

Property managers in Scotland – a market study

Annexe B - Survey of consumer experiences of
property management – a report of findings

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1 INTRODUCTION

Background

1.1 Overall 32 per cent of households in Scotland live in a flat, maisonette or apartment. This amounts to some 730,000 households. Of these, an estimated 300,000 are owner-occupied and a further 116,000 rented from private landlords, with most of the remainder rented within the social rented sector. Included among the 730,000 are an estimated 141,000 flats previously in the social rented sector that were sold under the Right to Buy scheme.¹

Table 1.1 The tenure of flats in Scotland

		Estimated population
All households		2,292,000
...of which living in flats		730,000
...of which	Owner occupied	300,000
	Social rented	296,000
	Private rented	116,000
	Other	18,000
	Total flats	730,000
...of which	Owned occupied flats previously in social rented sector	141,000

Estimates derived from Scottish Household Survey, 2007 and rounded to nearest 1,000

1.2 Flats are more likely to suffer housing quality failures and therefore arrangements for the management of communal repairs and maintenance are critical for a significant proportion of the private housing stock.²

¹ The Scottish House Condition Survey and the Scottish Household Survey provide similar estimates of the breakdown of the stock by tenure and property type. The estimate of the number of flats sold under the Right to Buy is taken from the 2007 Scottish Household Survey.

² Scottish Government's Housing Improvement Task Force (2002) *Issues in improving quality in private housing*, Edinburgh: The Scottish Government
www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/158826/0043128.pdf.

- 1.3 Currently, a variety of arrangements are in place in Scotland. In private sector buildings with common areas, owners either look after communal maintenance and repairs themselves – collectively or individually – or have a factor or property managing agent acting on their behalf. The remit of factors and property managing agents also varies. Some deal only with repairs while others provide a more comprehensive service including both reactive and planned maintenance.
- 1.4 The communal areas of property sold under the Right to Buy scheme remain the responsibility of the local authority or housing association either for 30 years or until two-thirds of the building has been sold. Until then, owners have to use the services provided by the social landlord.³
- 1.5 A number of problems have been identified in the property managing market suggesting that flat owners may not be getting good value for money. These problems centre around two key issues.
- 1.6 First, while property management by social landlords is regulated,⁴ the only regulation of private sector managing agents is through systems of self-regulation operated by professional associations. There are concerns that this may be compromising standards of service provided to residents⁵ and reflecting this, the Housing Improvement Task Force⁶ recommended the establishment of a national accreditation scheme.
- 1.7 Second, switching factor or property manager is seen as problematic, with consequent problems for residents obtaining a competitive service because

³ Scottish Consumer Council (1999) *In a Fix*, Glasgow: Scottish Consumer Council

⁴ On 1 April 2008 the regulator Communities Scotland was abolished. Most of its regulatory functions were transferred to the Scottish Government's Housing and Regulation Directorate. The work of Community Scotland's Regulation and Inspection Division has been transferred to the new Scottish Housing Regulator.

⁵ See, for example, Chartered Institute of Housing (2002) *Engaging Owners in Mixed Tenure Neighbourhoods*; Scottish Consumer Council (1999) *In a Fix*, Glasgow: Scottish Consumer Council

⁶ See Scottish Consumer Council (2007) *National Accreditation Scheme for Property Managers*, Glasgow: Scottish Consumer Council

- the property managing agent is employed collectively by a number of flat owners and it may be difficult for owners to take a collective decision to replace them or to secure significant changes in service
- knowledge of the owners' rights and the procedures to dismiss or appoint a new property managing agent may be low⁷
- there may be restrictions on the residents' rights to switch agent, especially in new developments where the agent has been appointed by the developer for a number of years.

1.8 Given these potential problems, the OFT decided to undertake a Market Study to determine whether the market for residential property management services in Scotland is working effectively. As part of this, OFT commissioned Ipsos MORI to undertake a survey of flat-owners to examine the market from the perspective of consumers. As well as exploring the views of residents with factors or property managers, the survey explored views and experiences of tenants who manage their own maintenance and repairs.

1.9 The survey was designed to explore a range of hypotheses.⁸ In particular, it sought to establish evidence on:

- The extent to which consumers can or cannot judge how good a deal they are receiving.
- Whether or not conflict between what residents want makes directing the managing agent difficult.
- The extent to which managing agents do or do not follow instructions.

⁷ Scottish Consumer Council (1999) *In a Fix*, Glasgow: Scottish Consumer Council

⁸ While these hypotheses informed this survey, the list is not exhaustive of all the study hypotheses in relation to the market of property managing agents in Scotland. For a complete list, please refer to the main market study report.

- Whether repairs and maintenance work are or are not being carried out, or not being done to a sufficient standard.
- The degree to which consumers are or are not receiving value for money.
- The extent to which consumers can or cannot get adequate redress with existing managing agent.
- Whether or not it is intrinsically difficult to secure the agreement of residents to switch managing agents.

Structure of the report

- 1.10 The next chapter (chapter two) provides a summary of the main findings.
- 1.11 Chapter three sets out the methodology that was adopted for the research.
- 1.12 Chapter four describes the profile of the buildings in which respondents to the survey lived.
- 1.13 Chapter five describes the arrangements respondents had in place to maintain and repair common areas of their block.
- 1.14 Chapter six examines respondents' perceptions of the services provided by property managers.
- 1.15 Chapter seven explores residents' experiences of complaining and whether they received adequate redress.
- 1.16 Chapter eight considers experiences of, and attitudes towards, switching among people with a private sector factor or property managers before describing the extent to which people who had services provided by a social landlord are aware of rules and procedures for switching.

1.17 Finally, chapter nine looks in detail at experiences of, and attitudes towards, self managing among people who live in building were owners manage repairs and maintenance themselves.

Terminology used in the report

The table below outlines the terminology that is used in the report to describe the various property managing arrangements that respondents had.

Table 1.2 Terminology

Terminology	Description
Respondents with a property manager	All respondents who have a private sector factor or have services provided by a council, housing association or housing association appointed factor
Respondents with a factor	All respondents who pay a private sector factor to carry out property managing services
Respondents who have services provided by a social landlord	All respondents who have services provided by a council, housing association or a factor appointed by a housing association
Self-managing respondents	All respondents who live in a building in which common repairs are arranged by owners and residents themselves

2 SUMMARY

Property management arrangements

- 2.1 When interpreting the findings it is important to remember that the results are based on a sample of flat owners and not on the entire flat-owning population. Consequently, results are subject to sampling tolerances and not all differences between subgroups are statistically significant. A more detailed discussion on sampling tolerances can be found in the annexe.
- 2.2 Across Scotland, just under a half of flat owners (49 per cent) said that residents arranged common repairs themselves – an arrangement commonly referred to as self-managing. Only around a third (29 per cent) paid a private sector factor to carry out common repairs and maintenance to their block, while 22 per cent had services provided by a social landlord - the council, housing association or housing association appointed factor.
- 2.3 Pre-war buildings in Glasgow and modern properties across Scotland were far more likely than average to be managed by a factor. Of those flat owners who have a factor, just under half lived in modern buildings across Scotland and 26 per cent in pre-war developments in Glasgow.
- 2.4 Factors and social landlords offered a range of services. The most common services provided were roof repairs, upkeep and maintenance of common grounds, cleaning of gutters and rones and repairs to outside walls and windows.
- 2.5 Although property managers act on behalf of owners collectively, only a fifth of owners said their building or development had any formal arrangement – a residents association for example – for dealing with their property manager. A similar proportion had an arrangement where owners worked together but in a less formal capacity and 6 per cent said that one resident dealt with the factor on all owners' behalf but that still left a majority of owner occupiers with no mechanism for dealing with their property manager.

Perceptions of services

- 2.6 Two-thirds of people with a property manager said that it was easy to have common repairs carried out when they were needed. However, a significant minority of respondents had some difficulty with their service, with just over a quarter (28 per cent) saying that it was difficult to arrange common repairs.
- 2.7 The extent to which owners dealt with their factor in an organised way, through an association or simply an informal group, had a significant positive impact on the ease of getting repairs carried out in their block. Owners with a formal association found it easiest: 75 per cent found it easy (30 per cent very easy).
- 2.8 On balance, owners who said it was difficult to arrange common repairs were more likely to say that difficulties stemmed from their property manager than from owners or residents themselves. In terms of difficulties created by property managers, two fifths (42 per cent) of owners said their property manager was not effective at getting things done. Other issues related to poor standards of work, high costs and poor communication.
- 2.9 Others mentioned difficulties created by the lack of organisation among people in their block, with a fifth (21 per cent) of owners who said it was difficult to arrange repairs mentioning problems organising or agreeing joint action. Other less common difficulties included obtaining payments from owners and obtaining timely consent from owners.
- 2.10 Just under half of owners rated the service provided by their property manager as being good value for money. However, there was a significant minority of respondents who were unhappy with their service, with around a third rating it as being poor value for money.
- 2.11 Owners who had no fixed arrangements for dealing with their property manager were more likely than those who did so in an organised way to describe the service they received as poor value for money. By contrast, owners who dealt with their factor in an organised way were much more

likely than average to rate the services provided by their property manager as good value for money.

- 2.12 There were a number of issues that appeared to affect perceptions of value for money, including cost, quality of service, provision of service and communication.
- 2.13 Respondents were also asked to rate the individual services carried out by their property manager. Broadly speaking, the types of services fell into two main groups: the **actual provision of repair or maintenance services** and the **organisation and management of services**.
- 2.14 With regards **repairs and maintenance**, for all but two types of service, a majority who used each service rated it as good. They were most satisfied with the maintenance and cleaning of lifts (71 per cent), the maintenance and cleaning of communal stairs (71 per cent), the upkeep of communal grounds (70 per cent), window cleaning (66 per cent) and repairs to door entry system (65 per cent).
- 2.15 This positive result notwithstanding, a significant minority of service users were dissatisfied with the services provided by their property manager, with around a fifth of service users rating each service as poor.
- 2.16 Owners' perceptions of the standard of **organisation and management of services** carried out by property managers were similarly positive to those for repairs and maintenance, with all but two of the services being rated as good by a majority of service users
- 2.17 However, again a significant minority of owners rated the services as poor. Moreover, users were more likely to rate their property manager's performance of making routine checks as poor than good (38 per cent compared to 27 per cent). Around a quarter (22 per cent) rated this service as **very** poor.
- 2.18 Although the majority of service users said the service they received was good, owners with a factor were more likely to say it was good than those who had services provided by a social landlord.

- 2.19 In addition, those owners who employed a **formal** strategy for dealing with their property manager were more likely than all other groups rate services as good
- 2.20 On balance, property managers were not thought to take preventative measures towards repairs and maintenance.

Complaining

- 2.21 Just over half (53 per cent) of owners with a property manager had wanted to complain, rising to 57 per cent among owners with a private sector factor. The focus of complaints related to repairs and maintenance, poor quality of services, lack of communication and costs and invoicing.
- 2.22 Two-thirds (67 per cent) of owners who wanted to make a complaint actually did so. This is equivalent to 35 per cent of all flat owners who had a private-sector factor or had services provided by a social landlord.
- 2.23 The majority of owners who made a complaint said their complaint was acknowledged (72 per cent) and 51 per cent were informed how it would be handled. However, less than half were told who would be handling the complaint (40 per cent) or how long it was likely to take (20 per cent). Only 8 per cent said they were informed that the complaint could be taken to some other agency if a suitable remedy was not available.
- 2.24 Two thirds (67 per cent) of owners who made a complaint said they were dissatisfied with the way their complaint was handled, of which 18 per cent were **fairly** dissatisfied and 49 per cent were **very** dissatisfied.
- 2.25 The overriding reason respondents gave for being dissatisfied was that their complaint was not addressed (71 per cent). Other reasons included the property manager took too long to react to the complaint (14 per cent), failed to communicate what they were going to do in response to the complaint (14 per cent) and staff were rude and unhelpful (12 per cent).

- 2.26 The survey asked about barriers to complaining. The most common barrier was scepticism about the likelihood of the complaint making any difference (34 per cent). Other barriers related to the individual's time constraints and a lack of awareness about making complaints.

Switching supplier

- 2.27 Just over three-quarters of owners with a factor were aware that they can change factor.
- 2.28 Asked when there was last a change in their factor, a large majority (71 per cent) said there had not been a change during their tenure. Of the small number who had experienced change, that is 73 out of the 294 individuals with a private sector factor, just over half (53 per cent) agreed that the change was necessary, with 45 per cent agreeing **strongly**. Asked whether they had experienced any difficulties when attempting to switch, a majority – almost four in five (79 per cent) – said they had not.
- 2.29 It appears that a lack of information may be a barrier to switching, with a majority disagreeing that there is plenty of information available about factors and agents, and two in five disagreeing that factors and agents make information available on their fees and services. Limited knowledge about switching also appears to be a barrier, with just over half disagreeing that they understand the steps needed to appoint a new factor or agent.
- 2.30 The findings also indicate that while a majority of owners with a factor would be willing to get involved in trying to change factor or agent, most feel that the process would be fairly onerous. Seven in ten agreed that it would be difficult to get the necessary agreement among owners to organise a change, and a similar proportion agreed that appointing a new factor or agent would be 'a lot of hassle'.
- 2.31 There was little appetite for self-managing among this group, with three-quarters agreeing that it would be too much trouble for the residents of their building to arrange repairs and maintenance themselves and 70 per cent **disagreeing** that they would prefer it if they residents of their

building looked after repairs and maintenance themselves, rather than having a factor do it.

- 2.32 The survey also identified barriers to switching among respondents who had property management services provided by a social landlord. This group had a low awareness of the status quo, with only around a quarter mentioning that they are obliged to use the landlord's factoring services, and a similar proportion saying that there are no barriers to changing their arrangements.
- 2.33 Less than a quarter who have services provided by a social landlord said they had a good or some understanding of the procedures for residents to change their property manager, while 18 per cent said they had a limited understanding and 41 per cent said they had no understanding at all.

Self managing

- 2.34 The self-managing group of respondents were asked to describe the care and maintenance arrangements that exist in their building. A large majority (93 per cent in total) said that there were no **formal** arrangements in place.
- 2.35 Almost a third of the self-managing group who had experienced change of arrangement during their tenure said that the residents had always self-managed and the change was simply in the nature of the self-managing arrangements already in place. The other main responses were about perceived problems with services provided by a former factor.
- 2.36 80 per cent of all those who had experienced a change and could remember whether the process was easy or difficult said they found the process of moving to self-management easy.
- 2.37 Self-managing appears to be working reasonably well in practice. Almost seven in ten of the self-managing group said it is easy to get common repairs done in their building, with 25 per cent saying it is **very** easy. Meanwhile, a total of 21 per cent said it is difficult.

- 2.38 The ease at which the self-managing group could arrange common repairs was in line with the experiences of those who had services provided by a property manager (68 per cent compared to 65 per cent).
- 2.39 The minority of respondents who said it is difficult to get common repairs done were asked what is difficult about it. The most common responses centred on the challenges of organising joint action, obtaining consent from residents, and collecting payment.
- 2.40 Self-managing respondents were asked to rate the effectiveness of their arrangements in relation to a number of specific types of repair and maintenance. Responses suggested that the extent of repairs and maintenance services they carried out is limited compared with those managed by factors and social landlords. This notwithstanding, the results are consistently more positive than negative.
- 2.41 Self-managing respondents were also asked to rate the effectiveness of their arrangements in relation to the **organisation and management** of repair and maintenance work. The results were again positive overall.
- 2.42 Of those respondents who rated their arrangements as poor in relation to **any** aspects of the organisation and management of repairs, just over half (54 per cent) said they would **not** prefer to have a factor look after common parts of their building. Asked why, almost half said that it might be too expensive while a quarter said that the service provided might not be any better. Sixteen per cent said they had 'heard bad things' about factors and agents.
- 2.43 The minority who said they **would** prefer to have a factor or agent were asked why they had not appointed one. Just over half said that the other residents in their block did not share their preference, while 12 per cent said they were worried that a factor or agent might be too expensive.
- 2.44 The survey also suggests that self-managing arrangements tend to be characterised by a predominantly reactive approach to care and maintenance.

3 METHODOLOGY

Sampling

3.1 The survey sample was drawn from a database of people who had taken part in the 2006, 2007 or 2008 Scottish Household Survey (SHS)⁹ and agreed to take part in further research. This was a highly effective way of drawing a sample for this research for four main reasons:

1. Given that SHS collects information relating to housing and tenure type, we were able to target owner-occupiers, living in flats, saving considerable time and resources that would have been required to 'screen' for eligible households.
2. We were able to analyse the profile of respondents in flats across Scotland and select a sample to reflect the geographical and social distribution of flats across the entire country.
3. The selected individuals were more likely to be willing to take part in the research having given their consent to be recontacted.
4. The SHS database includes full contact details for all individuals included in it, making it possible to send a personalised advance letter about the survey, explaining the purpose and aims of the research, and hopefully encourage participation in the research.

3.2 The sample comprised a total of 1,766 eligible households and 998 interviews were achieved, representing a response rate of 57 per cent. The data have been weighted by Local Authority area, using 2007 Scottish Household data.

⁹ The Scottish Household Survey is a continuous survey commissioned by the Scottish Government. The survey is designed to provide accurate, up-to-date information about the characteristics, attitudes and behaviour of households and individuals in Scotland on a range of issues.

Survey method

- 3.3 Fieldwork took place from 22 September to 5 October 2008. The interviews were conducted by Ipsos MORI Telephone using Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI). CATI offered two important advantages for this survey.
- 3.4 First, routing is automated using CATI and eliminates potential interviewer error. Given that the questionnaire included questions to be asked of specific groups depending on their property managing arrangement, CATI automatically directed interviewers to the correct questions, ensuring no questions were accidentally missed.
- 3.5 Second, in light of the short time-scales for the research, CATI facilitated the fast turnaround of survey data. The average length of the interviews was just under 20 minutes.

Questionnaire design

- 3.6 Shortly after the project was commissioned, The Office of Fair Trading provided a draft questionnaire to Ipsos MORI and the final questionnaire was designed in collaboration with The Office of Fair Trading. The questionnaire was then scripted for use by the telephone interviewing team.
- 3.7 To inform the objectives of the research the questionnaire covered a number of topics, including:
- details of the building, common areas and current property managing arrangements
 - perceptions of services provided by property managers
 - complaining behaviour and redress
 - awareness, behaviours and attitudes relating to switching property managers, and

- self-managing arrangements.

3.8 To ensure that the questionnaire was clear and easy for respondents to understand it was piloted among 79 respondents¹⁰. Following the pilot, there were limited changes to the final questionnaire (a copy of the questionnaire marked up with the survey results is included in the annexe).

Presentation and interpretation of the data

3.9 When interpreting the findings it is important to remember that the results are only based on a sample of flat owners, and not on the entire flat-owning population. Consequently, results are subject to sampling tolerances, and not all differences between subgroups are therefore statistically significant. A more detailed discussion on sampling tolerances can be found in the annexe.

3.10 Where percentages do not add up to 100 per cent, this may be due to computer rounding, the exclusion of don't know/not stated categories or multiple answers. Throughout the report, an asterisk (*) denotes any value less than half of one percent but more than zero and a hyphen (-) represents zero.

¹⁰ Given that there were few changes to the script following the pilot, the 79 interviews achieved in the pilot were combined with those in the main survey and used in the final data.

4 PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS AND THEIR BUILDINGS

- 4.1 This chapter describes the buildings in which respondents lived. It focuses on the number of dwellings in the common block, the location of properties, the age of dwellings and the tenure of households living in the block.
- 4.2 The 'flat' is a very diverse type of property, particularly in Scotland where various forms of flats have always been a feature of Scottish housing. Among owner-occupied flats, buildings tended to have eight flats or fewer, usually between five and eight (see table 4.1 below). These would generally be the traditional sandstone tenements common across Scotland and new tenements in modern developments. Having said that, in some parts of the cities, tenement blocks might have four to six floors, with between three and five flats on each floor. Fifteen flats in a building is not uncommon and we found that a fifth of flats were in buildings with nine flats or more.
- 4.3 In contrast, some buildings – traditional four-in-a-block flats and flats above shops – might only have between one and four flats and these accounted for just over a third of all flats.
- 4.4 Just under half of owner-occupiers in flats lived in the Glasgow City Council and the City of Edinburgh Council areas, reflecting the large stock of flats in these cities. Scotland's other two largest cities, Aberdeen and Dundee, accounted for 5 per cent and 4 per cent of respondents respectively. The remaining 48 per cent of respondents lived in council areas outside the four main cities in Scotland.
- 4.5 Table 4.1 shows the age of the building in which respondents lived. Respondents tended to live in older pre-war buildings, with over a third living in buildings built before 1919 and a further 12 per cent in properties built between 1919 and 1944. A quarter of respondents lived in properties built post-war between 1945 and 1982, while a fifth lived in modern buildings, built after 1982.

