



# London Borough of Tower Hamlets Customer Experience Strategy Survey Results Report (July 2023)



# Introduction

Tower Hamlets Council are pleased to introduce the Tower Hamlets Customer Experience Strategy 2023- 2026 – the Council’s first ever customer experience strategy. Excellent customer service is important because it is the interface that connects the Council with its residents.

The Customer Experience Strategy sets the Council’s commitment to improve and enhance the experiences residents have when accessing services.

The strategy sets out the vision to deliver against this commitment and will connect the council with residents, facilitating their easy access to our services and helping them secure a better future. The Council will also work collaboratively with partners, local communities, and individuals to help deliver and shape a positive customer experience.



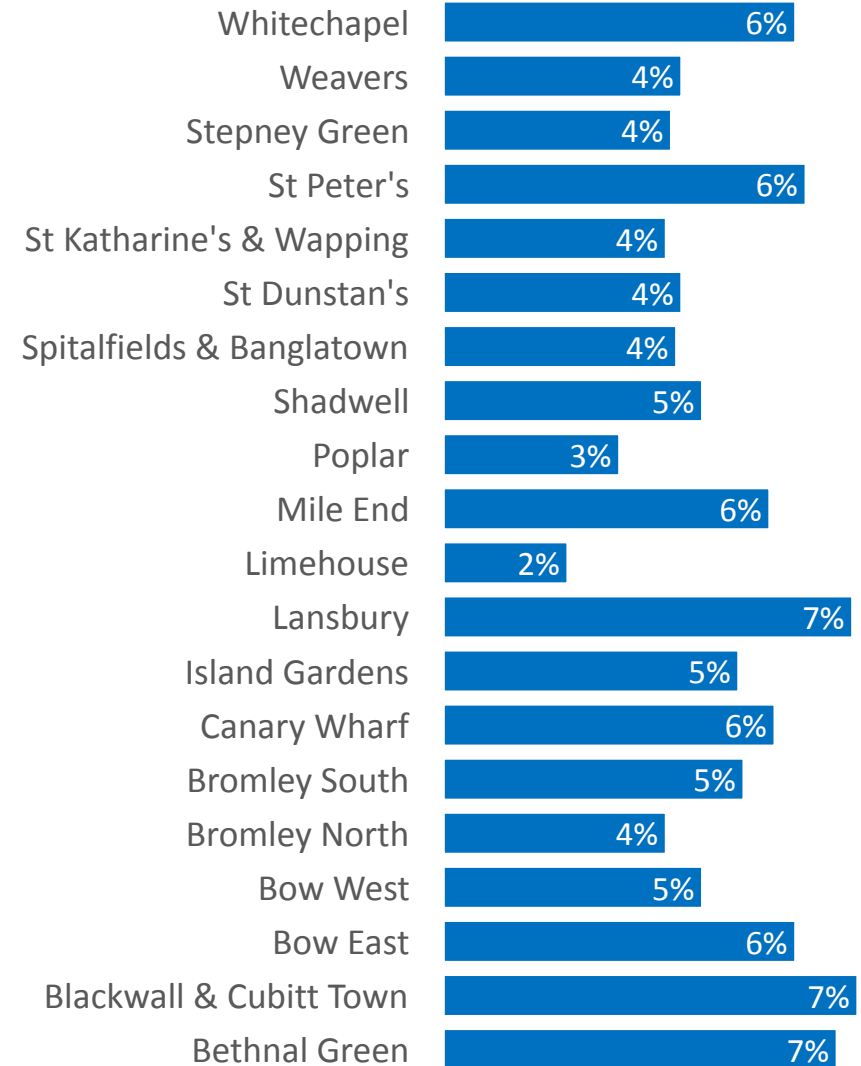
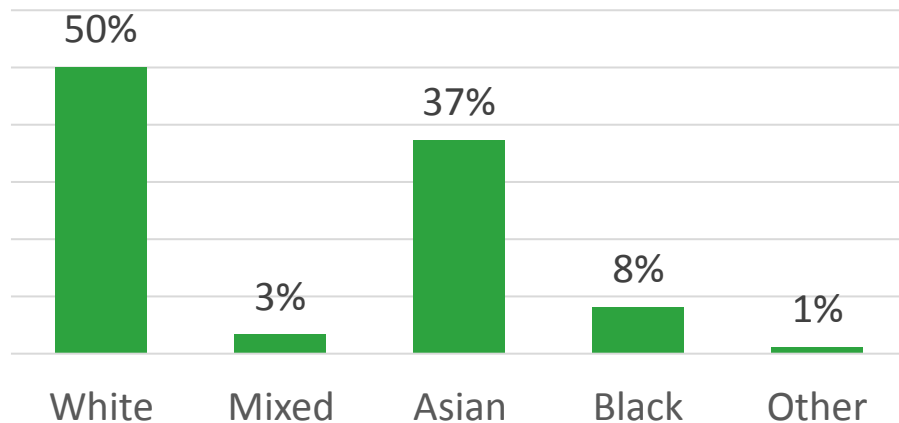
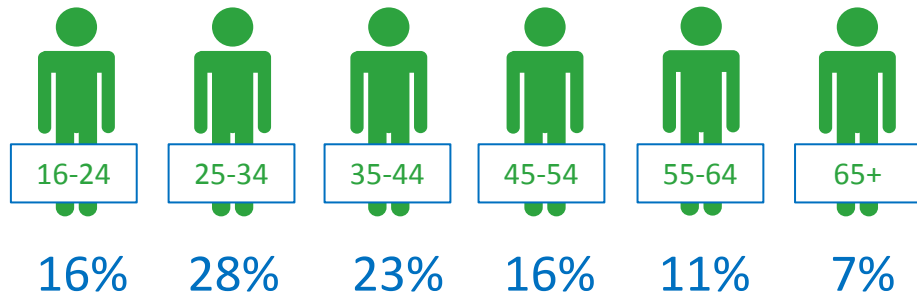
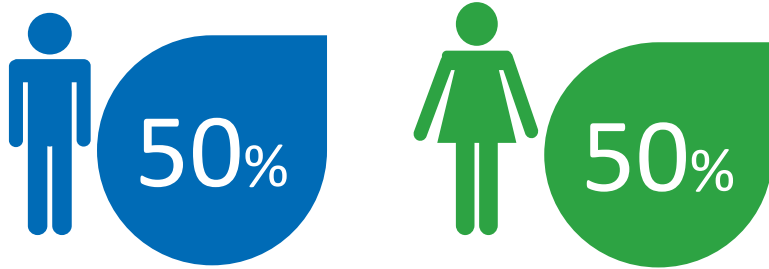
# Methodology

