



HMO West Grants Office

HMO Grants Customer Survey

January 2007

Housing
Executive

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1.0 Background to the Survey

- 1.1 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 area covered by the HMO West Grants Office who had applied for and received a HMO grant from the Housing Executive.
- 1.2 The aims of the survey were to:
- evaluate HMO grant applicants' perceptions of the grants process;
 - assess whether applicants thought they had a say in the services they received;
 - identify the priorities of applicants;
 - measure overall satisfaction with the service; and
 - identify shortcomings in the service and improvements required as perceived by the applicants.
- 1.3 The Research Unit consulted with Design and Property Services on the aims of the survey, questionnaire design, survey methodology and sample frame.

2.0 Research Methodology and Sample

- 2.1 It was agreed that the sample frame should include all grant applicants living in the HMO West Grants Office catchment area whose application had been completed within the previous 2½ years, i.e. between 1st December 2003 and 31st May 2006. 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 HMO System identified a total of 134 grant applicants to be included in the sample frame.
- 2.2 The agreed survey methodology was a telephone survey. The sample frame included successful applicants to the HMO Grants service.

3.0 The Questionnaire

- 3.1 The questionnaire was designed to assess satisfaction with all stages of the grant application process, including communication with the HMO Office, forms and documentation and overall satisfaction.

4.0 Fieldwork and Response Rate

4.1 The Research Unit carried out the interviews by telephone during late October and early November 2006. Interviews were conducted over approximately 10 days and evening calls were made to maximise the response rate.

4.2 Due to the relatively small size of the sample frame (134 HMO Grant applicants) it was decided that a survey of all applicants would be appropriate. However, a significant proportion of the applicant telephone numbers were either wrong or missing. A breakdown of the response rate is in Table A.

Table A

	Number	Percentage
Total number of applicants	134	100%
Less wrong/missing numbers	47	35%
Total number in scope	87	65%
Number of possible contacts	87	100%
Refusals	7	7%
Non contacts	17	20%
Achieved Interviews	63	72%

4.3 As the number of possible contacts was less than 100 (87), results of the survey are reported in both numbers and percentages. For data protection purposes, if less than five respondents have responded to a question, actual numbers are not reported.

Summary of Main Findings

Contact with Grants Office

- ❖ 54 respondents (86%) had applied for HMO grant aid prior to the survey by the technical officer.
- ❖ 50 respondents (91%) had known the name of their technical officer.
- ❖ 50 respondents (91%) said an appointment had been made for a preliminary inspection.
- ❖ All of these respondents (50: 100%) said that when the technical officer had made the preliminary inspection he/she had fully explained the process.
- ❖ 52 respondents (95%) had been satisfied with the inspection stage of the process.
- ❖ 34 respondents (62%) had telephoned the grants office at some time while awaiting approval of their grant application.
- ❖ 33 respondents (97%) who had telephoned said they had found the staff polite and all (34: 100%) said they had found the staff knowledgeable. 32 respondents (94%) said they did not feel the staff had come across as being in a hurry or rushed.
- ❖ 33 respondents (97%) who had telephoned the grants office were satisfied with the service they had received.
- ❖ 13% (7) of respondents had visited the HMO office within the previous 12 months.
- ❖ All respondents (7; 100%) who had visited the grants office said they had been attended to at the counter within ten minutes.
- ❖ All respondents (7; 100%) who had visited the grants office said they had found the staff polite, knowledgeable and did not feel the staff had come across as being in a hurry or rushed.
- ❖ All respondents (7; 100%) said the advice given by staff in relation to their query was helpful.
- ❖ All respondents (7; 100%) who had visited the HMO office within the previous 12 months were satisfied with their visit.

Completing Forms

- ❖ **Preliminary form**
 - 46 respondents (84%) said the preliminary form had been clear.
 - 46 respondents (84%) said the form had not been difficult to complete.
- ❖ **Schedule of Works**
 - 43 respondents (78%) said the schedule of works package had been clear.
 - 45 respondents (82%) reported no difficulty in completing the schedule of works package.
- ❖ **Landlord Rent Assessment**
 - 37 respondents (67%) said the landlord rent assessment form had been clear.
 - 37 respondents (67%) said the form had not been difficult to complete.
- ❖ **Approval of Grant Form**
 - 44 respondents (80%) said the approval of grant form had been clear.