4.6 In terms of the tenure mix buildings, the majority of respondents said the people sharing their building were mainly owner-occupiers (65 per cent). A fifth of respondents said that their building comprised a mix of tenures, including owners and people renting from a private landlord, council or housing association. It was less common for respondents to say that their block was made up of mainly people renting from a private landlord or council or housing association.

Table 4.1 Profile of buildings

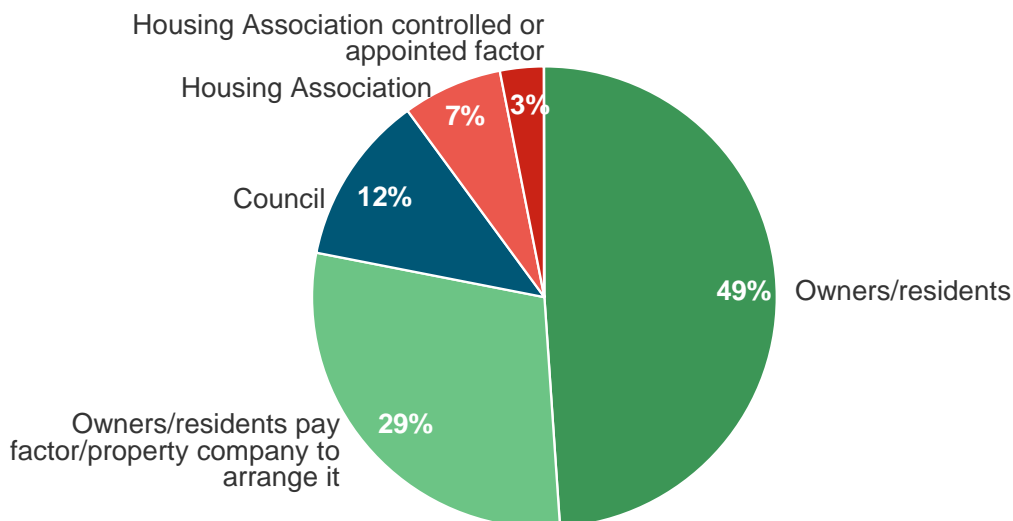
	All
<i>Base:</i>	998
	%
Number of flats in block	
1-4	37
5-8	41
9-12	12
13 or more	9
Date of build	
Pre 1919	37
1919-1944	12
1945-1964	13
1965-1982	12
Post 1982	19
Location	
Glasgow	24
Edinburgh	20
Aberdeen	5
Dundee	4
Other location	48
Tenure in common block	
Mainly owner-occupiers	65
Mainly renting from private landlord	6
Mainly renting from social landlord	7
Mix of different circumstances	21

5 PROPERTY MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

- 5.1 This chapter describes arrangements to maintain and repair common areas. It examines the distribution of the various property managing arrangements across areas and housing types in Scotland, before considering the services provided by property managers and the arrangements for paying for these services.
- 5.2 Across Scotland, just under a half of flat owners (49 per cent) said that residents arranged common repairs themselves – an arrangement commonly referred to as self-managing, although as we will discuss below, the extent to which this involves any actual 'management' is open to question (see figure 5.1). Only around a third (29 per cent) paid a private sector factor to carry out common repairs and maintenance to their block, while 22 per cent had services provided by a social landlord.

Figure 5.1 Property managing arrangements

Q. Who repairs and looks after the common parts of the block?



Base: all (998)

Ipsos MORI



5.3 Since the survey only covered flats in owner-occupation, it does not provide any direct measure of the size of market among flats in private renting. Rough estimates of the size of the market among flats in private renting can be made in two ways, either by assuming that factoring is as common in privately rented flats as it is in all owner-occupied flats or by assuming that the prevalence of factoring reflects that found in property types where private renting is more common. Table 5.1 shows both approaches, giving an estimate that there are between 120,000 and 134,000 properties in Scotland where communal maintenance is managed by a factor.

Table 5.1 Estimated size of property management market in Scotland

	All (flats in buildings with 5 or more dwellings in brackets)	Estimated size – owner occupied flats	Estimated size – private flats (based on all owner occupied flats)	Total of owner-occupied and private rented flats	Estimated size – private rented flats (based on owner-occupied flats in buildings with 5 or more flats)
<i>Base:</i>	998 (626)	300,000	116,000	416,000	416,000
	%				
Self manage	49 (37%)	147,000	57,000	203,000	189,000
Factor	29 (41%)	87,000	34,000	120,000	134,000
Social landlord	22 (23%)	66,000	26,000	91,000	92,000

Population sizes based on estimates from Table 1.1 All estimates rounded to the nearest thousand.

5.4 Reflecting the long tradition of factors in Glasgow, the majority of owner-occupiers in Glasgow had services provided by a factor (see table 5.2). Less than a fifth of owners in Glasgow self-managed. By comparison, those in Edinburgh and other areas of Scotland most commonly said that tenants and owners manage common areas of their block themselves.

Table 5.2 Property managing arrangements by location¹¹

	Edinburgh	Glasgow	Aberdeen	Dundee	Other locations
<i>Base:</i>	177	247	35	32	506
	%	%	%		
Self manage	64	19	60	48	57
Factor	21	55	15	15	22
Social landlord	14	26	26	38	21

5.5 As table 5.3 shows, the distribution of property management arrangements across different stock types in Scotland was quite marked. Indeed, factors were more common than other arrangements in newer (post 1982) buildings and in blocks with nine or more flats. This reflects the tendency for developers of new properties to install factors and to make provision for the management of common areas in the title deeds. By contrast, self-managing was most common in older pre-war buildings (pre-1919 and 1919-1944) buildings and in blocks with four or fewer flats. Social landlords were most likely to provide services in buildings built between 1965 and 1982, reflecting the stock of social rented properties that were available to buy under the right to buy scheme.

¹¹ As mentioned in paragraph 3.2 above, the Scottish Household Survey is designed in such a way that sample sizes may vary according to Local Authority, so the analysis of results is generally weighted. Further, where base sample sizes are provided in tables, these give an indication of the number of responses used as the basis for analysis. The analysis itself is based on weighted data. As a result of weighting, the number of people to which a given percentage relates cannot necessarily be calculated by applying the percentage to the base.

Table 5.3 Property managing arrangements by stock type

	All	Date of build					Number of flats in block			
		Pre	1919	1945	1965	Post	1-4	5-8	9-12	13 +
		1919	-	-	-	1982				
			1944	1964	1982					
<i>Base:</i>	998	363	124	134	119	190	368	413	121	92
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Self manage	49	68	61	43	28	26	72	39	32	30
Factor	29	22	12	11	26	69	8	38	51	41
Social landlord	22	11	27	47	47	4	20	24	17	29

5.6 Taking the distribution of property managing arrangements into account, a number of property types were created:

- pre-war properties located in Glasgow
- pre-war properties located in all other area out with Glasgow
- post-war properties located in Glasgow
- post war properties located in all other areas out with Glasgow
- modern (post 1982) properties in Scotland.

5.7 As table 5.4 shows, pre-war buildings in Glasgow and modern properties were far more likely than average to be managed by a factor. In fact, of those flat owners who have a factor, just under half lived in modern buildings across Scotland and 26 per cent in pre-war developments in Glasgow. Given that factoring is concentrated in particular geographical locations and specific property types in Scotland, the structure of the market has significant implications for an evaluation of the effectiveness of the market for residential property management. Most notably, a market that works relies heavily on the market working effectively in Glasgow. In addition, owners in modern developments are likely to be tied to agreements with factors that have been arranged by the property

developer. This in turn will have particular implications for people living in these properties and their ability to switch property manager. Further, pre-war buildings are most likely to be in need of maintenance and repair, creating challenges for the property managers of these buildings.

Table 5.4 Property managing arrangements by property type

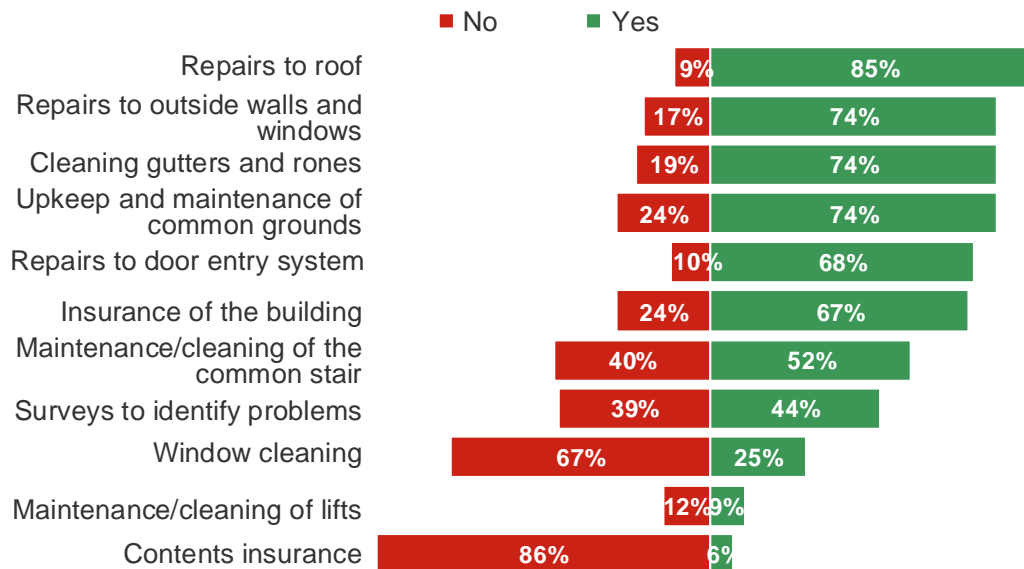
	All properties	Pre-war Glasgow	Pre-war other areas	Post-war properties Glasgow	Post war properties other areas	Modern properties
<i>Base:</i>	<i>998</i>	<i>139</i>	<i>348</i>	<i>55</i>	<i>198</i>	<i>190</i>
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Self manage	49	24	82	21	40	26
Factor	29	55	7	36	13	69
Social landlord	22	21	11	43	47	5

Services provided by property managers

5.8 Figure 5.2 shows the range of services provided by both factors and social landlords. The most common services provided were roof repairs, upkeep and maintenance of common grounds, cleaning of gutters and rones and repairs to outside walls and windows.

Figure 5.2 Services provided by property managers

Q. Which of these things, if any, does your factor/property managing agent/Council/Housing Association/Housing Association factor do or arrange to maintain the communal parts of the building?



Base: All who employ a factor or property managing agent, or who have services provided by a Council, Housing Association or Housing Association appointed factor (511)

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5.9 The extent to which factors and social landlords provided services varied, with factors more likely to provide window cleaning services, maintain and clean the common stair, insure the building, clean gutters and rones, carry out surveys to identify problems and repair door entry systems and outside walls and windows (see table 5.5 below). By comparison, social landlords provided a more limited service restricted to maintenance of common grounds, cleaning of gutter and rones and repairs to the roof and outside walls and windows.

Table 5.5 Types of services provided by property managing arrangement

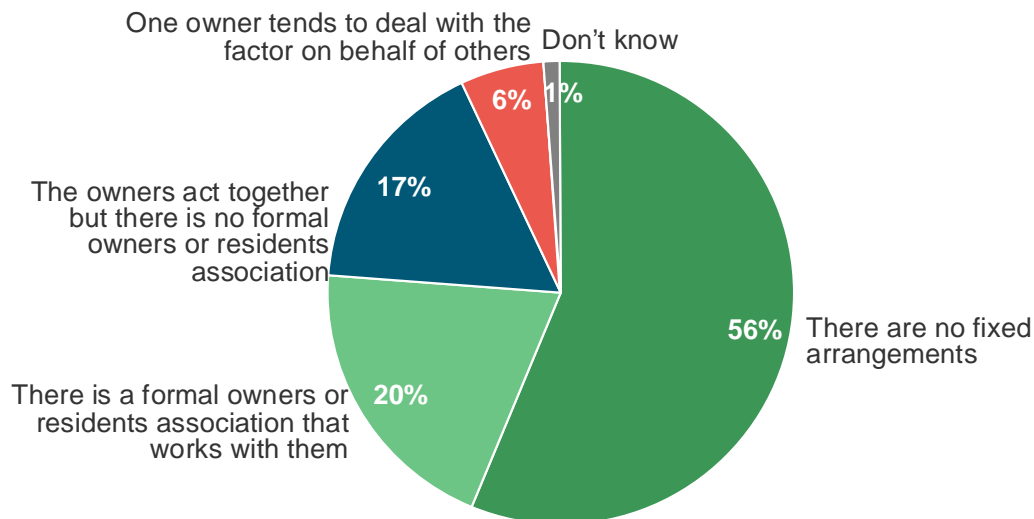
Service	Property management arrangement		
	% receiving service		
	<i>All</i>	<i>Factor</i>	<i>Social landlord</i>
Base:	<i>511</i>	<i>294</i>	<i>217</i>
Maintenance of communal grounds	74	77	71
Maintenance/cleaning of communal stair	52	69	30
Maintenance/cleaning of lifts	9	14	4
Window cleaning	25	37	10
Repairs to roofs	85	89	81
Cleaning gutters and rones	74	83	63
Repairs to outside walls and windows	74	76	71
Repairs to door entry system	68	80	52
Surveys to identify problems	44	48	39
Insurance of the building	67	78	53
Contents insurance	6	5	8

Strategy for dealing with property managers

5.10 Although property managers act on behalf of owners collectively, only a fifth of owners said their building or development had any formal arrangement – a residents association for example – for dealing with their property manager (see figure 5.3). A similar proportion had an arrangement where owners worked together but in a less formal capacity and 6 per cent said that one resident dealt with the factor on all owners' behalf but that still left a majority of owner occupiers with no mechanism for dealing with their property manager.

Figure 5.3 Strategy for dealing with property manager

Q. Which of the following best describes the way in which residents organise themselves to deal with the appointed factor/property management agent/Council/Housing Association/Housing Association factor?



Base: All who employ a property managing agent, or who have services provided by Council, Housing Association or Housing Association-appointed factor (511)

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- 5.11 Owners in modern buildings are most likely to have formal arrangements for dealing with property managers (33 per cent compared to 20 per cent overall) (see table 5.6). Conversely, those in older buildings (pre-1919) are more likely than average to have arrangements where owners worked together but in a less formal capacity (26 per cent compared to 17 per cent overall).
- 5.12 The remainder are equally as likely to have no fixed arrangements for dealing with their property manager.

Table 5.6 Strategy for dealing with property manager by age of building

	All	Pre 1919	1919 – 1944	1945 – 1964	1965 – 1982	Post 1982
<i>Base:</i>	<i>511</i>	<i>119</i>	<i>49</i>	<i>77</i>	<i>85</i>	<i>143</i>
	%	%	%	%	%	%
No fixed arrangements	56	53	64	63	54	51
There is a formal owners or residents association that works with	20	8	14	16	23	33
The owners act together but there is no formal owners or residents association	17	26	16	15	16	10
One owner tends to deal with the factor on behalf of	6	11	4	4	6	5

Payments

5.13 The vast majority (80 per cent) of owners who had a factor paid a **regular** service charge for the services provided by their property manager, averaging £365 per year. Over a third (36 per cent) paid a service charge of less than £200, while 23 per cent paid between £200 and £400. Around a third (30 per cent) paid £400 or more per year (see table 5.7).

Table 5.7 Amount paid in service charges by property managing arrangement

	All	All with factor	All who had services provided by a social landlord
<i>Base: All who pay a service charge</i>	407	283	124
	%	%	%
£1 to £199	36	36	35
£200 to £399	23	17	34
£400 or more	30	35	17
Don't know	12	11	14

5.14 As would be expected, people who employed a factor were far more likely than those who had services provided by a social landlord to pay a regular service charge (96 per cent compared to 58 per cent) and pay comparatively higher service charges, an average of £410 compared to £262.

5.15 Although two fifths of respondents who have services provided by a social landlord, said they do not pay a regular charge, it is likely that they pay a share of the costs when common repairs are carried out. Indeed, this is reflected in the types of services provided by social landlords, which are focused on reactive repairs (see table 5.5 above).

5.16 As table 5.8 shows, the amount paid in services charges varied significantly, from £50 per year in the lowest-paying five per cent to over £1,000 per year among the highest-paying five per cent. As would be expected, the greatest variation was found among those paying a service charge to a factor, with payments ranging from £50 per year in the lowest paying five per cent to over £1,200 per year in the highest paying five per cent. By comparison, payments made to social landlords varied less, from £50 per year in the lowest paying five per cent to over £600 per year among the highest paying five per cent.

Additional commentary provided by OFT

The commentary in this summary box has been added by the OFT and is additional to the content of the original report prepared by Ipsos MORI. The OFT acknowledges the very helpful inputs and commentary provided by the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations in connection with this issue.

The results described in paragraph 5.14 'people who employed a factor were far more likely than those who had services provided by a social landlord to pay a regular service charge (96 per cent compared to 58 per cent)' are difficult to interpret, since it seems extremely unlikely that councils and housing associations would provide a property management service without making a regular charge for that service.

It is more likely that this finding is explained by the existence of a group of owners who receive ad hoc services from the registered social landlord (RSL). In some blocks where there are private owners, a RSL will be the body responsible for initiating and organising repair work, either as a majority owner of properties or because of ongoing responsibilities to tenants. Private owners will generally be charged their share of these repairs

This may give rise to a group of owners who perceive themselves as receiving a service from the RSL, and where the RSL does in certain circumstances carry out work, but where there is no formal property management service.

While this appears to satisfactorily explain the observed results, it also triggers secondary concerns that such owners may have different expectations and different criteria for judging the standards of services being provided. Potentially, this group could have different opinions to owners who pay regular charges and may have influenced the overall satisfaction ratings for owners with an RSL supplier.

OFT has therefore re-examined the survey results looking at any differences between those paying and not paying regular service charges. We examined overall satisfaction, having cause for complaint, actual making of complaints and satisfaction with the way complaints were handled for the two groups. In each case the differences were small and were not statistically significant. Overall we found no evidence to suggest the 'non-paying' group was having any strong influence on customer satisfaction.

Table 5.8 Service charge statistics by property managing arrangement

	All	All with factor	All who had services provided by a social landlord
<i>Base: All who pay a service charge and could remember how much they</i>	354	247	107
Mean	£365	£410	£262
Range	£2,980	£2,980	£1,770
Median	£240	£280	£203
5 th Percentile	£50	£50	£50
95 th Percentile	£1,100	£1,200	£600

5.17 Of those who paid a service charge, nearly all (89 per cent) were sent a statement by their property manager showing their payments. However, the frequency of statements varied. The majority (57 per cent) received their statement quarterly, 13 per cent received their statements every six months and 12 per cent annually. A small proportion said they received statements more often, with five per cent receiving them monthly and less than one per cent as work was completed or at irregular times.

6 PERCEPTIONS OF SERVICES

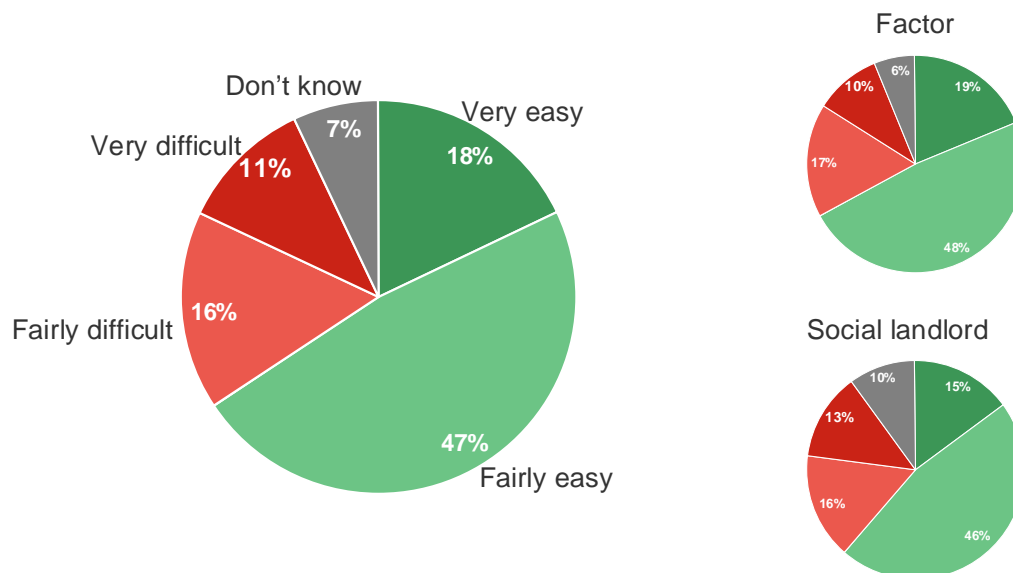
- 6.1 This chapter examines perceptions of the services provided by property managers. Specifically, it explores how easy it was to get repairs carried out and any difficulties people experienced. The chapter also considers attitudes towards services and in particular whether people felt they were receiving value for money and whether they felt their property manager was providing good services.

