



Belfast Grants Office

Customer Survey

November 2014

Northern Ireland
Housing Executive

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INTRODUCTION

i. Background to the Survey

As part of the Customer Satisfaction Survey Programme agreed with Design and Property Services, the Research Unit conducted a telephone survey of people living in the Belfast Grants Office area who had applied for and received a grant from the Housing Executive to repair, renovate, replace 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 Belfast Grants Office's Customer Service Excellence Standard. The Research Unit consulted with Design and Property 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 Belfast Grants Office catchment area whose application had been completed within a 12 month period, i.e. between August 2013 and July 2014. 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 Grants Management System and Private Sector Management System identified a total of 200 grant applicants, whose contact details were available, to be included in the sample frame for the survey.

The agreed methodology was a telephone survey. The sample frame included applicants who had received Disabled Facilities Grant, Home Repair Grant and Renovation 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 (85%) 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 November 2014. All 200 grant applicants whose application had been completed during the 12 months from August 2013 to July 2014 were 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	173	82
Renovation	16	9
Home Repair	11	5
TOTAL	200	96

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.

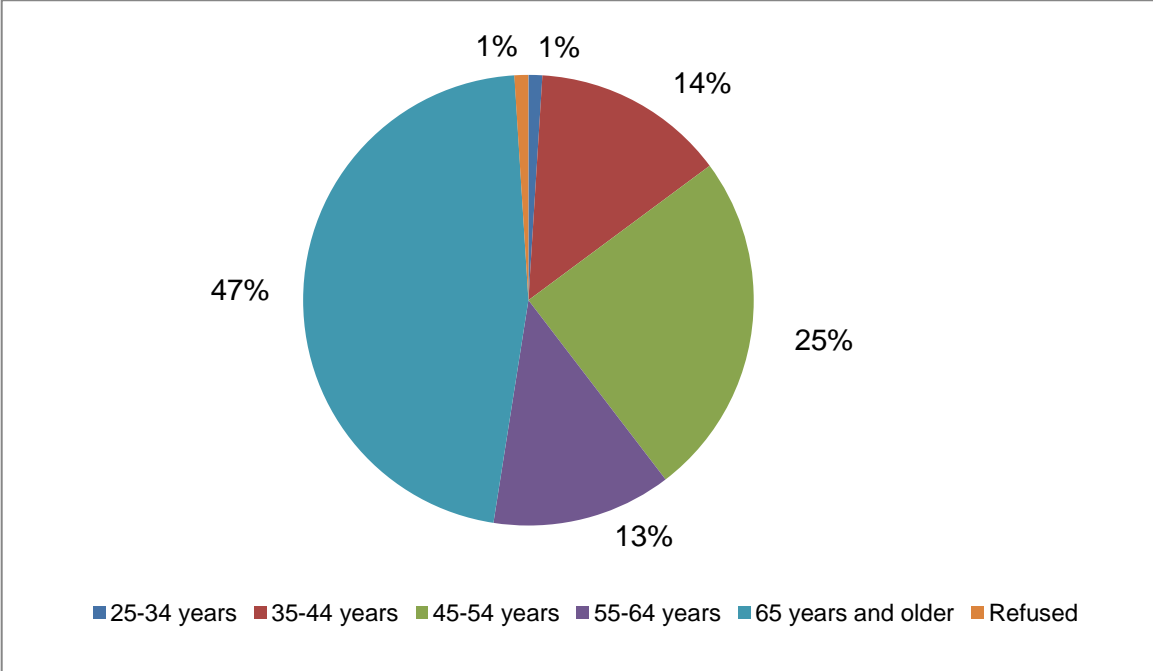
Commentary and Analysis

1.0 Respondent Profile and Grant Type

1.1 Age of respondents

Nearly half (45; 47%) of respondents were aged 65 or older, one-quarter (24; 25%) were aged between 45 and 54, 13 (14%) respondents were aged 35-44 and 12 (13%) respondents were aged 55-64; one (1%) respondent was aged 25-34 and the remaining respondent (1%) refused to state their age (Figure 1, Table 1.1).

Figure1: Age profile of respondent



1.2 Ethnicity of respondents

All (96; 100%) respondents described their ethnicity as white (Table 1.2).

