



Southway Housing – Inspired by Communities Surveys

Summary Report – July 2021

viewpoint

Giving your
customers a voice



Contents

1. Executive Summary	2
2. Methodology	5
3. Results	6
3.1 Core Southway Housing Services	6
3.2 Health & Wellbeing	8
3.3 Financial Security	10
3.4 Community Cohesion	12
3.5 Home & Environment	16
3.6 Equality of Opportunity	18

1. Executive Summary

This report details the results of Southway Housing's 'Inspired by Communities' surveys, delivered by Viewpoint Research CIC.

The surveys aimed to provide detailed insight from Southway's customers regarding their priorities and support needs as communities move into life after COVID.

In addition to collecting insight on key services, Southway wanted to gather insight on five key principles: Equality, Safe home & Environment, Financial security, Health & wellbeing and Community Cohesion.

Key findings are as follows:

1.1 Core Southway Housing Services

- The Repairs service received the largest number of respondents wishing to see changes to delivery. 29.3% suggested they would like to see things done differently.
- The amount of respondents wanting change in other service areas were: Neighbourhood & Green space management (24.6%), ASB (22.4%), Support with tenancy (8.8%) and Rent collection (3.9%)
- Aside from specific repair issues the two main suggestions for changes in the delivery of the Repairs service were: Completing repairs more quickly/efficiently and better processes around reporting/arranging repairs, including better communication.
- Suggestions to improve Neighbourhood & Green space management focussed on better care of communal green areas in terms of better care of trees and plants and cleaning/clearing rubbish.
- With ASB, aside from issues specific to the respondent, suggested improvements were more intervention from Southway and increased numbers of police, wardens and cameras.

1.2 Health & Wellbeing

- Over a fifth of respondents (21.0%) have seen increased evidence of food poverty in their household or neighbourhood.
- A number of specific responses were given to help make healthy eating easier, including: Dietary information, greater provision of allotments, reducing the prices of fresh food, providing recipes and cooking lessons and garden/green initiatives.
- Awareness of food clubs and food banks is high at 86.2% although only 42.5% understood the difference between the two.
- With the difference between them explained, a high proportion of respondents said they would access both types of support if required – Food banks (76.0%) and Food clubs (72.9%)
- In regard to personal health, 42.8% said their physical health had been negatively impacted in the past year, with 45.3% reporting a negative impact on their mental health. Nearly half of all respondents in both categories said their health had not been affected but very few said the past year had a positive effect on their physical or mental health.
- A range of answers were given to explain what helps customers feel mentally and physically well. A third of respondents (33.1%) said being outside/walking helped their health, with exercise/sport (25.6%) and being in the garden/gardening (12.9%) also common responses, showing that customers have a good understanding of the benefits of being outside and associated activity. This tallies with the importance tenants place on

green spaces (see section 1.5). Socialising with friends and family (18.3%) was the third most common response which, as it has been difficult to do in the past year, would perhaps help to explain the negative impact on health reported in the past year.

1.3 Financial Security

- Over a fifth of respondents (21.8%) said their income had been affected by Covid with a large minority of these (39.7%) saying it was because of reduced levels of work. 24.7% of these said they had been placed on furlough while nine respondents reported they had been made redundant.
- A large majority of respondents (82.4%) reported feeling secure financially and a similar proportion (82.3%) said they had not struggled to pay their rent this year.
- Of those who did not feel financially secure a range of suggestions were offered to help this including: job security and help finding/keeping employment, increase in income - again through better employment or through loans, increase in savings, and also advice around benefits and money management.

