

Fermanagh Office

Grants Customer Survey

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 Fermanagh Grants Office area who had applied for and received a grant from the Housing Executive to repair, renovate, replace or adapt their home. A previous study was conducted in 2004; comparisons with the earlier study, where possible, are included in this report.

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; and
- 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 Fermanagh Grants Office's Charter Mark application.

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 Fermanagh Grants Office catchment area whose application had been completed within a 12 month period, i.e. between July 2007 and June 2008. 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 identified a total of 535 grant applicants to be included in the sample frame.

The agreed methodology was a telephone survey. The sample frame included applicants who had received Home Repair Grants, Disabled Facilities Grants, Renovation Grants and Replacement Grants.

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 Home Repair Grants, the questionnaire design took account of these differences.

iv. **Fieldwork**

Research Unit staff carried out the interviews by telephone during August/September 2008. 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 535 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

Grant Type	Sample Frame	Sample	Achieved Interviews
Home Repair	368	138	69
Disabled Facilities	87	32	16
Renovation	45	16	8
Replacement	35	14	7
TOTAL	535	200	100

As a consequence of setting a target of 100 achieved interviews, the Research Unit did not contact some applicants in the sample. To make allowances for this fact, the results of the survey were weighted and grossed, to provide findings which would be considered representative of the eligible population of Fermanagh grant applicants (Table B).

TABLE B: EFFECTS OF WEIGHTING

Grant Type	Achieved Interviews	Grossed by weight of	Sample Frame
Home Repair	69	5.333	368
Disabled Facilities	16	5.438	87
Renovation	8	5.625	45
Replacement	7	5.000	35
TOTAL	100	-	535

It should be noted that the application of weights to the data sometimes has the effect of creating tables where column figures do not equal the total. This is due to the rounding process associated with weighting but has negligible effect on reporting.

v. Comparisons between 2008 and 2004 findings.

The survey methodology and sampling methods remained consistent to allow for comparisons with previous surveys. Research Unit and Design and Property Services have amended and extended the questionnaire in some areas since the last survey so data for 2004 is not available for comparison for some questions.

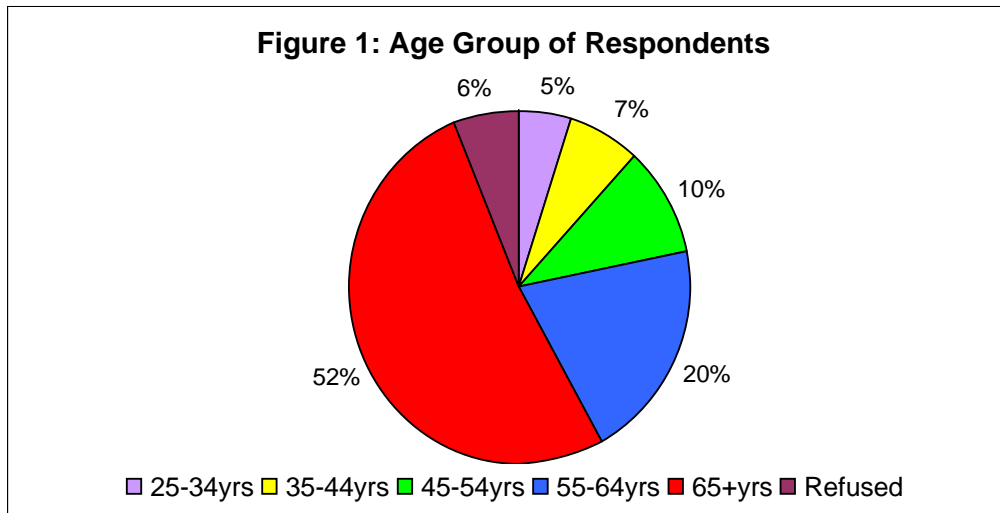
For each of the summary results the 2008 figures will be given first followed by the 2004 figures in brackets.

COMMENTARY AND ANALYSIS

1.0 RESPONDENT PROFILE AND GRANT TYPE

1.1 Age of respondents

More than half (52%) of respondents were aged 65 or older, 20% were between 55 and 64, 10% were aged between 45 and 54, 7% were between 35 and 44 and 5% were aged between 25 and 34. The remaining 6% refused to state their age (Figure 1, Table 1.1).



1.2 Employment Status

Almost three-fifths (59%) of respondents were retired from work and 14% were not working at the time of the survey. Smaller proportions described their employment status as 'other' (8%), working full-time (7%) and working part-time (6%). The remaining 4% were looking after their family/home (Table 1.2).