Payments and Contractors

- ❖ 33 respondents (61%) were satisfied overall with the payment process.
- ❖ 47 respondents (85%) were satisfied with the builder who had carried out the work.

Communications from Grants Office

- ❖ 51 respondents 93% said the letters they had received from the grants office had been clear.
- ❖ 48 respondents (87%) said the letters they had received had not been difficult to understand.
- ❖ 47 respondents (85%) were satisfied overall with the letters they had received from the grants office.

Satisfaction with Overall Process

- ❖ 43 respondents 78% were satisfied with the overall grants process.

Access to the Internet

- ❖ 48 respondents (87%) had access to the Internet.
- ❖ 38 respondents (79%) who had Internet access said they would be interested in accessing grants forms and documentation via the Internet.
- ❖ 37 respondents 77% who had Internet access said they would be interested in receiving information about their grant via e-mail.

Profile of Respondents

- ❖ 23 respondents (42%) were aged between 45 and 54 years.
- ❖ 31 respondents (56%) were working full-time.
- ❖ 31 of those interviewed (56%) described the religious composition of their household as Catholic and 17 (31%) said it was Protestant.

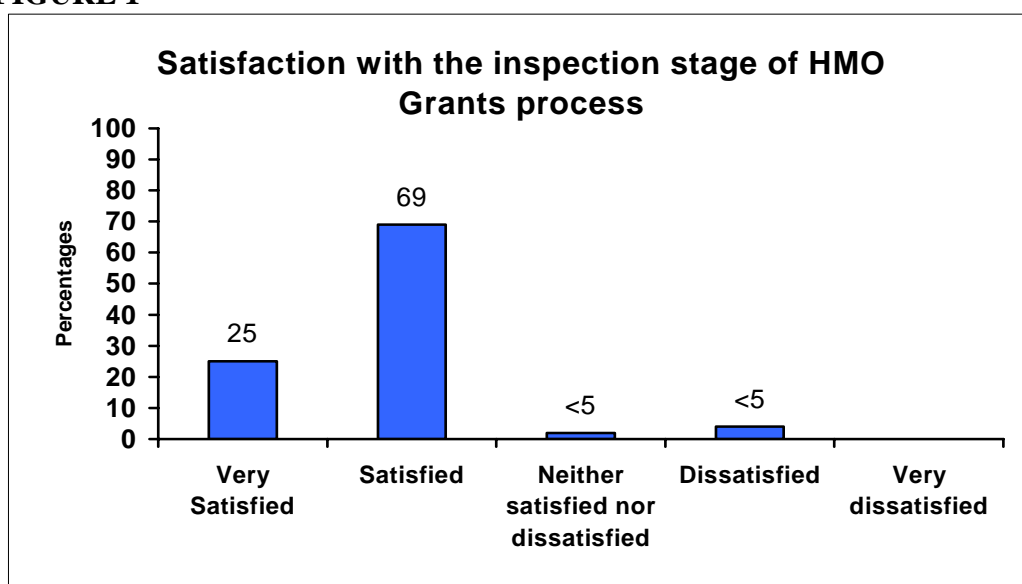
Conclusions

- ❖ Satisfaction with the inspection stage of the process was high (52 respondents; 95%).
- ❖ Satisfaction with the telephone service was high (33 respondents; 97%).
- ❖ All respondents (7; 100%) who had visited the HMO office within the previous 12 months were satisfied with their visit.
- ❖ Satisfaction with written correspondence from the grants office was high (67 respondents; 85%).
- ❖ A reasonably high proportion of respondents (37 or more; 67%+) had not experienced problems with the completion of forms.
- ❖ Satisfaction with the payment stage was reasonably high (33; 61%).
- ❖ Satisfaction with the builder/contractor was high (47; 85%)
- ❖ Overall satisfaction with the grants process was quite high (43 respondents; 78%).