1.3 Household Religion

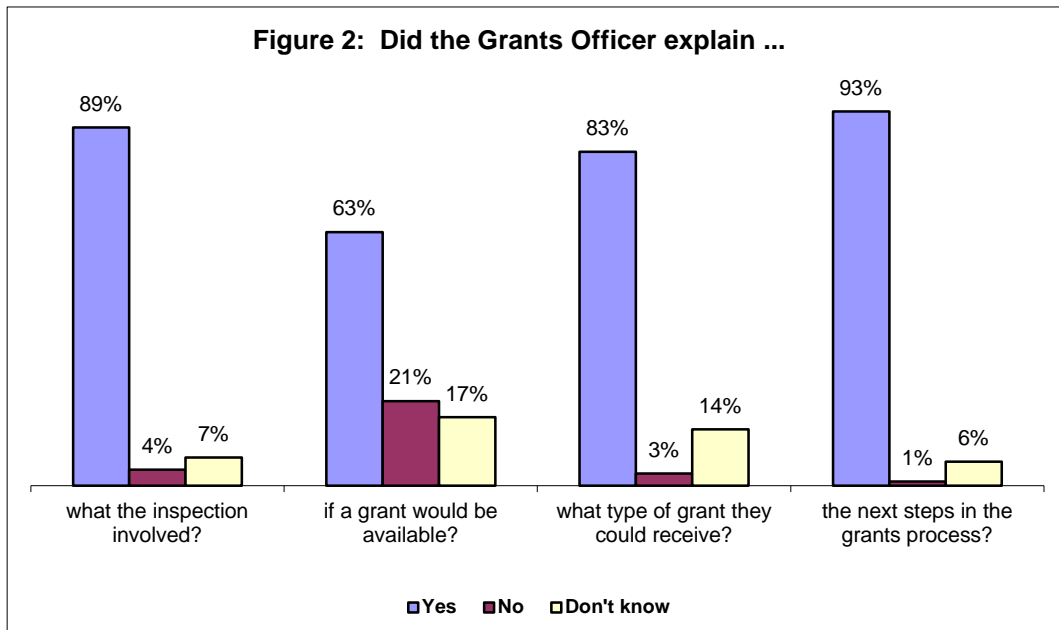
More than two-fifths (43; 45%) of respondents described their household religion as Catholic, two-fifths (38; 40%) described their religion as Protestant, eight (8%) described their religion as 'none'. Equal proportions (1; 1% in each case) described their household religion as mixed religion or 'other', the remaining five (5%) refused to state their religion (Table 1.3).

1.4 Grant Type

The majority (82; 85%) of respondents had received a Disabled Facilities Grant, nine (9%) had received a Renovation Grant and five (5%) had received a Home Repair Grant (Table 1.4).

2.0 Contacts with Grants Office

- 2.1** More than four-fifths (79; 82%) of respondents said they had been involved in every stage of the grants process, 16 (17%) said they had been involved in some of the stages and the remaining respondent (1%) said a family member had been involved in every stage of their grant application on their behalf (Table 2.1).
- 2.2** The majority (83; 87%) of respondents stated they were aware of their case officer at an early stage in the process, one (1%) stated this was not the case and 12 (13%) could not remember (Table 2.2).
- 2.3** Most respondents (71; 74%) had been offered a Preliminary Test of Resources and six (6%) had not, 16 (17%) could not remember and three (3%) stated a Preliminary Test of Resources was not applicable (Table 2.3).
- 2.4** The majority (95; 99%) of respondents were very satisfied/satisfied with the preliminary contact from the grants office, with the remaining (1; 1%) being neither satisfied nor dissatisfied (Table 2.4).
- 2.5** The majority (88; 92%) 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 (87; 99%) said the appointment had been kept (Tables 2.5 and 2.6).
- 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 of respondents (85; 89%) said the grants officer had explained what the inspection stage involved (Figure 2, Table 2.7).
- 2.7** Almost two-thirds (60; 63%) of respondents said the grants officer had explained whether he/she thought the grant would be available (Figure 2, Table 2.7).
- 2.8** More than four-fifths (80; 83%) of respondents said the grants officer had advised them on the type of grant they could receive. The majority (89; 93%) explained the next steps in the grant application process (Figure 2, Table 2.7).
- 2.9** The vast majority (90; 94%) of respondents were very satisfied/satisfied with the inspection stage of the process (Table 2.8).



