Local Government Association

Research

Polling on resident satisfaction with councils

February 2016

Acknowledgements

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To view more research from the Local Government Association Research and Information team please visit: http://www.local.gov.uk/local-government-research

Contents

Introduction

This report outlines the thirteenth set of results in a series of regular Local Government Association (LGA) public polls on resident satisfaction with local councils, conducted every four months[1].

With the publication of *Are You Being Served*[2] – a set of resident satisfaction questions that councils can choose to use in their local surveys and benchmark themselves against other authorities – the LGA has responded to demand from the sector for more intelligence in this area.

Our national polling complements councils' local work by regularly looking at the national picture. Tracking national changes in satisfaction with councils alongside questions on other related issues about residents' local areas can provide valuable information on what is driving resident perceptions and, therefore, what councils can do to serve their local communities better.

Many additional factors will influence resident views of councils at a local level, including local demographics. It is important, therefore, that polling results are seen as complementary to a wider approach aimed at understanding and responding to communities at a local level.

Comparison against national polls provides context and trends, and helps to identify possible relationships with other variables, but councils could include additional questions in their local surveys and conduct other engagement activities. Analysis of this information might help diagnose what other factors are driving satisfaction levels locally.

Methodology

Between 19 and 21 February 2016, a representative random sample of 1,000 British adults (aged 18 or over) was polled by telephone.[3]

Respondents were given the following preamble at the outset:

"I would like to ask you some questions about your local council. Local councils are responsible for a range of services such as refuse collection, street cleaning, planning, education, social care services and road maintenance.

If you live in an area with more than one council please think about the way in which they deliver services to you overall. This would include district and county councils. We are doing this to keep the survey simple as it is part of a national study."

The full interview script is included in Annex C for information. Where the questions cover the same topics as the *Are You Being Served*[2] question set, the same question ordering, wording, definitions and preamble have been used to allow comparability.[4]

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[1] Note that until October 2014, the polling was conducted quarterly, and this has now changed to once every four months.
[2] http://lginform.local.gov.uk/about-lg-inform/resident-satisfaction
[3] Quotas were set on age, gender and region and the data weighted to the known British profile of age, gender, region, social grade, taken a foreign holiday in the last 3 years, tenure, number of cars in the household, working status, and mobile only households. The polling was conducted by Populus Data Solutions.
[4] The mode of data collection can have a marked impact on results, therefore, results are only truly comparable with surveys conducted via telephone.

Where tables and figures report the base, the description refers to the group of people who were asked the question. The number provided refers to the unweighted number of respondents who answered each question.

This is the thirteenth round of polling in this series, and the paper examines trends since the first round in September 2012.[5] Differences between results are only highlighted within the report where this is statistically significant.[6]

Please note the following when reading the report:

- Throughout the report percentages in figures and tables may add to more than 100 due to rounding.
- The following conventions are used in tables: '*' - less than 0.5 per cent; '0' – no observations; '-' – category not applicable/data not available.

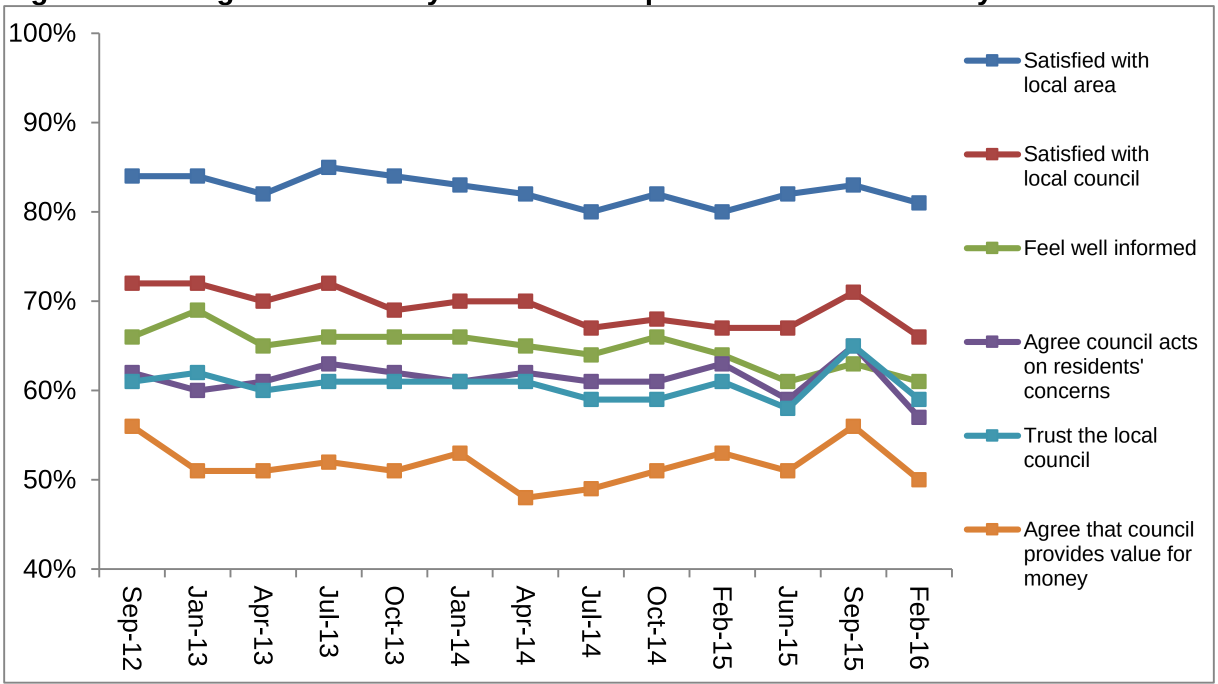
[5] The full papers outlining the results of previous polls can be found here: http://www.local.gov.uk/research-performance-and-improvement

[6] Statistical significance is tested at the 95% level.

Key findings

The results of our February poll show significant decreases in four of our six key indicators: **overall satisfaction with local council,** agreement that one's council **acts on the concerns of local residents, trust** in one's local council and agreement that one's council provides **value for money.** There was no significant change in views for the other two indicators (overall satisfaction with local area and feeling informed). This means, although the results for these indicators were slightly lower than in the previous poll, opinion did not vary enough between the two polls to indicate a meaningful change. Figure 1 shows the February results compare to all others since 2012.

Figure 1: Polling results for key indicators: September 2012 – February 2016



Base (all respondents): 1,000 British adults in February 2016[7]

Looking at the polling results over the last year, satisfaction was at its highest level across five of our six indicators in September 2015. Indeed, trust in one's local council, and agreement that one's local council acts on the concerns of local residents, hit their highest level across all 13 polls. Agreement that one's council provides value for money also peaked in the last poll (matched only by our first poll in September 2012).

In this round, two-thirds of respondents were satisfied overall with the way their local council runs things, but approval dropped to its lowest ever level (66 per cent, which is significantly lower than five of the previous 12 polls).

