



North East Grants Office

Customer Survey

May 2016

Northern Ireland
Housing Executive

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INTRODUCTION

i. Background to the Survey

As part of the Customer Satisfaction Survey Programme agreed with Private Sector Improvement Services, the Research Unit conducted a telephone survey of people living in the North East Grants Office area who applied for and received a grant from the Housing Executive to repair, renovate or adapt their home.

The aims of the survey were:

- to evaluate grant applicants' perceptions of the grants process;
- to assess whether applicants thought they had a say in the services they received;
- to identify the priorities of applicants;
- to measure overall satisfaction with the service;
- to evaluate grant applicants' views on electronic delivery of services; and
- to identify shortcomings in the service and improvements required as perceived by the applicants.

In addition, the survey was carried out in support of the North East Grants Office's Customer Service Excellence Standard. The Research Unit consulted with Private Sector Improvement Services on the aims of the survey, questionnaire design, survey methodology and sample frame.

ii. Research Methodology and Sample

It was agreed that the sample frame should include grant applicants in the North East Grants Office catchment area whose application had been completed within a 12 month period, i.e. between January 2015 and December 2015. This was agreed as an appropriate cut-off point, bearing in mind resource constraints and the length of time grants customers could be expected to remember details of the application process. The Housing Executive's computerised Private Sector Management System identified a total of 223 grant applicants, whose contact details were available, to be included in the sample frame for the survey. Of these a random sample of 200 was selected.

The agreed methodology was a telephone survey. The sample frame included applicants who had received Disabled Facilities Grant, Renovation Grant, Replacement Grant and Home Repair Grant. However, with reduced availability of funding, discretionary grants for renovation and home repair assistance are only available in exceptional circumstances and mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants therefore accounted for the majority (87%) of the overall sample.

iii. The Questionnaire

The questionnaire was designed to assess satisfaction levels with all stages of the grant application process. As the process varies somewhat for Disabled Facilities Grants, the questionnaire design took account of these differences.

iv. Fieldwork

Research Unit staff carried out the interviews by telephone in March and April 2016. All 200 grant applicants selected in the sample had their grant application completed during the 12 months from January 2015 to December 2015 where included in the survey. Response rate information is in Table A.

Table A: Sample and response information

Grant Type	Sample	Achieved Interviews
	Number	Number
Disabled Facilities	174	69
Renovation	15	2
Home Repair	10	7
Replacement Grant	1	0
TOTAL	200	78

v. PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

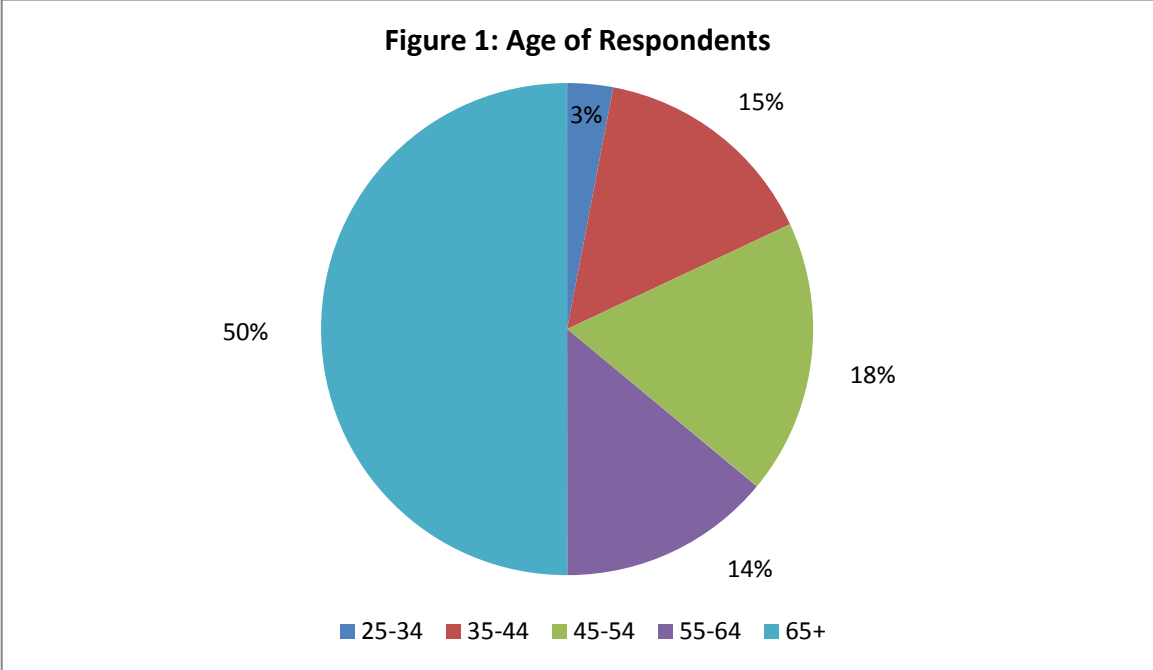
The number of respondents to any piece of quantitative research has an impact on the way information is presented in the analysis. It is standard practice, in the case of a survey achieving between 50 and 100 interviews, for both numbers and percentages to be quoted in the textual analysis and where the sub-sample size is less than 50 for numbers only to be quoted in the analysis. It is also standard practice where findings have a numeric value of less than five and may be of a sensitive nature, exact numbers are not reported in order to protect the anonymity of respondents.