Telephoning the Grants Office within the previous 12 months

- 2.10** More than two-fifths (44; 46%) of respondents had telephoned the grants office during the course of their grant application, in the previous 12 months. The majority (37) of respondents had been told the name of the person dealing with their call, one had not and six were unsure if they had been given a name (Tables 2.9 and 2.10).
- 2.11** All (44) respondents who had telephoned the grants office had found the staff knowledgeable. The majority (43) of respondents had found the staff polite and said they had not felt hurried or rushed by staff dealing with their query (Table 2.11).
- 2.12** Of the respondents who had telephoned the grants office (44; 46% of all respondents), 36 said the person who initially took the call had been able to deal with their query; six stated the person was unable to deal with their query and two were unsure if their query had been dealt with (Table 2.12).
- 2.13** All (44) respondents who had telephoned the grants office were very satisfied/satisfied with the overall service they had received (Table 2.13).

3.0 Grant Forms¹

3.1 Schedule of Works

More than three-quarters (73; 76%) of respondents had dealt with the Schedule of Works package. Of this sub group, 60 (82%) thought the Schedule of Works package was clear, 11 (15%) thought it was not clear and the remaining two (3%) respondents were unsure if the Schedule of Works package was clear or not (Table 3.1).

3.2 Contact by case Officer

Almost two-thirds (61; 64%) of respondents had been contacted by their case officer after they received the schedule of works package, 29 (30%) could not remember if the case officer had contacted them and six (6%) stated that the case officer did not contact them (Table 3.2).

3.3 Test of Resources Form

More than three-fifths (59; 62%) of respondents had completed a Test of Resources form. Of this sub group, the majority (52; 88%) thought the Test of Resources form was easy to complete, two (3%) thought the form was not easy to complete and five (9%) respondents could not remember (Table 3.3).

3.4 Grant Approval Document

The Grant Approval Document had been dealt with by almost four-fifths (75; 78%) of all respondents. Of this sub group, almost all (66; 88%) thought the grant approval document was clear, five (7%) thought the grant approval document was not clear and four (5%) could not recall (Table 3.4).

3.5 Contact by Grants Officer

Almost three-fifths (57; 59%) of respondents stated the grants officer contacted them after their grant had been approved, 34 (35%) could not remember the grants officer contacting them and five (5%) 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 (82; 85%) of respondents were very satisfied/satisfied with the payment stage of the grants process, nine (9%) were dissatisfied/very dissatisfied and five (5%) were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied (Table 4.1).

4.2 The majority (90; 94%) of respondents were very satisfied/satisfied with the builder who had carried out the work, five (5%) were dissatisfied/very dissatisfied and the remaining respondent (1%) was neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the builder (Table 4.2).

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

4.3 All respondents who had received a Disabled Facilities Grant (82; 85%) were asked if the work fulfilled their needs. Of this sub group, almost all (80; 98) were very satisfied/satisfied that the grant work carried out had fulfilled their needs (Table 4.3).

5.0 Communication from the Grants Office

5.1 All respondents (96; 100%) said a builder had been involved in the grant process; fewer respondents said an occupational therapist (82; 85%), architect (52; 54%) and Fold (55; 57%) had been involved in the grant process on their behalf (Table 5.1).

5.2 More than four-fifths (83; 87%) of respondents felt that the grants office had worked well with the builder, while 10 (10%) were unsure and three (3%) said the office had not worked well with their builder (Table 5.1).

5.3 Of the 82 (85%) respondents who said an Occupational Therapist (OT) had been involved in the grant process, the majority (71; 87%) felt the grants office had a good working relationship with their OT during the grant process, 10 (12%) were unsure and the remaining respondent (1%) felt the grants office did not work well with the OT (Table 5.1).

5.4 Of the 55 (57%) respondents who said Fold had been involved in the grant process the majority (41; 75%) of respondents felt the grants office had a good working relationship with Fold, 13 (24%) respondents were unsure and the remaining respondent (2%) said the grants office had not worked well with Fold (Table 5.1).

