

Report of	Meeting	Date
Director (Communities and Leisure)	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Thursday, 14 March 2024

Second Monitoring Report to Overview and Scrutiny - Select Move

Is this report confidential?	No
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Is this decision key?	No
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Savings or expenditure amounting to greater than £100,000	Significant impact on 2 or more council wards
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Purpose of the Report

- To provide the second update of the work undertaken to deliver the 18 recommendations made by the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group for Select Move.

Recommendations

- That the updates provided on this report are noted.

Reasons for recommendations

- To ensure the actions set out in the February 2023 Executive Cabinet report have been completed, in progress and track to be implemented.

Other options considered and rejected

- Not applicable.

Executive summary

- The Overview and Scrutiny Committee commissioned a report about Select Move to be delivered by the Director of Communities. The report was presented at the Overview and Scrutiny meeting on the 30th of September 2021. Following the delivery of the report, it was agreed for the matter to be the subject of a Task Group which commenced in December 2021.
- The objectives of the Task Group were:
 - To ensure that recommendations made are being adhered to, if applicable.
 - To investigate and evidence whether Select Move is meeting the needs, satisfaction and benefits of customers and Members.

- To investigate the current methods and models of communication between Select Move and customers, and explore what actions, if any can be taken to improve the process, accessibility and increase transparency.
- The actions in response to the 18 recommendations were presented to the Executive Cabinet on the 23rd February 2023 and these were approved.
- The first monitoring report was presented at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on the 5th of October 2023 providing the first update of the work undertaken to deliver the 18 recommendations made by the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group for Select Move.

Corporate priorities

7. The report relates to the following corporate priorities: (Please bold one)

Housing where residents can live well	A green and sustainable borough
An enterprising economy with vibrant local centres in urban and rural areas	Healthy, safe and engaged communities

Background to the report

8. In 2021, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee asked the Task Group to undertake a scrutiny inquiry to look at the Select Move Choice Based Lettings scheme, of which the Council is a member, alongside 11 Registered Providers of social housing.
9. Objectives were agreed to investigate and evidence whether Select Move is meeting the needs to the satisfaction of the applicants and ensuring that the service is efficient, easy to use and is meeting the needs of users while identifying and considering what the Council can influence.

Recommendations and Progress to Date

10. The 18 recommendations made by the Task Group were presented to Executive Cabinet on 23rd February 2023 and these were endorsed for action.
11. The table below sets out the 18 recommendations, with the second column providing actions and responses to the recommendations and the third column providing the latest update on progress.

No	Recommendation	Initial Action/ Responses	Latest Report Update Feb 2024
1	Review the role Chorley Council's Customer Service has in relation to Select Move and housing applications and queries.	Housing officers have provided training to both existing and new Customer Service staff to ensure they are equipped with the knowledge and tools to assist customers with general Select Move enquiries. The training includes tasks such as log-in issues, shortlisting, and bids etc. Meetings have been held with Customer Services to inform them of changes to the processes. The Housing Team will continue to offer training to Customer Services along with any additional support, and guidance required	All officers recruited to the Housing Team have all completed Select Move training. In January 2024, five training sessions were delivered by the Housing Teams to Customer Services existing and new staff. Further training and refresher training is being arranged for later in 2024. Customer Services Manager and Housing Solutions Manager are currently discussing how to enhance the management of Housing and Select Move calls

			and enquiries to improve the customer's experience.
2	An annual Member Learning Session to be conducted with Members of Chorley Borough Council, specifically in relation to Select Move. Members are to be updated and kept informed on any substantial changes made to Select Move.	The first of the annual member learning sessions took place on the 23rd of January 2023, this was delivered by the Select Move Co-ordinator.	A second Member Learning session will be arranged to share information about the implementation of the new policy in September 2024.
3	Simplify the banding system and influence the partnership to reduce the number of bands to ensure they are simple to understand and user friendly. Ensure that any consideration for changing a user's banding is communicated and clear.	Simplifying the banding has been addressed in the Select Move Policy Review. Recommendations in the new policy is to reduce bands to A-C with a light touch band D (no Housing need and sheltered approved, regardless of tenure). All changes to bands are communicated by letter/email to customers.	The new policy has been signed off by all three LA's, (Chorley, Preston and South Ribble), the policy implementation has been delayed due to lack of CIVICA capacity. CIVICA will start work developing updates to the housing management system. They have committed to a new "go live" date in September 2024.
4	Chorley Council to maintain the position that the Select Move Partnership keeps an open housing register to prevent disqualifying those with no evidenced housing need.	It was agreed across the partnership to maintain an open register. Recommendations for the new policy is to have a band D (no housing need and to also accept people who are sheltered approved regardless of tenure).	No changes/updates since last report. This has been addressed in the policy review. The partnership agreed to maintain the open register and the new proposed policy does not change this. The recommendation to have a band D no housing need was supported by consultees and the partnership.
5	The Select Move partnership to tighten the qualification criteria for local connection, and for Members of Chorley Borough Council to be frequently informed of migration figures, e.g. Member Learning Session, In the Know, or upon Member request.	Strengthening the Local Connection has been addressed in the Select Move Policy Review. It was identified that the current policy is less effective than neighbouring local authorities in relation to local connection. In the current policy a local connection is established after 6 months of residing in the Borough. Increasing the local connection to 2 years will require people to demonstrate they have an established connection to the Borough and have invested in our communities. There will be exceptions under homelessness legislation to fulfil statutory duties. Safeguards will be applied for applicants who have fled domestic abuse or extreme threats of violence from another area.	No changes/updates since the last report. This has been addressed in the policy review. Local connection criteria have been addressed in the new policy and will be changed to two years current residency continuously from 6 out of the previous 12 months or 3 out of the previous 5 years.

6	<p>The Select Move Partnership to retain the practice of being able to refuse three reasonable offers within the common allocations policy (though one offer refusal will still allow the council to discharge its statutory homelessness duty it would not disqualify a customer from the register).</p>	<p>To keep three refusals was recommended to the Partnership but it was agreed to amend the policy to consult on the reduction to two reasonable offers.</p> <p>Select Move is a choice based letting system and people have the choice to bid on properties themselves. The onus is on them to ensure that the area and property is suitable for them prior to placing the bid (this is one of the reasons why the bidding cycle is for 5 days).</p> <p>This reduction was recommended due to the delay caused to the process by refusals which can result in weeks delay and possible re-advertisement of the property.</p> <p>As part of this change, the Partnership will ensure there is clear communication via adverts and letters, advising on best practice when expressing interest in properties.</p> <p>The definition of a reasonable offer is set out in the proposed new policy. For example, refusal of a property that does not meet an applicant's needs for disability adaptations would be classed as a reasonable reason to refuse a property.</p>	<p>There was 68% support from Chorley residents for the proposal of reducing three reasonable offers down to two.</p> <p>Comments from residents were that adverts need to be more informative including photos and clearer advice needs to be given on what would be classed as a reasonable refusal.</p> <p>These comments will be taken on board when the policy goes live and the Select Move on-line system is amended.</p>
7	<p>Encourage the Partnership to increase the threshold of individual savings and income within the policy review, maintaining the position that exemptions will be assessed on housing need.</p>	<p>This was put forward to the Partnership. The policy is currently £30,000 savings and £60,000 household income.</p> <p>Individual circumstances would always be considered if an applicant's needs can only be met by Social Housing.</p> <p>It is recognised in the proposed changes to band D would now allow applicants to register if they can demonstrate a need for sheltered accommodation regardless of tenure.</p>	<p>No changes/updates since last report.</p> <p>Individual circumstance would always be considered especially if applicant's needs can only be met with Social Housing.</p>
8	<p>Ensure and exercise oversight of the Select Move Partnerships' adherence to the Common Allocations Policy, to ensure transparency, clarity, and accountability.</p>	<p>The Select Move Co-ordinator will monitor and oversee how the partners are operating to ensure a fair and fit for purpose policy and partnership is in place.</p> <p>The Co-ordinator will ensure policies and procedures are regularly reviewed. The new proposed Select Move policy will be reviewed annually to ensure it continues to reflect the partnerships and Council's priorities.</p> <p>The Co-ordinator attends both operational and steering group meetings and is currently building relationships across the partnership, which is paramount to this role in helping improve the delivery of social housing across the three LA's.</p>	<p>Preston City Council will host the Co-ordinator role from the 1st of April 2024.</p> <p>The Co-ordinator will continue to chair the monthly Partnership meetings and oversee the implementation of the new proposed policy.</p> <p>Workshops are being arranged to tackle inconsistency in processing, these will be arranged alongside the policy implementation.</p>