Ease of getting repairs done

- 6.2 Two-thirds of people with a property manager said that it was easy to have common repairs carried out when they were needed (see figure 6.1). However, a significant minority of respondents had some difficulty with their service, with just over a quarter (27 per cent) saying that it was difficult to arrange common repairs. Eleven per cent of respondents said it was **very** difficult.
- 6.3 As figure 6.1 also shows, there was little difference in the experiences of respondents with a factor and those who had services provided by a social landlord.

Figure 6.1 Ease of getting repairs carried out

Q. In general, how easy or difficult is it to sort out common repairs to the block when they are needed?



Base: All who employ a property managing agent, or who have services provided by Council, Housing Association or Housing Association-appointed factor (511); All with a factor (294); All who have services provided by a social landlord (217)

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- 6.4 Although two-thirds of owners said that it was easy to get repairs carried out, the extent to which they dealt with their factor in an organised way, through an association or simply an informal group, had a significant positive impact. Owners with a formal association found it easiest: 75 per cent found it easy (30 per cent **very easy**) (see table 6.1).

Table 6.1 Ease of getting repairs done by strategy for dealing with property managers

	Strategy for dealing with appointed property manager				
	<i>All</i>	<i>Formal owners or residents association</i>	<i>Owners act together but there is no formal owners or residents association</i>	<i>One owner tend to deal with the factor on behalf of others</i>	<i>No fixed arrangements</i>
<i>Base:</i>	<i>511</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>87</i>	<i>30</i>	<i>287</i>
	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>
<i>Very easy</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>30</i>	<i>23</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>Fairly easy</i>	<i>47</i>	<i>45</i>	<i>50</i>	<i>48</i>	<i>47</i>
<i>Quite difficult</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>Very difficult</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>14</i>

6.5 However, employing an organised strategy - through an association or an informal group had the greatest positive impact where owners were dealing with a **factor**. This group were more likely than owners who employed a similar strategy for communicating with a social landlord to say they found it **very** easy (31 per cent compared with 19 per cent) to get repairs done.

6.6 These findings are a reflection of the greater levels of organisation and involvement demonstrated by owners who engage with their property manager in a structured way, whether this is as part of a formal association or a less formal but organised group. This organisation is likely to make it easier for owners and residents to reach a consensus and to communicate the expectation of owners to their property manager, particularly in the case of those employing factors.

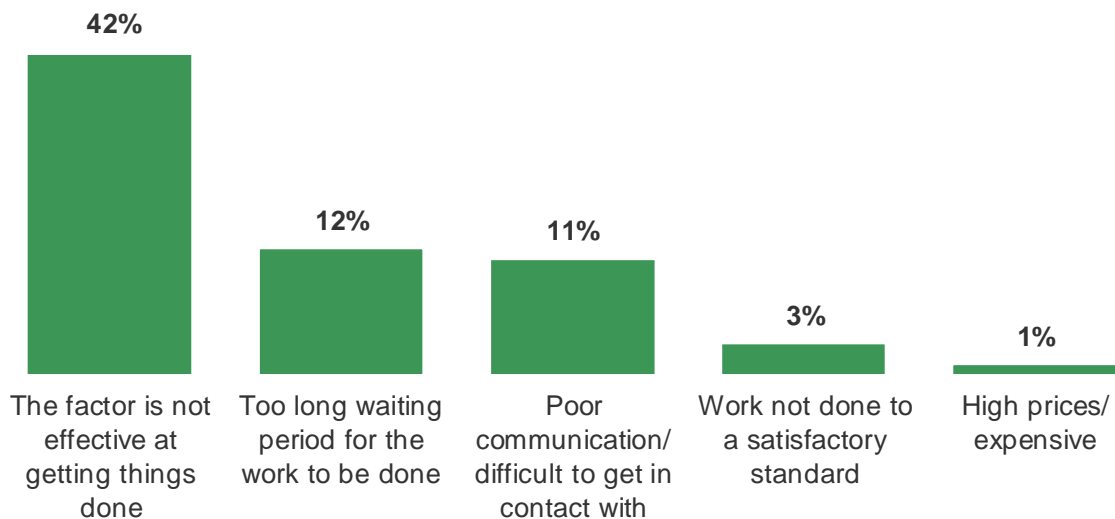
6.7 Owners who said it was difficult to arrange common repairs were asked what was difficult about it. Their explanations suggest a number of

barriers that prevent repairs being carried out effectively. These fall into two broad categories: those resulting from property managers, and those created by owners themselves. On balance, owners were more likely to mention difficulties stemming from their property manager than from owners or residents themselves.

- 6.8 In terms of barriers created by property managers, two fifths (42 per cent) of owners who said it was difficult to arrange common repairs said their property manager was not effective at getting things done (see figure 6.2). A much smaller proportion said that the standard of work carried out by property managers was not satisfactory. Other issues related to work not being carried out to a satisfactory standard, high costs and poor communication, although low levels of organisation among owners may also make communication more difficult and limit the owners' ability to engage with the property manager.

Figure 6.2 Difficulties getting repairs done – property manager related

Q. What specifically is difficult about it?



Base: All who say it is difficult to sort out common repairs in the block when they are needed (143)

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6.9 These results reinforce the findings of research carried out in Dennistoun, Glasgow.¹² Indeed, this research found that there were high levels of dissatisfaction with communication, costs and timescales of repairs carried out by property managers.

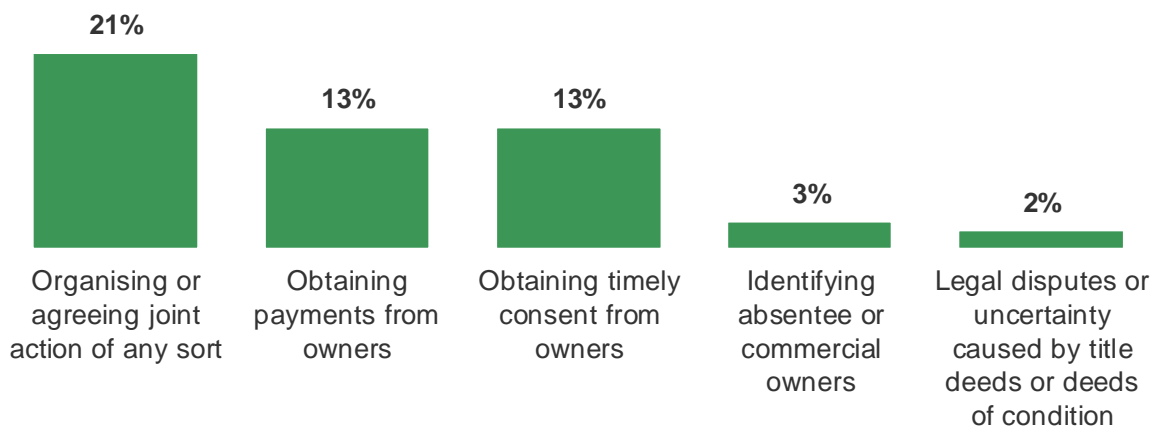
6.10 While owners were most likely to say property managers were responsible for the difficulties getting repairs carried out, others mentioned barriers created by the lack of organisation of people in their block. In particular, a fifth (21 per cent) of owners who said it was difficult to arrange repairs said that problems organising or agreeing joint action were a contributory element. Other less common difficulties

¹² Scottish Consumer Council (2007) *Consumer experience of property management services: A case study* Glasgow: Scottish Consumer Council.

included obtaining payments from owners and obtaining timely consent from owners (13 per cent) (See figure 6.3 below).

Figure 6.3 Difficulties getting repairs done – owners and residents related

Q. What specifically is difficult about it?



Base: All who say it is difficult to sort out common repairs in the block when they are needed (143)

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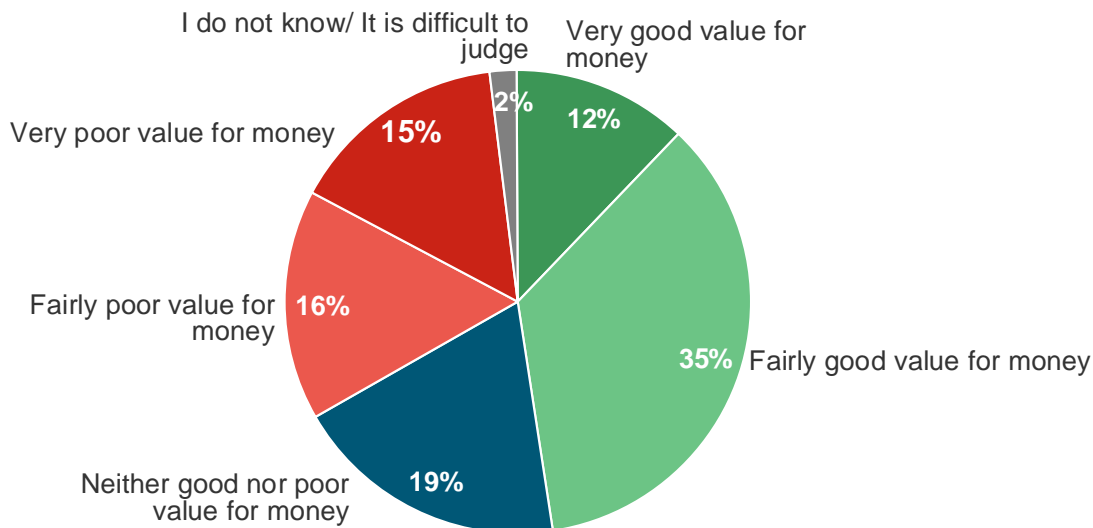
6.11 Analysis of the types of respondents who mentioned particular difficulties was not possible because the sample size upon which the analysis was based was too small.

Value for money

6.12 Just under half of owners (47 per cent) rated their property manager as providing good value for money (see figure 6.4). However, there was a significant minority of respondents who were unhappy with their service, with around a third (31 per cent) rating it as being poor value for money.

Figure 6.4 Perceptions of value for money

Q. Overall, how would you rate the service provided by your factor/property managing agent/Council/Housing Association/Housing Association factor?



Base: All who employ a property managing agent, or who have services provided by Council, Housing Association or Housing Association-appointed factor (511)

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- 6.13 Owners who had no fixed arrangements for dealing with their property manager were more likely than those who did so in an organised way to describe the service they received as poor value for money.
- 6.14 Owners who dealt with their property manager in an organised way were much more likely than average to rate the services provided by their property manager as good value for money (64 per cent compared to 47 per cent overall). However, while perceptions of value for money did not directly differ by the type of property management arrangement respondents had (see table 6.2 below) the effectiveness of organised strategies did differ according to whether they were used to deal with a factor or social landlord (see table 6.2). Indeed, those who dealt with a **factor** in an organised way were more likely than those who used the same strategy for communicating to a **social landlord** to say they received good value for money (63 per cent compared to 57 per cent).

6.15 Table 6.2 also demonstrates the benefits of employing an organised strategy as opposed to having no fixed arrangements for dealing with **factors**. Indeed, even though owners with a residents' association paid the highest charges, owners with no fixed arrangements in their block for dealing with their factor were twice as likely as those who had an organised strategy to say they received poor value for money (39 per cent compared to 19 per cent). Further, owners with an organised strategy for dealing with their factor were three times as likely to say they received good than poor value for money (63 per cent compared to 19 per cent).

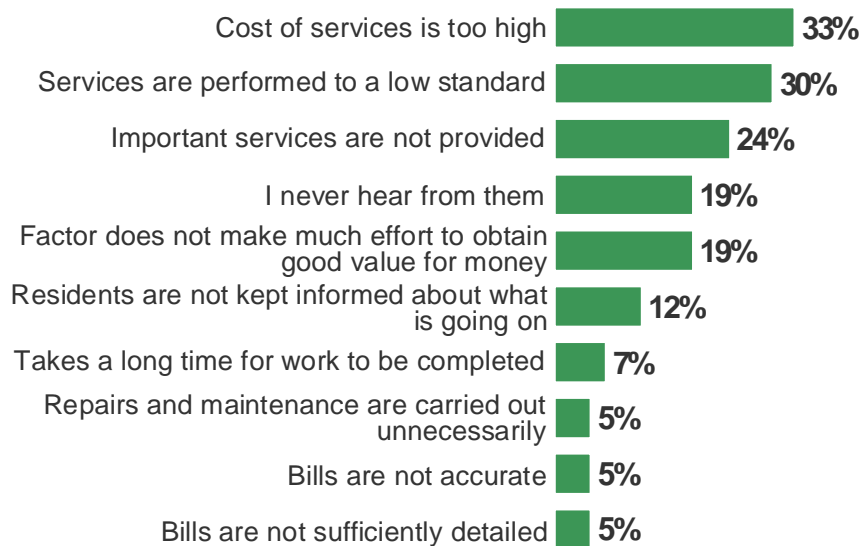
Table 6.2 Perception of value for money by property managing arrangement and strategy for dealing with property manager

	<i>All</i>	<i>All with a factor</i>	<i>Factor Formal owners or residents association or semi-formal arrangement</i>	<i>Factor No fixed arrangements</i>	<i>All who have services provided by a social landlord</i>	<i>Social landlord Formal owners or residents association or semi-formal arrangement</i>	<i>Social landlord No fixed arrangements</i>	<i>One owner tend to deal with the factor on behalf of others</i>
<i>Base:</i>	511	294	118	154	217	69	133	30
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Very good value for money</i>	11	10	16	5	14	18	11	10
<i>Fairly good value for money</i>	36	38	47	32	32	39	29	36
<i>Neither good nor poor value for money</i>	19	21	18	24	17	12	18	19
<i>Fairly poor value for money</i>	17	18	13	21	15	12	18	13
<i>Very poor value for money</i>	15	13	6	18	18	15	19	23

- 6.16 There were a number of issues that appear to affect perceptions of value for money, namely cost, quality of service, provision of service and communication. Two of the reasons in particular, cost and quality of services, are likely to be strong drivers of perceptions of value for money. Indeed, in simple terms, a person will have expectations of what type of service they should receive in return for the cost of that service. If the quality of service exceeds these expectations, they are likely to perceive the service as good value, while, conversely they will perceive a service that falls below expectations as poor value.
- 6.17 Consistent with this, as figure 6.5 shows, the main reasons owners gave for describing their management service as poor value for money were the **cost being too high** (compared to the service they are provided) (33 per cent) and **low service standards** (compared to what they would expect for the cost of the service) (30 per cent). In addition, respondents were less likely to mention the lack of important service provision (24 per cent), poor communication (19 per cent) and the lack of effort made by their property manager to get good value for money on behalf of residents (19 per cent).

Figure 6.5 Top ten reasons for describing the service as poor value for money

Q. Why do you say it is poor value for money?



Base: All who say the service is poor value for money (162)

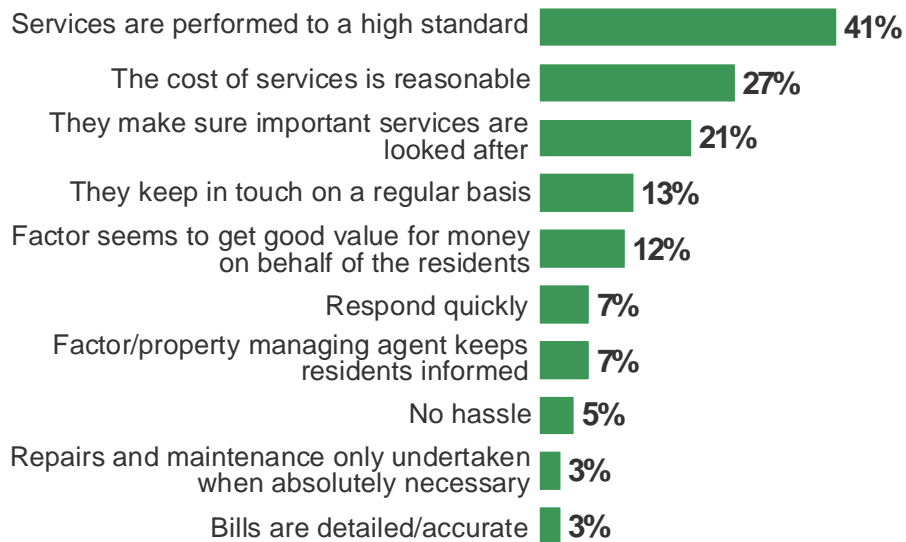
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6.18 By comparison, the aspects of service that were cited by owners who rated the service provided by their property managers as good value for money were also strongly related to cost and service quality, albeit positively skewed (see figure 6.6). Two-fifths of owners said that services were performed to a high standard (41 per cent), while just over a quarter said that the cost of services was reasonable (27 per cent). People were less likely to mention other reasons: a fifth said their property manager ensured the important services were looked after and 13 per cent said their property manager keeps residents informed of what is going on.

Figure 6.6 Top ten reasons for describing the service as good value for money

Q. Why do you say it is good value for money?



Base: All who say the service is good value for money (240)

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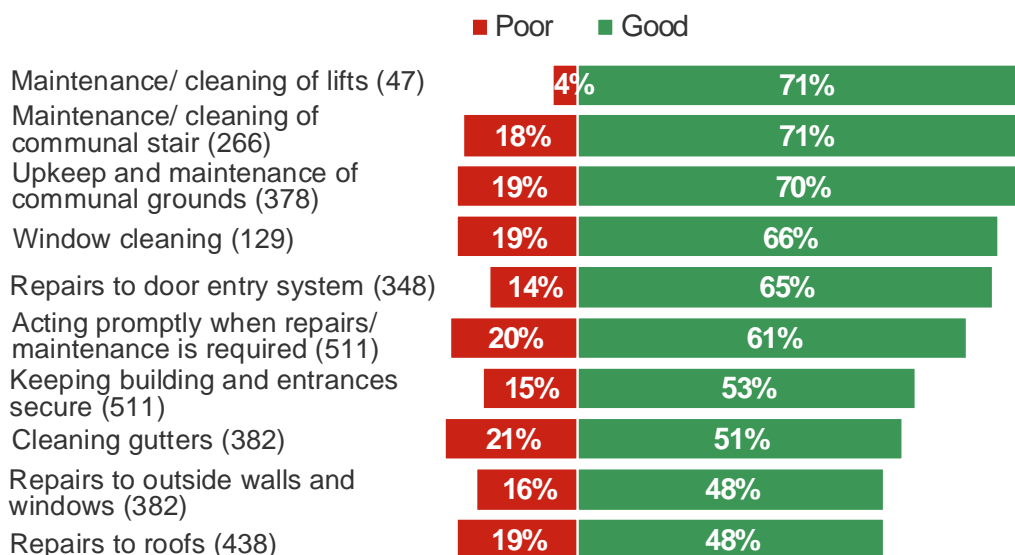
Satisfaction with services

6.19 Respondents were also asked to rate the individual services carried out by their property manager. Broadly speaking, the types of services fell into two main groups: the **actual provision of repair or maintenance services** and the **organisation and management of services**.

6.20 On the whole, service users were positive about the two groups of services provided by their property manager. As figure 6.7 shows, with regards repairs and maintenance, for all but two types of service, a majority who used each service rated it as good.

Figure 6.7 Perceptions of repair and maintenance services

Q. How would you rate the following services provided by your current factor/property managing agent/Council/Housing Association/Housing Association factor in your building?



Base: All who employ a factor or property managing agent, or who have services provided by Council, Housing Association or Housing Association-appointed factor and use this service

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- 6.21 They were most satisfied with the maintenance and cleaning of lifts (71 per cent), the maintenance and cleaning of communal stairs (71 per cent), the upkeep of communal grounds (70 per cent), window cleaning (66 per cent) and repairs to door entry system (65 per cent).
- 6.22 This positive finding notwithstanding, as was the case with perceptions of value for money, a significant minority of service users were dissatisfied. Indeed, around a fifth of service users rated each service as poor. Perhaps most significantly, 20 per cent of owners rated their property manager's promptness when common repairs or maintenance is required as poor.
- 6.23 Although, the majority of service users were happy with the services, the quality of services provided by factors and social landlords differed (see table 6.3). Owners with factors were more satisfied with a number of services than those who had services provided by a social landlord. In particular, they were more likely to rate the upkeep and maintenance of

communal grounds (74 per cent), the maintenance and cleaning of communal stairs (74 per cent), repairs to roofs (52 per cent) and keeping the buildings and entrances secure (59 per cent) as good. Conversely, respondents who received services from a social landlord were more likely to rate some services, particularly the upkeep and maintenance of common grounds (28 per cent), window cleaning (25 per cent), cleaning gutters and rones (25 per cent) and acting promptly when common repairs or maintenance were required (24 per cent), as poor.

