



# Sandwell Council Residents' Survey

Key Findings Report  
October 2023



# Research objectives and method



In September and early October 2023 M·E·L Research interviewed a randomly selected sample of 1,101 Sandwell residents.

This survey aimed to gauge how residents feel about their local area, Sandwell Council and the services they provide. We also asked residents about their biggest concerns in the post-pandemic and current cost-of-living environment, as well capturing insight regarding resident health and wellbeing.



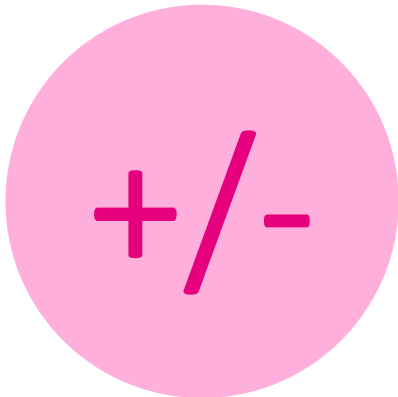
A stratified random locational sampling approach was used. In each ward, Census Output Areas (COAs) were ranked by the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD). COAs were then selected at random as sampling points. The number of sampling points selected was proportional to the interviewing target for each ward. All addresses for each COA sampling point were made available to interviewers, with a target of 10 interviews set per sampling point.

At ward level quotas were set by age and gender to ensure that the sample reflected the characteristics of the borough's population. Quotas were set using Census 2021 data.

# Data weighting and confidence level



In total 1101 interviews were completed. While the application of quotas at ward level ensured a diverse mix of residents were interviewed, the final dataset was weighted. This weighting eliminated the effect of differential response rates by geography and between demographic groups so that the resulting data is fully representative of the borough. The final data has been weighted by ward, age and gender, using 2021 Census population data.



The sample size of 1,101 means that this dataset has a maximum confidence level of +/- 2.95 at the borough level (at a 95% level of confidence). This means that we can say with 95% confidence that the responses reported will be no more than 2.95 percentage-points different than if all residents of the borough were interviewed.

Sub-group analysis i.e., comparing responses from particular resident groups or from specific locations within the borough will have higher confidence intervals.

# Spatial Analysis

The sample size of this research does not allow robust analysis at ward level. In order to analyse the data at a more statistically robust geographies, wards have been grouped into towns. These towns, as defined by the table on the right, will be used throughout the analysis.



Town	Ward
Oldbury	Bristnall
	Langley
	Old Warley
Rowley Regis	Blackheath
	Cradley Heath and Old Hill
	Tividale
Smethwick	Rowley
	Abbey
	Smethwick
	Soho and Victoria
Tipton	St Pauls
	Great Bridge
	Tipton Green
Wednesbury	Princes End
	Friar Park
	Wednesbury North
West Bromwich	Wednesbury South
	West Bromwich Central
	Hateley Heath
	Greets Green and Lyng
	Newton
	Great Barr with Yew Tree
	Charlemont with Grove Vale

# Sample profile

The tables below summarise the profile of the survey sample by key demographic prior to the application of corrective weighting.

Age	Count	%
18 to 24 years	77	7%
25 to 34 years	256	23%
35 to 44 years	203	18%
45 to 54 years	191	17%
55 to 64 years	144	13%
65 to 74 years	134	12%
75+ years	96	9%

Employment Status	Count	%
Employed full-time (30 hours or more a week)	402	37%
Employed part-time (less than 30 hours a week)	123	11%
Employed zero-hours	8	1%
Seasonal or casual worker	0	0%
Self-employed or Company Director	33	3%
Unemployed & looking for work	78	7%
Retired	233	21%
Student	40	4%
Looking after family home	76	7%
Long term sick	86	8%
Not working (other)	11	1%
Prefer not to say	11	1%

Gender	Count	%
Male	515	47%
Female	586	53%
Other	0	0%
Prefer not to say	0	0%

Tenure	Count	%
Owned (outright or with a mortgage)	533	48%
Rent (Council)	267	24%
Rent (Housing association / social housing)	88	8%
Rent (private landlord)	170	15%
Other rented/living rent free	19	2%
Part rent and part mortgage	2	0%
Don't know	2	0%
Prefer not to say	20	2%

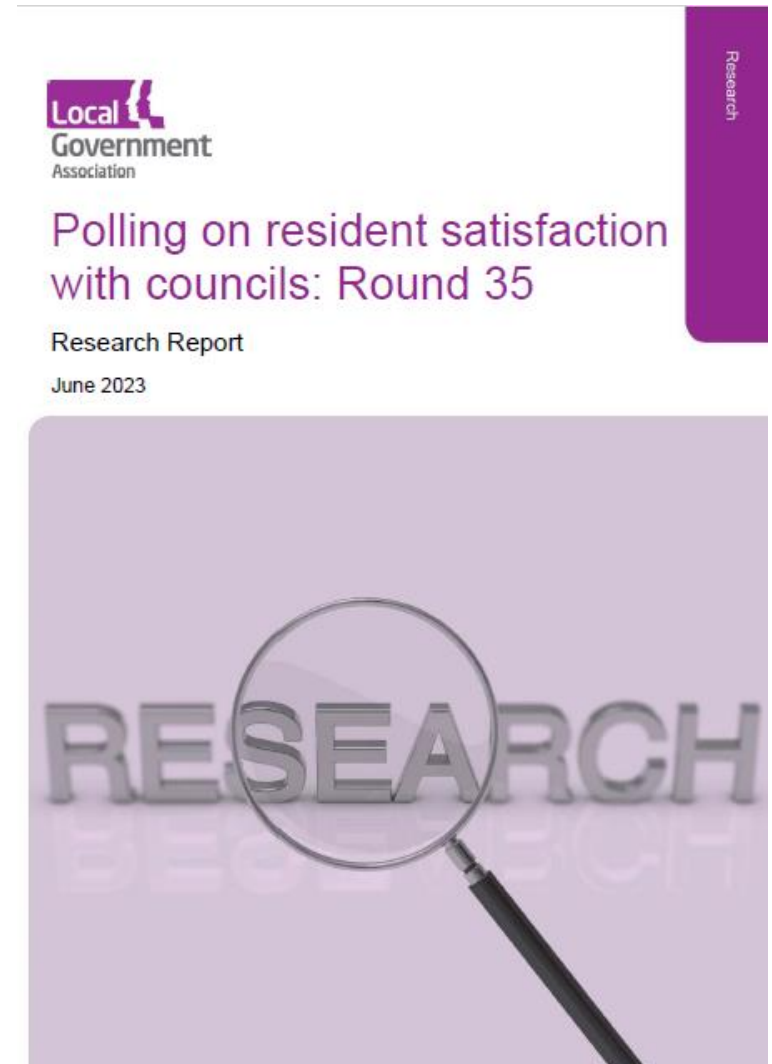
Health condition	Count	%
Yes	324	29%
No	769	70%
Prefer not to say	8	1%

Ethnic Origin	Count	%
English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British	615	56%
Irish	2	0%
Gypsy or Traveller	0	0%
Any other White background	50	5%
Black Caribbean & White	13	1%
Black African & White	4	0%
Asian & White	3	0%
Any other Mixed background	3	0%
Indian	179	16%
Pakistani	41	4%
Bangladeshi	29	3%
Chinese	4	0%
Any other Asian background	25	2%
African	52	5%
Caribbean	64	6%
Any other Black background	3	0%
Any other ethnic group	7	1%
Prefer not to say	7	1%

Town	Count	%
Oldbury	180	16%
Rowley Regis	178	16%
Smethwick	197	18%
Tipton	140	13%
Wednesbury	133	12%
West Bromwich	273	25%

# Benchmarking and comparisons

- The responses from Sandwell residents have also been compared to the LGA benchmarks, where possible. These are the result of ongoing LGA polling activity.
- Comparisons are made to the most recent dataset from June 2023. Between 8<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> June 2023, a representative sample of 1,001 British adults (18+) were polled by telephone to get their feedback on their local council and their satisfaction with nine council services.
- Individuals are also asked for their perceptions of the safety in their local area, trust in politicians and government and media coverage of councils.
- Where questions have remained consistent, we will also compare to the 2022 Sandwell Resident and Wellbeing Survey Results. Changes compared to the 2022 results will be indicated with ▲▼

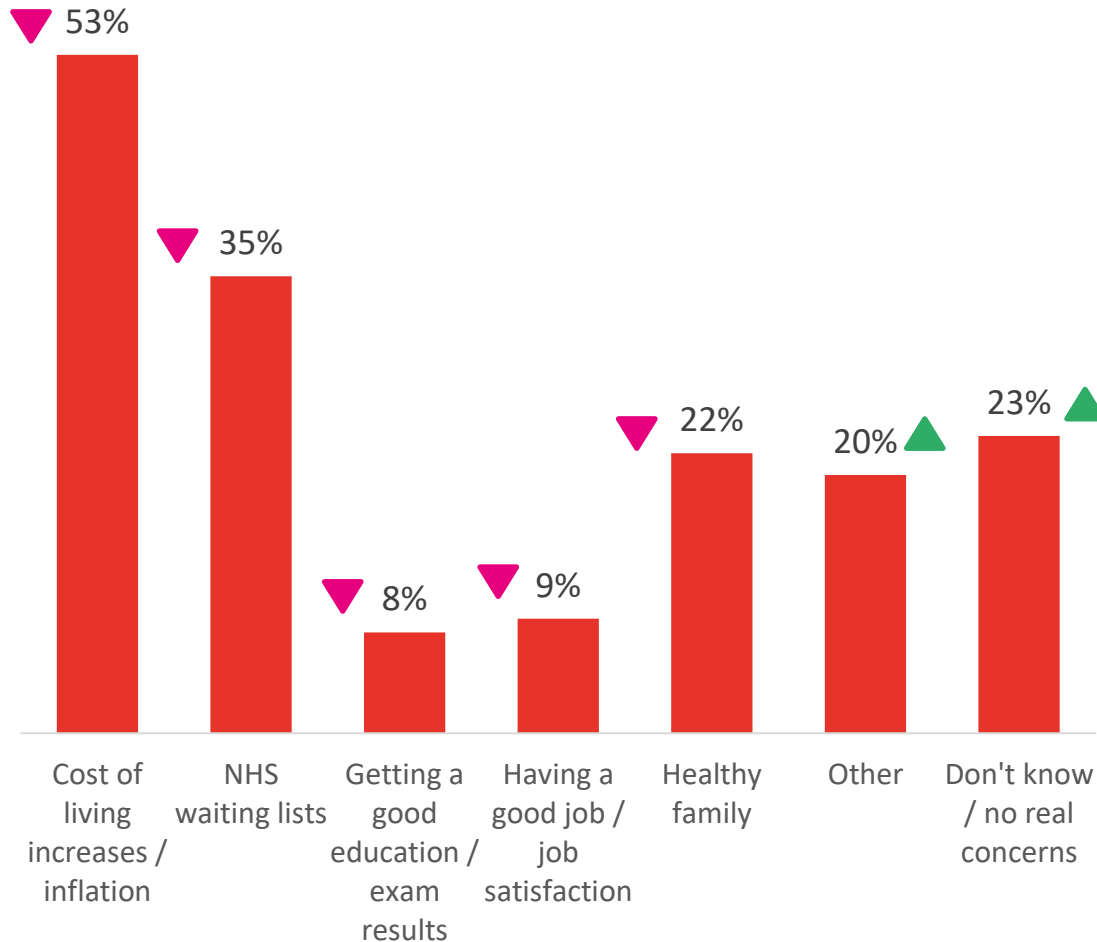




## Resident Concerns



# Family concerns



- When asked for their top 3 concerns, cost-of-living/inflation is the dominant concern (53%). This is a decline of 14 percentage points since 2022 (53% cf. 67%).
- NHS waiting lists remain the second most common concern, though the proportion of respondents who express that this is a concern for themselves, and their families has fallen by 4 percentage points since 2022. One in five cite family health as a concern (22%).
- Cost of living concerns are more prevalent amongst residents of Smethwick and Tipton (63% and 92% respectively). These concerns are less common amongst residents of Rowley Regis and Oldbury (34% and 32%).
- Residents of Rowley Regis and Oldbury are the most likely to say that they don't know or have no real concerns (31% and 35% respectively cf. 23%).
- Residents living in areas in the ACORN classification "Financially Stretched" are significantly more likely than other residents to be concerned about inflation (64%) and NHS waiting lists (45%), suggesting that these residents may need continued support despite the general sense more broadly that the cost-of-living crisis is now less of a concern.

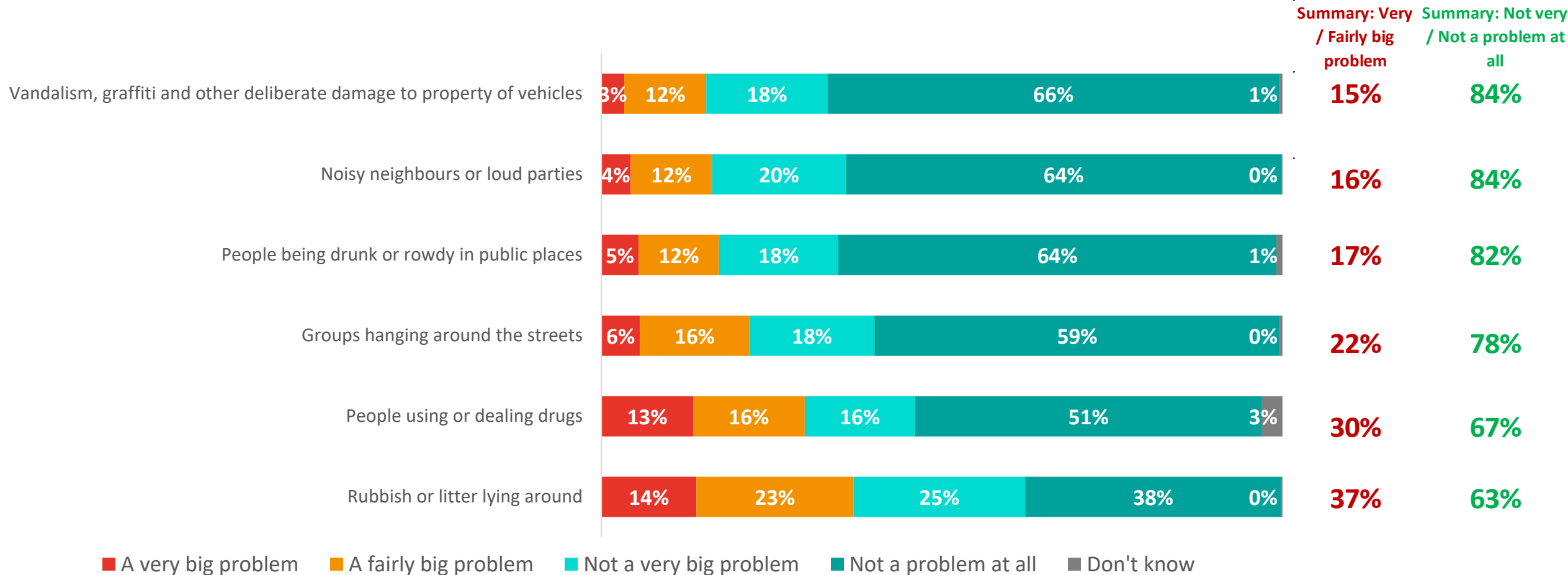


Q25. What three things give you the greatest concern for you and your family? Unweighted base: All respondents: 1,101  
 Note: In 2022 residents were asked whether they were concerned about Ukraine, this was not asked this year.



# Concerns in the local area

At neighbourhood level residents most commonly identify rubbish and litter as the biggest problem, with 37% suggesting this is an issue to some extent. Vandalism/graffiti is least commonly cited as a problem. Residents in Tipton are significantly more likely to consider all the options below (excluding noisy neighbours) a problem in their area, perhaps explaining the lower levels of satisfaction concerning the local area for these residents. In 2022, residents were most concerned with the number of people using or dealing drugs, which has now been surpassed by litter concerns.



Summary: Q6. Thinking about this local area, how much of a problem do you think each of the following are?

Unweighted base: All respondents: 1,101

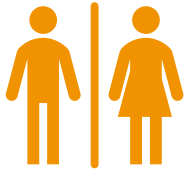
## Perceptions of neighbourhoods and community cohesion



# Overall Satisfaction with their local area



- 81% Sandwell residents are satisfied with their local area as a place to live, with just 10% dissatisfied. This level of satisfaction is 8-percentage points above the latest LGA benchmark (73%), and also represents a 3% increase in positive sentiment since 2022.



