



London Borough of Tower Hamlets Customer Experience Strategy Survey Results Report – Business (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

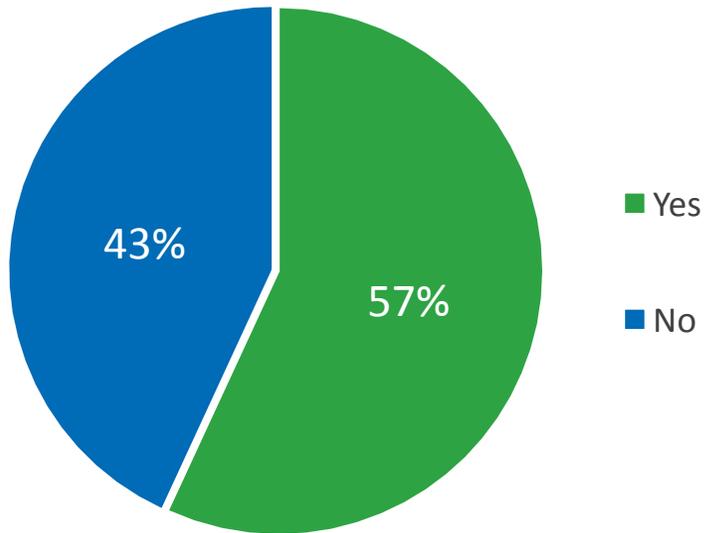
- Tower Hamlets Council wish to understand the views of residents and businesses on their Customer Experience Strategy 2023-26
- The Council commissioned Social and Market Research (SMSR Ltd), an independent research agency, to conduct surveys with residents and businesses using Computer Aided Telephone 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 12th June and 7th 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 a cross section of businesses across the borough
- This report provides headline findings for the 50 business surveys including key insight

Summary

- More than half of businesses interviewed contacted Tower Hamlets Council in the past year; the most frequent services contacted were Commercial Waste (62%), Parking and Permits (31%) and Business Waste (28%)
- More than half agreed staff were helpful and polite (55%), and felt they got to speak to the right person, first time (55%). Two fifths disagreed that accessing the service was easy (38%) and that timescales were met (38%)
- When asked to rank three methods of preferred contact with the Council, the top three choices were telephone (90%), email (55%) and in person (55%). When only considering the top ranked method, contact via telephone was most popular (34%) compared to website (28%) and in person (24%)
- Of those businesses who did not choose the Council website as a preferred method of contact, the majority (59%) say they prefer not to use online services
- Almost all businesses agree with the Customer Experience Strategy's vision (94%)
- Businesses also completely agree with the Strategy's three desired outcomes, each receiving an agreement score of 100%. However, around a quarter agree these outcomes are currently being met
- Almost all businesses agree that the Customer Promise is clear about what customers can expect from the Council and what the Council can expect from its customers?

Commercial Waste service contacted most frequently

Have you contacted the council in the last 12 months?



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



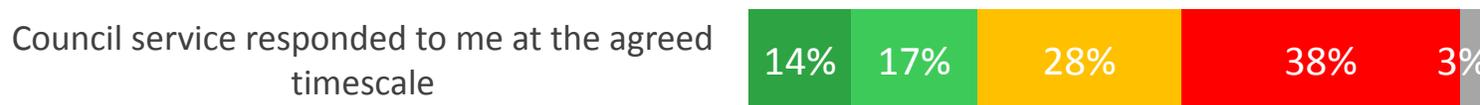
Key Insights

- Just over half of businesses interviewed said they have contacted the council in the last 12 months
- The most prominent reason for contact was commercial waste
- Contact also involved parking and permits, business rates and licencing
- Other reasons for contact included reporting of ASB, repairs and inspections

Over half found staff helpful and polite and said they got through to the right person at the first contact

