



South East Grants Office

Customer Survey

May 2015

Northern Ireland
Housing Executive

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION	
i. Background to the Survey	3
ii. Research Methodology and Sample.....	3
iii. The Questionnaire	3
iv. Fieldwork	4
 COMMENTARY AND ANALYSIS	
1.0 Respondent Profile and Grant Type.....	5
2.0 Contact with Grants Office.....	6-7
3.0 Completing Grant Forms.....	8
4.0 Payments and Contractors	8
5.0 Communication from Grants Office	9
6.0 Internet Access.....	10
7.0 Further Comments.....	10
TABULAR REPORT	11-19

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 February 2014 and January 2015. 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 143 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 (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 in March and April 2015. All 143 grant applicants whose application had been completed during the 12 months from February 2014 to January 2015 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	129	52
Renovation	9	3
Home Repair	5	2
TOTAL	143	57

v. PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

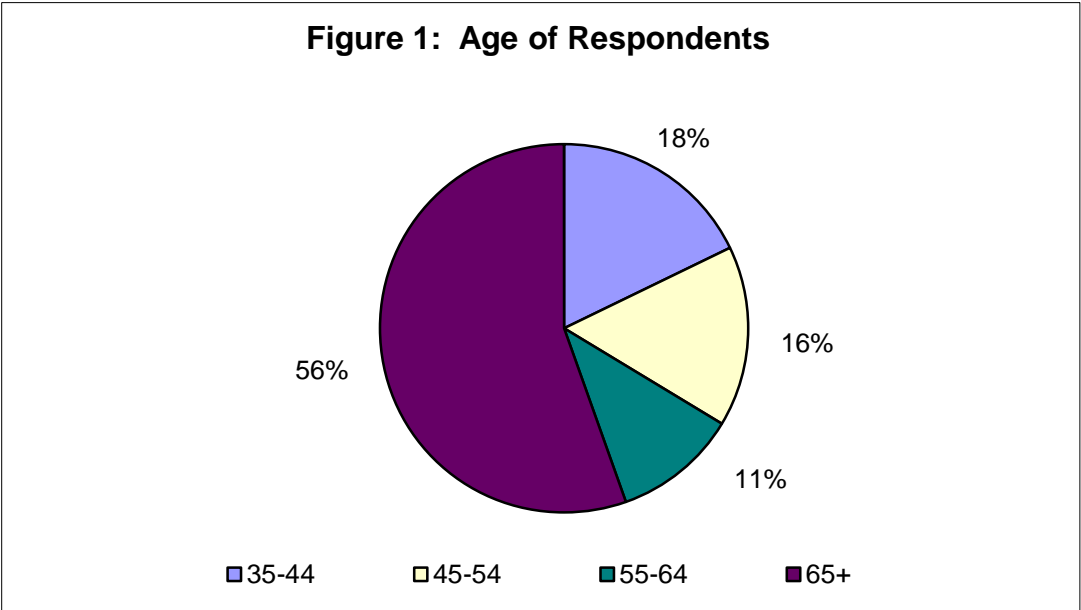
The number of respondents to any piece of quantitative research has an impact on the way information is presented in the analysis. It is standard practice, in the case of a survey achieving between 50 and 100 interviews, for both numbers and percentages to be quoted in the textual analysis and where 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

More than half (32; 56%) of respondents were aged 65 or older, almost one-fifth (10; 18%) were aged between 35 and 44; less than one-fifth (9; 16%) were aged between 45 and 54 and six (11%) were aged 55 to 64 (Figure 1, Table 1.1).



1.2 Ethnicity of respondents

Almost all (56; 98%) respondents described their ethnicity as white, the remaining respondent (2%) described their ethnicity as mixed ethnic (Table 1.2).