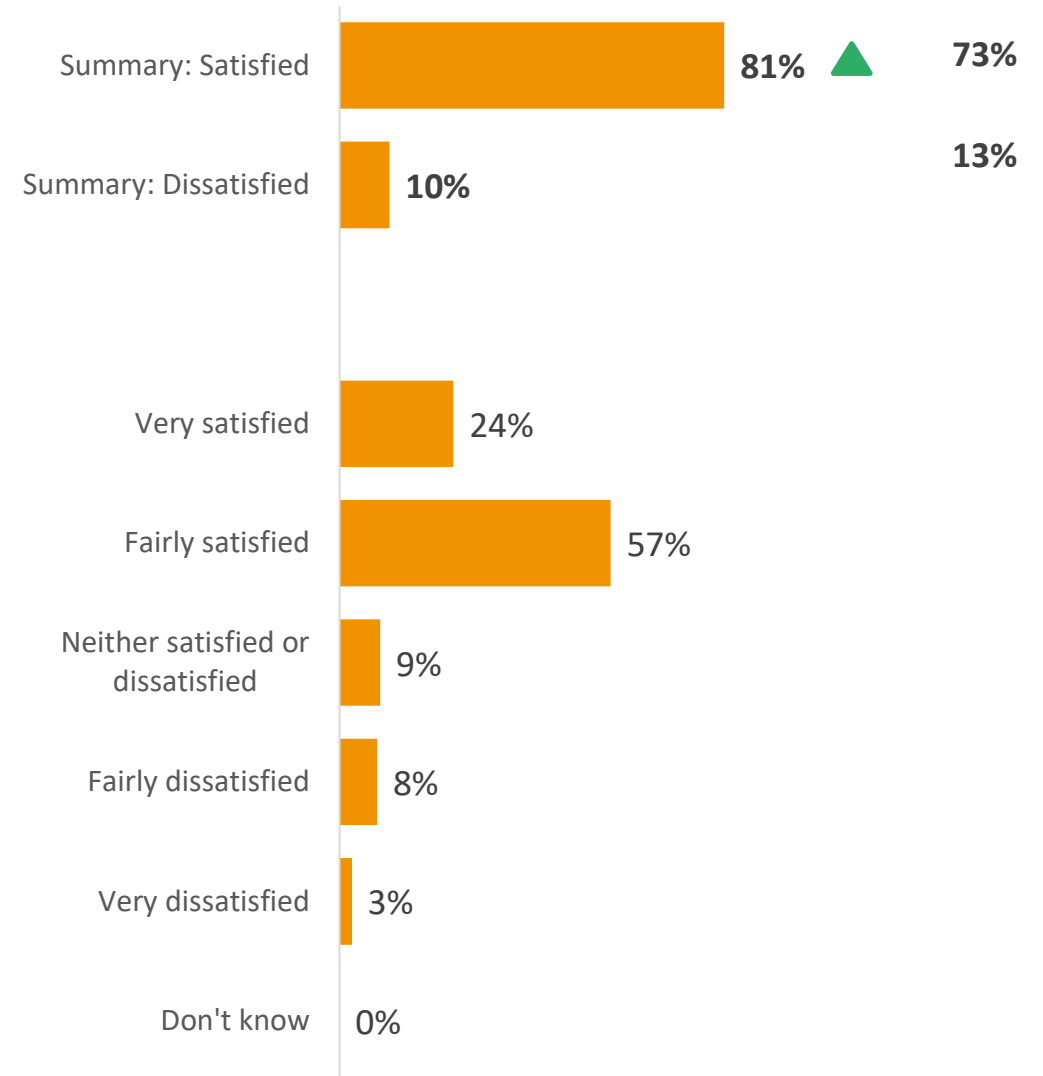
- Younger residents (aged 18 – 34) are the most likely to feel satisfied with their local area as a place to live (85%), with little variation amongst older residents. Women are more likely than men to feel satisfied with their local area (82% cf. 80%), though not significantly so.



- Looking at spatial variations, residents living in Rowley Regis are significantly more likely to be satisfied with their local area (93%), with residents living in Tipton significantly less likely to express satisfaction (68%).



LGA  
Benchmark  
June 2023



Q1. Overall how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your local area as a place to live?  
Unweighted base: All respondents: 1,101

# Sense of belonging



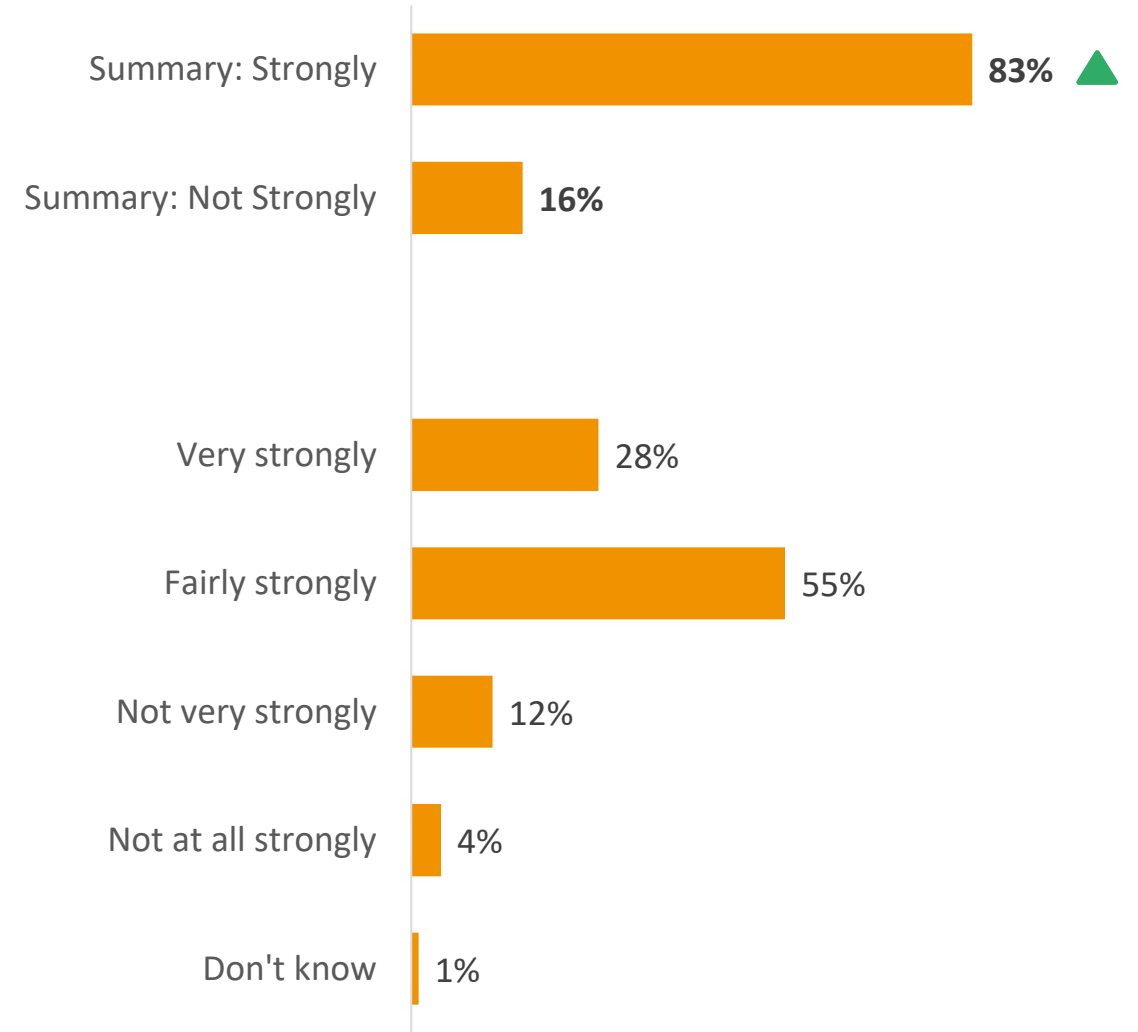
- More than eight in ten residents express a very or fairly strong sense of belonging to their area, with only 16% suggesting that they do not feel like they belong. The proportion of residents who feel a sense of belonging to their local area has remained largely stable compared to 2022 (83% cf. 82%).



- Older residents, aged 75+, are significantly more likely than other residents to feel a sense of belonging (93% cf. 83%). These residents are also significantly more likely to state that they feel a *very* strong sense of belong to their local area (52% cf. 28%).



- Those living in Rowley Regis (the town where overall satisfaction with the local area is highest) are significantly most likely to say they feel a strong sense of belonging to their area (90%).

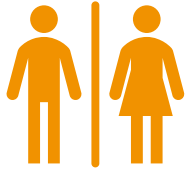


Q2. How strongly do you feel you belong to your local area?  
Unweighted base: All respondents: 1,101

# Community Cohesion



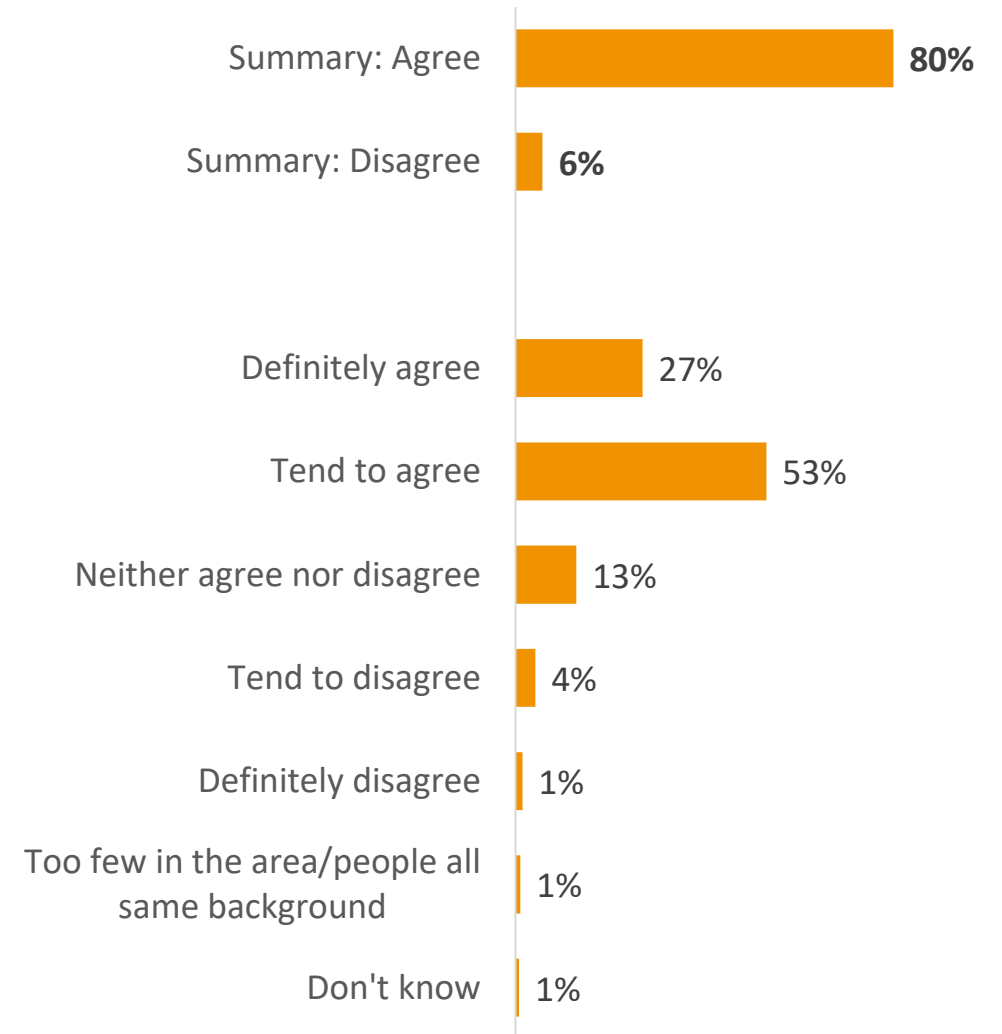
- Eight in ten (80%) Sandwell residents agree that their local is somewhere where people from different ethnic backgrounds get on well together. Just 6% disagree this is the case.



- Among residents of all ethnicities the balance of opinion regarding local community cohesion is strongly positive. However, it is notable that the strongest agreement to this question is found among those who are Asian/Asian British (85%) and Black/ Black British (85% relative to those who are white (77%).



- Residents of Tipton are significantly most likely to disagree that people of different ethnic backgrounds get on well together (11%)



# Community Cohesion



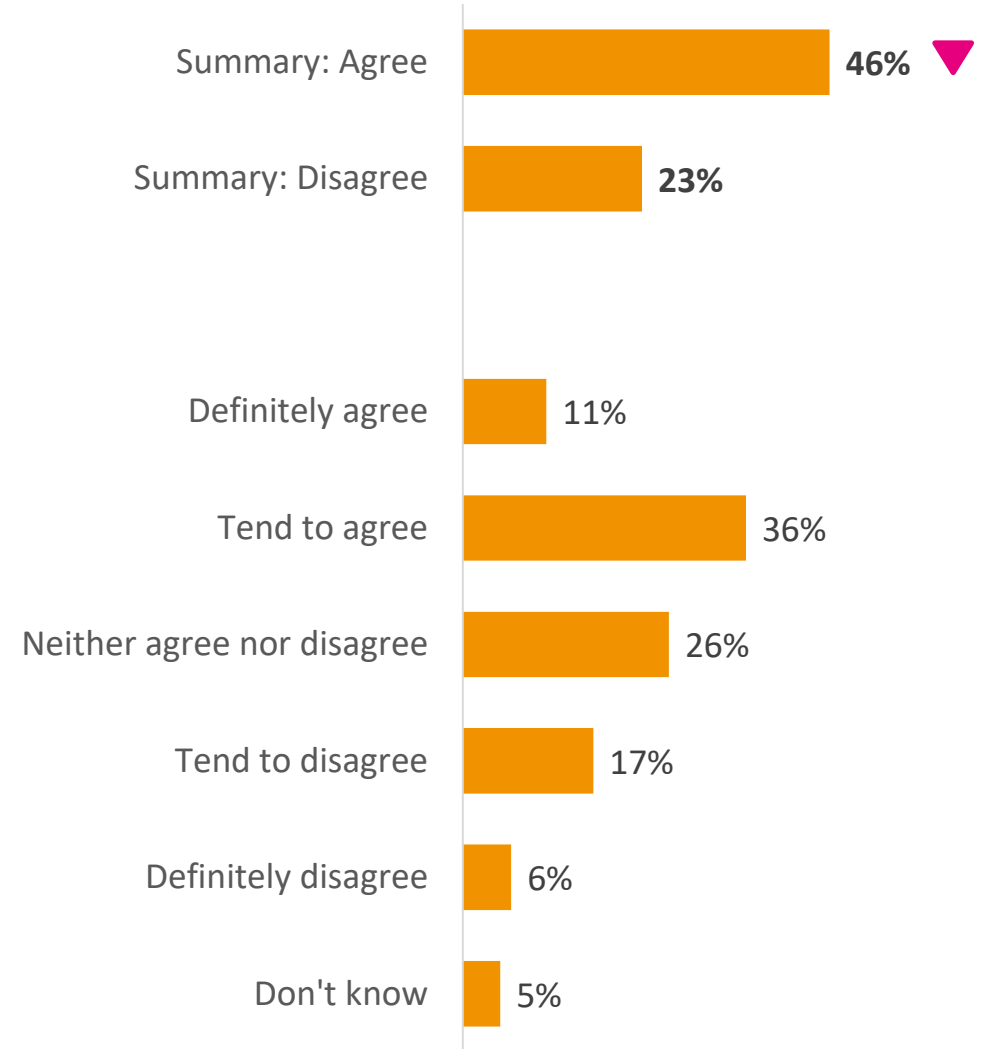
- Less than half of all the residents we spoke to said that they felt that people in their area come together to improve the local area (46%). Just over a fifth (23%) actively disagree that people come together to improve their area, with 26% neither agreeing nor disagreeing. The 46% of residents who agree that people in their area pull together represents a fall in positivity on this measure since 2022 (56%).



- Men are slightly more likely than women to agree that people in their local area pull together to improve their area (49% and 44% respectively), though this difference is not statistically significant. Whilst older residents are more likely to agree with this feature of their area (50%), there is little significant variation between age groups.



- Residents living in Wednesbury, Tipton and Rowley Regis are significantly less likely than other residents to agree that individuals in their area pull together (38%, 37% and 38%). At the other end of the spectrum, residents living in West Bromwich (56%) and Smethwick (57%) are significantly more likely to feel that people in their local area pull together to improve the local area.