1.3 Household Religion

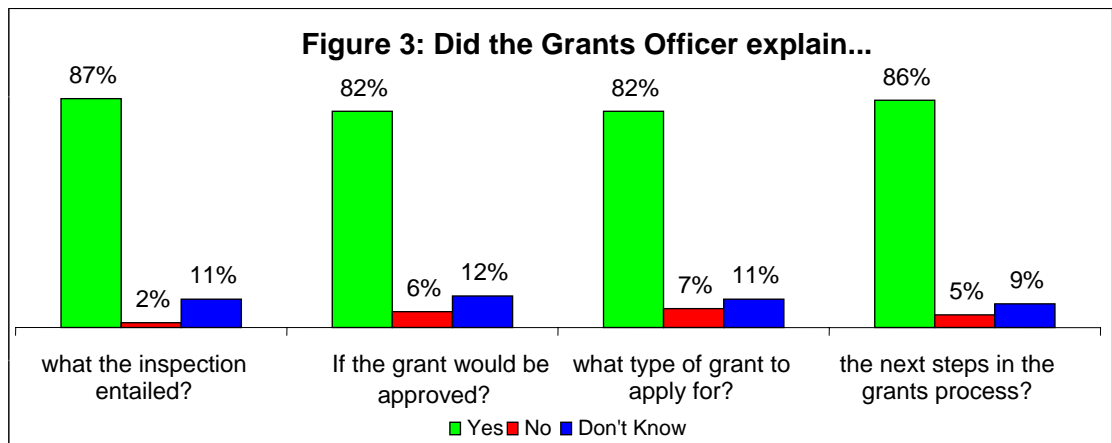
More than half (54%) of respondents described their household religion as Catholic; 27% described their religion as Protestant, and 3% as mixed religion. A further 2% described the religion of their household as 'other/none'. The remaining 14% refused to state the religion of their household (Table 1.3).

1.4 Grant Type

More than two-thirds (69%) of respondents had received a home repair grant and 16% had received a disabled facilities grant. Smaller proportions of respondents had received a renovation grant (8%) and replacement grant (7%) (Table 1.4).

2.0 CONTACT WITH GRANTS OFFICE

- 2.1 Most respondents (91%) said they had been involved in every stage of the grants process; 9% had been involved in some of the stages (Table 2.1).
- 2.2 The majority (91%; 92% in 2004) of respondents said the grants officer had given his/her name (Table 2.2).
- 2.3 The majority (94%; 91% in 2004) of respondents said the grants officer had made an appointment for a preliminary inspection. Of those respondents who said an appointment had been made, almost all (99%) said the appointment had been kept (Tables 2.3 and 2.4).
- 2.4 Respondents were asked a series of questions to establish if the grants officer had explained the grants process to them. The majority (87%; 92% in 2004) of respondents said the grants officer had explained what the inspection stage entailed (Figure 3, Table 2.5).
- 2.5 More than four-fifths (82%; 70% in 2004) of respondents said the grants officer had explained whether he/she thought the grant would be approved and the same proportion (82%; 72% in 2004) said he/she had advised them on the type of grant they should apply for (Figure 3, Table 2.5).
- 2.6 The majority (86%; 87% in 2004) of respondents said the grants officer had explained the next steps in the grant application process (Figure 3, Table 2.5).



- 2.7 All respondents (100%; 98% in 2004) were very satisfied/ satisfied with the preliminary inspection stage of the process (Table 2.6).

Telephoning the Grants Office within the previous 12 months

- 2.8 Almost one-quarter (24%; 39% in 2004) of respondents had telephoned the grants office at some time while awaiting approval of their grant application. Of these respondents, more than four-fifths (83%) had been told the name of the person dealing with their call (Tables 2.7 and 2.8).
- 2.9 All respondents (100%) who had telephoned the grants office had found the staff both polite and knowledgeable; 96% said staff had not been in a hurry or rushed when dealing with their query (Tables 2.9).

- 2.10** Of the respondents who had telephoned the grants office (24% of all respondents) the vast majority (92%) said the person who took the call had been able to deal with their query (Table 2.10).
- 2.11** All respondents (100%; 97% in 2004) who had telephoned the grants office were very satisfied/satisfied with the overall service they had received (Table 2.11).

Visiting the Grants Office within the previous 12 months

- 2.12** Fifteen percent of respondents had visited the grants office within the previous 12 months (Table 2.12). Reasons given included: to submit documents and to make a general enquiry.
- 2.13** All respondents (100%) who had visited the grants office said counter staff had attended to them within five minutes and all (100%) those with an appointment to see a particular member of staff said they had spoken to that member of staff within two minutes.
- 2.14** Of the respondents who had visited the grants office (15% of all respondents), more than four-fifths (87%) said the person who dealt with their query had provided identification. All respondents (100%) who had visited the grants office said that staff who attended to them were polite, knowledgeable and not in a hurry or rushed.
- 2.15** Almost all respondents (93%) who had visited the grants office said the advice given to them by staff in relation to their query had been very helpful/helpful.
- 2.16** Almost half (47%) of respondents who had visited the grants office had their query dealt with at the counter area. Of these respondents, all (100%) were very satisfied/satisfied with the confidentiality at the counter. Fifty-three percent of respondents had been taken into an interview room. Of those respondents, all (100%) were satisfied with confidentiality in the interview room.
- 2.17** Of the 15% of all respondents who had visited the grants office, almost half (47%) had read the leaflets and posters on display in the office; 86% of these respondents said they had found the information useful and 71% found it up-to-date.
- 2.18** No respondents had a disability that made access to the building/information or services difficult for them.
- 2.19** All respondents who had visited the grants office were very satisfied/ satisfied with their visit.

3.0 COMPLETING GRANT FORMS

3.1 Preliminary Form

Most respondents (93%; 84% in 2004) said the preliminary form had been clear and a similar proportion (92%; 86% in 2004) thought that it was not difficult to complete (Figure 4, Table 3.1).