Table 6.3 Perceptions of service by property management arrangement

Service	Property management arrangement					
	<i>All</i>		<i>Factor</i>		<i>Social landlord</i>	
Base:	<i>511</i>		<i>294</i>		<i>217</i>	
	<i>Good</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Poor</i>
	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>
Upkeep and maintenance of communal grounds	70	19	74	13	64	28
Maintenance/cleaning of communal stair	71	18	74	17	60	23
Maintenance/cleaning of lifts	71	4	70	2	75	16
Window cleaning	66	19	67	17	57	25
Repairs to roofs	48	19	52	17	41	22
Cleaning gutters and rones	51	21	52	19	49	25
Repairs to outside walls and windows	48	16	51	13	43	21
Repairs to door entry system	65	14	64	12	68	18
Keeping the buildings and entrances secure	53	15	59	12	45	19
Acting promptly when common repairs or maintenance is required	61	20	64	18	57	24

6.24 Further, as table 6.4 shows, perceptions of service delivery were again associated with the type of strategy that was employed to deal with appointed property managers. Those owners who employed a **formal** strategy for dealing with their property manager were more likely than all other groups to rate seven of the ten services as good: maintenance and cleaning of lifts (87 per cent) and communal stair (85 per cent), upkeep and maintenance of communal grounds (85 per cent), repairs to door entry systems (78 per cent) and windows and outside walls (60 per cent), acting promptly when common repairs or maintenance is required (71 per cent) and keeping the buildings and entrances secure (70 per cent).

Table 6.4 Perceptions of individual services by strategy for dealing with property manager

Service	Strategy for dealing with appointed property manager									
	<i>All</i>		<i>Formal owners or residents association</i>		<i>Owners act together but there is no formal owners or residents association</i>		<i>One owner tend to deal with the factor on behalf of others</i>		<i>No fixed arrangements</i>	
<i>Base:</i>	<i>511</i>		<i>100</i>		<i>87</i>		<i>30</i>		<i>287</i>	
	<i>Good %</i>	<i>Poor %</i>	<i>Good %</i>	<i>Poor %</i>	<i>Good %</i>	<i>Poor %</i>	<i>Good %</i>	<i>Poor %</i>	<i>Good %</i>	<i>Poor %</i>
Upkeep and maintenance of communal grounds	70	19	85	9	70	21	64	31	63	23
Maintenance/cleaning of communal stair	71	18	85	11	73	15	49	38	65	21
Maintenance/cleaning of lifts	71	4	87	5	77	0	0	0	58	4
Window cleaning	66	19	76	10	73	17	57	43	56	22
Repairs to roofs	48	19	53	8	54	19	39	22	45	22
Cleaning gutters	51	21	62	13	62	17	56	18	42	26
Repairs to outside walls and windows	48	16	60	9	51	7	52	20	40	22
Repairs to door entry system	65	14	78	6	68	17	65	11	59	17
Keeping the buildings and	53	15	70	8	56	10	58	21	46	19
Acting promptly when common repairs or maintenance is	61	20	71	10	60	21	68	29	57	23

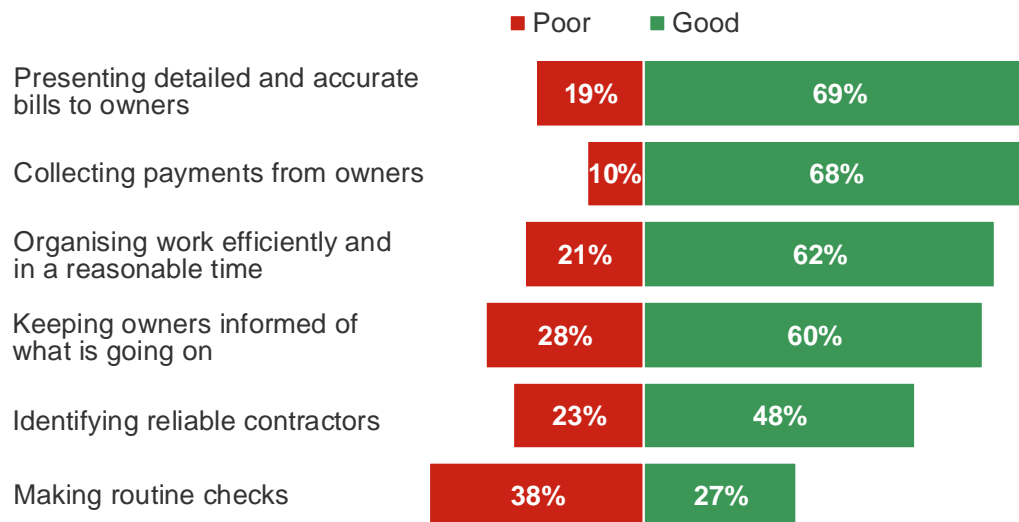
6.25 Owners' perceptions of the standard of organisation and management of services carried out by property managers were similarly positive to those for repairs and maintenance, with all but two of the services being rated as good by a majority of service users (see figure 6.8). They are most likely to rate as good their property manager's performance relating

to presenting detailed and accurate bills to owners (69 per cent), collecting payments from owners (68 per cent), and organising work efficiently and in a reasonable time (62 per cent).

- 6.26 However, again, there is some room for improvement in the delivery of particular services. Although a majority also rated these services as good, over a quarter (28 per cent) of owners rated their property manager's performance of keeping owners informed of what was going on as poor. In addition, 23 per cent of owners rated their property manager's ability to identify reliable contractors as poor. Moreover, the findings indicated that property managers could do more to perform preventative services, with users more likely to rate their property manager's performance of making routine checks as poor than good (38 per cent compared to 27 per cent). Around a quarter (22 per cent) rated this service as **very** poor.

Figure 6.8: Perceptions of organisation and management of services

Q. And how would you rate the performance of your factor/property managing agent/Council/Housing Association/Housing Association factor on the following?



Base: All who employ a factor or property managing agent, or who have services provided by Council, Housing Association or Housing Association-appointed factor (511)

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6.27 For a number of services, factors performed better than social landlords (see table 6.5). In particular, owners with a factor were more likely than those who had services provided by a social landlord to rate their property manager's performance of identifying reliable contractors and presenting detailed and accurate bills to owners as good. Although table 6.5 also indicates a difference in perceptions of collecting payments from owners, particularly those rating the aspect as good, this is the result of a quarter of respondents (27 per cent) who had services provided by a social landlord responding 'don't know' or 'not applicable' to this question, rather than any dissatisfaction with this aspect of service.

Table 6.5 Perceptions of service by property management arrangement

Service	Property management arrangement					
	<i>All</i>		<i>Factor</i>		<i>Social landlord</i>	
Base:	511		294		217	
	<i>Good</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Poor</i>
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Making routine checks	27	38	28	35	27	41
Identifying reliable contractors	48	23	54	23	40	22
Organising work efficiently and in a reasonable time	62	21	63	28	60	21
Keeping owners informed of what is going on	60	28	60	28	60	30
Presenting detailed and accurate bills to owners	69	19	75	18	60	20
Collecting payments from owners	68	10	77	9	58	12

6.28 Again, owners with a formal strategy for dealing with their property manager were more likely to rate services as good (see table 6.6). Most notably, while owners with other arrangements were more likely to rate their property managers' performance of making routine checks as poor than good, those with a formal strategy were nearly twice as likely to rate it as good than poor (45 per cent compared to 23 per cent).

6.29 Further demonstrating the negative effect that the lack of formal or organised arrangement for dealing with property managers has on the quality of service delivery, owners with no fixed arrangements were most likely to rate services as poor. Indeed, at least a quarter of owners with no arrangement for dealing with their property manager rated each service, with the exception of collecting payments from owners, as poor, rising as high as 43 per cent for making routine checks and 35 per cent for keeping owners informed of what is going on.

Table 6.6 Perceptions of service by strategy for dealing with property manager

Service	Strategy for dealing with appointed property manager									
	<i>All</i>		<i>Formal owners or residents association</i>		<i>Owners act together but there is no formal owners or residents association</i>		<i>One owner tend to deal with the factor on behalf of others</i>		<i>No fixed arrangements</i>	
<i>Base:</i>	<i>511</i>		<i>100</i>		<i>87</i>		<i>30</i>		<i>287</i>	
	<i>Good</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Poor</i>
	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>
Making routine checks	27	38	45	23	30	37	31	53	20	43
Identifying reliable contractors	48	23	67	17	52	21	52	27	39	25
Organising work efficiently and in a reasonable time	62	21	77	10	67	20	62	35	55	24
Keeping owners informed of what is going on	60	28	77	13	59	24	54	37	54	35
Presenting detailed and accurate bills to	69	19	78	11	76	14	70	16	63	24
Collecting payments from owners	68	10	78	9	70	9	74	7	64	11

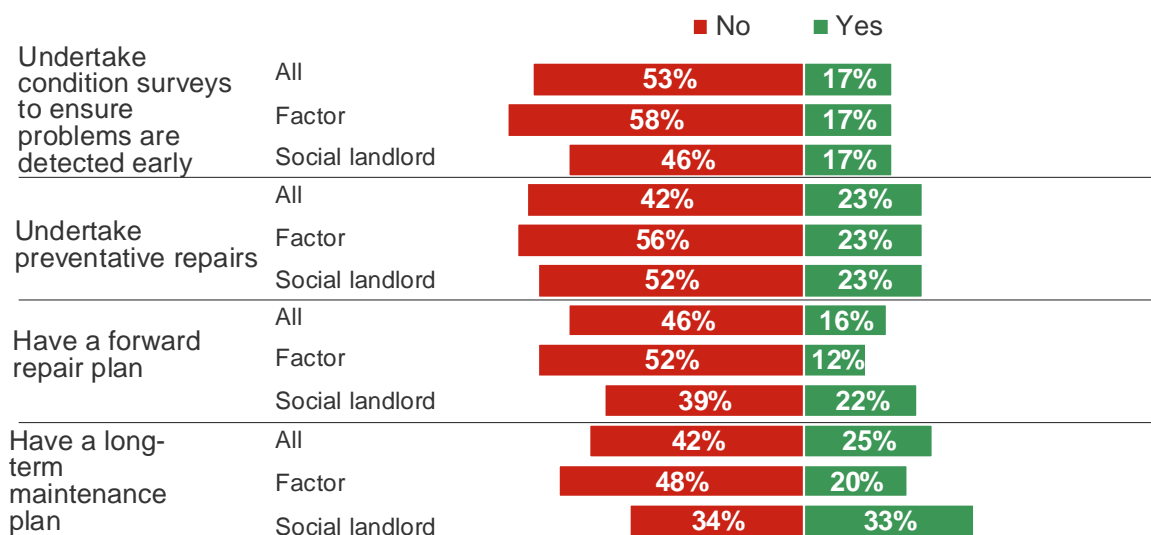
6.30 Owners were asked whether their property manager took proactive or preventative measures towards repairs and maintenance. On balance, property managers were not thought to take these measures (see figure 6.9). Indeed, twice as many owners said their manager **does not** than does: undertake preventative repairs (54 per cent) and condition surveys to ensure problems are detected early (53 per cent) have a forward

repair plan (46 per cent) and have a long term maintenance plan (42 per cent). These results suggest that much of what is currently offered by property managers is reactive. Reinforcing negative ratings of property manager's performance of **making routine checks**, the results suggest that property managers could improve preventative maintenance services.

- 6.31 However, compared with awareness of the various repairs services provided by their property manager, owners were considerably more likely to say they did not know if their property manager carried out preventative services. This suggests two things: first, there is a lack of awareness among owners of what property managers offer as part of their service and, second, there is less expectation from customers for property managers to carry out these services, compared with what might be perceived as 'necessary' repairs and maintenance services.
- 6.32 While respondents with a factor had more positive perceptions of a number of aspects of repairs services and the management and organisation of these services than those with a social landlord, the pattern is reversed regarding the provision of preventative repairs and maintenance services. Indeed, respondents who had services provided by a social landlord were more likely than those with a factor to say their property manager has a forward repair plan (22 per cent compared to 12 per cent) and a long-term maintenance plan (33 per cent compared to 20 per cent) (see figure 6.9).

Figure 6.9: Provision of preventative repair and maintenance services

Q. As far as you are aware does your factor/property management agent/Council/Housing Association/Housing Association factor...?



Base: All who employ a factor or property managing agent, or who have services provided by a Council, Housing Association or Housing Association appointed factor (511); All with a factor (294); All who have services provided by a social landlord (217)

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6.33 Again, owners with a formal strategy for dealing with their property manager tended to have more positive experiences of services, as table 6.7 shows. Indeed, respondents employing this strategy are nearly twice as likely than average to say their property manager carries out the four measures: have a long term maintenance plan (40 per cent compared to 25 per cent), undertake preventative repairs (37 per cent compared to 23 per cent), have a forward repair plan (35 per cent compared to 16 per cent) and undertake condition surveys to ensure problems are detected early (35 per cent compared to 17 per cent).

Table 6.7 Receipt of services by strategy for dealing with property manager

Service	% receiving each service in relation to each strategy				
	<i>All</i>	<i>Formal owners or residents association</i>	<i>Owners act together but there is no formal owners or residents</i>	<i>One owner tend to deal with the factor on behalf of others</i>	<i>No fixed arrangements</i>
<i>Base:</i>	<i>511</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>87</i>	<i>30</i>	<i>287</i>
	%	%	%	%	%
Undertake condition surveys to ensure problems are detected early	17	35	24	15	9
Undertake preventative repairs	23	37	21	36	17
Have a forward repair plan	16	35	9	20	12
Have long term maintenance plan	25	40	20	30	21

Management of one-off repairs

6.34 The majority (60 per cent) of respondents said their property manager has the right to undertake minor repairs in their block providing the cost is below some previously agreed threshold, although 21 per cent did not know whether this was the case.

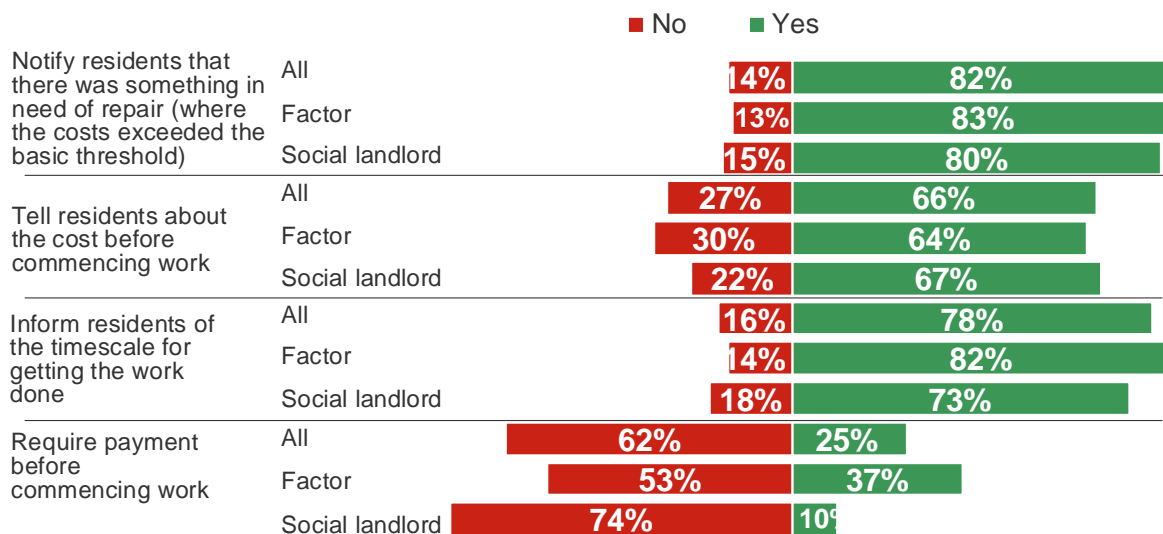
6.35 In most cases, property managers appeared to communicate effectively to their customers about one-off repairs (see figure 6.10). Indeed, a majority of owners (82 per cent) said that their property manager would notify residents of the need for a repair and the timescale for getting work done. Regarding costs, a majority (78 per cent) said their property manager would tell residents about the costs and 62 per cent said their property manager would not require payment before carrying out work.

6.36 However, just over a quarter of respondents said that their property manager would not inform them of the timescale for getting the work done, suggesting that improvement could be made in this aspect of service.

6.37 As figure 6.10 shows, there was little difference in the way factors and social landlords managed one-off repairs, although respondents with a factor were slightly more likely than those who had services provided by a social landlord to say that they are informed of the timescales for getting work carried out. In addition, reflecting the greater proportion of owners with this arrangement who pay a regular service charge, respondents with a factor were nearly four times as likely than those with a social landlord to say their property manager requires payment before starting work.

Figure 6.10: Management of one-off repairs

Q. As far as you are aware does your factor/property management agent/Council/Housing Association/Housing Association factor...?



Base: All who employ a factor or property managing agent, or who have services provided by a Council, Housing Association or Housing Association appointed factor (511); All with a factor (294); All who have services provided by a social landlord (217)

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6.38 Consistent with their positive experiences of services in general, respondents with a formal strategy for dealing with their property

manager were more likely than average to say that in the event of a one-off repair being required in their block, their property manager would inform them of the timescale for completing work (77 per cent compared to 66 per cent).

- 6.39 Of those who said their property manager would not keep them adequately informed about one-off repairs, there was little variation across the different sub-groups.

7 MAKING COMPLAINTS

7.1 This chapter explores residents' experiences of making complaints. It considers whether flat owners had wanted to or had actually made complaints to their property manager and the specific reasons for this. It then considers how property managers handled complaints and the extent to which owners felt they received sufficient redress. Sub-group analysis of the findings in this section is not always possible due to the sample size of particular groups being too small.

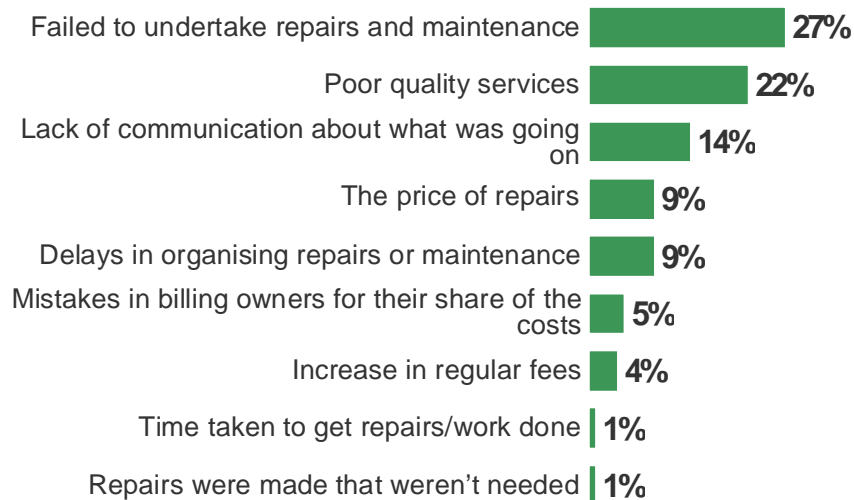
7.2 Just over half (53 per cent) of owners with a property manager had wanted to complain, rising to 57 per cent among owners with a private sector factor.

7.3 As figure 7.1 shows, the focus of complaints related to four main issues:

- repairs and maintenance, in particular the failure to undertake repairs and maintenance (27 per cent) and delays in organising repairs and maintenance (nine per cent)
- poor quality services (22 per cent)
- lack of communication about what was going on (14 per cent), and
- costs and invoicing, including the price of repairs (nine per cent), mistakes in billing owners for their share of the costs (five per cent) and an increase in regular fees (four per cent).

