

London: Its People and their Litter



Research Report
March 2009

Capital Standards



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This report was first published in 2009 by Environmental Campaigns

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ENCAMS, Elizabeth House, The Pier, Wigan, WN3 4EX

ISBN 978 - 1 - 904860 - 10 - 5

Designed by Vivid



Printed on recycled paper

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Executive Summary

London has historically endured poorer levels of local environmental quality (LEQ) than the rest of England. In answer to this, Capital Standards was established in 2002 to improve London's LEQ.

The aim of the research described in this report was to aid Capital Standards in understanding which LEQ factors affect residents' overall level of satisfaction with cleanliness in the capital. The research also sought to establish links between actual standards of LEQ and public perception of, and satisfaction with, standards.

Just over 2,400 on-street surveys were conducted with residents of the 33 London boroughs and overall the results were encouraging. The majority of residents (68%) were satisfied with their local area as a place to live.

Notable differences were found between the London boroughs depending on their level of affluence, cleanliness rating and whether they were an inner or outer London borough. These areas differed in terms of importance of the issues; how clean the residents thought their area was; satisfaction with area; feelings of safety and satisfaction with feelings of safety; and the likelihood to report a problem.

Affluent boroughs:

- The most important issues for spend included graffiti, fly-tipping and drugs-related litter.
- Residents were more satisfied with how safe they felt and the look of their local area, and were more likely to know who to contact to report a problem compared to residents of more deprived boroughs.

Deprived areas:

- Important issues included dog fouling, street lighting and drugs-related litter.
- Residents were less likely to state that feeling safe when out was extremely important compared to residents of more affluent boroughs.

High-performing (cleaner) boroughs:

- Only 15% of residents thought that litter was a major problem.
- How the area looks was important to residents.
- Residents felt more satisfied with how the area looked and with how safe they felt than residents of low-performing boroughs.

Low-performing (dirtier) boroughs:

- 35% of residents thought that litter was a major problem.
- How the area looks was important to residents.

Inner London boroughs:

- Residents were more likely to be satisfied with how the area looked and were less likely to state that feeling safe when out was extremely important to them compared to residents of outer London boroughs.

Outer London boroughs:

- Important issues included graffiti, fly-tipping, fly-posting, vandalism, abandoned vehicles, street cleanliness and leaf fall, soil, mud, grit, etc.
- Residents were slightly more likely to state that feeling safe when out was extremely important to them and were more likely to know who to contact to report a problem than inner London borough residents.

The results are discussed in relation to a climate of resignation amongst residents of more deprived areas and the varying expectations and attitudes of residents depending on the area in which they live. Specifically, residents living in more deprived areas may have a tendency to accept the state of their area and do not question it because other issues are considered of higher importance. This may explain why residents of more deprived areas are less likely to know who to contact about a local environmental issue.

The outcomes of this report have implications for local authorities, housing associations and any other land managers in Greater London who may want to focus their efforts on the issues that are of most concern to their residents.

1. Introduction

Despite London's prestigious status in the world economy, its residents experience some of the country's worst local environmental quality.

1.1 London

The City of London and the 32 London boroughs (often referred to as Greater London) cover an area of 609 square miles¹ (1,577.3km²) and have an estimated population of 7.5 million²; representing 12% of the UK population.³ This makes London the most populous city in the European Union⁴ and the 25th most populous city in the world⁵.

In addition to this, London is considered a global centre of business and finance⁶ and is regarded – alongside New York and Tokyo – as one of the three 'command centres' for the world economy.⁷ In relation to the rest of the UK, people working in London earn significantly more, with median full-time weekly earnings in London totalling £613, compared to other regions where earnings range from £418 in Northern Ireland to £500 in the South East.⁸

However, despite London's prestigious status in the world economy, and its unrivalled economic role within the UK, its residents experience some of the country's worst local environmental quality (LEQ).

1.2 Capital Standards

Capital Standards was established in 2002 as a programme to improve LEQ in London. It is a partnership between the majority of London local authorities⁹, London Councils, ENCAMS (the organisation that runs the Keep Britain Tidy campaign), the Environment Agency, Government Office for London, Greater London Authority (GLA), Metropolitan Police, London Fire & Emergency Planning Authority, London Warden Network, Transport for London (TfL) and three street cleansing contractors.

The programme includes:

- The undertaking of LEQ surveys in the partnered London local authorities.
- Sharing of best practice through seminars and meetings.
- Training of local authority officers through the Street Academy.
- Working groups on issues including education, enforcement, graffiti and transport.
- London-wide campaigns on LEQ issues.
- Education initiatives.¹⁰

Specifically, the programme has developed and delivered London-wide public campaigns on litter, graffiti and smoking-related litter. Street Academy has delivered enforcement training to over 600 local authority officers in all aspects of LEQ enforcement. The London Schools Environment Award – which engaged with 699 schools across the Capital during 2007-08 – highlights the issues of LEQ to primary school pupils. Seminars, conferences and technical support are undertaken with the sole purpose of sharing good practice to drive up standards of environmental cleanliness across London. In addition, Capital Standards' most recent endeavour is the London Capital Clean-up campaign, aimed at supporting and encouraging targeted improvements to London's local environment in preparation for the 2012 Olympics to be hosted in London.

One of the ways in which ENCAMS contributes to the Capital Standards programme is by conducting on the ground assessments using the methodology of the Local Environmental Quality Survey of England (LEQSE), created in 2001. The survey is designed to provide national benchmark standards for more than 30 aspects of LEQ, which can be described as the physical factors that matter most to people. On behalf of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), ENCAMS has been undertaking a national LEQ survey for the past seven years.

Although historically London has received lower LEQ scores than the rest of the country, the result of the Capital Standards initiative has been a gradual improvement in the environmental quality in the partnered London local authorities that it covers.

Figure 1

Extended Local Environmental Quality Survey of England litter % scores for London and all other English regions

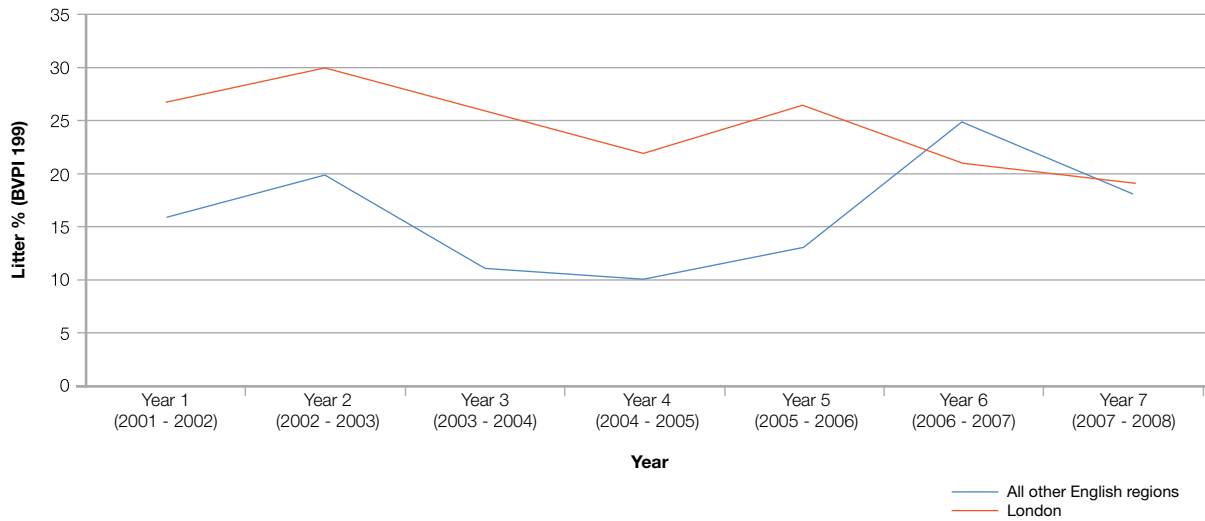


Figure 1 shows the Best Value Performance Indicator (BVPI) 199 scores for litter recorded in the extended Local Environmental Quality Survey of England. The scores refer to the percentage of sites surveyed in local authorities which were significantly affected by litter.

