

# South East Grants Office

## Customer Survey

May 2013

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 South East 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 South East 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 South East Grants Office catchment area whose application had been completed within a 12 month period, i.e. between April 2012 and March 2013. 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 238 grant applicants 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 Grants, Home Repair Grants and Renovation Grants. However, with reduced availability of funding, discretionary grants for renovation, replacement and home repair assistance are only available in exceptional circumstances and mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants therefore accounted for the majority (90%) 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 during May 2013. Interviews were conducted over approximately 20 days. It was agreed that a quota of 100 achieved interviews would be sufficient for analysis.

From an eligible population of 238 households, the Research Unit selected two stratified random samples of 100, proportionate to each grant type. Once the first sample was exhausted, the second sample was used to ensure the target of 100 interviews was achieved. The sampling and response information are in Table A.

**Table A: Sample and response information**

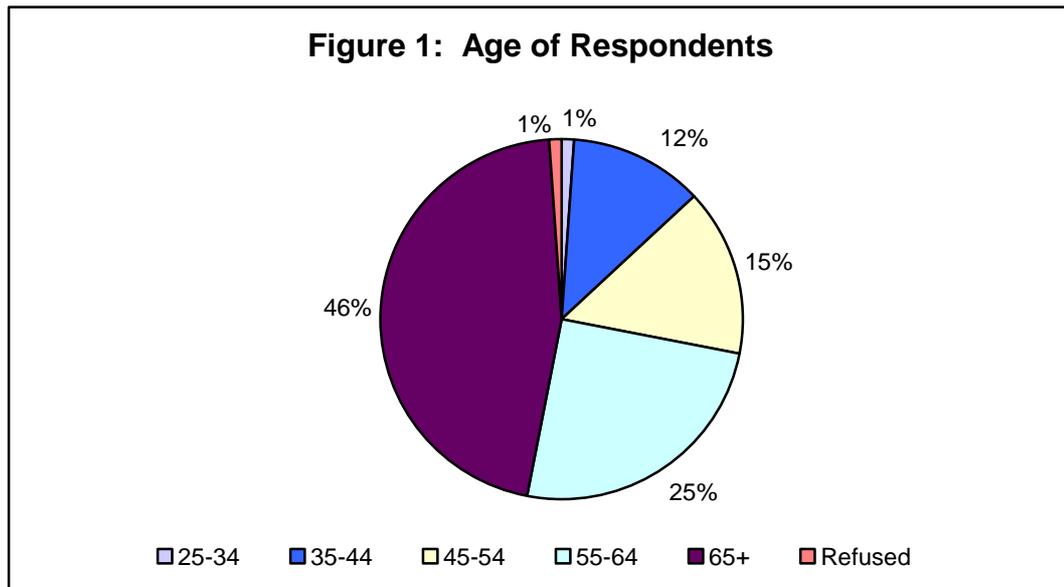
<b>Grant Type</b>	<b>Sample Frame</b>	<b>Sample</b>	<b>Achieved Interviews</b>
Disabled Facilities	214	180	90
Home Repair	12	10	5
Renovation	12	10	5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>238</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100</b>

## Commentary and Analysis

### 1.0 Respondent Profile and Grant Type

#### 1.1 Age of respondents

More than two-fifths (46%) of respondents were aged 65 or older; 25% were aged between 55 and 64, 15% between 45 and 54, and 12% were aged between 35 and 44. Equal proportions (1% in each case) were aged between 25 and 34 and refused to state their age (Figure 1, Table 1.1).



#### 1.2 Ethnicity of respondents

The majority (99%) of respondents described their ethnicity as white. The remaining 1% of respondents were Indian (Table 1.2).