1.0 Contact with the HMO Grants Office

- 1.1 Respondents were asked if they had applied for grant aid prior to the survey carried out by the technical officer. The majority (86%; 54 respondents) had applied for grant aid and eight respondents (13%) had not made a prior application (Table 1).
- 1.2 The majority of respondents (60; 95%) had been involved in every stage of the grant application process and 2% (<5 respondents) had been involved in some of the stages (Table 2).
- 1.3 Respondents were asked if they had known the name of their technical officer; 50 respondents (86%) said they had known the name of their technical officer and only 2% (< 5 respondents) said they had not known their name (Table 3).
- 1.4 Most respondents (50; 91%) said the technical officer had made an appointment for a preliminary inspection and all respondents said that the appointment had been kept. The majority (50; 91%) of respondents said the grants officer had explained what the inspection stage entailed. Almost two-thirds (36; 65%) said the grants officer had explained whether he/she thought the grant would be approved. More than three-quarters (42; 76%) of respondents said the grants officer had explained the type of grant they should apply for and 45 (82%) said he/she had explained the next steps in the grant application process. The majority (52; 94%) of respondents were satisfied with the inspection stage of the process; 4% (<5 respondents) were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied and 2% (<5) were dissatisfied. Due to the small percentage of dissatisfied respondents, this report does not include analysis of their reasons for dissatisfaction as findings would not be statistically reliable (Figure 1) (Tables 4-7).

FIGURE 1

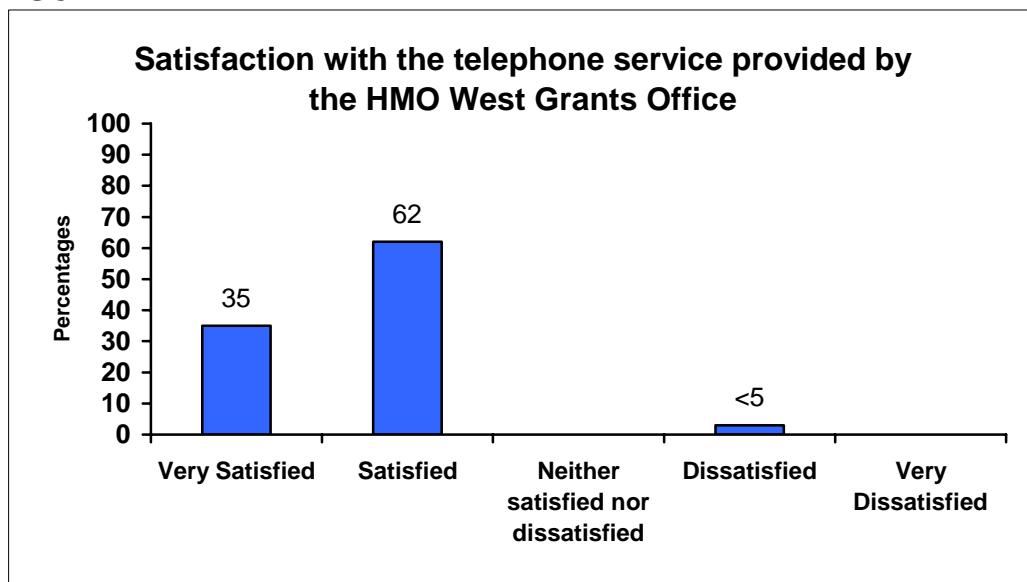


- 1.5 Almost two-thirds (34; 62%) of respondents had telephoned the grants office at some time while awaiting approval of their grant application. Of these respondents, more than three-quarters (26; 76%) had been told the name of the person dealing with their call. The majority of respondents (33; 97%) who had

telephoned the grants office said that staff had been polite, all respondents (34; 100%) said the staff had been knowledgeable and 56 respondents (94%) said staff had not been in a hurry/rushed (Tables 8-10).

- 1.6 Of these 34 respondents who had telephoned the grants office, 76% (26) said that the person who took the call had been able to deal with their query and 24% (8 respondents) said the person had not been able to deal with their query. Of those respondents who said the person had not been able to deal with their query, all (8; 100%) said they had been put through to someone else who had been able to help (Tables 11 & 12).
- 1.7 Almost all respondents (33; 97%) who had telephoned the grants office were satisfied overall with the service they had received and the remaining 3% (<5 respondents) were dissatisfied; however, the number of dissatisfied respondents is too small to provide reliable analysis for reasons for dissatisfaction (Figure 2) (Table 13).