[7] The full sample sizes for previous rounds are as follows: 1,006 British adults in September 2012, 1,004 in January 2013, 1,036 in April 2013, 1,002 in July 2013, 1,003 in October 2013, 1,008 in

All eight of the services provided by local councils, asked about in the poll, saw decreases in satisfaction from the previous round in September 2015. Four of these drops in satisfaction were statistically significant (namely road maintenance, sports and leisure services, services and support for older people, and services and support for children and young people). It should be noted, however, that satisfaction with these four services peaked in the previous poll, and the current results have returned to levels similar to June 2015.

There have been a small number of significant changes in the polling results since September 2012, and the notable changes in this round are highlighted below:

- While overall satisfaction with one's local area as a place to live saw no significant change since the last poll, there was a significant decrease in the proportion of residents who were very satisfied – reflecting a peak in the previous poll.
- There was a significant drop in overall satisfaction in one's local council and the way it runs things since the last poll. Indeed, satisfaction dropped to its lowest level across all 13 polls.
- Fifty- cent of respondents agreed, overall, that their local council provides value for money – a significant decrease from the previous poll in September 2015 (but similar to our poll in June 2015).
- Fifty-seven per cent of respondents said, overall, their local council acts on the concerns of local residents – a significantly lower proportion that the last poll (but similar to our poll in June 2015).
- There was a small decrease, since the last poll, in the proportion of respondents who said that, overall, their local council keeps residents well informed about its services and benefits (61 per cent). While the increase is not significant enough to indicate a meaningful change, it is the lowest figure achieved across the 13 polls (and with June 2015).
- Fifty-nine per cent of respondents said they trusted their council a great deal or a fair amount – a significant decrease from the previous poll (but similar to June 2015).
- There was a one per cent increase in the proportion of respondents who said they trusted their local council the most to make decisions about how services are provided in their local area (77 per cent for this poll; 76 per cent in September 2015) – but no significant change in those who said they trusted local councillors the most to make decisions about how services are provided in their local area (74 per cent in this poll; 75 per cent in September 2015).
- As in previous rounds, most respondents said they felt safe in their local area. Seventy-eight per cent said they felt very or fairly safe after dark, which is consistent with previous rounds. Further, respondent feelings of safety during the day in their local area also remain very high, with 93 per cent saying that

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January 2014, 1,005 in April 2014, 1,001 in July 2014, 1,002 in October 2014, 1,003 in February 2015, 1,008 in June 2015, 1009 in September 2015 they felt very or fairly safe (although this is which is significantly lower than three previous rounds).

- This round saw significant decreases in satisfaction for four of the eight services provided by local councils, which were asked about in the poll (however, satisfaction with these four services peaked in the previous poll). The most notable changes were:

    - Satisfaction with waste collection services is high – in this round 81 per cent of respondents were very or fairly satisfied. There was no significant change from the last round.
    - Satisfaction with road maintenance is at 40 per cent; this is a significant drop from 48 per cent in the last poll, but similar to most other rounds.
    - Satisfaction with library services has been relatively stable since the polling began, although with a couple of peaks – once in April 2013, the other in July 2014 – both at 71 per cent. In this round, overall satisfaction was at 64 per cent.
    - Satisfaction with sport and leisure services has remained fairly stable across the polls. In this round, overall satisfaction was at 61 per cent, which is significantly lower than the previous poll (which, at 66 per cent, was highest recorded figure since polling began).
    - Satisfaction with services and support for older people has tended to at sit at around 50 per cent, except dips in November 2013, July 2014 and June 2015. In this round, overall satisfaction was at 44 per cent, which is significantly lower than the last poll.
    - Satisfaction with services and support for children and young people has tended to at sit at around 50 per cent, but saw a dip in the three polls between January 2014, July 2014 and June 2015. In this round, overall satisfaction was at 48 per cent, which is which is significantly lower than the last poll (which was the highest figure recorded since polls began).

Polling on resident satisfaction with councils

This section outlines the full set of polling results.

Overall satisfaction with local area

The vast majority of respondents were positive about their local area as a place to live – with 81 per cent very or fairly satisfied in February 2016. This is a similar level to that seen in previous rounds, although in this round a significantly lower proportion were very rather than fairly satisfied compared to the previous round (see Table 1).

Table 1: Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your local area as a place to live?[8]

Round:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
	Sep	Jan[9]	Apr	Jul	Oct	Jan	Apr	Jul	Oct	Feb	Jun	Sep	Feb
	2012	2013				2014				2015			2016
	%												
Very or fairly satisfied	**84**	**84**	**82**	**85**	**84**	**83**	**82**	**80**	**82**	**80**	**82**	**83**	**81**
Very satisfied	34	28	34	34	34	30	28	31	29	28	31	37	31
Fairly satisfied	50	57	48	51	50	53	54	50	53	52	51	46	50
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	9	9	9	8	9	7	10	9	8	8	9	8	8
Fairly dissatisfied	5	4	5	4	4	5	6	6	5	7	6	6	8
Very dissatisfied	2	2	3	3	3	5	2	5	4	5	3	3	3
Don't know	0	*	1	*	*	0	*	0	*	*	0	*	-

Base (all respondents): 1,000 British adults in February 2016[7]

Overall satisfaction with local council

Satisfaction among respondents with the way their local councils run things has stood at between 67 and 72 per cent for the last three years. In this round, 66 per cent of respondents were very or fairly satisfied; the lowest recorded amount. This result is significantly lower than the last poll in September, although not statistically different to polls conducted between November 2013 and June 2015 (see Table 2).

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[8] Local area was defined as "the area within 15 – 20 minutes walking distance from your home"

[9] Whilst the individual 'very' or 'fairly' answer options displayed in Table 1 for January 2013 appear to sum to 85 per cent, this is due to the fact the figures in the table have been rounded to the nearest whole number. Please note that this may also occur in other parts of the report where answer categories are combined.

Table 2: Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way your local council(s) runs things?													
Round:	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**	**11**	**12**	**13**
	Sep	**Jan**[10]	**Apr**	**Jul**	**Oct**	**Jan**	**Apr**	**Jul**	**Oct**	**Feb**	**Jun**	**Sep**	**Feb**
	2012	**2013**				**2014**				**2015**			**2016**
	%												
Very or fairly satisfied	**72**	**72**	**70**	**72**	**69**	**70**	**70**	**67**	**68**	**67**	**67**	**71**	**66**
Very satisfied	19	16	20	18	19	15	16	14	16	16	16	21	15
Fairly satisfied	53	57	50	54	50	55	54	54	52	51	50	50	50
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	12	13	13	12	14	13	16	15	16	13	16	13	12
Fairly dissatisfied	10	9	9	8	10	10	8	11	9	11	10	9	14
Very dissatisfied	4	4	7	6	6	6	6	7	6	8	6	7	8
Don't know	1	2	2	1	1	*	1	*	1	*	1	*	*

Base (all respondents): 1,000 British adults in February 2016[7]

Value for money

In the first round of polling in September 2012, 56 per cent of respondents tended to or strongly agreed that their local council provided value for money. This figure has dropped significantly five times over the last three years, and has once again fallen significantly. In this round, the proportion who agreed that their council provides value for money stands at 50 per cent (see Table 3).