Commentary and Analysis

1.0 Respondent Profile and Grant Type

1.1 Age of respondents

Half (39) of respondents were aged 65 or older; similar proportions were aged between 35 and 44 years (12; 15%); aged between 45 and 4 (14; 18%) or aged between 55 and 64 years (11; 14%). The remaining two respondents (3%) were aged between 25 and 34 years (Figure 1, Table 1.1).



1.2 Ethnicity of respondents

The majority (77; 99%) of respondents described their ethnicity as white; the remaining respondent (1%) refused to state their ethnicity (Table 1.2).

1.3 Household Religion

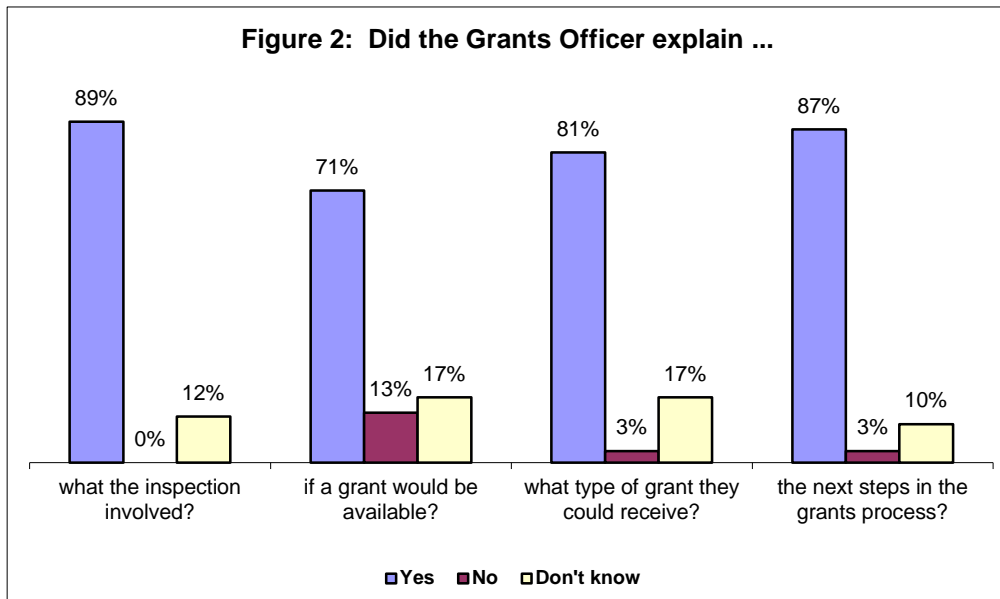
More than three-fifths (48; 62%) of respondents described their household religion as Protestant and more than one-quarter (20; 26%) described their religion as Catholic. Similar proportions described their household religion as 'none' (5; 6%); 'mixed religion' (3; 4%) or 'other' (2; 3%) (Table 1.3).

