

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: Councillor Clements
LEAD OFFICER: Fergus Mc Morrow
REPORT AUTHOR: Alan Davis

Summary and Recommendation:

This report informs the Panel of questionnaire results received to date from homelessness and housing options service users about their experiences of our services.

The Panel are asked to note the contents.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the Homeless Strategy delivery action plan we undertook to improve services to our customers by gauging their opinions and using their views to help us drive improvements in the service.

Initially we received few responses when the forms initially started to be sent out in June 2009, which to some extent reflects the transient nature of customers using the service.

Following a re launch of these with the incentive of a prize draw offering shopping vouchers for those returning we have now received a much better response rate.

2. ANALYSIS OF RESPONSES

Considering that customers of the Housing Options and Homelessness Services generally come to us at a time of great stress there are a number of positives coming out of the results to date.

These include the fact that around 88% find it easy to contact their Housing Options Adviser and that a similar figure knew the name of their case worker and how to contact them.

Also an encouraging 77% were either very or fairly satisfied with the service received from the Housing Options Team. Similarly around 80% found the staff helpful and feel that they have a good attitude and

approximately the same percentage feel either very or fairly satisfied with the quality of advice and information given.

Just as promisingly given the legal complexities of homeless legislation, 70% said that they were either very or fairly satisfied with the explanation given on how homelessness legislation and procedure works and a similar figure were satisfied with how other housing options were explained to them.

The next important step is to ensure that we learn the lessons given to us by our customers.

3. NEXT STEPS

In order to respond to the feedback received showing that there are a number of people who are not satisfied with aspects of the services that we are delivering there are a number of actions that we are going to take.

Where individuals have left their contact details we will get in touch with them and try to resolve their particular difficulties and learn from the lessons of these negative experiences.

We also want to inform our customers what we are proposing to do as a result of these comments and of course also learn from the positive comments made where we are doing things in the right way.

We want to form a service user group to look at aspects of our services and involve them in seeing how we can change our services to better suit the requirements of our customers.

Finally we are using these questionnaires as just one way of trying to routinely involve our customers in shaping our service delivery. We are currently looking at other ways in which we can involve our customers and will report back to the Strategic Housing Panel about these proposals.

4. FINANCIAL AND HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS (INCLUDING SOURCES OF FINANCE)

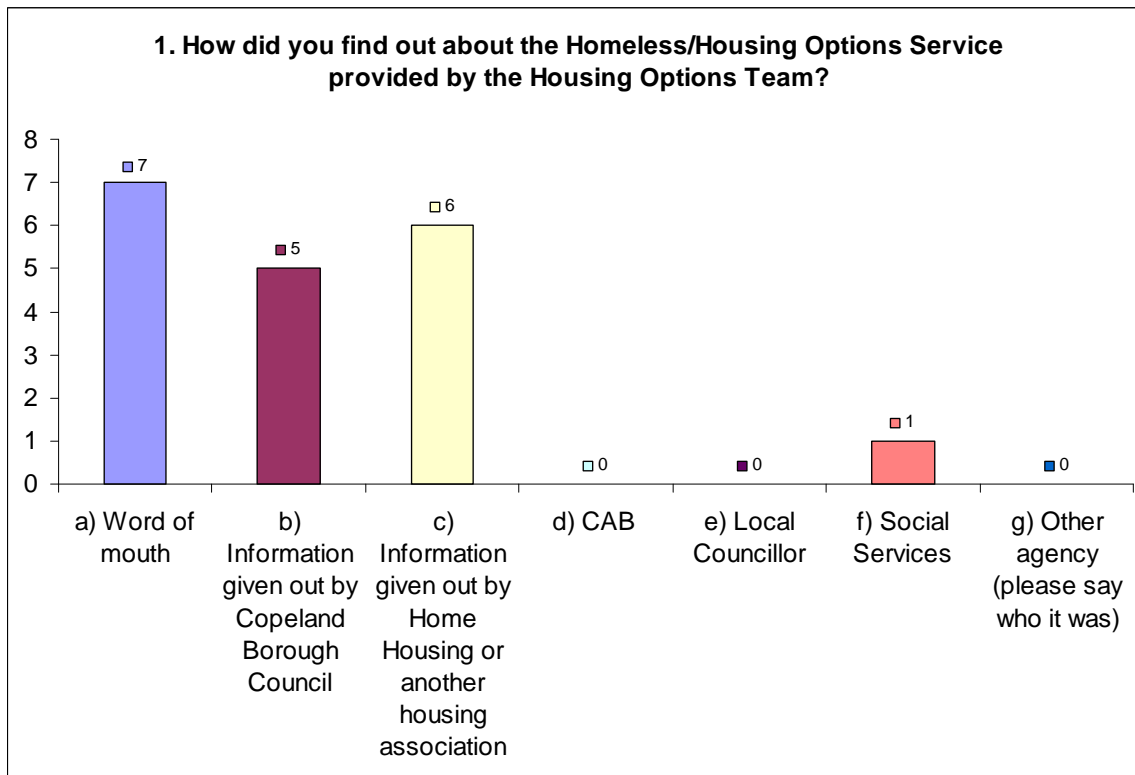
The intention of this report is to effectively involve our customers in order to improve our services, which should help us to take early action and possibly to prevent people from becoming statutorily homeless. This can potentially save the Council expense while delivering a better service.