- Tower Hamlets Council wish to understand the views of residents and businesses on their Customer Experience Strategy 2023-26
- The Council commissioned Social and Market Research (SMSR Ltd), an independent research agency, to conduct surveys with residents and businesses using Computer Aided Telephone Interviewing (CATI) and on-street using Computer Aided Personal Interviewing (CAPI)
- A questionnaire was designed by key staff at The Council with support from SMSR Ltd during a thorough development phase with input and feedback provided by staff at both organisations in order to validate the script
- The consultation took place between 12<sup>th</sup> June and 7<sup>th</sup> July 2023
- A sample of 1,108 residents were interviewed, representative by age, gender, ethnicity and ward. This provides a confidence level of 95% (+/-3%)
- A further 50 interviews were completed with businesses across the borough
- This report provides headline findings together with additional demographic insights

# Summary

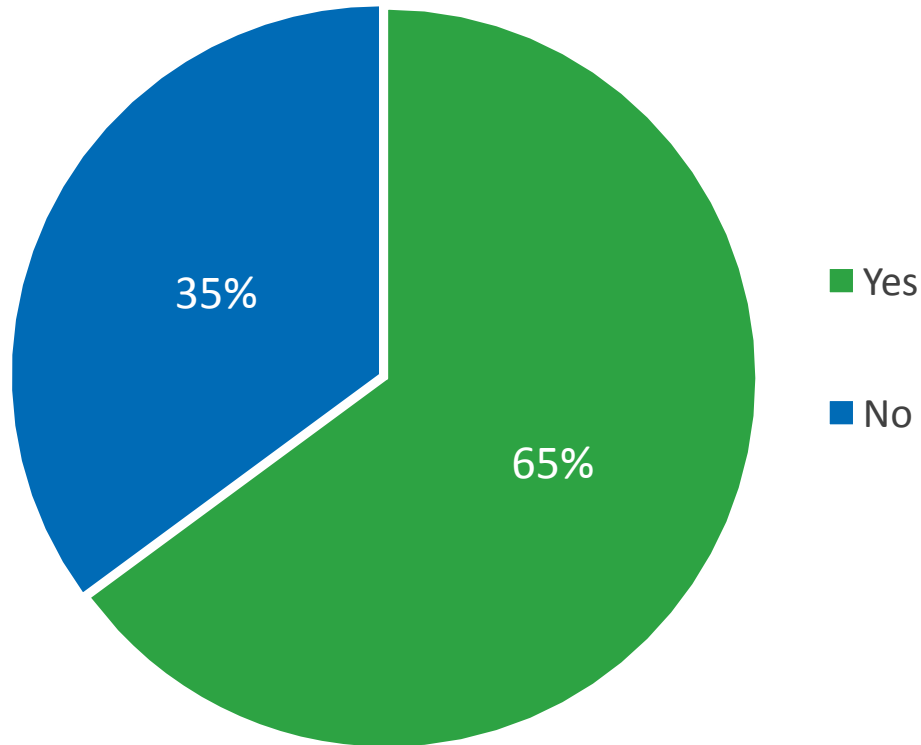
- Around two-thirds (65%) say they have contacted Tower Hamlets Council in the past year; the most frequent services contacted were Housing (26%), Council Tax and Housing Benefit (25%) and Waste and Recycling (22%)
- When contacting the council, more than 8 in every 10 felt staff were helpful and polite and three-quarters agreed that staff has sufficient knowledge to deal with their query (76%). Just over half felt they got to speak to the right person, first time (56%)
- When asked to rank three methods of preferred contact with the Council, the top three choices were telephone (87%), website (68%) and email (63%). When only considering the top ranked method, contact via the website was most popular (31%) compared to email (29%) and telephone (26%)
- Of those who did not choose the Council website as a preferred method of contact, almost two-thirds (63%) say they prefer not to use online services
- Almost all residents agree with the Customer Experience Strategy's vision (94%)
- Residents also unanimously agree with the Strategy's three desired outcomes, each receiving an agreement score of 95% or over. Around two-thirds agree these outcomes are currently being met
- The vast majority agree that the Customer Promise is clear about what customers can expect from the Council and what the Council can expect from its customers?

# Respondent Breakdown (1,108)



# Just under two-thirds contacted the council in the past 12 months

Have you contacted the council in the last 12 months?

