

Key findings:

- 71% of Lewisham Homes service users support the proposal to bring housing management services into direct management by Lewisham Council. Analysis by tenure, shows majority support among both tenants and leaseholders (71% and 69% respectively).
- Analysis of explanatory text based comments suggests that the balance of opinion towards the proposed changes is based on an appetite for housing services to improve/be delivered more efficiently. Particular emphasis was given to how the responsive repairs service is delivered.
- Looking ahead, the key priorities for tenants are having repairs carried out promptly and right first time, calls or correspondence being responded to promptly and improvements being made to homes when needed. Leaseholders key priorities include services providing value for money, calls or correspondence being responded to promptly and communal spaces being well maintained.

Introduction

Engagement process

M·E·L Research were commissioned to support the Council design and deliver a multi-channel resident engagement programme. A range of methodologies were used to engage with tenants and leaseholders to capture their views on the proposal to return housing management to the Council. There was also supporting communication about the proposals and how individuals could get involved, both prior to and during the engagement window.

The Council publicised the engagement options in several ways. Firstly, all tenants and leaseholder were sent a letter in July/August informing them of the proposal and giving notice of the consultation. Following this, Lewisham Council and Lewisham Homes promoted it at numerous events at every ward with housing stock over the summer and via social media. M·E·L Research were responsible for directly contacting tenants and leaseholders, giving all service users an opportunity to share their views.

All of the engagement activity took place between 14th September and 24th October 2022. Responses from all methods were combined at the end of the survey period and overall we received a total of 3,663 responses. The table below presents a summary of the approach and the number of responses received through each engagement method.

Target population	Lewisham Homes tenants and leaseholders			
Interview length	Average of 10 minutes			
Engagement period	14 th September – 24 th October 2022			
Data collection methods	Self-completion postal survey	Self-completion online survey	Interviewer-administered telephone survey	Interviewer-administered face to face survey
Number of responses	1,294	259	1,608	502

Response rate and statistical reliability

Postal surveys were sent to all 17,189 tenants and leaseholders, giving all of these residents an equal chance to take part and have their say. A total of 3,663 completed surveys were returned, representing a response rate of 21%.

As the survey findings are based on a sample of Lewisham Homes tenants and leaseholders, the results are subject to sampling tolerances. The achieved confidence interval gives an indication of the precision of results. With 3,663 residents having completed the survey, this provides data with a confidence interval of $\pm 1.5\%$ for a 50% statistic at the 95% confidence level. This simply means that if 50% of respondents indicated they agreed with a certain aspect, the true figure could in reality lie within the range of 48.5% to 51.5% and that these results would be seen 95 times out of 100. On the basis of this sampling error, the dataset delivered through the engagement activity is highly robust.

The table below shows the response rate overall and by tenure, and the confidence intervals for differing response results (sample tolerance).

Breakdown of completed interviews and sampling tolerances

	Stock size	Sample size	Response rate	Approximate sampling tolerances*		
				50%	30% or 70%	10% or 90%
Tenants	11,879	2,617	22%	$\pm 1.7\%$	$\pm 1.6\%$	$\pm 1.0\%$
Leaseholders	5,310	1,046	20%	$\pm 2.7\%$	$\pm 2.5\%$	$\pm 1.6\%$
Overall	17,189	3,663	21%	$\pm 1.4\%$	$\pm 1.3\%$	$\pm 0.9\%$

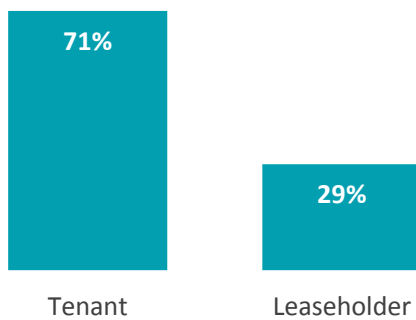
**Based on a 95% confidence level*

As set out above, a managed approach to surveying was taken to ensure a representative sample of tenants and leaseholders took part in the engagement programme. This resulted in a sample that is broadly representative by tenure and ward, proportionate to the overall stock profile. A breakdown of the survey profile against the stock profile is included in Appendix C. Based on analysis of this sample profile, no corrective weighting was required for this data to ensure that it was representative of the Lewisham Homes customer base.

