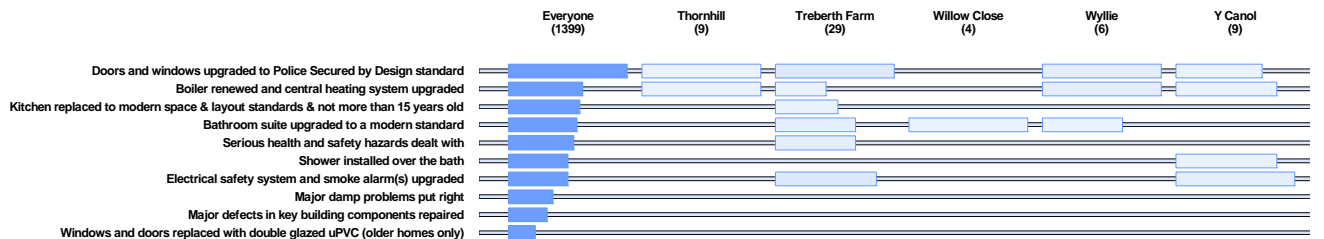
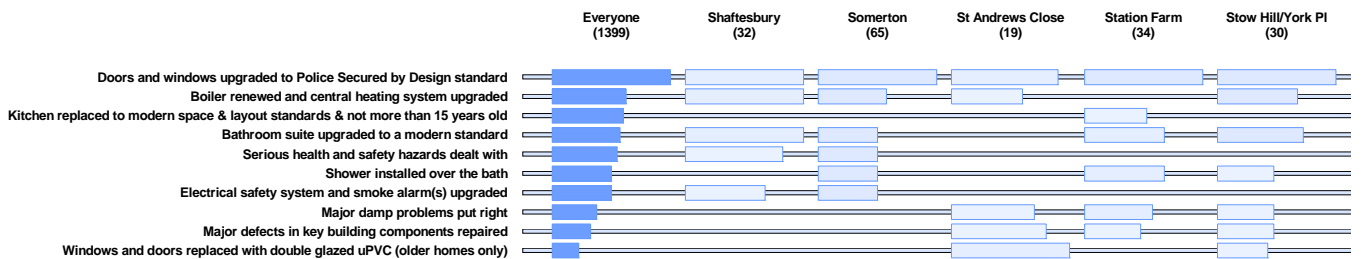
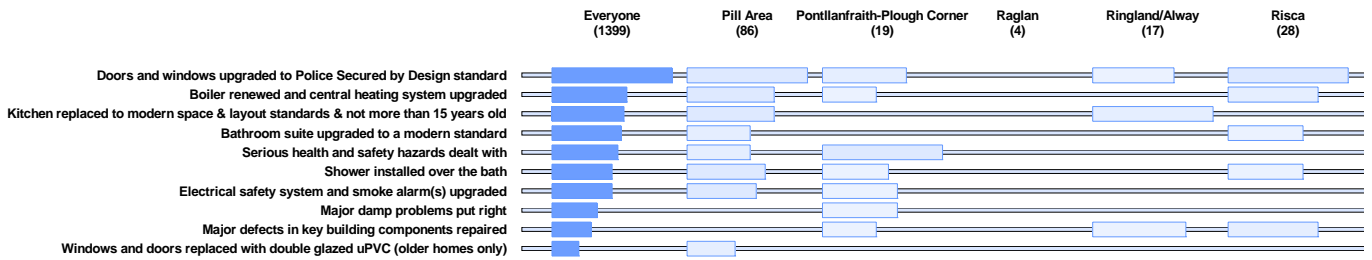
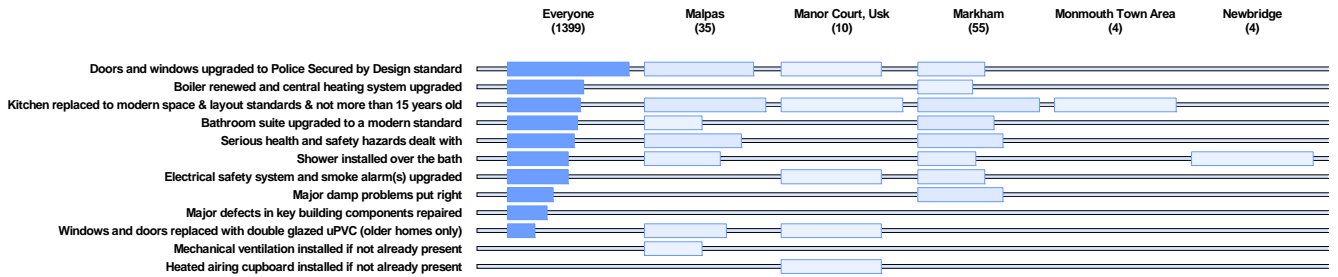
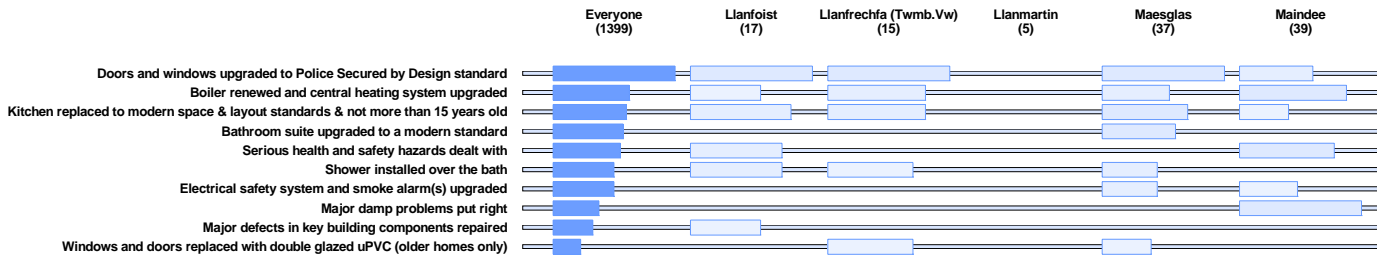
# 3.5 Priorities for property improvements