9	Annual satisfaction survey to be completed with all users of Select Move, with action plans in place to resolve reported issues.	It has been agreed to undertake an annual survey.	A customer survey was completed in between 14 th November and 13 th December 2023, see results in report.
10	Ensure and exercise oversight of the Select Move Partnership monitoring consistency in the application process, policies in relation to valid documentation, e.g. GP evidence letters.	<p>The Select Move Co-ordinator will monitor consistency in the application process and polices in relation to valid documentation.</p> <p>Guidance on assessing medical applications is proposed in the new draft allocations policy as an appendix.</p>	<p>Ongoing - the Co-ordinator continues to chair the monthly meetings and oversees the implementation of the new proposed policy.</p> <p>Workshops are being arranged to tackle inconsistency in processing, these will be arranged alongside the policy implementation.</p> <p>Guidance specifically on assessing medical applications has been produced and will be adopted alongside the new policy.</p>
11	Ensure that face to face access remains available to all users alongside the technological improvements. If required, users are to be signposted to services available such as Citizens Advice Bureau and Chorley Help the Homeless.	<p>Face to Face support via the council's Housing Options Team is available weekdays in the Council's Union Street Office and two officers are on call every day to support this service.</p> <p>Currently, the Housing Options Officers are signposting customers to Chorley Help the Homeless and the digital sessions delivered by the Communities Teams. Chorley Help the Homeless have limited scope to support customers but the team are looking to deliver training to all volunteers on how best to support customers.</p>	<p>The appointment of a Select Move Advisor offers additional help and support as required either face to face or over the phone.</p> <p>This role is critical to the service, and we have seen an improvement on processing and managing enquiries since having a dedicated role. It is anticipated that a dedicated Select Move resource will remain as part of the Service Led review (due for implementation in Q1 2024/25).</p> <p>Responses are dealt with, within 48 hours.</p> <p>Signposting is undertaken with consent of the customer to CAB, Help the Homeless and to the Council's Social Prescribing Service. Training has been provided to volunteers at Help the Homeless on how to support our residents going through the assessment process.</p>
12	Chorley Council to explore further opportunities to support customers in rural areas to access the Select Move register, e.g. commission library services.	Contact will be made with the Registered Providers' to discuss access in rural areas.	<p>Discussions have taken place with Registered Provider to address to explore opportunities to support customers in rural areas.</p> <p>This has tied in with the Council's Digital Skills project which was delivered successfully. A programme of learning opportunities was</p>

			<p>launched and delivered across many community venues both in central and rural Chorley.</p> <p>The council commissioned programme was a short, intensive offer to promote the benefits of building digital literacy whilst developing fundamental skills. This also included support for people accessing Select Move.</p> <p>Particular success has been achieved when an arrangement has been made with existing groups of residents, to bring the programme to their members as part of their regular meetings, friendship groups, social events, religious congregations.</p> <p>Through delivery of this programme, it has become apparent that the existing support available at local libraries, charities and voluntary groups is sufficient to meet the demand, with a referral pathway created and circulated within customer facing council teams and local networks.</p>
13	<p>Monitor the progress and roll out of the upgraded system provided by Civica which should allow the Select Move website to be functional, and easy to use on all devices. Chorley Council to be actively involved in any future procurement exercise in relation to the Choice Base Letting platform.</p>	<p>The upgrade was implemented on the 3rd November 2022 and training has been provided to the team and customers on the new system. The website is more mobile friendly, reducing those barriers for those customers with only mobile devices. The new element to allow customers to upload documents themselves from their Select Move account is proving to be positive, making the process more efficient. Any future procurement will involve Chorley Council.</p>	<p>Completed 2022</p>
14	<p>Provide clear and open lines of communication and information to allow applicants of Select Move to manage and set their expectations. This is to include photographs of listed properties, average waiting times for responses, average waiting times for different sized properties and average waiting times per geographic location.</p>	<p>As part of the upgrade customers are now able to view visual maps showing average waiting times across the borough, this also provides information on how many properties have been advertised and let per area, this is a real positive tool to help manage expectations on lengths of time it takes to be housed and the demand on Social housing.</p> <p>Search properties - SelectMove</p> <p>Jigsaw have agreed to ensure photographs are available for their properties.</p>	<p>No changes/updates since last report.</p> <p>Ongoing business as usual - The visual hex maps are used daily by customers and officers and make a real difference in managing expectations.</p> <p>As part of the policy review the suite of letters provided to customers will be reviewed to bring them in line with the new policy changes. Prior to implementation these can be shared with the task group for comments and to confirm that communication is clear and understood by customers and those who are non-housing professionals.</p>

15	Develop a greater understanding and insight into the Housing Associations makeup, and demographics of the people moving into the area through the 25% allowance not through Select Move.	This will be requested; however, as the 25% sits outside the Select Move Policy this will be discretionary.	No changes/updates, since last report. This information has not been received from the Housing Associations. This information can be requested again but will be a choice of the partner if they provide it.
16	That the partnership recognises the importance of treating social housing customers with the dignity and respect, and that the customer service standards are of utmost priority.	This is paramount to our staff and customer service standards are our utmost priority. The team is now fully staffed, and development training has been scheduled which will support the team in responding effectively to customers providing a quality service.	Ongoing – this remains our utmost priority, training will continue to be provided to ensure officers are up to date on legislation, best practice and current guidance. Staff will be continuously supported, coached and mentored by senior staff to improve their confidence in making right-first-time decisions. The housing team has an improved structure, with a Head of Service, Manager, Team Leader, five Housing Solutions Officers and a Select Move Advisor, this has been a great improvement for the team and the service provided for the customer.
17	A further Select Move Task Group, or a Scrutiny Investigation to be conducted following the final Monitoring Report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee if the recommendations failed to be adhered to or if significant issues arise.	Agreed by Executive Cabinet 10th November 2022.	No changes/updates since last report.
18	Chorley Council to explore the advantages and disadvantages of remaining within the partnership and the impact of increasing its own housing stock.	Agreed by Executive Cabinet 10th November 2022 and adopted as a central theme in the Council's Corporate Strategy "Housing where residents can live well".	No changes/updates since last report.