Figure 7.1 Reasons for wanting to complain

Q. Thinking about the most recent occasion you wanted to complain, what was the main issue you were unhappy with?



Base: All who have wanted to complain about the services provided (274)

Ipsos MORI

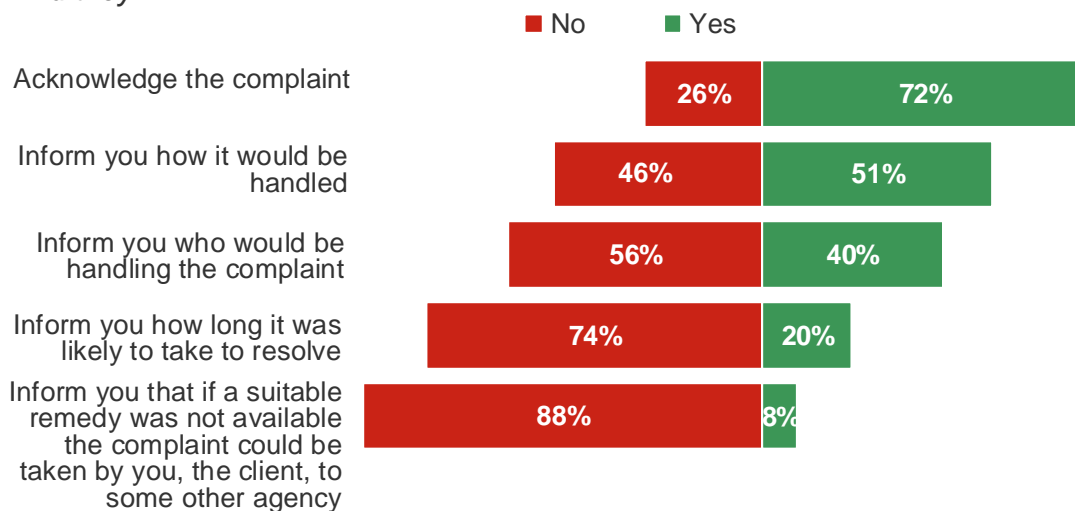


- 7.4 There was little difference in terms of the reasons for complaining across different groups.
- 7.5 Two-thirds (67 per cent) of owners who wanted to make a complaint actually did so. This is equivalent to 35 per cent of all flat owners who had a private-sector factor or had services provided by a social landlord.
- 7.6 Interestingly, despite being less likely than other groups to want to complain, owners who employed a formal strategy to deal with their property manager tended to make a complaint, more so than other groups. Again, this indicates that owners who employ this strategy are likely to be more organised and have an existing dialogue with their property manager. As a result, when they are dissatisfied with a particular aspect of service, this formal strategy offers a collective voice for people in the block, making it easier to make a complaint to their property manager.

7.7 Those who made a complaint were asked about various aspects of the way in which the complaint was handled by their property manager. As figure 7.2 shows property managers could make a number of improvements to the way they handle complaints. The majority of owners who made a complaint said that their complaint was acknowledged (72 per cent) and 51 per cent of those who complained were informed how it would be handled. However, less than half were told who would be handling the complaint (40 per cent) or how long it was likely to take (20 per cent). Although only eight per cent of those who had made a complaint said they were informed that the complaint could be taken to some other agency if a suitable remedy was not available, it is important to bear in mind that **factors** could only offer a referral to another agency, for example the Property Managers Association Scotland Limited, if they were a member of such a scheme.

Figure 7.2 Management of complaints

Q. Regardless of your satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the outcome, we would like to know how the complaint was handled by your factor/property management agent/Council/Housing Association/Housing Association factor. Did they...?



Base: All who made a complaint (181)

Ipsos MORI

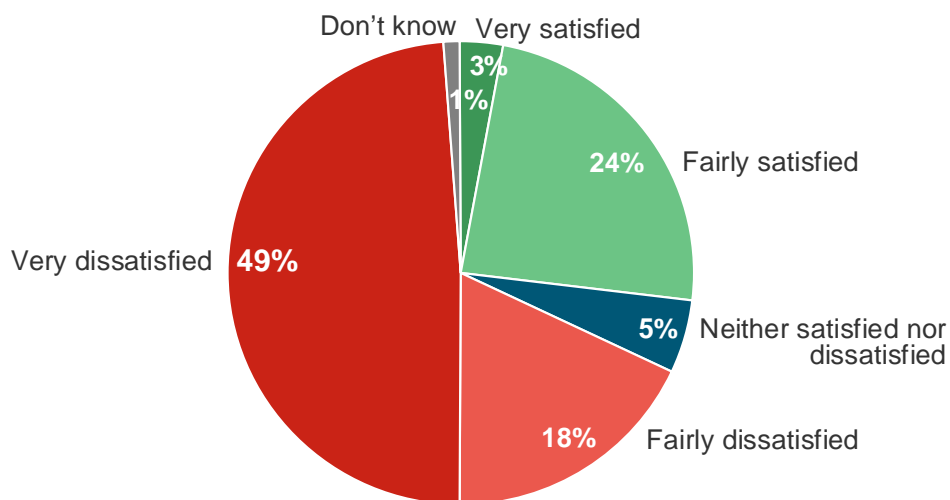


7.8 Two thirds (67 per cent) of owners who made a complaint said they were dissatisfied with the way their complaint was handled, of which 18

per cent were **fairly** dissatisfied and 49 per cent were **very** dissatisfied (see figure 7.3). Only a quarter (28 per cent) of those who made a complaint said they were satisfied with the way their complaint was handled.

Figure 7.3 Satisfaction with handling of complaints

Q. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the way your complaint was handled?



Base: All who made a complaint (181)

Ipsos MORI



7.9 Respondents' experiences of complaints were slightly more positive than those reported in the study carried out in Dennistoun.¹³ This research found that over half of respondents had made a complaint about the service they had received. In addition, 86 per cent of respondents were dissatisfied with how their complaint was handled.¹⁴

¹³ Scottish Consumer Council (2007) *Consumer experience of property management services: A case study* Glasgow: Scottish Consumer Council.

¹⁴ It is important to remember that the survey measured respondents' perceptions and could not measure whether the complaints were justified or not. A property manager would only be able to deal with those complaints that are valid and justified.

- 7.10 Although two-thirds of owners who made a complaint were dissatisfied with the way it was handled, factors and social landlords appear to handle complaints differently. Respondents who had services provided by a social landlord more likely than those with a factor to be dissatisfied with the way their complaint was handled (78 per cent compared to 60 per cent).
- 7.11 Asked what specific aspects of complaint handling they were dissatisfied with, the overriding reason was that the complaint was not addressed (71 per cent).¹⁵ Other aspects mentioned included the property manager took too long to react to the complaint (14 per cent), failed to communicate what they were going to do in response to the complaint (14 per cent) and staff were rude and unhelpful (12 per cent).
- 7.12 Only a quarter of those who were dissatisfied with the way their complaint was handled took the complaint further. The most common place where they sought advice was from another party such as the Citizen's Advice Bureau or legal advice. Others included the Council (three per cent) and fellow residents to try and enlist support (three per cent). Three per cent had a complaint ongoing. Very few respondents who were dissatisfied with the way their complaint was handled sought advice from organisations that exist to deal with issues relating specifically to social landlords or factors. Indeed, only three per cent of respondents who were dissatisfied with the way their **social landlord** handled their complaint sought advice from the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman. Further, no respondents who were dissatisfied with the way their complaint was handled by their **factor** consulted the Property Managers Association Scotland Limited.
- 7.13 Around three quarters (73 per cent) did not take their complaint any further. Given this and the fact that 71 per cent said that they were dissatisfied because their complaint was not addressed, the findings suggest that a significant proportion of complaints ended without a satisfactory conclusion for the customer.

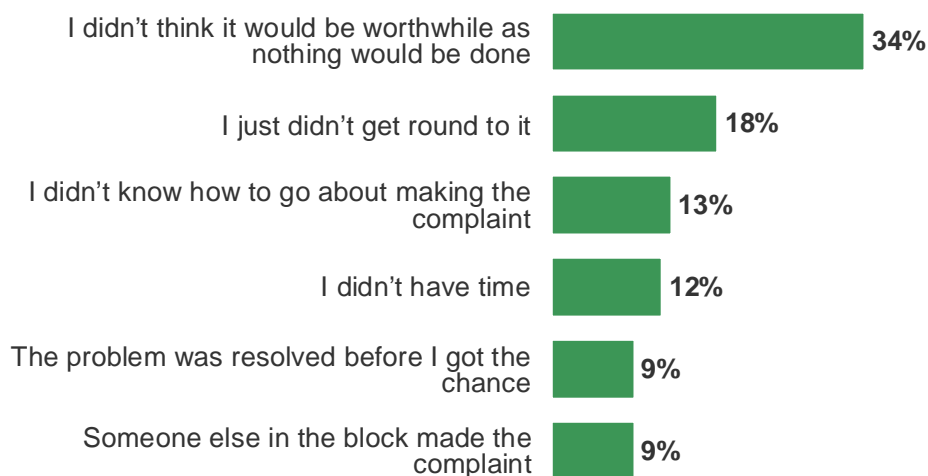
¹⁵ As highlighted previously, a property manager is likely to only be able to address those complaints that are valid and justified.

7.14 Among the small minority, that is 34 respondents, who took their complaint further, nearly two-fifths (38 per cent) said that the action did not help. A positive outcome was less common, with just 23 per cent saying their issue was resolved and the 17 per cent saying it was partly resolved.

7.15 The survey asked those respondents who wanted to but did not actually make a complaint why they did not do so. A number of barriers to complaining were identified (see figure 7.4). The most common barrier was scepticism about the likelihood of the complaint making any difference. Indeed, a third (34 per cent) of owners who wanted to make a complaint did not because they felt it would not be worthwhile as nothing would be done.

Figure 7.4 Barriers to complaining

Q. What prevented you making the complaint?



Base: All who did not make a complaint (93)

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7.16 Another barrier was related to the individual's time constraints, including not having time (12 per cent) and not getting round to making the complaint (18 per cent). A less common barrier was a lack of awareness

about making complaints, with 13 per cent saying that they were prevented from making a complaint because they did not know how to go about making the complaint.

- 7.17 All owners who wanted to make a complaint, even if they did not actually make the complaint, were asked if they had any comments about making complaints to their property manager. The most common responses related to communication. More specifically, they felt their property manager was hard to reach and did not keep owners and tenants informed (12 per cent), did not listen or care about the needs of their customers (seven per cent) and there was a lack of face-to-face contact (four per cent).
- 7.18 Other comments owners who wanted to make a complaint made included their property manager did not take much action in response to complaints (10 per cent), and were slow to respond (six per cent). Five per cent made specific reference to complaints process itself, including they were unsure how to make a complaint and said there was no formal process for making a complaint.

8 SWITCHING SUPPLIER

- 8.1 As well as assessing whether or not owners are getting value for money from factors and social landlords, the survey aimed to identify whether there are any problems associated with switching supplier which may have a significant negative effect on competition in this market. This Chapter looks first at experiences of, and attitudes towards, switching among owners with a factor. It then moves on to consider the extent to which owners who had services provided by a social landlord were aware of the specific rules and procedures for switching that apply to them.

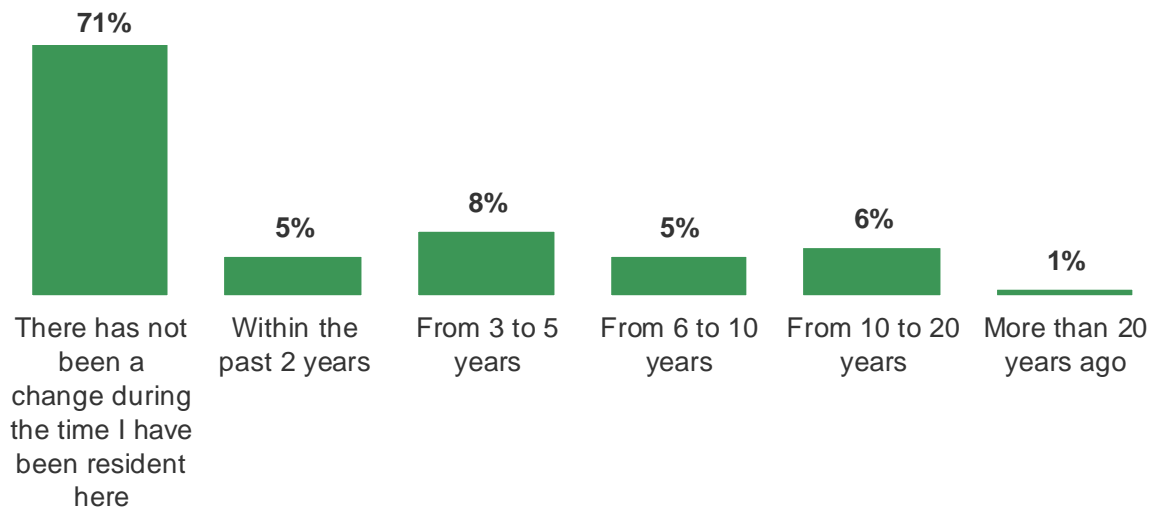
Switching in the private sector

Awareness and experiences of switching

- 8.2 Just over three-quarters of owners with a factor were aware that they can change factor. This rises to 88 per cent among those who deal with their factor via a formal residents association.
- 8.3 Asked when there was last a change in their factor, 71 per cent said there had not been a change during their tenure but 13 per cent said there had been a change with the last five years, five per cent said there had been a change between six and ten years previously, and seven per cent said a change had occurred 10 or more years previously (figure 8.1).

Figure 8.1 Experience of a change in factor or property managing agent

Q. In the time you have been resident in your property, when was the last time there was a change in factor/property managing agent?



Base: All who have a factor or property managing agent (294)

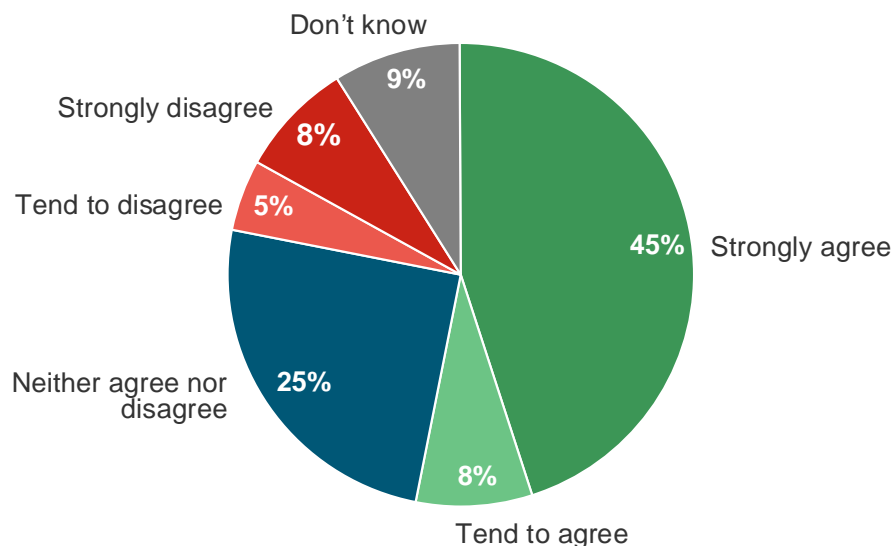
Ipsos MORI



8.4 As figure 8.2 illustrates, of the 73 owners with a factor who had experienced change, just over half (53 per cent) agreed that the change was necessary, with 45 per cent agreeing strongly. A quarter were ambivalent on the matter and 13 per cent disagreed that change was necessary (Figure 8.2).

Figure 8.2 Views on whether change was necessary

Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the change was necessary?



Base: All who say there has been a change of factor or property managing agent in the time they have been resident (73)

Ipsos MORI



- 8.5 Asked whether they had experienced any difficulties when attempting to switch, a majority (79 per cent) – almost four in five – said they had not, while 15 per cent said they had and seven per cent could not remember.
- 8.6 Among the 11 respondents who **had** encountered difficulties, the main challenges cited related to problems reconciling final bills and floats, obtaining the co-operation of all residents and, to a lesser extent, obstruction by the incumbent factor.

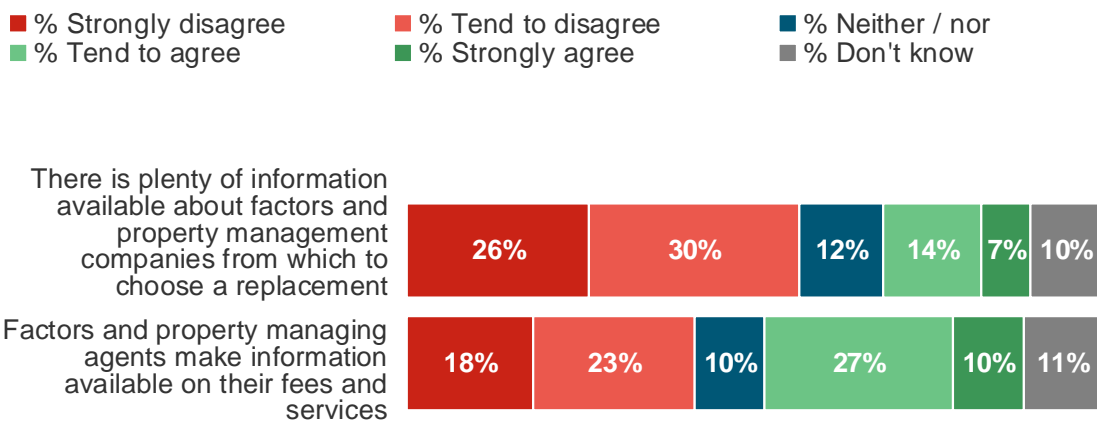
Attitudes towards switching

- 8.7 All respondents with a factor were read a list of attitude statements relating to switching and asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with each. The results are summarised in figures 8.3 – 8.6 below.

8.8 When asked about information provision, and in particular about information from which to choose a replacement property manager, only a minority (21 per cent) agreed that there was plenty of information available. Similarly, only a minority (41 per cent) agreed that factors make information available on their fees and services (figure 8.3).

Figure 8.3 Attitudes – information provision

Q. To what extent would you say you agree or disagree with the statements about changing your property managing agent?



Base: All who have a factor or property managing agent (294)

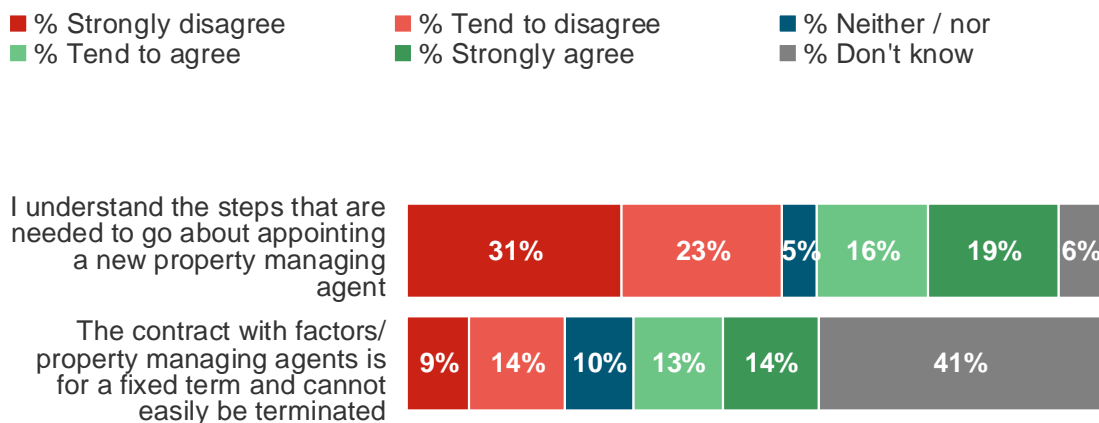
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8.9 Just over half disagreed that they understand the steps needed to appoint a new factor or agent. Similarly, 41 per cent were unable to give a definite response to the statement: 'The contract with factors/property managing agents is for a fixed term and cannot be easily terminated' (figure 8.4).

Figure 8.4 Attitudes – knowledge about switching

Q. I am going to read out some statements about changing your property managing agent. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each?



Base: All who have a factor or property managing agent (294)

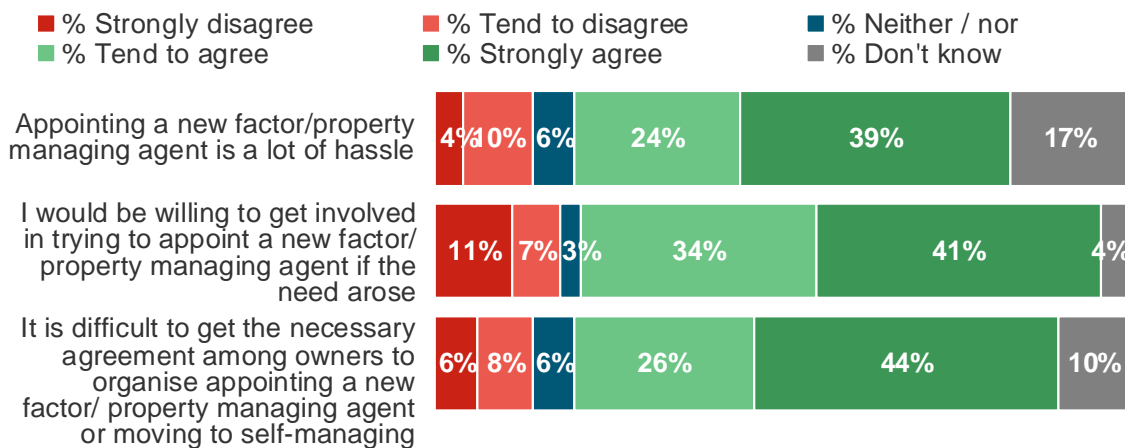
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8.10 As figure 8.5 illustrates, the findings also indicate that while a majority of owners with a factor would be willing to get involved in trying to change factor or agent, most feel that the process would be fairly onerous. Seven in ten agreed that it would be difficult to get the necessary agreement among owners to organise a change, and a similar proportion agreed that appointing a new factor or agent would be 'a lot of hassle'.

