

# Tenant Satisfaction Survey Report 2016



## Introduction

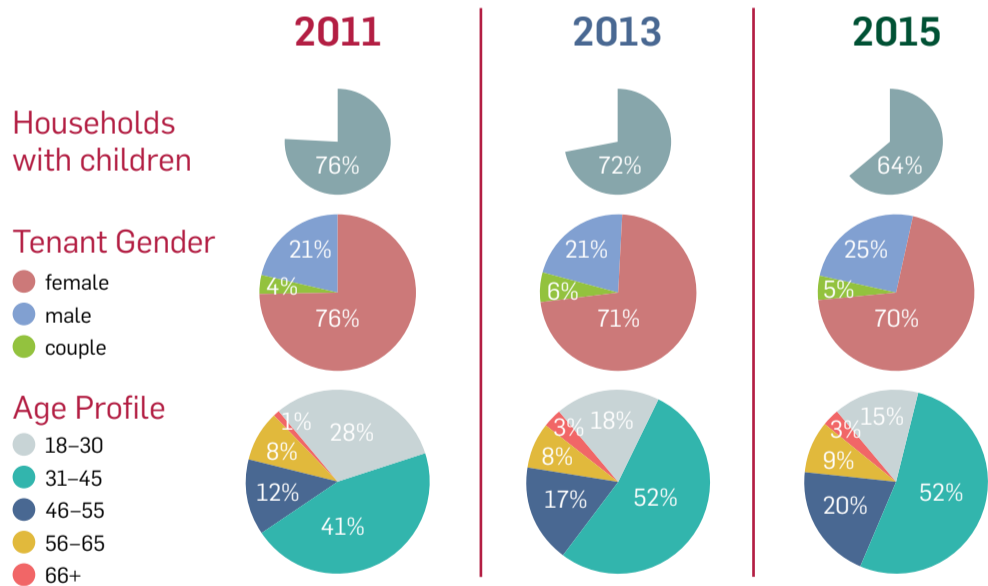
Circle Voluntary Housing Association was legally incorporated and given approved status by the Dept. of Environment, Community & Local Government in 2003. We commenced providing housing in 2006 and we currently provide over 1000 housing units in the Dublin area. Our vision is **'Making a difference by providing quality homes for people in housing need'** which encapsulates our belief that the provision of good quality affordable housing offers a foundation for a family or individual and enhances life choices and opportunity for those we house and the community that they live in.

Circle VHA has undertaken a Tenant Satisfaction Survey every two years since 2011. This survey is a postal questionnaire type survey whereby tenants complete the questionnaire form and return it to an independent researcher who analyses the findings for Circle VHA. We have undertaken this survey in order to find out how tenants rate the quality of the housing and housing management services that we provide. We believe that this is an important aspect of tenant engagement and informs us of what we do well and what we need to change and improve upon. Ms Mary Quinlan of Taemur Consulting has undertaken the analysis of the survey findings in 2011, 2013 and 2015 and written a complete report for each survey period.

In 2011, 455 households were surveyed with 250 returns = 55% return rate  
 In 2013, 627 household were surveyed with 288 returns = 46% return rate  
 In 2015, 956 household were surveyed with 440 returns = 46% return rate



## Social Demographic Profile



The above presents summary information from the surveys undertaken. A number of significant features are evident in terms of dominance of households with a female as the primary tenant. While there has been some reduction in this ratio from 74% to 70% the preponderance of lone parent female households is striking and does present different challenges for Circle VHA, community cohesion and for the families. There are of course complexity and variation within this.

The number of households with children has reduced from 76% to 64% over the 5 year survey period. This has changed as Circle VHA has increased its scale of one bed units of accommodation reflecting a major increase in demand for single persons or one bed units. The majority of respondents 31% (136) have 1 child; 20% (87) have 2 children; 8% (36) have 3 children; while 5% have 4 or 5 children. 147 respondents have no children. The age profile of our tenants is primarily that of a young age group. This does present a continuing challenge to Circle VHA when the family size increases. In 2015 the dominant age profile is that of households in the 18-45 age group at 69% which a consistent pattern over the three surveys. We have a very small number of tenants over 66 years of age at just 3% in 2015.