1.4 Grant Type

More than four-fifths (69; 89%) of respondents had received a Disabled Facilities Grant, seven (9%) had received a Home Repair Assistance Grant and two (3%) had received a Renovation Grant (Table 1.4).

2.0 Contacts with Grants Office

- 2.1** More than four-fifths (68; 87%) of respondents said they had been involved in every stage of the grants process and 10 (13%) said they had been involved in some of the stages (Table 2.1).
- 2.2** The majority (73; 94%) of respondents stated they were aware of their case officer at an early stage in the process, two (3%) stated this was not the case and three (4%) could not remember (Table 2.2).
- 2.3** More than two-thirds (55; 71%) had been offered a Preliminary Test of Resources; more than one-tenth (11; 14%) said they had not been offered a Preliminary Test of Resources; one-tenth (8; 10%) could not remember and four (5%) stated a Preliminary Test of Resources was not applicable (Table 2.3).
- 2.4** The majority (76; 97%) of respondents were very satisfied/satisfied with the preliminary contact from the grants office and the remaining two respondents (3%) were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied (Table 2.4 and 2.5).
- 2.5** The majority (75; 96%) of respondents said the grants officer had made an appointment to visit them. Of those respondents who said an appointment had been made, the vast majority (72) said the appointment had been kept (Tables 2.6 and 2.7).
- 2.6** Respondents were asked a series of questions to establish if the grants officer had explained the grants process to them. More than four-fifths (69; 89%) of respondents said the grants officer had explained what the inspection stage involved (Figure 2, Table 2.8).
- 2.7** More than two-thirds (55; 71%) of respondents said the grants officer had explained whether they thought the grant would be available (Figure 2, Table 2.7).
- 2.8** More than four-fifths (63; 81%) said the grants officer had advised them on the type of grant they could receive (Figure 2, Table 2.8).
- 2.9** More than four-fifths (68; 87%) said the grants officer explained the next steps in the grant application process (Figure 2, Table 2.8).
- 2.9** The majority (77; 95%) of respondents were very satisfied/satisfied with the inspection stage of the process; four (5%) respondents were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied (Table 2.9).



Telephoning the Grants Office within the previous 12 months

- 2.10** More than two-fifths (32; 41%) of respondents had telephoned the grants office during the course of their grant application in the previous 12 months. The majority (29) of respondents had been told the name of the person dealing with their call and the remaining three respondents were unsure if they had been given a name (Tables 2.10 and 2.11).
- 2.11** All respondents (32) who had telephoned the grants office had found the staff polite and knowledgeable; 31 respondents said they had not felt hurried or rushed by staff dealing with their query (Table 2.12).
- 2.12** Of the respondents who had telephoned the grants office (32; 37% of all respondents), 30 said the person who initially took the call had been able to deal with their query and the remaining two stated the person was unable to deal with their query (Table 2.13).
- 2.13** The majority of respondents (31) who had telephoned the grants office were very satisfied/satisfied with the overall service they had received and the remaining respondent was neither satisfied nor dissatisfied (Table 2.14).

3.0 Grant Forms¹

3.1 Schedule of Works

Almost three-quarters (58; 74%) of all respondents had dealt with the Schedule of Works package. Of these, the majority (55) thought the Schedule of Works package was clear, one thought it was not clear and the remaining two respondents were unsure if the Schedule of Works package was clear (Table 3.1).

3.2 Contact by case Officer

More than two-thirds (56; 72%) of all respondents had been contacted by their case officer after they received the schedule of works package; more than one-fifth (18; 23%) could not remember if the case officer had contacted them and four (5%) stated that the case officer did not contact them (Table 3.2).

3.3 Test of Resources Form

More than three-fifths (50; 64%) of respondents had completed a Test of Resources form. Of these, the majority (42) thought the test of resources form was easy to complete, three thought the form was not easy to complete and five respondents could not remember (Table 3.3).

3.4 Grant Approval Document

The Grant Approval Document had been dealt with by almost three-quarters (58; 74%) of all respondents. The majority (54) thought the grant approval document was clear, one thought the form was not easy to complete and three respondents could not recall (Table 3.4).