1.4 Community Cohesion

- A similar number of respondents said they don't feel part of their community (28.7%) or feel lonely or isolated (28.2%), but only 15.5% would like more opportunities to connect with their neighbours. This may be largely explained by people 'keeping themselves to themselves' which was the most common response to explain what would improve their sense of community cohesion. Other reasons given were a lack of sense of community with a lack of events/activities, with a small number suggesting more information about such things would help.
- A large majority of respondents (89.8%) would prefer to communicate with Southway by telephone with 'In person' the next most popular route – at home (37.1%) and at the Southern Gate office (31.9%). Email (30.7%) was a popular response but other digital options were selected by fewer tenants –Website (15.0%) and Social media (4.2%).
- In terms of giving feedback to Southway, over half (51.6%) indicated that they would use text surveys with telephone surveys the next most popular (33.0%). Almost a fifth (19.5%) would use email with 13.6% selecting writing. Only small numbers selected digital options or face-to-face options.
- 16.3% reported difficulties communicating, with getting through on the phone the principle reason.
- Only 9.4% said that the closure of the Southern Gate office had impacted them. However this was the second most popular option for how to meet Southway staff. 31.8% gave Southern Gate as their first preference, behind home visits (42.7%). Online meetings were the least popular with 10.2% giving this as their first preference.
- Despite some reluctance to engage with digital options in other questions, a significant minority of respondents (39.1%) said it would be useful to have an online forum for feedback and keeping in touch. Given some of the tenant suggestions above about greater information being offered to tenants it might be reasonable to consider such a forum as a way of providing information as well.

1.5 Home & Environment

- Green spaces are clearly very important to tenants, with a majority of respondents (54.3%) saying they have become a greater priority since the pandemic started.
- A wide range of improvements to green spaces to help getting people outdoors were suggested with the most popular being an increase in organised events/clubs/classes (31.8%) followed by making them cleaner & tidier (28.1%).

- Significant majorities declared an interest in the local environment (68.6%) and reducing their carbon footprint (83.9%).
- Suggestions for support to help look after the local environment focussed on practical improvements, particularly to fencing/hedges/walls (34.5%) and street lights (25.1%).
- A large majority (91.6%) said they currently feel safe and secure in their home. The greatest indicator to tenants of this is not needing to worry and having 'peace of mind'. Reading the comments in this section will stress just how important feeling safe and secure is to tenants.
- Installing CCTV was the most popular suggestion (28.5%) to increase the feeling of security with lighting (23.6%) and fencing/gates/walls (20.5%) again showing up strongly.

1.6 Equality of Opportunity

- Almost half of respondents (49.6%) said the pandemic had increased their levels of anxiety which closely tallies with 45.3% reporting a negative impact on their mental health (see 1.2 above).
- The concerns for tenants, both short-term and long-term, are varied and there is a lot of cross-over with the issues identified. The most common relate to the Covid pandemic, wider concerns such as climate change or the economy and issues such as health (of them and their families), employment and education/their children's future.
- Suggested support to ease their concerns included improved social care type services, new community services, employment support services and improved existing services from Southway.

2. Methodology

The questionnaires were primarily designed by Southway Housing with support from Viewpoint. A mix of quantitative and qualitative questions were used to give clear findings but also to encourage conversation and to give the maximum opportunity to tease out issues relating to the services and processes.

All surveys were completed independently by telephone. A full tenant list was provided by Southway from which Viewpoint contacted tenants at random, while making sure responses broadly reflected the demographics of Southway's tenant group. Fieldwork took place during May, June and July 2021.

362 completions were achieved, giving the results a 95% confidence level with a 5% margin of error.

The responses reflect the following demographics:

		Tenant base	Survey responses
Gender	Female	70%	69%
	Male	30%	31%
Age	U35	11%	10%
	35-59	58%	51%
	60+	31%	39%
Ethnicity	Asian	9%	10%
	Black	8%	8%
	Mixed	3%	4%
	White British	57%	52%
	White Other	4%	5%
	Other	19%	21%
Area	West	29%	29%
	East	33%	32%
	Central	37%	37%
	Other	1%	2%

This report presents tables for all questions showing counts (actual number of responses) and percentages to one decimal place. The 'Base' in each table indicates the size of respondent sample for that particular question.

3. Results Tables

Results tables are presented below of all the questions asked. In order to produce these, all the open text responses have been categorised for analysis. The categories are based on the prompts given and our best interpretation of the responses. Respondents could give as much feedback as they wished, so many responses were coded into more than one category.

The number of responses should not be seen as definitive. For example, if a customer did not mention in their response a particular aspect it does not mean that this does not apply to them, it just means that they did not highlight it within their answer. Furthermore in the asking of the questions there will naturally have been differences in how prompts were used depending on the progress of the conversation and how much information was initially forthcoming from the customer.