1.3 Household Religion

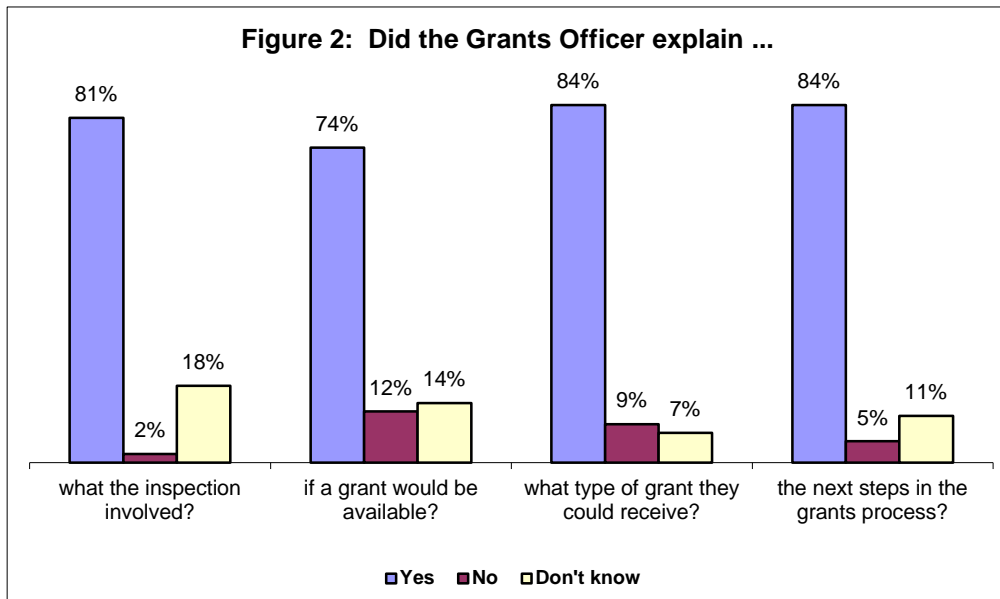
More than three-fifths (37; 65%) of respondents described their household religion as Protestant, more than one-fifth (12; 21%) described their religion as Catholic. Smaller proportion described their household religion as 'none' (3; 5%) or mixed religion (2; 4%) or 'other' (1; 2%) and the remaining two respondents (4%) refused to give the household religion (Table 1.3).

1.4 Grant Type

The vast majority (52; 91%) of respondents had received a Disabled Facilities Grant, three (5%) had received a Renovation Grant and two (4%) had received a Home Repair Grant (Table 1.4).

2.0 Contacts with Grants Office

- 2.1** More than three-fifths (37; 65%) of respondents said they had been involved in every stage of the grants process and 20 (35%) said they had been involved in some of the stages (Table 2.1).
- 2.2** More than two-thirds (40; 70%) of respondents stated they were aware of their case officer at an early stage in the process, six (11%) stated this was not the case and 11 (19%) could not remember (Table 2.2).
- 2.3** More than three-quarters (45; 79%) had been offered a Preliminary Test of Resources; 10 (18%) could not remember and two (4%) stated a Preliminary Test of Resources was not applicable (Table 2.3).
- 2.4** The majority (53; 93%) of respondents were very satisfied/satisfied with the preliminary contact from the grants office; three (5%) respondents were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied and the remaining respondent (2%) was dissatisfied (Table 2.4).
- 2.5** The majority (55; 97%) 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 (53) said the appointment had been kept (Tables 2.6 and 2.7).
- 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 (46; 81%) said the grants officer had explained what the inspection stage involved (Figure 2, Table 2.9).
- 2.7** Almost three-quarters (42; 74%) of respondents said the grants officer had explained whether they thought the grant would be available (Figure 2, Table 2.9).
- 2.8** Equal proportions of respondents (48; 84% in each case) said the grants officer had advised them on the type of grant they could receive and explained the next steps in the grant application process (Figure 2, Table 2.9).
- 2.9** The majority (52; 91%) of respondents were very satisfied/satisfied with the inspection stage of the process; three (5%) respondents were dissatisfied and the remaining two (4%) respondents were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied (Table 2.10).



Telephoning the Grants Office within the previous 12 months

- 2.10** More than one-third (22; 39%) of respondents had telephoned the grants office during the course of their grant application, in the previous 12 months. The majority (18) of respondents had been told the name of the person dealing with their call, one respondent had not and three were unsure if they had been given a name (Tables 2.11 and 2.12).
- 2.11** All respondents (22) who had telephoned the grants office had found the staff polite; 21 respondents said they had not felt hurried or rushed by staff dealing with their query and 20 respondents said the staff were knowledgeable (Table 2.13).
- 2.12** Of the respondents who had telephoned the grants office (22; 39% of all respondents), 12 said the person who initially took the call had been able to deal with their query; seven stated the person was unable to deal with their query and three were unsure if their query had been dealt with (Table 2.14).
- 2.13** The majority of respondents (20) who had telephoned the grants office were very satisfied/satisfied with the overall service they had received the remaining two respondents were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied (Table 2.15).