#### 1.3 Household Religion

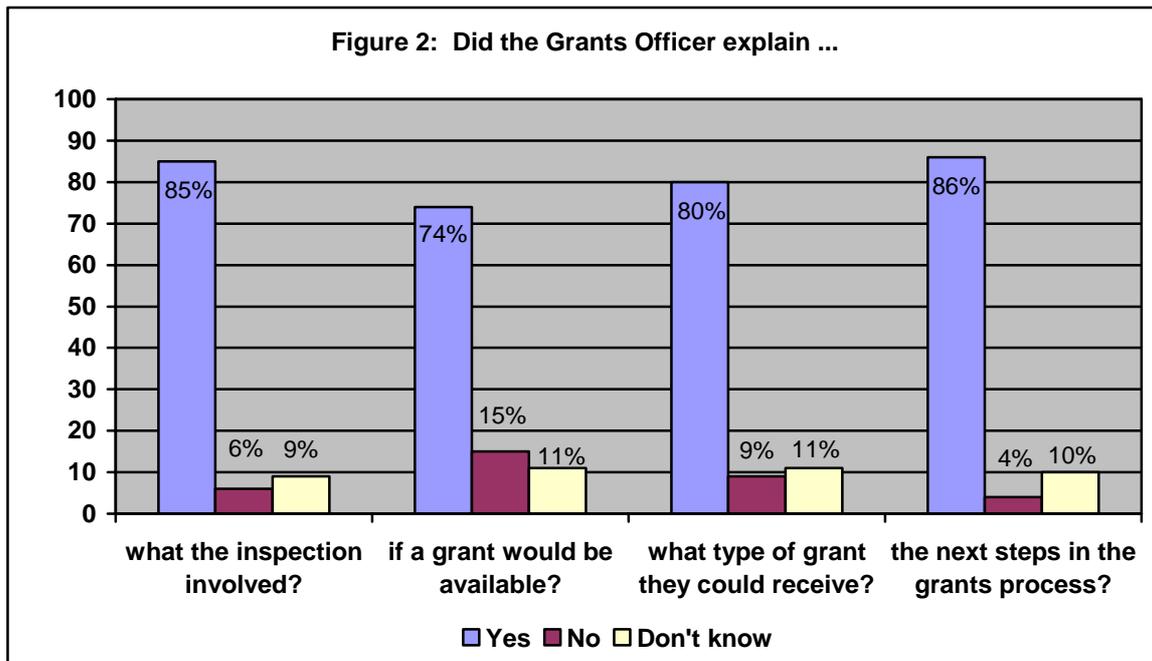
The majority (58%) of respondents described their household religion as Protestant, 31% described their religion as Catholic, equal proportions (3% in both cases) as 'mixed religion' and 'no religion' and 1% as other religion. The remaining 4% of respondents refused to state the religion of their household (Table 1.3).

#### 1.4 Grant Type

The majority (90%) of respondents had received a Disabled Facilities Grant, 5% had received a Renovation Grant and the same proportion had received a Home Repair Grant (5%) (Table 1.4).

## **2.0 Contact with Grants Office**

- 2.1** The majority (86%) of respondents said they had been involved in every stage of the grants process; 13% had been involved in some of the stages and 1% stated that family had dealt with the application (Table 2.1).
- 2.2** More than three-quarters (88%) of respondents stated they were aware of their case officer at an early stage in the process, 3% stated this was not the case and 9% could not remember (Table 2.2).
- 2.3** Most respondents (74%) had been offered a Preliminary Test of Resources, 9% had not, 17% could not remember and 1% stated a Preliminary Test of Resources was not applicable (Table 2.3).
- 2.4** Almost all (97%) respondents were very satisfied/satisfied with the preliminary contact from the grants office; 1% were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied and 2% were dissatisfied/very dissatisfied (Table 2.4).
- 2.5** The majority (89%) of respondents said the grants officer had made an appointment to visit them. Of those respondents who said an appointment had been made, all (100%) 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. The majority of respondents (85%) said the grants officer had explained what the inspection stage involved (Figure 2, Table 2.7).
- 2.7** More than two-thirds (74%) of respondents said the grants officer had explained whether he/she thought the grant would be available (Figure 2, Table 2.7).
- 2.8** Four-fifths (80%) of respondents said the grants officer had advised them on the type of grant they could receive (Figure 2, Table 2.7).
- 2.9** More than four-fifths (86%) of respondents said the grants officer explained the next steps in the grant application process (Figure 2, Table 2.7).
- 2.9** Almost all respondents (95%) 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 (43%) of respondents had telephoned the grants office during the course of their grant application, in the previous 12 months. Of these respondents, 77% had been told the name of the person dealing with their call, 14% said they had not been told the name of the person and 9% were unsure (Tables 2.9 and 2.10).
  
- 2.11 Almost all respondents (98%) who had telephoned the grants office had found the staff polite. Equal proportions (91% in both cases) said staff were knowledgeable and 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 (43% of all respondents), 77% said the person who initially took the call had been able to deal with their query, 21% stated the person who initially took their call was unable to deal with their query and the remaining 2% could not remember (Table 2.12).
  