3.2 Schedule of Works

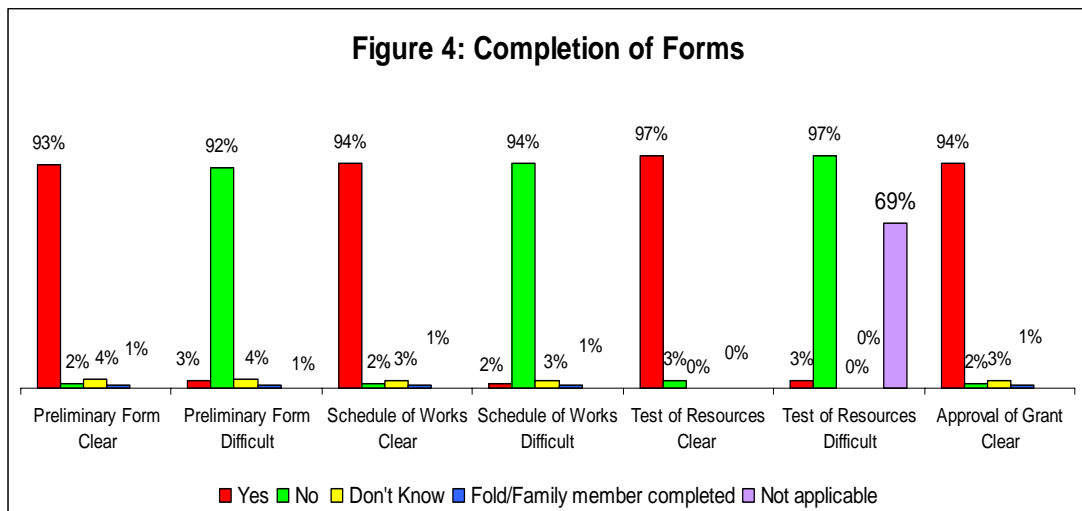
Ninety-four percent of respondents (86% in 2004) felt the Schedule of Works package had been clear and the same proportion (94%; 82% in 2004) felt that it had not been difficult to complete (Figure 4, Table 3.1).

3.3 Test of Resources Form

Almost all respondents (97%; 72% in 2004) who had completed the Test of Resources form had found it clear. The same proportion (97%; 71% in 2004) had not found it difficult to complete. (N.B. The Test of Resources form does not require completion by home repair grant applicants) (Figure 4, Table 3.1).

3.4 Approval of Grant Form

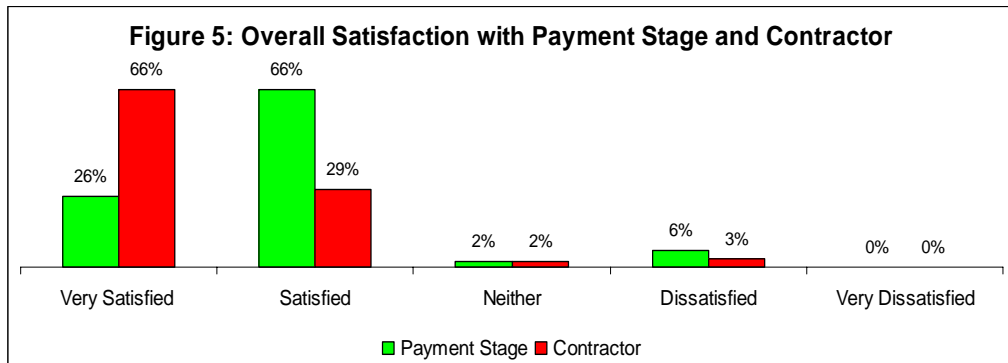
The majority (94%; 91% in 2004) said the Approval of Grant form had been clear. (The Approval of Grant form does not require completion by grant applicants) (Figure 4, Table 3.1).



4.0 PAYMENTS AND CONTRACTORS

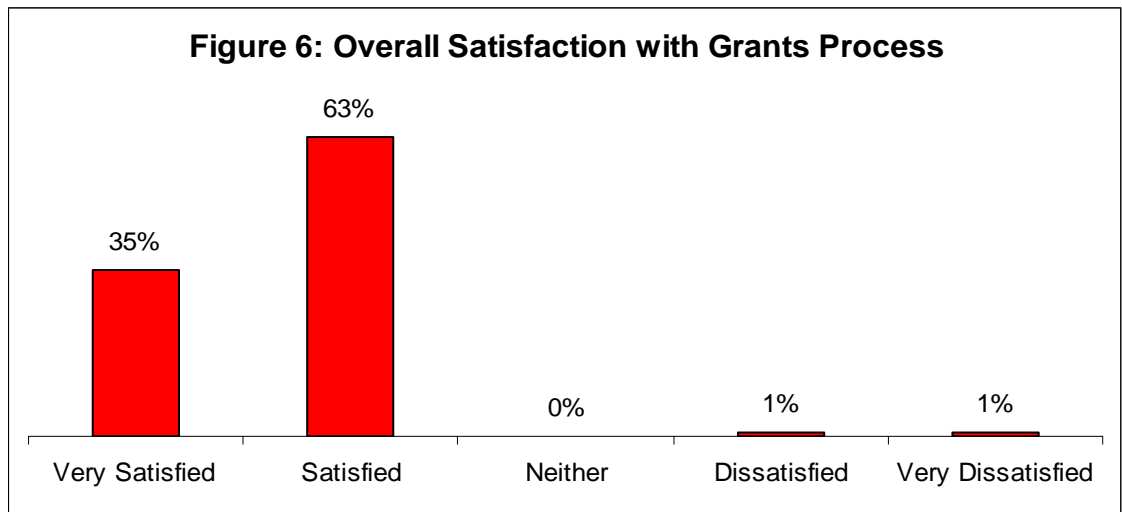
4.1 The majority (92%; 82% in 2004) of respondents were very satisfied/satisfied with the payment stage of the grants process, 2% were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied and 6% were dissatisfied. Reasons for dissatisfaction are not included in the report as numbers are too small (Figure 5, Tables 4.1).