Q4. To what extent do you agree or disagree that people in your local area pull together to improve the local area? Unweighted base: All respondents: 1,101



# Community Safety



# Perceptions of Safety – During the Day

LGA  
Benchmark  
June 2023



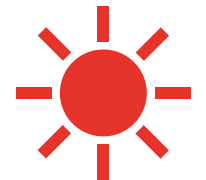
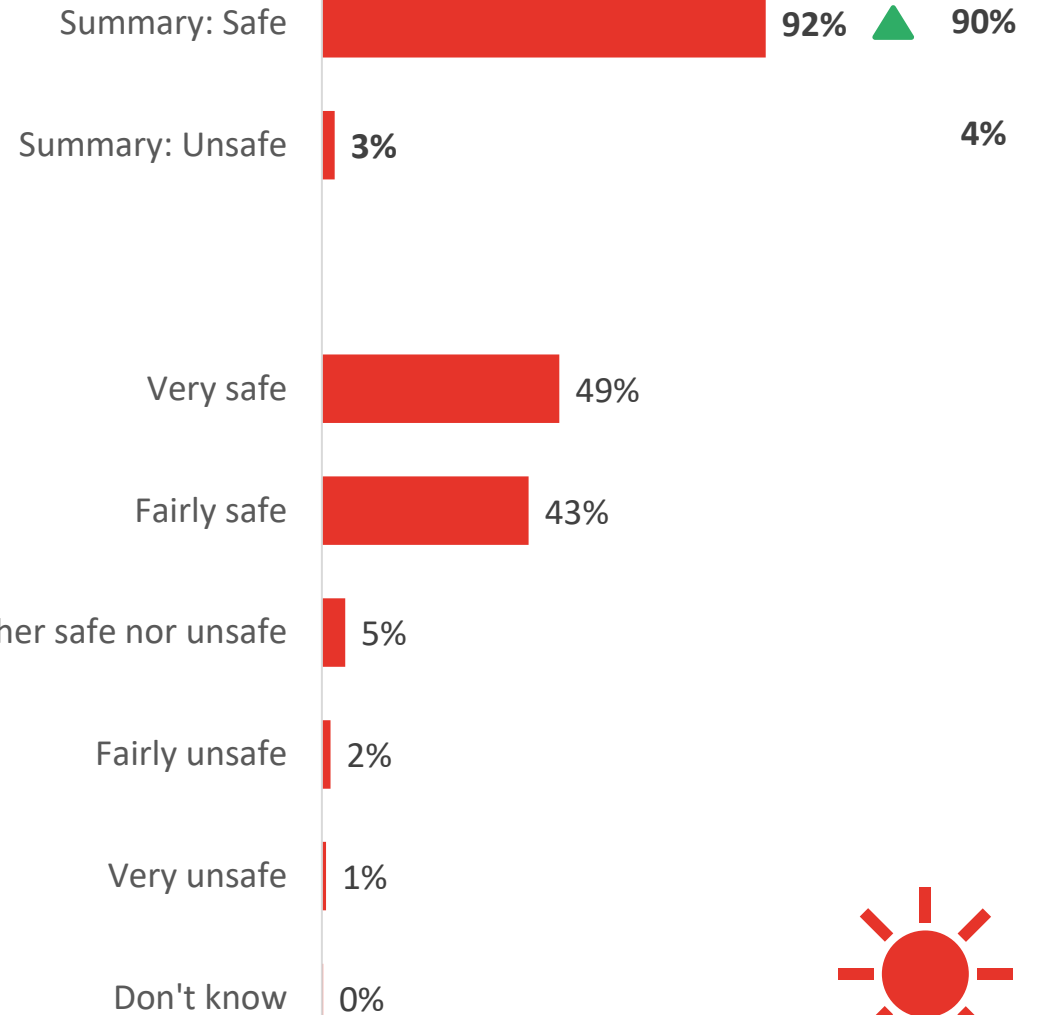
- Perceived safety during the day within Sandwell is in line with the national average. More than nine-in-ten residents (92%) feel safe in their local area during the day in line with June 23 LGA polling results (90%). The proportion feeling safe during the day in Sandwell has increased since 2022, rising from 87% to 92%.



- Female residents are more likely than their male counterparts to express concerns about their safety during the day (4% cf. 1%), showing that safety at any time of the day is of more concern for female residents, though this feeling of being unsafe is more pronounced after dark (see next slide).



- A majority of residents in all six Sandwell towns feel safe in their local area during the day. However, residents of Tipton are significantly less likely to say that they feel safe in their area during the day (85% cf. 92%), with 6% feeling unsafe.



# Perceptions of Safety – After Dark

LGA  
Benchmark  
June 2023



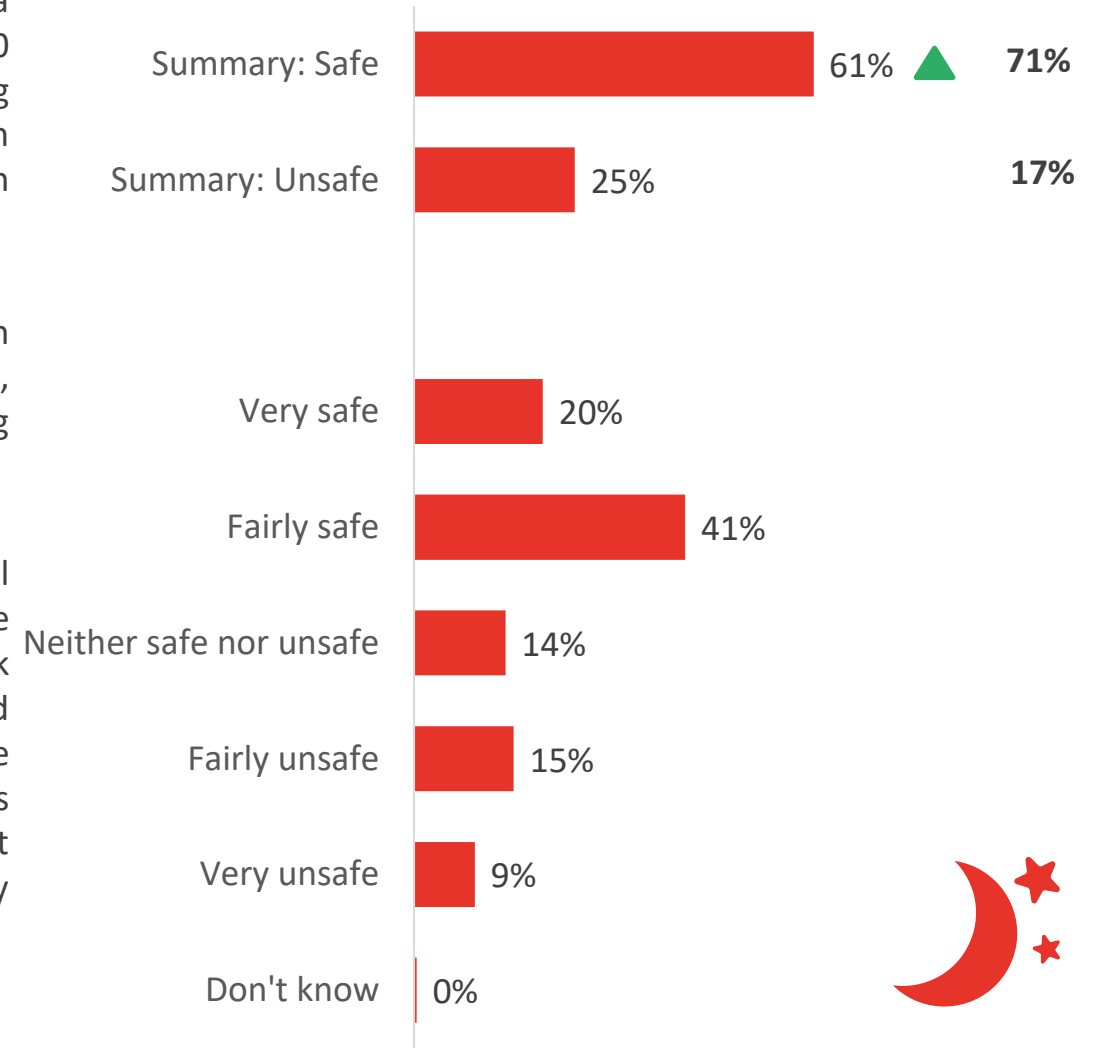
- Less than two-thirds of Sandwell residents feel safe in their local area after dark, this is substantially lower than the LGA benchmark (-10 percentage points), with 25% feeling unsafe after dark. Despite falling below the LGA Benchmark, this year's score is a substantial increase in the proportion of residents who feel safe in their area after dark (an increase of 11 percentage points).



- Feeling unsafe is more prominent amongst female residents (32%), with only 52% saying they feel safe after dark, compared to 71% of men, showing a clear gendered dimension to perceptions of safety. Feeling unsafe is also more pronounced amongst residents aged 55 – 74 (33%).



- Wednesbury is also an area where a greater proportion of residents feel unsafe after dark (36% cf. 25%). Residents living in Wednesbury are twice as likely as other residents to state that they feel very unsafe after dark (18% cf. 9%), showing that only are more residents in this area concerned about their safety after dark but also the magnitude of this fear is more pronounced. To contextualise these results this dataset also shows residents in Wednesbury are amongst the most likely to say they do not feel they belong to their local area (23%) and that people in Wednesbury do not pull together to improve their area (31%).



## Satisfaction with the Council



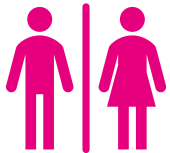
# Overall Satisfaction with Sandwell Council

LGA  
Benchmark  
June 2023



- Approximately two-thirds of Sandwell residents are satisfied with the way that Sandwell Council runs things, with 18% dissatisfied. This level of satisfaction is 4-percentage points above the latest LGA benchmark and levels of dissatisfaction broadly in line with the benchmark. The majority of residents state that they are “fairly” satisfied with the Council, suggesting there is some room for improvement.

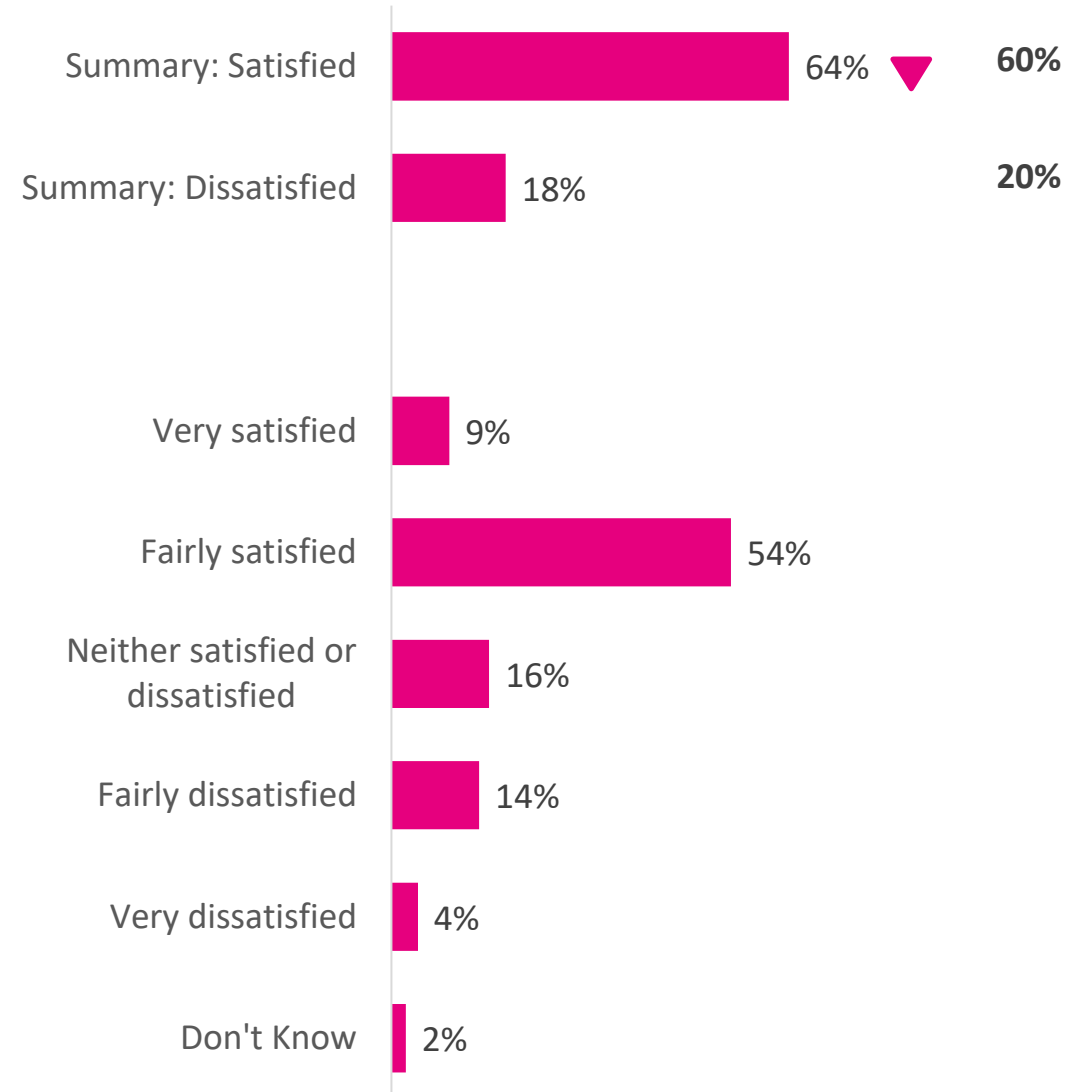
- Compared with 2022, satisfaction with the way Sandwell Council runs things has stayed largely stable, falling by 2 percentage point from 66%. This stability is notable in the context of the disruption to waste collection services due to industrial action in summer 2023.



- Male and female residents express similar level of satisfaction with the way Sandwell Council runs things (63% and 64% respectively). Residents aged 75+ are significantly more likely than younger residents to express satisfaction with the Council (77%), with residents aged 18 – 34 the least likely to be satisfied (61%).



- Residents living in Rowley Regis are significantly more likely than residents of the other areas to say that they are satisfied with the way in which Sandwell Council runs things (72%). There is no significant variation between the other areas regarding satisfaction with the Council.