Figure 2

Capital Standards litter % scores for participating London Boroughs

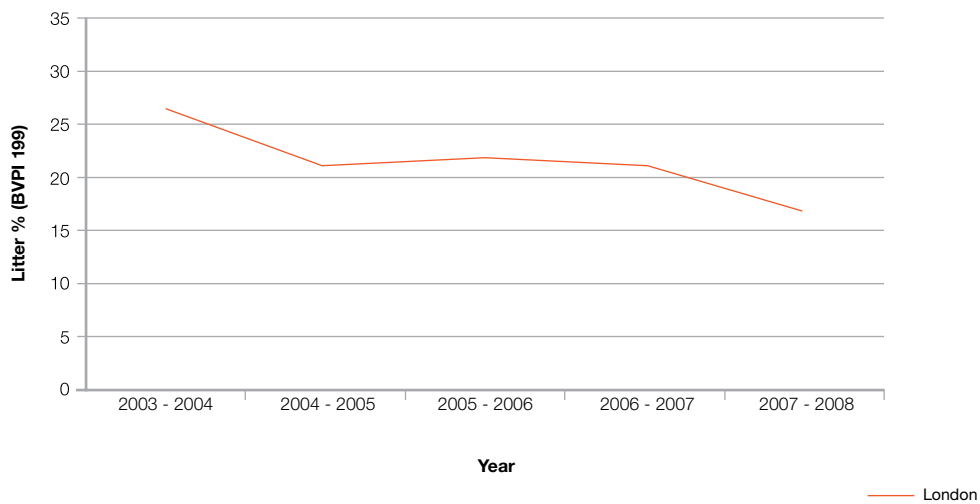


Figure 2 shows the BVPI 199 scores for litter in the London Boroughs partnered in Capital Standards. The scores refer to the average percentage of sites surveyed in the Capital Standards survey which were significantly affected by litter.

1.3 Perception data

Ipsos MORI carried out some research to investigate the factors reflected in people's own assessments of what will improve their quality of life. It was revealed that 'liveability' – or what is happening in the streets where they live – is fundamental. They noted that local authority spending is often reduced on issues such as street scene services. However, when asked to prioritise the most-needed improvements to their area, 'clean streets' was one of the highest-scoring options for residents¹¹.

In support of this, ENCAMS own research into quality of life¹² revealed that the factors that contribute towards an individual's overall quality of life fall into one of two main categories: personal or neighbourhood. Within the latter category one of the contributing factors was the local environment; in particular litter, fly-tipping, graffiti and dog fouling.

Levels of crime and feelings of safety when out were also rated as important factors contributing towards a good quality of life. Research has made links between LEQ and feelings of safety. For example, many people believe that graffiti indicates that an area is unsafe¹³.

ENCAMS Quality of Life report also identified that the most satisfied individuals were the most affluent. In tandem with this, a report carried out by Ipsos MORI¹⁴ highlighted that the average income in each London neighbourhood has the strongest positive relationship with how people feel about their area than overall levels of crime.

Recorded crime levels in London have seen a noticeable decrease recently, being at their lowest level for ten years¹⁵. In spite of this, however, London's crime levels have historically been the highest in the country¹⁶. This is still the case today with it being reported as the region with the highest rates of recorded violence against the person, offences against vehicles, other theft offences and total recorded crime,¹⁷ according to the British Crime Survey and police recorded data.

To summarise, London has made impressive progress in the last few years. Crime levels are down and LEQ has been improving continuously. However, public perceptions are still clearly related to the type of area they live in and in particular their individual level of income. In view of the identified links between:

- antisocial behaviour and certain aspects of LEQ;
- satisfaction with individual areas and antisocial behaviour;
- London's record levels of crime and low LEQ scores;

further investigation into public perceptions and levels of satisfaction with their local environment was warranted.

1.4 Background to the research

The obvious measure of local environmental quality is to measure the quantity, location and severity of specific problems in any given area. However, this measure on its own does not provide enough detail to develop an informed and effective strategy. In order to complement 'on the ground' assessments with perception data, Capital Standards commissioned ENCAMS to undertake a perception survey with residents of London in order to understand the factors which affect public satisfaction with cleanliness across London.

1.5 Research aims and objectives

The aim of the research was to aid Capital Standards in understanding which wider local environmental quality issues impact on the overall level of satisfaction with cleanliness in the Capital. The research also sought to establish links between *actual* standards of local environmental quality and public perception of, and satisfaction with, standards.

The objectives of this research were to:

- Establish overall levels of satisfaction with the borough in which respondents live;
- Establish overall levels of satisfaction with the cleanliness of the area in which they live;
- Consider importance for the local council to spend money on each issue (expectation);
- Undertake a rating of a variety of issues with regards to the level of the problem including litter, graffiti, fly-tipping, drugs-related litter, staining, dog fouling (reality);
- Analyse the gap between expectation and reality;
- Determine preferred method of communications;
- Assess fear of crime in the area and overall feelings of safety;
- Discover residents' likelihood to complain about issues;
- Discover residents' likelihood to get involved in improving the local environment;
- Determine level of awareness of the Capital Clean-up campaign.

This report is a summary of the full research report presented to Capital Standards in September 2008.

2. Methodology

2.1 Sample

The sample for this research consisted of residents from each of the 33 London boroughs. At least 60 interviews were carried out with residents of each of the 33 boroughs and the sample was selected to be broadly representative of the demography¹⁸ of each London borough.

2.2 Method

This research consisted of 2,407 on-street, face-to-face interviews with people living in the borough in which the research took place. The survey lasted approximately ten minutes and covered a number of topics including which LEQ issues were most important for spend, the level of LEQ problems, how satisfied residents were with their area and how safe residents felt.

In order to analyse residents' perceptions in relation to how clean their borough is, the 33 London boroughs were divided into groups based on their cleanliness scores from their on the ground survey. The data used to identify these groups was from the most recent complete dataset at the time of reporting. On the ground surveys form part of the Capital Standards programme, so for participating boroughs, these scores were used (07/08 data). Scores from the extended Local Environmental Quality Survey of England (LEQSE) were used for the London Boroughs of Bromley and Enfield (06/07), the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea (07/08) and the London Boroughs of Barnet and Redbridge (08/09). The Capital Standards surveys and the extended LEQSE surveys use comparable methodology.

Group one comprises the highest performing (cleanest) boroughs according to the scores from the on the ground surveys, with cleanliness decreasing through groups two and three, and ending with the lowest performing (dirtiest) boroughs in group four.