Table 3: To what extent do you agree or disagree that your local council(s) provides value for money?[11]													
Round:	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**	**11**	**12**	**13**
	Sep	**Jan**	**Apr**	**Jul**	**Oct**	**Jan**	**Apr**	**Jul**	**Oct**	**Feb**	**Jun**	**Sep**	**Feb**
	2012	**2013**				**2014**				**2015**			**2016**
	%												
Strongly or tend to agree	**56**	**51**	**51**	**52**	**51**	**53**	**48**	**49**	**51**	**53**	**51**	**56**	**50**
Strongly agree	10	9	11	11	12	9	11	12	11	11	9	13	11
Tend to agree	46	42	40	42	39	44	37	37	41	41	42	42	39
Neither agree nor disagree	21	29	25	26	25	23	31	27	25	24	22	23	24
Tend to disagree	15	11	13	13	13	14	15	13	12	14	18	12	17
Strongly disagree	6	7	7	8	8	9	7	9	10	9	8	8	8
Don't know	2	2	4	2	2	1	1	2	1	*	1	1	1

Base (all respondents): 1,000 British adults in February 2016[7]

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[10] Whilst the individual 'very' or 'fairly' answer options displayed in Table 1 for January 2013 appear to sum to 85 per cent, this is due to the fact the figures in the table have been rounded to the nearest whole number. Please note that this may also occur in other parts of the report where answer categories are combined.

[11] The following preamble was used: "In considering the next question, please think about the range of services your local council(s) provides to the community as a whole, as well as the services your household uses. It does not matter if you do not know all of the services your local council(s) provides to the community. We would like your general opinion."

Council responsiveness

This is an important measure of local accountability as it looks at whether councils are perceived to be responsive to local issues and problems. As Table 4 shows, in this round, 57 per cent said that their council acts on the concerns of local residents a great deal or a fair amount. This is a significant drop from the previous round, and the lowest result to date (although only a significantly lower result with regards to three polls).

Table 4: To what extent do you think your local council(s) acts on the concerns of local residents?

Round:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
	Sep	Jan	Apr	Jul	Oct	Jan	Apr	Jul	Oct	Feb	Jun	Sep	Feb
	2012	2013				2014				2015			2016
	%												
A great deal or fair amount	**62**	**60**	**61**	**63**	**62**	**61**	**62**	**61**	**61**	**63**	**59**	**65**	**57**
A great deal	8	9	10	8	10	8	9	9	9	10	8	10	9
A fair amount	54	52	51	54	52	53	53	52	52	53	51	54	48
Not very much	28	27	26	25	27	28	27	29	28	27	31	27	31
Not at all	5	6	7	7	7	7	8	9	7	7	7	7	9
Don’t know	5	7	6	5	5	3	3	1	3	2	3	1	3

Base (all respondents): 1,000 British adults in February 2016[7]

Informed about the council

In the last year, there has been no significant change in the proportion of respondents who said that their local council keeps residents very or fairly well informed about the services and benefits it provides. Although the proportion dropped slightly in this round at 61 per cent, this fall was not statistically significant (see Table 5).

Table 5: Overall, how well informed do you think your local council(s) keeps residents about the services and benefits it provides?

Round:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
	Sep	Jan	Apr	Jul	Oct	Jan	Apr	Jul	Oct	Feb	Jun	Sep	Feb
	2012	2013				2014				2015			2016
	%												
Very or fairly well informed	**66**	**69**	**65**	**66**	**66**	**66**	**65**	**64**	**66**	**64**	**61**	**63**	**61**
Very well informed	17	17	17	15	17	14	14	15	15	14	12	16	13
Fairly well informed	49	52	48	51	49	51	51	49	51	49	49	47	48
Not very well informed	25	23	23	22	22	23	25	25	24	25	28	26	27
Not well informed at all	8	6	9	10	9	11	9	11	9	11	11	10	10
Don’t know	1	2	2	1	2	1	1	*	1	1	1	1	1

Base (all respondents): 1,000 British adults in February 2016[7]

Trust

Levels of trust in councils have been fairly consistent since polling started in September 2012, but rose significantly in the last round. However, as Table 6 shows, in this round, the proportion of respondents who said that they trusted their council a great deal or a fair amount stood at 59 per cent, which is a more typical level.

Table 6: How much do you trust your local council(s)?

Round:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
	Sep	Jan	Apr	Jul	Oct	Jan	Apr	Jul	Oct	Feb	Jun	Sep	Feb
	2012	2013				2014				2015			2016
	%												
A great deal or fair amount	**61**	**62**	**60**	**61**	**61**	**61**	**61**	**59**	**59**	**61**	**58**	**65**	**59**
A great deal	10	7	9	9	10	8	8	8	9	8	8	9	9
A fair amount	51	55	51	53	51	52	53	51	50	53	50	55	50
Not very much	26	27	28	25	26	26	28	29	29	25	28	25	29
Not at all	10	8	10	11	12	12	10	11	11	13	13	9	11
Don’t know	2	3	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

Base (all respondents): 1,000 British adults in February 2016[7]

A new question was introduced in the July 2013 round, looking at public trust in local councils to make decisions about how services are provided in their local area, compared to their trust in the government.

Table 7 shows that the vast majority of respondents said, of the two, they trusted their local council most to make decisions about how services are provided in their local area. Seventy seven per cent said they most trusted their local council; a higher proportion than many of the previous rounds. The proportion of respondents who trusted the government most was much lower, at 14 per cent.

Table 7: Who do you trust most to make decisions about how services are provided in your local area?[12]

Round:	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
	Jul	Oct	Jan	Apr	Jul	Oct	Feb	Jun	Sep	Feb
	2013		2014				2015			2016
	%									
Your local council(s)	70	71	77	72	80	73	75	72	76	77
The government	14	11	13	16	14	15	19	17	15	14
Neither	13	16	8	11	5	10	6	11	7	8
Don't know	3	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1

Base (all respondents): 1,000 British adults in February 2016[7]

A new question was introduced in the January 2014 round asking which *individuals* were most trusted by respondents to make decisions about how services are provided in their local area. As Table 8 shows, local councillors remain by far the

[12] ‘Neither’ was not read out to respondents as an answer option but the interviewer could code it if it was given spontaneously.

most trusted group, with 74 per cent of respondents stating that that they most trusted local councillors to make decisions by services. This is similar to most previous rounds.

Table 8: And which individuals do you trust most to make decisions about how services are provided in your local area?[13]

Round:	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
	Jan	Apr	Jul	Oct	Feb	Jun	Sep	Feb
	2014				2015			2016
	%							
Local councillors	76	73	75	72	73	70	75	74
Members of parliament	9	9	13	11	12	14	12	12
Government ministers	6	8	7	7	10	7	6	7
None of the above	8	8	4	8	4	7	5	6
Don't know	2	2	1	2	2	2	1	1

Base (all respondents): 1,000 British adults in February 2016[7]

Community safety

Most respondents said they felt safe in their local area. Seventy eight per cent said they felt very or fairly safe after dark. This is similar to recent rounds and significantly higher than the 75 per cent who said they felt safe after dark in September 2012.