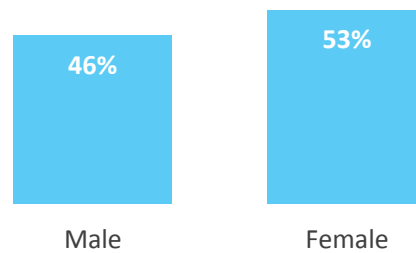
Profile of respondents

As part of this engagement programme, all Lewisham Homes service users were asked to a number of questions to collect their demographic information. Recognising that some of these questions could be considered personal or sensitive, respondents were given the option to skip these questions. However, responses to these questions show that we captured views from a diverse cross section of customers.

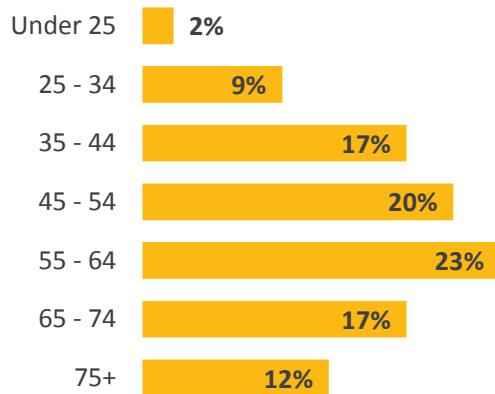
Tenure (n=3,663)



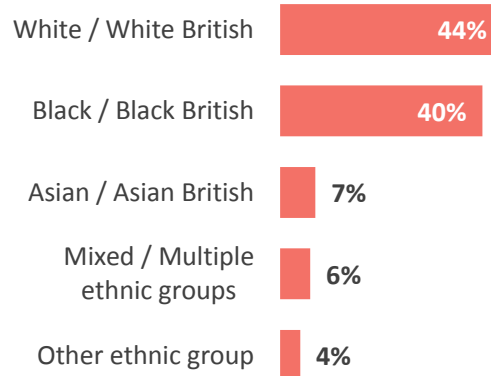
Gender (n=3,555)



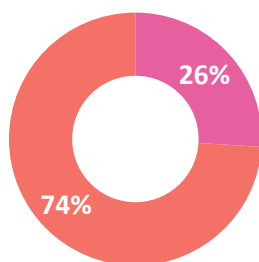
Age band (n=3,530)



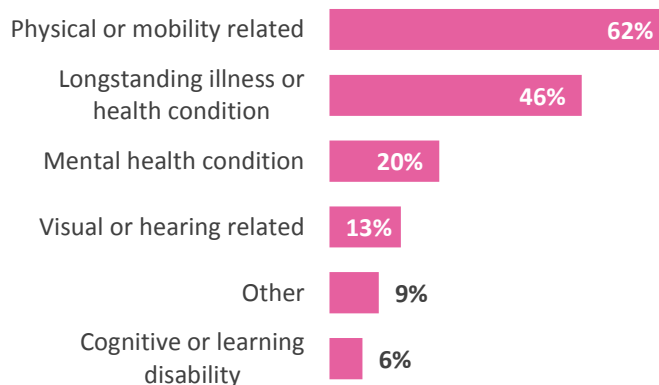
Ethnicity (n=3,367)



Disability (n=3,453)