Figure 8.5 Attitudes – ease of switching

Q. I am going to read out some statements about changing your property managing agent. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each?



Base: All who have a factor or property managing agent (294)

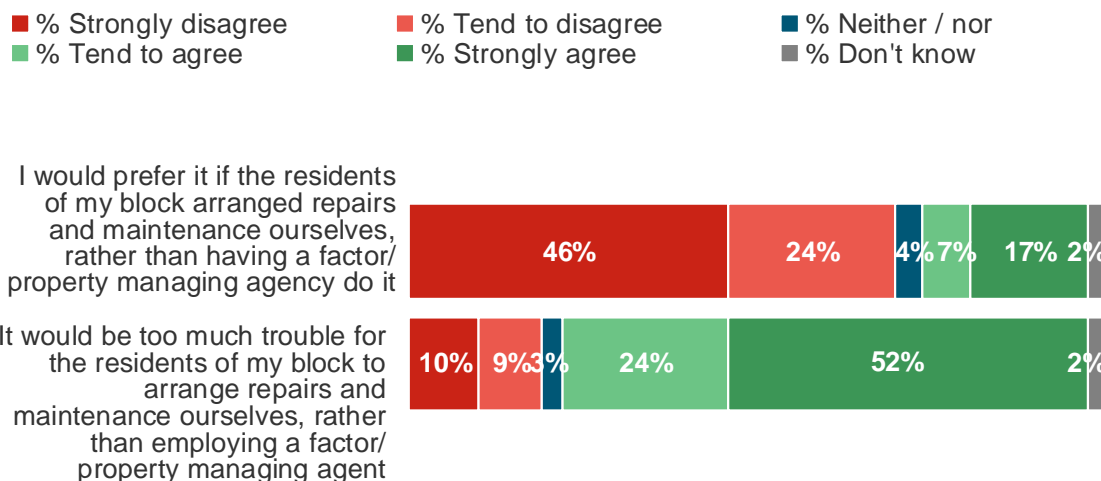
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8.11 There was little appetite for self-managing among this group, with three-quarters agreeing that it would be too much trouble for the residents of their building to arrange repairs and maintenance themselves and 70 per cent **disagreeing** that they would prefer it if the residents of their building looked after repairs and maintenance themselves, rather than having a factor or agent to do it (figure 8.6).

Figure 8.6 Attitudes – self-managing

Q. I am going to read out some statements about changing your property managing agent. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each?



Base: All who have a factor or property managing agent (294)

Ipsos MORI



8.12 There was some sub-group variation in attitudes. Most notably those who employed a formal strategy for dealing with their factor were more likely than average to:

- Agree that there is plenty of information available about factors (35 per cent compared to 21 per cent) and that factors make information available on their fees and services (50 per cent compared to 38 per cent).
- Agree that they understand the steps that are needed to go about appointing a new factor (55 per cent compared to 35 per cent).
- Disagree that they would prefer it if the residents of their building arranged repairs and maintenance themselves (85 per cent compared to 70 per cent).

8.13 There were also differences between the views of those who had actually experienced a change in factor or agents and those who had not. Those who had been through the process of switching were more likely than average to: disagree that appointing a new factor is a lot of hassle (29 per cent compared to 14 per cent); agree that they understand the steps that are needed to go about appointing a new factor (49 per cent compared to 35 per cent); and disagree that it is difficult to get the necessary agreement among owners to organise appointing a new factor (23 per cent compared to 14 per cent). However, just under half (49 per cent) of this group said that appointing a new factor is a lot of hassle, suggesting they had difficulty during their experience of switching factor.

Switching in the former social rented sector

8.14 Home owners living in former social rented sector properties are often in a minority within a social housing development and therefore have no choice of factor, which remains with the relevant local authority or housing association for thirty years or until two thirds of properties have been sold by the local authority. To assess awareness of this situation, respondents who had property management services provided by a social landlord were asked (unprompted) to identify any barriers that would prevent them from changing their current arrangements for the repairs and maintenance of common parts of the block.

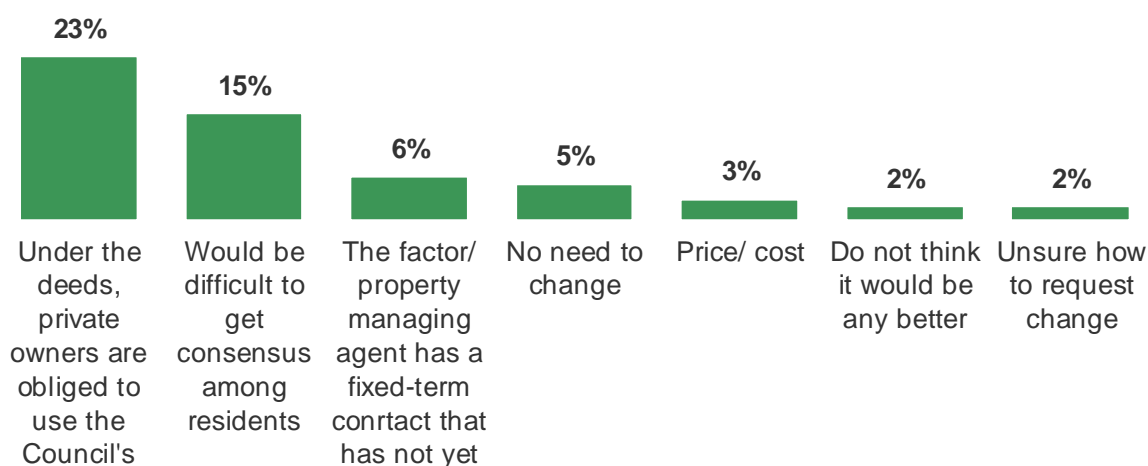
8.15 As figure 8.7 illustrates, the results point towards low awareness of the status quo, with only around a quarter of respondents mentioning the fact that they are obliged to use the local authority's or housing association's factoring services, and a similar proportion saying that there are no barriers to changing their arrangements (a further 15 per cent gave a 'don't know' response).

8.16 Other respondents identified practical barriers, which similarly imply a belief that change is possible, even if it might be difficult to achieve. Thus 15 per cent said that it would be hard to obtain a consensus among residents and three per cent cited financial barriers.

8.17 A further six per cent said that their property manager has a fixed term appointment that has not yet expired. To some extent this response is ambiguous: it may indicate awareness of the fact that residents are unable to influence their current arrangements but it could reflect a belief that residents in the former social rented sector properties are subject to the same rules and procedures for switching as those in private sector housing.

Figure 8.7 Awareness of barriers to changing arrangements

Q. What barriers, if any, would prevent you from changing the current arrangements for the repairs and maintenance of common parts of the block?



Base: All who have services provided by the Council, Housing Association or Housing Association factor (217)

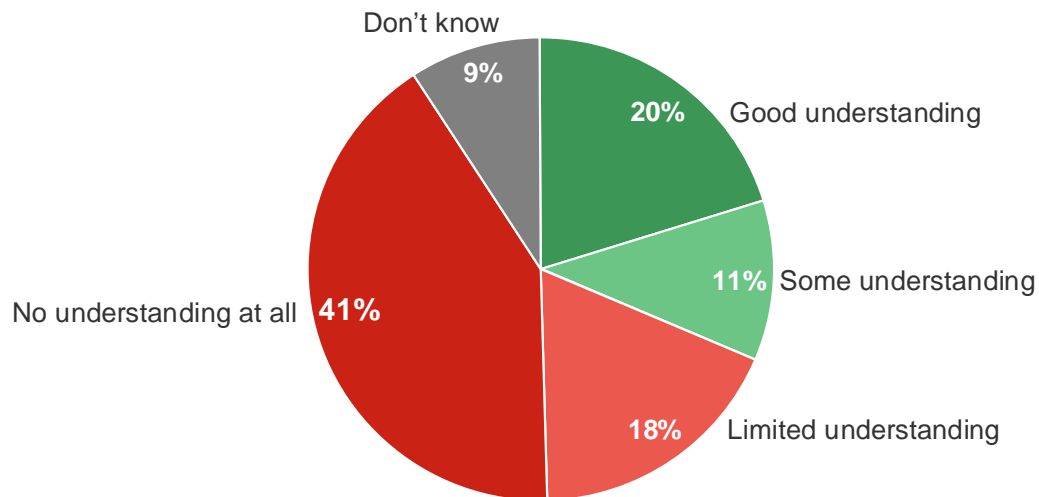
Ipsos MORI



8.18 Residents who had property management services provided by a social landlord were also asked how well they felt they understood the procedures that would need to be followed for residents of their block to change their factor. Reinforcing the results presented in figure 8.7, less than a quarter said they had a good or some understanding of the procedures, while 18 per cent said they had a limited understanding and 41 per cent said they had no understanding at all (see figure 8.8 below).

Figure 8.8 Understanding of procedures for changing factor or property managing agent

Q. If the possibility ever arose, how well do you feel you understand the procedures that would have to be followed for the residents of your block to change their property manager?



Base: All who have services provided by Council, Housing Association or Housing Association factor (217)

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9 SELF-MANAGING

9.1 As noted in Chapter 5, almost half (49 per cent) of respondents in the survey said that the care and maintenance of common parts of their building is organised by the residents themselves – an arrangement commonly referred to as self-managing. This chapter looks in detail at experiences of, and attitudes towards, self-managing. Specifically, it considers the nature of residents' self-managing arrangements, before assessing the scope and perceived effectiveness of these arrangements. Sub-group analysis of the findings in this section is not always possible due to the sample sizes of particular groups being too small.

Nature of self-managing arrangements

9.2 The self-managing group of respondents were asked to describe the care and maintenance arrangements that exist in their building. As is shown in table 9.1 (below), a large majority (93 per cent in total) said that there are no **formal** arrangements in place, with almost half saying that things are organised as and when the need arises, 22 per cent saying the owners act together but on an ad hoc basis, and 13 per cent saying that nothing seems to be arranged or managed by anyone. A further, 11 per cent per cent said that one owner tends to organise things on the others' behalf.

Table 9.1 Types of self-managing arrangements in place

<i>Base: all who self-manage (487)</i>	per cent
There is no fixed arrangement and things are organised as and when the need arises	48
The owners act together but there is no formal owners association	22
Nothing seems to be formally arranged or managed by anyone	13
One owner tends to organise things on behalf of the others	11
There is a formal owners association that makes the	5

arrangements

Don't know

*

9.3 Reflecting this lack of formal arrangements, only 11 per cent of the self-managing group said that the residents of their block have a fund or account to cover repairs and maintenance of common parts. In terms of the actual amount they pay, this varies significantly, from below £10 to over £50 per month. However, the mean amount paid stands at £31.20 per month.

Figure 9.1 Amount paid into maintenance fund or account per month

Q. How much do owners pay into the fund each month?



Base: All who say there is a maintenance fund or account (59)

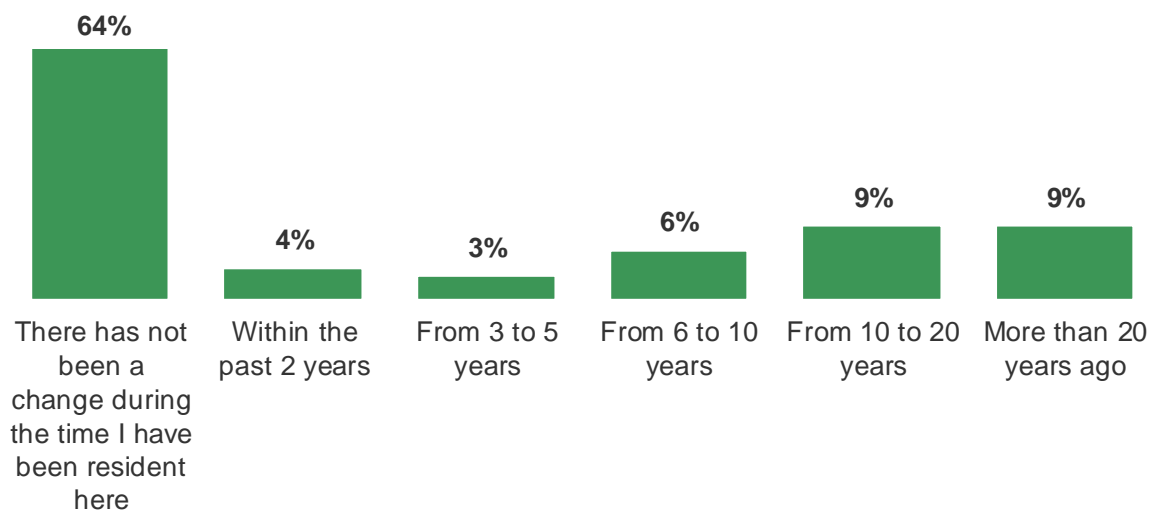
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9.4 Asked how long their current care and maintenance arrangements have been in place, around two-thirds of the self-managing group said for as long as they can remember, seven per cent said for five years or less, six per cent said between six and 10 years, and 18 per cent said for ten years or more (figure 9.2).

Figure 9.2 Duration of current self-managing arrangements

Q. And, as far as you know, how long have these arrangements been in place in your block?



Base: All who self-manage (487)

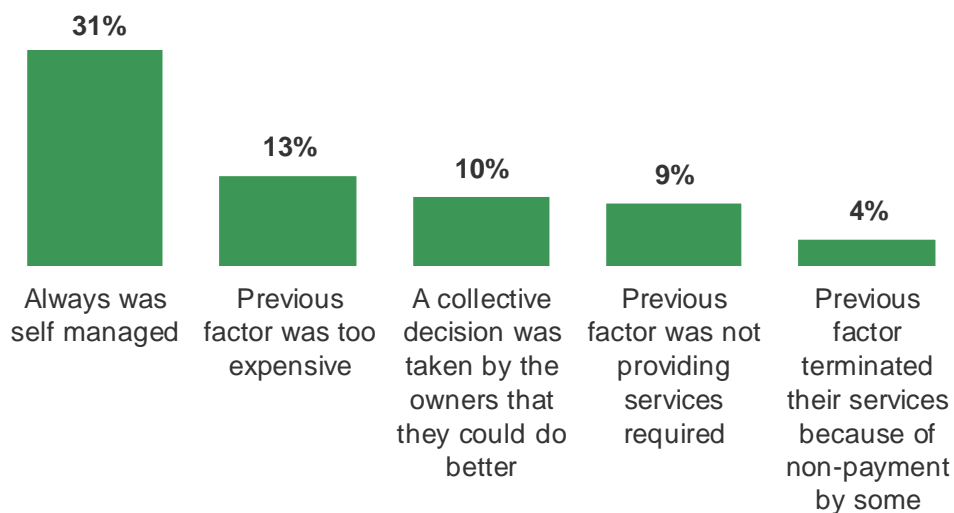
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- 9.5 Those who had experienced a change of arrangement during their tenure were asked to specify why there had been a switch to self-managing. As figure 9.3 shows, almost a third said that the residents had always self-managed and the change was simply in the nature of the self-managing arrangements already in place.
- 9.6 The other main responses centre around perceived problems with services provided by a former factor. Thus, 13 per cent said that the previous factor charged too much, 10 per cent said that residents felt they could do better, and nine per cent said their previous factor was failing to provide the required services. A smaller proportion – four per cent – said that the previous factor or agent terminated their agreement because of non-payment by some residents.

Figure 9.3 Reasons for switch to self-managing

Q. What was the main reason for the shift to self-management arrangements?



Base: All can identify when current arrangements came into place (150)

Ipsos MORI

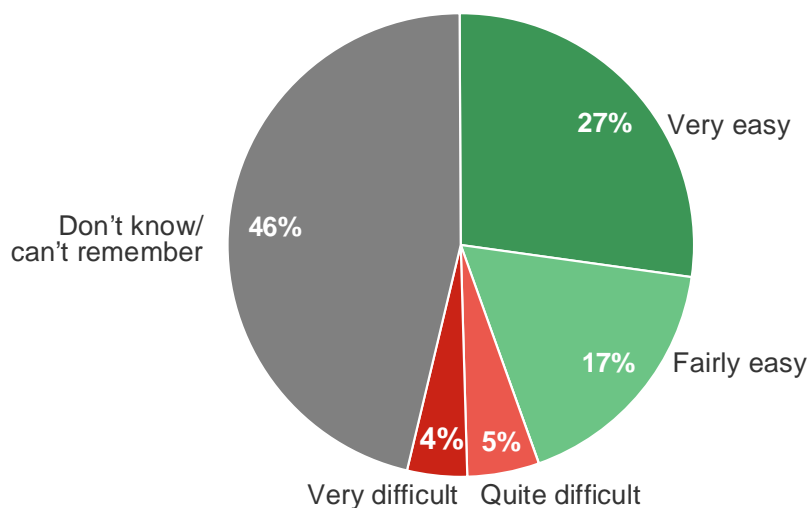


9.7 Respondents who had experienced a change of arrangement during their tenure were further asked whether they found the process of shifting to self-management easy or difficult. As figure 9.4 shows almost half gave a 'don't know' response or said they couldn't remember. In part this may reflect the finding that a relatively high proportion of this group had in fact always self-managed, as discussed above.

9.8 Focusing on the responses of those to whom the question was directly applicable, most (80 per cent of all those who had experienced a change and could remember whether the process was easy or difficult) said they found the process of moving to self-management easy.

Figure 9.4 Ease of switching to self-managing

Q. And was the process of moving to self-management easy or difficult?



Base: All who can identify when current arrangements came into place (150)

Ipsos MORI

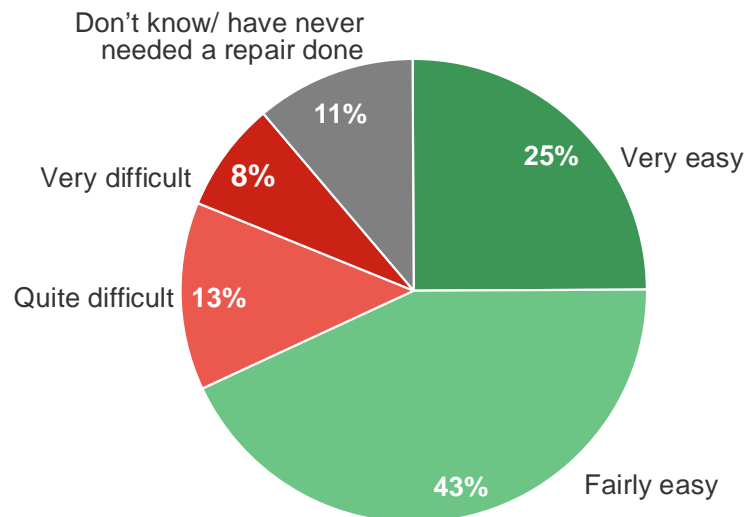


Ease of getting repairs done

9.9 Almost seven in ten of the self-managing group said it is easy to get common repairs done in their building, with 25 per cent saying it is **very** easy. Meanwhile, a total of 21 per cent said it is difficult (figure 9.5).

Figure 9.5 Ease of getting repairs done

Q. In general, how easy or difficult is it to get common repairs done in the block?



Base: All who self-manage (487)

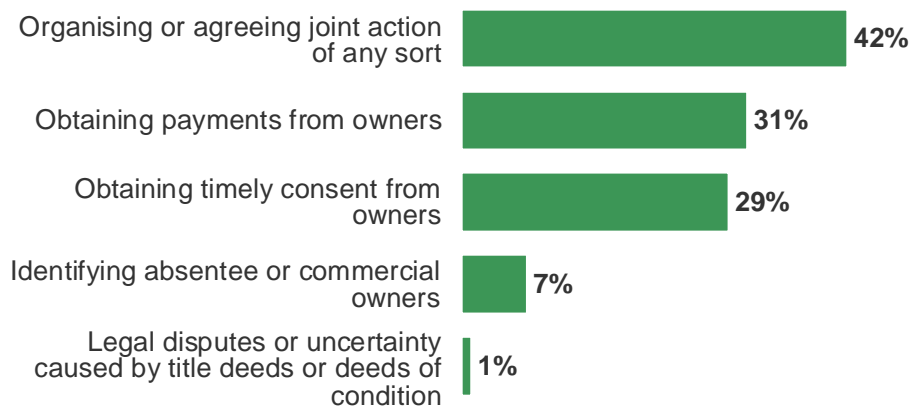
Ipsos MORI



- 9.10 Those who live in smaller blocks of flats (comprising four flats or fewer) were more likely than average to say it is easy to get repairs done (74 per cent). This most likely reflects the greater ease with which consensus can be reached and arrangement made among smaller groups of residents.
- 9.11 The experiences of those in the self managing groups were much in line with those who had services provided by a property manager, with both groups equally as likely to say it was easy to get repairs done in their block (68 per cent compared to 65 per cent).
- 9.12 The minority of respondents who said it is difficult to get common repairs done were asked to specify what is difficult about it. As figure 9.6 illustrates, the most common responses centred around the challenges of organising joint action, obtaining consent from residents, and collecting payment.