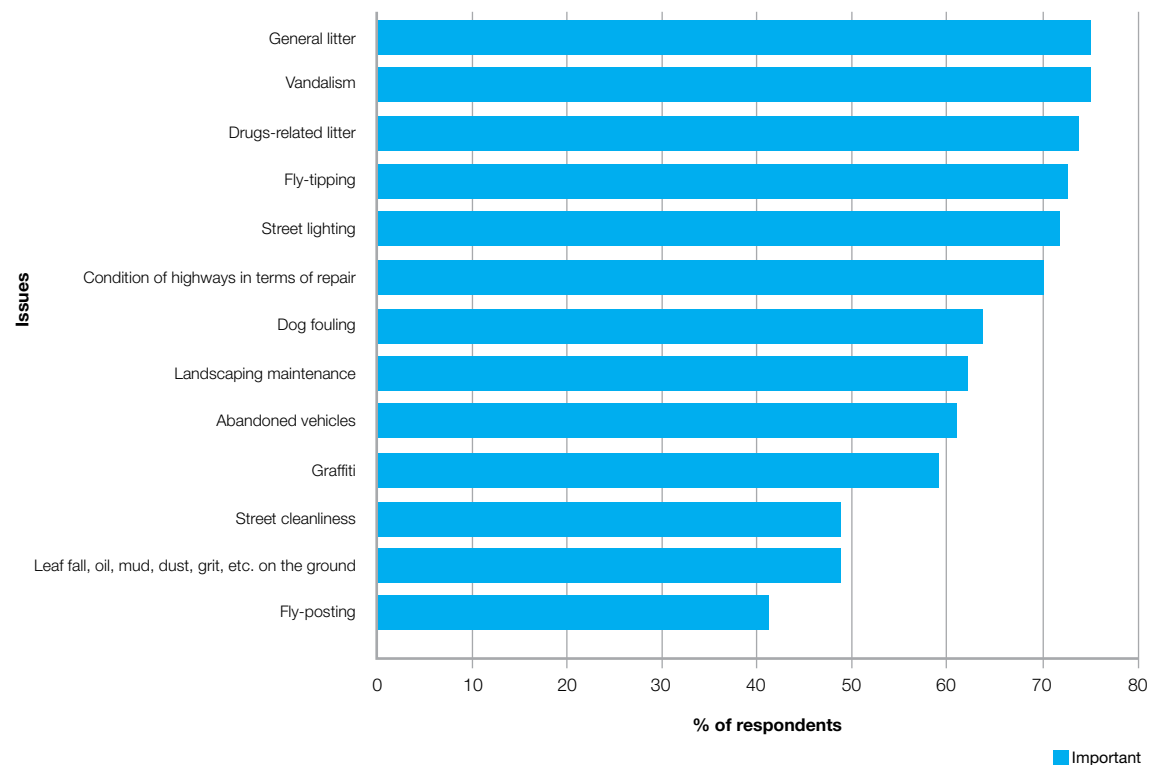
In addition, the London boroughs were divided into groups based on their Index of Multiple Deprivation¹⁹ (IMD: 2007) scores. Group one comprises the most affluent boroughs according to the IMD, with deprivation increasing through groups two and three, ending with the most deprived boroughs in group four.

3. Importance of Local Environmental Quality (LEQ) Issues

Residents were asked to indicate how important it was to them that money was spent on tackling each of the following LEQ issues in the area where they lived using a scale of one to five, where one was 'not at all important' and five was 'extremely important':

- Dog fouling;
- Litter;
- Graffiti;
- Fly-posting;
- Fly-tipping;
- Landscaping maintenance (e.g. condition of grassed areas etc.);
- Vandalism (e.g. deliberate damage to property and vehicles);
- Abandoned vehicles;
- Drugs-related litter (such as syringes);
- Street lighting;
- Staining, blemishes and discolouring on the ground (street cleanliness);
- Condition of highways in terms of repair (roads, paths, gullies, etc.);
- Leaf fall, soil, mud, dust, grit, etc. on the ground.

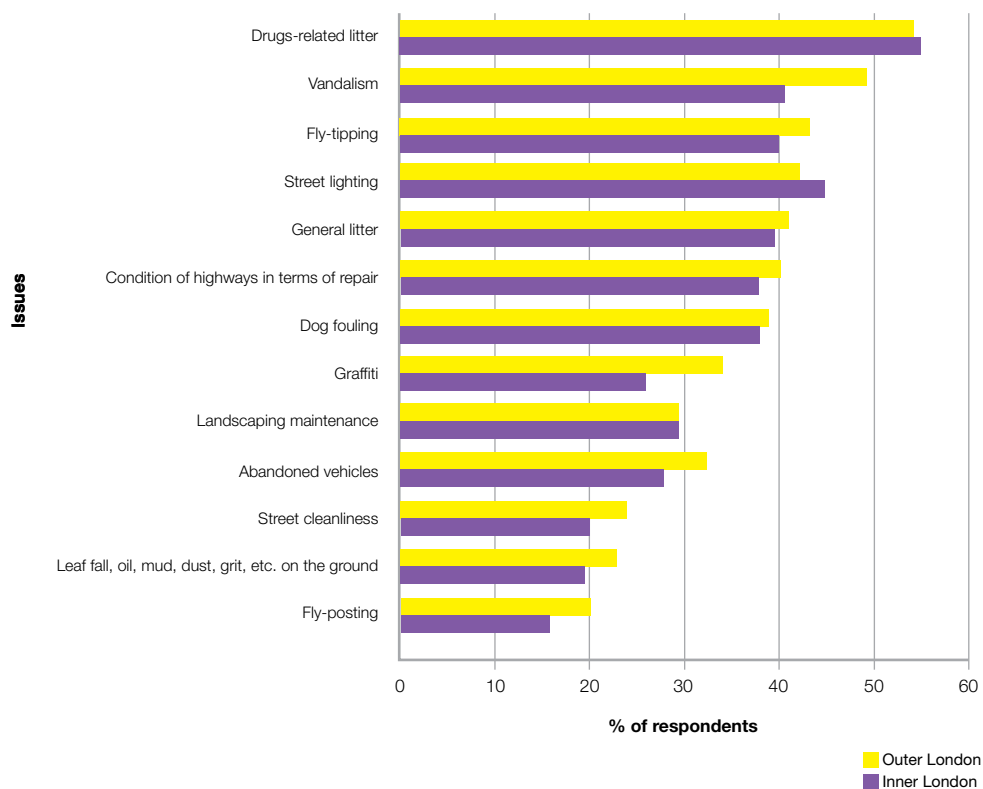
Figure 3 Importance for spend



Base: 2407

Figure 3 above shows the proportion of respondents who gave a rating of four or five, indicating that the issue was important to some extent. The most important issues for spend were general litter (75%), vandalism (75%), drugs-related litter (74%), fly-tipping (73%) and street lighting (72%).