5. IMPACT ON CORPORATE PLAN AND RECOMMENDATION

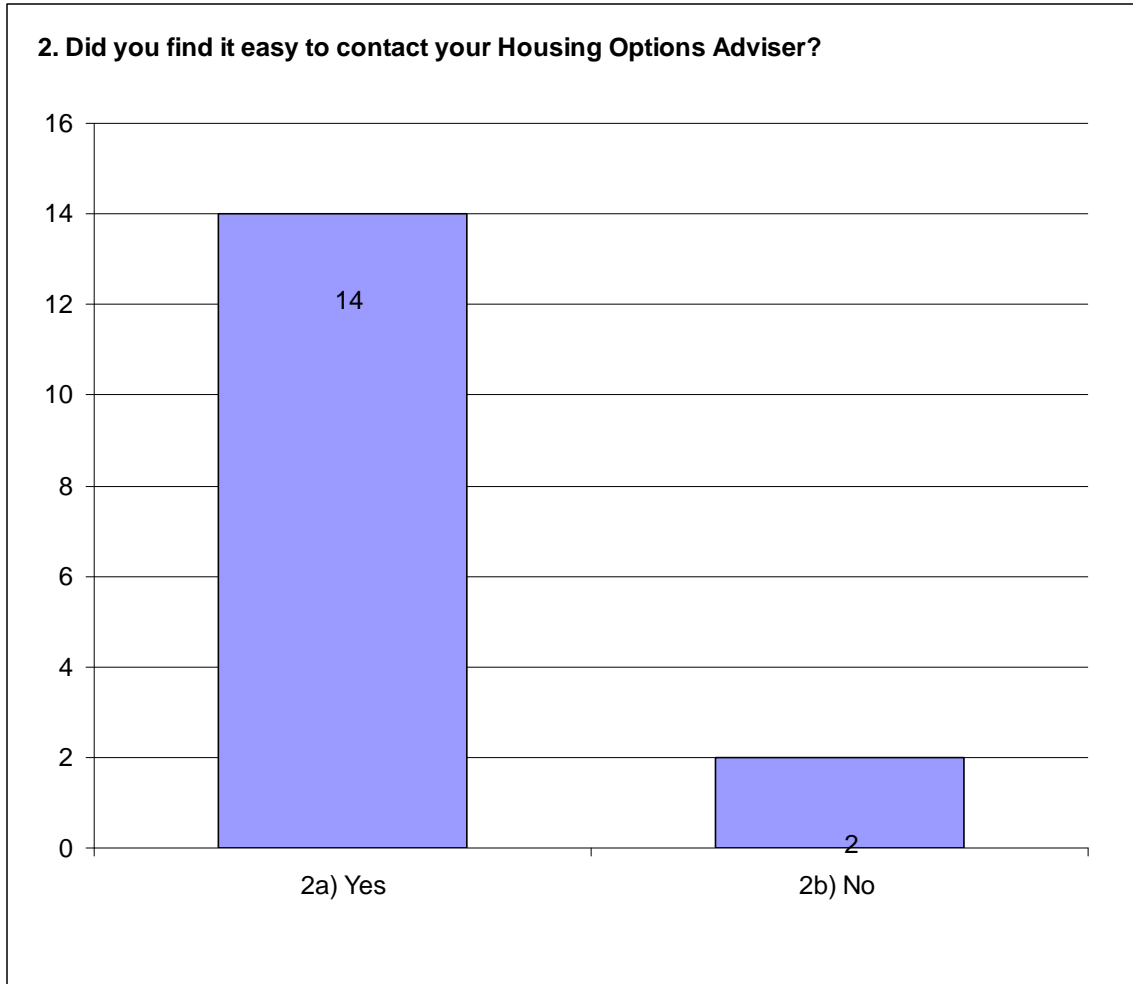
The report is consistent with the housing objectives in the Corporate Improvement Plan and the Strategic Housing Action Plan produced after the last Audit Commission Housing Inspection.

List of appendices – Appendix 1: Copy of the analysis of surveys returned to us to date.

Total surveys recorded: 13 (Totals on graphs may be higher than total number of surveys because respondents may have recorded more than one response for each question)



g) Other agency (please say who it was)



Comments received

a) If not, why not?

Could not get interview when required

Had to wait 3 days for an appointment after which I was sent away with no help.

b) If so, why?

She was very helpful

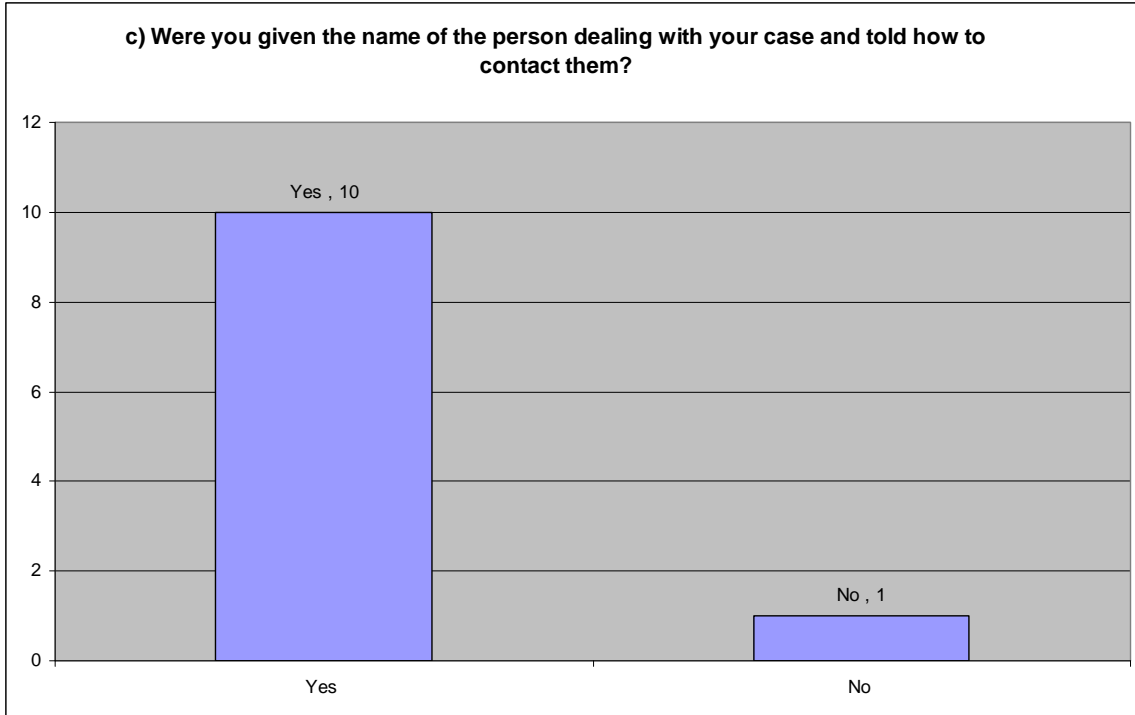
Social services and my son got in touch with them