3.5 Contact by Grants Officer

More than two-thirds (56; 72%) of respondents stated the grants officer contacted them after their grant had been approved, 19 (24%) could not remember the grants officer contacting them and three (4%) said the grants officer did not contact them (Table 3.5).

4.0 Payments, Contractors and Length of Time to Process Grant application

4.1 More than four-fifths (68; 87%) of respondents were very satisfied/satisfied with the payment stage of the grants process, six (8%) were dissatisfied/very dissatisfied and four (5%) were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied (Table 4.1).

4.2 The majority (70; 90%) of respondents were very satisfied/satisfied with the builder who had carried out the work; six (8%) were dissatisfied/very dissatisfied and the remaining two respondents (3%) were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied (Table 4.2).

4.3 All respondents who had received a Disabled Facilities Grant (69; 88% of all respondents) were asked if the work fulfilled their needs. Of these, almost all (68) were very satisfied/satisfied that the grant work carried out had fulfilled

¹ Respondents who stated that someone else (family member/friend, builder or representative from Fold/Fold) had dealt with the grant forms on their behalf are not included in the analysis relating to the grants forms.

their needs and the remaining respondent (1%) was neither satisfied nor dissatisfied (Table 4.3).

5.0 Communication from the Grants Office

- 5.1** All respondents (78) said a builder had been involved in the grant process; fewer respondents said an occupational therapist (69; 85%); architect (48; 62%) or Fold (31; 40%) had been involved in the grant process on their behalf (Table 5.1).
- 5.2** The majority (71; 91%) of respondents felt that the grants office had worked well with the builder, while five (6%) were unsure and two (3%) said the office had not worked well with their builder (Table 5.1).
- 5.3** Of the 69 respondents who said an Occupational Therapist (OT) had been involved in the grant process, four-fifths (62; 80%) of respondents felt the grants office had a good working relationship with their OT during the grant process and the remaining eight (20%) were unsure if the grants office worked well with the OT (Table 5.1).
- 5.4** Of the 48 respondents who said an architect had been involved in the grant process, 40 respondents felt the grants office had a good working relationship with their architect during the grant process; seven respondents were unsure and one respondent said the office had not worked well with their architect (Table 5.1).
- 5.5** Of the 31 respondents who said Fold had been involved in the grant process, 24 respondents felt the grants office had a good working relationship with Fold; five respondents were unsure, two respondents said the grants office had not worked well with Fold (Table 5.1).
- 5.6** The majority (73; 94%) of respondents were very satisfied/satisfied with the letters they had received from the grants office; four (5%) respondents said they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, the remaining respondent (1%) was very dissatisfied/dissatisfied (Table 5.2).
- 5.7** The majority (76; 97%) of respondents felt they had been treated fairly throughout the grants process, the remaining two respondents (3%) stated that they had not been treated fairly (Table 5.3).
- 5.8** The majority (73; 94%) of respondents were very satisfied/satisfied overall with the grants process; four (5%) respondents said they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied and the remaining respondent (1%) was dissatisfied/very dissatisfied (Table 5.4).

6.0 Internet Access

- 6.1** More than three-fifths (49; 63%) of respondents had access to the internet. Of these 31 said they would be interested in accessing grants forms and documentation via the internet, 16 said they would not be interested and the remaining two respondents did not know (Tables 6.1 and 6.2).

7.0 Further Comments

- 7.1** More than half (41; 53%) made a further comment on the grants process. Thirty-three respondents were satisfied with the service provided; four respondents said the process was too long; two respondents said the payment stage of the process is too long. Equal proportions (1 respondent in each case) said they were dissatisfied with the grants process or dissatisfied with communication from the office during the process (Table 7.1).