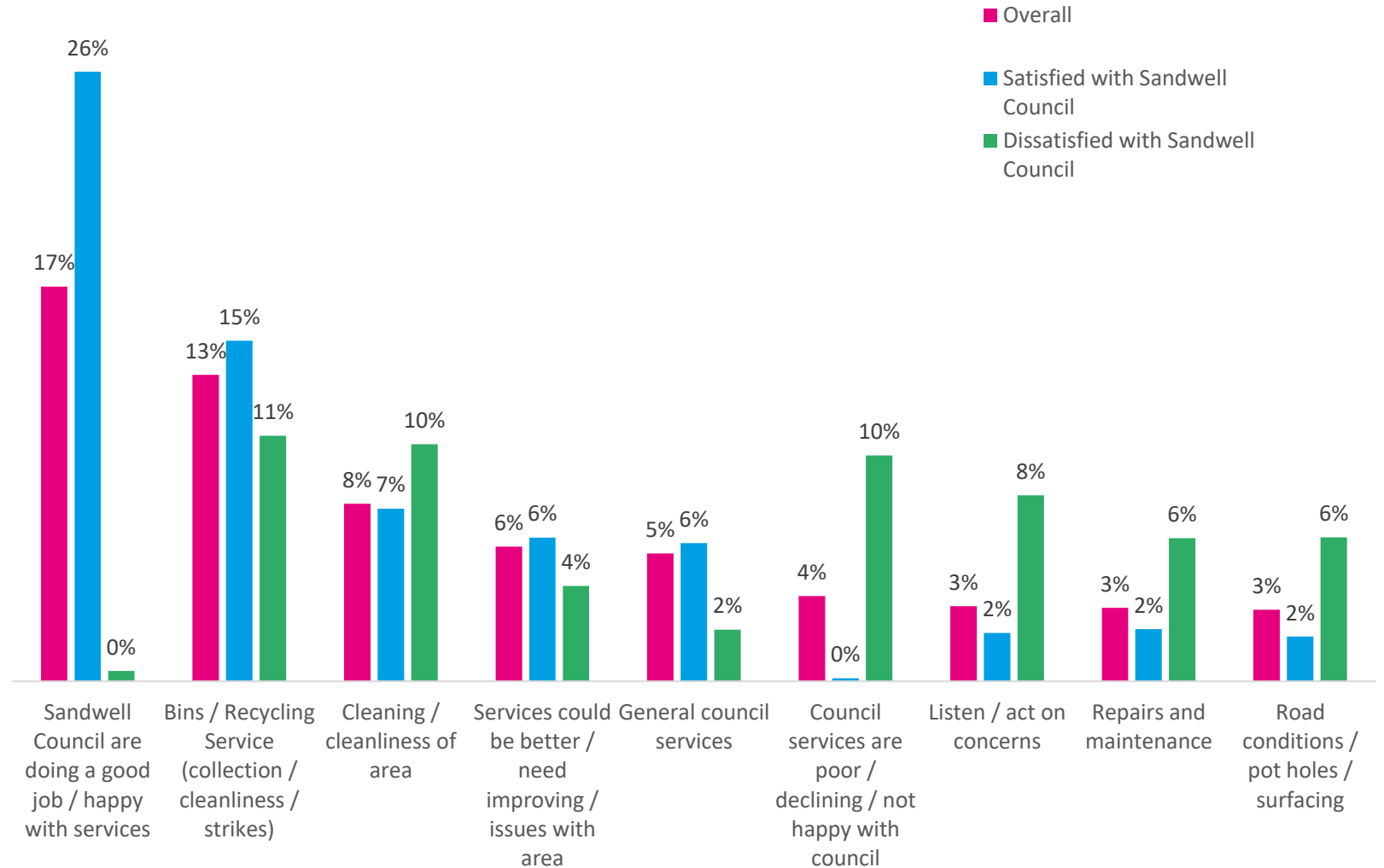


Q7. Overall how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with Sandwell Council runs things?  
Unweighted Base: All responses: 1101



# Reasons for Satisfaction with Sandwell Council

- In order to inform future improvement, residents were asked what they had thought about when rating their overall satisfaction with the way Sandwell Council runs things.
- Beyond general positivity/satisfaction with the services received, waste and recycling services and street cleanliness appear to be key influences (with some mentions of recent strike action).
- Among those who are dissatisfied with the council, waste collection and street scene issues remain influential along with general perceptions of service decline; a lack of acting upon concerns and the more specific issues of repairs and maintenance and potholes.

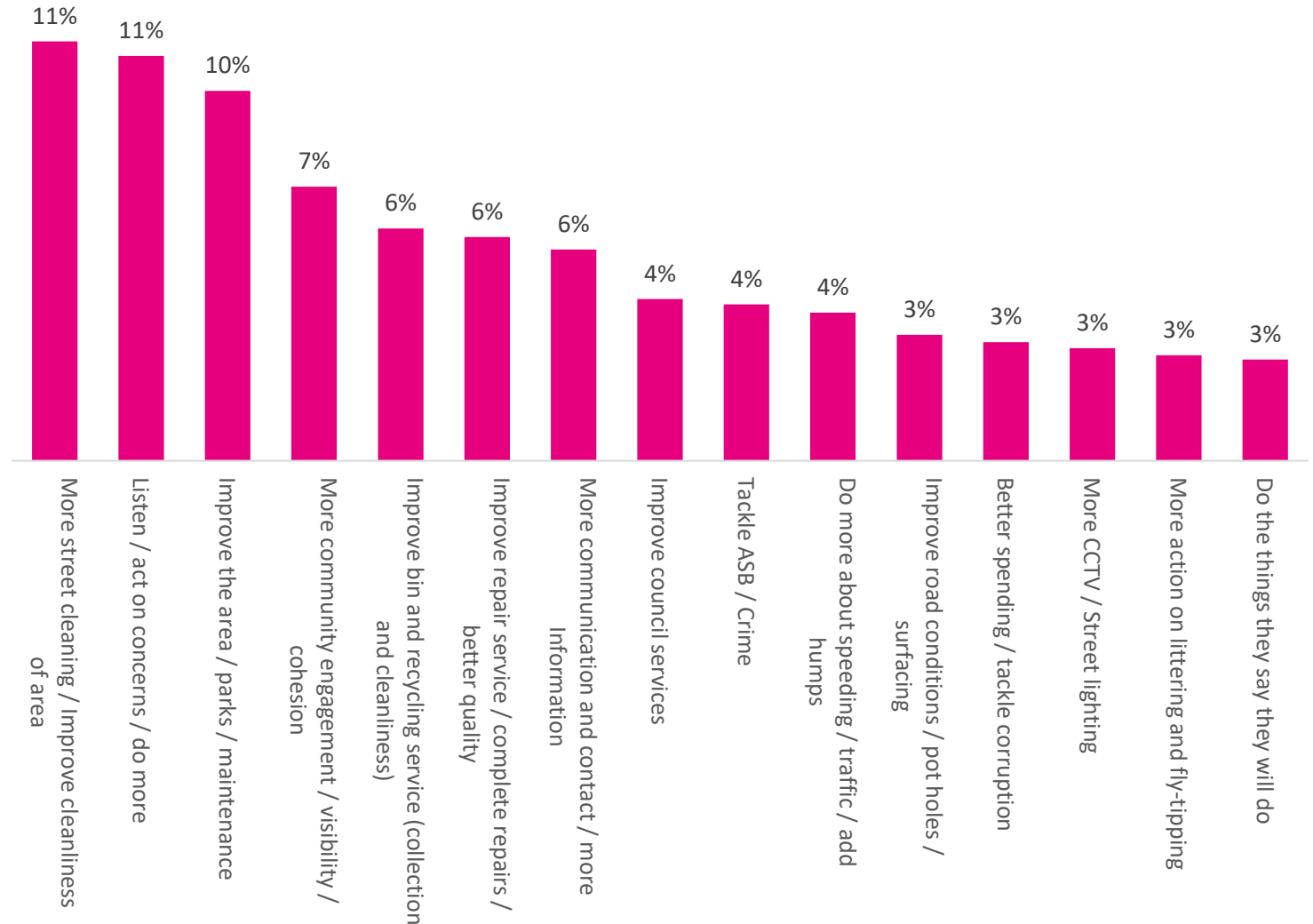


Q7b. What things did you think about rating your satisfaction with the local authority? What things shape your views of Sandwell Council? Unweighted Base: Valid Responses:1023  
Results under 3% not displayed in graph



# Ways to improve Satisfaction with the Council

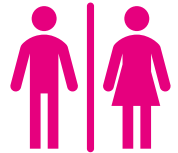
- Residents who expressed dissatisfaction with the way that the Council does things, were asked what would make them feel more positive about Sandwell Council.
- Among the wide range of thoughts provided the most common themes are street cleaning and the maintenance of public spaces such as parks, and inter-related with this, waste collection services. These responses therefore echo those summarised on the previous slide.
- There also appears to be an appetite for improving the extent to which residents' views are listened to and acted upon (including public engagement).



# Listening to Residents



- While there is some appetite for Sandwell Council to listen more, current perceptions of this aspect of Council activity are above the national average. Around half of residents believe that Sandwell Council listens and acts on the concerns of residents to at least a fair extent (52%). This is equal to the latest LGA benchmark (also 52%). Among Sandwell residents this measure has seen a decline since 2022, decreasing from 60% to 52%.



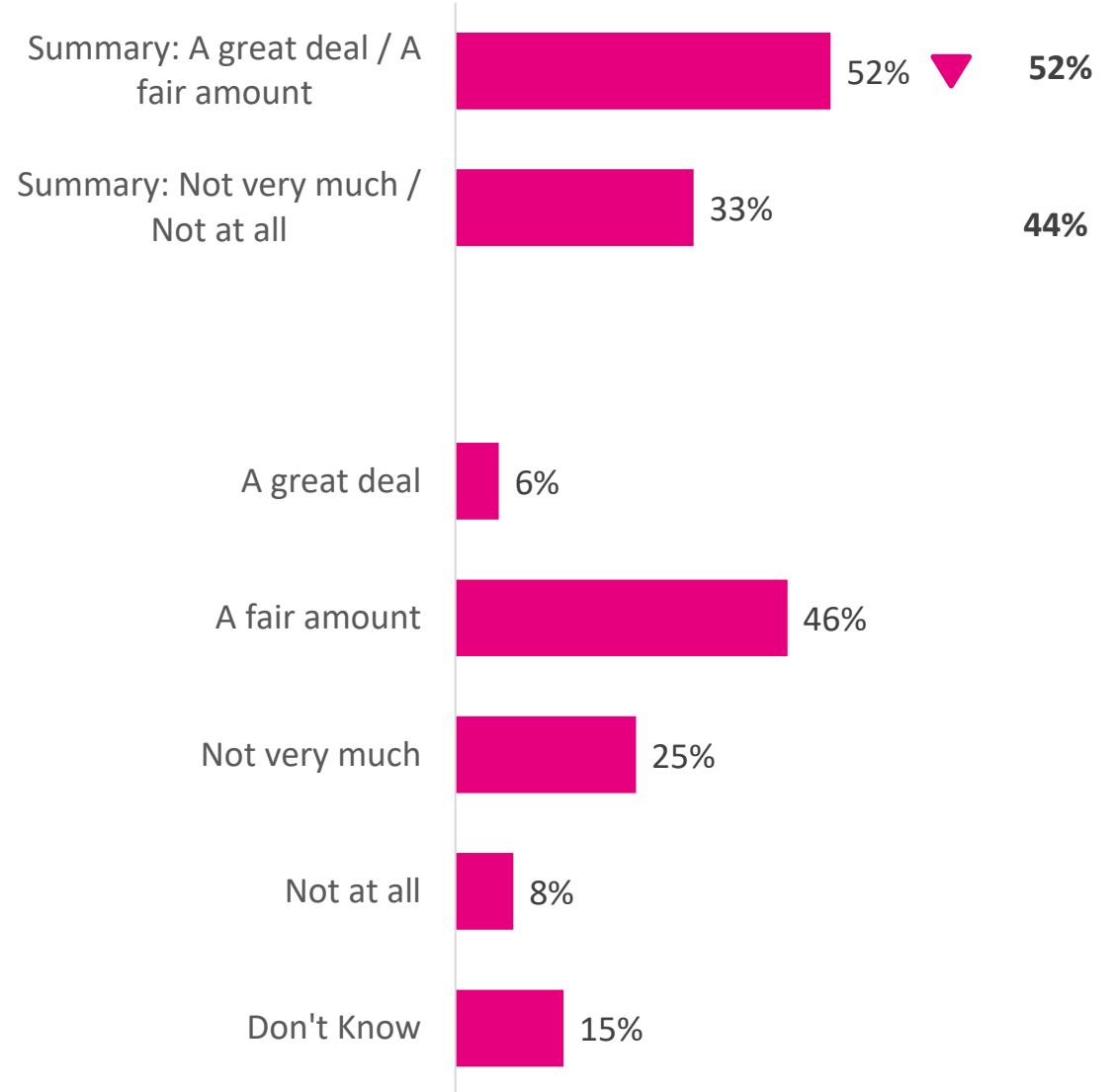
- Residents aged 75+ are more likely to express the sentiment that the council acts on their concerns either a fair amount or great deal (56%), with younger residents being less likely to believe this.



- Wednesbury residents are the least likely to feel that their concerns are acted on by the council, with only 46% feeling the council is responsive. Both Tipton and Wednesbury residents are significantly more likely than other residents to feel that their concerns are not acted upon “at all” (14% and 17% respectively). These residents are also the least likely to be satisfied with the way the council runs things.



LGA  
Benchmark  
June 2023

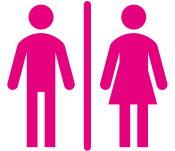


# Keeping Residents Informed

LGA  
Benchmark  
June 2023



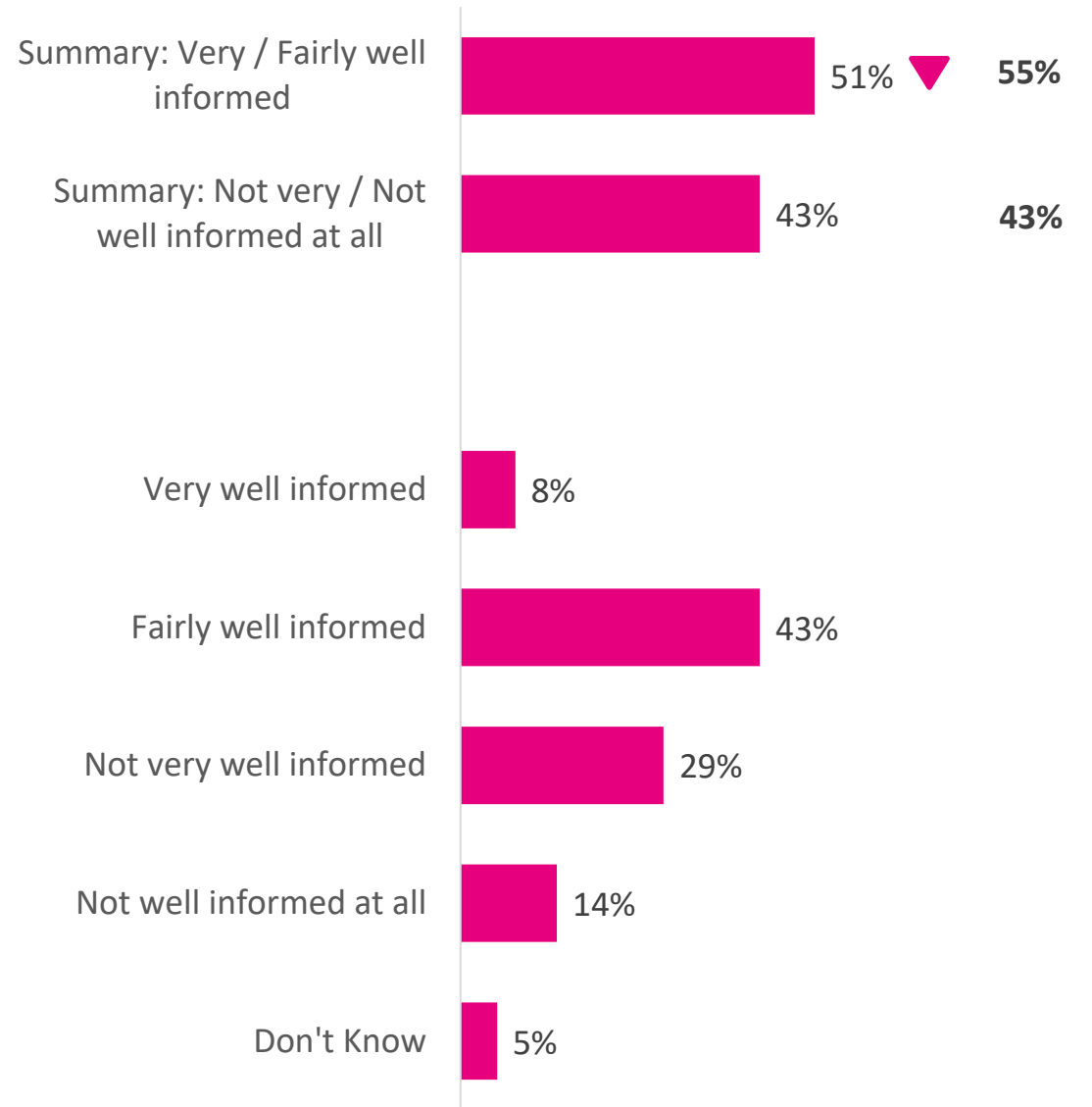
- Just over half of residents feel that they are kept adequately informed about the benefits and services Sandwell Council provides (51%), with 43% responding that they are not kept informed about benefits and services. This is slightly behind the LGA benchmark (51% cf. 55% and 43% cf. 43%). There has been a drop in the proportion of residents who feel that they are kept informed compared to 2022 (a fall of 9 percentage points). The LGA benchmark comparison between 2022 and 2023, has also fallen, though by a smaller proportion, suggesting this fall is part of a larger trend.



- There is little variation in sentiment that residents are kept adequately informed about the benefits and services Sandwell provides between residents aged over 35. However, residents aged 18 – 34 are significantly less likely to feel informed (45%), indicating a need for further engagement with younger residents.



- Following on from the lower level of satisfaction with the responsiveness of the Council, residents in Wednesbury are again less likely to feel very or fairly well informed (44% cf. 51%). This would seem to suggest that there is a lack of transparent communication between residents in Wednesbury and the Council.