Figure 4 Importance for spend for inner and outer London



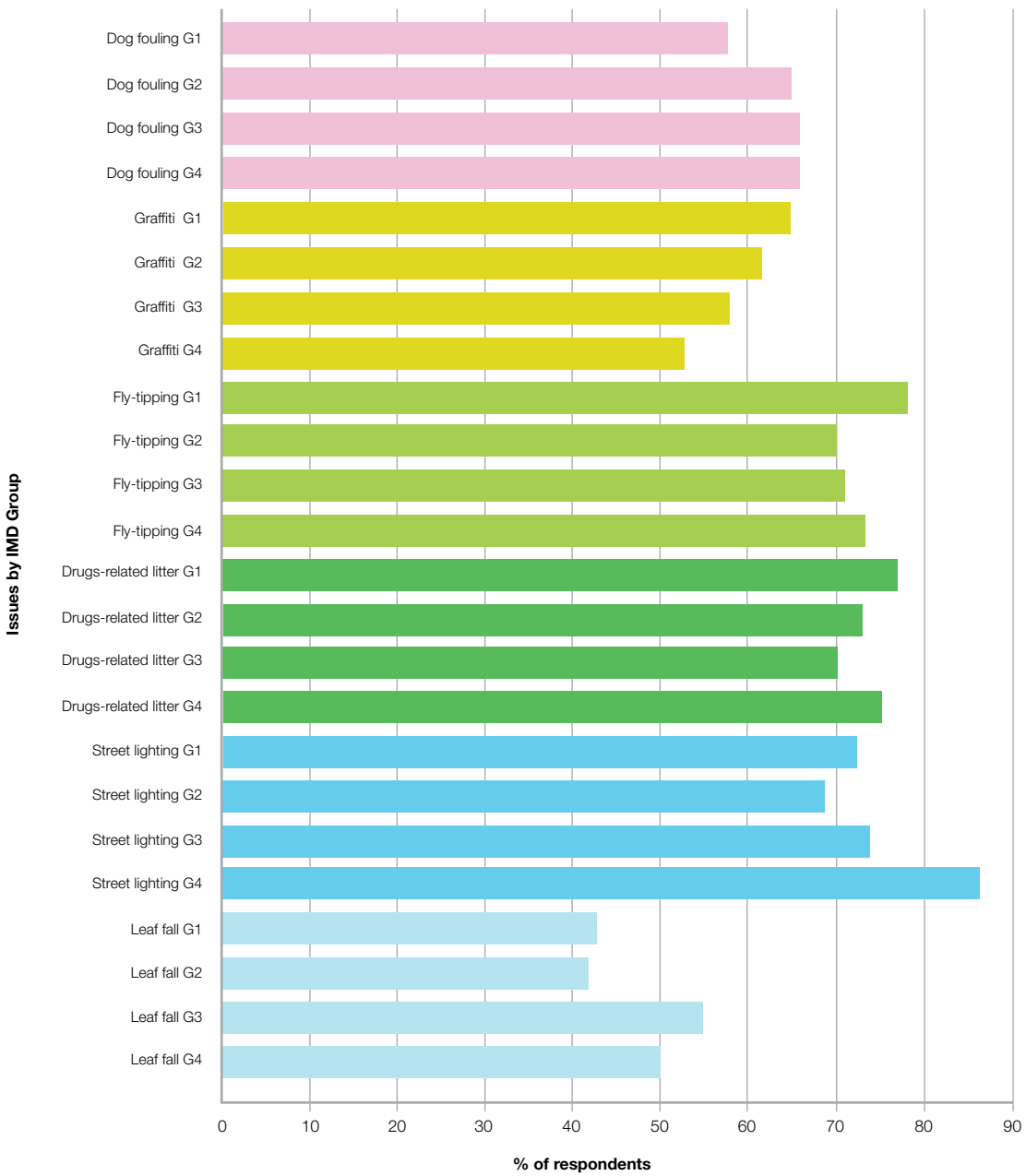
Base: Inner 931/ Outer 1476

Figure 4 shows the issues rated as extremely important in inner and outer London. When compared against each other, significant differences were observed between the two samples for graffiti, fly-posting, fly-tipping, vandalism, abandoned vehicles, staining/blemishes/discolouring on the ground (street cleanliness) and leaf fall, soil, mud, dust, grit, etc. on the ground. Specifically, greater proportions of residents from outer London felt that each of these issues was extremely important when compared to inner London residents.

3.1 Importance for spend by deprivation

Figure 5 below shows the issues where significant differences were observed for importance for spend between the IMD groups (G1 = most affluent area; G4 = most deprived area). The chart highlights the issues rated as important to some extent (a rating of four or five).

Figure 5 Importance for spend by IMD groups



Data from Figure 5 reveals the following significant differences between the groups:

- Dog fouling and street lighting were felt to be more important issues for spend to those living in the most deprived boroughs (G4) than they were to those living in the most affluent boroughs (G1). Leaf fall was also an issue deemed more important for spend to those living in the most deprived groups of boroughs (G3 and G4) than the most affluent groups of boroughs (G1 and G2).
- Graffiti and fly-tipping were rated as extremely important issues by a greater proportion of those living in the most affluent boroughs (G1) when compared with those residing in the most deprived boroughs (G4).
- Drugs-related litter was perceived to be of similar, and of most, importance for spend to those in the most affluent and the most deprived boroughs (G1 and G4). However, it was also one of the most important issues for spend for all other boroughs (G2 and G3).

3.2 Importance for spend by age

The results of importance for spend for each LEQ issue were analysed by age of respondent. The following results were found:

- 16–24 years olds were significantly less likely to want money spent on dog fouling, graffiti, leaf fall etc. and general litter than other age groups and were more likely to want money spent on drugs-related litter.
- Those aged 55–64 and 65+ were more likely to want money spent on graffiti and fly-posting. However these two older categories were split on vandalism and abandoned vehicles; the 65+ age group were the least likely, and the 55–64 age group the most likely, to want money spent on these issues.
- The over 65s were also the least likely age group to want money spent on tackling drugs-related litter.
- Those aged 45–64 gave highest priority to improving the condition of highways.

3.3 Importance for spend by gender

Significant differences were observed between males and females. A greater proportion of females than males rated the following issues as extremely important for spend:

- Dog fouling;
- General litter;
- Fly-tipping;
- Landscaping maintenance;
- Drugs-related litter;
- Street lighting.

4. Level of Problem

Residents were asked to indicate how much of a problem they considered each of the LEQ issues to be in the area where they lived on a scale of one to five, where one indicated a 'major problem' and five indicated 'no problem'. The results revealed:

■ The most problematic issues were drugs-related litter and dog fouling. Almost a quarter (23%) of residents said that drugs-related litter was a major problem (rating of one) in their area, whilst around a fifth (21%) said that dog fouling was a major problem.

■ Around two-fifths felt that drugs-related litter (42%), street lighting (41%), fly-posting (40%), abandoned vehicles (40%) and leaf fall, soil, mud, dust, grit, etc. (40%) were no problem at all or very small problems (rating of four or five) in the area where they lived.

4.1 Level of problem by deprivation

Some key differences were observed between the four IMD groups, in terms of their perception of the level of problem of certain issues:

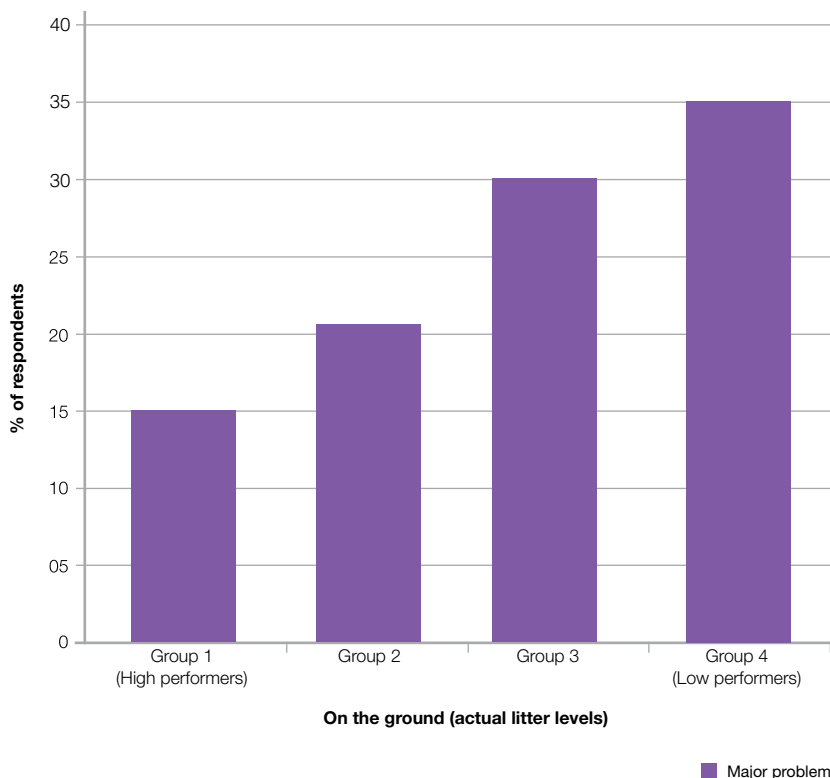
■ General litter and the condition of the highways were issues that were perceived to be more problematic in the most affluent boroughs (G1) when compared to the other boroughs (G2, G3 and G4).

■ Fly-tipping, drugs-related litter, street lighting, leaf fall, soil, mud, dust, grit, etc., vandalism and abandoned vehicles were all perceived to be more problematic in the second most affluent group (G2) when compared with all other groups (G1, G3 and G4).