I went to my housing association and they gave me an appointment to see a housing officer

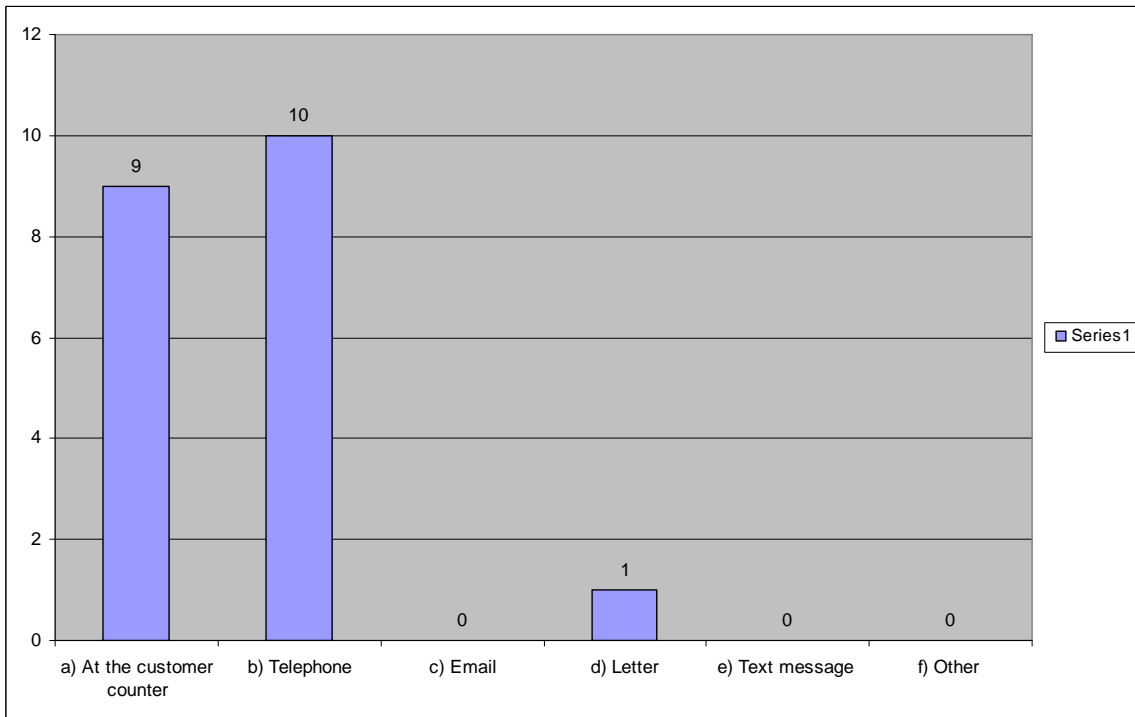
I was given the right telephone number and name to get in touch when needed.