■ Yes ■ No



Engagement responses

1. Support for the proposal

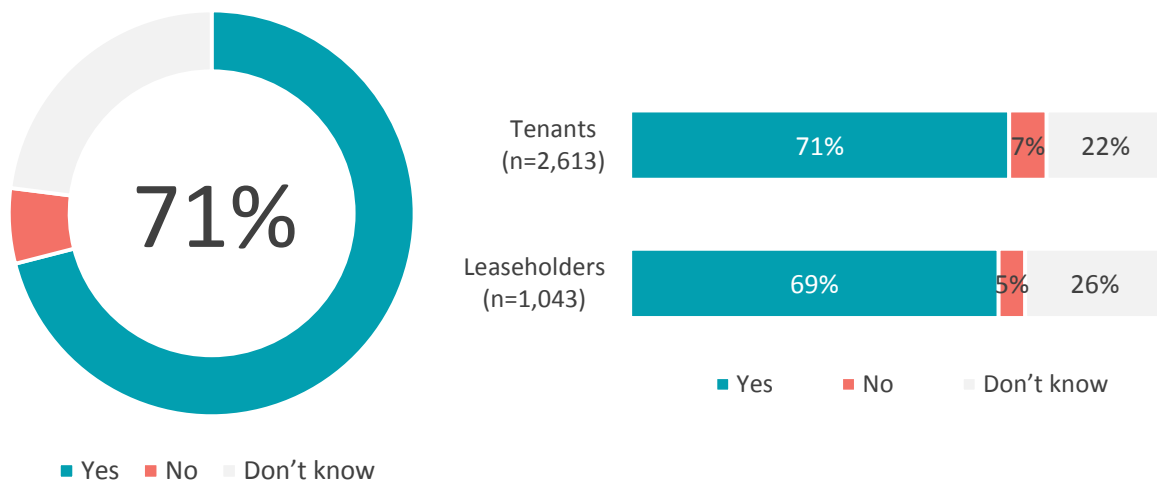
All Lewisham Homes service users were asked if they support the proposal to bring housing management services into direct management by Lewisham Council. In response seven in ten (71%) support the proposal. Just 6% of respondents do not support the proposal while 23% are unsure based on the information presented to them thus far.

92% of those that expressed an opinion support the proposal to bring housing management service back into the direct management of the council.

When exploring levels of support by tenure, tenants are slightly more in support (71% vs 69%), however it was more a case of leaseholders being unsure as opposed to not supporting the proposal.

Figure 1.1: Do you support the proposal to bring housing management services into direct management by Lewisham Council?

Base size: 3,656



Conclusions

This engagement programme set out to test opinion on the proposal to bring housing management services back into direct management by Lewisham Council following 15 years of management under Lewisham Homes, an Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO). Having heard from a representative sample of tenants and leaseholders from across the borough, there is clear support for the proposal with 71% of housing service users in agreement. Just 6% do not support the proposal and 23% are at present unsure. Excluding those who did not feel able to decide either way at this time, (i.e. among those who have a view), the proportion who support the change in housing management is 92%.

Analysis of the explanatory text based comments captured in the engagement activity suggests that the balance of opinion towards the proposed changes is based on an appetite for housing services to improve/be delivered more efficiently, with particular emphasis being on how the responsive repairs service is delivered. Rejection of the proposal is most commonly due to respondents being happy with current services.

This engagement activity was also used as an opportunity to explore which aspects of the housing service are most important to users of housing services. The key priorities for tenants are timely and high quality repairs, prompt responses to calls and correspondence and improvements being made to homes when needed. This echoes the much of the new and upcoming regulation in the sector, on the back of the Social Housing White Paper, which sets out what every social housing resident should be able to expect from their landlord. This includes having a good quality home and neighbourhood to live in and being treated with respect.

The biggest priority for leaseholders is ensuring services represent value for money. This value is likely to be judged by their landlord providing prompt responses to communications and by ensuring communal spaces are well maintained.

As stated in the information communicated in the engagement programme, Lewisham Council wants to be a good landlord, and to set an example for other social housing providers in the borough. While this vision was not directly addressed by the engagement activity, it is reasonable to conclude that the proposed change in housing management is recognised by current service users as a potential enabler of improved service delivery.