In 2015 some 54% of our tenants were dependent on Social Protection income only. 36% of tenants were working full time and 5% were working part time with some Social Protection income support. There was lower percentage of working tenants in 2013 and 2011 with an average of 34% employed part time and full time. Some 75% of the respondents were Irish born with the remaining 25% being from 36 different states

## Summary

Circle VHA delivered its first homes in April 2006. The surveys that we have undertaken are one measure of tenant satisfaction and delivery of our housing management services alongside other performance indicators. The overall satisfaction ratings by our tenants are very positive over the past three surveys. These results are affirming in terms of the scale of response and the overall positive feedback from our tenants on the delivery of our housing management services. The survey results also pointed to where we need to improve the quality and efficiency of our housing management services. Circle VHA was also awarded an Excellence in Business Awards 2015 by the Public Sector Magazine which is a further recognition of the quality of our housing management services.

The importance of providing good quality housing and housing management services remains and is central to our vision and mission. The survey findings provide some indications of the complexity of that responsibility which ranges from providing good quality housing to enabling the feeling of safety, community integration and cohesion for our tenants.

There are continuing challenges for Circle VHA in maintaining good quality housing and housing management services in the next ten-year period. The policy and social housing context of 2016 is very different to when we provided our first homes in 2006. There is an increased scale of social housing need that Circle VHA needs to respond to by delivering an increased scale of new social housing provision.

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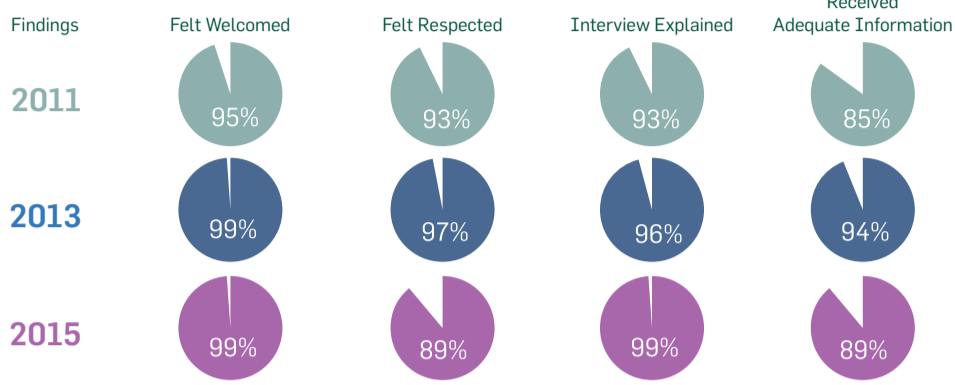
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# Key Findings:

The following summarises the main findings of the tenant satisfaction survey completed in 2015 and provides some comparative analysis with previous surveys. There has been a consistent pattern of findings in each survey that has been completed. In 2011 there was a 55% postal return and in 2013 and 2015 there was a 46% postal return. The key findings are as follows:

## Tenant Interview Rating

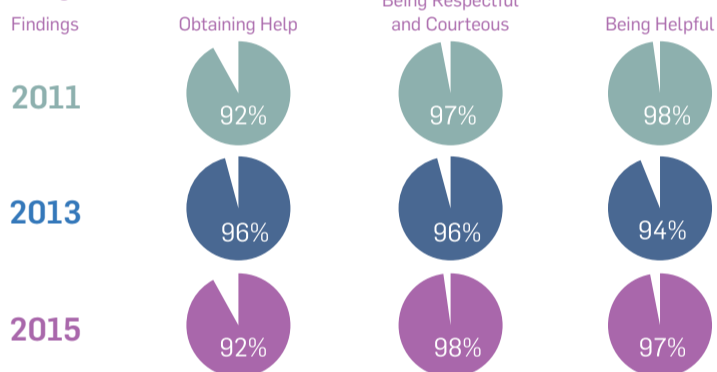


There is a consistent pattern of tenant satisfaction rating with the interview that they had when they applied for housing of over 90% with the welcoming, being respected and having the interview explained. There has been a reduction in the adequacy of information being provided to the tenant on the property which we will need to attend to.