Via telephone and help desk

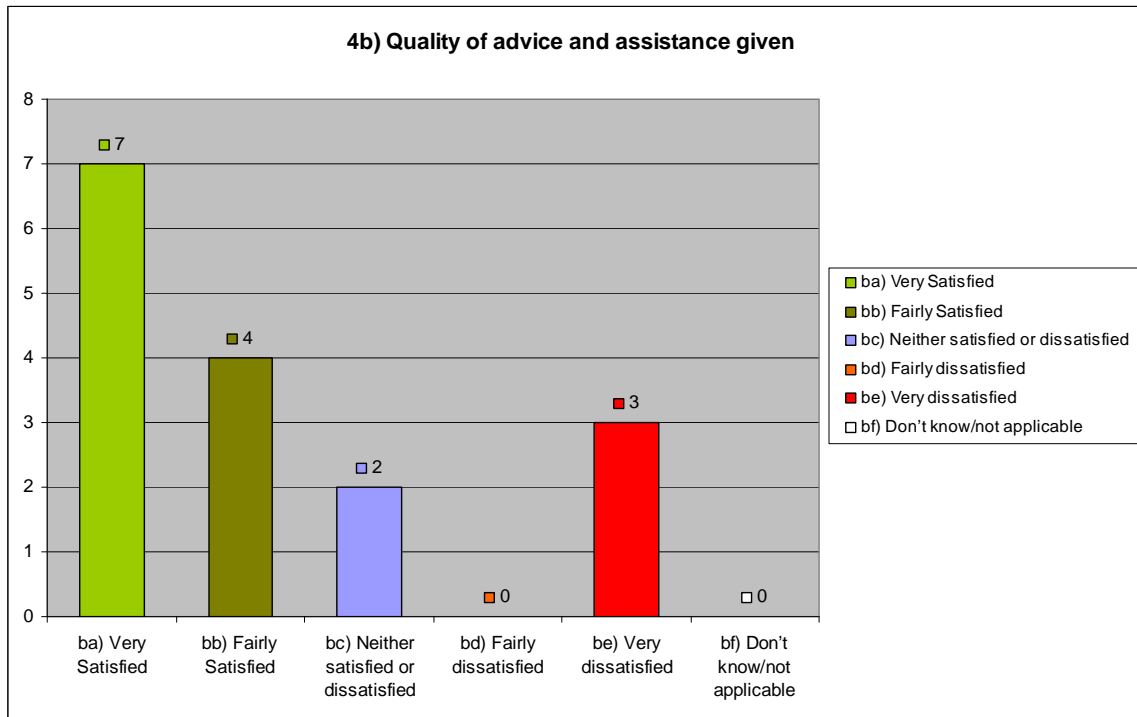
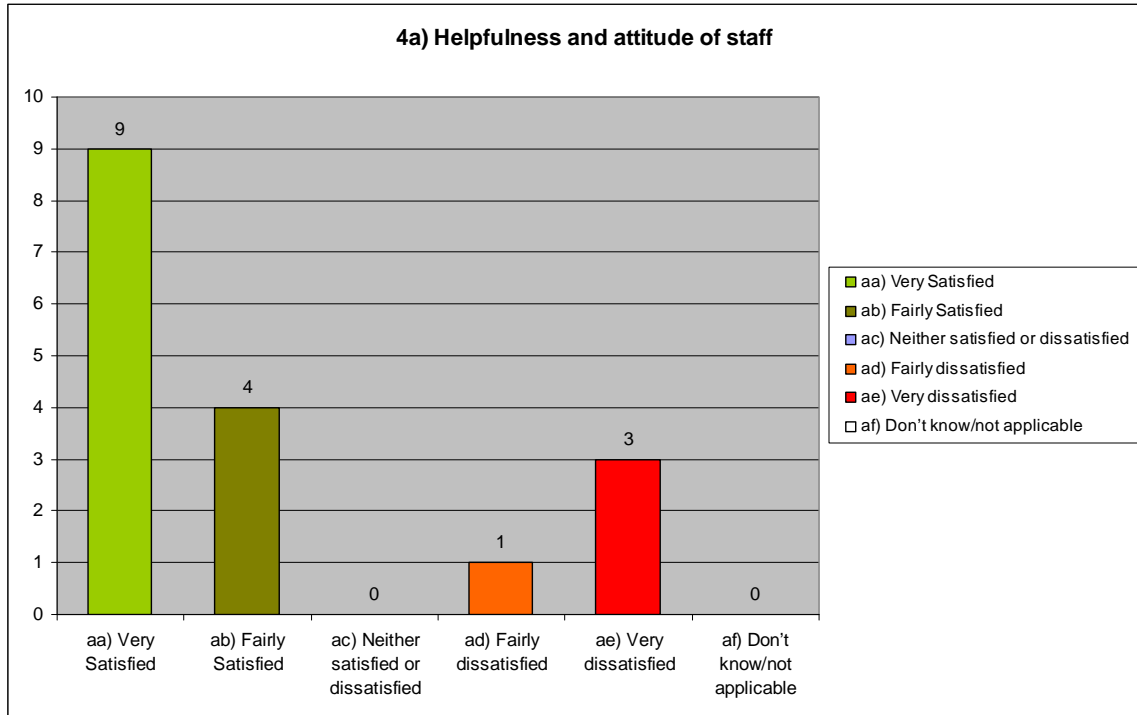
Front desk very helpful



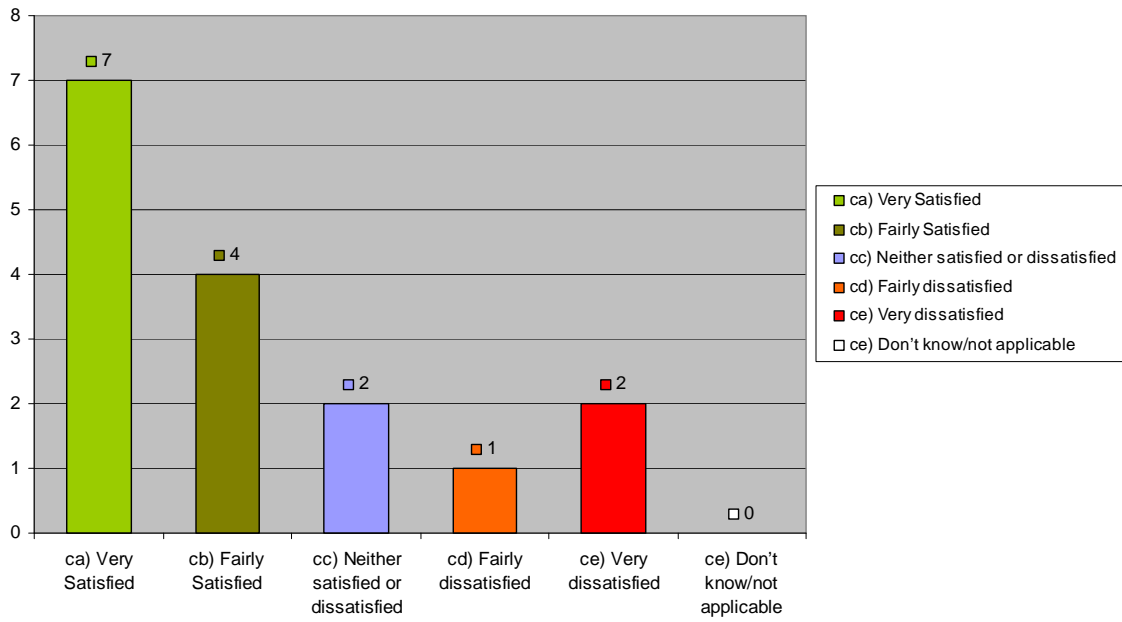
3. How do you prefer to contact your Housing Options Adviser?