4.2 Level of litter problem by actual cleanliness (on the ground)

Figure 6 below shows the percentage of respondents from each on the ground group – group one being the cleanest and group four being the dirtiest – who considered the level of litter in their area to be a major problem.

Figure 6 Level of litter by actual cleanliness (on the ground)



Base: 2407

There was some correlation between reality (actual on the ground scores) and perception.

15% of respondents in the cleanest boroughs (G1), which were the highest performing boroughs in the on the ground surveys, felt that litter was a major problem in their area. This increased to 21% in group two, 30% in group three and 35% in group four.

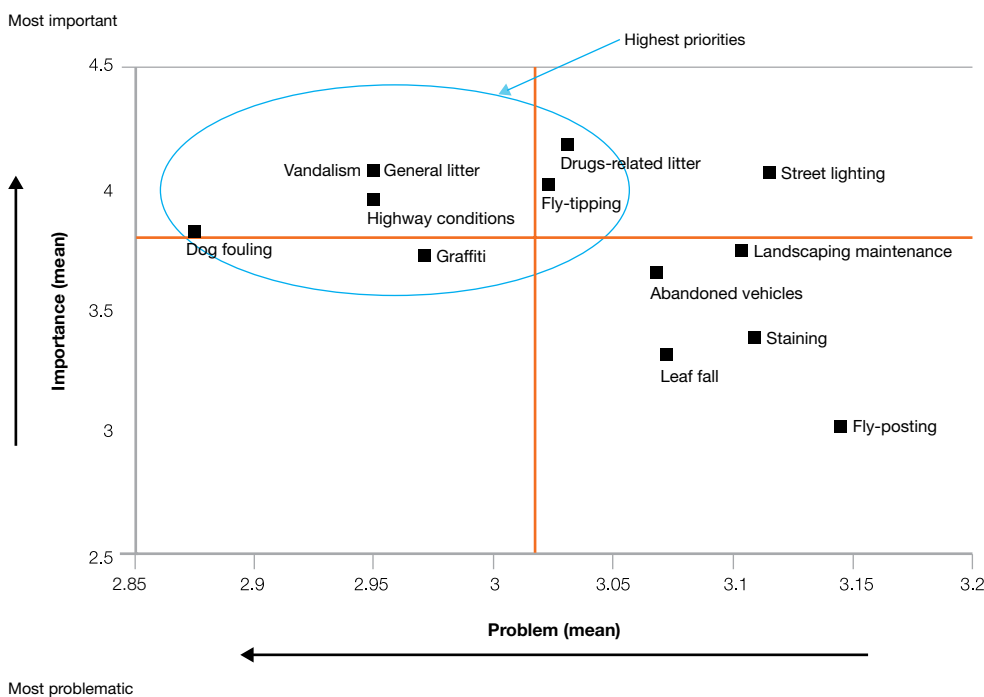
5. Importance vs. Problem

In order to highlight the difference between the ratings of importance for spend (expectation) and the level of the problem (reality of the situation), they have been plotted against each other in Figure 7 below. The figures on what residents would like money spent on represent the expectation that they have for each issue. When rating the problem they were showing how much of a problem (reality) they perceive each issue to be.

Figure 7 has been created using the mean value (rating out of five) for each issue. For the expectation ratings, the higher the score out of five, then the more important for spend residents felt the issue was; and for reality ratings, the lower the score then the more problematic the issue.

The highest priorities are highlighted on the graph.

Figure 7 Expectation vs. reality²⁰



According to these findings, the greatest priorities for action are general litter, vandalism, dog fouling, condition of the highways, graffiti, drugs-related litter and fly-tipping. These issues were perceived to be both problematic and important for spend.

6. Affected Areas

This section looks at which areas residents felt were most affected by each issue. The area(s) suffering most from each issue are highlighted in blue in table 1.

Table 1 Most affected areas

| | Shopping areas (%) | Housing areas (%) | Main roads (%) | Parks and open spaces (%) |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|----------------|---------------------------|
| Dog fouling | 4 | 31 | 21 | 42 |
| General litter | 23 | 32 | 32 | 11 |
| Graffiti | 22 | 46 | 20 | 11 |
| Fly-posting | 31 | 27 | 30 | 11 |
| Fly-tipping | 6 | 52 | 23 | 18 |
| Vandalism | 8 | 65 | 17 | 9 |
| Abandoned vehicles | 3 | 54 | 33 | 9 |
| Drugs-related litter | 5 | 46 | 11 | 37 |
| Staining, blemishes and discolouring on the ground (street cleanliness) | 26 | 20 | 44 | 8 |
| Leaf fall, soil, mud, dust, grit, etc. on the ground | 6 | 33 | 27 | 34 |

Base: 1632 to 2034

The table shows that:

- Dog fouling was perceived to be the most prevalent in parks and open spaces (42%).
- General litter was perceived to be the most prevalent in housing areas (32%) and on main roads (32%).
- Graffiti was perceived to be the most prevalent in housing areas (46%).
- Fly-posting was perceived to be the most prevalent in shopping areas (31%) and on main roads (30%).
- Fly-tipping was perceived to be the most prevalent in housing areas (52%).
- Vandalism was perceived to be the most prevalent in housing areas (65%).
- Abandoned vehicles were perceived to be the most prevalent in housing areas (54%).
- Drugs-related litter was perceived to be the most prevalent in housing areas (46%).
- Issues with street cleanliness were perceived to be the most prevalent on main roads (44%).
- Leaf fall, soil, mud, dust, grit, etc. on the ground was perceived to be the most prevalent in parks and open spaces (34%) and housing areas (33%).

7. Appearance of the Area and Feelings of Safety

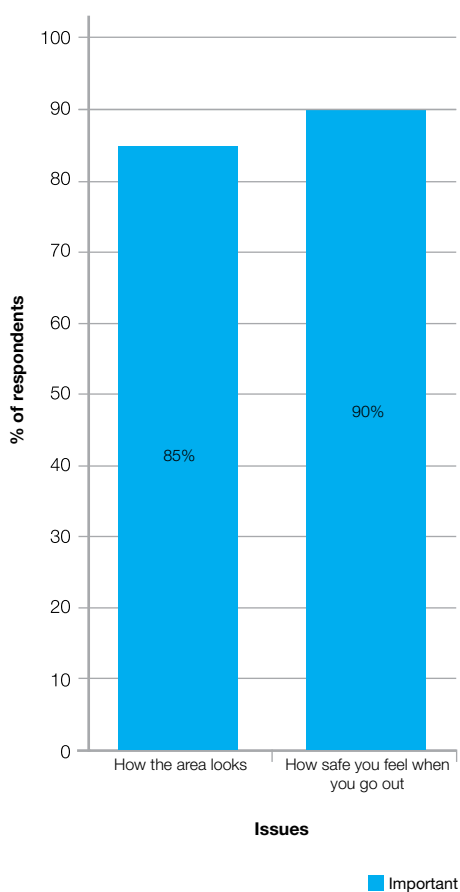
7.1 Importance of issues

Residents were asked to think about the area in which they lived and indicate how important each of the following issues was to them using a scale of one to five, where one was 'not at all important' and five was 'extremely important':

- How the area looks (free from litter, dog fouling, etc.).
- How safe you feel when you go out.

Figure 8 below shows the proportion of respondents who gave a rating of four or five, indicating that the issue was important to some extent.

Figure 8 Importance of issues



Base: 2407

7.1.1 Appearance

Over eight in ten residents (85%) stated that how the area looked was important (either extremely important or important) to them.

A greater proportion of residents from boroughs in groups one, two and four – based on their cleanliness ratings – stated that the appearance of the area was extremely important in comparison to residents of boroughs in group three (69%, 73%, 66% compared to 39% respectively).

How the area looks was felt to be more important to those aged 55–64 (69% stated extremely important) and 65 and over (71%) than to younger respondents, particularly those aged between 25 and 34 (55%).