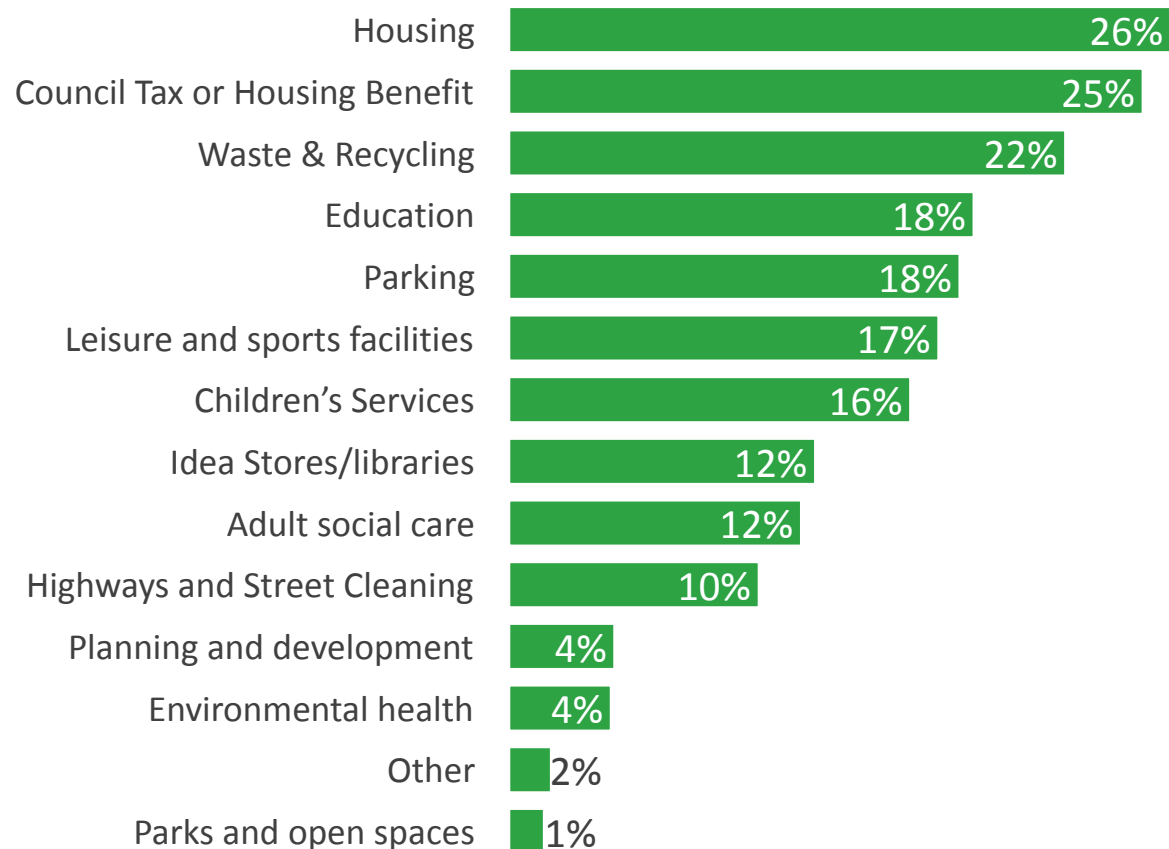


## Key Insights

- Just under two-thirds (65%) had contacted the council over the past 12 months
- Males more likely than females to have contacted the council
- Those aged 35-44 and 75+ more likely to have contacted the council, those aged 55-64 and 65-74 less likely
- Residents with a disability and ethnic minority respondents less inclined to have contacted the council
- Residents in Bethnal Green, Bow West, Bromley North, Limehouse, St Katharine's & Wapping and Stepney Green less likely to have contacted the council
- Residents in Blackwall & Cubitt Town, Bow East, Bromley South, St Dunstan's, St Peter's and Weavers most likely to have contacted the council

# Most contacted services: Housing; Council Tax or Housing Benefit and Waste and Recycling

If you contacted the council in the last 12 months, please tell us which services you contacted most recently