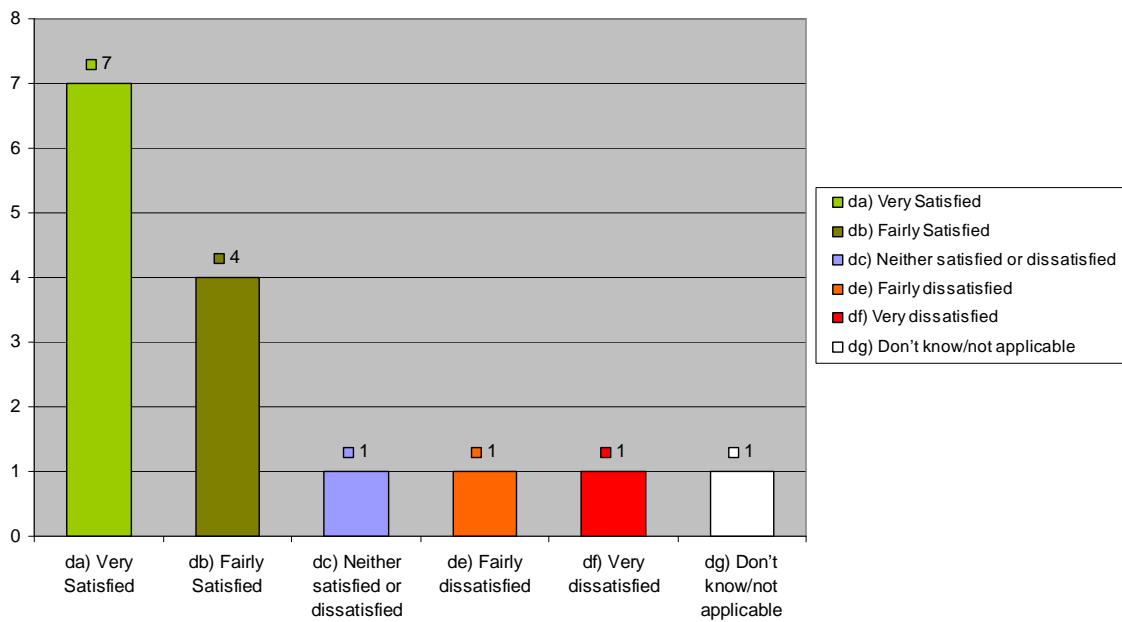
4. How satisfied are you with the service received from the Housing Options Team in the following areas?



4c) Explanation of how homeless legislation and procedure work



4d) How other housing options (such as private renting) were explained to you



Comments received:

4e) If you were either fairly or very dissatisfied can you say why?

We were told to rent, but now they say you have a home. Told them 1 entrance in to prop 4 flights of stairs. No garden to hang washing out. What happens if fire (not your problem)

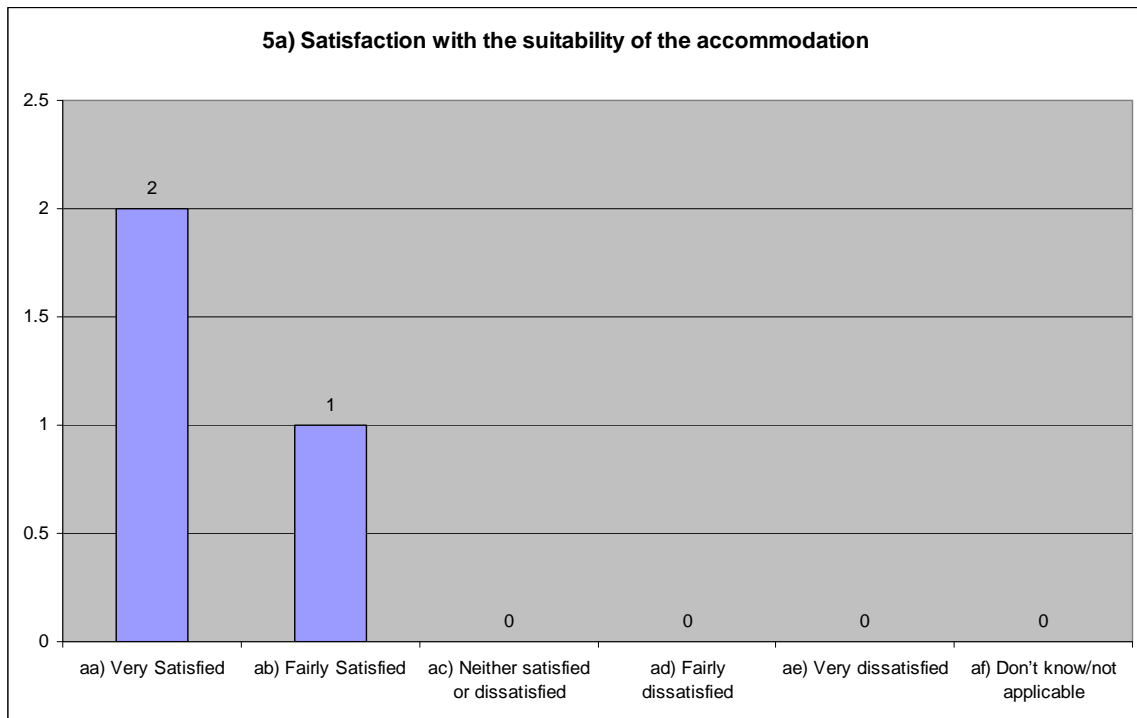
Because at the moment I work and am living between friends and found all the information very unuseful as I am homeless and was told there's nothing anyone can do