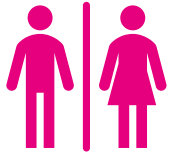


# Trust in the Council

LGA  
Benchmark  
June 2023



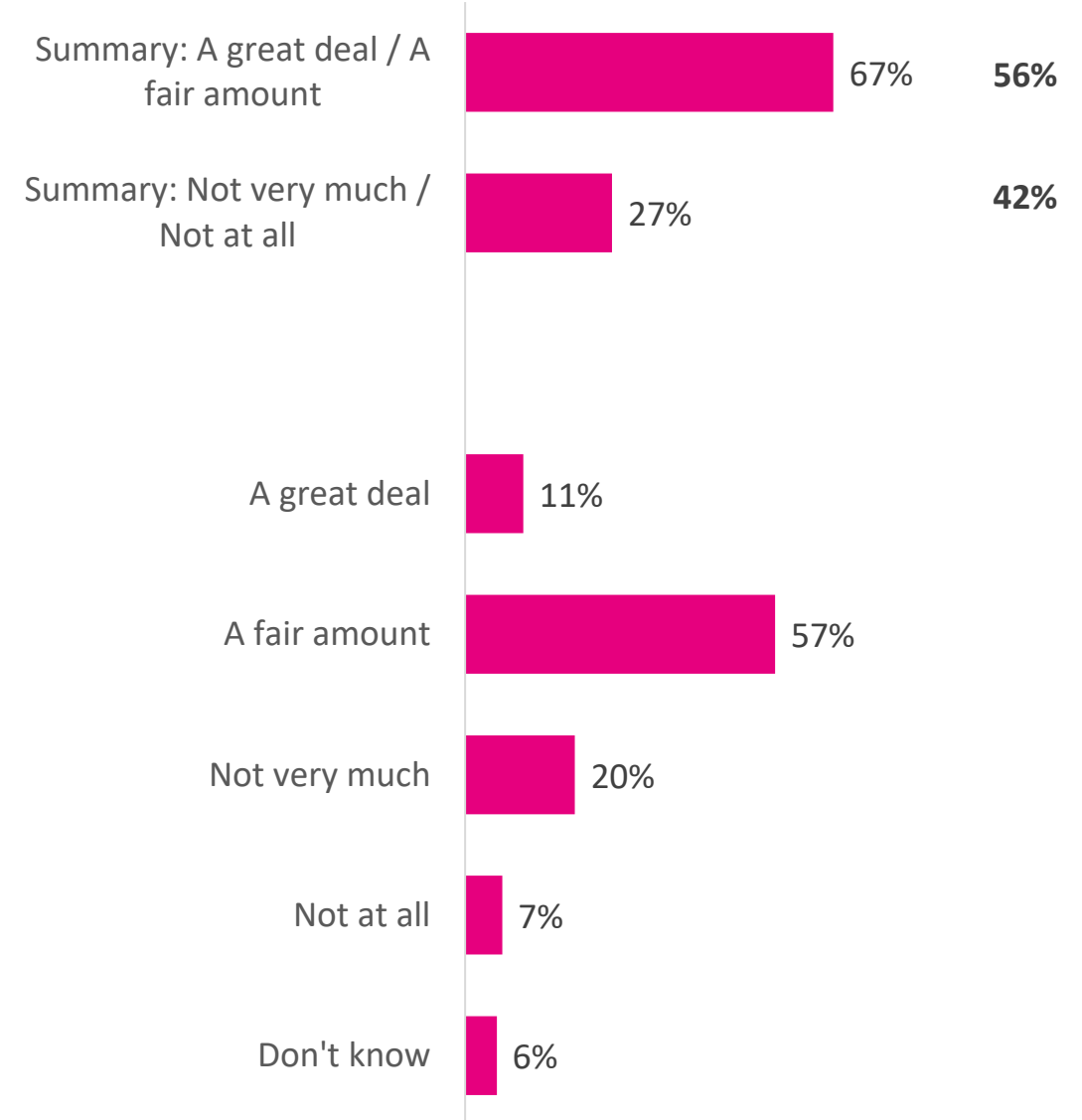
- More than two-thirds of the residents we talked to trust Sandwell Council, this sits eleven percentage points above the LGA benchmark. The majority state that they trust the Council a fair amount rather than a great amount. Compared to 2022, trust has stayed consistent remaining at 67%.



- There is little variation in the level of trust experienced by residents, with female residents marginally more trusting than male residents. Residents aged 75+ are the most likely to trust the council (76% cf. 67%), though this difference is not statistically significant.



- Trust in the council follows a similar trend to agreement that the council is responsive to resident concerns and the belief that the Council keeps residents adequately informed, with residents living in Wednesbury significantly less likely to express trust in the council (60% cf. 67%).

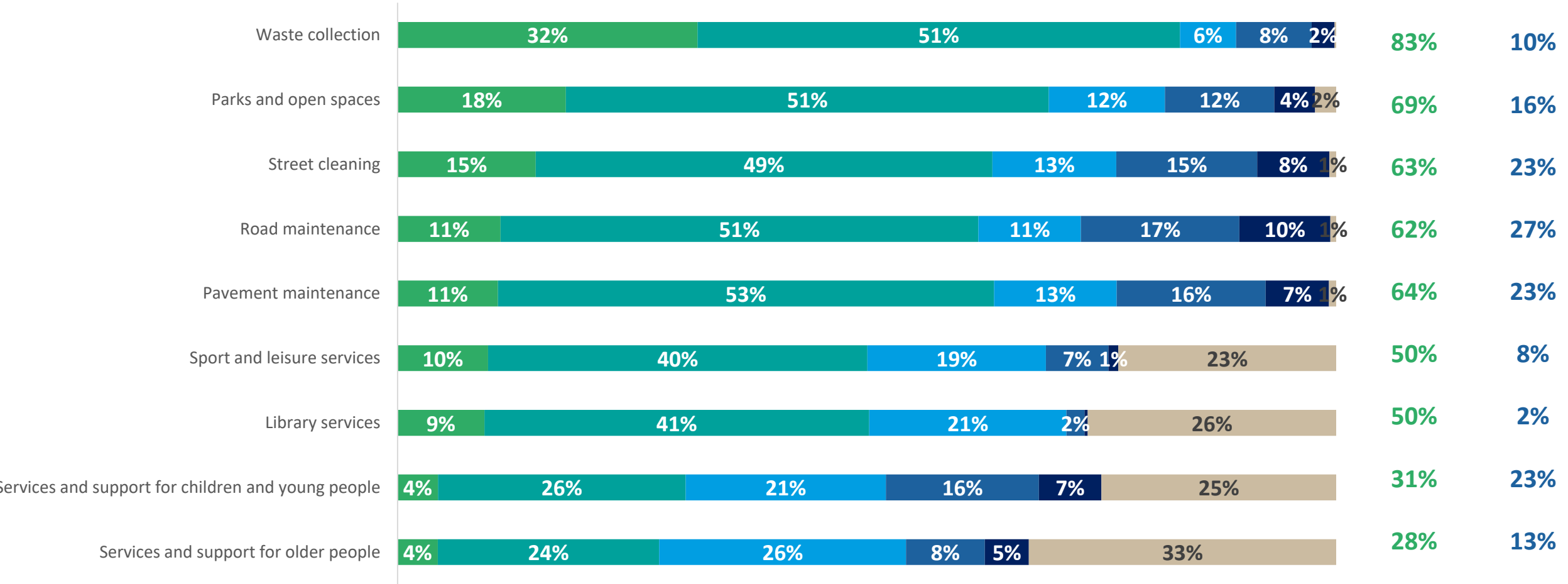


## **Satisfaction with the Services the Council provides**



# Satisfaction with Council Services

Summary: Satisfied      Summary: Dissatisfied



■ Very satisfied   
 ■ Fairly satisfied   
 ■ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied   
 ■ Fairly dissatisfied   
 ■ Very dissatisfied   
 ■ Don't know



Summary: Q13. How satisfied or dissatisfied you are overall with the council's...? Unweighted base: All respondents: 1,101



# Satisfaction with Council Services

Since 2022, satisfaction with parks and open spaces, street cleaning, sports and leisure centres, and services for older and young people has dropped. Whereas satisfaction with waste collection, road and pavement maintenance and library services, have increased.



- More than four-fifths (83%) of residents are satisfied with the council's waste collection services. This is 5 percentage points (pp) higher than the LGA polling benchmark (78%) and 5pp lower than the score in 2022. On this basis satisfaction with this service appears to have been impacted by the industrial action that happened over the summer.



- 69% of residents are satisfied with parks and open spaces in their area. This is 11pp below the LGA benchmark (80%). This satisfaction is unchanged from 2022 (70%).



- 63% of residents are satisfied with street cleaning in their area. This is 4 percentage points lower than in 2022, and is in line with the LGA benchmark (64%). Residents living in Smethwick (55%) are significantly less likely to be satisfied with street cleaning in their area.



- 62% of residents and 64% of residents are satisfied with the road and pavement maintenance provided by the council respectively. Both of these represent an improvement in satisfaction since 2022. Satisfaction with road and pavement maintenance in 2022 sat at 50% and 61% respectively.



- Sports centres and libraries have lower satisfaction (50% both), though levels of active dissatisfaction are very low (8% and 2% respectively). It is more likely the low levels of satisfaction with these services is the result of many residents feeling unable to say they are satisfied or dissatisfied, perhaps due to not using the services. Looking at the 2022 results satisfaction with these services, satisfaction with library services has stayed stable (49% cf. 50%) whilst satisfaction with sports and leisure services has dropped from 56% to 50% in 2023.

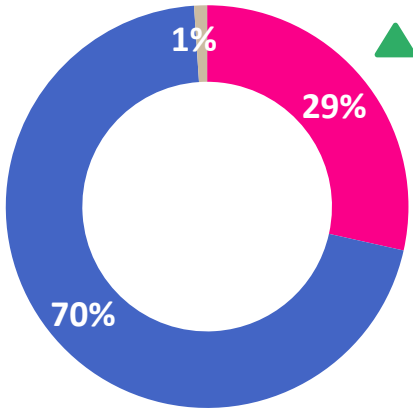
## Contacting the Council



# Contact with Council

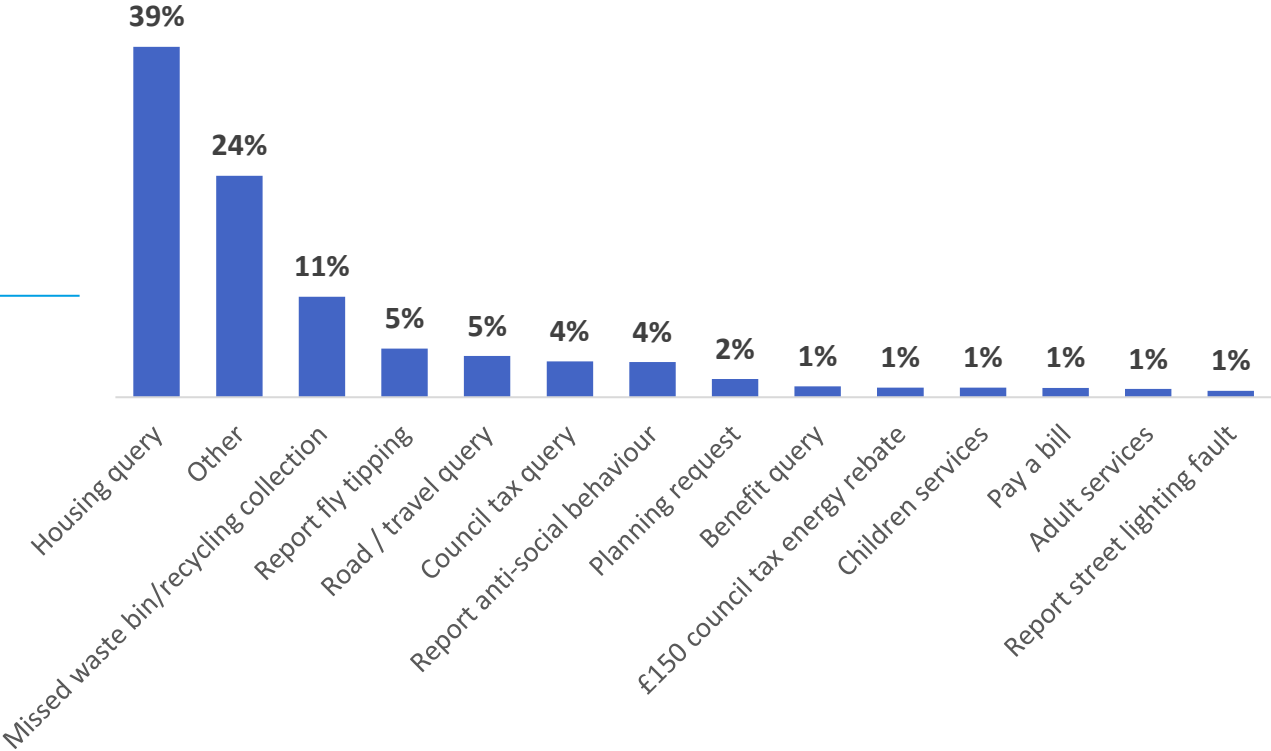
Three in ten (29%) residents said that they had had reason to contact the council in the past 3 months (2% more residents than in 2022). Of these, 39% contacted about a general housing query (an increase of 15%), 24% said "other" and 11% stated that they had contacted due to a missed bin collection.

## Have you recently (last three months) had cause to contact the Council?



■ Yes ■ No ■ Don't Know

## What was this for?



Q14. Have you recently (last three months) had cause to contact the Council? Unweighted base: All respondents: 1,101  
 Q15. What was this for Unweighted Base: Those who had contacted the council: 308

# Single contact number

All residents were asked if they would prefer a single contact number for all council services. In response:

**45%** said they would

**55%** said that they would not

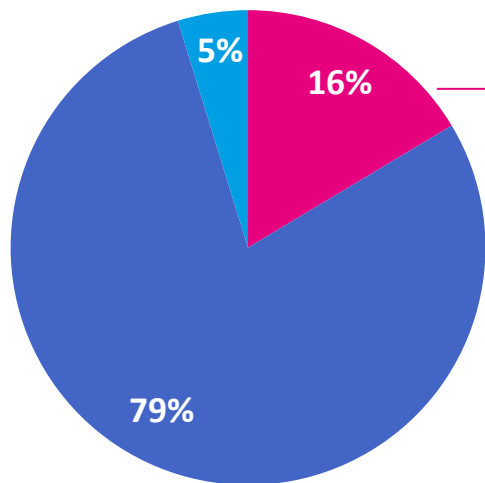
Among those who have contacted the council in the last 12 months there is marginally more support for a single contact number option (48%), but this is still a minority. Overall, therefore there is no clear public consensus on this issue.



# Contact with Council

A majority of 79% do not think that there is anything that makes it difficult for them to access council services. However, 16% of residents do feel that there are barriers. Further analysis does not clearly identify if these barriers are spatial/ geographic or if they relate to the individual's own needs or skills.

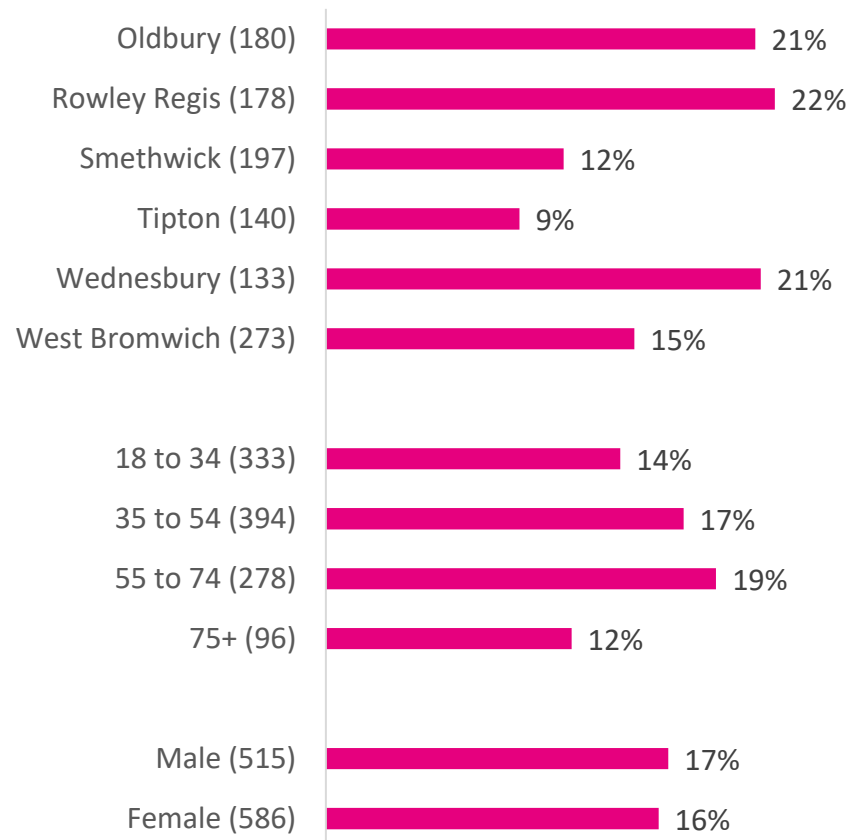
Is there anything that makes it difficult for you to access the Council services you need?