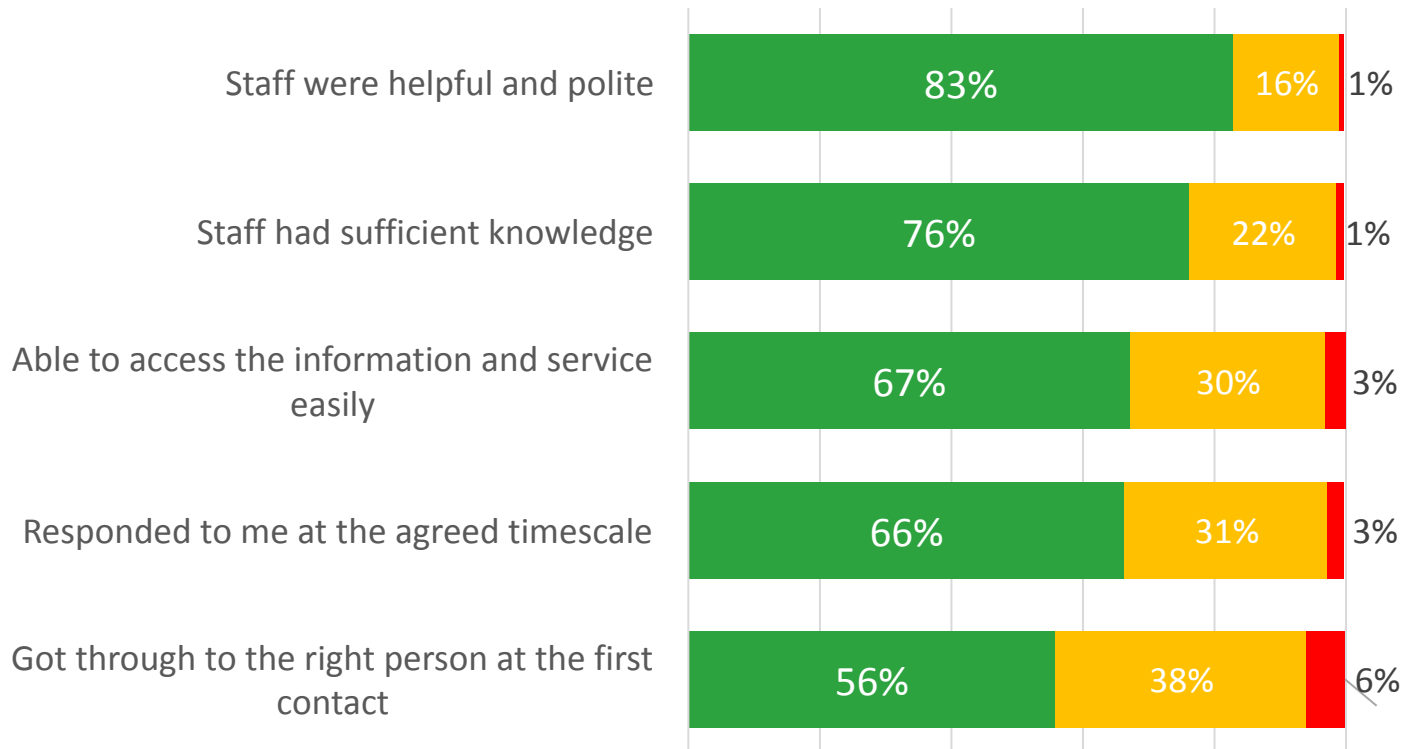
## Key Insights

- Around a quarter contacted the council regarding Housing (26%) or Council Tax or Housing Benefit (25%). Just over a fifth made contact regarding Waste & Recycling (22%)
- Just under a fifth contacted the council regarding Education (18%), Parking (18%), Leisure and sports facilities (17%) and Children's Services (16%)
- Residents from an Ethnic Minority Background more likely to have contacted the council regarding both Housing and Council Tax or Housing Benefit compared to White respondents

# More than 8 in every 10 found staff helpful and polite; three quarters say staff had sufficient knowledge

Thinking about your most recent experience with the council, please state to what extent you agree with the statements below:

■ Net agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Net disagree



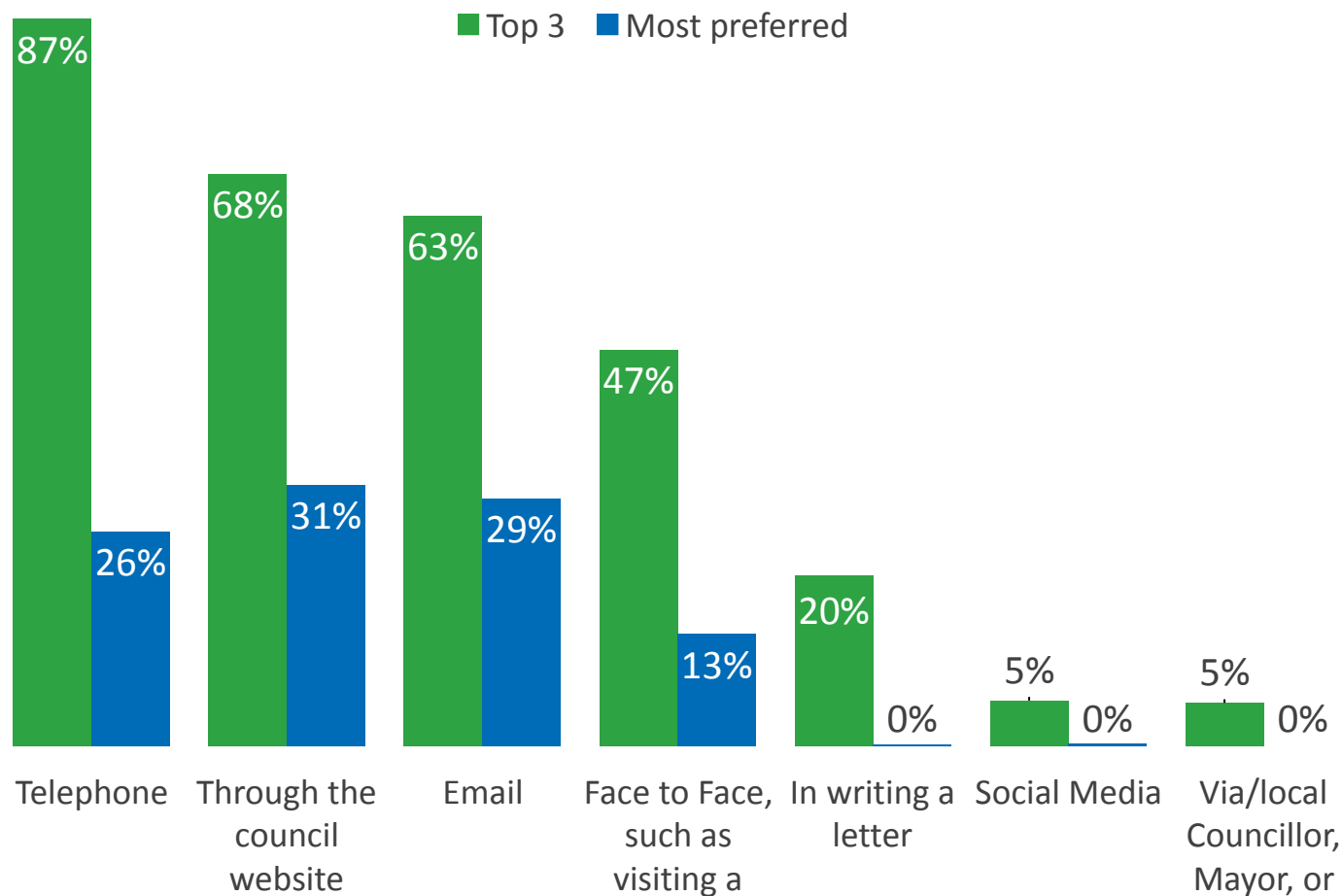
## Key Insights

- More than 8 out of every 10 found Council staff to be helpful and polite and three-quarters (76%) felt staff had sufficient knowledge to answer their query
- The majority agreed they were able to access the information and service easily (67%) and felt the council responded in the agreed timeframe (66%)
- Just over half got through to the right person at the first contact (56%)
- Low levels of disagreements to all statements
- Significant levels of neutral response to statements may indicate some modes of contact may not be applicable to the statements



# Contact via the council website most preferred method alongside email and telephone

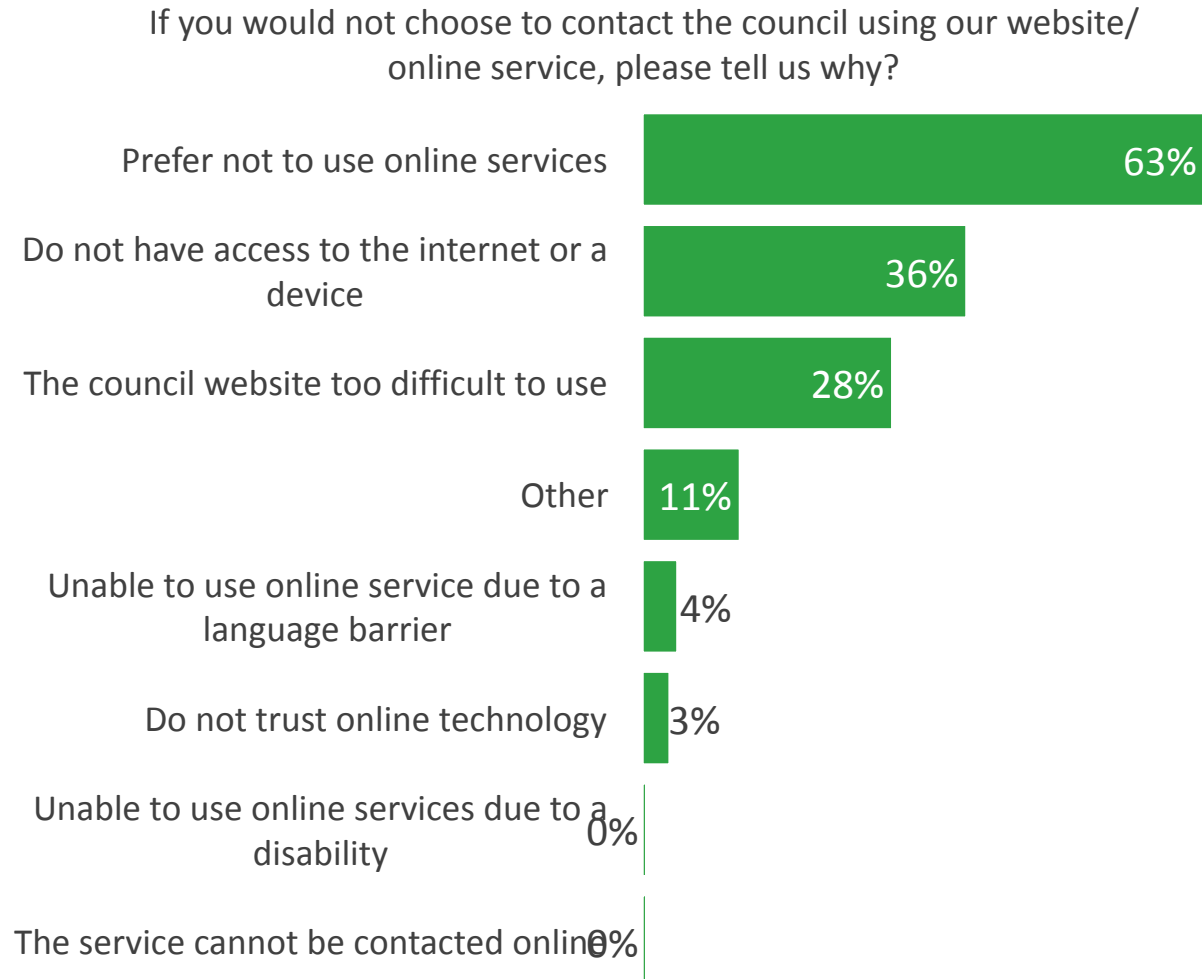
How would you prefer to contact the council? (RANK TOP THREE)