7.1.2 Feelings of safety when out

90% of London residents stated that how safe they felt when they went out was important to them (to some extent).

Residents of the most deprived areas (G4) were less likely to state that how safe they felt was extremely important to them (66%) than the other boroughs (G3; 75%, G2; 76%; and G1; 76%).

Residents of outer London boroughs were slightly more likely to state that how safe they felt was extremely important.

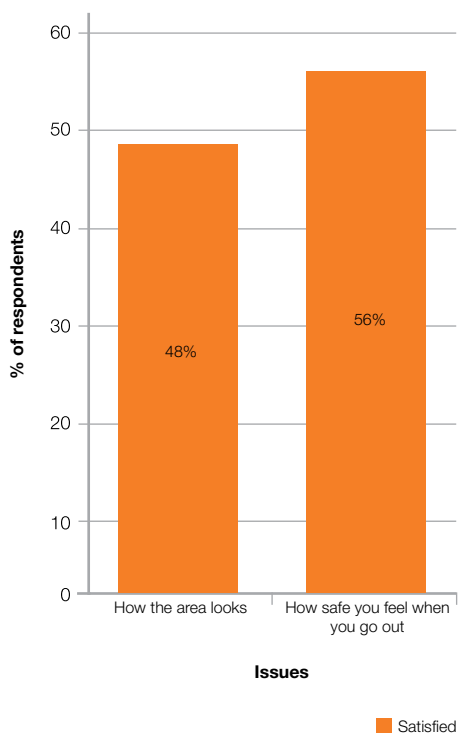
7.2 Satisfaction with issues

Residents were asked to think about the area in which they lived and decide how satisfied they were with each of the following issues using the scale of one to five, where one was 'not at all satisfied' and five was 'very satisfied':

- How the area looks (free from litter, dog fouling, etc.)
- How safe you feel when you go out.

Figure 9 below shows the proportion of respondents who gave a rating of four or five, indicating that they were satisfied with the issue to some extent.

Figure 9 Satisfaction with issues



Base: 2407

7.2.1 Appearance

■ Around half of residents (48%) were satisfied to some extent (satisfied or very satisfied) with how their area looked.

■ A significantly higher proportion of residents from inner London boroughs were very satisfied with how the area looked than residents in outer London boroughs.

Significant differences were also noticed across the IMD and on the ground groups:

■ A greater proportion of residents in the most affluent boroughs (G1) were satisfied to some extent (55%) with how their area looked in comparison to residents in the most deprived boroughs (G4; 44%).

■ A greater proportion of residents in the highest performing boroughs (G1 & G2) were satisfied to some extent with how their area looked (59% and 56% respectively) when compared with residents of boroughs in groups three and four (38% and 39%).

7.2.2 Feelings of safety when out

Over half of residents (56%) were satisfied to some extent with how safe they felt when they went out.

Significant differences were noticed between inner and outer London residents:

A greater proportion of inner London residents were very satisfied with how safe they felt when they went out when compared with outer London residents.

Significant differences were also noticed across the IMD and on the ground groups:

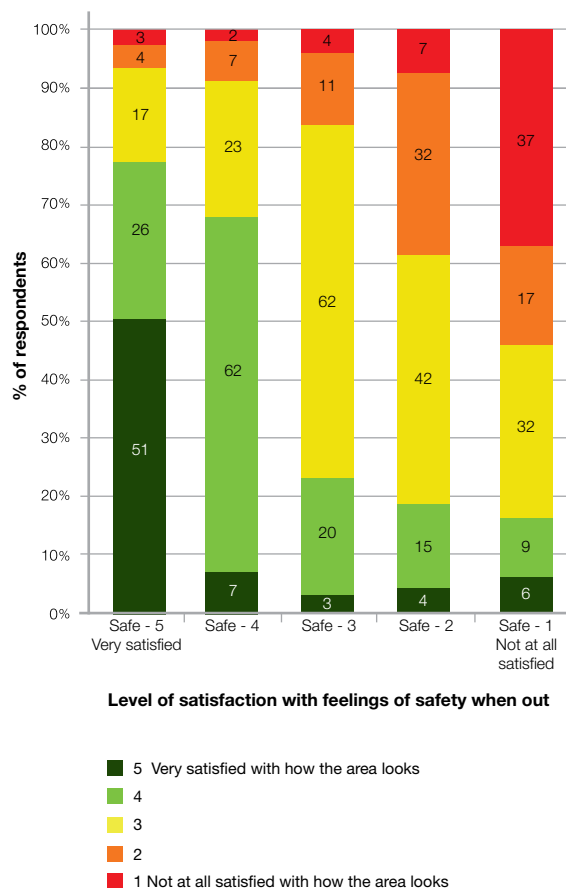
A greater proportion of residents from the most affluent boroughs (G1) were very satisfied with how safe they felt when compared to residents of the more deprived boroughs (G3 and G4).

Also, a greater proportion of residents from the highest performing boroughs (G1) were very satisfied with how safe they felt when compared with residents from all other groups.

7.3 Satisfaction with appearance of the area by feelings of safety

Levels of satisfaction with how the area looks were compared against levels of satisfaction with feelings of safety when out. A correlation was observed between the two variables.

Figure 10 Satisfaction with appearance of the area by feelings of safety



Of those who said that they were very satisfied with how safe they felt when they went out, over 70% were also satisfied to some extent with the appearance of the area.

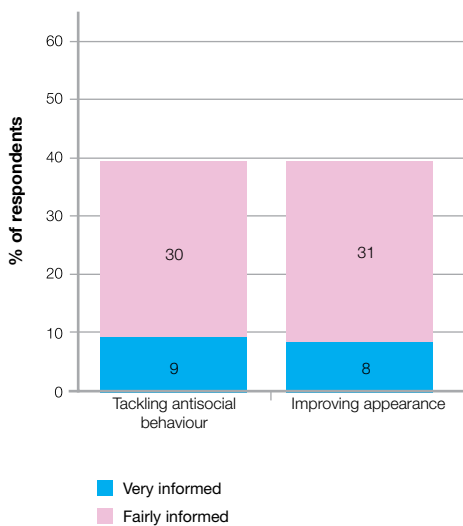
Base: 2407

8. Contact and Communication

8.1 Awareness of action and improvements

Residents were asked how informed they felt about action being undertaken in their area to tackle antisocial behaviour and improve the general appearance of the area.

Figure 11 Awareness of action and improvements



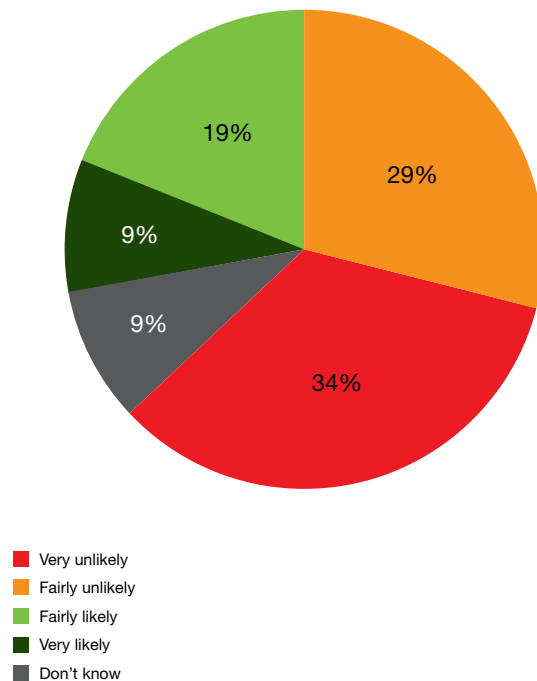
Base: 2407

■ Around four in ten respondents (39%) said they felt informed to some extent (either very or fairly) about what was being done to tackle antisocial behaviour, and to improve the general appearance of the area (39%).