4.2 The majority (95%; 96% in 2004) of respondents were very satisfied/satisfied with the builder who had carried out the work, 2% were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied and 3% were dissatisfied (Figure 5, Table 4.2).



5.0 COMMUNICATION FROM GRANTS OFFICE

- 5.1 The majority (97%; 94% in 2004) of respondents said the letters they had received from the grants office had been clear. A similar proportion (95%; 93% in 2004) did not find the letters they had received difficult to understand and almost all respondents (98%; 98% in 2004) were satisfied with the letters they had received from the grants office (Tables 5.1 and 5.2).
- 5.2 All respondents (100%) felt they had been fairly and sensitively treated throughout the grants process. Almost all respondents (98%) said they were very satisfied/satisfied overall with the grants process (Figure 6, Tables 5.3-5.5).



6.0 INTERNET ACCESS

- 6.1** Almost one in five respondents (19%) had access to the internet. Of these respondents, 42% said they would be interested in accessing grants forms and documentation via the internet and a similar proportion (37%) said they would be interested in receiving information and updates about their grant application via e-mail (Table 6.1).

7.0 FURTHER COMMENTS

- 7.1** Almost one-third (30%) of respondents provided further comments about the grants process. Of these respondents, 88% were satisfied with the service provided. A full list of comments is included in Table 7.1.

Appendix 1: TABULAR REPORT

FERMANAGH GRANTS CUSTOMER SURVEY

Table 1.1: Age of Respondents

	Numbers	Percentages
25 - 34 years	26	5
35 - 44 years	38	7
45 - 54 years	54	10
55 - 64 years	107	20
65+ years	278	52
Refused	33	6
TOTAL	535	100

Base: 100 (all respondents)

Table 1.2: Employment Status of Respondents

	Numbers	Percentages
Retired	316	59
Not Working	74	14
Working full-time	37	7
Working part-time	32	6
Other (sick/disabled/)	42	8
Looking after family home	22	4
TOTAL	535	100

Base: 100 (all respondents)

Table 1.3: Household Religion

	Numbers	Percentages
Catholic	288	54
Protestant	144	27
Refused	76	14
Mixed Religion (Protestant/Catholic)	16	3
Other/none	10	2
TOTAL	535	100

Base: 100 (all respondents)

Table 1.4: Grant Type

	Numbers	Percentages
Home Repair Grants	368	69
Disabled Facilities	87	16
Renovation Grants	45	8
Replacement Grants	35	7
TOTAL	535	100

Base: 100 (all respondents)

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

	Numbers	Percentages
Yes, every stage	487	91
Yes, some of the stages	48	9
TOTAL	535	100

Base: 100 (all respondents)

Table 2.2: Did the Grants Officer give his or her name?

	Numbers	Percentages
Yes	487	91
No	11	2
Don't know	37	7
TOTAL	535	100

Base: 100 (all respondents)

Table 2.3: Did the Grants Officer make an appointment for a preliminary inspection?

	Numbers	Percentages
Yes	503	94
No	32	6
TOTAL	535	100

Base: 100 (all respondents)

Table 2.4: Was the appointment kept?

	Numbers	Percentages
Yes	498	99
No	5	1
TOTAL	503	100

Base: 94 (respondents who had an appointment made for a preliminary inspection)

Table 2.5: Did the Grants Officer explain....

	Numbers			
	Yes	No	D/K	Total
...what the inspection stage entailed?	466 87%	10 2%	59 11%	535 100%
...whether they thought the grant would be approved or not?	439 82%	32 6%	64 12%	535 100%
...what type of grant you should apply for?	439 82%	37 7%	59 11%	535 100%
...the next steps in the grants process?	460 86%	26 5%	48 9%	535 100%

Base: 100 (all respondents)

Table 2.6: Satisfaction with the preliminary inspection stage of process

	Numbers	Percentages
Very satisfied	261	49
Satisfied	274	51
Neither	-	-
Dissatisfied	-	-
Very dissatisfied	-	-
TOTAL	535	100

Base: 100 (all respondents)

Table 2.7: Did you make telephone contact with the Grants Office at any time while awaiting approval of grant?

	Numbers	Percentages
No	337	63
Yes	129	24
Don't know	70	13
TOTAL	535	100

Base: 100 (all respondents)

Table 2.8: Did the person dealing with the call give his/her name?

	Numbers	Percentages
Yes	107	83
No	11	8
Don't know	11	8
TOTAL	129	100

Base: 24 (respondents who had contacted the grants office by telephone)

Table 2.9: Did you find the staff...

	Yes	%	No	%	DK	%
Polite?	129	100	-	-	-	-
Knowledgeable?	129	100	-	-	-	-
In a hurry/rushed?	-	-	123	96	5	4

Base: 24 (respondents who had contacted the grants office by telephone)

Table 2.10: Was the person who took the call able to deal with your query?

	Numbers	Percentages
Yes	118	92
No	11	8
TOTAL	129	100

Base: 24 (respondents who had contacted the grants office by telephone)

Table 2.11: How satisfied/dissatisfied were you with the telephone service?