3.0 Grant Forms¹

3.1 Schedule of Works

More than two-thirds (40; 70%) of respondents had dealt with the Schedule of Works package. Of these, 27 thought the Schedule of Works package was clear, eight thought it was not clear and the remaining five respondents were unsure if the Schedule of Works package was clear (Table 3.1).

3.2 Contact by case Officer

More than half (32; 56%) of respondents had been contacted by their case officer after they received the schedule of works package, 20 could not remember if the case officer had contacted them and five stated that the case officer did not contact them (Table 3.2).

3.3 Test of Resources Form

More than half (26; 56%) of respondents had completed a Test of Resources form. Of these, more than half (17) thought the test of resources form was easy to complete, one thought the form was not easy to complete and eight respondents could not remember (Table 3.3).

3.4 Grant Approval Document

The Grant Approval Document had been dealt with by more than two-thirds (38; 67%) of all respondents. The majority (30) thought the grant approval document was clear, three thought the form was not easy to complete and five respondents could not recall (Table 3.4).

3.5 Contact by Grants Officer

Three-fifths (34; 60%) of respondents stated the grants officer contacted them after their grant had been approved, 19 (33%) could not remember the grants officer contacting them and four (7%) 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 three-quarters (43; 76%) of respondents were very satisfied/satisfied with the payment stage of the grants process, nine (16%) were dissatisfied/very dissatisfied and five (9%) were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied (Table 4.1).

4.2 The majority (50; 88%) of respondents were very satisfied/satisfied with the builder who had carried out the work, five (9%) were dissatisfied/very dissatisfied and two (4%) were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied (Table 4.2).

4.3 All respondents who had received a Disabled Facilities Grant (52; 91%) were asked if the work fulfilled their needs. Of these, almost all (49; 94%) were very satisfied/satisfied that the grant work carried out had fulfilled their needs, three (6%) were dissatisfied/very dissatisfied (Table 4.3).

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

5.0 Communication from the Grants Office

- 5.1** All respondents (57; 100%) said a builder had been involved in the grant process; fewer respondents said an occupational therapist (52; 91%); architect (52; 91%) or Fold (30; 53%) had been involved in the grant process on their behalf (Table 5.1).
- 5.2** More than four-fifths (47; 83%) of respondents felt that the grants office had worked well with the builder, while seven (12%) were unsure and three (5%) said the office had not worked well with their builder (Table 5.1).
- 5.3** Of the 52 respondents who said an Occupational Therapist (OT) had been involved in the grant process, more than three-quarters (41; 78%) of respondents felt the grants office had a good working relationship with their OT during the grant process; 10 (19%) were unsure and the remaining respondent (2%) felt the grants office did not work well with the OT (Table 5.1).
- 5.4** Of the 30 respondents who said Fold had been involved in the grant process, 23 respondents felt the grants office had a good working relationship with Fold; six respondents were unsure and the remaining respondent said the grants office had not worked well with Fold (Table 5.1).
- 5.5** Of the 52 respondents who said an architect had been involved in the grant process more than two-thirds (36; 69%) respondents felt the grants office had a good working relationship with their architect during the grant process; 15 (29%) respondents were unsure and the remaining respondent (2%) felt they did not work well with the architect (Table 5.1).
- 5.6** More than four-fifths (49; 86%) of respondents were very satisfied/satisfied with the letters they had received from the grants office; six (11%) respondents said they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied and the remaining two respondents (4%) were very dissatisfied/dissatisfied (Table 5.2).
- 5.7** The majority (55; 97%) of respondents felt they had been treated fairly throughout the grants process, the remaining two respondents (4%) stated that they had not been treated fairly (Table 5.3).
- 5.8** The majority (53; 93%) of respondents were very satisfied/satisfied overall with the grants process. Equal proportions (2; 4% respondents in each case) were neither satisfied or dissatisfied/ very dissatisfied (Table 5.4).