- Yes
- No
- Don't know/prefer not to say



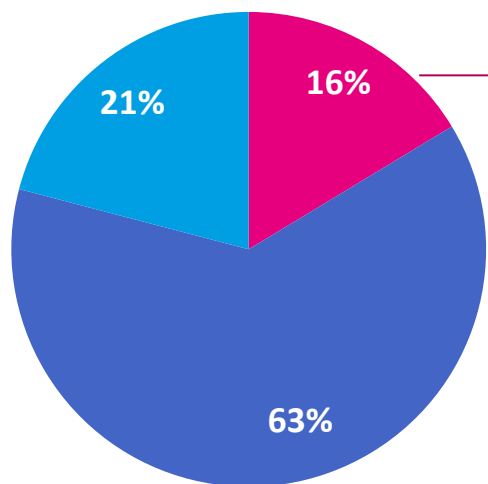
% Yes



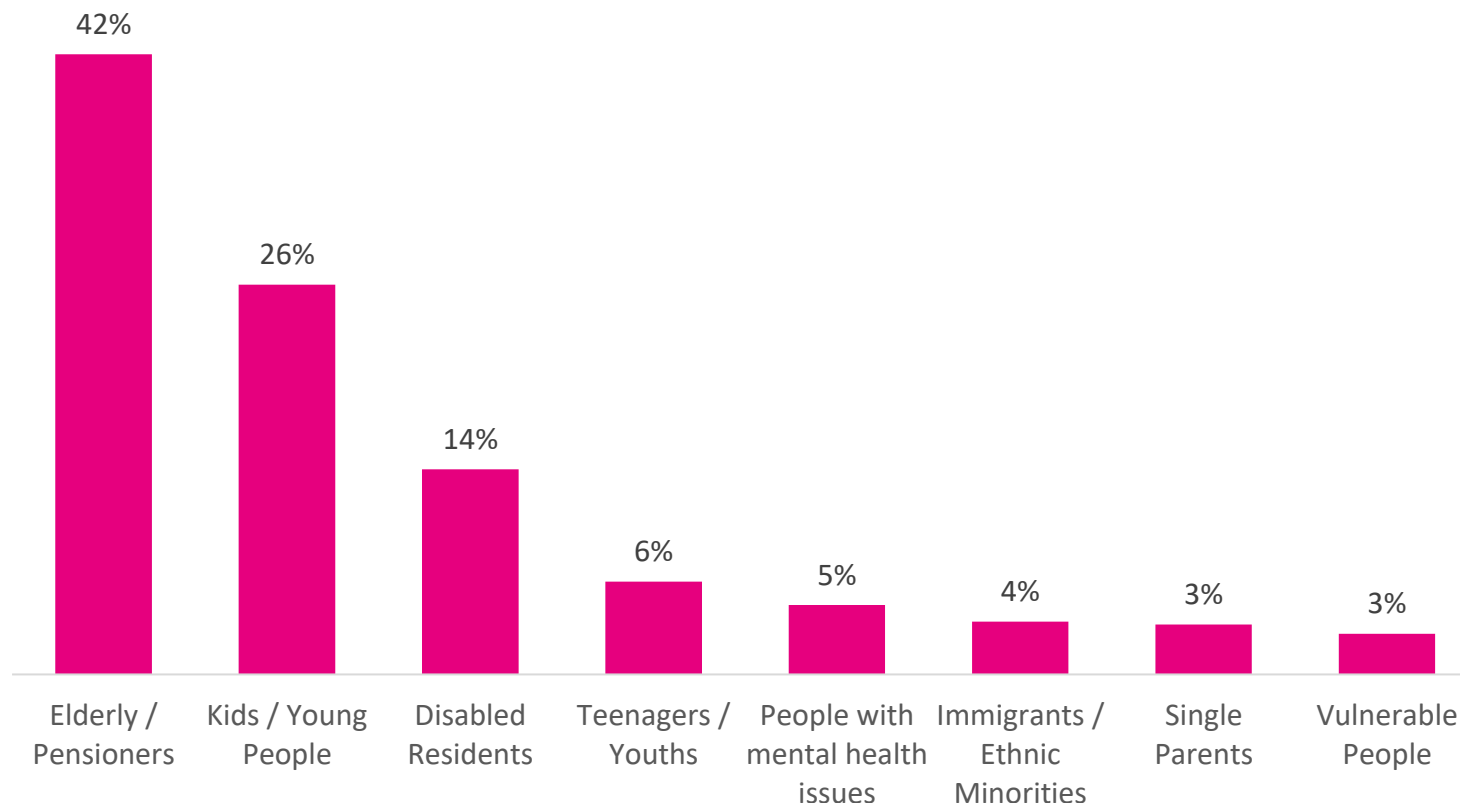
# Contact with Council

16% of residents believe that there are groups within their communities who do not get sufficient support. Residents in Rowley Regis are significantly more likely to state there are groups within their community who need further support (27% cf. 16%). When asked which groups needed more support residents most frequently mentioned the elderly (42%), followed by young people (26%).

Thinking about your community, are there any groups that you think do not get the support that they need?



- Yes
- No
- Don't know/prefer not to say

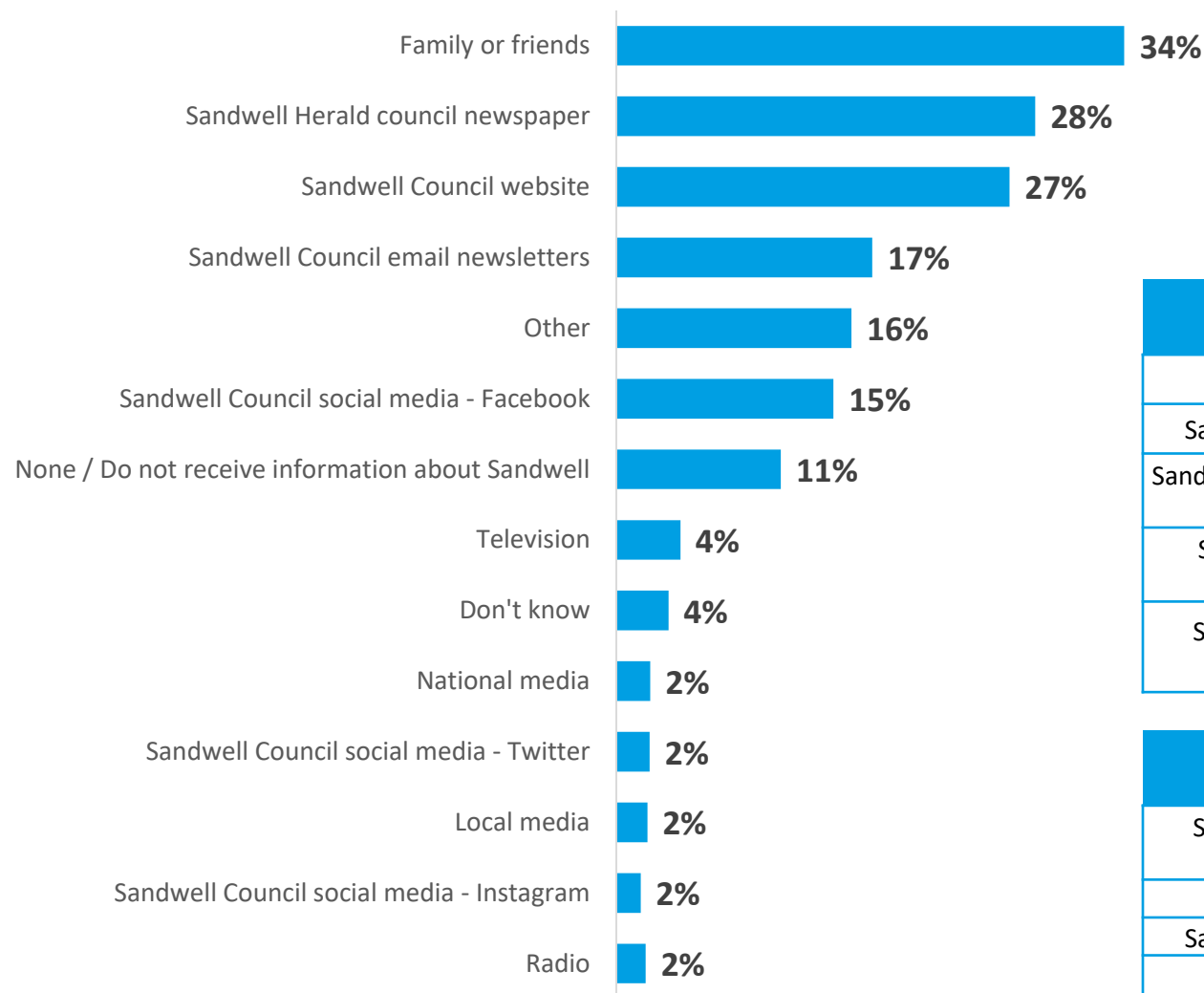




# Communication from the Council



# Hearing news about the Council



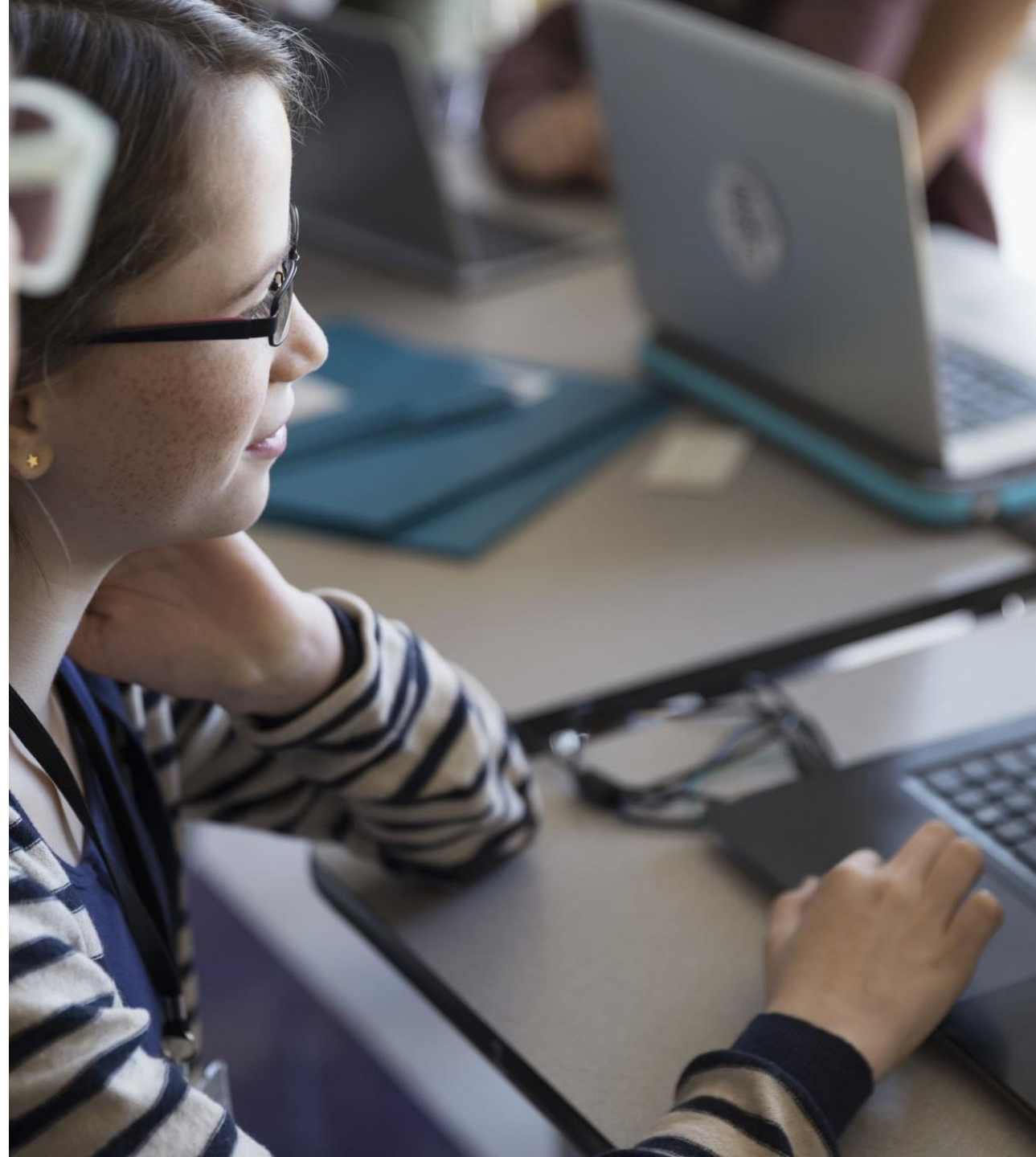
- Just over a third of residents get their news about what is happening in Sandwell and what the council is doing, from family and friends. Word of mouth is more commonly cited as an information source than any of the Council's direct communication channels (Herald newspaper 28%, website).

Key channels by age			
	18 to 34		35 to 54
Family or friends	34%	Sandwell Council website	35%
Sandwell Council website	27%	Family or friends	33%
Sandwell Council social media - Facebook	22%	Sandwell Herald council newspaper	27%
Sandwell Council email newsletters	19%	Sandwell Council email newsletters	19%
Sandwell Herald council newspaper	14%	Sandwell Council social media - Facebook	17%

Key channels by age			
	55 to 74		75+
Sandwell Herald council newspaper	39%	Sandwell Herald council newspaper	51%
Family or friends	38%	Family or friends	33%
Sandwell Council website	21%	Other	20%
Other	19%	None / Do not receive information about Sandwell	11%
Sandwell Council email newsletters	16%	Sandwell Council email newsletters	11%



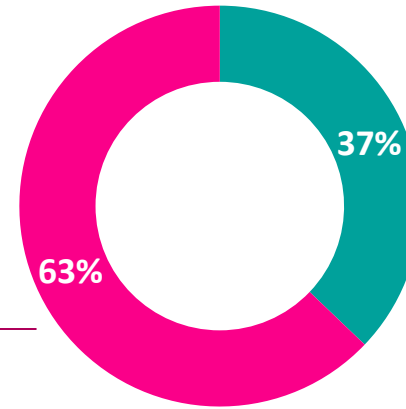
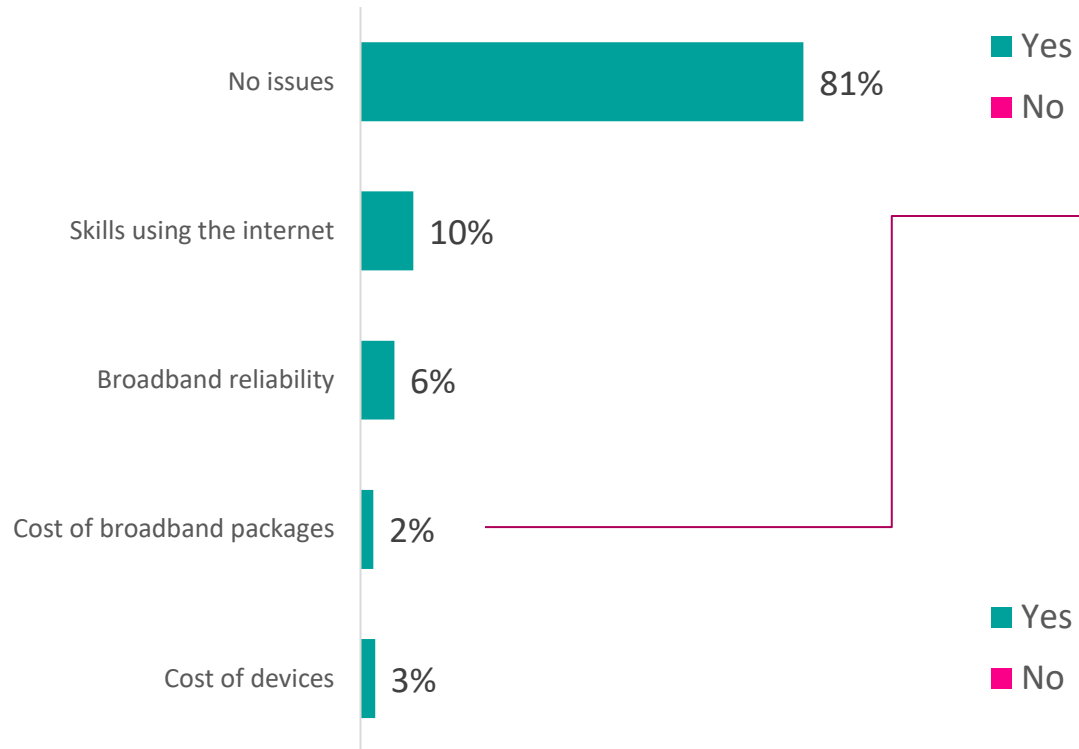
# Digital Connectivity



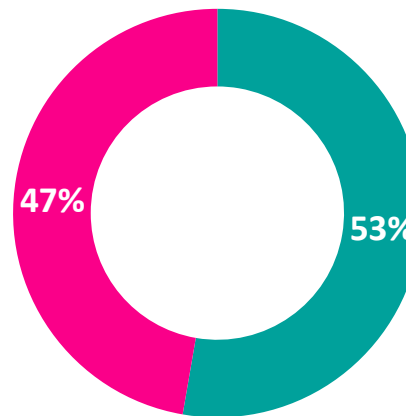
# Challenges to digital connectivity

Of the residents surveyed, 81% state that they have no particular challenges when they access the internet. Amongst the people who do struggle with internet access – 10% cite internet skills as a limitation. Those citing that they feel they lack skills when using the internet rises to 20% among those aged 55 - 74 and to 41% amongst those aged 75 and over.