FIGURE 2



- 1.8 A small number (13%; 7) of respondents had visited the HMO office within the previous 12 months. Reasons for visiting the office, waiting times and satisfaction with the service at the HMO office are in Tables 14 to 20.

2.0 Completing Forms

Preliminary Form

- 2.1 Respondents were asked for their opinions of various aspects relating to the forms they had been required to complete during the grants process. Equal proportions (84%; 46 respondents) said the preliminary form had been clear and had not been difficult to complete (Figure 3) (Table 21).

Schedule of Works

- 2.2 Almost four-fifths (78%; 43) of respondents thought the Schedule of Works package had been clear and 82% (45 respondents) said it had not been difficult to complete (Figure 3) (Table 21).

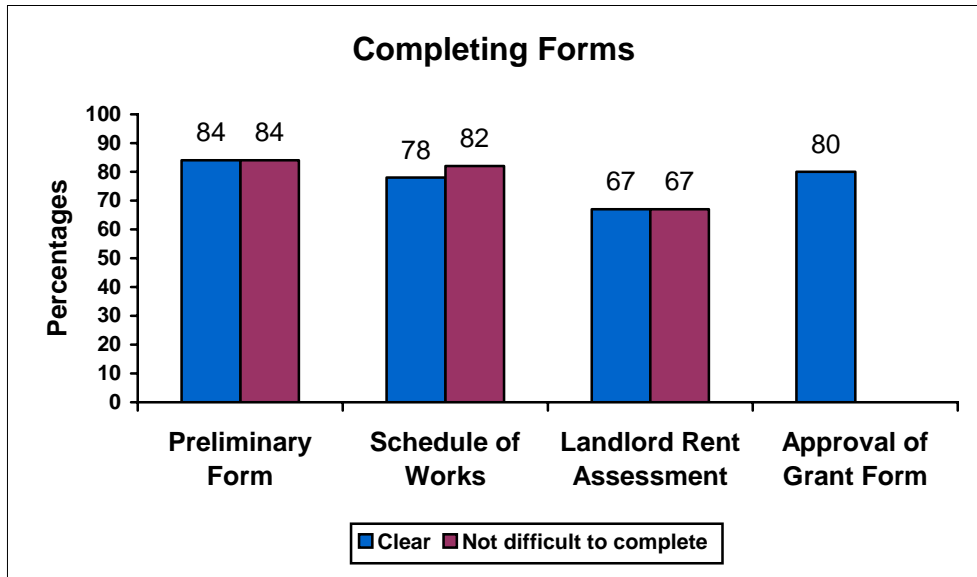
Landlord Rent Assessment Form

2.3 More than two-thirds (67%; 37) of respondents said the Landlord Rent Assessment form had been clear and the same proportion said it had not been difficult to complete (Figure 3) (Table 21).

Approval of Grant Form

2.4 Most respondents (44; 80%) said that the Approval of Grant form had been clear (Figure 3) (Table 21).

FIGURE 3



3.0 Payments and Contractors

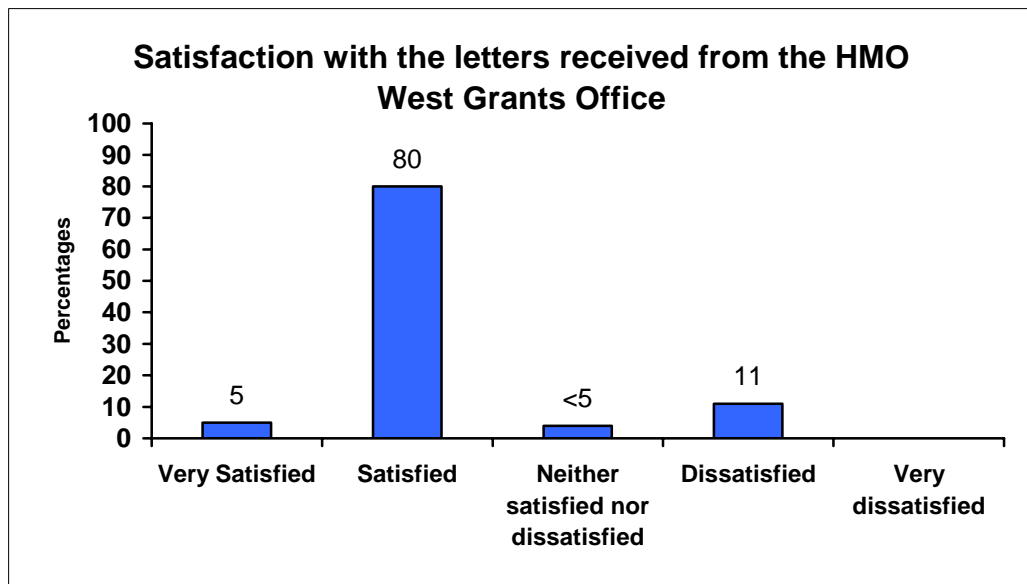
3.1 Almost two-thirds of respondents (33; 61%) were satisfied overall with the payment stage of the grants process and 16 (30%) were dissatisfied. Of the 16 respondents who were dissatisfied, 13 cited 'the process took too long' as their reason for dissatisfaction and the remainder said they had not received enough money (Table 22).