Select Move Customer Survey 2023

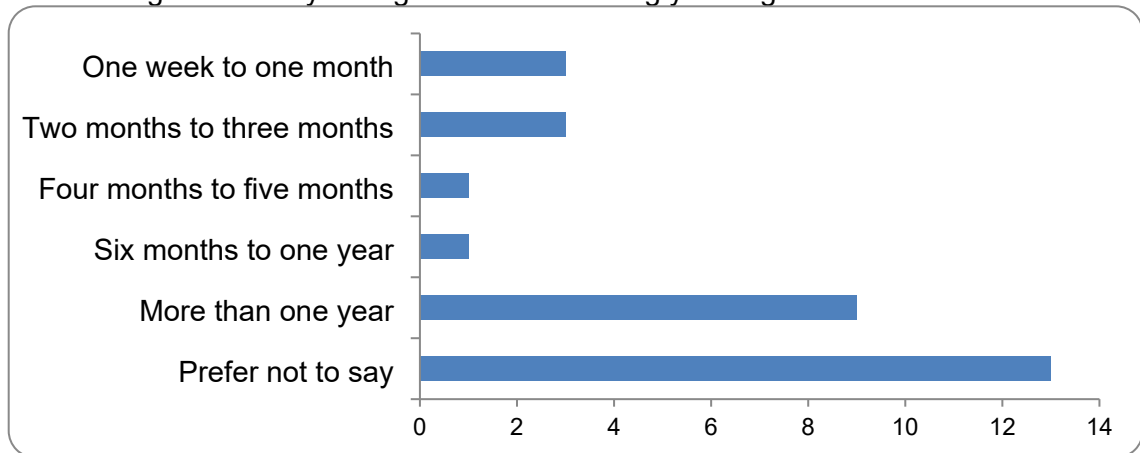
12. Two surveys were completed between 14th November to 13th December 2023. One survey was sent to applicants where Chorley Council was managing the application, and the second survey was sent to applicants whose applications were managed by any other partner. By having two surveys it has allowed us to identify if there are significant differences in processing between partners.
13. To allow analysis and comparison over time the survey questions used were the same as the previous survey undertaken in 2022. The team have identified learning about our survey methodology and in future will use fewer "free text" answers and provide more multiple-choice options. The free text answers this year will inform what

multiple-choice options we offer in future. Free-text responses are difficult to accurately analyse, and it can be challenging to identify areas which are working well and those that require further improvement.

14. Chorley Borough Council Select Move Customer Survey 2023

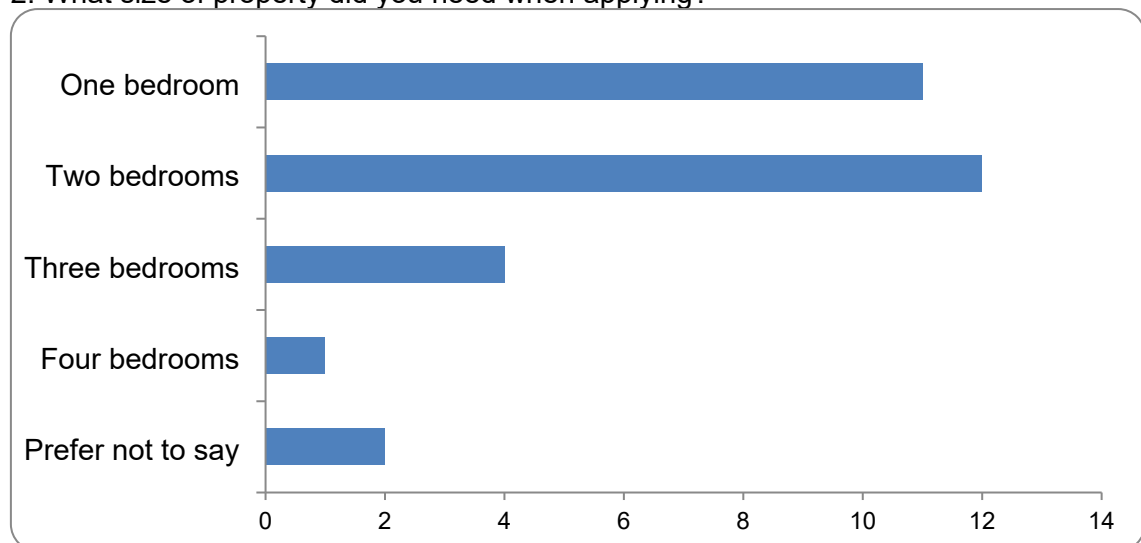
We received 30 responses from customers whose applications are being managed by Chorley Borough Council. This survey was sent to all applicants who selected Chorley as their Local Authority.

1: How long did it take you to get housed following your registration?



Option	Total	Percent
One week to one month	3	10.00%
Two months to three months	3	10.00%
Four months to five months	1	3.33%
Six months to one year	1	3.33%
More than one year	9	30.00%
Prefer not to say	13	43.33%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

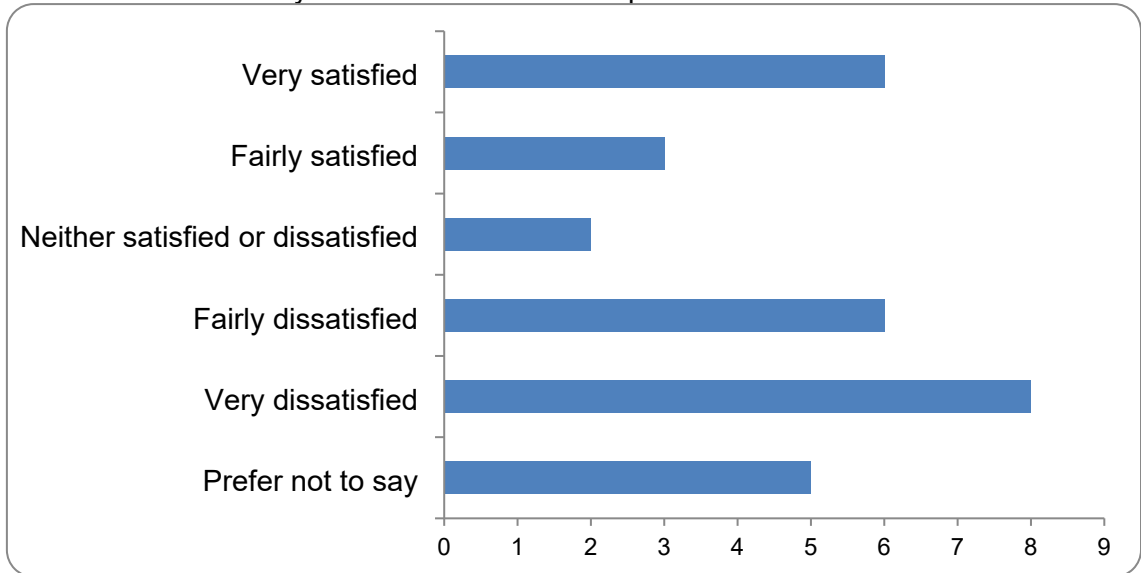
2: What size of property did you need when applying?



Option	Total	Percent
One bedroom	11	36.67%
Two bedrooms	12	40.00%
Three bedrooms	4	13.33%

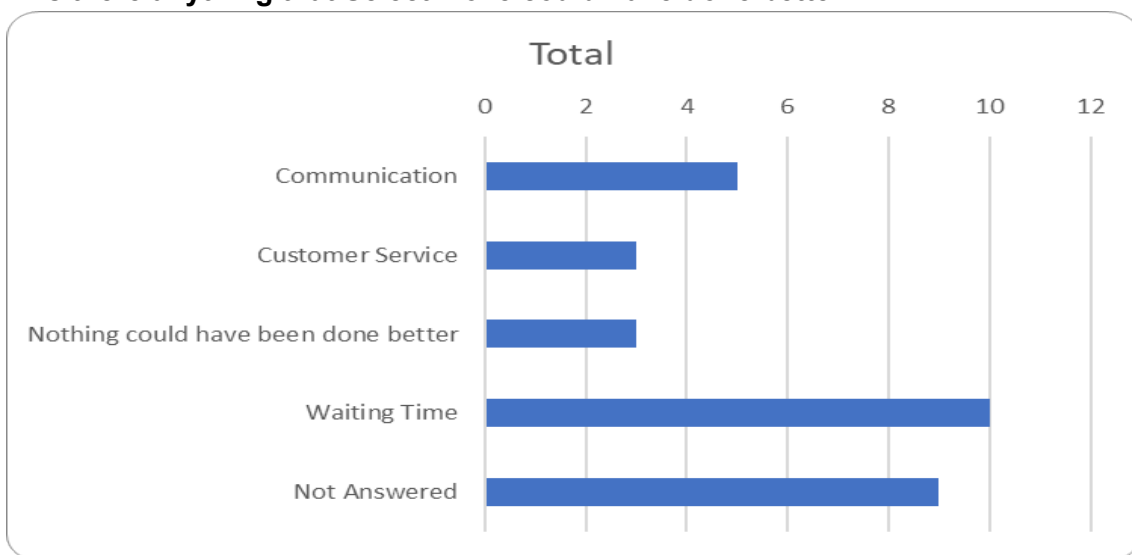
Four bedrooms	1	3.33%
Five bedrooms and above	0	0.00%
Prefer not to say	2	6.67%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

3: How satisfied were you with the Select Move process?