6.0 Internet Access

- 6.1** Less than half (27; 47%) of respondents had access to the internet. Of these 16 said they would be interested in accessing grants forms and documentation via the internet, 10 said they would not be interested and the remaining respondents did not know (Tables 6.1 and 6.2).

7.0 Further Comments

- 7.1** More than two-fifths (26; 46%) made no further comments on the grants process. Eighteen (32%) respondents were satisfied with the service provided, equal proportions (3; 5% in each case) thought communication from the Housing Executive could have been clearer and thought the grants process took too long. Equal proportions (2; 4% in each case) thought the payment process was too long and there was a payment issue still unresolved. Equal proportions (1; 2% in each case) were dissatisfied with the builder or dissatisfied with the help they got from Fold or unhappy with the disruption the work caused (Table 7.1).

Appendix 1: Tabular Report

South East Grants Customer Survey

Table 1.1: Age of Respondents

	Numbers	Percentages
35-44 years	10	18
45-54 years	9	16
55-64 years	6	11
65+ years	32	56
TOTAL	57	100

Base: 57 (all respondents)

Table 1.2: Ethnicity of Respondents

	Numbers	Percentages
White	56	98
Mixed Ethnic	1	2
TOTAL	57	100

Base: 57 (all respondents)

Table 1.3: Household Religion

	Numbers	Percentages
Protestant	37	21
Catholic	12	65
Mixed Religion (Protestant/Catholic)	2	4
Other	1	2
None	3	5
Refused	2	4
TOTAL	57	100

Base: 57 (all respondents)

Table 1.4: Grant Type

	Numbers	Percentages
Disabled Facilities Grant	52	91
Home Repair Grant	2	4
Renovation Grant	3	5
TOTAL	57	1030

Base: 57 (all respondents)

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

	Numbers	Percentages
Yes, every stage	37	65
Yes, some of the stages	20	35
TOTAL	57	100

Base: 57 (all respondents)

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

	Numbers	Percentages
Yes	40	70
No	6	11
Don't Know/Can't Remember	11	19
TOTAL	57	100

Base: 57 (all respondents)

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

	Numbers	Percentages
Yes	45	79
Don't Know/Can't Remember	10	18
Not Applicable	2	4
TOTAL	57	100

Base: 57 (all respondents)

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

	Numbers	Percentages
Very satisfied	21	37
Satisfied	32	56
Neither	3	5
Dissatisfied	1	2
Very Dissatisfied	0	0
TOTAL	57	100

Base: 57 (all respondents)

Table 2.5: If dissatisfied, please state why.

	Numbers
Grant offered was not enough to cover total cost of work	1
TOTAL	1

Base: 1 (all respondents dissatisfied with preliminary contact from the Grants office)

Table 2.6: Did the Grants Officer make an appointment to visit you?

	Numbers	Percentages
Yes	55	97
Don't Know/Can't Remember	2	4
TOTAL	57	100

Base: 57 (all respondents)

Table 2.7: Did the Grants Officer turn up to the appointment?

	Numbers	Percentages
Yes	53	96
No	1	2
Don't Know/Can't Remember	1	2
TOTAL	55	100

Base: 55 (respondents who had an appointment)

Table 2.8: Did the Grants Officer give a reason for not turning up to the appointment?

	Numbers
Yes	1
TOTAL	1

Base: 1 (respondent who said the appointment was not kept)

Table 2.9: Did the Grants Officer explain...

	Numbers %			
	Yes	No	D/K	Total
what the inspection stage involved?	46	1	10	57
	81	2	18	100%
whether they thought a grant would be available?	42	7	8	57
	74	12	14	100%
what type of grant you could receive?	48	5	4	57
	84	9	7	100%
the next steps in the grants process?	48	3	6	57
	84	5	11	100%

Base: 57 (all respondents)

Table 2.10: How satisfied/dissatisfied were you with the inspection stage of process?

	Numbers	Percentages
Very satisfied	20	35
Satisfied	32	56
Neither	2	4
Dissatisfied	3	5
Very Dissatisfied	0	0
TOTAL	57	100

Base: 57 (all respondents)

Table 2.11: Did you make telephone contact with the Grants Office at any time during your application?