	Numbers	Percentages
Very satisfied	69	54
Satisfied	59	46
Neither satisfied/dissatisfied	-	-
Dissatisfied	-	-
Very dissatisfied	-	-
TOTAL	129	100

Bas: 24 (respondents who had contacted grants office by telephone)

Table 2.12: Have you visited the grants office within the last 12 months?

	Numbers	Percentages
No	455	85
Yes	80	15
TOTAL	535	100

Base: 100 (all respondents)

Table 3.1: Completion of Forms

	Numbers (Percentages)									
	Were forms clear?					Were forms difficult to complete?				
	Yes	No	Don't know	Fold/ family member completed form	Total	Yes	No	Don't know	Fold/ Family member completed form	Total
Preliminary Form*	498 (93%)	11 (2%)	21 (4%)	5 (1%)	535 (100%)	16 (3%)	492 (92%)	21 (4%)	5 (1%)	535 (100%)
Schedule of Works package*	503 (94%)	11 (2%)	16 (3%)	5 (1%)	535 (100%)	11 (2%)	503 (94%)	16 (3%)	5 (1%)	535 (100%)
Test of resource Form**	162 (97%)	5 (3%)	- (0%)	- (0%)	167 (100%)	5 (3%)	162 (97%)	- (0%)	- (0%)	167 (100%)
Approval of grant Form*	503 (94%)	11 (2%)	16 (3%)	5 (1%)	535 (100%)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

* **Base: 100 (all respondents)**

** **Base: 31 (respondents excluding Home Repair grant applicants)**

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

	Numbers	Percentages
Very satisfied	138	26
Satisfied	354	66
Neither	11	2
Dissatisfied	32	6
Very dissatisfied	-	-
TOTAL	535	100

Base: 100 (all respondents)

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

	Numbers	Percentages
Very satisfied	353	66
Satisfied	155	29
Neither	11	2
Dissatisfied	16	3
Very dissatisfied	-	-
TOTAL	535	100

Base: 100 (all respondents)

Table 5.1: Do you think the letters you received from the grants office were...

	Yes		No		DK		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Clear?	519	97	5	1	11	2	535	100
Difficult to understand?	11	2	508	95	16	3	535	100

Base: 100 (all respondents)

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

	Numbers	Percentages
Very satisfied	122	23
Satisfied	402	75
Neither	5	1
Dissatisfied	-	-
Very dissatisfied	5	1
TOTAL	535	100

Base: 100 (all respondents)

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

	Numbers	Percentages
Yes	535	100
No	-	-
TOTAL	535	100

Base: 100 (all respondents)

Table 5.4: Overall, do you think you were treated sensitively throughout the grants process?

	Numbers	Percentages
Yes	535	100
No	-	-
TOTAL	535	100

Base: 100 (all respondents)

Table 5.5: How satisfied/dissatisfied are you with the overall grants process?

	Numbers	Percentages
Very satisfied	187	35
Satisfied	338	63
Neither	-	-
Dissatisfied	5	1
Very dissatisfied	5	1
TOTAL	535	100

Base: 100 (all respondents)

Table 6.1: Do you have access to the internet?

	Numbers	Percentages
Yes	102	19
No	433	81
TOTAL	535	100

Base: 100 (all respondents)

Table 7.1: Further comments about the grants process (telephone service/letters/grant forms)

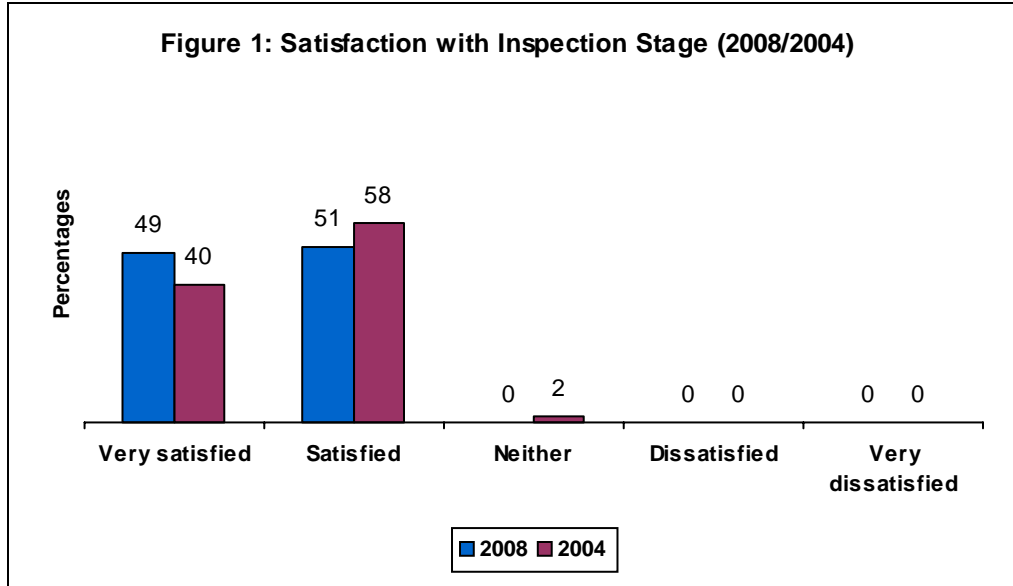
	Numbers	Percentages
Satisfied with service	140	88
Have to wait 2 or 3 years between each grant application	10	6
Other (Had to pay for proof of purchase documentation, process took too long)	10	6
TOTAL	160	100

Base: 30 (respondents who made further comments)

Appendix 2: Comparisons between 2008 and 2004 Grant Surveys.