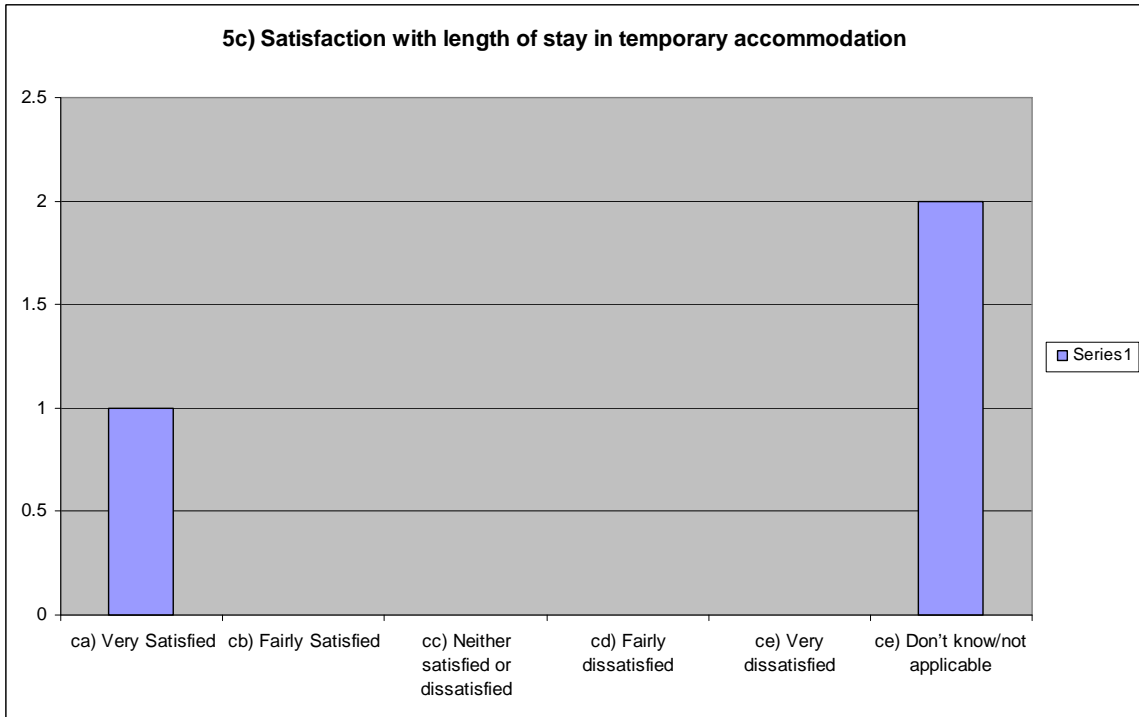
Satisfied with attitude and manner of staff but not satisfied with the system. I have 2 young children and we are about to become homeless and basically it doesn't matter.

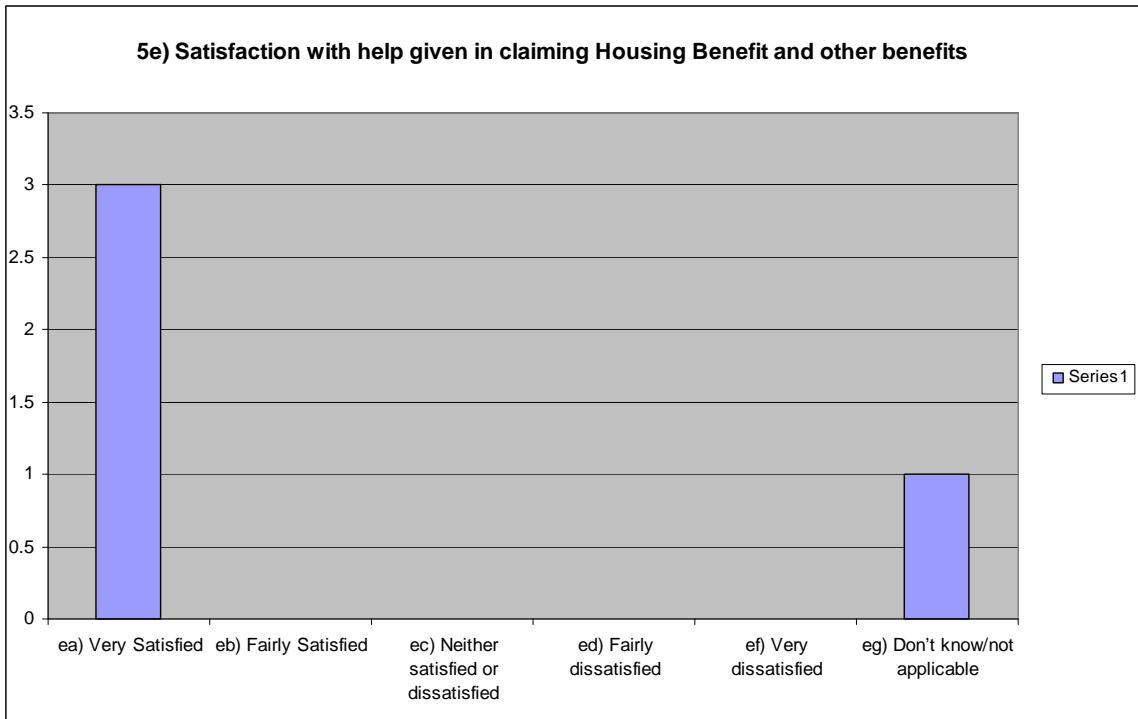
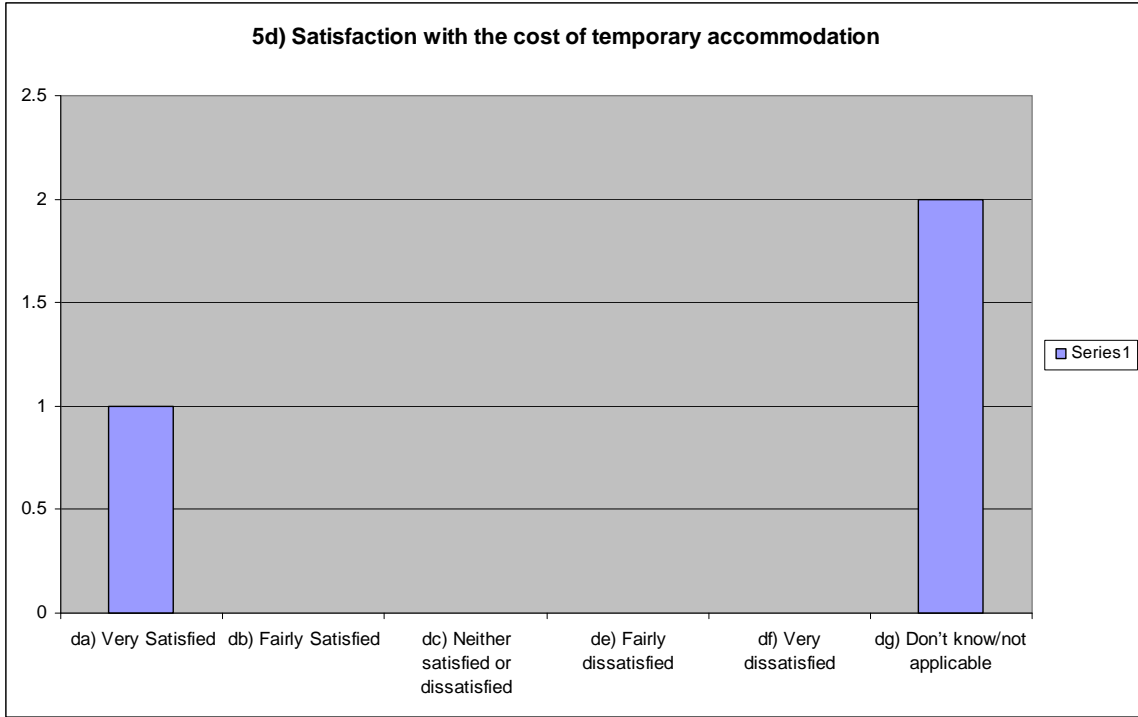
Me and my daughter are homeless and living in between houses and received no help and are still homeless, and the woman's attitude was unhelpful and very abrupt. Very dissatisfied