	Numbers	Percentages
Yes	22	39
No	25	44
Don't Know/Can't Remember	10	18
TOTAL	57	100

Base: 57 (all respondents)

Table 2.12: Did the person dealing with the call give his/her name?

	Numbers
Yes	18
No	1
Don't Know/Can't Remember	3
TOTAL	22

Base: 22 (respondents who had contacted the grants office by telephone)

Table 2.13: Did you find the staff...

	Yes	No	DK/Can't Remember	Total
	Numbers			
polite?	22	0	0	22
knowledgeable?	20	0	2	22
In a hurry/rushed?	0	21	1	22

Base: 22 (respondents who had contacted the grants office by telephone)

Table 2.14: Was the person who took your call able to deal with your query directly?

	Numbers
Yes	12
No	7
Don't Know/Can't Remember	3
TOTAL	22

Base: 22 (respondents who had contacted the grants office by telephone)

Table 2.15: How satisfied/dissatisfied were you with the telephone service?

	Numbers
Very satisfied	10
Satisfied	10
Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	2
TOTAL	22

Base: 22 (respondents who had contacted grants office by telephone)

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

	Numbers
Yes	27
No	8
Don't Know/Can't Remember	5
Sub Total	40
Fold dealt with document	10
Family/friend dealt with document	7
TOTAL	57

Base: 40 (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	32	56
No	5	9
Don't Know/Can't Remember	20	35
TOTAL	57	100

Base: 57 (all respondents)

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

	Numbers
Yes	1
No	17
Don't know/can't remember	8
Sub Total	26
Fold completed form	17
Family/friend completed form	10
N/A	4
TOTAL	57

Base: 26 (respondents who completed the Test of Resources Form)

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

	Numbers
Yes	30
No	3
Don't know/can't remember	5
Sub Total	38
Fold dealt with document	12
Family/friend completed form	7
TOTAL	57

Base: 38 (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	34	60
No	4	7
Don't Know/Can't Remember	19	33
TOTAL	57	100

Base: 57 (all respondents)

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

	Numbers	Percentages
Very satisfied	14	25
Satisfied	29	51
Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	5	9
Dissatisfied	8	14
Very Dissatisfied	1	2
TOTAL	57	100

Base: 57 (all respondents)

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

	Numbers	Percentages
Very satisfied	26	46
Satisfied	24	42
Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	2	4
Dissatisfied	4	7
Very dissatisfied	1	2
TOTAL	57	100

Base: 57 (all respondents)

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

	Numbers	Percentages
Very satisfied	35	67
Satisfied	14	27
Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	0	0
Dissatisfied	2	4
Very dissatisfied	1	2
Total	52	100

Base: 52 (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?	47	3	7	57
	83	5	12	100%
The occupational therapist?	41	1	10	52
	79	2	19	100%
The architect?	36	1	15	52
	69	2	29	100%
Fold?	23	1	6	30
	77	3	20	100%

Bases: 57 (builder); 52 (OT); 52 (architect); 30 (Fold).

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

	Numbers	Percentages
Very satisfied	15	26
Satisfied	34	60
Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	6	11
Dissatisfied	2	4
Very Dissatisfied	0	0
TOTAL	57	100

Base: 57 (all respondents)

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

	Numbers	Percentages
Yes	55	97
No	2	4
TOTAL	57	100

Base: 57 (all respondents)

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

	Numbers	Percentages
Very satisfied	25	44
Satisfied	28	49
Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	5	4
Dissatisfied	1	2
Very Dissatisfied	1	2
TOTAL	57	100

Base: 57 (all respondents)

Table 6.1: Do you have access to the internet?

	Numbers	Percentages
Yes	27	47
No	30	53
TOTAL	57	100

Base: 57 (all respondents)

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

	Numbers
Yes	16
No	10
Don't know	1
TOTAL	27

Base: 27 (respondents who had access to the internet)

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

	Numbers
Satisfied with grants process	18
Grants process takes too long	3
Communication could be better/clearer	3
Payment stage is too slow	2
Payment query unresolved	2
Dissatisfied with builder	1
Dissatisfied with Fold	1
Other	1
TOTAL	31

Base: 31 (all respondents)