These results tables should be used alongside the data sheet, where we suggest reading through the responses will give the best feel of the customer experience, particularly when looking at the specifics of their answers.

Quantitative tables/charts are presented in gold, qualitative results are in green.

3.1. Core Southway Housing Services

3.1.1 Is there anything about the way we deliver the following services that you would like to see change or done differently?

	Base	Yes	No
Repairs	362	106 29.3%	256 70.7%
Rent Collection	362	14 3.9%	348 96.1%
Neighbourhood and green space management	362	89 24.6%	273 75.4%
Support with your tenancy	362	32 8.8%	330 91.2%
Anti-social behaviour	362	81 22.4%	281 77.6%

3.1.2 What would you like to see change or done differently?

Repairs

	Counts	%
Base	109	
Specific repair/improvements that need doing	53	48.6%
Complete repairs quicker/more efficiently	48	44.0%
Process of arranging/reporting repairs/communication	41	37.6%
Quality of repairs could be improved	17	15.6%

Rent collection

There were few suggestions around improving the rent collection, with a small number saying the process of using direct debits was unsatisfactory.

Neighbourhood and green space management

	Counts	%
Base	90	
Tidy up trees/plants/green areas (Communal areas)	30	33.3%
Cleaning/dog fouling etc/rubbish being dumped	28	31.1%
Garden assistance required	17	18.9%
Parking – more spaces/inconsiderate parking	12	13.3%
ASB	5	5.6%
Neighbourhood Community Officers	3	3.3%

Support with your tenancy

There were few suggestions to improve in this area but the greatest by far was 'better communication', which amounted for 60% of responses.

Anti-social behaviour

	Counts	%
Base	80	
Specific ASB issues to deal with	58	72.5%
More intervention/communication from Southway	16	20.0%
Police presence	11	13.8%
Cameras	10	12.5%
More wardens	3	3.8%

Any other issues

Respondents were asked to detail any other areas of service improvement. A number of specific issues were raised, the most common being to do with communication, garden assistance and providing new fencing.

3.2. Health & Wellbeing

3.2.1 Have you seen increased evidence of food poverty/shortage in your household or community/neighbourhood?

Base	Yes	No
362	76 21.0%	286 79.0%

3.2.2 Is there anything that could be done to make it easier for you and your family to eat healthily / more healthily?

Base	Yes	No
362	31 8.6%	331 91.4%

Respondents were asked to explain if they responded 'Yes'. A number of specific responses were given, which included: Dietary information, greater provision of allotments, reducing the prices of fresh food, providing recipes and cooking lessons and garden/green initiatives.

3.2.3 Have you heard about food clubs or food banks?

Base	Yes	No
362	312 86.2%	50 13.8%

3.2.4 Do you understand the difference?

Base	Yes	No
362	154 42.5%	208 57.5%

3.2.5 If you needed to, would you access a local foodbank?

Base	Yes	No
362	275 76.0%	87 24.0%

3.2.6 If you needed to, would you access a local food club?

Base	Yes	No
362	264 72.9%	98 27.1%

3.2.7 Have you had to shield during the pandemic?

Base	Yes	No
362	156 43.1%	206 56.9%

3.2.8 How do you feel your physical health has been affected by the past year?

Base	Positively	Negatively	Not affected
362	32 8.8%	155 42.8%	175 48.3%

3.2.9 How do you feel your mental health has been affected by the past year?

Base	Positively	Negatively	Not affected
362	20 5.5%	164 45.3%	178 49.2%

3.2.10 What helps you to feel mentally and physically well?

Response	Counts	%
Base	317	
Being outside/Walking	105	33.1%
Exercise/sport	81	25.6%
Socialising – Being with friends/family	58	18.3%
Indoor activities (TV/gaming/music)	45	14.2%
Being in the garden/gardening	41	12.9%
Hobbies (any other)	34	10.7%
Reading	29	9.1%
Working	24	7.6%
Find it difficult to be well / am not well	19	6.0%

3.3. Financial Security

3.3.1 Has your income been affected by Covid?

Base	Yes	No
362	79 21.8%	283 78.2%

Respondents were asked 'If yes, in what way?'