- 2.13 The majority (91%) of respondents who had telephoned the grants office were very satisfied/satisfied with the overall service they had received. The remaining 9% were dissatisfied/very dissatisfied (Table 2.13).

## **3.0 Grant Forms<sup>1</sup>**

### **3.1 Schedule of Works**

The majority (81%) of respondents had dealt with the Schedule of Works package. Of these, 88% thought the Schedule of Works package was clear, while 12% thought it was not clear (Table 3.1).

### **Contact by Case Officer**

**3.2** More than two thirds (71%) of respondents had been contacted by their case officer after they received the schedule of works package, 18% could not remember if the case officer had contacted them and 11% stated that the case officer did not contact them (Table 3.2).

### **3.3 Test of Resources Form**

More than half (55%) of respondents had completed a Test of Resources form. Of these, more than three-quarters (87%) thought the test of resources form was easy to complete, 8% thought the form was not easy to complete and 4% could not remember (Table 3.3).

### **3.4 Grant Approval Document**

The Grant Approval Document had been dealt with by 78% of respondents. Of these almost all (95%) thought the grant approval document was clear (Table 3.4).

### **3.5 Contact by Grants Officer**

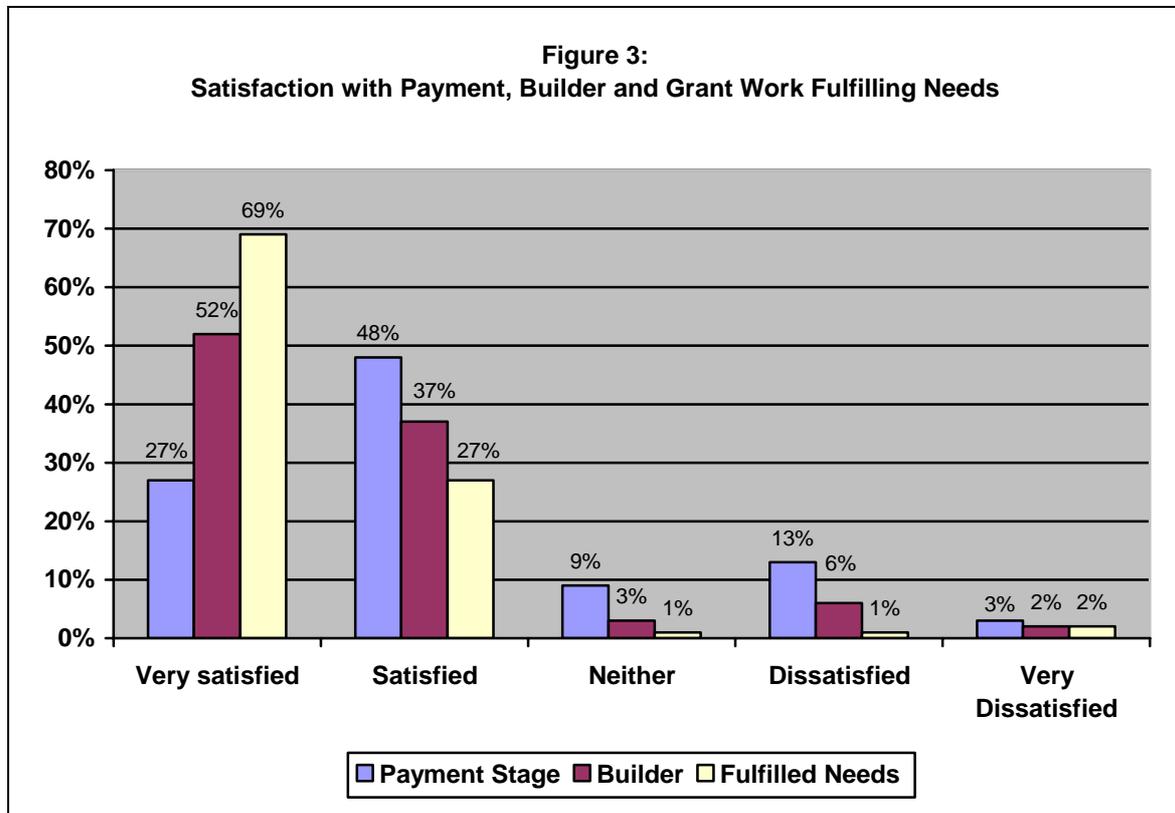
The majority (78%) of respondents stated the grants officer contacted them after their grant had been approved, 17% could not remember the grants officer contacting them and 5% said the grants officer did not contact them (Table 3.5).