## Reasons for Contacting Housing Officers

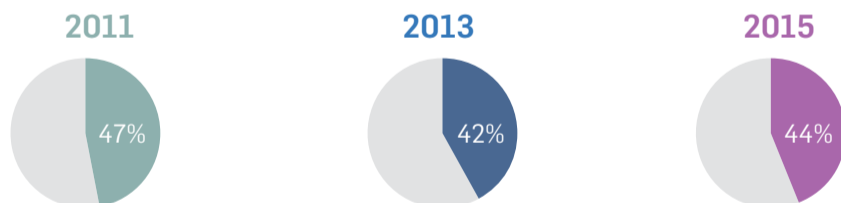
The findings for 2015 indicate that 50% of tenants made contact with their Housing Officer a few times per year, near 40% rarely and some 9% never. The 2011 and 2013 surveys did not include these questions so there is no comparability. The main reasons for meeting their Housing Officer relate to rent and maintenance issues. The most common ways of making contact was by phone. These findings raise questions as to the frequency and type of contact we need to make with our tenants. Some schemes require a regular weekly visit while other schemes do not need such attention. Interesting the majority of tenants, 72%, stated that they did not seek greater contact from their Housing Officer.

## Rating of Circle VHA Staff



There is a consistent pattern of tenants finding the staff in the organisation helpful and respectful over the three surveys.

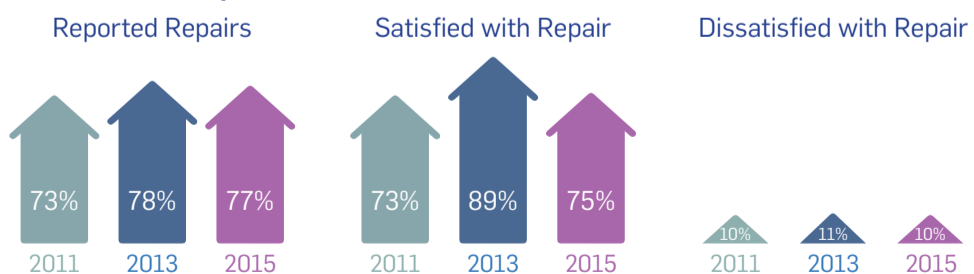
## Experience of Anti-Social Behaviour



There is a consistent pattern of tenants experiencing antisocial behaviour in the three surveys. The main types of antisocial behaviour are noise, vandalism, dumping, and damage to properties, drug abuse/dealing, and noise nuisance from pets, harassment in descending order of experience. This presents a challenge to Circle VHA in terms of always being informed and then responding effectively to the reported incident. Only one third of tenants spoke to the tenants who was causing them difficulty and this had a positive response in one third of such approaches.

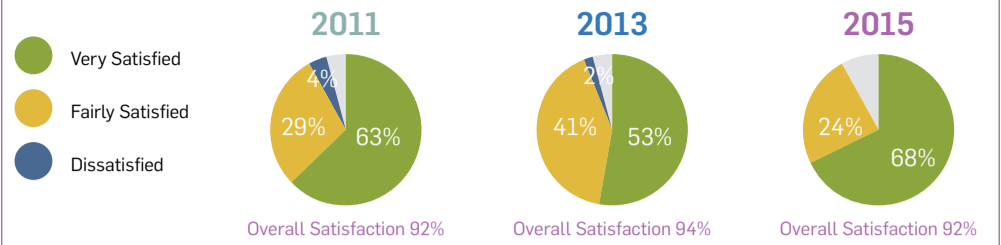
Of note is that only 62% reported incidents to Circle VHA. Where the incident was reported we responded effectively on over two thirds of such incidents. The ongoing requirement is a housing management presence and effective working relationships with the Garda and local agencies.

## Maintenance Repairs



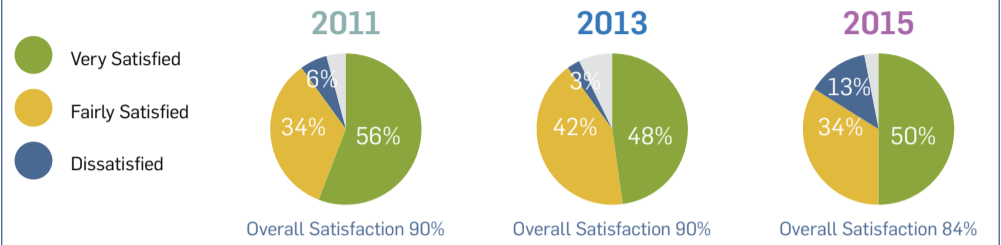
A primary reason for tenants to contact us is with regard to maintenance needs. These can vary from heating breakdown to small leaks to more substantive problem such as major water leaks. We have criterion of response for emergency repairs such as major water leaks, fire damage within a 24-hour period to 5 working days for what deemed urgent heating breakdown to 20 working days for what is deemed non-urgent repairs. Tenants have complained in their forms of having to report maintenance repairs on a number of occasions. There is a discordance between the tenant's expectation of a response and the policy on repairs that we apply. That stated there is a consistent rating of satisfaction and dissatisfaction in all three surveys and it indicates areas that we need to improve in our housing management performance.