3.2 Most respondents (47; 86%) were satisfied with the builder who had carried out the work. A small number (<5; 7%) said they were dissatisfied with the builder who had carried out the work (Table 23).

4.0 Communication from Grants Office

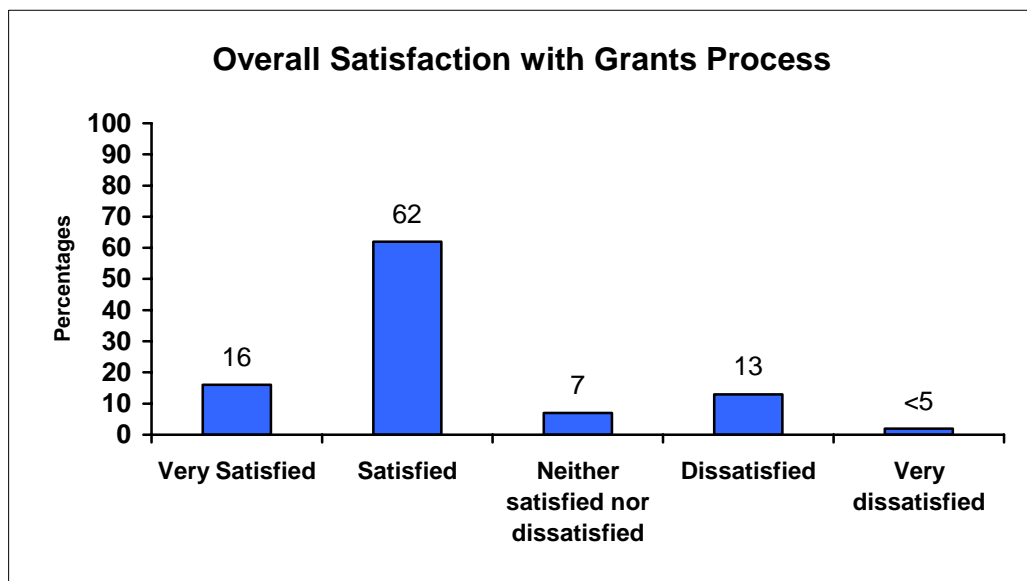
4.1 The majority of respondents said the letters received from the grants office had been clear (51; 93%) and had not been difficult to understand (48; 87%). Most respondents (47; 85%) were satisfied overall with the letters they had received from the Grants Office (Figure 4) (Tables 24 and 25).

FIGURE 4



4.2 Respondents were asked how satisfied or dissatisfied they were overall with the grants process; the majority (78%, 43) were satisfied and 15% (8) were dissatisfied; however, the number of dissatisfied respondents is too small to provide further analysis (Figure 5) (Table 26).