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

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

- 4.1 Three-quarters (75%) of respondents were very satisfied/satisfied with the payment stage of the grants process, 16% were dissatisfied/very dissatisfied and 9% were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied and (Figure 3, Table 4.1).
- 4.2 The majority (89%) of respondents were very satisfied/satisfied with the builder who had carried out the work, 8% were dissatisfied/very dissatisfied and 3% were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied (Figure 3, Table 4.2).
- 4.3 All respondents who had received a Disabled Facilities Grant (90%) were asked if the work fulfilled their needs. Of these, almost all (96%) were very satisfied/satisfied that the grant work carried out had fulfilled their needs (Figure 3, Table 4.3).



## 5.0 Communication from the Grants Office

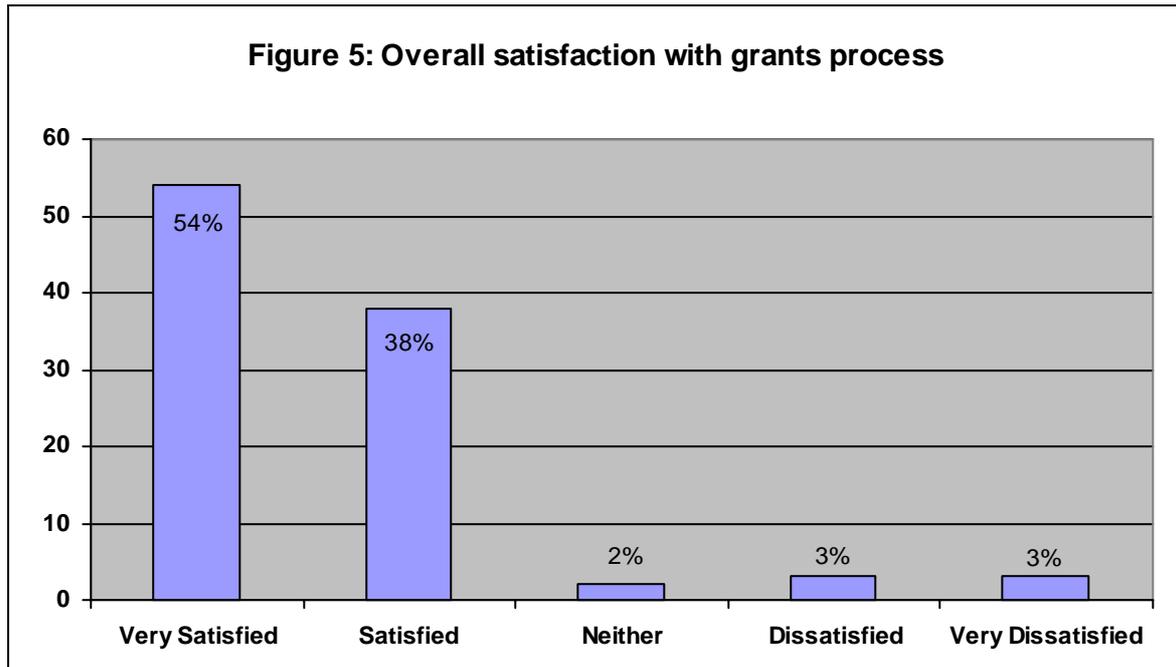
- 5.1** All respondents (100%) said a builder had been involved in the grant process; fewer respondents said an occupational therapist (88%), architect (80%) and/or Fold/Gable (63%) had been involved in the grant process on their behalf (Figure 4, Table 5.1).
- 5.2** The majority (89%) of respondents felt that the grants office had worked well with the builder, while 7% were unsure and 4% felt the grants office did not work well with the builder (Figure 4, Table 5.1).
- 5.3** The majority (89%) of respondents felt the grants office had a good working relationship with their Occupational Therapist during the grant process; 10% were unsure and 1% felt the grants office did not work well with the OT (Figure 4, Table 5.1).
- 5.4** Almost two-thirds (63; 63%) of respondents had received assistance from Fold or Gable during the grants process. Of those respondents 83% felt the grants office had worked well with Fold/Gable, 13% of respondents were unsure and the remaining 5% felt the grants office did not work well with Fold/Gable (Figure 4, Table 5.1).
- 5.5** More than four-fifths (80%) of respondents had required assistance from an architect. Of these, 79% felt the grants office had worked well with them during the grants process and 21% were unsure (Figure 4, Table 5.1).