Figure 9.6 Barriers to getting common repairs done

Q. What specifically was difficult about it?



Base: All who say it is difficult to get repairs done in the block (101)

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Perceptions of self-managing arrangements

9.13 Self-managing respondents were asked to rate the effectiveness of their arrangements in relation to a number of specific types of repair and maintenance.¹⁶ The results are summarised in table 9.2.

¹⁶ Respondents were asked only about those care and maintenance functions that had been identified as being applicable to them earlier in the questionnaire.

Table 9.2 Ratings of self-managing arrangements in relation to specific types of repair and maintenance

	Very good	Fairly good	Neither good nor poor	Fairly poor	Very poor	N/A	Base
	%	%	%	%	%	%	
The upkeep and maintenance of communal grounds	32	29	6	10	8	14	487
Maintenance/cleaning of communal stairs	31	33	5	9	17	4	257
Maintenance/cleaning of lifts	42	-	-	-	-	58	6
Window cleaning	16	12	2	4	7	57	487
Repairs to roofs	30	25	6	6	6	19	487
Cleaning gutters	25	26	5	10	11	17	487
Repairs to outside walls and windows	19	20	4	6	7	36	487
Repairs to door entry system	30	24	2	8	15	15	180
Keeping the building and entrances secure	30	24	3	6	6	29	487
Acting promptly when common repairs or maintenance is required	34	32	5	12	9	6	487

9.14 The relatively high level of 'not applicable' responses suggest that the extent of repairs and maintenance services carried out in buildings with self-management arrangements is limited compared with those managed by factors and social landlords. This notwithstanding, the results are consistently more positive than negative. Thus around two-thirds rated their arrangements as very or fairly good in relation to: acting promptly when repairs or maintenance are required; the maintenance and cleaning

of communal stairs; and the upkeep and maintenance of common grounds. Meanwhile, around half were positive about their arrangements in relation to roof repairs, gutter cleaning, repairs to the door entry system and keeping the building and entrances secure.

- 9.15 Taking these ratings into account, there appears to be little difference in the experiences of repairs and maintenance that are carried out in their blocks between flat owners who self-manage and those with property managers. Both groups were positive about repairs and maintenance carried out in their common block and a significant minority in both groups rated services as poor. However, among the self-management group, much fewer repairs and maintenance services appear to fall within the scope of 'management'. As a consequence, there is a risk that some aspects that are critical to the fabric of the building, including roofs, walls and security, are neglected.
- 9.16 Again, respondents living in blocks of flats where residents are predominantly owner-occupiers tended to give more positive ratings than average, as table 9.3 shows.

Table 9.3 Ratings of self-managing arrangements among residents living in owner-occupied blocks

	% rating their arrangements as good in relation to each function	
	All who self-manage	Residents living in predominantly owner occupied blocks
<i>Base:</i>	487	371
The upkeep and maintenance of communal grounds	61	61
Maintenance/cleaning of communal stairs	64	72
Maintenance/cleaning of lifts	42	51
Window cleaning	28	31
Repairs to roofs	55	61
Cleaning gutters	50	57
Repairs to outside walls and windows	40	43
Repairs to door entry system	54	56
Keeping the building and entrances secure	54	56
Acting promptly when common repairs or maintenance is required	66	71

9.17 As might be expected, ratings also vary depending on the type of self-managing arrangements residents have in place. Those who say that the residents of their block act together in an organised but non-formal way¹⁷ were more likely than average to rate their arrangements as good in relation to:

¹⁷ Again, small sample sizes preclude a fuller analyses of the ways in which residents views vary depending on their self-managing arrangements.

- The upkeep and maintenance of communal grounds (75 per cent compared to 61 per cent of all self-managing respondents).
- Repairs to roofs (71 per cent compared to 55 per cent).
- Cleaning gutters (71 per cent compared to 50 per cent).
- Keeping the buildings and entrances secure (64 per cent compared to 54 per cent).
- Acting promptly when common repairs or maintenance is required (83 per cent compared to 66 per cent).

9.18 Self-managing respondents were also asked to rate the effectiveness of their arrangements in relation to the **organisation and management** of repair and maintenance work. As can be seen from table 9.4 the results are again positive overall. Around three-quarters rated their arrangements as good in terms of keeping residents informed, while around two-thirds did so in relation to identifying reliable contractors, organising work in a timely manner and presenting detailed and accurate bills to owners. However, only around half rated their arrangements as good in relation to making routine checks, with over a quarter giving a negative rating on this aspect.

9.19 These results are positive when compared with the ratings of flat owners who had these services carried out by a property manager. Most notably, self-managers were more positive about making routine checks. However, it is important to remember that expectations of what constituted 'good' organisation and management of repairs and maintenance work is likely to have differed between the two groups. For example, making routine checks for self-managers may simply mean noticing things as they walk through it, rather than any stringent or purposeful check and assessment of the property's condition.

Table 9.4 Ratings of self-managing arrangements in relation to management/organisation of repairs and maintenance

	Very good	Fairly good	Neither good nor poor	Fairly poor	Very poor	Don't know
<i>Base: all who self-manage (487)</i>	%	%	%	%	%	%
Making routine checks	24	29	9	14	13	11
Identifying reliable contractors	30	33	8	9	7	14
Organising work efficiently and in a reasonable time	30	36	8	9	8	9
Keeping owners informed of what is going on	40	34	6	6	6	8
Presenting detailed and accurate bills to owners	39	29	8	4	4	16
Collecting payment from owners	37	25	7	6	5	20

9.20 Ratings were again more positive among residents who live in blocks of flats that are mainly owner-occupied, and among those whose self-managing arrangements involve residents working together in an organised but informal way (table 9.5 below).

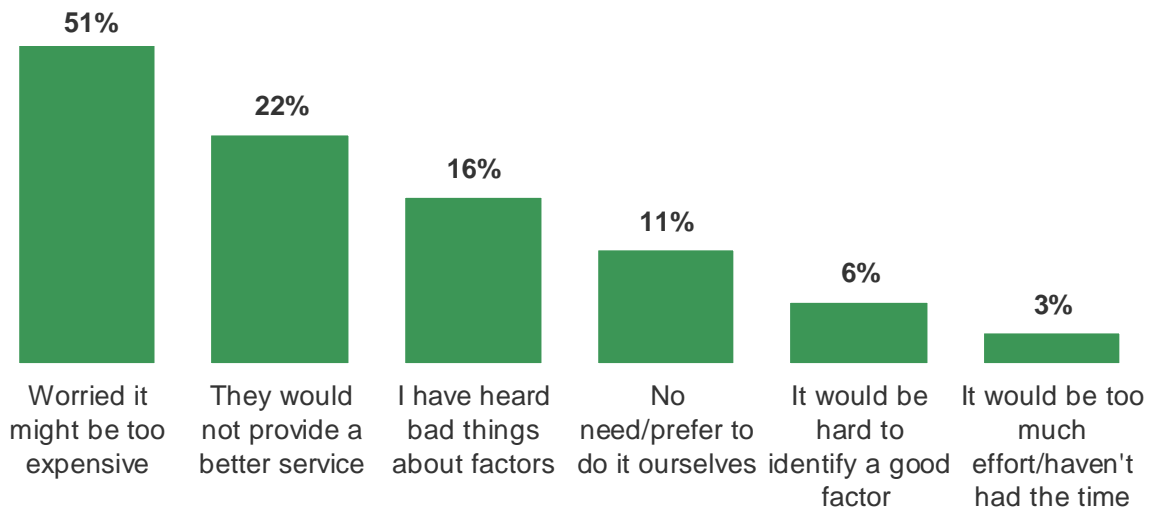
Table 9.5 Ratings of self-managing arrangements in relation to organisation/management of repairs and maintenance – sub group differences

	Making routine checks	Identifying reliable contractors	Organising work efficiently/in a reasonable time	Keeping owners informed of what is going on	Presenting details and accurate bills to owners	Collecting payment from owners	Base
<i>Base: all who self-manage (487)</i>							
	% rating their self-managing arrangements as good						
All who self-manage	53	63	66	74	68	62	487
Residents living in owner occupied blocks	58	69	73	77	72	67	371
Residents who say owners act together informally	68	75	88	89	84	80	104

9.21 Respondents who rated their arrangements as poor in relation to **any** of the functions listed in table 9.2 were asked whether they would prefer to have a factor to look after common parts of their building. Just over half (54 per cent) said they would not. Asked why this was the case, a half said that a factor or agent might be too expensive, while a quarter said that the service provided might not be any better. Sixteen per cent said they had heard bad things about factors and agents (see figure 9.6).

Figure 9.6 Perceived problems with factors/property managing agents

Q. Why not?



Base: All who would not prefer to employ a factor or property managing agent (94)

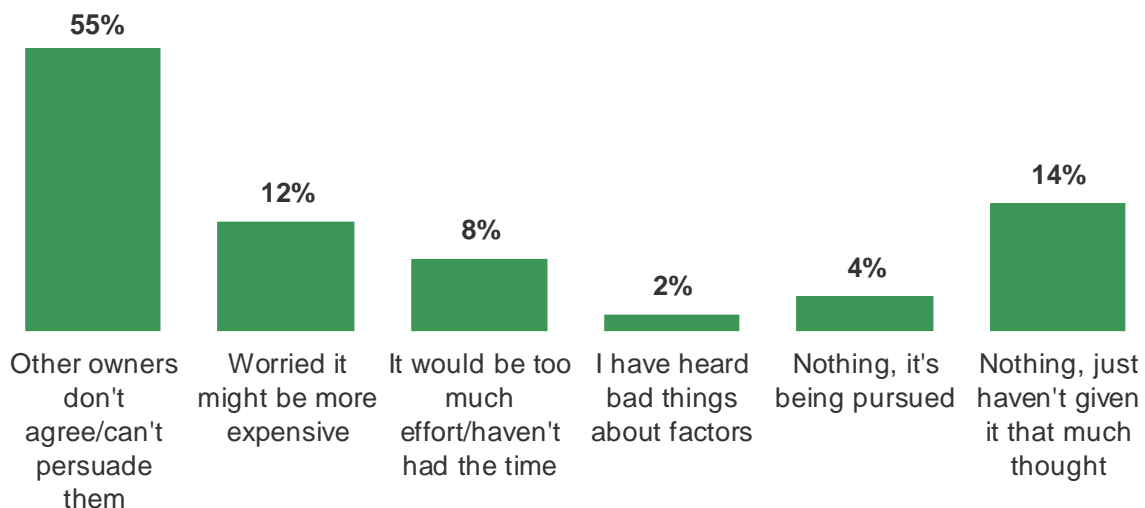
Ipsos MORI



9.22 The minority who said they **would** prefer to have a factor or agent were asked why they had not appointed one. As can be seen from figure 9.7, just over half said that the other residents in their block did not share their preference, while 12 per cent said they were worried that a factor or agent might be too expensive. Smaller proportions gave others reasons, saying it would be too much effort to change their arrangements or that they had heard bad things about factors and agents.

Figure 9.7 Reasons residents have not appointed a factor/property managing agent

Q. What has prevented you from appointing a factor or property managing agent?



Base: All who would prefer to employ a factor or property managing agent (68)

Ipsos MORI



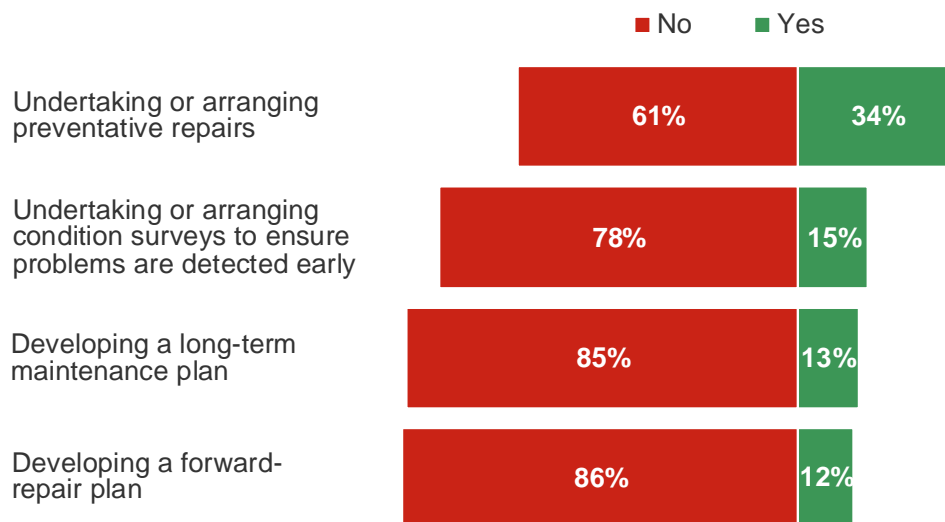
Reactive versus planned care and maintenance

9.23 While perceptions of self-managing arrangements are generally more positive than negative, the survey also suggests that such arrangements tend to be characterised by a predominantly reactive approach to care and maintenance. As figure 9.8 illustrates, only a third of self-managing respondents say their arrangements encompass preventative repairs, and fewer than half as many say the same in relation to conditions surveys, forward repair plans and long term maintenance plans.

9.24 These results are consistent with the experiences of flat owners who have services provided by property managers, with both groups reliant on a predominantly reactive approach to care and maintenance of common areas.

Figure 9.8 Preventative repairs and maintenance plans

Q. As far as you are aware, do the self-managing arrangements in your block include...?



Base: All who self-manage (487)

Ipsos MORI



9.25 While there are few sub-group differences in these findings, residents living in blocks comprising four or fewer flats were more likely than average to say their arrangements include undertaking preventative repairs (38 per cent).

A THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Property Managing Agents

FINAL questionnaire

P1 Good morning/afternoon/evening. My name is.....from Ipsos MORI, the independent research organisation. You may remember that you took part in the Scottish Household Survey and agreed to take part in follow up research. We are phoning to see if you would be willing to take part in a short survey about maintenance and repairs in communal areas of blocks of flats. You should have received a letter about this. [IF NECESSARY The survey is for the Office of Fair Trading who are keen to hear about people's experiences in this area]. We'd be grateful if you could spare a few moments to share your experiences with us. Alternatively, if there is someone else in the household you think it would be more appropriate for us to speak to, we'd be happy to do so. The interview will take 20 minutes at the most.

I'd like to assure you that all of the information you provide will be treated in the strictest confidence and used for research purposes only. It will not be possible to identify any particular individuals or addresses in the results.

Would you be interested in taking part.

P2	Yes	1	CONTINUE
	No	2	CLOSE

Screening

P3 As I just mentioned the subject we are researching is the management of common areas in blocks of flats. I'd just like to ask some initial questions to check that the subject applies to you. Do you live in a flat, maisonette or apartment?

Single code.

Flat, maisonette or apartment 1 CONTINUE

House or other type of property 2 CLOSE

P4 Which of the following best describes how you occupy your current accommodation?

Single code.

Own it outright 1 CONTINUE

Owner buying with a mortgage or loan 2

Other 3

CLOSE

Don't know 4

Refused 5

Section A: Demographics

QA1 How long have you lived in your current home?

Single code.

Up to 2 years	1
3 to 10 years	2
More than 10 years	3
Don't know	4
Refused	

QA2 Do you know roughly when your home was built

Single code.

Before 1919	1
1919-1944	2
1945-1964	3
1965-1982	4
Since 1982	5
Don't know	6
Refused	7

QA3 Was the building development.....?

Single code.

Custom built as a block	1
A converted house	2
A conversion of industrial or commercial property	3
Don't know	4
Refused	5

QA4 How many flats are there on each floor of your **immediate block**?

Write in

And how many floors are there?

Write in

QA5 As far as you are aware, are the other residents in the block...?

Single code.

Mainly owner-occupiers	1
Mainly renting from a private landlord	2
Mainly renting from the Council or a Housing Association	3
None of these, it's a mixture of the different groups	4
Don't know	5

QA6 Does the building contain any of the following communal features or shared facilities?

If no code 1, if yes, multicode ok

No, there are no communal features or shared facilities	1	CLOSE
Entrance lobby	2	_____
Common stairs	3	CONTINUE
Lifts	4	
Windows in shared areas	5	
External courtyard(s) or gardens	6	
Secure door entry system	7	
Private parking area for residents	8	
Lighting in shared areas	9	
Roof	0	

QA7 Who repairs and looks after the common parts of the block?

Single code.

Owners/residents	1	Go to section C
Owners/resident pay factor/property managing company to arrange it	2	CONTINUE
Council	3	
Housing Association	4	CONTINUE
Housing Association controlled or appointed factor	5	
Landlord	6	CLOSE
Owner pays cleaner/someone	7	CLOSE
Other WRITE IN	8	
Don't know	9	

QA8 What is the name of your [TEXT SUB FROM QA7: factoring company/property managing agent/council/ housing association/housing association factor]?

Write in.

Don't know/can't remember

Refused

Section B: Ask all who employ a factor/ property management company/ property managing agent or who have services provided by Council or Housing Association (Codes 2-5 at QA7)

QB1 Which of these things, if any, does your [TEXT SUB FROM A7 factor/property managing agent/Council/Housing Association] do or arrange to maintain the communal parts of the building?

Read out. Single code each row

		<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Don't know / Unsure</u>	<u>N/A</u>
Upkeep and maintenance of common grounds (grass cutting etc).	1	2	3	4	
Maintenance/cleaning of common stair	1	2	3	4	
Maintenance/cleaning of lifts	1	2	3	4	
Window cleaning	1	2	3	4	
Repairs to roof	1	2	3	4	
Cleaning gutters and rones	1	2	3	4	
Repairs to outside walls and windows	1	2	3	4	
Repairs to door entry system	1	2	3	4	
Surveys to identify problems	1	2	3	4	
Insurance of the building	1	2	3	4	
Contents insurance	1	2	3	4	

QB1 Which of the following best describes the way in which residents organize themselves to deal with the appointed [TEXT SUB: factor/property managing agent/council/housing association]?

A

Single code.

- There is a formal owners or residents association that works with them 1
- The owners act together but there is no formal owners or residents association 2
- One owner tends to deal with the factor on behalf of others 3
- There are no fixed arrangements 4
- Other WRITE IN
- Don't know 5
- Refused 6

QB1B In general, how easy or difficult is it to sort out common repairs to the block when they are needed?

Single code.

- Very easy 1
- Fairly easy 2
- Quite difficult 3
- Very difficult 4
- Don't know 5
- Refused

ASK ALL WHO SAY DIFFICULT (CODE 3 OR 4 AT QB1)

QB1 What specifically is difficult about it?

C *Do not prompt. Multicode ok*

Identifying absentee or commercial owners	1
Obtaining timely consent from owners	2
Obtaining payments from owners	3
Legal disputes or uncertainty caused by title deeds or deeds of condition	4
Organising or agreeing joint action of any sort	5
The factor is not effective at getting things done	6
Other WRITE IN	7
Don't know	8

QB2 Does your household pay a regular service charge for the services provided by your [TEXT SUB FROM A7: factor/property managing agent/council/Housing Association [IF BUYING ON A MORTGAGE AT P4 ADD: in addition to the mortgage?]

Single code.

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know	3
Refused	4

ASK ALL WHO SAY YES AT QB2. OTHERS GO TO QB5a

QB3 How much do you pay each year? At this stage do not include any special or one-off payments.

Write in.

Don't know

Refused

QB4 Does your [TEXT SUB: factor/property managing agent/Council/Housing Association] send you regular statements showing your payments?

Single code

- | | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Yes, annually | 1 |
| Yes, quarterly | 2 |
| Yes, monthly | 3 |
| Yes, other period WRITE IN | 4 |
| No | 5 |
| Don't know | 6 |

ASK ALL

QB5a Does your factor/property managing agent/ Council/Housing Association] have the right to undertake minor repairs in your block providing the cost is below some previously agreed threshold?

Single code.

Yes	<u>1</u>
No	2
Don't know	3

QB5b As far as you are aware, which if any, of the following would your [TEXT SUB: factor/property managing agent/ Council/Housing Association] do if there was a need to make a one-off repair in your block [ADD IF YES AT B5a where the costs exceeded the basic threshold]?

Read out. Single code each row.

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
Notify residents that something was in need of repair ADD IF YES AT QB5A (CODE 1) where the cost would exceed the basic threshold	1	2	3
Inform residents of the timescale for getting the work done	1	2	3
Tell residents about the costs before commencing work	1	2	3
Require payment before commencing work	1	2	3

Perceptions of services provided by factors/property managing agents

ASK FOR EACH SERVICE PROVIDED AT B1

QB6 How would you rate the following services provided by your current [TEXT SUB: factor/property managing agent/Council/Housing Association] in your building?