5.5 Of the 52 (54%) respondents who said an architect had been involved in the grant process the majority (40; 77%) felt the grants office had a good working relationship with their architect during the grant process, 11 (21%) respondents were unsure and the remaining respondent (2%) felt they did not work well with the architect (Table 5.1).

5.6 The majority (86; 89%) of respondents were very satisfied/satisfied with the letters they had received from the grants office, seven (7%) respondents said they were very dissatisfied/dissatisfied and three (3%) respondents said they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied (Table 5.2).

5.7 The majority (91; 95%) of respondents felt they had been treated fairly throughout the grants process the remaining five respondents (5%) stated that they had not been treated fairly (Table 5.3).

5.8 The majority (91; 95%) of respondents were very satisfied/satisfied overall with the grants process; the remaining five (5%) respondents were dissatisfied/very dissatisfied (Table 5.4).

6.0 Internet Access

6.1 More than half (50; 52%) of respondents had access to the internet. Of this sub group, 23 (46%) said they would be interested in accessing grants forms and documentation via the internet, 26 (52%) said they would not be interested and the remaining respondent (2%) did not know whether they would like to access grants forms and documentation via the internet (Tables 6.1 and 6.2).

7.0 Further Comments

7.1 More than two-fifths (46; 48%) made no further comments on the grants process. Thirty-seven (39%) respondents were satisfied with the service provided, equal proportions (5; 5% in each case) were dissatisfied with the grants process or thought the grant forms were too complicated. Equal proportions (1; 1% in each case) thought the grants process was too long or were unhappy with Fold or thought the Housing Executive should raise awareness of the availability of grants (Table 7.1).

Appendix 1: Tabular Report

Belfast Grants Customer Survey

Table 1.1: Age of Respondents

	Numbers	Percentages
25-34 years	1	1
35-44 years	13	14
45-54 years	24	25
55-64 years	12	13
65+ years	45	47
Refused	1	1
TOTAL	96	100

Base: 96 (all respondents)

Table 1.2: Ethnicity of Respondents

	Numbers	Percentages
White	96	100
TOTAL	96	100

Base: 96 (all respondents)

Table 1.3: Household Religion

	Numbers	Percentages
Catholic	43	45
Protestant	38	40
Mixed Religion (Protestant/Catholic)	1	1
Other	1	1
None	8	8
Refused	5	5
TOTAL	96	100

Base: 96 (all respondents)

Table 1.4: Grant Type

	Numbers	Percentages
Disabled Facilities Grant	82	85
Renovation Grant	9	9
Home Repair Grant	5	5
TOTAL	96	100

Base: 96 (all respondents)

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

	Numbers	Percentages
Yes, every stage	79	82
Yes, some of the stages	16	17
No, family member was involved at all stages	1	1
TOTAL	96	100

Base: 96 (all respondents)

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

	Numbers	Percentages
Yes	83	87
No	1	1
Don't Know/Can't Remember	12	13
TOTAL	96	100

Base: 96 (all respondents)

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

	Numbers	Percentages
Yes	71	74
No	6	6
Don't Know/Can't Remember	16	17
Not Applicable	3	3
TOTAL	96	100

Base: 96 (all respondents)

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

	Numbers	Percentages
Very satisfied	53	55
Satisfied	42	44
Neither	1	1
TOTAL	96	100

Base: 96 (all respondents)

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

	Numbers	Percentages
Yes	88	92
No	2	2
Don't Know/Can't Remember	6	6
TOTAL	96	100

Base: 96 (all respondents)

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

	Numbers	Percentages
Yes	87	99
Don't Know/Can't Remember	1	1
TOTAL	45	100

Base: 45 (respondents who had an appointment)

Table 2.7: Did the Grants Officer explain...