## Satisfaction with Quality of their Home



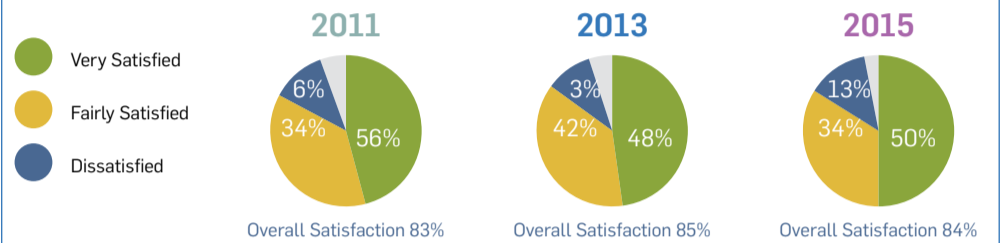
The vast majority of the schemes that we own and manage are new schemes constructed in the past 10 years, some of whom are of very high quality construction.

## Satisfaction with the Condition of the Property



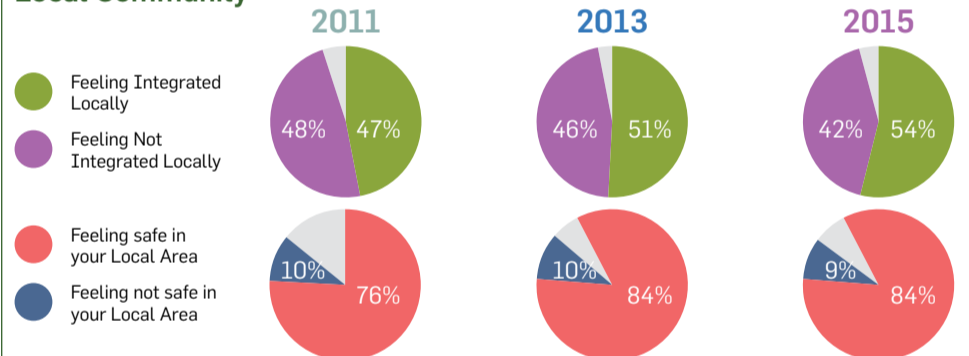
The findings are broadly similar in 2011 and 2013 with an increase in the dissatisfaction level in 2015.

## Satisfaction with Neighbourhood



There is a consistent pattern of satisfaction with the neighbourhood that our tenants live at near 83%-85%. The satisfaction rate factors are nearness to schools, family and insignificant antisocial behaviour occurring locally. The main determinant of dissatisfaction is the experience of antisocial behaviour in the neighbourhood most often from the adjoining schemes rather than within the scheme that we manage and is a key factor in determining the tenant satisfaction rating.

## Involvement/Integration in your Local Community/ Feeling Safe in your Local Community



These findings are significant for tenants and there is some consistent pattern to the findings. The scale of feeling integrated locally has increased from 47% to 54%. This increase is probably related to tenants residing longer in scheme becoming more settled and integrated. The feeling of being safe in your local area has increased in the three surveys from 76% to 84% which is to be welcomed. The feeling of being unsafe remains at a 10% level. The importance of being able to respond effectively to reported antisocial behaviour is a constant housing management challenge.

## Tenant Induction Satisfaction Rating/ Tenant Handbook Rating

	2011	2013	2015
Rating of Tenant Induction Usefulness	96%	98%	94%
Rating of Course Length	82%	86%	83%
Rating of Tenant Handbook	91%	90%	98%

The findings are consistent over the three surveys for the tenant induction and the quality of the Tenant Handbook that is given to each tenant when they move into their home. Circle VHA normally undertakes a Tenant Induction process with new tenants prior to the move in to their new home. This normally takes place over two to three meetings where we inform tenants of Circle VHA of landlord and tenant responsibilities. We believe that the Tenant Induction process is an important element and foundation of delivering good quality housing management services to our tenants.

## Overall Satisfaction Rating