Read out. Single code each row.

	Very good	Fairly good	Neither good nor poor	Fairly poor	Very poor	Don't know	Not applicable
Upkeep and maintenance of communal grounds	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Maintenance/cleaning of communal stair	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Maintenance/cleaning of lifts	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Window cleaning	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Repairs to roofs	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Cleaning gutters	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Repairs to outside walls and windows	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Repairs to door entry system	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Keeping the buildings and entrances secure	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Acting promptly when common repairs or maintenance is required	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

QB7 And how would you rate the performance of your [TEXT SUB:factor/property managing agent/ Council/Housing Association] on the following?

Read out. Single code each row.

	Very good	Fairly good	Neither good nor poor	Fairly poor	Very poor	Don't know	N/A
Making routine checks	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Identifying reliable contractors	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Organising work efficiently and in a reasonable time	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Keeping owners informed of what is going on	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Presenting detailed and accurate bills to owners	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Collecting payments from owners	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

QB8 As far as you are aware, does your [TEXT SUB: factor/ property managing agent/ Council/Housing Association]?

Read out. Single code each row.

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
Undertake condition surveys to ensure problems are detected early	1	2	3
Undertake preventative repairs	1	2	3
Have a forward repair plan	1	2	3
Have a long term maintenance plan	1	2	3

QB9 Overall, how would you rate the service provided by your factor/property managing agent/ Council/Housing Association? Would you say it is.....?

Read out. Single code

Very good value for money	1
Fairly good value for money	2
Neither good nor poor value for money	3
Fairly poor value for money	4
Very poor value for money	5
I do not know / It is difficult to judge	6

ASK ALL WHO SAY FAIRLY OR VERY POOR VALUE FOR MONEY AT QB9

QB10 Why do you say it is poor value for money?

Do not prompt. Multicode ok.

I never hear from them	1
Important services are not provided	2
Services are performed to a low standard	3
Cost of services is too high	4
Repairs and maintenance are carried out unnecessarily	5
Residents are not kept informed about what is going on	6
Bills are not sufficiently detailed	7
Bills are not accurate	8
When repairs are needed, the property managing agent does not make much effort to get good value for money on behalf of the residents.	9
The factor/property managing agent does not do enough to get good deals on services like cleaning and insurance	0
Other WRITE IN	X
Don't know	Y

ASK ALL WHO SAY FAIRLY OR VERY GOOD VALUE FOR MONEY AT QB9

QB11 Why do you say it is good value for money?

Do not prompt. Multicode ok. .

They keep in touch on a regular basis	1
They make sure important services are looked after	2
Services are performed to a high standard	3
The cost of services is reasonable	4
Repairs and maintenance are only undertaken when absolutely necessary	5
Factor/ property managing agent keeps residents informed of what is going on	6
Bills are detailed/accurate	7
When repairs are needed, the property managing agent seems to get good value for money on behalf of the residents	8
Factor/property managing agent works hard to get good deals on services like cleaning and insurance	9
Other WRITE IN	0
Don't know	X

Causes for complaint, complaining and redress

ASK ALL WHO HAVE A FACTOR OR PROPERTY MANAGING AGENT OR WHO HAVE SERVICES PROVIDED BY A COUNCIL OR HOUSING ASSOCIATION AT QA7 (CODES 2-5)

QB12 Have you ever wanted to complain about the services provided by your [TEXT SUB: factor/property managing agent /Council/Housing Association], regardless of whether you actually made a complaint or not?

Single code.

Yes

1 ASK B13

No

2 GO TO B22

ASK ALL WHO SAY YES AT QB12

QB13 Thinking about the most recent occasion you wanted to complain, what was the main issue you were unhappy with?

Single code.

- | | |
|---|---|
| Failure to undertake repairs and maintenance | 1 |
| Poor quality services | 2 |
| Lack of communication about what was going on | 3 |
| Delays in organising repairs or maintenance | 4 |
| The price of repairs | 5 |
| Mistakes in billing owners for their share of costs | 6 |
| Increase in regular fees | 7 |
| Other WRITE IN | 8 |
| Don't know | 9 |
| Refused | 0 |

QB14 And on this occasion did you actually make a complaint?

Single code .

- | | |
|-----|---|
| Yes | 1 |
| No | 2 |

ASK ALL WHO SAY NO AT QB14. OTHERS GO TO QB16

QB15 What prevented you making the complaint?

Do not prompt. Multicode ok

- | | |
|--|---|
| | 1 |
| Someone else in the block made the complaint | |
| The problem was resolved before I got the chance | 2 |
| I didn't know how to go about making the complaint | 3 |
| I didn't have time | 4 |
| I just didn't get around to it | 5 |
| I didn't think it would be worthwhile as nothing would be done | 6 |
| Other WRITE IN | 7 |
| Don't know/can't remember | 8 |

ASK ALL WHO SAY YES AT QB14

QB16 Overall how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the way in which your complaint was handled?

Single code.

- | | |
|---|---|
| Very satisfied | 1 |
| Fairly satisfied | 2 |
| Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied | 3 |
| Fairly dissatisfied | 4 |
| Very dissatisfied | 5 |
| Too early to say – the complaint is ongoing | 6 |
| Don't know | 7 |

ASK ALL WHO SAY THEY WERE DISSATISFIED AT QB16. OTHERS GO TO QB20

QB17 Why do you say you were dissatisfied?

Do not prompt. Multicode ok.

- | | |
|---|---|
| Complaint was not addressed | 1 |
| Factor/property managing agent took too long to react to the complaint | 2 |
| Factor/property managing agent failed to communicate what they were doing in response | 3 |
| Staff were rude/unhelpful | 4 |
| Other WRITE IN | 5 |
| Don't know | 6 |

QB18 Did you attempt to take the complaint any further?

Single code.

- | | |
|--|---|
| Yes - took advice from another party such as CAB, legal advice, etc | 1 |
| Yes - took the complaint to Trading Standards | 2 |
| [INCLUDE ONLY FOR THOSE WHO HAVE FACTOR OR PROPERTY MANAGING AGENT AT QA7 (CODE 2) Yes - involved the Property Managers Association Scotland Limited] | 3 |
| [INCLUDE ONLY FOR THOSE WHO HAVE SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE COUNCIL OR A HOUSING ASSOCIATION AT A7 (CODE 3, 4 or 5) Yes - involved the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman] | 4 |
| Yes - tried to enlist support of fellow residents | 5 |
| Yes – other, WRITE IN | 6 |
| No, did not take the complaint any further | 7 |
| Don't know/can't remember | 8 |

ASK ALL WHO SAY YES (CODES 1 TO 6) AT QB18

QB19 Did this action help?

Single code.

- | | |
|---|---|
| Yes – issue was subsequently resolved | 1 |
| Yes – issue was partly resolved | 2 |
| No – did not help | 3 |
| Too early to say – the complaint is ongoing | 4 |
| Don't know/can't remember | |

ASK ALL WHO SAY YES, MADE A COMPLAINT AT QB14

QB20

Regardless of your satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the outcome, we would like to know *how the complaint was handled* by your [TEXT SUB: factor/property managing agent/Council/Housing Association]. Did they....?

<i>Read out. Single code each row</i>	Yes	No	Don't know/can't remember
Acknowledge the complaint	1	2	3
Inform you how it would be handled	1	2	3
Inform you who would be handling the complaint	1	2	3
Inform you how long it was likely to take to resolve	1	2	3
Inform you that if a suitable remedy was not available the complaint could be taken by you, the client, to some other agency?	1	2	3

QB21 What other comments or observations, if any, would you like to make about making complaints to your [TEXT SUB: factor/property managing agent/Council/Housing Association] about the way in which they manage the communal areas of your block?

Write in.

Changing property managing agents: Awareness, previous history and attitudes to future changes

ASK B22-B28 OF ALL WHO HAVE A FACTOR/ PROPERTY MANAGING AGENT AT QA7 (CODE 2). RESIDENTS WHO GET THEIR FACTORING / PROPERTY MANAGEMENT SERVICES VIA A LOCAL AUTHORITY OR SOCIAL HOUSING PROVIDER (QA7, CODE 3, 4 OR 5) GO TO B28

QB22 Were you aware that residents can change their factor or property managing agent if they wish?

Single code.

- | | |
|------------------------------|---|
| Yes - I was aware of this | 1 |
| No – I was not aware of this | 2 |

QB23 In the time you have been resident in your current property, when was the last time there was a change in factor/property managing agent?

Single code.

- | | |
|---|---|
| There has not been a change during the period I have been resident here | 1 |
| Within the past 2 years | 2 |
| From 3 to 5 years ago | 3 |
| From 6 to 10 years ago | 4 |
| From 10 to 20 years ago | 5 |
| More than 20 years ago | 6 |
| Don't know/can't remember | 7 |

ASK ALL WHO SAY THERE HAS BEEN A CHANGE OF FACTOR/AGENT AT QB23 (CODES 2-6). OTHERS GO TOQB27

QB24 To what extent did you agree or disagree that the change was necessary?

Single code.

- | | |
|------------------------------|---|
| Strongly agreed | 1 |
| Tended to agree | 2 |
| Neither agreed nor disagreed | 3 |
| Tended to disagree | 4 |
| Strongly disagreed | 5 |
| Don't know | 6 |

ASK ALL WHO SAY THERE HAS BEEN A CHANGE OF FACTOR/AGENT AT QB23
(CODES 2-6). OTHERS GO TO QB27

QB25 Did you and the other residents of your block experience any problems or difficulties
when attempting to switch to a new factor/property managing agency?

Single code.

- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Yes | 1 |
| No | 2 |
| Don't know/cant remember | 3 |

ASK IF YES AT QB25. OTHERS GO TO Q27A

QB26 What problems or difficulties did you encounter?

Write in.

ASK ALL WHO HAVE A FACTOR/PROPERTY MANAGING AGENT AT QA7
(CODE 2)

QB27 To what extent would you say you agree or disagree with the statements about changing your
A property managing agent? *Select one answer on each line across.*

Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
-------------------	------------------	-------------------------------	---------------------	----------------------	---------------

There is plenty of information
available about factors and property
management companies from which
to choose a replacement.

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

Factors and property managing agents
make information available on their
fees and services

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

ASK ALL WHO HAVE A FACTOR/PROPERTY MANAGING AGENT AT QA7
(CODE 2)

B27B I'm going to read out some more statements about changing your property management agent?
 To what extent do you agree or disagree with each?

Select one answer on each row

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Appointing a new factor/property managing agent is a lot of hassle	1	2	3	4	5	6
I would be willing to get involved in trying to appoint a new factor/property managing agent if the need arose	1	2	3	4	5	6
I understand the steps that are needed to go about appointing a new property managing agent	1	2	3	4	5	6
It is difficult to get the necessary agreement among owners to organise appointing a new factor/property managing agent or moving to self managing	1	2	3	4	5	6
The contract with factors/property managing agents is for a fixed term and cannot be easily terminated early.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I would prefer it if the residents of my block arranged repairs and maintenance ourselves, rather than having a factor/property managing agency do it.	1	2	3	4	5	6

It would be too much trouble for the residents of my block to arrange repairs and maintenance ourselves, rather than employing a factor/property managing agent	1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

ASK ALL WHO HAVE SERVICES PROVIDED BY COUNCIL OR HOUSING ASSOCIATION
AT QA7 (CODES 3, 4 OR 5)

QB28 What barriers, if any, would prevent you from changing the current arrangements for
the repairs and maintenance of common parts of the block?

Do not prompt. Multicode ok.

The factor / property managing agent has a fixed term appointment that has not yet expired	1
---	---

Under the deeds, private owners are obliged to use the council's factoring service	2
---	---

Would be difficult to get consensus among residents	3
---	---

Other WRITE IN	4
----------------	---

Don't know	5
------------	---

None	6
------	---

QB29 If the possibility ever arose, how well do you feel you understand the procedures that would have to be followed for the residents of your block to change their property managing agent?

Single code.

Good understanding

Some understanding

Limited understanding

No understanding at all

Don't know

Section C: Ask all who look after their own property managing arrangements at QA7 (code 1). Others go to interview close

QC1 Circumstances in which residents of flats look after care and maintenance of common areas themselves is sometimes called 'self-managing '. Which of the following best describes the self-managing arrangements that exist in your block?

Read out. Single code

- | | |
|---|---|
| There is a formal owners association that makes the arrangements | 1 |
| The owners act together but there is no formal owners association | 2 |
| One owner tends to organise on behalf of the others | 3 |
| There is no fixed arrangement, and things are organised as and when the need arises | 4 |
| Nothing seems to be formally arranged or managed by anyone | 5 |
| Other, WRITE IN | 6 |
| Don't know | 7 |
| Refused | |

QC2 And, as far as you know, how long have these arrangements been in place in your block?

Single code

- | | |
|---|---|
| There has not been a change during the period I have been resident here | 1 |
| Within the past 2 years | 2 |
| Between 3 and 5 years | 3 |
| Between 6 and 10 years | 4 |
| Between 10 and 20 years | 5 |
| More than 20 years ago | 6 |
| Don't know/can't remember | 7 |
| Refused | 8 |

ASK ALL WHO CAN IDENTIFY WHEN CURRENT ARRANGEMENTS CAME INTO PLACE AT QC2 (CODES 2-5). OTHERS GO TO QC3

QC2 What was the reason for the shift to self-management arrangements?

A *Do not prompt. Multicode ok*

- | | |
|--|---|
| Previous factor/property managing agent terminated their services because of non-payment by some residents | 1 |
| Previous factor/property managing agent was too expensive | 2 |
| Previous factor/property managing agent was not providing the services required | 3 |
| A collective decision was taken by the owners that they could do better | 4 |
| Other WRITE IN | 5 |
| Don't know/can't remember | 6 |
| Refused | 7 |

QC2 And, was the process of moving to self management easy or difficult?

B *Single code*

- | | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Very easy | 1 |
| Fairly easy | 2 |
| Quite difficult | 3 |
| Very difficult | 4 |
| Don't know/can't remember | 7 |
| Refused | 8 |

QC3 In general, how easy or difficult is it to get common repairs done in the block?

Single code

- | | |
|--|----------|
| Very easy | <u>1</u> |
| Fairly easy | <u>2</u> |
| Quite difficult | <u>3</u> |
| Very difficult | <u>4</u> |
| Don't know/have never needed a repair done | <u>5</u> |

ASK ALL WHO SAY DIFFICULT AT QC3 (CODES 3 OR 4). OTHERS GO TO QC5

QC4 What specifically is difficult about it?

Do not prompt. Multicode ok

Identifying absentee or commercial owners	1
Obtaining timely consent from owners	2
Obtaining payments from owners	3
Legal disputes or uncertainty caused by title deeds or deeds of condition	4
Organising or agreeing joint action of any sort	5
Other WRITE IN	6
Don't know	7

ASK ALL WHO SELF MANAGE AT QA7 (CODE 1)

QC5 Is there a maintenance fund or account that everyone pays into on a regular basis to cover repairs and maintenance of the common parts?

Single code.

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know	3

ASK ALL WHO SAY YES (CODE 1) AT QC5

QC6 How much do owners pay into the fund each month?

Please provide the exact number of whole pounds.

Exact number, whole £.

Don't know

Refused

QC7 How would you rate the effectiveness of the self managing arrangements in your block in relation to each of the following?

Read out. Single code each row.

	Very good	Fairly good	Neither good nor poor	Fairly poor	Very poor	Don't know	N/A
The upkeep and maintenance of communal grounds	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
ASK IF HAVE COMMON STAIRS (QA6/3) Maintenance/cleaning of communal stairs	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
ASK IF HAVE LIFT(S) (QA6/4) Maintenance/cleaning of lifts	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Window cleaning	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Repairs to roofs	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Cleaning gutters	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Repairs to outside walls and windows	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
ASK IF HAVE SECURE ENTRY SYSTEM (QA6/7) Repairs to door entry system	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Keeping the building and entrances secure	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Acting promptly when common repairs or maintenance is required	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

ASK IF ANY RATED AS FAIRLY OR VERY POOR AT QC7. OTHERS GO TO QC8

QC7 You rated the effectiveness of some of your arrangements as poor. Given that this is the case, would your personal preference be to employ a factor or property managing agent to repair and look after communal parts of the block?

A

Single code

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know	3
Refused	4

ASK ALL WHO SAY YES AT QC7A. OTHERS GO TO QC7C

QC7 What has prevented you from appointing a factor or property managing agent ?

B

MULTICODE OK

Other owners don't agree/can't persuade them	1
Worried it might be more expensive	2
It would be too much effort/haven't had the time	3
I have heard bad things about factors/property managing agents	4
Nothing, it is being pursued	6
Nothing, just haven't given it that much thought	
Other WRITE IN	
Don't know	7
Refused	8

ASK ALL WHO SAY NO AT QC7A. OTHERS GO TO QC8

QC7 Why not?

MULTICODE OK

Worried it might be more expensive	1
It would be too much effort/haven't had the time	2
It would be hard to identify a good factor/property managing agent	3
I have heard bad things about factors/property managing agents	4
They would not provide a better service	5
No reason, just haven't given it that much thought	6
Other WRITE IN	7
Don't know	8
Refused	9

QC8 And how would you rate the effectiveness of the self managing arrangements in your block in terms of.....?

Read out. Single code each row

	Very good	Fairly good	Neither good nor poor	Fairly poor	Very poor	Don't know
Making routine checks	1	2	3	4	5	6
Identifying reliable contractors	1	2	3	4	5	6
Organising work efficiently and in a reasonable time	1	2	3	4	5	6
Keeping owners informed of what is going on	1	2	3	4	5	6
Presenting detailed and accurate bills to owners	1	2	3	4	5	6
Collecting payments from owners	1	2	3	4	5	6

QC9 As far as you are aware do the self managing arrangements in your block include....?

Read out. Single code each row

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
Undertaking or arranging condition surveys to ensure problems are detected early	1	2	3
Undertaking or arranging preventative repairs	1	2	3
Developing a forward repair plan	1	2	3
Developing a long term maintenance plan	1	2	3

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR TAKING PART IN THIS SURVEY

B GUIDE TO STATISTICAL RELIABILITY

The respondents to the questionnaire are only a sample of the total 'population'. We cannot therefore be certain that the figures obtained are exactly those we would have if everybody had been interviewed (the 'true' values). However, we can predict the variation between the sample results and the 'true' values from a knowledge of the size of the samples on which the results are based and the number of times that a particular answer is given.

The confidence with which we can make this prediction is usually chosen to be 95 per cent - that is, the chances are 19 in 20 that the 'true' value will fall within a specified range. The table below illustrates the predicted ranges for different sample sizes and percentages results at the '95 per cent confidence interval', based on a random sample.

Size of sample on which survey result is based	Approximate sampling tolerances applicable to percentages at or near these levels		
	10% or 90%	30% or 70%	50% \pm
	\pm	\pm	
100 interviews	6	9	10
200 interviews	4	6	7
300 interviews	3	5	6
500 interviews	3	4	4
1,000 interviews	2	3	3
998 interviews	2	3	3

Source: Ipsos MORI

For example, on a question where 50 per cent of the people in a sample of 998 respond with a particular answer, the chances are 95 in 100 that this result would not vary by more than three percentage points, plus or minus from a complete coverage of the entire population using the same procedures.

However, while it is true to conclude that the 'actual' result (95 times out of 100) lies anywhere between 47 per cent and 53 per cent, it is proportionately more likely to be closer to the centre of this band (i.e. at 50 per cent).

Tolerances are also involved in the comparison of results from different parts of a sample. A difference, in other words, must be of at least a certain size to be considered statistically significant. The following table is a guide to the sampling tolerances applicable to comparisons. The main sub group comparisons used in the report are outlined in the table. In particular:

- All owners with a property manager (511) compared to those with a factor (294).
- All owner with a property manager (511) compared to those who have services provided by a social landlord (217).
- All owners with a factor (294) compared to those who have services provided by a social landlord (217).
- All those who have services provided by a property manager (511) compared to self managing respondents (487).

For example, on a question where 50 per cent of owner occupiers living in flats with a factor respond with a particular answer, for a comparison with those who have services provided by a social landlord to be found to be significantly different, there needs to be a difference of around nine percentage points, that is, 41 per cent (or fewer) or 59 per cent (or more) of respondents with a social landlord would need to respond with that answer.

Size of samples compared	Differences required for significance at or near percentage levels		
	10% or 90%	30% or 70%	50% <u>±</u>
	<u>±</u>	<u>±</u>	
100 and 100	8	13	14
200 and 200	6	9	10

200 and 400	5	8	9
200 and 500	5	8	8
500 and 500	4	6	6
700 and 300	4	6	7
700 and 400	4	6	6
1,000 and 100	6	9	10
511 and 294	4	7	7
511 and 217	5	7	8
294 and 217	5	8	9
511 and 487	4	6	6

Source: Ipsos MORI