Option	Total	Percent
Very satisfied	6	20.00%
Fairly satisfied	3	10.00%
Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	2	6.67%
Fairly dissatisfied	6	20.00%
Very dissatisfied	8	26.67%
Prefer not to say	5	16.67%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

4: Is there anything that Select Move could have done better?



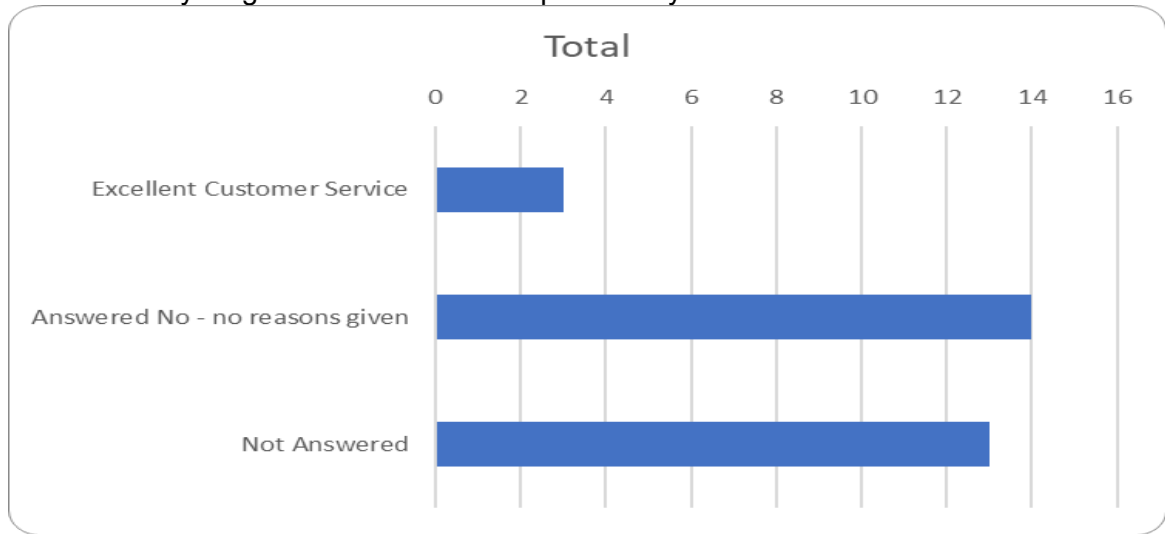
Option	Total	Precent
Communication	5	16.67%
Customer Service	3	10.00%
Nothing could have been done better	3	10.00%
Waiting Time	10	33.33%

Not Answered

9

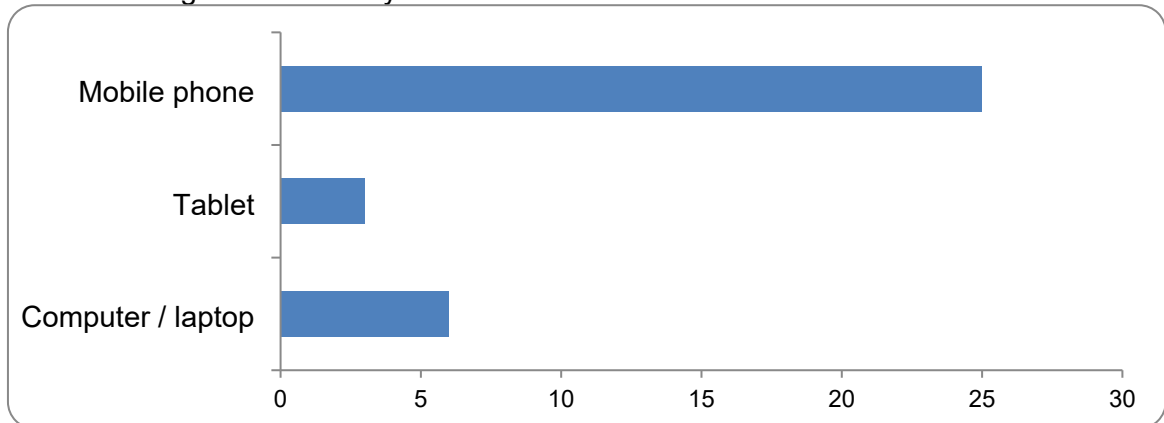
30.00%

5: Is there anything that Select Move did particularly well?



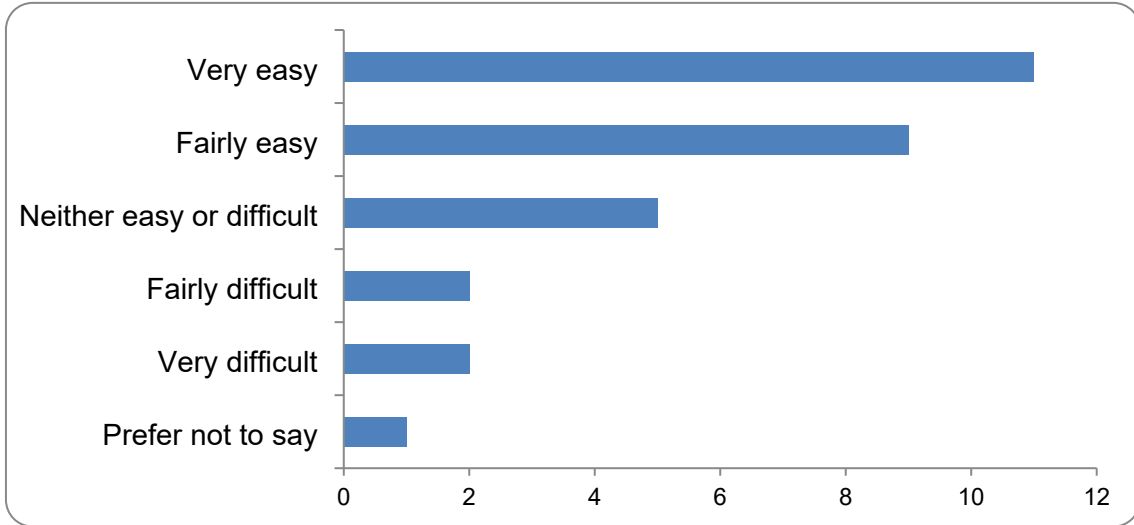
Option	Total	Precent
Excellent Customer Service	3	10.00%
Answered No - no reasons given	14	46.67%
Not Answered	13	43.33%

6: On what digital device did you access Select Move?