FIGURE 5



5.0 Internet Access

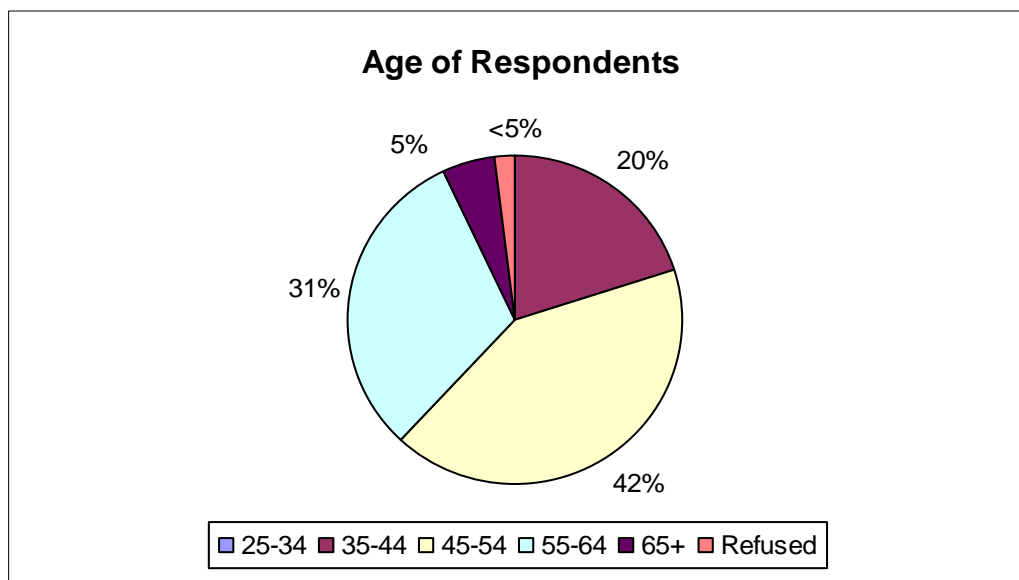
5.1 Respondents were asked questions relating to email and Internet access, to assess the level of interest in electronic delivery of services and possible future demand for such services. The majority (48; 87%) of respondents said they had access to the Internet. Of these respondents, more than three-quarters said they would be interested in accessing grant forms and documentation via the Internet (38; 79%) and would be interested in receiving information about their grant by email (37; 78%) (Tables 27–29).

5.0 Respondent Profile

6.1 Age of Respondents

Almost two-fifths (42%, 23) of respondents were aged between 45 and 54; 31% (19 respondents) were aged between 55 and 64 years and 20% (11 respondents) were aged between 35 and 44 years and a very small number (< 5; 5%) were aged 65 or over. The remaining respondents (<5; 2%) refused to supply details about their age (Figure 6) (Table 30).

FIGURE 6



Employment Status

5.1 Fifty-six per cent (31) of respondents worked full-time and 18% (10 respondents) were retired from work; 8% (5 respondents) were self-employed and equal proportions of respondents (5%, <5) worked part-time or were looking after family/home. The remaining 4% (<5 respondents) were not working (Table 31).

Household Religion

5.2 More than half (56%, 31) of respondents said their household religion was Catholic and 31% (14 respondents) described their household religion as Protestant. Small proportions of respondents described their household religion as 'mixed' (2%; <5) and 'none' (1%; <5) and 9% (5) of respondents refused to state the religious composition of their household (Table 32).

6.0 Further Comments

6.1 Respondents were asked for further comments on selected aspects of the grants process, such as the forms and letters they had received and the telephone service (if applicable). Of a total of 31 further comments received, almost half (13) related to respondents' satisfaction with the service overall. The remaining 18 comments related to dissatisfaction with other aspects of the grants process; details of comments are in the appendix tables (Table 33).

TABULAR REPORT

HMO WEST GRANTS CUSTOMER SURVEY

(Note: Due to rounding some percentages may not add to 100)

Table 1: Did the applicant apply for grant aid prior to the survey by the Technical Officer?

	Numbers	Percentages
Yes	54	86
No	8	13
Don't know	<5	2
Total	63	100

Base: 63 (all respondents)

Table 2: Was the applicant involved in every stage of the process?

	Numbers	Percentages
Yes, every stage	60	95
Yes, some of the stages	<5	2
No, none of the stages	<5	3
TOTAL	63	100

Base: 63 (all respondents)

Table 3: Did you know the Technical Officer by name?

	Numbers	Percentages
Yes	50	86
No	<5	2
Don't know	<5	6
TOTAL	55	100

Base: 55 (respondents who applied for grant aid prior to the survey by the Technical Officer)

Table 4: Did the Technical Officer make an appointment for a preliminary inspection?

	Numbers	Percentages
Yes	50	91
No	<5	5
Don't know	<5	4
TOTAL	55	100

Base: 55 (respondents who applied for grant aid prior to the survey by the Technical Officer)

Table 5: Was the appointment kept?