**Figure 4: Do you think the Grants Office worked well with ...**

	Numbers %			
	Yes	No	Unsure	Total
The builder?	89 89%	4 4%	7 7%	<b>100</b> <b>100%</b>
The occupational therapist?	78 89%	1 1%	9 10%	<b>88</b> <b>100%</b>
Fold/Gable?	52 83%	3 5%	8 13%	<b>63</b> <b>100%</b>
The architect?	63 79%	-	17 21%	<b>80</b> <b>100%</b>

**Bases: 100 (builder); 88 (OT); 63 (Fold/Gable); 80 (architect):**

- 5.6** The majority (95%) of respondents were very satisfied/satisfied with the letters they had received from the grants office; 3% were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied and 2% were dissatisfied (Table 5.2).
- 5.7** The majority (97%) of respondents felt they had been treated fairly throughout the grants process (Table 5.3).
- 5.8** The majority (92%) of respondents were very satisfied/satisfied overall with the grants process, 6% were dissatisfied and 2% were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the grants process (Figure 5, Table 5.4).



## 6.0 Internet Access

**6.1** More than one-third (39%) of respondents had access to the internet. Of these, 41% said they would be interested in accessing grants forms and documentation via the internet, 54% said they would not be interested and 5% did not know (Tables 6.1 and 6.2).

## 7.0 Further Comments

**7.1** Respondents were asked if they had any suggestions for improvement in the service they had received; less than half (49; 49%) made a comment. The majority (59%) were satisfied with the service they had received and 25% were dissatisfied. Equal proportions (6% in both cases) said the process involved too much bureaucracy and the grant they received had not covered the total cost of the work carried out, the remaining two respondents (4%) said the grants process took too long (Table 7.1)

## Appendix 1: Tabular Report

### South East Grants Customer Survey

Table 1.1: Age of Respondents

	Numbers	Percentages
25-34 years	1	1
35-44 years	12	12
45-54 years	15	15
55-64 years	25	25
65+ years	46	46
Refused	1	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

*Base: 100 (all respondents)*

Table 1.2: Ethnicity of Respondents

	Numbers	Percentages
White	99	99
Indian	1	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

*Base: 100 (all respondents)*

Table 1.3: Household Religion

	Numbers	Percentages
Protestant	58	58
Catholic	31	31
Mixed Religion (Protestant/Catholic)	3	3
Other	1	1
None	3	3
Refused	4	4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

*Base: 100 (all respondents)*

Table 1.4: Grant Type

	Numbers	Percentages
Disabled Facilities Grant	90	90
Home Repair Grant	5	5
Renovation Grant	5	5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

*Base: 100 (all respondents)*

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

	Numbers	Percentages
Yes, every stage	86	86
Yes, some of the stages	13	13
No (family dealt with application process)	1	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

*Base: 100 (all respondents)*

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

	Numbers	Percentages
Yes	88	88
No	3	3
Don't Know/Can't Remember	9	9
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

*Base: 100 (all respondents)*

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

	Numbers	Percentages
Yes	74	74
No	9	9
Don't Know/Can't Remember	17	17
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

*Base: 100 (all respondents)*

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

	Numbers	Percentages
Very satisfied	42	42
Satisfied	55	55
Neither	1	1
Dissatisfied	2	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

*Base: 100 (all respondents)*

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

	Numbers	Percentages
Yes	89	89
No	2	2
Don't Know/Cant Remember	9	9
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

*Base: 100 (all respondents)*

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

	Numbers	Percentages
Yes	89	100
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>100</b>

*Base: 89 (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 85%	6 6%	9 9%	<b>100</b> <b>100%</b>
whether they thought a grant would be available?	74 74%	15 15%	11 11%	<b>100</b> <b>100%</b>
what type of grant you could receive?	80 80%	9 9%	11 11%	<b>100</b> <b>100%</b>
the next steps in the grants process?	86 86%	4 4%	10 10%	<b>100</b> <b>100%</b>

*Base: 100 (all respondents)*

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

	Numbers	Percentages
Very satisfied	52	52
Satisfied	43	43
Neither	3	3
Dissatisfied	1	1
Very Dissatisfied	1	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

*Base: 100 (all respondents)*

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

	Numbers	Percentages
Yes	43	43
No	45	45
Don't Know/Can't Remember	12	12
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

*Base: 100 (all respondents)*

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

	Numbers	Percentages
Yes	33	77
No	6	14
Don't Know/Can't Remember	4	9
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>100</b>

*Base: 43 (respondents who had contacted the grants office by telephone)*

Table 2.11: Did you find the staff...