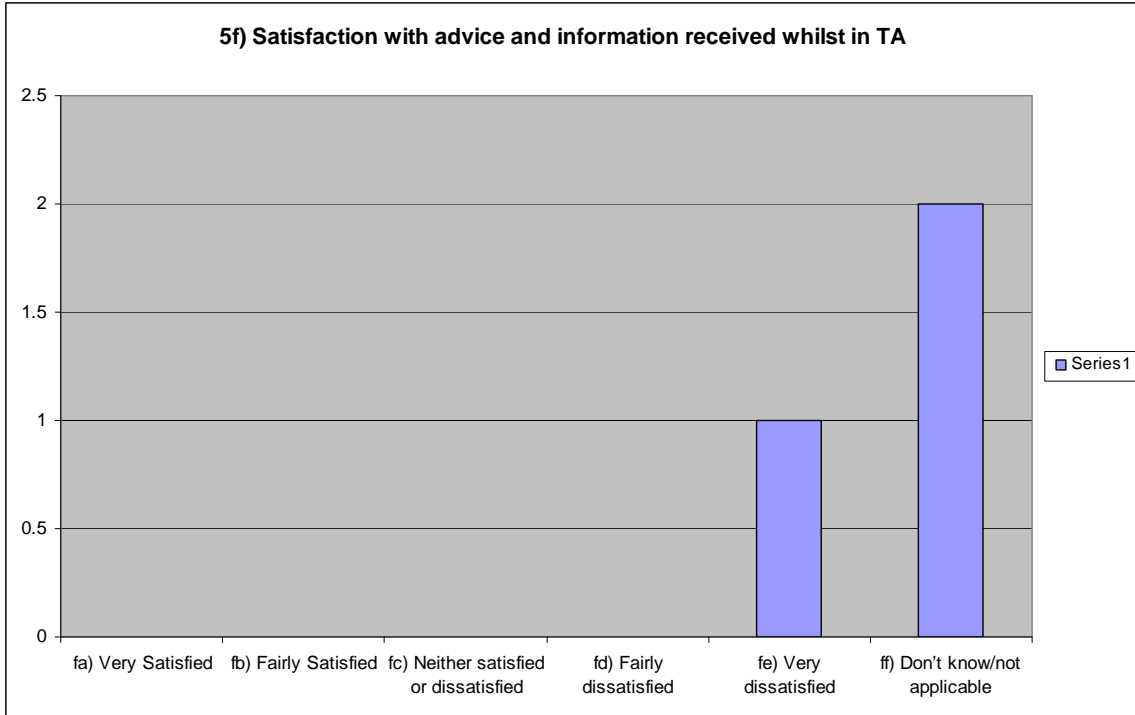
Questions to full Homelessness Acceptances only