## Q21. Do you experience any particular barriers or difficulties in accessing the internet?



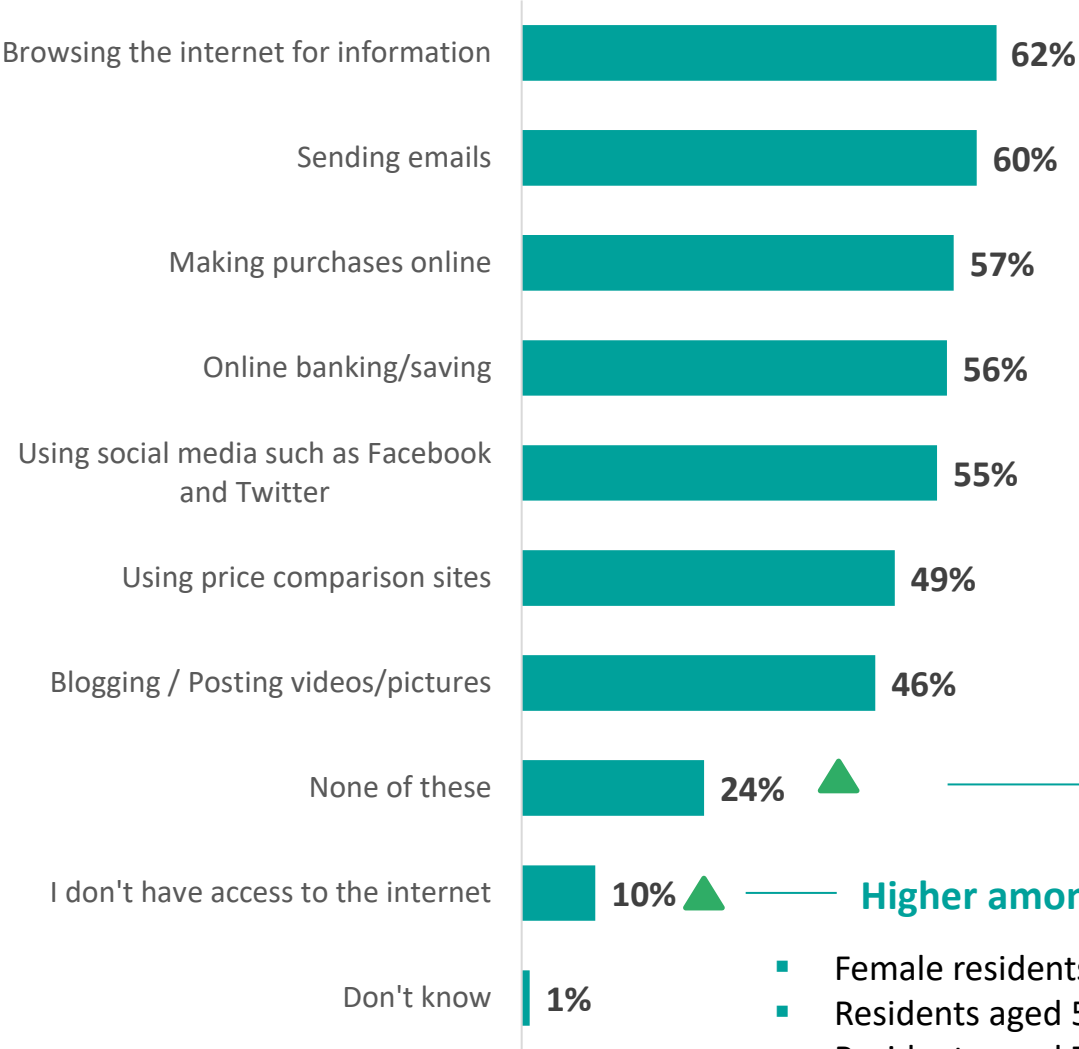
## Q22. Did you know you can get a social tariff from some broadband providers if you are on income support?



## Q23. Did you know you can access free Wi-Fi in Sandwell libraries?



# Online Confidence



- Six in ten residents (62%) feel confident using the internet to browse for information and to send emails (60%). This indicates that even online task of relatively low complexity there will be a lack of confidence /competence among some residents.
- For more complex online behaviours such as posting videos or using price comparison sites confidence for these tasks is only found among less than half of residents. In the context of a cost of living crisis this level of confidence could have detrimental financial impacts.

**Higher amongst**

**Higher amongst**

- Female residents: 12%
- Residents aged 55 – 74: 19%
- Residents aged 75+: 42%

- Oldbury Residents: 41%
- Rowley Regis: 37%



# Health and Wellbeing

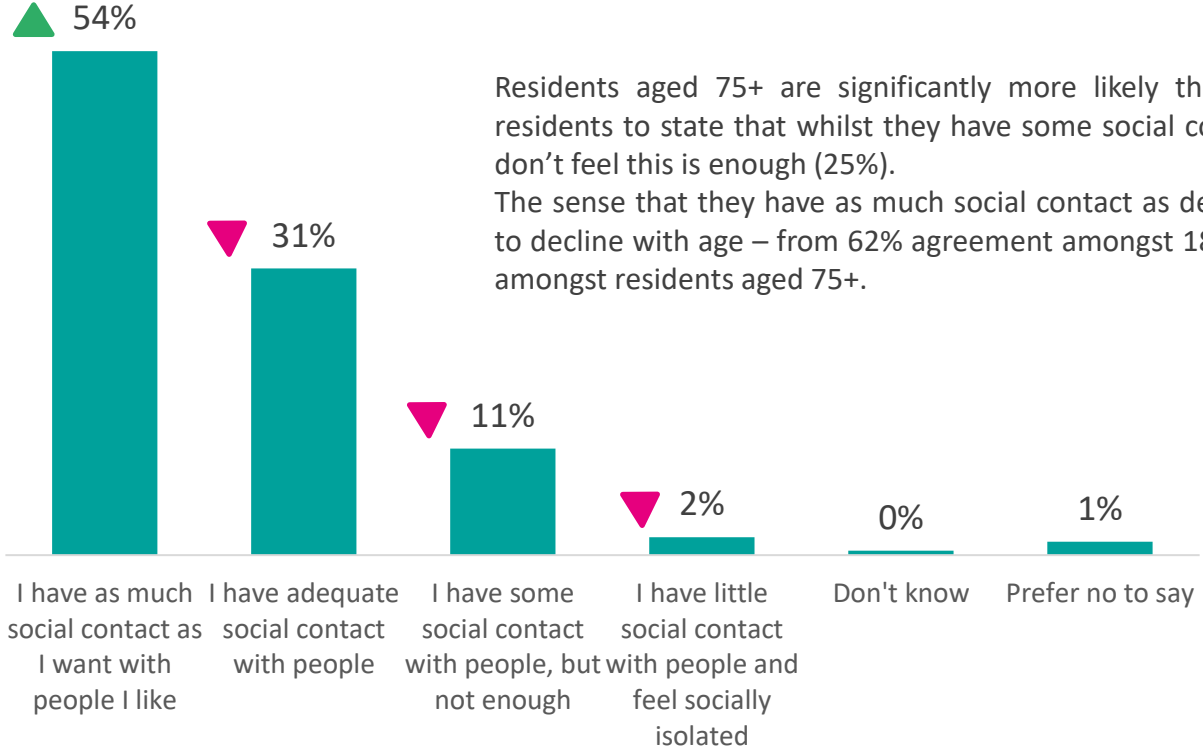
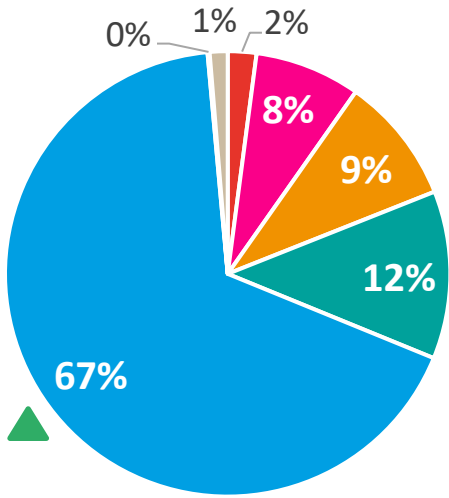




# Feelings of Loneliness and Isolation

The number of residents who report feeling lonely has fallen compared to 2022, with two-thirds reporting that they never feel lonely (67%), compared to 45% in 2022. The proportion of residents who say they have as much social contact as they would like has increased over the past year from 48% in 2022, to 54% in 2023. The proportion of residents stating that they have some social contact, but not enough has fallen, as has the proportion who feel socially isolated. Residents who feel lonely turn to their family or friends (76% and 51% respectively), rather than community groups (1%). Approximately 15% state that they do not turn to anyone – this increases to 20% amongst 55–74-year-olds, which may warrant some further attention.

- Often/always
- Some of the time
- Occasionally
- Hardy ever
- Never
- Don't know
- Prefer not to say

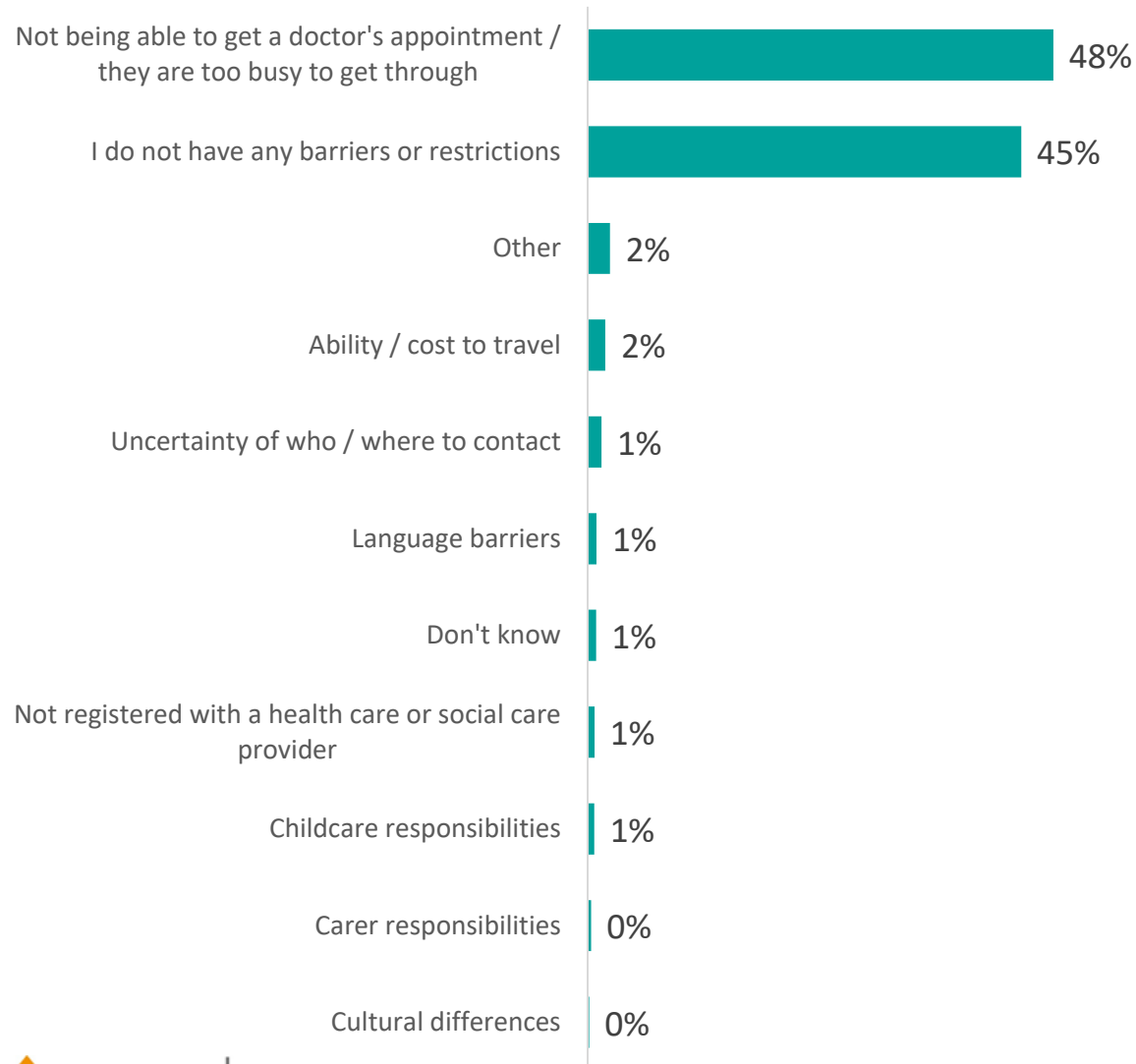


Residents aged 75+ are significantly more likely than younger residents to state that whilst they have some social contact, they don't feel this is enough (25%). The sense that they have as much social contact as desired tends to decline with age – from 62% agreement amongst 18-34 to 37% amongst residents aged 75+.