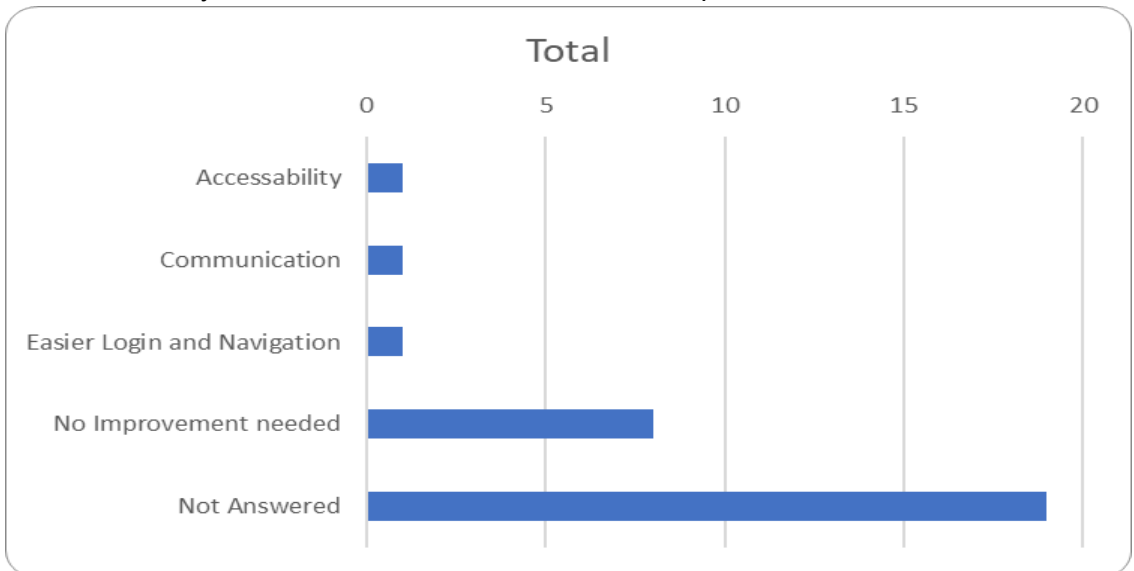
Option	Total	Percent
Mobile phone	25	83.33%
Tablet	3	10.00%
Computer / laptop	6	20.00%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

7: How easy did you find the website to navigate?



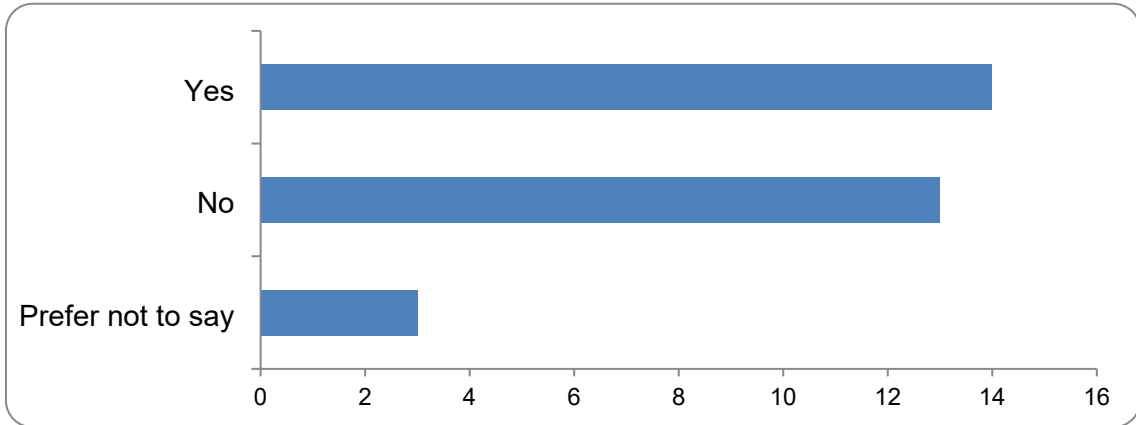
Option	Total	Percent
Very easy	11	36.67%
Fairly easy	9	30.00%
Neither easy or difficult	5	16.67%
Fairly difficult	2	6.67%
Very difficult	2	6.67%
Prefer not to say	1	3.33%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

8: Are there any areas of the website that could be improved?



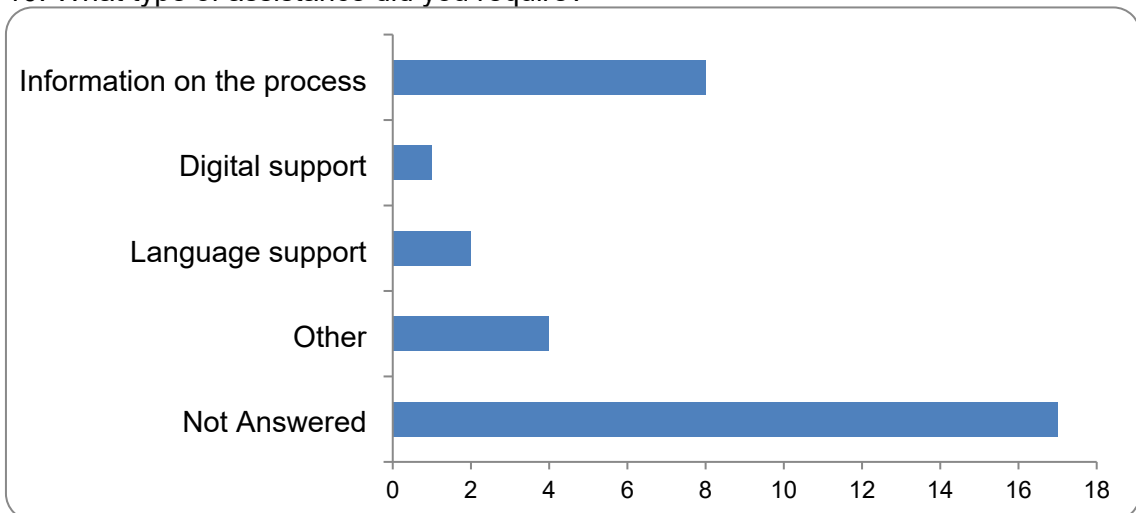
Option	Total	Precent
Accessibility	1	3.33%
Communication	1	3.33%
Easier Login and Navigation	1	3.33%
No Improvement needed	8	26.67%
Not Answered	19	63.33%

9. Did you require assistance when completing your housing application on Select Move?



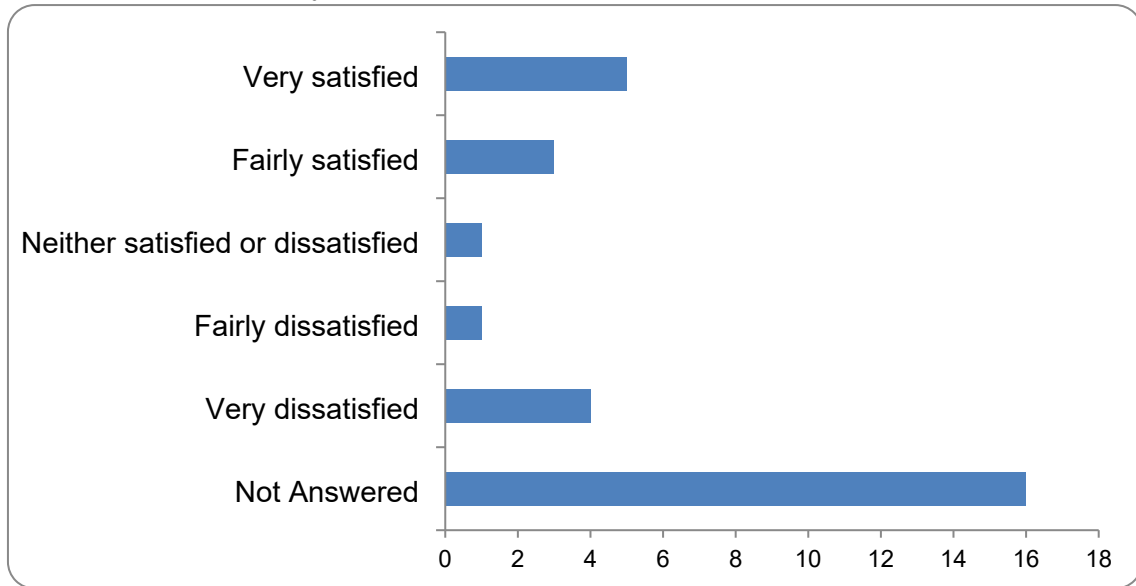
Option	Total	Percent
Yes	14	46.67%
No	13	43.33%
Prefer not to say	3	10.00%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

10: What type of assistance did you require?