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

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

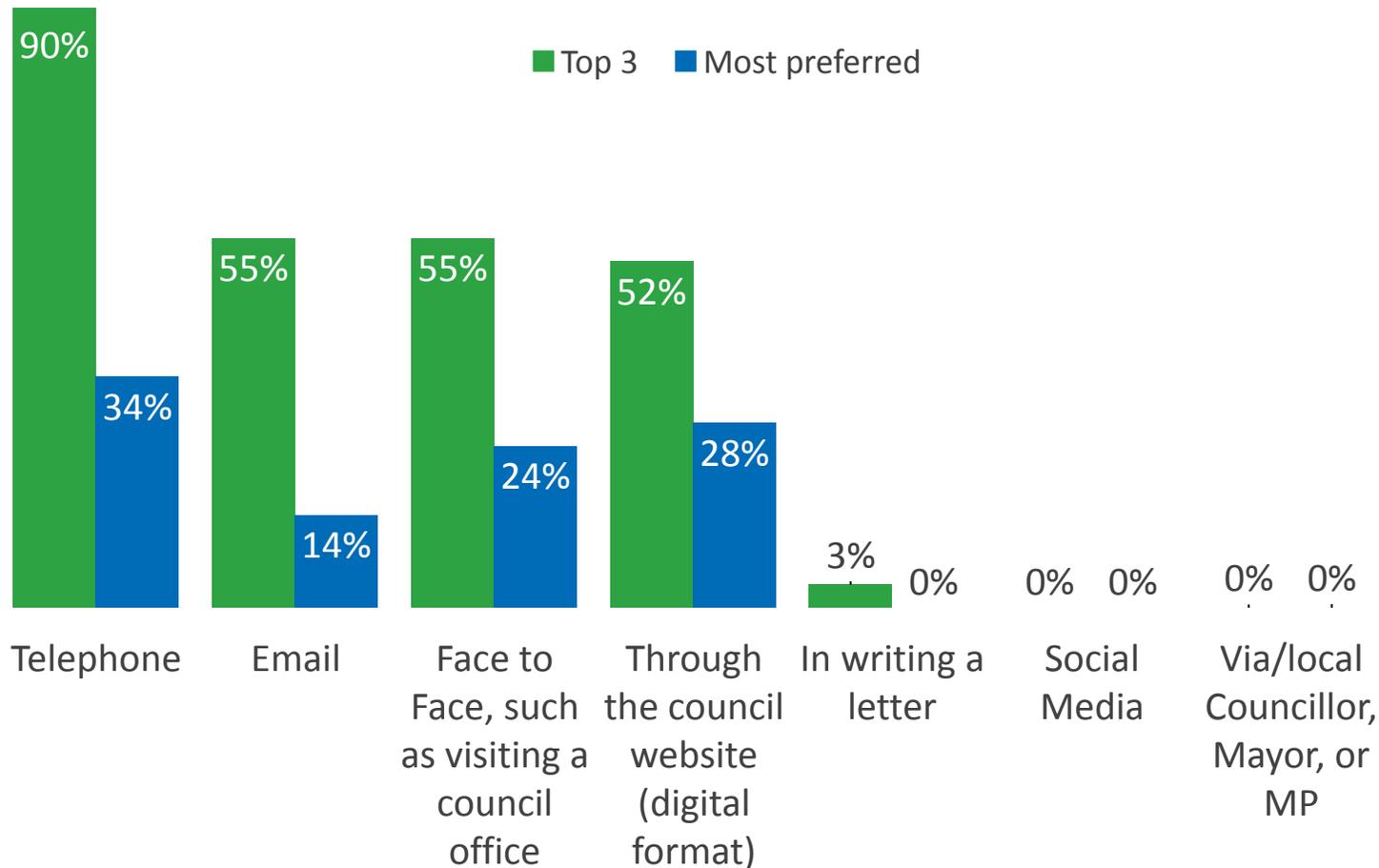


Key Insights

- More than half found Council staff to be helpful and polite (55%) and said they got through to the right person at the first contact (55%)
- Two-fifths felt the staff had sufficient knowledge to respond to their query (38%) with just under a third that felt they were able to access the information and service easily (31%) and that the service responded to them in the agreed timescale (31%)
- Around two-fifths disagreed they were able to access the information and service easily (38%) and that the service responded to them in the agreed timescale (38%)
- Significant levels of neutral response to statements may indicate some modes of contact may not be applicable to the statements

Contact via telephone most preferred method

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

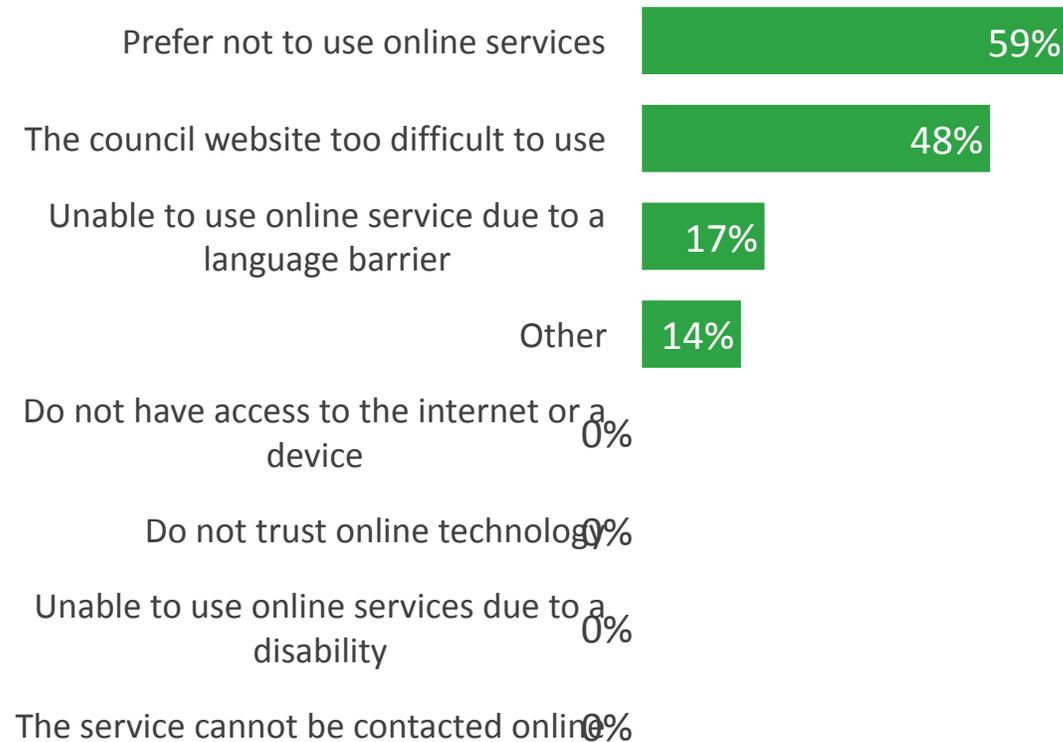


Key Insights

- Overall, when given three choices, almost all businesses chose telephone contact as a preferred method. More than half chose email (55%), face to face (55%) or through the council website (52%)
- When considering preferred choices (no 1 ranked method), telephone retained the highest percentage (34%), followed by the website (28%) and face to face contact (24%)
- Fewer said they prefer email (14%)

Those who do not choose to use the website prefer not to use online services

If you would not choose to contact the council using our website/ online service, please tell us why?

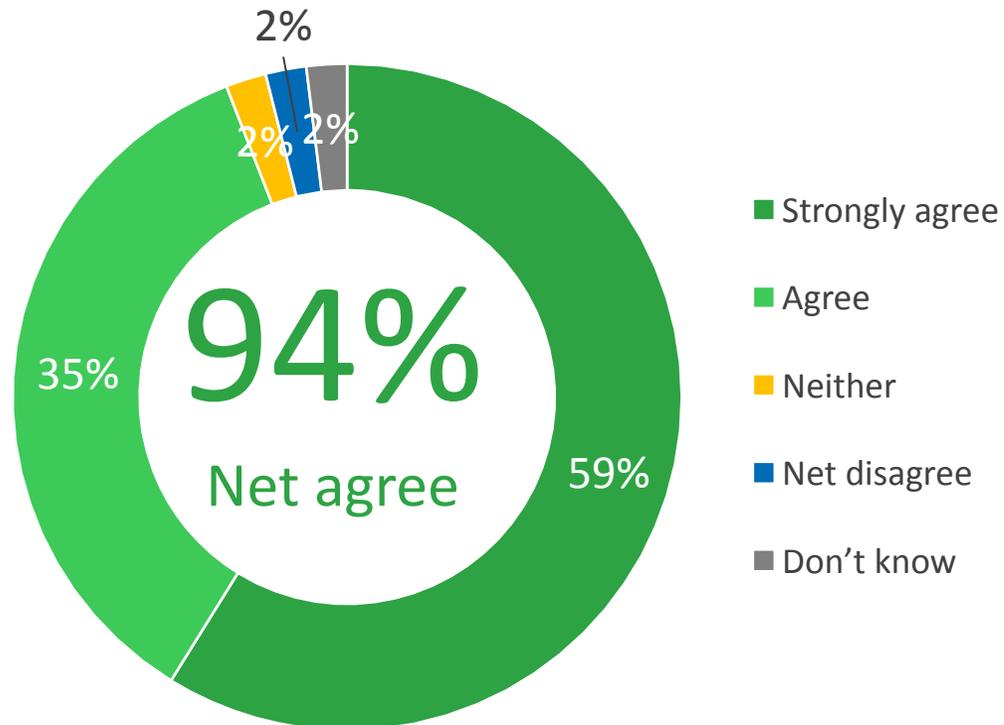


Key Insights

- The majority of those businesses who did not choose the website as a method of contact say they prefer not to use online services (59%). Anecdotally, some businesses stressed the speed of response was slower using online modes or there was uncertainty regarding timescales
- Around half also cited difficulty of use as a factor when not selecting to use the website (48%)
- Other reasons included language barriers (17%) and those who provided an 'other' option cited timescales and the urgency of some enquiries.

Almost all businesses agree with the Customer Experience Strategy's vision

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



Key Insights

- Businesses showed overwhelming support for the Customer Experience Strategy's vision.
- The majority of businesses interviewed (59%) say they strongly agree with the vision
- A third say they agree (35%) and a small percentage gave a neutral response (2%), disagreed with the vision (2%) or did not know (2%)

Complete 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

- It was found that businesses were also unanimous in agreement towards each of the Strategy's desired outcomes
- In keeping with the same percentage of business that strongly agreed with the Strategy's vision, three-fifths (59%) say they strongly agree with each of the Strategy's outcomes
- The remaining business say they agree with the strategy
- No businesses said they disagreed with the desired outcomes

Just under a third 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

Council services are easily accessible, and inclusive



Services are improved by using feedback, data, technology, and innovation



The council embed a customer-focused culture to deliver an excellent customer experience



Key Insights

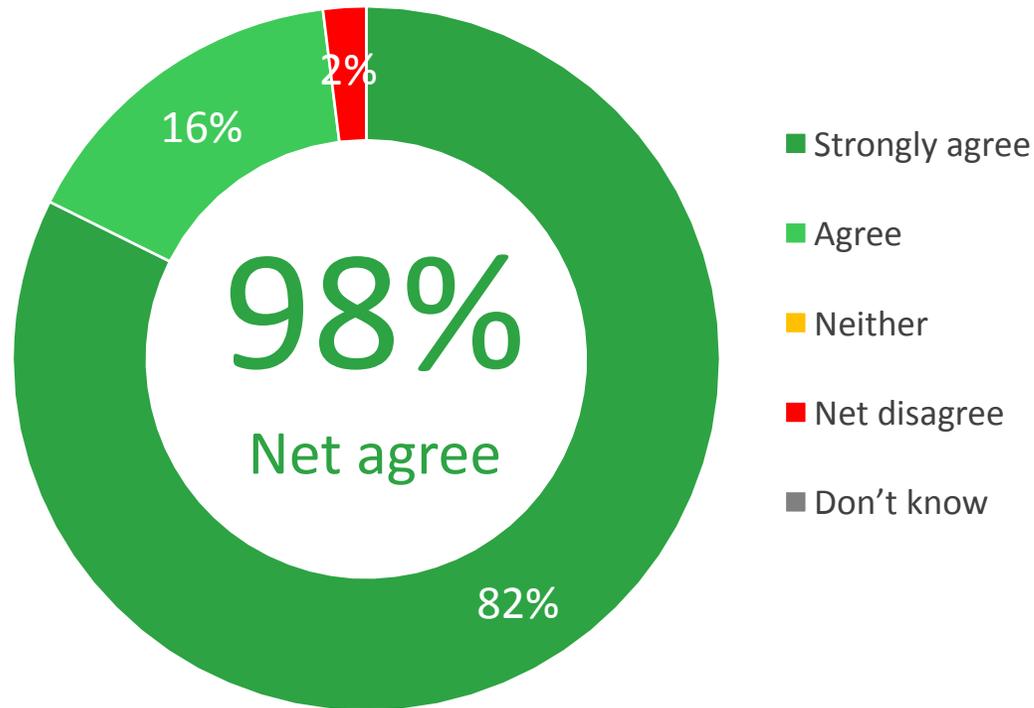
- 31% felt council services are easily accessible and inclusive, with slightly fewer that feel that services are improved using feedback, data, technology and innovation (29%) and the council embed a customer-focused culture to deliver an excellent customer experience (27%)
- Significant levels of neutral response to statements which may indicate a mixed experience
- Highest levels of disagreement towards accessibility (25%)

Are any additional outcomes which should be included - themes

- Insufficient Waste Infrastructure: Businesses mention not having enough bins and the need for bigger bins in the area to address a growing waste issue.
- Inadequate Support for Businesses : Some businesses feel that council staff need better training and hold a perception that no one listens to their concerns in the council. Businesses also express dissatisfaction with the lack of support from the council in resolving issues like parking, fines, and license delays.
- Timescales: Obtaining licenses and accessing council services is described as a time-consuming and cumbersome process, causing frustration for some business owners.
- Communication and Accessibility: There is a lack of clear and easy access to council services. Businesses mention difficulties in reporting problems and not knowing how to contact the council.
- Security and Crime: Businesses have expressed concerns about high crime rates, inadequate security measures, and dysfunctional security cameras in the area.

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

- As found with residents, most businesses interviewed agree, overall, the Customer promise is clear (98%)
- Four-fifths say they strongly agree the Customer Promise is clear (82%)
- A small percentage say they disagree this is the case

Summary of other comments

Additional comments were limited amongst business respondents; below is a series of quotes from the verbatim provided:

“We are having another big problem regarding parking for the shoppers because the council put the double yellow lines everywhere, which has affected the business in the area. Most properties upstairs are empty due to TFL underground services, could be occupied by homeless as they are just sitting outside and get drunk. When we say something, they can be very rude. We need the council to pay attention on these problems.”

“Parking is a big issue for the businesses, we are only allowed to park for 15 minutes and even for that time it is impossible to park because some people park their vans for the whole day - no one says anything to them. We park our delivery vans far away from the shop, it gets so difficult to bring deliveries.”

“There is a scaffolding up outside the shops for months, TFL has put this up and is not removing it. Had reported it several times but nobody is listening. Due to that, customers are not happy, especially in rainy weather. There should be a system to solve these types of issues.”

“Staff are very helpful. The main problem is drugs and drug dealing; I have witnessed it several times. Havent reported it to the police or council because we are scared.”

“Staff are very helpful and kind. We need bigger bins in the area, local residents just leave junk on the side streets.”

“We need a physical presence of staff to see the problems so that they can resolve the issues.”



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