	Yes		No		DK/Can't Remember		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
polite?	42	98	-	-	1	2	<b>43</b>	<b>100</b>
knowledgeable?	39	91	3	7	1	2	<b>43</b>	<b>100</b>
In a hurry/rushed?	3	7	39	91	1	2	<b>43</b>	<b>100</b>

**Base: 43 (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	Percentages
Yes	33	77
No	9	21
Don't Know/Can't Remember	1	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>100</b>

**Base: 43 (respondents who had contacted the grants office by telephone)**

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

	Numbers	Percentages
Very satisfied	22	51
Satisfied	17	40
Dissatisfied	3	7
Very Dissatisfied	1	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>100</b>

**Base: 43 (respondents who had contacted grants office by telephone)**

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

	Numbers	Percentages
Yes	71	88
No	10	12
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>100</b>
Fold/ dealt with document	16	
Family/friend dealt with document	3	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>	

*Base: 81 (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	71	71
No	11	11
Don't Know/Can't Remember	18	18
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

*Base: 100 (all respondents)*

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

	Numbers	Percentages
Yes	5	9
No	48	87
Don't know/can't remember	2	4
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>100</b>
Family/friend completed form	4	
Fold completed form	15	
N/A	26	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>	

*Base: 55 (respondents who completed the Test of Resources Form)*

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

	Numbers	Percentages
Yes	74	95
No	4	5
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>100</b>
Family/friend dealt with document	4	
Fold dealt with form	18	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>	

*Base: 78 (respondents who dealt with the Grant Approval Document)*

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

	<b>Numbers</b>	<b>Percentages</b>
Yes	78	78
No	5	5
Don't Know/Can't Remember	17	17
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

*Base: 100 (respondents who had contacted the grants office by telephone)*

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

	Numbers	Percentages
Very satisfied	27	27
Satisfied	48	48
Neither	9	9
Dissatisfied	13	13
Very dissatisfied	3	3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

*Base: 100 (all respondents)*

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

	Numbers	Percentages
Very satisfied	52	52
Satisfied	37	37
Neither	3	3
Dissatisfied	6	6
Very dissatisfied	2	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

*Base: 100 (all respondents)*

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

	Numbers	Percentages
Very satisfied	62	69
Satisfied	24	27
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	1	1
Dissatisfied	1	1
Very dissatisfied	2	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>

*Base: 90 (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?	89 89%	4 4%	7 7%	<b>100</b> <b>100%</b>
The occupational therapist?	78 89%	1 1%	9 10%	<b>88</b> <b>100%</b>
Fold/Gable?	52 83%	3 5%	8 13%	<b>63</b> <b>100%</b>
The architect?	63 79%	-	17 21%	<b>80</b> <b>100%</b>

**Bases: 100 (builder); 88 (OT); 63 (Fold/Gable); 80 (architect)**

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

	Numbers	Percentages
Very satisfied	39	39
Satisfied	56	56
Neither	3	3
Dissatisfied	2	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

**Base: 100 (all respondents)**

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

	Numbers	Percentages
Yes	97	97
No	3	3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

**Base: 100 (all respondents)**

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

	Numbers	Percentages
Very satisfied	54	54
Satisfied	38	38
Neither	2	2
Dissatisfied	3	3
Very Dissatisfied	3	3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

**Base: 100 (all respondents)**

Table 6.1: Do you have access to the internet?

	Numbers	Percentages
Yes	39	39
No	60	60
Refused	1	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

*Base: 100 (all respondents)*

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

	Numbers	Percentages
Yes	16	41
No	21	54
Don't know	2	5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>100</b>

*Base: 39 (respondents who had access to the internet)*

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

	Numbers	Percentages
Satisfied with service	29	59
Dissatisfied with service	12	25
Too much bureaucracy	3	6
Grant did not cover total cost of works carried out	3	6
Process took too long	2	4
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>100</b>

*Base: 49 (respondents who made a comment about the service they had received)*