## 3.5.27 Priorities by lettings area



# 3.5 Priorities for property improvements

## 3.5.27 Priorities by lettings area (continued)



This page is intentionally left blank

## **Appendix**

---

### **4.1 Methodology**

## 4.1 Methodology

### Overview

The research methodology employed by Priority Research Ltd originated from dissatisfaction with existing methods, which can broadly be divided into two groups depending on whether they are *qualitative* or *quantitative* in nature. Each method has its particular strengths and weaknesses:

*Quantitative* methods have the advantage of numerical accuracy and ease of analysis, but they tend to be reductionist in nature, and when applied to research areas involving human experience can miss or lose much of the available information.

*Qualitative* methods are more applicable to human phenomena, but are often operationally difficult - and hence expensive - to carry out, and they tend to yield large quantities of data which can then be difficult and time-consuming to analyse.

Priority Research's methodology involves the application of specialised numerical methods to qualitative data.

### The Questionnaire

A Priority Search questionnaire is divided into two parts. Part One of the questionnaire gathered demographic information and collected respondents' opinions on various aspects of the WHQS. Part Two, the sequential paired comparison section (details of which are given on the next page) is the core of a Priority Search. The paired comparisons allow respondents to establish their personal agenda from the items selected. In this section, respondents were asked to read each of the paired statements and to indicate their relative preference for the two items. Each item appeared three times, each time paired with a different item. The Priority Search software then ranked all the items for each individual, and the preferences of the whole population, or subgroups of it, was thereby established.

### Fieldwork

The questionnaires were distributed to all tenant households during July/August 2005. A reminder questionnaire and a free prize draw were also used to encourage the response rate. A sample of 1750 tenants successfully completed and returned questionnaires by the closing date, a response rate of 48%.

### Analysis

Readers should take care when considering percentage results from some of the sub groups within the main sample, as the base figures may sometimes be small. Due to rounding some graphs may not add up to 100%. Unless otherwise stated, all statistically significant differences are reported at the 95% confidence level. Therefore, a difference between two groups is usually considered statistically significant if chance could explain it only 5% of the time or less. This calculation relies on a number of factors such as the base figure and the level of variance, both within and between sample groups, thereby taking into account more than just the simple percentage difference.

# 4.1 Methodology

## The Priority Search algorithm

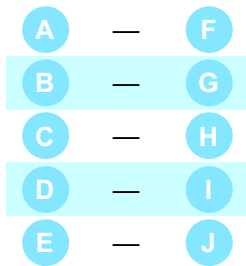
The use of paired comparison as an aid to prioritisation is relatively well known. However, dichotomous choice is usually used, which requires the comparison of all possible pairs.

The Priority Search process allows respondents to compare each pair not dichotomously but using a *Likert scale*. This tool is commonly used to measure subjective phenomena, for example pain or mood. The addition of this scale gives more information per pair, and as a result the number of pairings needed is reduced considerably:

A uniquely ranked list of  $n$  items comprises  $\log_2(n!)$  bits of information.

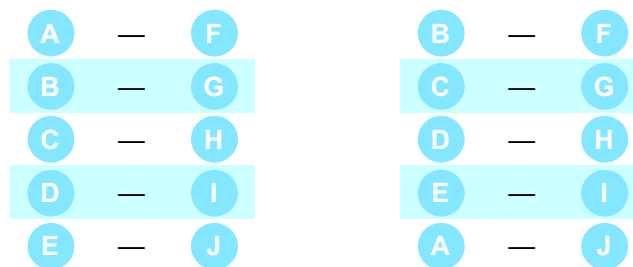
A set of 3 pairings per item on a scale of  $P$  points comprises  $\log_2(P^{1.5n})$  bits, and for even small values of  $P$  the value of  $P^{1.5n}$  exceeds  $n!$  over a usable range of items.

In order to extract a rank order from the resulting partial set of all possible pairings it is necessary to be able to relate each item to all the others. Consider a set of ten items paired as follows:



In this case, we know how A relates to F, B to G, etc, but we have no information about how A relates to any item other than F, or B to any item other than G, etc

If the order of the pairings is altered and replicated, the following arrangement can be reached:



By creating a second set of pairings with the left hand column frame shifted, a chain results: On the left, A is compared with F, which on the right is compared with B; B is compared with G, which is compared with C, and so on. In this way the position of any item relative to any other can be determined.

Such a design is known as a reduced subset cyclic design. Two sets of pairings arranged as above will allow a perfect rank order to be calculated if the input to the system comprises mathematically precise data. The Priority Search process adds a third, different set of pairings; this allows more information to be extracted and is sufficient to cope with the imprecision which is inherent in subjective ratings.

This page is intentionally left blank