Option	Total	Percent
Information on the process	8	26.67%
Digital support	1	3.33%
Language support	2	6.67%
Other	4	13.33%
Not Answered	17	56.67%

11: How satisfied were you with the assistance received?

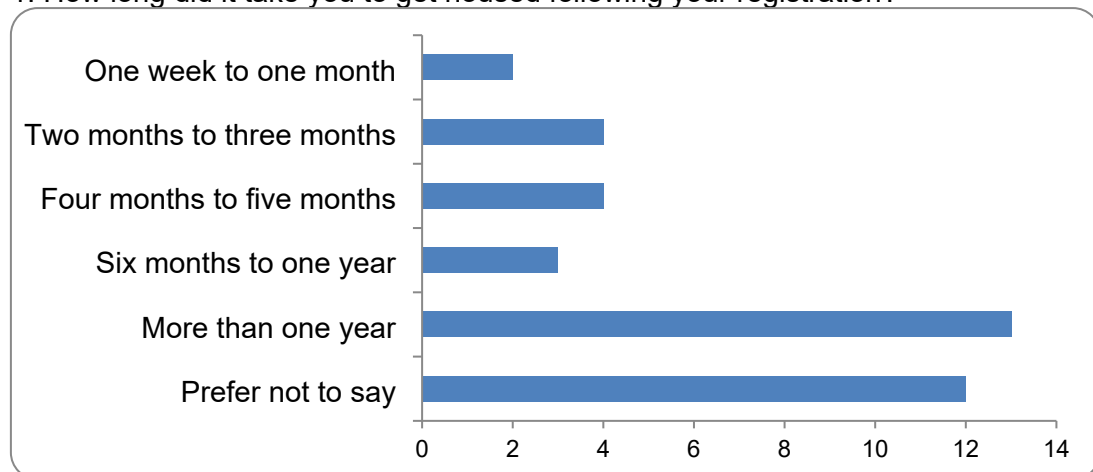


Option	Total	Percent
Very satisfied	5	16.67%
Fairly satisfied	3	10.00%
Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	1	3.33%
Fairly dissatisfied	1	3.33%
Very dissatisfied	4	13.33%
Prefer not to say	0	0.00%
Not Answered	16	53.33%

15. **Select Move Customer Survey 2023 - Other Partners**

We received 38 responses for customers whose applications are being managed by other Select Move Partner i.e., Jigsaw, Places for People and Accent Foundation. This survey was sent to all applicants who selected Chorley as their Local Authority.

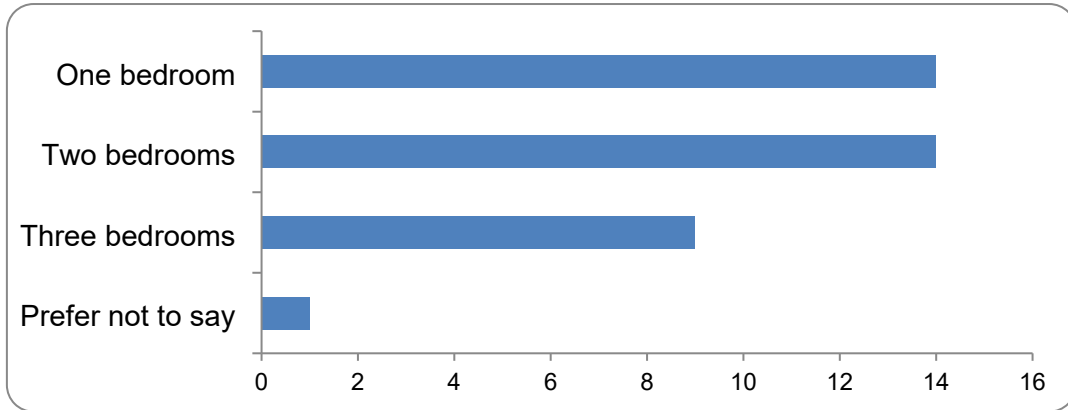
1: How long did it take you to get housed following your registration?



Option	Total	Percent
One week to one month	2	5.26%
Two months to three months	4	10.53%
Four months to five months	4	10.53%

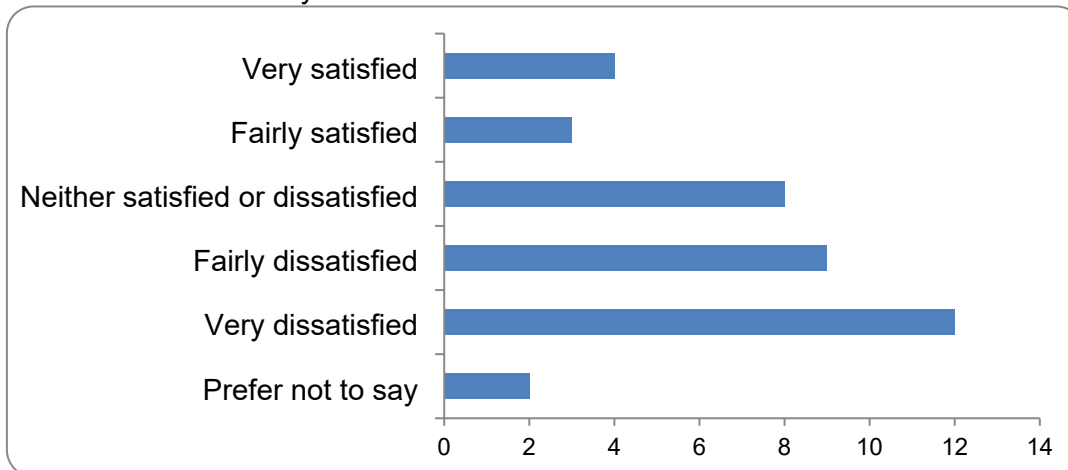
Six months to one year	3	7.89%
More than one year	13	34.21%
Prefer not to say	12	31.58%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

2. What size of property did you need when applying?



Option	Total	Percent
One bedroom	14	36.84%
Two bedrooms	14	36.84%
Three bedrooms	9	23.68%
Four bedrooms	0	0.00%
Five bedrooms and above	0	0.00%
Prefer not to say	1	2.63%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

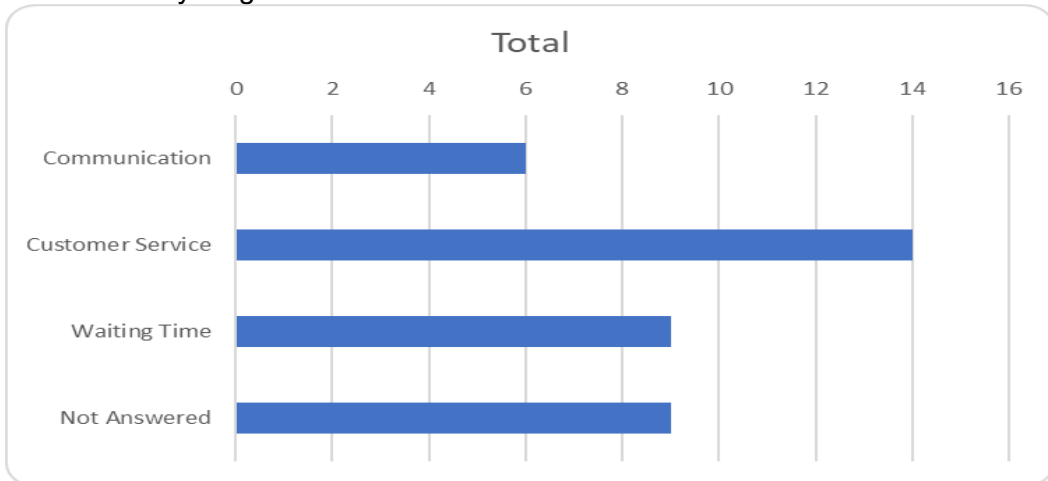
3. How satisfied were you with the Select Move Process