Table 9: How safe or unsafe do you feel when outside in your local area[14]…

	…after dark												
Round:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
	Sep	Jan	Apr	Jul	Oct	Jan	Apr	Jul	Oct	Feb	Jun	Sep	Feb
	2012	2013				2014				2015			2016
	%												
Very or fairly safe	**75**	**76**	**78**	**77**	**78**	**78**	**79**	**79**	**79**	**79**	**80**	**79**	**78**
Very safe	27	30	32	33	34	32	31	33	34	35	37	37	38
Fairly safe	48	46	46	45	45	46	47	46	46	44	43	42	41
Neither safe nor unsafe	8	9	8	8	9	9	9	9	9	8	9	9	9
Fairly unsafe	12	9	8	10	7	9	7	7	7	9	7	7	8
Very unsafe	3	4	4	4	4	4	5	5	4	4	3	4	4
Don't know	1	2	2	1	1	*	1	*	1	*	*	*	*

Base (all respondents): 1,000 British adults in February 2016[7]

As Table 10 shows, respondent feelings of safety during the day in their local area also remains high, with 93 per cent saying that they felt very or fairly safe – a similar level to previous rounds. This includes 63 per cent who said that they feel very safe and 30 per cent who feel fairly safe.

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[13] 'None of the above' was not read out to respondents as an answer option but the interviewer could code if it was given spontaneously

[12] Local area was defined as "the area within 15 – 20 minutes walking distance from your home".

Table 10: How safe or unsafe do you feel when outside in your local area[15]…													
	…during the day												
Round:	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**	**11**	**12**	**13**
	Sep	**Jan**	**Apr**	**Jul**	**Oct**	**Jan**	**Apr**	**Jul**	**Oct**	**Feb**	**Jun**	**Sep**	**Feb**
	2012	**2013**				**2014**				**2015**			**2016**
	%												
Very or fairly safe	**95**	**95**	**96**	**95**	**95**	**94**	**94**	**95**	**94**	**94**	**96**	**94**	**93**
Very safe	60	62	65	66	66	62	63	62	63	65	68	67	63
Fairly safe	35	33	31	29	29	32	32	33	31	29	28	27	30
Neither safe nor unsafe	3	3	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	4	5
Fairly unsafe	2	2	1	1	*	2	2	1	2	2	2	2	2
Very unsafe	*	*	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	*	*	1
Don't know	0	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	0	*

Base (all respondents): 1,000 British adults in February 2016[7]

Service specific satisfaction

Respondents were invited to indicate how satisfied or dissatisfied they were with the following key services:

- waste collection
- street cleaning
- road maintenance
- pavement maintenance
- library services
- sport and leisure services
- services and support for older people
- services and support for children and young people

Respondents' views remained positive for the majority of services in this round (see Figure 2). As in all previous rounds, levels of satisfaction with waste collection and street cleaning were higher than overall satisfaction with the council; 81 per cent were fairly or very satisfied with waste collection and 73 per cent with street cleaning, compared to 66 per cent for overall satisfaction with the way one's local council runs things.

As Figure 3 shows, levels of satisfaction with specific services have remained fairly stable since the polling began in September 2012, although several notable were observed in this round.

[15] Local area was defined as "the area within 15 – 20 minutes walking distance from your home".

Significant changes are:

- **Road maintenance**: Satisfaction has dropped significantly since the previous poll (which stood at 48 per cent, and now at 40 per cent), but is similar to levels observed for most other polls. The previous poll saw the highest peak in satisfaction.
- **Sport and leisure services**[16]: Satisfaction has dropped significantly since the previous poll (which stood at 66 per cent, and now at 61 per cent), but is similar to levels observed for most other polls. The previous poll saw the highest peak in satisfaction.
- **Services and support for older people**: Satisfaction has dropped significantly since the previous poll (which stood at 51 per cent, and now at 44 per cent). Indeed, the current result is significantly lower than eight of the previous 12 rounds. It is worth noting that many respondents will not have direct experience of this service and the proportion answering 'neither satisfied nor dissatisfied' (28 per cent) or 'don't know' (seven per cent) reflects this.
- **Services and support for children and young people**: Satisfaction has dropped significantly since the previous poll (which stood at 55 per cent, and now at 48 per cent). The previous poll saw the highest peak in satisfaction. Again, it is worth noting that many respondents will not have direct experience of this service and the proportion answering 'neither satisfied nor dissatisfied' (26 per cent) or 'don't know' (nine per cent) reflects this.

No significant change:

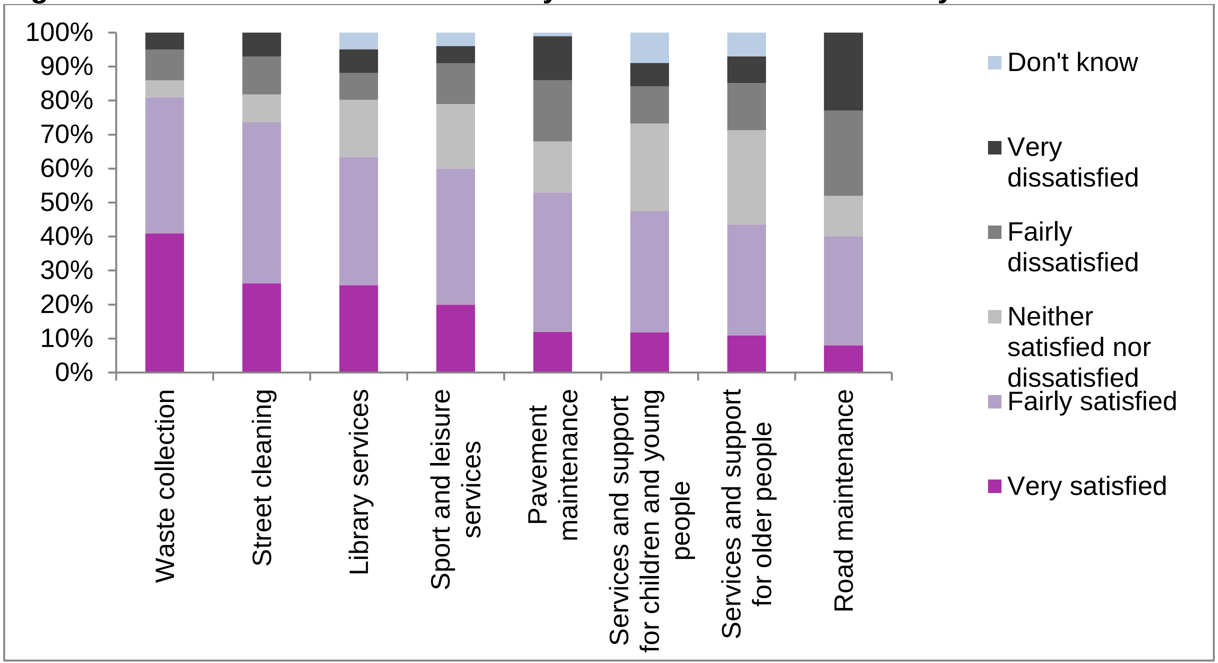
- **Waste collection**: Satisfaction remains at the 80 per cent level, as in all polls except June 2015 when it stood at 77 per cent.
- **Street cleaning**: Satisfaction remains at the 70 per cent level, as in all previous polls.
- **Pavement maintenance**: Satisfaction remains at the 50 per cent level, as in all previous polls (although significantly higher results have been observed in two other polls)
- **Library services**: Satisfaction remains at the 60 per cent, as seen in most other polls (although significantly higher results have been observed in four other polls)

Road maintenance and pavement maintenance continue to have the highest levels of dissatisfaction. In this round, 48 per cent were very or fairly dissatisfied with road maintenance, whilst 31 per cent were very or fairly dissatisfied with pavement maintenance.