## Key Insights

- Overall, when given three choices, almost nine-tenths (87%) chose telephone contact as a preferred method. Around two thirds chose a digital method: council website (68%) and email (63%). Less than half chose face-to-face (47%)
- However, when considering respondents' preferred choices (no 1 ranked method), the majority chose a digital mode of contact: council website (31%) and email (29%). The majority of the remaining respondents chose telephone contact (26%)
- Fewer said they prefer face-to-face contact (13%)
- Overall, older residents, those with a disability and ethnic minority groups more inclined prefer telephone contact

# Three quarters of those who would not choose to contact the council via the website prefer not to use online services

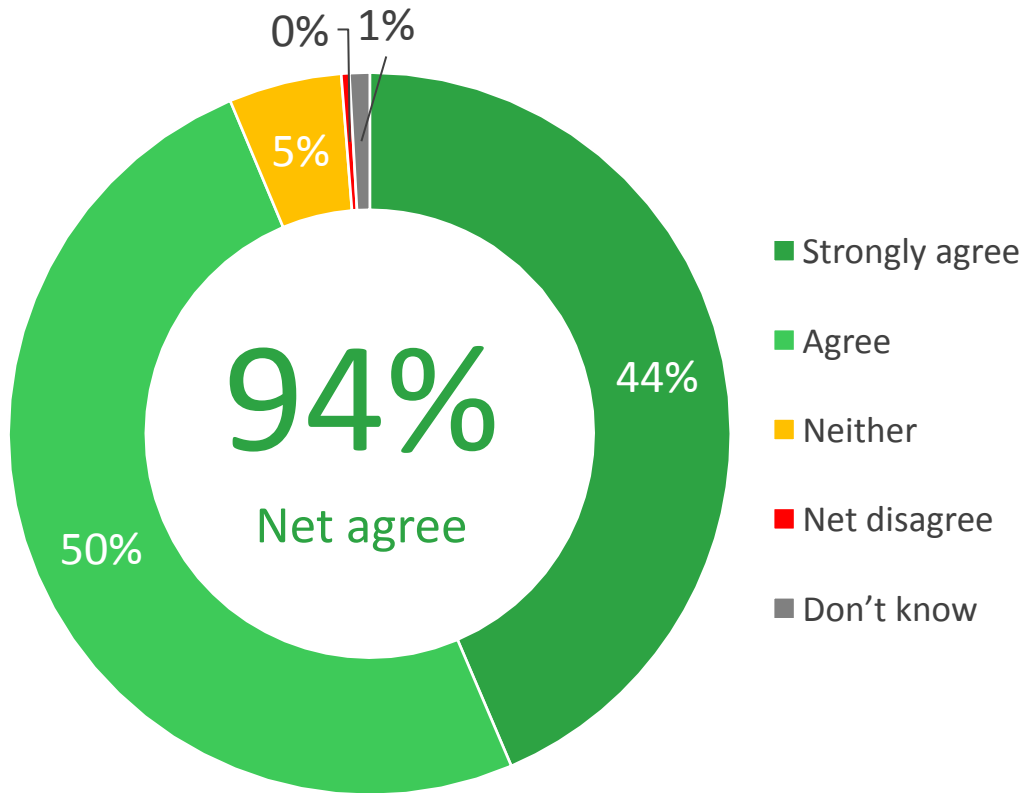


## Key Insights

- The most frequent reason residents who did not choose to contact the council via website/online services was Prefer not to use online services (63%)
- This implies the majority would not choose this method of contact, rather than consider it a barrier to engagement. This may reflect preference of personal interaction, response time, complexity of query, mistrust of online privacy etc.
- However, Just over a third (36%) said it was due to not having access to the internet and more than a quarter (28%) said the council website was too difficult to use. A tenth (11%) gave another reason, mainly involving a lack of IT skills
- Older residents and those with a disability and were more likely to say they do not have access to the internet
- Those from an ethnic minority background and aged between 25 and 44 were more likely to say they prefer not to use online services

# Almost all residents agree with the Customer Experience Strategy's vision

Please state to what extent you agree with the Customer Experience Strategy's vision?