	Counts	%
Base	73	
Amount of work reduced	29	39.7%
Furlough	18	24.7%
Redundancy	9	12.3%
Health prevents work (or felt not safe to work)	4	5.5%
Temporary contract	2	2.7%

3.3.2 Do you feel that you and your family have what you need to feel secure financially?

Base	Yes	No
358	295 82.4%	63 17.6%

Respondents were asked 'If no, please tell us what would make you feel more financially secure?'

	Counts	%
Base	44	
Job security	8	18.2%
More money/income/better paid job	6	13.6%
Affordable loans/money management	6	13.6%
Help with finding and or keeping employment	6	13.6%
Savings	3	6.8%
Health issues impact ability to feel secure financially	3	6.8%
Better benefits advice	2	4.5%

3.3.3 Have you struggled to pay your rent at all during the last year?

Base	Yes	No
361	64 17.7%	297 82.3%

If respondents did not feel they had what they need to feel secure financially or had struggled to pay their rent during the last year they were asked 'Southway has lots of services aimed at supporting people with money. Would you like me to arrange for someone to call you? 25 people requested a call.

3.4. Community Cohesion

3.4.1 Do you feel part of your community?

Base	Yes	No
361	253 71.3%	102 28.7%

Respondents were asked 'Please explain, please tell us what would improve this for you?'

	Counts	%
Base	76	
Keep myself to myself/low profile	27	35.5%
Struggle to get out	16	21.1%
No real sense of community	11	14.5%
Unpleasant/unfriendly neighbours or neighbourhood	9	11.8%
Nothing going on	6	7.9%
More info/newsletters/communication would help	6	7.9%
Lack of opportunity being new to area	5	6.6%

3.4.2 Would you like more opportunities to connect with your neighbours?

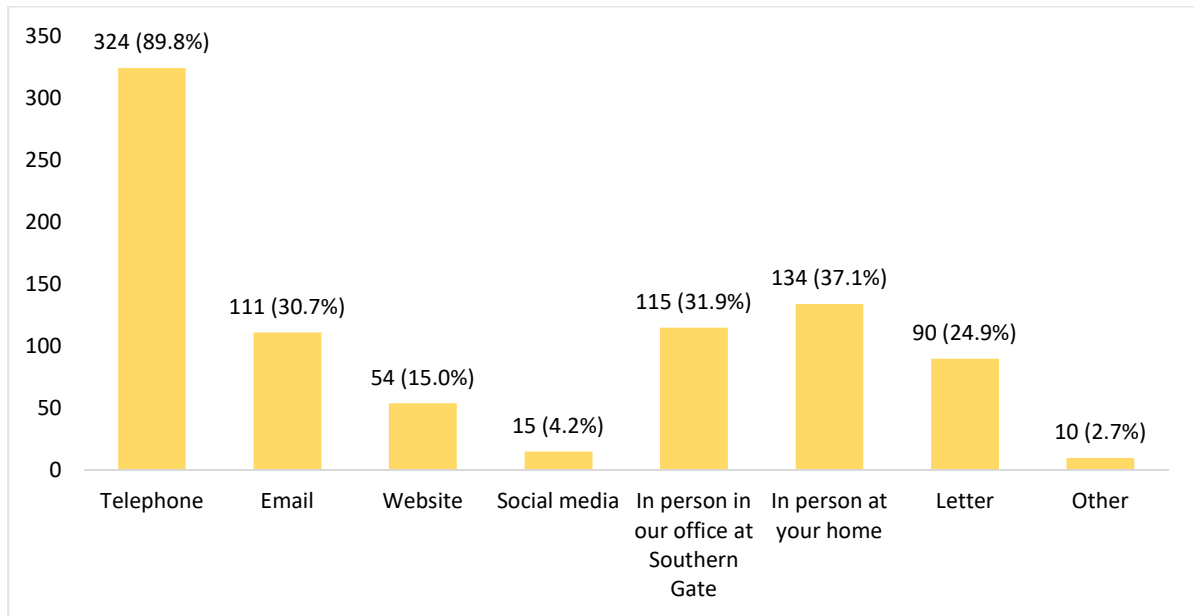
Base	Yes	No
361	56 15.5%	306 84.5%

3.4.3 Do you ever feel lonely or isolated?

Base	Yes	No
361	102 28.2%	260 71.8%

If respondents said they would like more opportunities to connect or felt lonely or isolated they were asked: 'Southway has lots of services aimed at supporting and bringing people together in the community. Would you like me to arrange for someone to call you?' 34 people requested a call.