Tables showing the full set of service-specific satisfaction results can be found at Annex A.

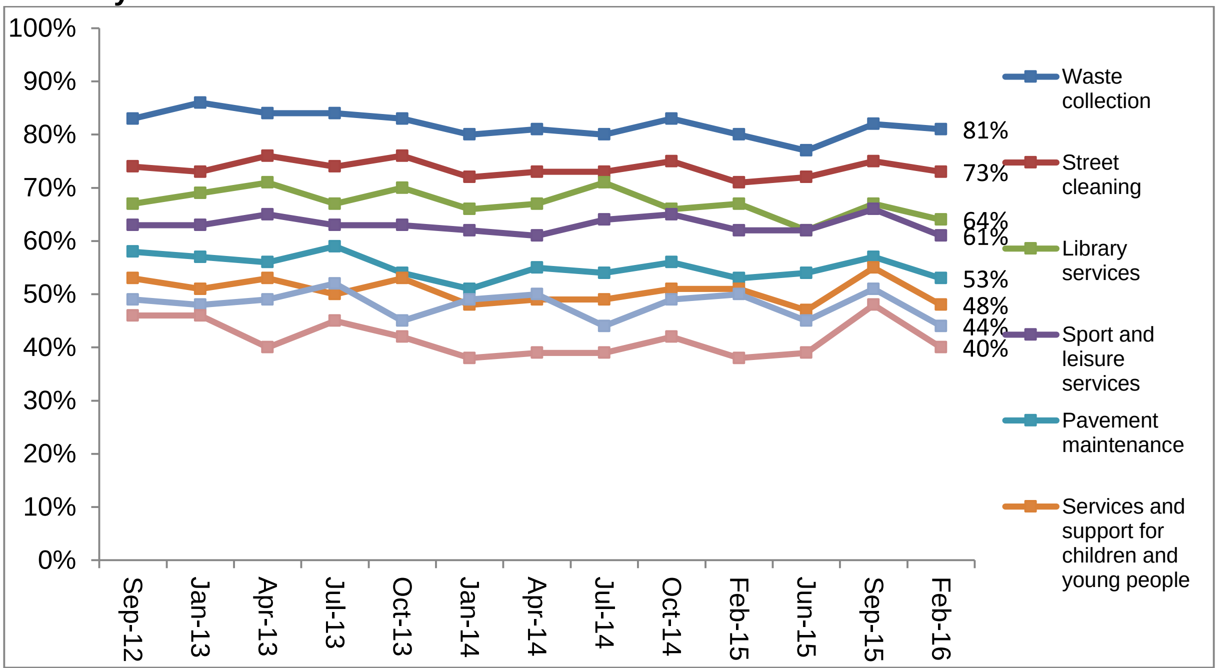
[16] Note that as this question was asked of all respondents, the base includes those that may not have used particular services.

Figure 2: Levels of satisfaction with key council services – February 2016



Base (all respondents): 1,000 British adults

Figure 3: Proportion very or fairly satisfied with each service: September 2012 – February 2016



Base (all respondents): 1,000 British adults in February 2016[7]

Importance of services

Respondents were presented with a list of services and asked to select the three categories that were most important to them and their family. The services were:

- Condition of roads/pavements
- Consumer protection and environmental health (e.g. rogue traders, noise)

- Facilities/services for children and young people (not including schools)
- Housing
- Job prospects
- Levels of crime and anti-social behaviour
- Library services
- Local high street facilities
- Public transport
- Schools
- Services and support for older people
- Sport and leisure services
- Street cleaning
- Waste collection

Levels of crime and anti-social behaviour was most commonly selected category – 37 per cent selected this option. This option has consistently topped the poll, although the proportion of respondents choosing it has dropped significantly in the last year.

The second and third most popular choices were schools and the conditions of roads and pavements (selected by 29 and 28 per cent respectively). These options have issues consistently been ranked second and third. The services that have changed potision since the last poll are:

- Public transport has risen from 6th place to 4th place
- Job prospects has risen from 9th place to joint 6thplace
- Library services has risen from 13th place to 12th place

Housing rose signfcantly in importance in the last round, but has retruned to the same level as June in 2015. The least important to those surveyed in this round were local high street facilities and consumer protection and environmental health, with ten per cent placing each of these in their top three.

Table 11: Thinking about your local area, which three things are most important to you and your family?						
Round:	8	9	10	11	12	13
	July	Oct	Feb	June	Sept	Feb
	2014		2015			2016
	%					
Levels of crime and anti-social behaviour	45	42	39	38	37	37
Schools	30	29	33	28	33	29
Condition of roads/pavements	29	31	32	29	30	28
Public transport	22	22	21	21	23	25
Facilities/services for children and young people (not including schools)	25	25	27	27	26	24
Services and support for older people	24	22	24	21	23	22
Job prospects	23	19	19	20	19	22
Waste collection	21	22	22	24	20	21
Housing	14	15	14	17	20	17
Sport and leisure services	16	17	18	16	15	15
Street cleaning	13	13	12	14	14	14
Library services	9	10	10	10	9	12
Consumer protection and environmental health	13	11	9	13	10	10
Local high street facilities	9	9	10	10	9	10
Don't know	*	1	*	1	*	1
None of the above	*	1	*	*	*	*

Base (all respondents): 1,000 British adults in February 2016[7]
Note that the figures in the table add up to more than 100% as respondents could select up to three answer options.

The media

Respondents were asked whether, overall, they thought that the media had viewed the following organisations positively or negatively in the last few months:

- the government
- local councils across the country
- their own local council.

As with the previous rounds of polling, on balance, respondents said the media had relayed positive or neutral, rather than negative, messages about local government. National government fared less on this measure.