Appendix 1: Tabular Report

North East Grants Customer Survey

Table 1.1: Age of Respondents

	Numbers	Percentages
25-34 years	2	3
35-44 years	12	15
45-54 years	14	18
55-64 years	11	14
65+ years	39	50
TOTAL	78	100

Base: 78 (all respondents)

Table 1.2: Ethnicity of Respondents

	Numbers	Percentages
White	77	99
Refused	1	1
TOTAL	78	100

Base: 78 (all respondents)

Table 1.3: Household Religion

	Numbers	Percentages
Protestant	48	62
Catholic	20	26
Mixed Religion (Protestant/Catholic)	3	4
None	5	6
Other	2	4
TOTAL	78	100

Base: 78 (all respondents)

Table 1.4: Grant Type

	Numbers	Percentages
Disabled Facilities Grant	69	89
Home Repair Grant	7	3
Renovation Grant	2	9
TOTAL	78	100

Base: 78 (all respondents)

Table 2.1: Was the applicant involved in every stage of the process?

	Numbers	Percentages
Yes, every stage	65	87
Yes, some of the stages	10	13
TOTAL	78	100

Base: 78 (all respondents)

Table 2.2: Were you aware of your case officer at an early stage in the process?

	Numbers	Percentages
Yes	73	96
No	2	3
Don't Know/Can't Remember	3	4
TOTAL	78	100

Base: 78 (all respondents)

Table 2.3: Were you offered a Preliminary Test of Resources?

	Numbers	Percentages
Yes	55	71
No	11	14
Don't Know/Can't Remember	8	10
Not Applicable	4	5
TOTAL	78	100

Base: 78 (all respondents)

Table 2.4: How satisfied/dissatisfied were you with the preliminary contact from the Grants Office?

	Numbers	Percentages
Very satisfied	60	64
Satisfied	26	33
Neither	2	3
Dissatisfied	0	0
Very Dissatisfied	0	0
TOTAL	78	100

Base: 78 (all respondents)

Table 2.5: Did the Grants Officer make an appointment to visit you?

	Numbers	Percentages
Yes	75	96
No	3	4
TOTAL	78	100

Base: 78 (all respondents)

Table 2.6: Did the Grants Officer turn up to the appointment?

	Numbers	Percentages
Yes	72	96
Don't Know/Can't Remember	3	4
TOTAL	75	100

Base: 75 (respondents who had an appointment)

Table 2.7: Did the Grants Officer explain...

	Numbers %			
	Yes	No	D/K	Total
what the inspection stage involved?	69	0	9	78
	89	0	12	100%
whether they thought a grant would be available?	55	10	13	78
	71	13	17	100%
what type of grant you could receive?	63	2	13	78
	81	3	17	100%
the next steps in the grants process?	68	2	8	78
	87	3	10	100%

Base: 78 (all respondents)

Table 2.8: How satisfied/dissatisfied were you with the inspection stage of process?

	Numbers	Percentages
Very satisfied	39	50
Satisfied	35	45
Neither	4	5
Dissatisfied	0	0
Very Dissatisfied	0	0
TOTAL	78	100

Base: 78 (all respondents)

Table 2.9: Did you make telephone contact with the Grants Office at any time during your application?

	Numbers	Percentages
Yes	32	41
No	37	47
Don't Know/Can't Remember	9	12
TOTAL	78	100

Base: 78 (all respondents)

Table 2.10: Did the person dealing with the call give his/her name?

	Numbers
Yes	29
Don't Know/Can't Remember	3
TOTAL	32

Base: 32 (respondents who had contacted the grants office by telephone)

Table 2.11: Did you find the staff...

	Yes	No	DK/Can't Remember	Total
Numbers				
polite?	32	0	0	32
knowledgeable?	32	0	0	32
In a hurry/rushed?	1	31	0	32

Base: 32 (respondents who had contacted the grants office by telephone)

Table 2.12: Was the person who took your call able to deal with your query directly?

	Numbers
Yes	30
No	2
TOTAL	32

Base: 32 (respondents who had contacted the grants office by telephone)

Table 2.13: How satisfied/dissatisfied were you with the telephone service?

	Numbers
Very satisfied	23
Satisfied	8
Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	1
Dissatisfied	0
Very Dissatisfied	0
TOTAL	32

Base: 32 (respondents who had contacted grants office by telephone)

Table 3.1: Do you think the Schedule of Works Package was clear?