	Numbers	Percentages
Yes	50	100
No	-	-
TOTAL	50	100

Base: 50 (respondents who had an appointment)

Table 6: Did the Grants Officer explain....?

	Numbers			Percentages		
	Yes	No	D/K	Yes	No	D/K
...what the inspection stage entailed?	50	<5	<5	91	4	5
...whether they thought the grant would be approved or not?	36	13	6	65	24	11
...what type of grant you should apply for?	42	7	6	76	13	11
...the next steps in the grants process?	45	<5	11	82	5	13

Base: 55 (respondents who applied for grant aid prior to the survey by the Technical Officer)

Table 7: Satisfaction with the inspection stage of the process

	Numbers	Percentages
Very satisfied	14	25
Satisfied	38	69
Neither	<5	4
Dissatisfied	<5	2
Very dissatisfied	-	-
TOTAL	55	100

Base: 55 (respondents who applied for grant aid prior to the survey by the Technical Officer)

Table 8: Did you make telephone contact with the Grants Office at any time while awaiting approval of grant?

	Numbers	Percentages
Yes	34	62
No	11	20
Don't know	10	18
TOTAL	55	100

Base: 55 (respondents who applied for grant aid prior to the survey by the Technical Officer)

Table 9: Did the person dealing with the call give his/her name?

	Numbers	Percentages
Yes	26	76
No	<5	6
Don't know	6	18
TOTAL	34	100

Base: 34 (respondents who had contacted the grants office by telephone)

Table 10: Did you find the staff...

	Numbers			Percentages		
	Yes	No	D/K	Yes	No	D/K
Polite	33	<5	-	97	3	-
Knowledgeable	34	-	-	100	-	-
In a hurry/rushed	<5	32	-	6	94	-

Base: 34 (respondents who had contacted the grants office by telephone)

Table 11: Was the person who took the call able to deal with the query?

	Numbers	Percentages
Yes	26	76
No	8	24
TOTAL	34	100

Base: 34 (respondents who had contacted the grants office by telephone)

Table 12: If no, were you put through to someone else who was able to deal with your query?

	Numbers	Percentages
Yes	8	100
No	-	-
TOTAL	8	100

Base: 8 (respondents who said the person who first took their call was unable to help)

Table 13: How satisfied/dissatisfied were you with the telephone service?

	Numbers	Percentages
Very satisfied	12	35
Satisfied	21	62
Neither	-	-
Dissatisfied	<5	3
Very dissatisfied	-	-
TOTAL	34	100

Base: 34 (respondents who had contacted grants office by telephone)

Table 14: Have you visited the grants office within the last 12 months?

	Numbers	Percentages
Yes	7	13
No	48	87
TOTAL	55	100

Base: 55 (respondents who applied for grant aid prior to the survey by the Technical Officer)

Table 15: Reason for visit to Grants Office

	Numbers	Percentages
Submit documentation	5	71
General enquiry	<5	14
Other	<5	14
TOTAL	7	100

Base: 7 (respondents who had visited the Grants Office)

Table 16: Approximately how long did you have to wait in the reception area before you were attended to by counter staff?

Minutes	Numbers	Percentages
5 - 10 mins	7	100
TOTAL	7	100

Base: 7 (respondents who had visited the Grants Office)

Table 17: Did the person/persons who dealt with you identify themselves?

	Numbers	Percentages
Yes	5	71
Don't know	<5	29
TOTAL	7	100

Base: 7 (respondents who had visited the Grants Office)

Table 18: Did you find the staff...

	Numbers			Percentages		
	Yes	No	D/K	Yes	No	D/K
Polite?	7	-	-	100	-	-
Knowledgeable?	7	-	-	100	-	-
In a hurry/rushed?	-	7	-	-	100	-

Base: 7 (respondents who had visited the Grants Office)

Table 19: How helpful was the advice given by staff in relation to your query?

	Numbers	Percentages
Very helpful	5	71
Helpful	<5	29
TOTAL	7	100

Base: 7 (respondents who had visited the Grants Office)

Table 20: How satisfied/dissatisfied were you with your visit to the grants office?