Option	Total	Percent
Very satisfied	4	10.53%
Fairly satisfied	3	7.89%
Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	8	21.05%
Fairly dissatisfied	9	23.68%
Very dissatisfied	12	31.58%
Prefer not to say	2	5.26%

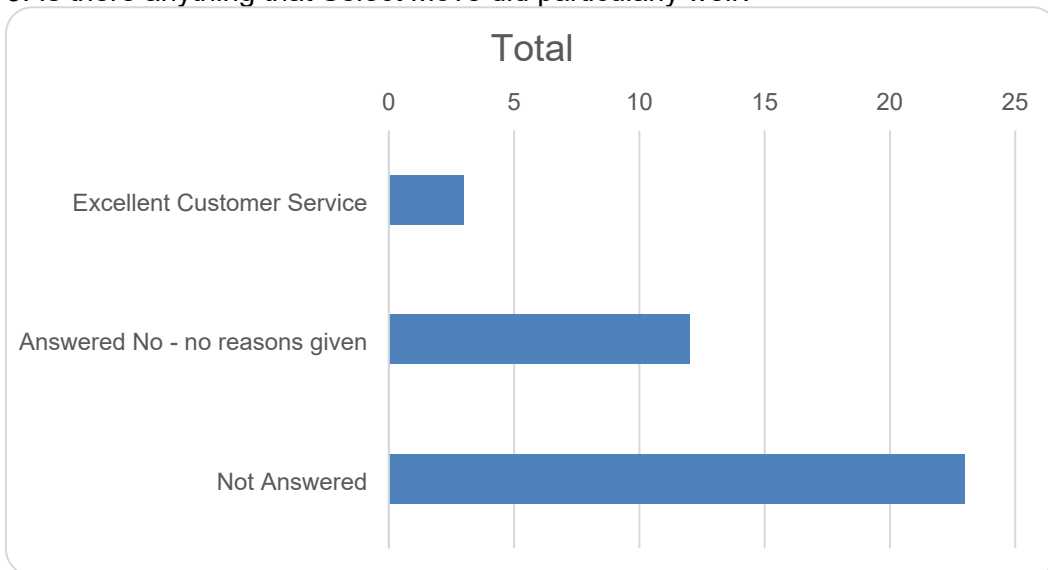
Not Answered	0	0.00%
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4: Is there anything that Select Move could have done better?



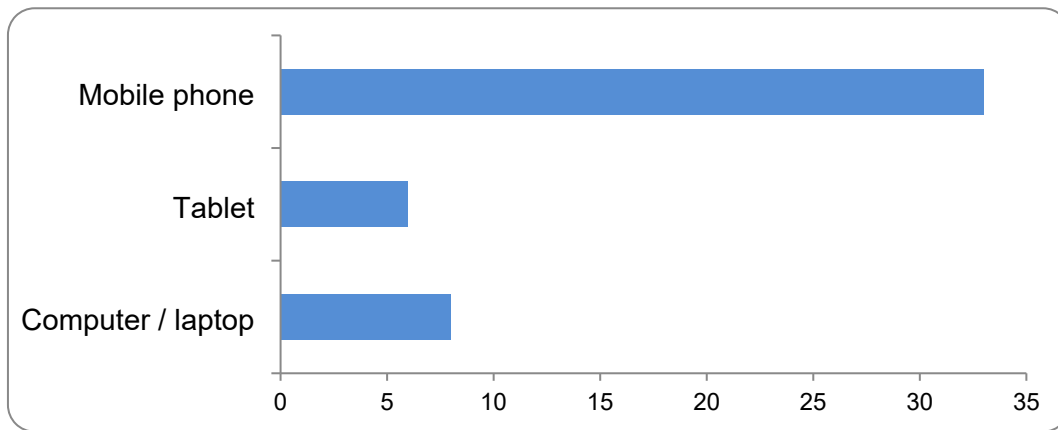
Option	Total	Precent
Communication	6	15.79%
Customer Service	14	36.84%
Waiting Time	9	23.68%
Not Answered	9	23.68%

5: Is there anything that Select Move did particularly well?



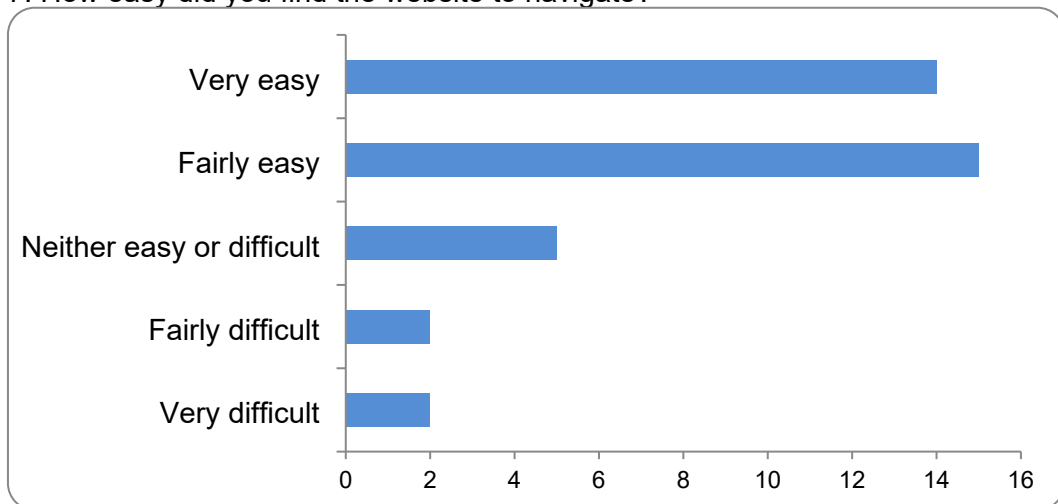
Option	Total	Precent
Excellent Customer Service	3	7.89%
Answered No - no reasons given	12	31.58%
Not Answered	23	60.53%

6: On what digital device did you access Select Move?



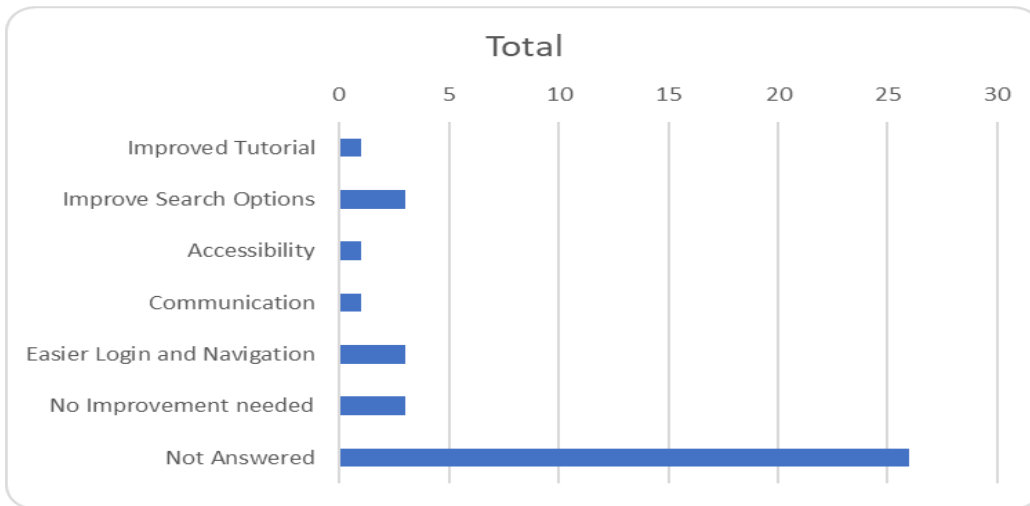
Option	Total	Percent
Mobile phone	33	86.84%
Tablet	6	15.79%
Computer / laptop	8	21.05%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

7: How easy did you find the website to navigate?