5. How satisfied were you with the temporary accommodation we provided you (if applicable?)

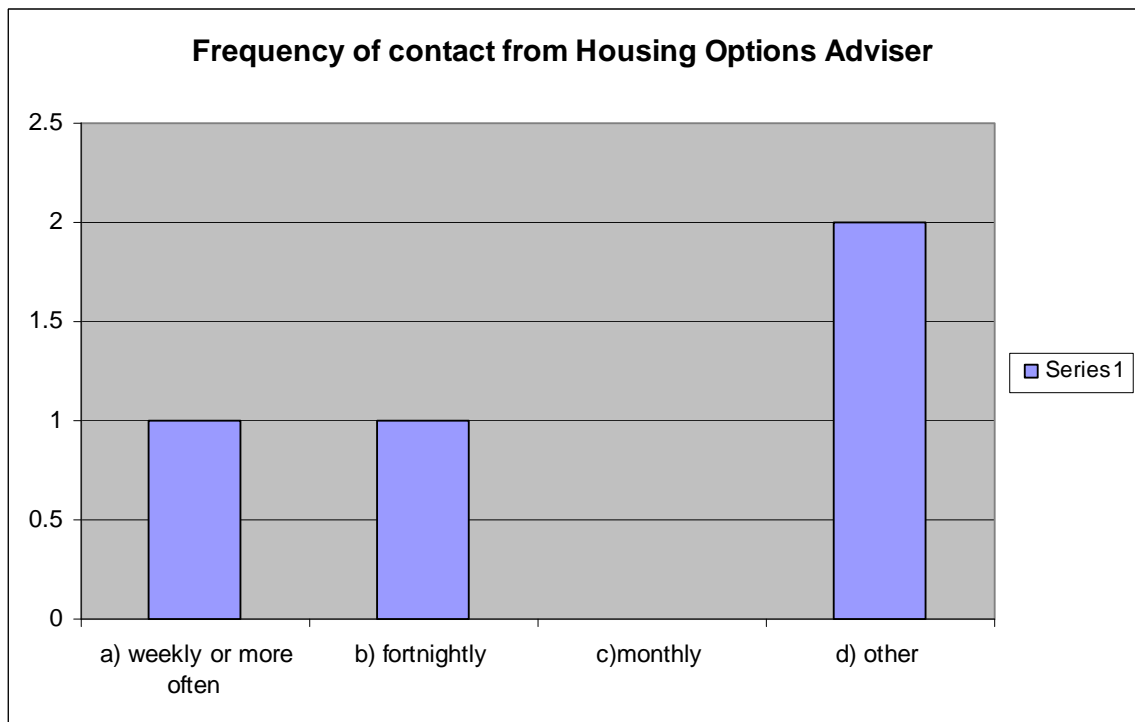


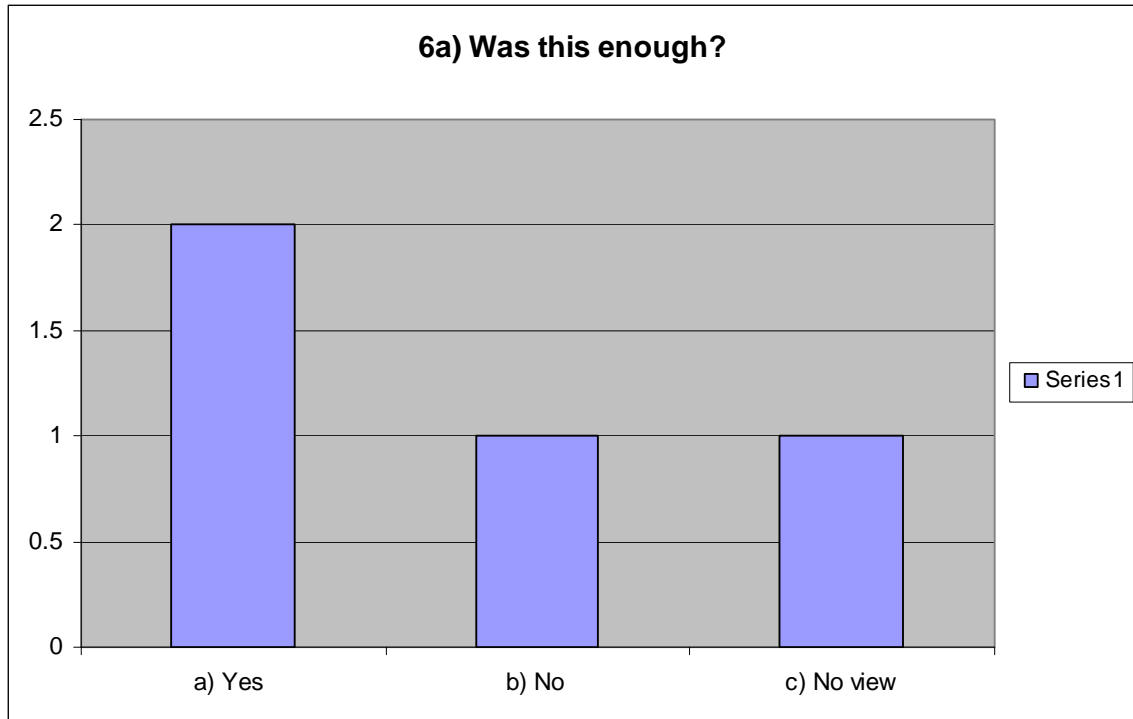






6. How often did your Housing Options Adviser visit/talk with you?





Comments received:

6b) If not enough, why not?

Am still waiting for someone to come and see me and gave me some advise on my housing and if I am getting help.

I haven't heard anything from a housing officer for a few weeks now, as I am awaiting word for another suitable house.

7. a) Which Housing Association re housed you?

Private
None just yet

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Private
None just yet

8 (Inc. Responses to Q5 of HO forms) Do you have any suggestions as to how the Housing Options Service or any other part of Copeland Borough Council could improve its service to you?

Response to 2c) After I found out who she was and she was not helpful at all and due to my circumstance it was disgusting
4b) Tell you to do one thing now we're stuck 5. (Yes) help people who are born and bred in the area and have family near by who need their help and so I can keep my job (care worker) not to be told we could house you at Millom but you must give up job. Took me long time to get (disgusting)

They could try to improve their housing options for homeless people who work can't get housed due to unemployed or people with addictions. If someone would like to contact me for my views they are more than welcome. (back of form) I would be grateful if someone could contact me as I say I am homeless. Thank you for your help. I've tried to contact someone before now and all I ever get told is someone will call you back and it never happens.

Reduce waiting time

Think about local people and people like myself and my partner before immigrants and drug users as regards to housing.

Nope.

I'm homeless with a two year old. I don't have a car and was offered a B&B in Millom. The woman was unhelpful and very cheeky to me & told me I'd made myself homeless so she wouldn't help. The leaflet I was given with private housing was out of date. I feel the advice I was given wasn't very good. Me & my daughter are still homeless & I have no help from family. We are sleeping in between houses on sofas which is unsettling for my daughter.

I would like to be kept in touch

I think everything was covered by yourselves when I met up with the housing officer, and like I said I am waiting for a move.