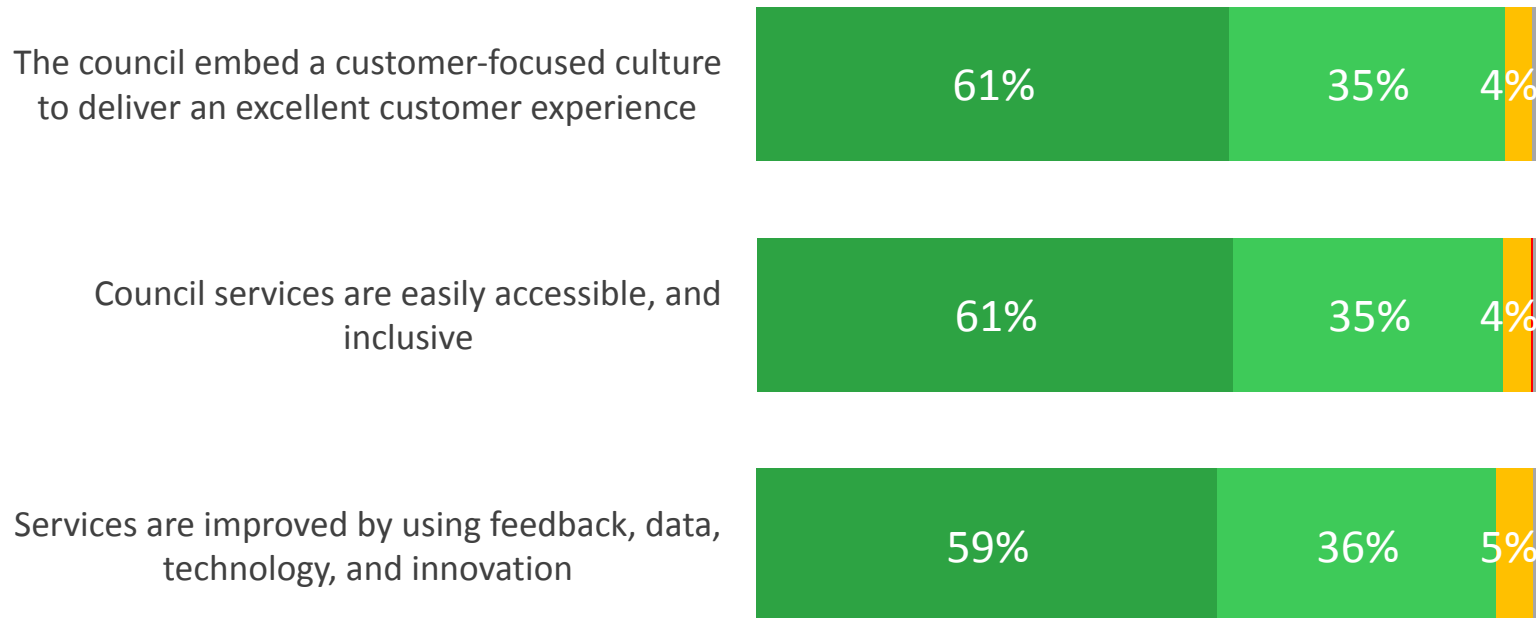
## Key Insights

- Almost all residents say they agree overall with the Customer Experience Strategy's vision
- Nearly half (44%) revealed they strongly agreed with the vision
- Less than a percent disagreed with the Customer Experience Strategy's concept
- A small percentage (5%) say they neither agree nor disagree with the vision

# High levels of agreement towards each of the Strategy's desired outcomes

Please state to what extent you agree with the Strategy's desired outcomes?

■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Net disagree ■ Don't know



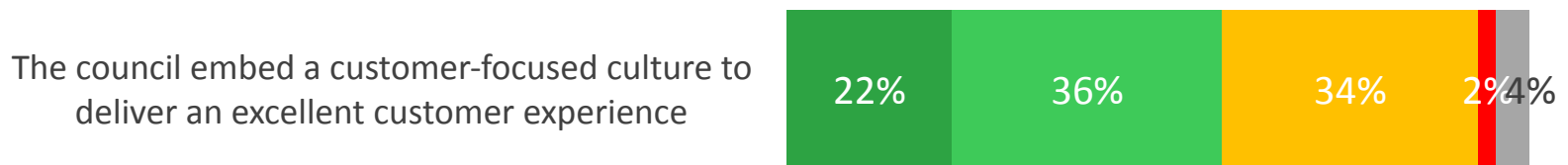
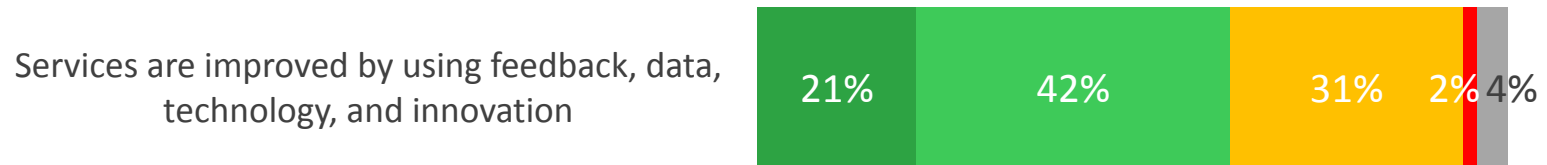
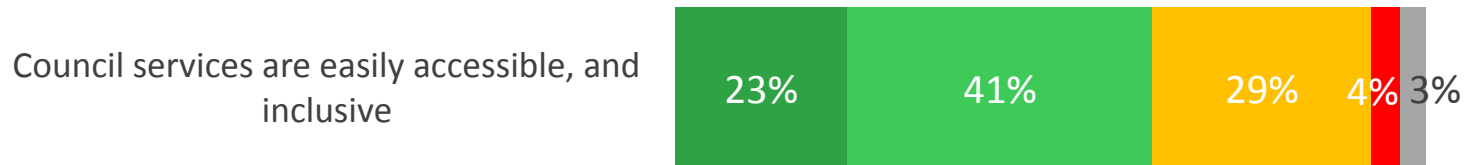
## Key Insights

- Residents were unanimous in their overall agreement towards the strategy's desired outcomes
- Overall agreement levels were similar for all three statements exceeding 95% for all three statements
- Around three-tenths of residents stated they strongly agreed with each statement
- Disagreement levels extremely low towards all three statements (either 0% or <1%)

# Just under two-thirds feel council services are easily accessible and inclusive

To what extent do you think Tower Hamlets Council currently meet these outcomes?