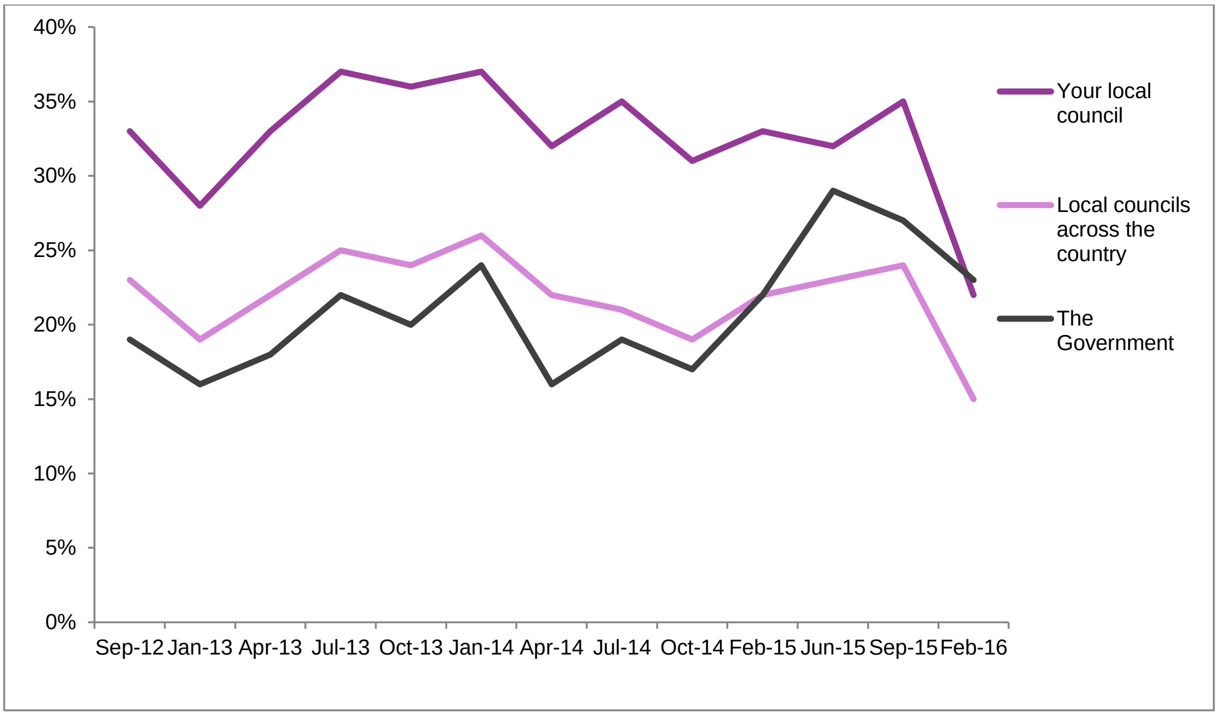
Regarding the government, the proportion of respondents observing positive coverage was 23 per cent – which is significantly lower than the previous two rounds but still significantly higher than six of the 12 previous polls. There was a dip in observed negative coverage (currently at 40 per cent – but still noticeably higher than the proportion observing positive coverage).

Regarding one's own council, perceptions of media coverage have remained fairly consistent, with the majority observing positive or neutral coverage. Currently:

- 22 per cent of respondents observe generally positive coverage of their own local council – a significant drop from the last poll which stood at 35 per cent. Fifty-three per cent answered ‘neither positively nor negatively’.
- 15 per cent of respondents observe generally positive coverage of local councils across the country – a significant drop from the last poll which stood at 24 per cent. Forty-one per cent answered ‘neither positively nor negatively’.

Figure 4 shows the proportion of respondents who said that media coverage had been positive, since September 2012. Table 12 shows the results for all answer options since October 2013; the full set of figures can be found at Annex B.

Figure 4: Overall, do you think that the media has viewed the following positively in the last few months?



Base (all respondents): 1,000 British adults in February 2016[7]

Table 12: Overall, do you think that the media has viewed the following positively or negatively in the last few months?										
	Round:	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**	**11**	**12**	**13**
		Oct	**Jan**	**Apr**	**Jul**	**Oct**	**Feb**	**Jun**	**Sep**	**Feb**
		2013	**2014**				**2015**			**2016**
		%								
The Government	Positively	20	24	16	19	17	22	29	27	23
	Neither positively nor negatively	20	23	29	26	30	29	29	27	34
	Negatively	54	49	51	54	49	47	40	43	40
	Don't know	5	4	4	2	4	2	2	3	3
Local councils across the country	Positively	24	26	22	21	19	22	23	24	15
	Neither positively nor negatively	29	28	39	36	42	34	43	41	50
	Negatively	34	37	30	36	32	40	30	29	29
	Don't know	13	9	9	7	7	5	5	6	6
Your local council	Positively	36	37	32	35	31	33	32	35	22
	Neither positively nor negatively	30	32	40	36	43	39	44	41	53
	Negatively	25	24	21	23	19	23	19	18	20
	Don't know	9	7	7	6	7	5	4	5	6

Base (all respondents): 1,000 British adults in February 2016[7]

Cuts to local council services

A new question was introduced in February 2015 asking respondents how concerned, if at all, they were about the effects of cuts to local council services on them and their family in the next 12 months. As **Error! Reference source not found.** hows, in this round, 61 per cent were very or fairly concerned – a significant drop compared to the other three rounds.

Table 13: How concerned, if at all, are you about the effects of cuts to local council services on you and your family in the next 12 months?				
Round:	**10**	**11**	**12**	**13**
	Feb	**Jun**	**Sep**	**Feb**
	2015			**2016**
	%			
Very or fairly concerned	**72**	**68**	**68**	61
Very concerned	34	34	33	24
Fairly concerned	38	34	35	36
Not very concerned	18	21	21	26
Not concerned at all	10	10	11	13
Don't know	*	*	*	*

Base (all respondents): 1,000 British adults in February 2016[7]

Annex A: Service specific satisfaction results

Table A1: I am going to read out a number of different types of services that are provided by your council(s) in your area. I would like you to tell me how satisfied or dissatisfied you are overall with your council's...

Round:	… waste collection[17]												
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**	**11**	**12**	**13**
	Sep	**Jan**	**Apr**	**Jul**	**Oct**	**Jan**	**Apr**	**Jul**	**Oct**	**Feb**	**Jun**	**Sep**	**Feb**
	2012	**2013**				**2014**				**2015**			**2016**
	%												
Very or fairly satisfied	**83**	**86**	**84**	**84**	**83**	**80**	**81**	**80**	**83**	**80**	**77**	**82**	**81**
Very satisfied	45	45	48	43	44	41	41	39	41	42	39	44	41
Fairly satisfied	37	41	36	41	39	39	39	41	42	38	38	38	40
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	5	4	4	4	4	5	6	4	4	4	5	6	5
Fairly dissatisfied	7	5	7	8	7	10	8	8	6	9	9	7	9
Very dissatisfied	5	5	5	5	5	5	6	7	7	7	8	5	5
Don't know	1	*	*	*	1	0	*	0	*	*	*	*	-

Base (all respondents): 1,000 British adults in February 2016[7]

Table A1 continued…

Round:	… street cleaning												
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**	**11**	**12**	**13**
	Sep	**Jan**	**Apr**	**Jul**	**Oct**	**Jan**	**Apr**	**Jul**	**Oct**	**Feb**	**Jun**	**Sep**	**Feb**
	2012	**2013**				**2014**				**2015**			**2016**
	%												
Very or fairly satisfied	**74**	**73**	**76**	**74**	**76**	**72**	**73**	**73**	**75**	**71**	**72**	**75**	**73**
Very satisfied	27	26	30	27	26	24	24	25	25	27	24	29	26
Fairly satisfied	47	47	46	48	49	48	50	48	50	44	48	45	47
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	6	10	8	8	7	10	9	8	9	10	10	9	8
Fairly dissatisfied	12	10	9	10	10	10	11	12	9	10	11	9	11
Very dissatisfied	7	6	7	7	7	7	6	7	7	8	7	7	7
Don't know	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	*	1	*	*	1	*

Base (all respondents): 1,000 British adults in February 2016[7]

[17] Note that in September 2012 respondents were asked about 'refuse collection'.