	Numbers	Percentages
Yes	55	95
No	1	2
Don't Know/Can't Remember	2	3
Sub Total	58	100
Fold dealt with document	10	
Family/friend dealt with document	8	
Builder dealt with document	2	
TOTAL	78	

Base: 58 (respondents who dealt with the Schedule of Works Package)

Table 3.2: Were you contacted by your case officer after receiving the Schedule of Works Package?

	Numbers	Percentages
Yes	56	72
No	4	5
Don't Know/Can't Remember	18	23
TOTAL	78	100

Base: 78 (all respondents)

Table 3.3: Do you think the Test of Resources Form was difficult to complete?

	Numbers	Percentages
Yes	3	6
No	42	84
Don't know/can't remember	5	10
Sub Total	50	100
Fold completed form	10	
Family/friend completed form	8	
N/A	10	
TOTAL	78	

Base: 50 (respondents who completed the Test of Resources Form)

Table 3.4: Do you think the Grant Approval Document was clear?

	Numbers	Percentages
Yes	54	93
No	1	2
Don't know/can't remember	3	5
Sub Total	58	
Fold dealt with document	12	
Family/friend completed form	7	
Builder completed form	1	
TOTAL	78	

Base: 58 (respondents who dealt with the Grant Approval Document)

Table 3.5: Were you contacted by the Grants Officer after you received approval?

	Numbers	Percentages
Yes	56	72
No	3	4
Don't Know/Can't Remember	19	24
TOTAL	78	100

Base: 78 (all respondents)

Table 4.1: Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the payment stage?

	Numbers	Percentages
Very satisfied	33	42
Satisfied	40	51
Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	4	5
Dissatisfied	0	0
Very Dissatisfied	1	1
TOTAL	78	100

Base: 78 (all respondents)

Table 4.2: How satisfied/dissatisfied were you with the builder who carried out the work?

	Numbers	Percentages
Very satisfied	52	67
Satisfied	18	23
Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	2	3
Dissatisfied	3	4
Very dissatisfied	3	4
TOTAL	78	100

Base: 78 (all respondents)

Table 4.3 How satisfied/dissatisfied are you that the work carried out fulfilled your needs?

	Numbers	Percentages
Very satisfied	51	74
Satisfied	17	25
Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	1	1
Dissatisfied	0	0
Very dissatisfied	0	0
Total	69	100

Base: 69 (respondents who received disabled facilities grant)

Table 5.1: Do you think the Grants Office worked well with ...

	Numbers			
	Yes	No	Unsure	Total
The builder?	71	2	5	78
	91	3	6	100%
The occupational therapist?	62	0	7	69
	90	0	10	100%
The architect?	40	1	7	48
Fold?	24	2	5	31

Bases: 78 (builder); 69 (OT); 48 (architect); 31 (Fold).

Table 5.2: Overall, how satisfied/dissatisfied were you with the letters you received?

	Numbers	Percentages
Very satisfied	36	46
Satisfied	32	41
Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	4	5
Dissatisfied	5	6
Very Dissatisfied	1	1
TOTAL	78	100

Base: 78 (all respondents)

Table 5.3: Overall, do you think you were treated fairly throughout the grants process?

	Numbers	Percentages
Yes	76	97
No	2	3
TOTAL	78	100

Base: 78 (all respondents)

Table 5.4: Overall how satisfied/dissatisfied are you with the grants process?

	Numbers	Percentages
Very satisfied	53	68
Satisfied	20	26
Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	4	5
Dissatisfied	1	1
Very Dissatisfied	0	0
TOTAL	78	100

Base: 78 (all respondents)

Table 6.1: Do you have access to the internet?

	Numbers	Percentages
Yes	49	63
No	28	36
Don't Know	1	1
TOTAL	78	100

Base: 78 (all respondents)

Table 6.2: Would you be interested in accessing grants forms and documentation via the internet?

	Numbers
Yes	31
No	16
Don't know	2
TOTAL	49

Base: 49 (respondents who had access to the internet)

Table 7.1: Would you like to make any other comments about the grants process?

	Numbers
Satisfied with grants process	33
Grants process takes too long	4
Payment stage is too slow	2
Dissatisfied with grants process	1
Dissatisfied with communication throughout the process	1
TOTAL	41

Base: 41 (all respondents who made additional comment about grants process)