■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Net disagree ■ Don't know



## Key Insights

- Agreement with each outcome recedes by around a third when asked if the Council currently meet them. Agreement levels replaces mainly with neutral response of neither agree nor disagree
- Around three-fifths agree the council is currently meeting each outcome
- Disagreement low for all three statements (less than 4%)
- Agreement levels tended to be higher amongst those aged 16-24, 25-34, 75+, males and White respondents
- Agreement levels tended to be lower amongst those aged 45-54, 55-64, 65-74, females, those with a disability or from an ethnic minority background

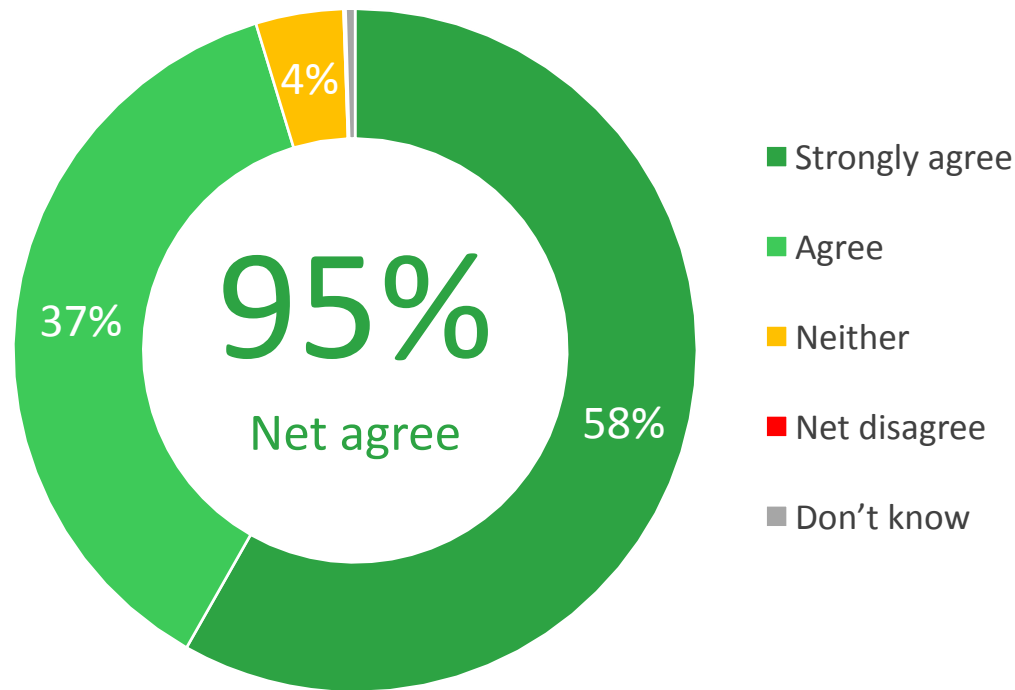
# Are any additional outcomes which should be included (Top 10 themes)

- Enhance Access: Make accessing council services easier, particularly by improving phone-based access and simplifying the navigation of options.
- Increase Local Offices: Establish more local offices to provide in-person assistance and support, ensuring residents can receive help directly and easily.
- Improve Communication: Enhance communication channels, available contact methods, promote online services.
- Strengthen Staff Training: Provide training programs to improve staff knowledge, performance, responsiveness, and professionalism.
- Streamline Processes: Simplify processes, such as school admissions and building regulations, to make them easier and more straightforward for residents.
- Enhance Accountability: Implement measures to monitor and evaluate staff service delivery, ensuring accountability and addressing any issues promptly.
- Collaborate with Other Agencies: Continue collaborating with other agencies and community services to deliver integrated and effective services.
- Improve Feedback Mechanisms: Establish reliable and accessible feedback systems, including alternative options for providing feedback besides online.
- Focus on Specific Needs: Address the needs of specific groups, such as senior citizens, children with special needs, vulnerable individuals, and key workers.
- Enhance Community Engagement: Organise community meetings, consultations, and involvement activities to encourage residents' active participation and ensure their voices are heard.

Q9. Please state if you feel there are any additional outcomes which should be included.

# The vast majority feel the Customer Promise is clear about what customers can expect

To what extent do you agree that the Customer Promise is clear about what our customers can expect from us and what we expect from our customers?



## Key Insights

- Residents deemed the Customer Promise to be clear about what they can expect and what the Council can expect from them
- The vast majority say they agree with this statement
- A small percentage provided a neutral response, stating they neither agree nor disagree
- Less than a percent say they disagree with the statement

# Summary of other comments

Residents were asked to provide any additional comments on the Customer Experience Strategy.

The proposed plans and vision of the council are generally appreciated and welcomed, with residents expressing gratitude for the efforts to improve customer services and the overall quality of life in the borough.

Comments provided about the Council's Customer Experience plan focused on several key themes. Residents expressed a strong desire for the maintenance and improvement in the quality of services provided by the council. They also emphasise the need for high standards and quality staff to best meet their needs. Furthermore, there is a strong emphasis on staff training and knowledge enhancement to ensure professionalism and improve service delivery. Time efficiency is another crucial aspect, with residents calling for realistic time frames and quicker responses.

The use of technology and social media platforms is seen as essential for effective communication, community engagement, and gathering feedback. However, care needs to be taken to ensure that methods of communication are available to suit the needs of more vulnerable groups or those who are not so confident in using online systems. Engaging and involving the community in decision-making processes and establishing regular feedback mechanisms are also highlighted as important factors for a successful customer experience.

Residents also stress the importance of trust and reputation, believing that if the council delivers on its proposed plans, it will gain the trust of the community and be held in high regard.

In summary, the feedback highlights the need for improved service quality, trust-building, the use of technology, a safe environment, community engagement, staff training, time efficiency, and recognition for the council's initiatives. These areas of focus will contribute to a better customer experience and a stronger relationship between the council and its residents.

Q11. Do you have any additional comments?





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