8.2 Likelihood to report problem

Residents were asked how likely or unlikely they would be to report a local environmental problem such as litter, dog fouling or dumped waste in the area where they lived. The results are shown in the chart below.

Figure 12 Likelihood to report



Base: 2407

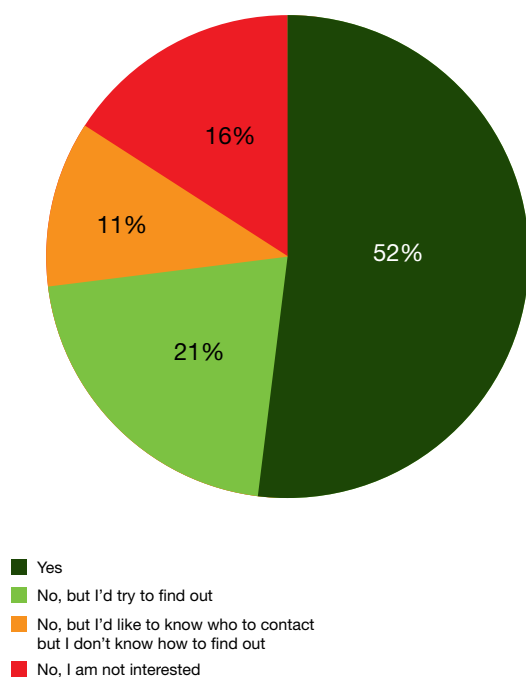
■ On the whole, over a quarter (28%) of residents were likely (either very or fairly) to report a problem affecting the local environment in the area where they lived.

■ Around a third of residents (34%) stated that they were very unlikely and over a quarter (29%) said that they were fairly unlikely to report a problem affecting the local environment in the area where they lived.

8.3 Point of contact

Residents were then asked whether they would know who to contact in order to report a problem affecting the local environment. The results are shown in the chart below.

Figure 13 Who to contact



Base: 2407

■ Around half of respondents answered 'yes'; they did know who to contact in the event that they would like to report a problem affecting the local environment in the area where they lived.

■ Around a fifth (21%) said that they didn't know who to contact, but would try to find out.

■ Around a tenth (11%) said that they didn't know who to contact, but would like to but didn't know how to find out, whilst 16% didn't know and were not interested.

The following significant differences were observed:

■ A greater proportion of outer London residents knew who to contact (57%) than inner London residents (46%).

■ Those living in the most affluent boroughs (G1) were more likely to know who to contact (64%) than the other boroughs (G2; 56%, G3; 46% and G4; 46%).

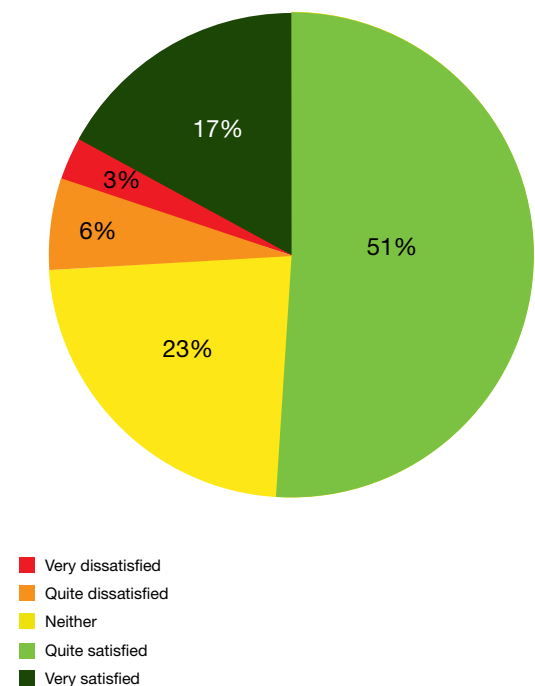
■ 55–64 year olds were the most likely age group to know who to contact (64%) whereas 16–24 year olds were the least aware (44%).

Those respondents who answered yes, they would know who to contact, were then asked to specify who they would contact. The vast majority of respondents said that they would contact the local council (79%).

9. Overall Satisfaction

Residents were asked how satisfied or dissatisfied they were with their local area as a place to live. The results are shown in the chart below.

Figure 14 Overall satisfaction



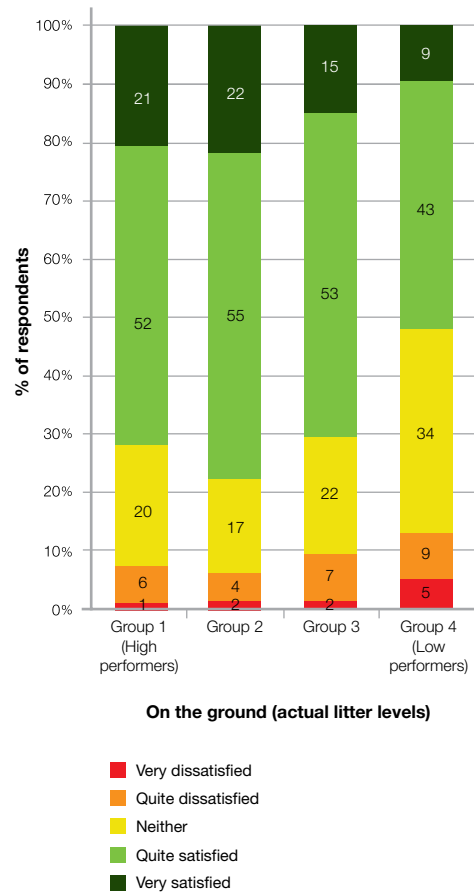
Base: 2407

■ Around two-thirds (68%) of residents stated that they were satisfied to some extent (either very or fairly) with their local area as a place to live.

■ Around a quarter (23%) were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, whilst just 6% were fairly dissatisfied and 3% were very dissatisfied with their local area as a place to live.

■ Those in the most deprived boroughs (G4) were the least satisfied overall with their area as a place to live (56% satisfied to some extent) compared with the other groups (G1; 74%, G2; 73% and G3; 73%).

Figure 15 Satisfaction with area by actual cleanliness (on the ground)



Base: 2407

Figure 15 shows that residents living in the lower performing boroughs were less satisfied than residents living in higher performing boroughs.

10. Conclusions

Capital Standards has made unquestionable improvements to the LEQ in the London boroughs that it covers – monitoring and tackling the amount of environmental crime. With the support of ENCAMS an additional dimension has been added to Capital Standards' knowledge and understanding in the form of London residents' perceptual data on LEQ issues and how these relate to feelings of safety and satisfaction with their area.

Some of the results were encouraging: around two-thirds were satisfied with their local area as a place to live and the appearance of an area was 'extremely important' to around two-thirds of people.

Other findings revealed that half of all residents were satisfied with how safe they felt when out, around four in ten respondents felt informed about what was being done to tackle antisocial behaviour and improve the general appearance of the area, and over a quarter of residents were likely to report or complain about a problem affecting the local environment.

Specifically, it was identified that general litter, vandalism, dog fouling, the condition of the highways in terms of repair, graffiti, drugs-related litter and fly-tipping were identified as priorities for action.

In addition, themes emerged amongst the key findings with differences observed between the most affluent and deprived areas, and between the highest (cleanest) and lowest (dirtiest) performing boroughs. Fewer differences existed, but did emerge between inner and outer London boroughs. The following sections address each of these themes in turn.

10.1 Affluence of area

Differences were observed between the London boroughs in terms of their IMD score.

Model 1 Findings by IMD Group

Affluent areas (G1)



Important issues
Graffiti and fly-tipping

Deprived areas (G4)



Important issues
Dog fouling and street lighting

Important issues
Drugs-related litter

Were more satisfied with how safe they felt

Felt more satisfied with the look of the local area

Were more likely to know who to contact to report a problem

Feeling safe when out was less likely to be extremely important

10.2 Issues of importance and satisfaction with area and contact

For those living in the most deprived areas, dog fouling and street lighting were felt to be most important for spend and for those in more affluent areas, graffiti and fly-tipping were rated as most important for spend. Drugs-related litter was rated as important by both groups.