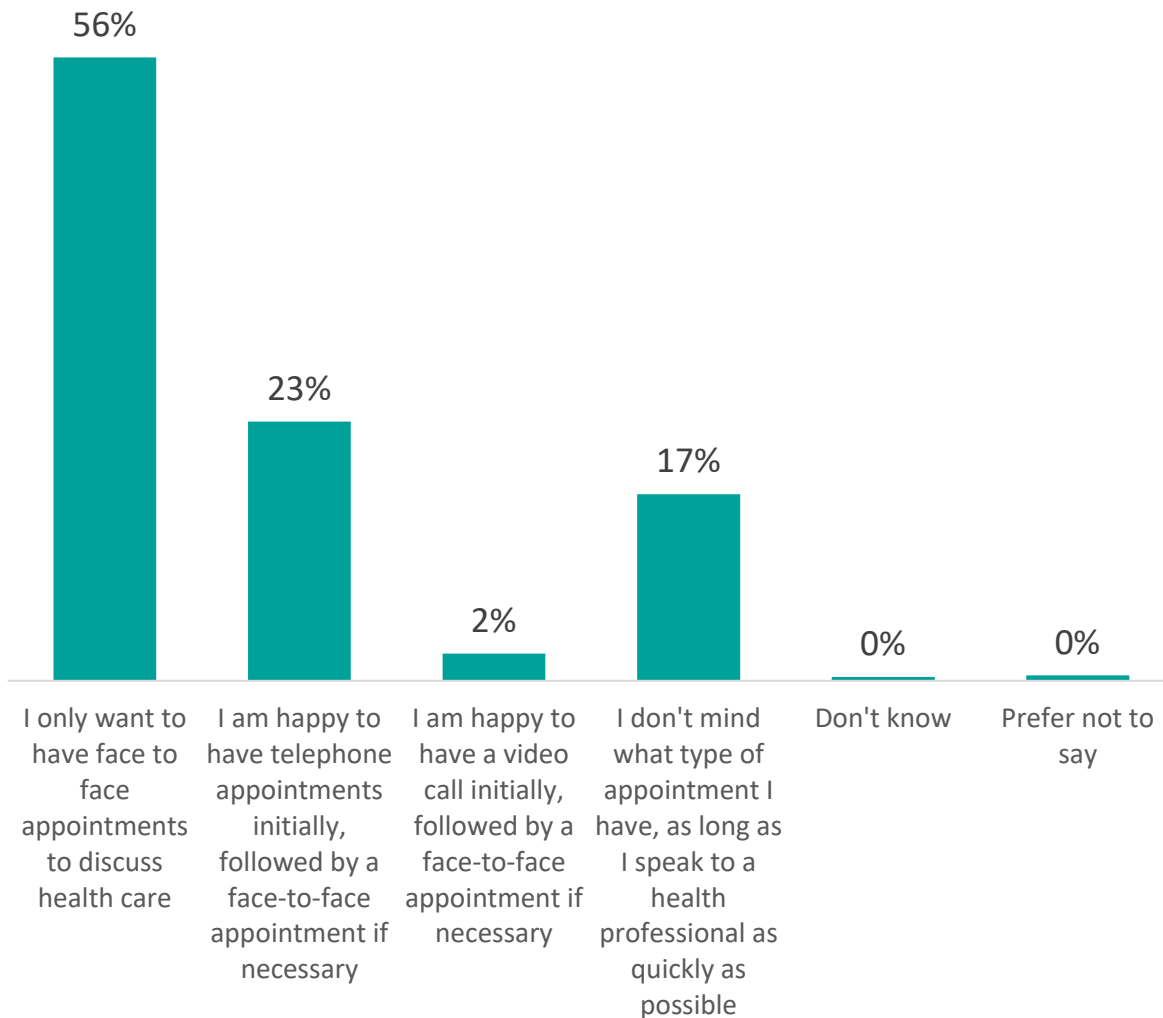
Q26. How often do you feel lonely or isolated? Unweighted base: All respondents: 1,101  
 Q27. Thinking about how much contact you've had with people you like, which of the following statements best describes your social situation? Unweighted base: All respondents: 1,101  
 Q28. Who do you turn to if you are feeling lonely or isolated? Base: Those who feel lonely or isolated Occasionally or more often: 209

# Residents' ability to access healthcare



- 45% of residents state that they do not face any barriers or restrictions to accessing health or social care
- An inability to get a doctor's appointment is the dominant barrier to accessing healthcare identified (48%)
- The inability to get through to the doctors or get an appointment is more pronounced in Rowley Regis – where 57% of residents say they struggle to get an appointment; Tipton where 60% state they are unable to get an appointment and Wednesbury where nearly two-thirds (64%) have difficulty getting through to the doctors.

# Residents' healthcare preferences



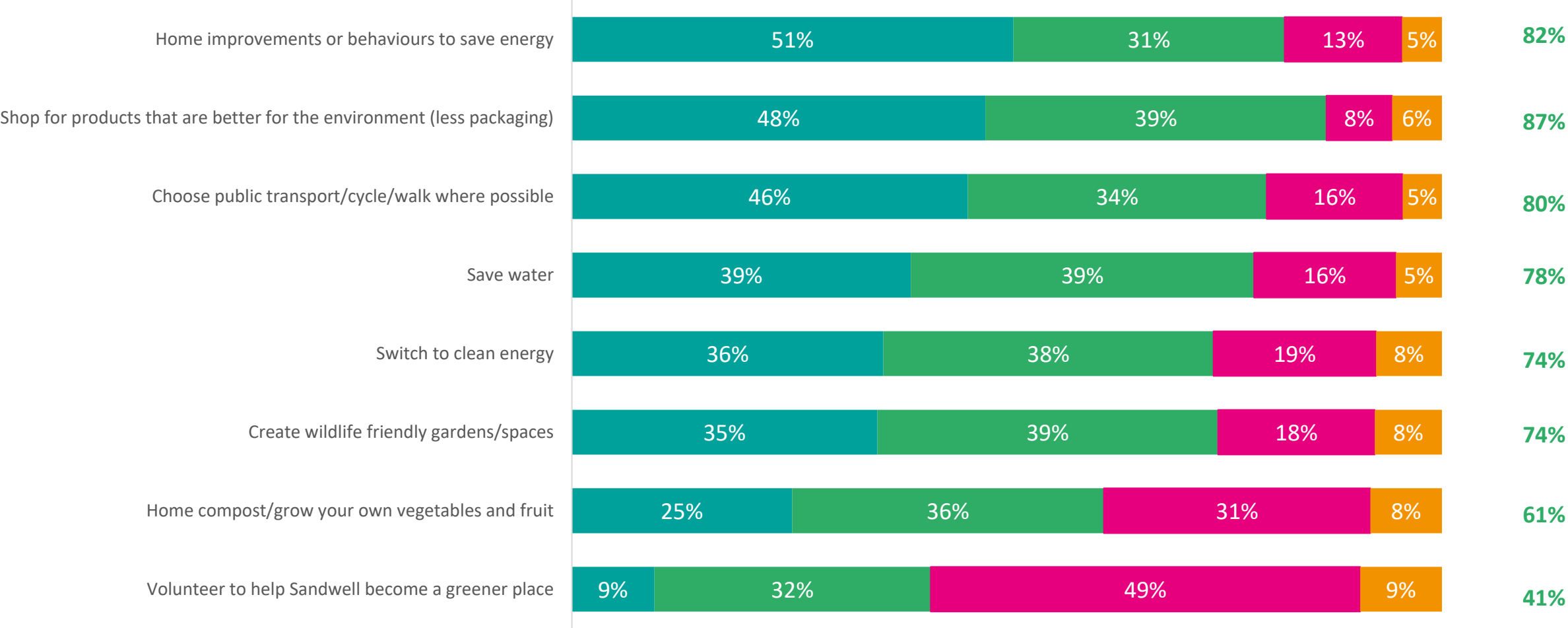
- Resident attitudes towards healthcare appointments being delivered via different channels were explored. While more than half (56%) would prefer in-person appointments, beyond this there does seem to be some flexibility regarding appointment channels, particularly through the deployment of telephone consultations.
- Older residents have the strongest preference for face to face appointments for healthcare (74% of residents aged 55+ would prefer in person appointments, with this proportion falling to 42% amongst 18–34-year-olds).
- Younger residents are significantly more likely to favour telephone appointments with a follow up in-person appointment, if necessary (29%), with a quarter of residents aged 18-34 expressing no preference in appointment format,

# Residents' attitudes to Climate Change



# Willingness to take action to combat climate change

Summary:  
Willing to do  
this



■ Very willing to do this  
 ■ Could be willing to do this  
 ■ Not willing to do this  
 ■ Don't know / Not applicable



Summary: Q19. How willing would you be to do (or continue to do) the following? Unweighted base: All respondents: 1,101



# Community involvement in combatting climate change

- Residents of Sandwell are generally open to making changes to their lives to help combat climate change. Most residents in principle would be willing to:
  - Make home improvements and to change their behaviours to save energy
  - Change their purchasing /consumer habits
  - Change their transportation choices usage
- While these scores do suggest that Sandwell residents recognise they potentially have a role in tackling climate change, this survey did not have the scope to explore the practicalities, price points and behavioural nudges that would encourage residents to translate this theoretical willingness into practical actions.
- Residents are least willing to act as volunteer to help Sandwell become a more environmentally friendly place. Approximately two-fifths (41%) would be willing to do this.



# Key Messages



# Key messages

- When asked for their top 3 concerns, cost-of-living/inflation is the dominant concern (53%). NHS waiting lists are also still a concern along with general family health. The latter two concerns may be inter-related.
- At a local level litter and rubbish is the issue most commonly described as a problem, surpassing concerns about people using or dealing drugs, which was the most commonly identified problem in 2022.
- The newly added questions around what influences how residents judge Sandwell Council suggest that waste and recycling services and street cleanliness appear to be key influences. While there some mentions of recent strike action, overall satisfaction with this service does not seem to have been unduly affected.
- Among those who are dissatisfied with the council, waste collection and street scene issues remain influential along with general perceptions of service decline; a lack of acting upon concerns and the more specific issues of repairs and maintenance and potholes. To contextualise these findings, it is notable that three in ten (29%) residents said that they had had reason to contact the council in the past 3 months (2% more residents than in 2022). Delivering strong customer service upon contact is likely to be influential.

# LGA benchmark comparisons

Perceptions of Sandwell as a place to live and of how well the council run things exceed the latest available national benchmarks. Satisfaction with waste collection is above the LGA benchmark as are road and pavement maintenance which is notable given the importance of waste and street scene issues identified in this survey.

Question	Sandwell 2023 (% Positive)	LGA June 2023	Difference
Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your local area as a place to live?	81%	73%	+8%
Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way your local council(s) runs things?	64%	60%	+4%
To what extent do you think your local council(s) acts on the concerns of local residents?	52%	52%	0%
Overall, how well informed do you think your local council(s) keeps residents about the services and benefits it provides?	51%	55%	-4%
<b>Levels of satisfaction with key council services:</b>			
Waste collection	83%	78%	+5%
Street cleaning	63%	64%	-1%
Road maintenance	62%	34%	+28%
Pavement maintenance	64%	48%	+16%
Library services	50%	56%	-6%
Sport and leisure services	50%	55%	-5%
Services and support for older people	28%	39%	-11%
Services and support for children and young people	31%	40%	-9%
Parks and open spaces	69%	80%	-11%

# Year on year changes

- Year on year there is some evidence of improved perceptions around community safety. Whilst there is a gap between the number of residents feeling safe locally during the day and night, since 2022 the proportion of residents feeling safe at night has increased by 11-percentage points.
- Alongside this, for most ASB issues the proportion describing each as a problem has fallen since 2022. This is particularly the case for vandalism and graffiti and drug related issues.
- There has been a 12-percentage point increase in the proportion of residents saying they are satisfied with the council's road maintenance services.
- While the proportion of residents expressing concern about the cost of living and inflation has fallen year on year (-14 percentage points), this remains the dominant concern when residents consider their family circumstances.
- Compared to 2022, there is a weaker sense that the people in their area pull together to improve where they live (down to 46% from 56%).

# Variations between Towns

- Wednesbury and Tipton residents tend to be more negative in their perceptions of living in Sandwell. Tipton residents are significantly less likely to be happy with their area as a place to live (68%), with only 54% saying that they feel safe in their area.
- Looking at Tipton, where resident satisfaction is lower, issues of ASB (most significantly cleanliness issues, vandalism, people being rowdy or drunk and groups hanging around) are more likely to be a big or fairly big problem for residents. These issues are likely to be contributing to lower neighbourhood satisfaction.
- Furthermore, residents living in Tipton are significantly more likely to state that the Council should prioritise cleanliness (17%), resident safety (4% cf. 1%), and investment in their area.



## Appendix 1: Year on Year Trends





# Year on Year Comparison

Difference of 10 –percentage points or more highlighted

Question	Sandwell 2023 (% Positive)	Sandwell 2022	Change
Overall how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your local area as a place to live?	81%	78%	3%
How strongly do you feel you belong to your local area?	83%	82%	1%
To what extent do you agree or disagree that your local area is a place where people from different ethnic backgrounds get on well together?	80%	77%	3%
To what extent do you agree or disagree that people in your local area pull together to improve the local area?	46%	56%	-10%
How safe or unsafe do you feel when outside in your local area? : After dark	61%	50%	+11%
How safe or unsafe do you feel when outside in your local area? : During the day	92%	87%	5%
<b>Summary: Very / Fairly big problem</b>			
Thinking about this local area, how much of a problem do you think each of the following are? : Noisy neighbours or loud parties	16%	17%	-1%
Thinking about this local area, how much of a problem do you think each of the following are? : Rubbish or litter lying around	37%	40%	-3%
Thinking about this local area, how much of a problem do you think each of the following are? : Vandalism, graffiti and other deliberate damage to property of vehicles	15%	26%	-11%
Thinking about this local area, how much of a problem do you think each of the following are? : People using or dealing drugs	30%	45%	-15%
Thinking about this local area, how much of a problem do you think each of the following are? : People being drunk or rowdy in public places	17%	22%	-5%
Thinking about this local area, how much of a problem do you think each of the following are? : Groups hanging around the streets	22%	29%	-7%
Overall how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with Sandwell Council runs things?	64%	66%	-2%
To what extent do you think Sandwell Council acts on the concerns of local residents?	52%	60%	-8%
Overall, how well informed do you think Sandwell Council keeps residents about the services and benefits it provides?	51%	60%	-9%

# Year on Year Comparison

Difference of 10–percentage points or more highlighted

Question	Sandwell 2023 (% Positive)	Sandwell 2022	Change
How much do you trust Sandwell Council?	67%	67%	0%
How satisfied or dissatisfied you are overall with the council's...? : Waste collection	83%	88%	-5%
How satisfied or dissatisfied you are overall with the council's...? : Street cleaning	63%	67%	-4%
How satisfied or dissatisfied you are overall with the council's...? : Road maintenance	62%	50%	+12%
How satisfied or dissatisfied you are overall with the council's...? : Pavement maintenance	64%	61%	3%
How satisfied or dissatisfied you are overall with the council's...? : Library services	50%	49%	1%
How satisfied or dissatisfied you are overall with the council's...? : Sport and leisure services	50%	56%	-6%
How satisfied or dissatisfied you are overall with the council's...? : Services and support for older people	28%	36%	-8%
How satisfied or dissatisfied you are overall with the council's...? : Services and support for children and young people	31%	41%	-10%
How satisfied or dissatisfied you are overall with the council's...? : Parks and open spaces	69%	70%	-1%
Question	Sandwell 2023 (% Positive)	Sandwell 2022	Change
Have you recently (last three months) had cause to contact the Council? – Yes	29%	27%	2%
How do you keep up to date with what the council is doing and what is happening in Sandwell?			
Local media	2%	3%	-1%
National media	2%	3%	-1%
Radio	2%	1%	1%
Television	4%	11%	-7%
Sandwell Council email newsletters	17%	18%	-1%
Sandwell Council social media - Facebook	15%	25%	-10%
Sandwell Council social media - Twitter	2%	4%	-2%
Sandwell Council social media - Instagram	2%	3%	-1%
Sandwell Council website	27%	21%	6%
Sandwell Herald council newspaper	28%	27%	1%
Family or friends	34%	29%	5%
Other	16%	10%	6%
None / Do not receive information about Sandwell	11%	-	-
Don't know	4%	12%	-8%

# Year on Year Comparison

Difference of 10–percentage points or more highlighted

Question	Sandwell 2023 (% Positive)	Sandwell 2022	Change
<b>What three things give you the greatest concern for you and your family?</b>			
Cost of living increases / inflation	53%	67%	-14%
NHS waiting lists	35%	39%	-4%
Getting a good education / exam results	8%	14%	-6%
Having a good job / job satisfaction	9%	18%	-9%
Healthy family	22%	35%	-13%
Other	20%	18%	2%
Don't know / no real concerns	23%	13%	10%
<b>How often do you feel lonely or isolated?</b>			
Often/always	2%	6%	-4%
Some of the time	8%	11%	-3%
Occasionally	9%	14%	-5%
Hardly ever	12%	23%	-11%
Never	67%	45%	+22%
Don't know	0%	1%	-1%
Prefer not to say	1%	-	-
<b>Thinking about how much contact you've had with people you like, which of the following statements best describes your social situation?</b>			
I have as much social contact as I want with people I like	54%	48%	6%
I have adequate social contact with people	31%	34%	-3%
I have some social contact with people, but not enough	11%	11%	0%
I have little social contact with people and feel socially isolated	2%	6%	-4%
Don't know	0%	2%	-2%
Prefer not to say	1%	-	-
<b>Are there any barriers or restrictions that prevent you, or make it difficult for you, to access health care and/or social care?</b>			
I do not have any barriers or restrictions	45%	65%	-20%
Ability / cost to travel	2%	8%	-6%
Childcare responsibilities	1%	3%	-2%
Carer responsibilities	0%	-	-
Language barriers	1%	1%	0%
Cultural differences	0%	1%	-1%
Uncertainty of who / where to contact	1%	1%	0%
Not registered with a health care or social care provider	1%	-	-
Not being able to get a doctor's appointment / they are too busy to get through	48%	23%	25%
Other	2%	2%	0%
Don't know	1%	2%	-1%
Prefer not to say	1%	-	-

This project has been delivered to ISO 9001:2015, 20252:2019 and 27001:2013 standards:

