

Test: Satisfaction hard won

Various factors outside of your council's service quality will have an impact on satisfaction levels.

This test is a quick assessment which lets you see how difficult it will be for your authority to win the satisfaction of residents.¹

Look at each statement and then mark how strongly you agree (giving a higher number the more strongly you do). There are more and less rigorous ways of doing the test. You may want to dive straight in, or, for a more scientific outcome your team could benchmark against national averages for each question.

Once you're finished, tally up your score out of 30 and see how you did.

	Mark out of five
1. A high proportion of the population in my community are in managerial and professional occupations	
2. A lower than average proportion of the population we serve is under ten years' old	
3. A high proportion of the housing in our area is in council tax band C	
4. There is a comparatively low inflow of people aged 1–14	
5. My council serves an area which is rural	
6. [For those answering 1, 2 or 3 to Q5] The surrounding area is also fairly urban	
7. Finally, which region are you in? (London = 1 mark; South East, South West, North West, Wales, Northern Ireland, East Midlands, Scotland, West Midlands, Yorkshire, East of England = 2; and North East = 3).	

¹ This test is roughly based on work by Ipsos MORI in 2008, 2009, and 2010 which looked at the external factors determining satisfaction, and provided an 'Area Challenge Index' to determine how 'satisfaction resistant' an area is

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How did you score?

Tally up your score once you've done the test, and see what the implications are for your council's satisfaction ratings.

Your council's score	What this means for your satisfaction
5 or less out of 30	You're against the ropes – it's really hard going
6–12	You're swimming upstream – it's a struggle but not impossible
13–18	You're jogging on the flat – some factors work in your favour and some don't
19–24	You're in pole position – it's not a doddle, but things are working for you
25 or more	You're freewheeling – pretty much everything's in your favour

What this means

Your score gives you an approximation of how ready your resident base is to feel satisfied with your performance. If your organisation is 'against the ropes' or 'swimming upstream' then local people will be less likely to give the benefit of the doubt or appreciate service improvements. This doesn't mean winning trust is impossible, but it means you might have to work harder, instead of being able to rely on residents noticing changes when they happen on the ground.

Engagement is key to this. Services may be stretched and communities more sceptical. However, as we will see, by being straight with people, listening, and gently helping them to understand the situation, you can buck the odds and keep satisfaction high.

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