Table A1 continued…

	… road maintenance												
Round:	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**	**11**	**12**	**13**
	Sep	**Jan**	**Apr**	**Jul**	**Oct**	**Jan**	**Apr**	**Jul**	**Oct**	**Feb**	**Jun**	**Sep**	**Feb**
	2012	**2013**				**2014**				**2015**			**2016**
	%												
Very or fairly satisfied	**46**	**46**	**40**	**45**	**42**	**38**	**39**	**39**	**42**	**38**	**39**	**48**	**40**
Very satisfied	12	11	10	10	9	9	10	8	11	8	9	11	8
Fairly satisfied	35	35	30	35	32	29	30	31	31	30	30	37	32
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	10	12	8	11	9	11	12	14	14	11	12	13	12
Fairly dissatisfied	24	22	22	23	26	25	22	24	24	25	25	20	25
Very dissatisfied	19	20	28	20	22	26	26	22	20	27	23	19	23
Don't know	*	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	*	*	*	*

Base (all respondents): 1,000 British adults in February 2016[7]

Table A1 continued…

	… pavement maintenance												
Round:	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**	**11**	**12**	**13**
	Sep	**Jan**	**Apr**	**Jul**	**Oct**	**Jan**	**Apr**	**Jul**	**Oct**	**Feb**	**Jun**	**Sep**	**Feb**
	2012	**2013**				**2014**				**2015**			**2016**
	%												
Very or fairly satisfied	**58**	**57**	**56**	**59**	**54**	**51**	**55**	**54**	**56**	**53**	**54**	**57**	**53**
Very satisfied	15	13	15	12	14	11	14	13	14	13	13	16	12
Fairly satisfied	43	44	41	47	41	39	42	41	42	41	41	41	41
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	9	12	11	9	11	15	14	15	12	13	12	14	15
Fairly dissatisfied	19	19	18	16	20	19	19	19	17	18	19	16	18
Very dissatisfied	13	10	15	14	14	14	11	11	14	15	14	12	13
Don't know	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	*	1	1	1	1	1

Base (all respondents): 1,000 British adults in February 2016[7]

Table A1 continued…													
	… library services												
Round:	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**	**11**	**12**	**13**
	Sep	**Jan**	**Apr**	**Jul**	**Oct**	**Jan**	**Apr**	**Jul**	**Oct**	**Feb**	**Jun**	**Sep**	**Feb**
	2012	**2013**				**2014**				**2015**			**2016**
	%												
Very or fairly satisfied	**67**	**69**	**71**	**67**	**70**	**66**	**67**	**71**	**66**	**67**	**62**	**67**	**64**
Very satisfied	34	29	30	32	32	30	27	30	31	30	31	29	26
Fairly satisfied	34	40	41	35	38	36	40	41	35	38	32	38	38
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	10	12	11	13	10	17	14	15	17	16	19	17	17
Fairly dissatisfied	7	5	6	5	6	7	7	6	5	6	9	7	8
Very dissatisfied	3	3	3	3	3	5	4	5	6	6	6	4	7
Don’t know	12	11	10	11	10	5	7	3	7	5	4	5	5

Base (all respondents): 1,000 British adults in February 2016[7]

Table A1 continued…													
	… sport and leisure services												
Round:	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**	**11**	**12**	**13**
	Sep	**Jan**	**Apr**	**Jul**	**Oct**	**Jan**	**Apr**	**Jul**	**Oct**	**Feb**	**Jun**	**Sep**	**Feb**
	2012	**2013**				**2014**				**2015**			**2016**
	%												
Very or fairly satisfied	**63**	**63**	**65**	**63**	**63**	**62**	**61**	**64**	**65**	**62**	**62**	**66**	**61**
Very satisfied	21	19	22	18	19	18	18	21	21	21	19	25	20
Fairly satisfied	42	43	43	45	44	44	43	42	44	41	43	42	40
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	13	16	14	13	14	17	18	17	16	17	19	16	19
Fairly dissatisfied	11	8	8	12	9	9	9	10	7	11	9	7	12
Very dissatisfied	5	5	5	5	5	6	6	6	7	6	5	6	5
Don’t know	8	9	9	8	9	6	6	3	5	3	5	4	4

Base (all respondents): 1,000 British adults in February 2016[7]

Table A1 continued…													
	… services and support for older people												
Round:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
	Sep	Jan	Apr	Jul	Oct	Jan	Apr	Jul	Oct	Feb	Jun	Sep	Feb
	2012	2013				2014				2015			2016
	%												
Very or fairly satisfied	**49**	**48**	**49**	**52**	**45**	**49**	**50**	**44**	**49**	**50**	**45**	**51**	**44**
Very satisfied	10	13	15	12	10	11	10	13	13	13	12	15	11
Fairly satisfied	39	35	34	40	35	38	39	31	36	38	33	36	33
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	19	21	21	20	23	28	27	31	25	28	28	26	28
Fairly dissatisfied	9	8	9	8	10	9	8	11	9	9	11	9	14
Very dissatisfied	4	5	5	5	7	8	5	6	6	7	9	8	8
Don't know	18	18	17	14	15	7	9	8	11	5	6	7	7

Base (all respondents): 1,000 British adults in February 2016[7]

Table A1 continued…													
	… services and support for children and young people												
Round:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
	Sep	Jan	Apr	Jul	Oct	Jan	Apr	Jul	Oct	Feb	Jun	Sep	Feb
	2012	2013				2014				2015			2016
	%												
Very or fairly satisfied	**53**	**51**	**53**	**50**	**53**	**48**	**49**	**49**	**51**	**51**	**47**	**55**	**48**
Very satisfied	14	14	15	15	14	14	11	16	12	13	12	16	12
Fairly satisfied	39	38	38	35	39	34	38	33	40	38	35	38	36
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	15	19	16	17	18	24	23	26	21	24	26	21	26
Fairly dissatisfied	10	7	9	10	9	11	10	12	9	9	12	9	11
Very dissatisfied	6	7	6	8	5	7	6	7	8	9	5	8	7
Don't know	16	16	15	15	15	10	12	6	10	7	9	7	9

Base (all respondents): 1,000 British adults in February 2016[7]

Annex B: Views on media coverage since September 2012

Table B1: Overall, do you think that the media has viewed the following positively or negatively in the last few months?

	The Government												
Round:	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**	**11**	**12**	**13**
	Sep	**Jan**	**Apr**	**Jul**	**Oct**	**Jan**	**Apr**	**Jul**	**Oct**	**Feb**	**Jun**	**Sep**	**Feb**
	2012	**2013**				**2014**				**2015**			**2016**
	%												
Positively	19	16	18	22	20	24	16	19	17	22	29	27	23
Neither positively nor negatively	23	28	29	20	20	23	29	26	30	29	29	27	34
Negatively	54	50	46	52	54	49	51	54	49	47	40	43	40
Don't know	4	6	7	6	5	4	4	2	4	2	2	3	3

Base (all respondents): 1,000 British adults in February 2016[7]

Table B2: Overall, do you think that the media has viewed the following positively or negatively in the last few months?