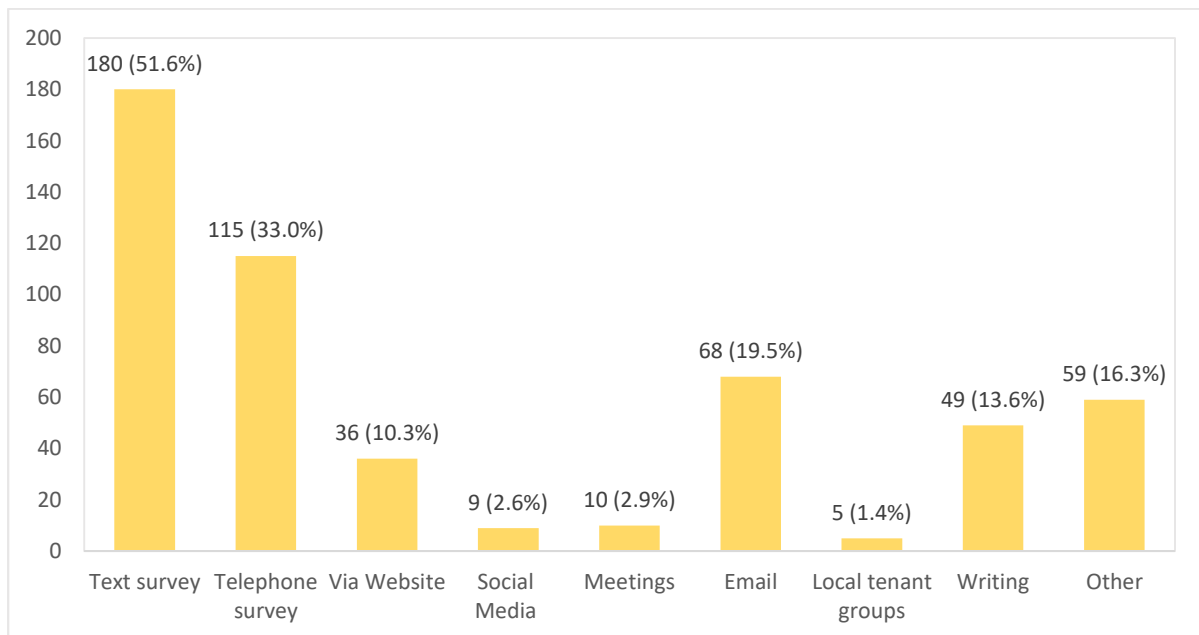
3.4.4 How do you prefer to communicate with us?



Base=361

Of the 10 'Other' responses, seven said they would prefer to communicate by text message.

3.4.5 How do you prefer to give feedback to us?



Base=349

Of the 59 'Other' responses, 41 said they would give feedback by telephone, not necessarily through a survey, with many saying they would call Southway rather than waiting to be contacted to give feedback.

3.4.6 Is there anything that makes it difficult for you to communicate with us in the way you want?

Base	Yes	No
361	59 16.3%	303 83.7%

Respondents were asked to explain if they answered 'Yes'.

	Counts	%
Base	57	
Getting through	24	42.1%
Disabilities/personal difficulties	22	38.6%
Not getting a response	6	10.5%
Attitude of call handlers	6	10.5%
Language	2	3.5%

3.4.7 Our central office, Southern Gate, has been closed for a year during the pandemic. Has this had an impact on the way you access our services?

Base	Yes	No
361	34 9.4%	328 90.6%

Respondents were asked to explain if they answered 'Yes'.