	Numbers %			
	Yes	No	D/K	Total
what the inspection stage involved?	85 89%	4 4%	7 7%	96 100%
whether they thought a grant would be available?	60 63%	20 21%	16 17%	96 100%
what type of grant you could receive?	80 83%	3 3%	13 14%	96 100%
the next steps in the grants process?	89 93%	1 1%	6 6%	96 100%

Base: 96 (all respondents)

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

	Numbers	Percentages
Very satisfied	50	52
Satisfied	40	42
Neither	5	5
Dissatisfied	1	1
TOTAL	96	100

Base: 96 (all respondents)

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

	Numbers	Percentages
Yes	44	46
No	37	39
Don't Know/Can't Remember	15	16
TOTAL	96	100

Base: 96 (all respondents)

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

	Numbers
Yes	37
No	1
Don't Know/Can't Remember	6
TOTAL	44

Base: 44 (respondents who had contacted the grants office by telephone)

Table 2.11: Did you find the staff...

	Yes	No	Total
	Numbers		
polite?	43	1	44
knowledgeable?	44	0	44
In a hurry/rushed?	1	43	44

Base: 44 (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	36
No	6
Don't Know/Can't Remember	2
TOTAL	44

Base: 44 (respondents who had contacted the grants office by telephone)

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

	Numbers
Very satisfied	26
Satisfied	18
TOTAL	44

Base: 44 (respondents who had contacted grants office by telephone)

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

	Numbers	Percentages
Yes	60	82
No	11	15
Don't Know/Can't Remember	2	3
Total	73	100

Base: 73 (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	61	64
No	6	6
Don't Know/Can't Remember	29	30
TOTAL	96	100

Base: 96 (all respondents)

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

	Numbers	Percentages
Yes	5	9
No	52	88
Don't know/can't remember	2	3
Total	59	100

Base: 59 (respondents who completed the Test of Resources Form)

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

	Numbers	Percentages
Yes	66	88
No	5	7
Don't know/can't remember	4	5
Total	75	100

Base: 75 (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	57	59
No	5	5
Don't Know/Can't Remember	34	35
TOTAL	96	100

Base: 96 (all respondents)

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

	Numbers	Percentages
Very satisfied	28	29
Satisfied	54	56
Neither	5	5
Dissatisfied	7	7
Very dissatisfied	2	2
TOTAL	96	100

Base: 96 (all respondents)

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

	Numbers	Percentages
Very satisfied	55	57
Satisfied	35	37
Neither	1	1
Dissatisfied	3	3
Very dissatisfied	2	2
TOTAL	96	100

Base: 96 (all respondents)

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

	Numbers	Percentages
Very satisfied/satisfied	80	98
Very Dissatisfied/Dissatisfied	2	2
Total	82	100

Base: 82 (respondents who received a disabled facilities grant)

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

	Numbers %			
	Yes	No	Unsure	Total
The builder?	83 87%	3 3%	10 10%	96 100%
The occupational therapist?	71 87%	1 1%	10 12%	82 100%
Fold?	41 75%	1 2%	13 24%	55 100%
The architect?	40 77%	1 2%	11 21%	52 100%

Bases: 96 (builder); 82 (OT); 55 (Fold); 52 (architect)

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

	Numbers	Percentages
Very satisfied	30	31
Satisfied	56	58
Neither	3	3
Dissatisfied	4	4
Very Dissatisfied	3	3
TOTAL	96	100

Base: 96 (all respondents)

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

	Numbers	Percentages
Yes	91	95
No	5	5
TOTAL	96	100

Base: 96 (all respondents)

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

	Numbers	Percentages
Very satisfied	59	62
Satisfied	32	33
Neither	0	0
Dissatisfied	4	4
Very Dissatisfied	1	1
TOTAL	96	100

Base: 96 (all respondents)

Table 6.1: Do you have access to the internet?

	Numbers	Percentages
Yes	50	52
No	46	48
TOTAL	96	100

Base: 96 (all respondents)

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

	Numbers	Percentages
Yes	23	46
No	26	52
Don't know	1	2
TOTAL	50	100

Base: 50 (respondents who had access to the internet)

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

	Numbers	Percentages
No comment	46	48
Satisfied with grants process	37	39
Dissatisfied with grants process	5	5
Grants forms can be complicated and hard to complete	5	5
Grants process takes too long	1	1
Unhappy with Fold	1	1
NIHE should raise awareness of grants availability	1	1
TOTAL	96	100

Base: 96 (all respondents)