	Local councils across the country												
Round:	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**	**11**	**12**	**13**
	Sep	**Jan**	**Apr**	**Jul**	**Oct**	**Jan**	**Apr**	**Jul**	**Oct**	**Feb**	**Jun**	**Sep**	**Feb**
	2012	**2013**				**2014**				**2015**			**2016**
	%												
Positively	23	19	22	25	24	26	22	21	19	22	23	24	15
Neither positively nor negatively	30	38	39	25	29	28	39	36	42	34	43	41	50
Negatively	34	31	27	34	34	37	30	36	32	40	30	29	29
Don't know	13	12	12	16	13	9	9	7	7	5	5	6	6

Base (all respondents): 1,000 British adults in February 2016[7]

Table B3: Overall, do you think that the media has viewed the following positively or negatively in the last few months?

	Your local council												
Round:	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**	**11**	**12**	**13**
	Sep	**Jan**	**Apr**	**Jul**	**Oct**	**Jan**	**Apr**	**Jul**	**Oct**	**Feb**	**Jun**	**Sep**	**Feb**
	2012	**2013**				**2014**				**2015**			**2016**
	%												
Positively	33	28	33	37	36	37	32	35	31	33	32	35	22
Neither positively nor negatively	34	43	41	27	30	32	40	36	43	39	44	41	53
Negatively	21	18	17	24	25	24	21	23	19	23	19	18	20
Don't know	12	11	9	13	9	7	7	6	7	5	4	5	6

Base (all respondents): 1,000 British adults in February 2016[7]

Annex C: Polling questions

I would like to ask you some questions about your local council. Local councils are responsible for a range of services such as refuse collection, street cleaning, planning, education, social care services and road maintenance.

If you live in an area with more than one council please think about the way in which they deliver services to you overall. This would include district and county councils. We are doing this to keep the survey simple as it is part of a national study.

1. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your local area as a place to live?

Please consider your local area to be the area within 15–20 minutes walking distance from your home

Very satisfied
Fairly satisfied
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
Fairly dissatisfied
Very dissatisfied
Don't know

2. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way your local council(s) runs things?

Very satisfied
Fairly satisfied
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
Fairly dissatisfied
Very dissatisfied
Don't know

3. In considering the next question, please think about the range of services your local council(s) provides to the community as a whole, as well as the services your household uses. It does not matter if you do not know all of the services your local council(s) provides to the community. We would like your general opinion.

To what extent do you agree or disagree that your local council(s) provides value for money?

Strongly agree
Tend to agree
Neither agree nor disagree
Tend to disagree
Strongly disagree
Don't know

4. To what extent do you think your local council(s) acts on the concerns of local residents?

A great deal
A fair amount
Not very much
Not at all
Don’t know

5. Overall, how well informed do you think your local council(s) keeps residents about the services and benefits it provides?

Very well informed
Fairly well informed
Not very well informed
Not well informed at all
Don’t know

6. How much do you trust your local council(s)?

A great deal
A fair amount
Not very much
Not at all
Don’t know

7. Who do you trust most to make decisions about how services are provided in your local area?

SELECT ONE ANSWER OPTION ONLY
RANDOMISE ORDER

Your local council(s)
The government
Neither (not read out but the interviewer can code if given spontaneously)
Don’t know

8. And which <u>individuals</u> do you trust most to make decisions about how services are provided in your local area?

SELECT ONE ANSWER OPTION ONLY
RANDOMISE ORDER

Local councillors
Members of parliament
Government ministers
None of the above (not read out but the interviewer can code if given spontaneously)
Don’t know

9a. How safe or unsafe do you feel when outside in your local area <u>after dark</u>?

Please consider your local area to be the area within 15 – 20 minutes walking distance from your home

Very safe
Fairly safe
Neither safe nor unsafe
Fairly unsafe
Very unsafe
Don't know

9b. How safe or unsafe do you feel when outside in your local area <u>during the day</u>?

Please consider your local area to be the area within 15 – 20 minutes walking distance from your home

Very safe
Fairly safe
Neither safe nor unsafe
Fairly unsafe
Very unsafe
Don't know

10. I am going to read out a number of different types of services that are provided by your council(s) in your area. I would like you to tell me how satisfied or dissatisfied you are overall with your council's…

Very satisfied
Fairly satisfied
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
Fairly dissatisfied
Very dissatisfied
Don't know

RANDOMISE ORDER

Waste collection
Street cleaning
Road maintenance
Pavement maintenance
Library services
Sport and leisure services
Services and support for older people
Services and support for children and young people

11. Thinking about your local area, which THREE things are most important to you and your family?
SELECT UP TO THREE ANSWER OPTIONS
RANDOMISE ORDER

Waste collection
Street cleaning

Condition of roads/pavements
Library services
Local high street facilities
Job prospects
Public transport
Sport and leisure services
Services and support for older people
Facilities/services for children and young people (not including schools)
Housing
Schools
Consumer protection and environmental health (e.g. rogue traders, noise)
Levels of crime and anti-social behaviour
None of the above (not to be read out but coded if given spontaneously and no options selected above)
Don't know

12. Have you, or someone in your immediate family, used any of the following public services provided or supported by your council in the last twelve months.

Yes/No/Don't know

Advice services (including on benefits and council tax)
Care for the elderly by social services
Care for other adults (disabled, mental health problems) by social services
Children and families support, including children's centres
Education/schools
Environmental health (for example, noise control and pest control)
Housing/social housing/council housing
Sport and leisure facilities
Libraries
Local museums and galleries
Local theatres/concert halls
Parks and open spaces
Planning services and building control (for example, planning permission)
Public transport information
Roads/parking/pavements
Support for local businesses
Trading standards/consumer protection (fair trading)
Waste/recycling

13. In order to cover some of the increasing costs of providing care to adults who need it in your area, the government has given permission for councils to increase their council tax by 2 per cent.

To what extent would you support your local council increasing council tax by 2 per cent to fund adult social care?

I would strongly support this
I would tend to support this

I would tend to oppose this
I would strongly oppose this
Don't know

14. Which, if any, of the following services would you be willing to support by accepting a council tax increase?

Yes/No/Don't know

Advice services (including on benefits and council tax)
Children and families support, including children's centres
Education/schools
Environmental health (for example, noise control and pest control)
Housing/social housing/council housing
Sport and leisure facilities
Libraries
Local museums and galleries
Local theatres/concert halls
Parks and open spaces
Planning services and building control (for example, planning permission)
Public transport information
Roads/parking/pavements
Support for local businesses
Trading standards/consumer protection (fair trading)
Waste/recycling
Other (WRITE IN)

15. Overall, do you think that the media has viewed the following positively or negatively in the last few months?

Positively
Neither positively nor negatively
Negatively
Don't know

RANDOMISE ORDER

The Government
Local council(s) across the country
Your local council

16. How concerned, if at all, are you about the effects of cuts to local council services on you and your family in the next 12 months?

Very concerned
Fairly concerned
Not very concerned
Not concerned at all
Don't know

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