In terms of satisfaction with their area, a greater proportion of residents in affluent boroughs²¹ were satisfied to some extent with how their area looked in comparison to residents in the most deprived boroughs.

Finally, those living in the most affluent authorities were more likely to know who to contact to report an issue than those living in the other three groups of boroughs. The percentage of respondents decreased as the level of affluence decreased with the exception of groups three and four being equal.

The differences between boroughs with different levels of affluence may be the result of a climate of resignation. A climate of resignation exists when residents simply accept the state of their area and do not question it because other issues are considered to be of higher importance. This may lead to a vicious circle where it becomes a struggle to get the residents to see the issue as important enough to report it. Therefore, they are less likely to feel satisfied with their area and will be less likely to know who to contact to report a problem as they do not consider that as an option.

In further support of this, a report carried out by ENCAMS²² identified that those living in more affluent areas were one of the groups of people most likely to have a vested interest in having graffiti removed and therefore report it. This was because they wanted to keep their areas 'nice', had higher expectations of council services and could be a vociferous and demanding group.

An exception to this may exist where an issue in more deprived areas (e.g. dog fouling and street lighting) reaches a critical point and passes a threshold and suddenly becomes bad enough for it to be considered an important issue for focus. It is likely that this critical point is much higher for residents in more deprived areas than it is for residents in more affluent areas.

In addition, street lighting may be considered a priority for residents in more deprived areas as feelings of safety when out are lower. Those living in more affluent areas were more satisfied with how safe they felt compared to those residing in the most deprived London boroughs,²³ who were also less likely to state that how safe they felt when out was extremely important, when compared to the other three groups. Consequently, a correlation was observed between satisfaction with feelings of safety when out and satisfaction with the appearance of the area. Those who were the most satisfied with how safe they felt when out were also most satisfied with how the area looked. Those who were the least satisfied with how safe they felt when out were also least satisfied with the appearance of the area.

This relationship is supported by research carried out by ENCAMS¹² in 2007 measuring quality of life among the public. The report highlights that feeling safe when out and neighbourhood appearances were both important factors contributing towards a good quality of life; in particular, safety when out was one of the most important factors for good neighbourhood quality of life.

10.3 Cleanliness of area

Differences between the boroughs in terms of their on the ground scores emerged.

Model 2 Findings by on the ground survey group

High performing (cleaner) areas



15% thought that litter was a major problem in their area

Low performing (dirtier) areas



35% thought that litter was a major problem in their area

How the area looks is important

Feel more satisfied with how the area looks

More likely to be very satisfied with how safe they feel

There was some correlation between actual cleanliness and resident perception with litter being rated as less of a problem by those living in the highest performing boroughs (G1) compared to those living in the lowest performing boroughs. This suggests that residents' perceptions of litter are relatively accurate in terms of on the ground surveys and may imply that where residents feel there is a problem, there is indeed likely to be higher levels of litter.

Following on from this, those in the highest performing boroughs²⁴ were more satisfied with how the area looked compared to those in the bottom two groups (three and four).

In addition, how the area looked was felt to be more important to those residing in the highest and lowest performing boroughs²⁵ when compared to those residing in the mid groups. This may be explained by the extremes experienced by the highest and lowest performing boroughs. Those in the 'cleaner' boroughs are likely to hold proportionately higher expectations for their area than those in the lower performing boroughs. Conversely, those in the lowest performing boroughs are likely to be aware of the contrast between their area and neighbouring boroughs in the higher performing groups, and therefore want their area to be of a higher standard.

This suggests that changes in LEQ should be followed by changes in residents' perceptions. If residents' perceptions do not change it may be because the changes are not big enough, are not happening quickly enough or are not tackling the key issues.

10.4 Inner and outer London

In addition to differences noted between the boroughs in terms of affluence and cleanliness, differences between inner and outer London emerged.

Model 3 Findings by inner and outer London

| Inner London boroughs | Outer London boroughs |
|------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| More likely to be satisfied with how area looks | When compared with inner London residents, the following issues were felt to be more important to residents of outer London boroughs: graffiti, fly-tipping, fly-posting, vandalism, abandoned vehicles, street cleanliness and leaf fall, soil, mud grit etc. |
| Feel more satisfied with how safe they feel when out | |
| | More likely to state that how safe they feel when out is extremely important |
| | More likely to know who to contact to report a problem |

Residents of outer London boroughs were more likely than residents of inner London boroughs to state that how safe they felt when out was extremely important to them. However it was the residents of inner London boroughs who were more likely to feel satisfied with how safe they felt compared with outer London residents. Inner London residents were also more likely to state that they felt satisfied with the appearance of the area.

Finally, the fact that a greater proportion of outer London residents knew who to contact to report a problem affecting the quality of the local environment than inner London residents may be explained by the fact that there are a higher proportion of outer London boroughs than inner London boroughs in the top two quartiles of boroughs as defined by the IMD. Residents of more affluent boroughs are, as already mentioned, more likely to report a problem and be vociferous.

10.5 Did the questions get answered?

The research was successful in identifying which factors affect public satisfaction with LEQ issues in London, with specific differences across boroughs dependent upon level of affluence and cleanliness. The research was also successful in identifying a correlation between actual standards of LEQ and public perception of, and satisfaction with, standards.

10.6 What are the practical implications?

London local authorities may want to use the information provided in this report to identify areas and issues within their borough that require priority action, whether it be in terms of on the ground results or residents' perceptions.

For example, local authorities of more affluent areas may consider focusing their attention on reducing the amount of graffiti and fly-tipping incidences, and ensure drugs-related litter is targeted sufficiently, and be seen to be doing so by its residents. Whereas local authorities of more deprived areas may want to focus on improving incidences of dog fouling and ensuring street lighting and drugs-related litter are targeted appropriately.

Local authorities of more deprived areas may also want to investigate further why feeling safe when out is less likely to be extremely important to their residents. If a climate of resignation is apparent then local authorities might want to identify ways in which they can instil higher expectations in their residents and encourage them to report incidences of problematic environmental issues.

Similarly, local authorities who receive high performance scores in the on the ground surveys may take comfort from the fact that a large majority of their residents believe it to be of a high standard in terms of cleanliness, and continue to work towards such high outcomes as it is an important issue for their residents and contributes towards their positive feelings about the area and their feelings of safety when out. Local authorities who receive lower on the ground results may want to improve upon that to increase their residents' feelings of satisfaction with the area, as how the area looks is of equal importance to them as it is to residents of cleaner boroughs.

Local authorities of inner London boroughs may want to think about communicating with their residents more, to ensure that they are aware of who to contact if they want to report a problem.

10.7 What are the implications for Capital Standards?

Part of the Capital Standards programme includes the sharing of best practice through seminars and meetings. Capital Standards will consider focusing on specific issues for specific boroughs rather than working generally across the whole partnership. Similarly, they will consider focusing their campaigns to specific boroughs rather than taking a London-wide approach.

Capital Standards can play a key role in educating the public in how they can report an issue to their local authority; an issue which needs particular focus for those in more deprived boroughs.

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London Borough of Bexley
London Borough of Brent
London Borough of Camden
London Borough of Croydon
London Borough of Ealing
London Borough of Greenwich
London Borough of Hackney
London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham
London Borough of Haringey
London Borough of Harrow
London Borough of Havering
London Borough of Hillingdon
London Borough of Hounslow
London Borough of Islington
Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames
London Borough of Lambeth
London Borough of Lewisham
City of London
London Borough of Merton
London Borough of Newham
London Borough of Richmond Upon Thames
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