	Numbers	Percentages
Very satisfied	<5	43
Satisfied	<5	57
Neither	-	-
Dissatisfied	-	-
Very dissatisfied	-	-
TOTAL	7	100

Base: 7 (respondents who had visited the grants office)

Table 21: Completion of Forms

	Clear						Difficult to complete					
	Yes		No		Don't know		Yes		No		Don't know	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Preliminary Form	46	84	5	9	<5	7	5	9	46	84	<5	7
Schedule of Works package	43	78	9	16	<5	5	7	13	45	82	<5	5
Landlord Rent Assessment	37	67	<5	2	17	31	<5	4	37	67	16	29
Approval of Grant Form	44	80	<5	7	7	11	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Base: 55 (respondents who applied for grant aid prior to the survey by the Technical Officer)

Table 22: Overall, how satisfied were you with the payment stage?

	Numbers	Percentages
Very satisfied	5	9
Satisfied	28	52
Neither	5	9
Dissatisfied	13	24
Very dissatisfied	<5	6
TOTAL	55	100

Base: 55 (respondents who applied for grant aid prior to the survey by the Technical Officer)

Table 23: How satisfied/dissatisfied were you with the builder who carried out the work?

	Numbers	Percentages
Very satisfied	17	31
Satisfied	30	55
Neither	<5	7
Dissatisfied	<5	7
Very dissatisfied	-	-
TOTAL	55	100

Base: 55 (respondents who applied for grant aid prior to the survey by the Technical Officer)

Table 24: Do you think the letters you received from the grants office were...

	Yes		No		DK	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
clear?	51	93	<5	5	<5	2
difficult to understand?	6	11	48	87	<5	2

Base: 55 (respondents who applied for grant aid prior to the survey by the Technical Officer)

Table 25: Overall, how satisfied/dissatisfied were you with the letters you received?

	Numbers	Percentages
Very satisfied	<5	5
Satisfied	44	80
Neither	<5	4
Dissatisfied	6	11
Very dissatisfied	-	-
TOTAL	55	100

Base: 55 (respondents who applied for grant aid prior to the survey by the Technical Officer)

Table 26: How satisfied/dissatisfied are you with the overall HMO Grants process?

	Numbers	Percentages
Very satisfied	9	16
Satisfied	34	62
Neither	<5	7
Dissatisfied	7	13
Very dissatisfied	<5	2
TOTAL	55	100

Base: 55 (respondents who applied for grant aid prior to the survey by the Technical Officer)

Table 27: Do you have access to the Internet?

	Numbers	Percentages
Yes	48	87
No	7	13
TOTAL	55	100

Base: 55 (respondents who applied for grant aid prior to the survey by the Technical Officer)

Table 28: Would you be interested in accessing grants forms and documentation via the Internet?

	Numbers	Percentages
Yes	38	79
No	10	21
TOTAL	48	100

Base: 48 (respondents who have access to the Internet)

Table 29: Would you be interested in receiving information about your grant by email?

	Numbers	Percentages
Yes	37	77
No	11	23
TOTAL	48	100

Base: 48 (respondents who have access to the Internet)

Table 30: Age of respondents

	Numbers	Percentages
35 - 44 years	11	20
45 - 54 years	23	42
55 - 64 years	17	31
65+ years	<5	5
Refused	<5	2
TOTAL	55	100

Base: 55 (respondents who applied for grant aid prior to the survey by the Technical Officer)

Table 31: Employment status of respondents

	Numbers	Percentages
Working full-time	31	56
Retired	10	18
Self employed	5	8
Working part-time	<5	5
Looking after family/home	<5	5
Not working	<5	4
TOTAL	55	100

Base: 55 (respondents who applied for grant aid prior to the survey by the Technical Officer)

Table 32: Household religion of respondents

	Numbers	Percentages
Catholic	31	56
Protestant	17	31
Refused	5	9
Mixed religion	<5	2
None	<5	1
TOTAL	55	100

Base: 55 (respondents who applied for grant aid prior to the survey by the Technical Officer)

Table 33: Further comments about the grants process (telephone service/letters/grants forms)

	Numbers
Satisfied with service	13
Process too bureaucratic	<5
Process takes too long	<5
Dissatisfied with grant amount	<5
Other miscellaneous	8
TOTAL	31

Base: 27 respondents who made 31 further comments