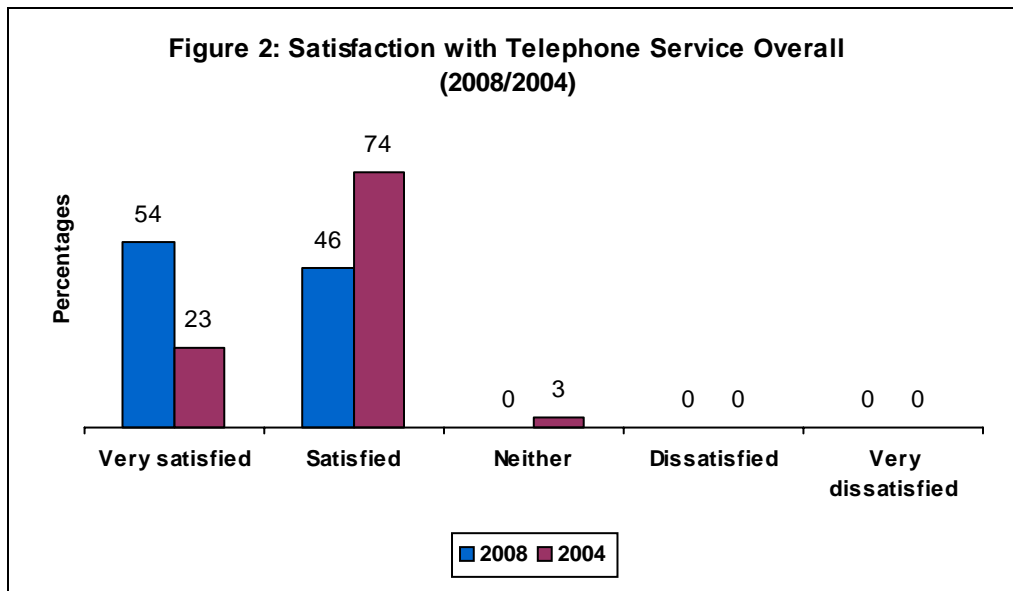
1. Satisfaction with Inspection Stage

In 2008, all respondents (100%) were satisfied with the inspection stage (98% in 2004).



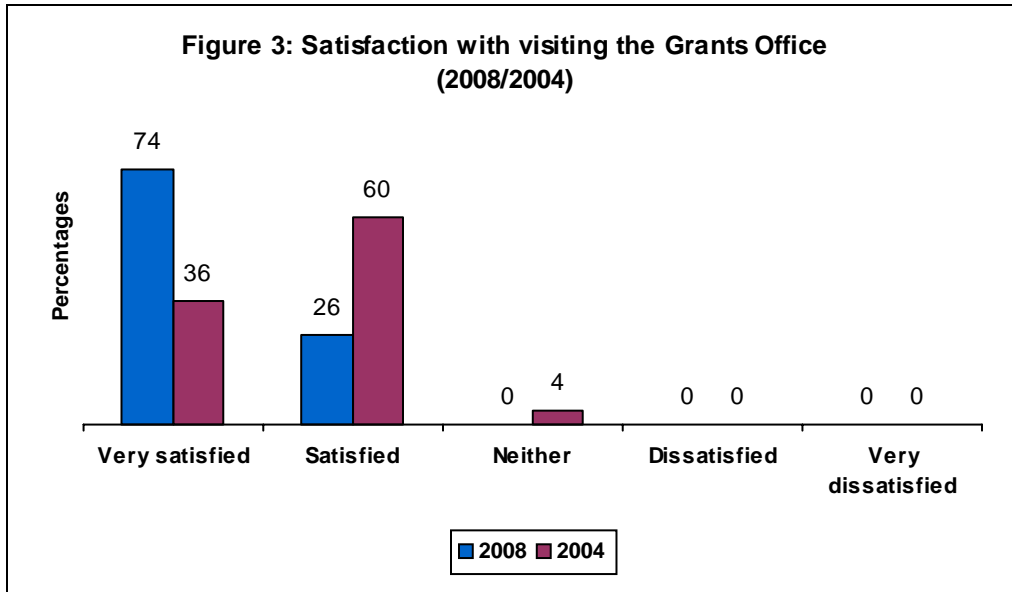
2. Satisfaction with telephoning the Grants Office

100% of respondents who telephoned the office were satisfied with the overall service they had received (97% in 2004).



3. Satisfaction with visiting the Grants Office

100% of respondents who visited the office were satisfied with the overall service they had received (100% in 2004).