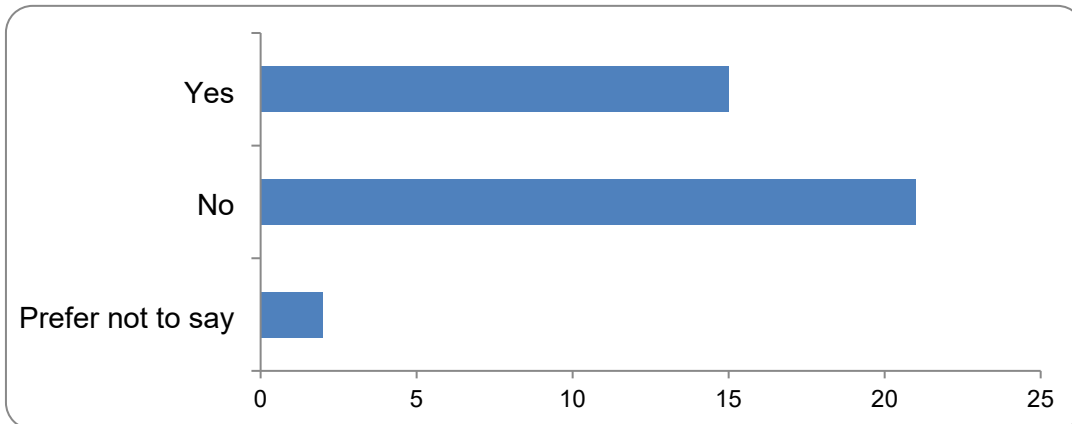
Option	Total	Percent
Very easy	14	36.84%
Fairly easy	15	39.47%
Neither easy or difficult	5	13.16%
Fairly difficult	2	5.26%
Very difficult	2	5.26%
Prefer not to say	0	0.00%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

8: Are there any areas of the website that could be improved?



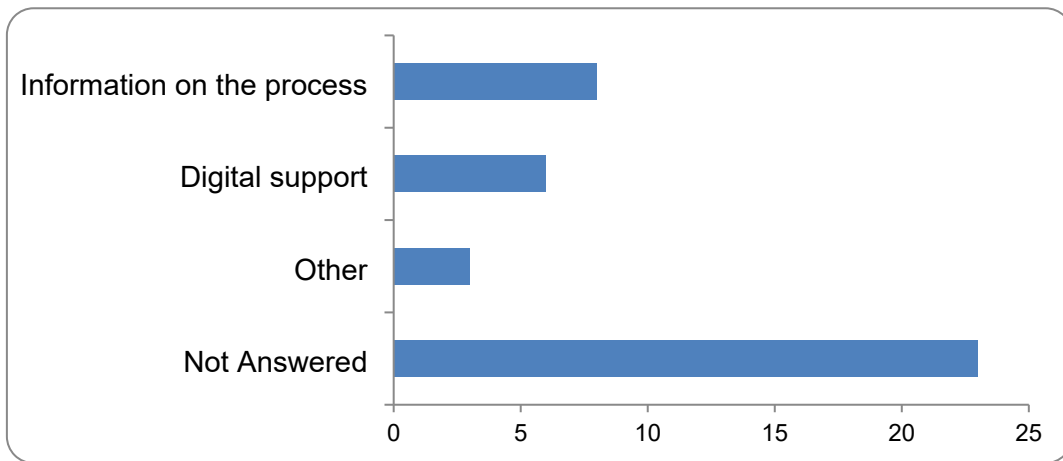
Option	Total	Precent
Improved Tutorial	1	2.63%
Improve Search Options	3	7.89%
Accessibility	1	2.63%
Communication	1	2.63%
Easier Login and Navigation	3	7.89%
No Improvement needed	3	7.89%
Not Answered	26	68.42%

9: Did you require assistance when completing your housing application on Select Move?



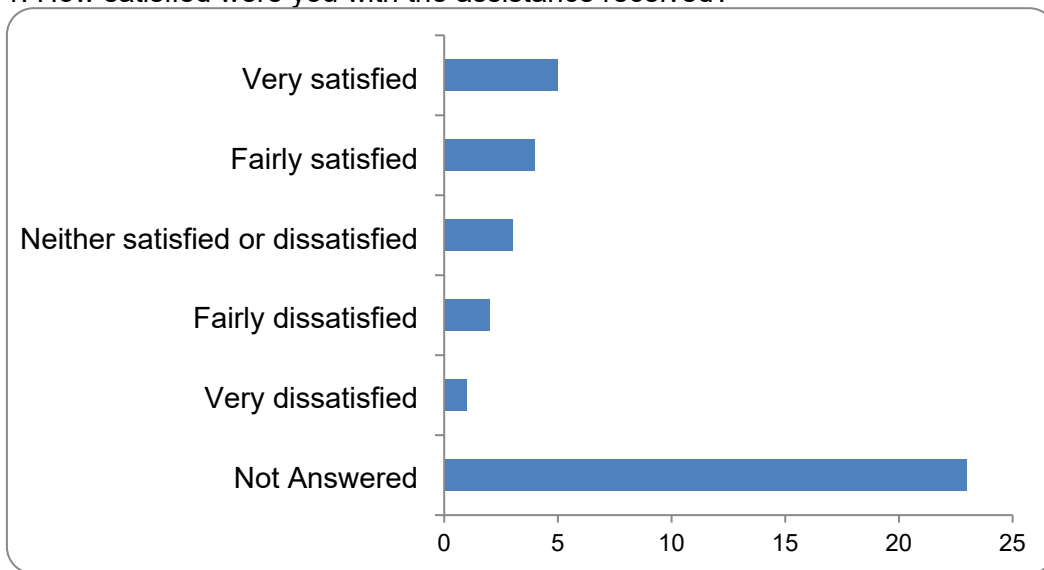
Option	Total	Percent
Yes	15	39.47%
No	21	55.26%
Prefer not to say	2	5.26%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

10: What type of assistance did you require?



Option	Total	Percent
Information on the process	8	21.05%
Digital support	6	15.79%
Language support	0	0.00%
Other	3	7.89%
Not Answered	23	60.53%

11: How satisfied were you with the assistance received?



Option	Total	Percent
Very satisfied	5	13.16%
Fairly satisfied	4	10.53%
Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	3	7.89%
Fairly dissatisfied	2	5.26%
Very dissatisfied	1	2.63%
Prefer not to say	0	0.00%
Not Answered	23	60.53%

Climate change and air quality

16. The work noted in this report has an overall neutral impact on the Councils Carbon emissions and the wider Climate Emergency and sustainability targets of the Council.

Equality and diversity

17. An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) was undertaken November 2023 and no direct implications have been identified.

Comments of the Statutory Finance Officer

18. The report is for noting, there are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

Comments of the Monitoring Officer

19. There are no legal implications arising as a result of this report.

Background documents

Background Papers		
Document	Date	File
Overview and Scrutiny Task Group Final report	10/11/2022	Overview and Scrutiny Task Group Final Report - Select Move.pdf (moderngov.co.uk)
Select Move Policy 2018	2018	Allocation Policy 2018.docx (live.com)
Select Move Policy Review 2022	Exec Cabinet meeting 19/01/2023	Select Move Policy Review 2022 Executive Cabinet Report Template.pdf (moderngov.co.uk)
Recommendation response - Select Move – Overview and Scrutiny	Exec Cabinet Meeting 23/02/2023	Select Move - Overview and Scrutiny Executive Cabinet Report Template.pdf (moderngov.co.uk)
First Monitoring Overview and Scrutiny Report	05/10/2023	First Monitoring Report - Select Move Overview and Scrutiny Task Group Oct 2023 Committee Template C.pdf (moderngov.co.uk)

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