	Counts	%
Base	28	
Prevented me getting issues resolved	20	71.4%
Prefer face-to-face	10	35.7%

3.4.8 In order of preference, please tell us how you want to meet or see Southway staff when you need to? A - Southern Gate Office (Princess Road), B - A hub in your community to visit, C - Home visits, D - A meeting online OR E - None are necessary

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
Base	274	221	166	126
A - Southern Gate Office (Princess Road)	87 31.8%	55 24.9%	56 33.7%	13 10.3%
B - A hub in your community to visit	42 15.3%	91 41.2%	52 31.3%	11 8.7%
C - Home visits	117 42.7%	57 25.8%	41 24.7%	12 9.5%
D - A meeting online	28 10.2%	18 8.1%	17 10.2%	90 71.4%

Not all respondents gave 4 choices, some preferred just to give a top 1, 2 or 3. 61 replied with option 'E' - None are necessary.

3.4.9 Would it be useful to have an online forum where you can give feedback and keep in touch with your community?

Base	Yes	No
361	140 39.1%	218 60.9%

3.5. Home & Environment

3.5.1 Have green spaces become a greater priority for you since the pandemic?

Base	Yes	No
359	195 54.3%	164 45.7%

3.5.2 What could be done to improve green spaces/help get people outdoors?

	Counts	%
Base	274	
Events/Clubs/Classes/projects/organised walks	87	31.8%
Cleaner/tidier	77	28.1%
Park facilities	37	13.5%
Sports/Exercise facilities	37	13.5%
Kid's facilities (playgrounds etc)	18	6.6%
Awareness campaigns of green spaces	12	4.4%

3.5.3 Do you have an interest in the local environment?

Base	Yes	No
360	247 68.6%	113 31.4%

3.5.4 What help or support would benefit you and your community to help look after the environment?

	Counts	%
Base	267	
Fencing/Hedges/Walls	92	34.5%
Street lights	67	25.1%
Bins (inc recycling), Cleaning (more reg service)	43	16.1%
Neighbourhood groups	28	10.5%
Speedbumps	19	7.1%
Parking improvements	17	6.4%
CCTV	16	6.0%

3.5.5 Is reducing your carbon footprint important to you?

Base	Yes	No
355	298 83.9%	57 16.1%

3.5.6 Do you feel safe and secure in your home?

Base	Yes	No
356	326 91.6%	30 8.4%

3.5.7 What does a safe and secure home mean to you?

	Counts	%
Base	338	
Not worrying/peace of mind/able to relax	192	56.8%
Locks/secure doors	92	27.2%
Alarms	50	14.8%
Good neighbours/community	50	14.8%
CCTV	27	8.0%
Police presence	6	1.8%

3.5.8 What would make you feel more secure in your home?

	Counts	%
Base	263	
CCTV	75	28.5%
Lighting inc security lights	62	23.6%
Fencing/gates/walls	54	20.5%
Police presence	54	20.5%
Better alarms/doors/locks/windows	45	17.1%
Neighbourhood watch group	6	2.3%

3.6. Equality of Opportunity

3.6.1 Has the pandemic increased your levels of anxiety?

Base	Yes	No
353	175 49.6%	178 50.4%

3.6.2 What worries you the most about the future? Thinking both: Short term: In the next 6 months & Long term In the next 3 years

	Counts	%
Base	262	
Covid pandemic	47	17.9%
Wider concerns – climate change/government	44	16.8%
Personal/ family health	36	13.7%
Job security/ Employment	31	11.8%
Education / children’s future	31	11.8%
Security of home	16	6.1%
Finances	9	3.4%
Quality of home	6	2.3%

3.6.3 What (support and services) would make this better for you?

	Counts	%
Base	95	
Social services support e.g. childcare, adult social care	26	27.4%
New community services/ activities	18	18.9%
Job/employment support	16	16.8%
Better services from Southway e.g. repairs, cleaning	13	13.7%
Educational/training support	2	2.1%

3.6.4 Do you need help and support at the moment?

Base	Yes	No
361	67 18.6%	294 81.4%

3.6.5 If so please tell us what sort of help and support you need?

64 respondents gave detail about specific help they need currently with 50 requesting a call from a Southway staff member.