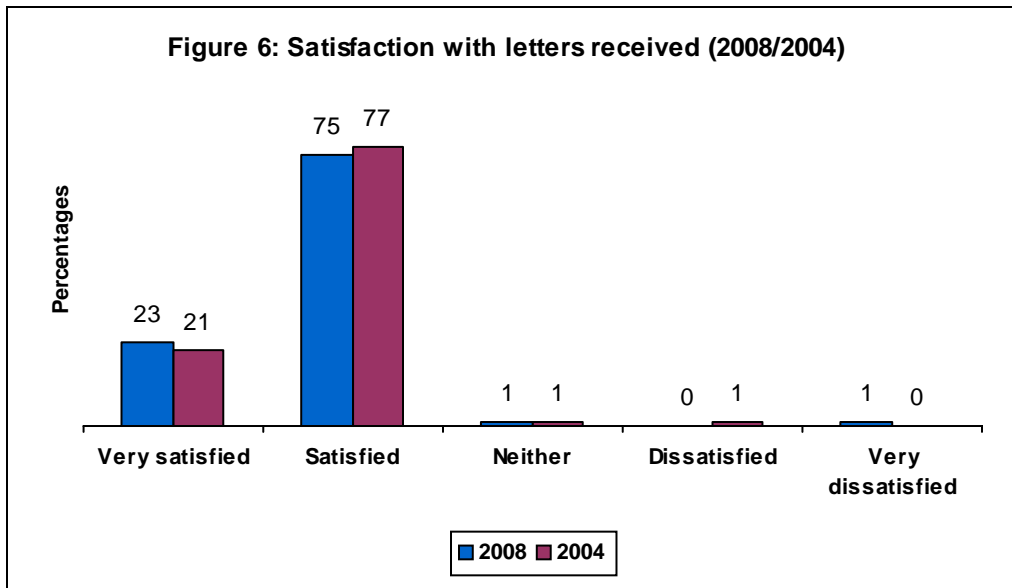


4. Advice from staff

93% of respondents said that the advice given by staff had been helpful or very helpful (No direct comparisons from 2004).

5. Satisfaction with letters received

Almost all respondents (98%; 98% in 2004) were satisfied with the letters they had received from the grants office.



6. Grants Forms



Preliminary Form

Most respondents (93%; 84% in 2004) said the preliminary form had been clear and a similar proportion (92%; 86% in 2004) thought that it was not difficult to complete.



Schedule of Works

Ninety-four percent of respondents (86% in 2004) felt the Schedule of Works package had been clear and the same proportion (94%; 82% in 2004) felt that it had not been difficult to complete.



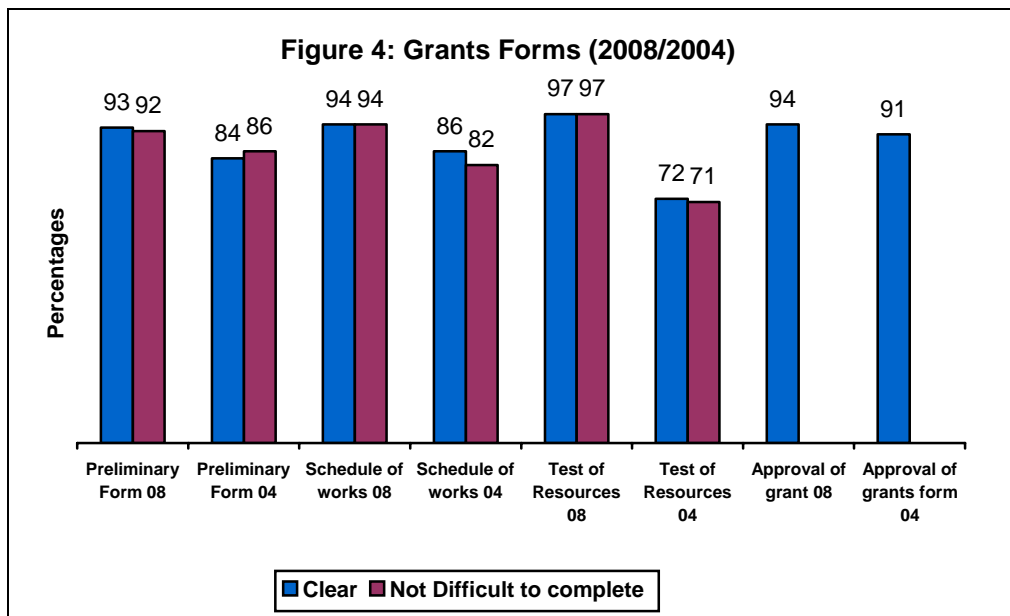
Test of Resources Form

Almost all respondents (97%; 72% in 2004) who had completed the Test of Resources form had found it clear. The same proportion (97%; 71% in 2004) had not found it difficult to complete.



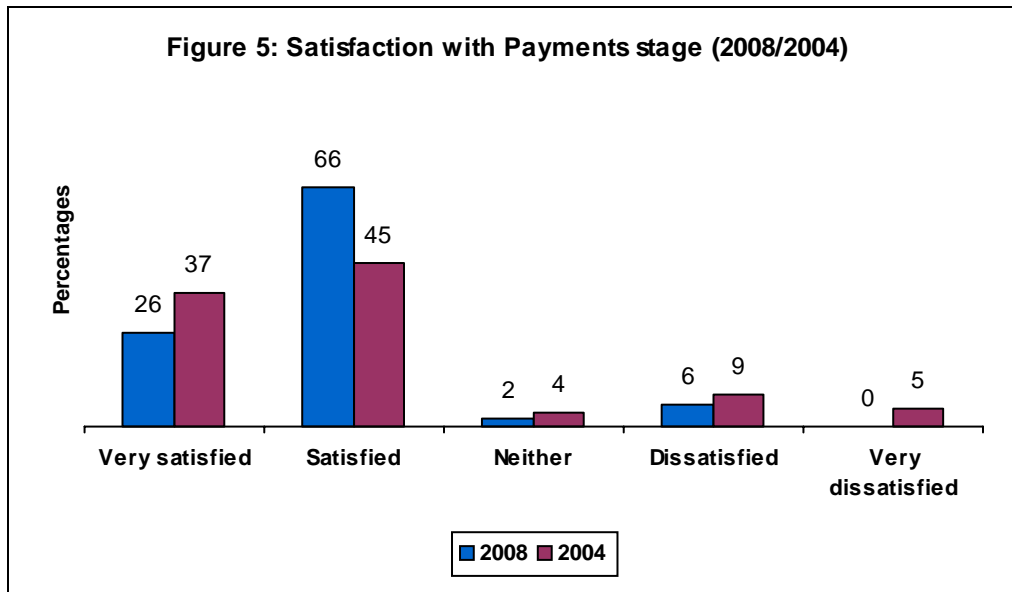
Approval of Grant Form

The majority (94%; 91% in 2004) said the Approval of Grant form had been clear. (The Approval of Grant form does not require completion by home repair grant applicants).



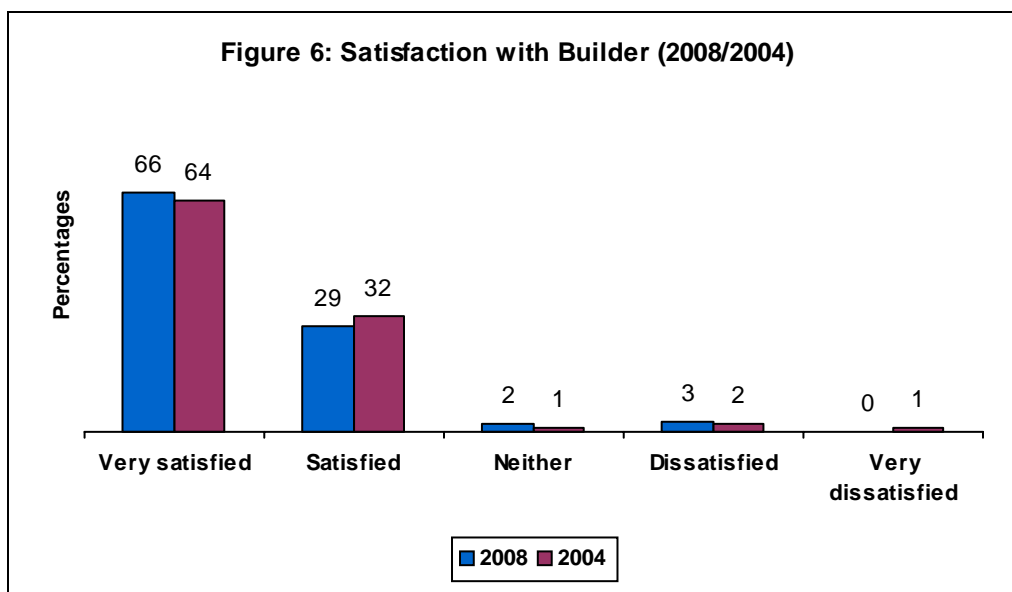
7. Satisfaction with Payment Stage

The majority (92%; 82% in 2004) of respondents were very satisfied/satisfied with the payment stage of the grants process.



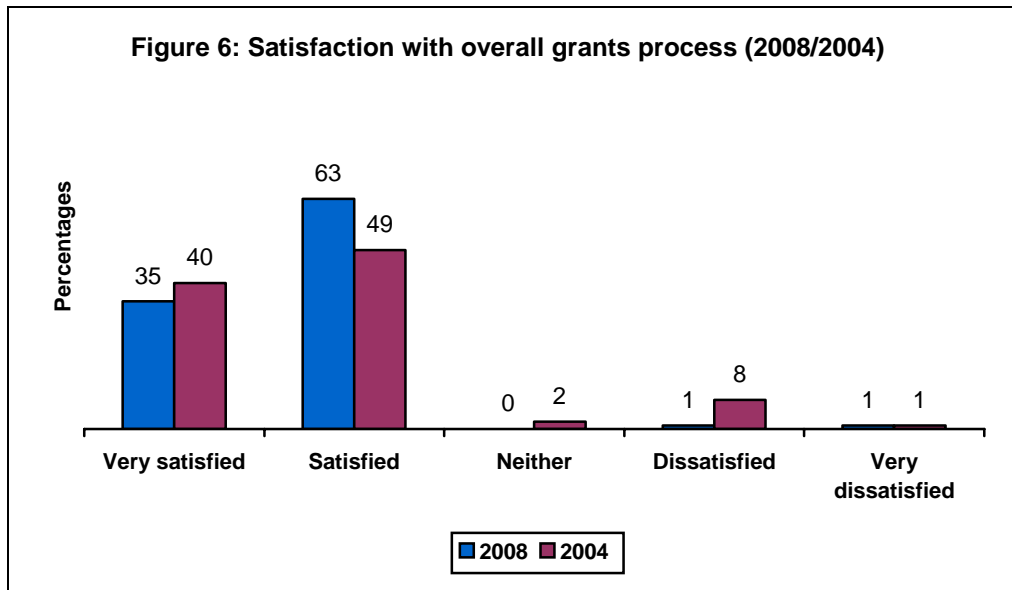
8. Satisfaction with builder

The majority (95%; 96% in 2004) of respondents were very satisfied/satisfied with the builder who had carried out the work.



9. Satisfaction with Grants process overall

Almost all respondents (98%) said they were very satisfied/satisfied overall with the grants process (89% in 2004).



END