

Housing Services – 2025/2026 Rent Consultation Results



DARLINGTON
Borough Council

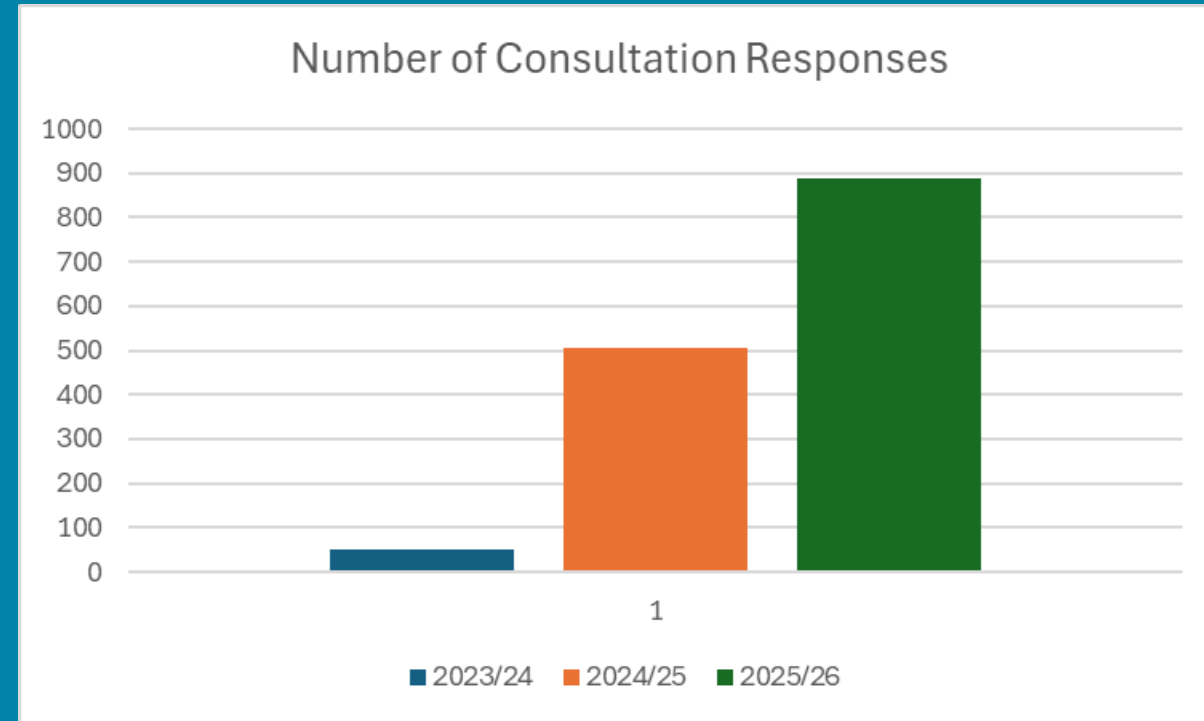
Consultation Methods and Dates

- Cabinet approval was given on 3rd December 2024 for a consultation with Darlington Borough Council tenants on the proposed rent charges for 2025/2026.
- The consultation commenced 4th December 2024 and was promoted to Council tenants via the following methods:
 - Social media campaign to promote the consultation.
 - Text message to all Council tenants (with a mobile phone number linked to their tenancy).
 - Via telephone conversations with tenants.
 - Via the Tenants Panel members.
- The survey was online, however appreciating that not all tenants have online access face to face events were held at Housing Services sheltered and extra care facilities and tenants could contact the team by telephone to complete it over the phone.
- Information sheets were produced and provided to tenants electronically and hard copies as required.
- Housing Contact and Housing Income staff received additional training to ensure they could answer tenant's queries appropriately.
- Consultation ran until midnight 31st December 2024.



Consultation response rates

- A total of 889 Council tenants completed the rent consultation survey; this is 17% of all Council tenants.
- This was a 75% increase on responses to the 2024/25 rent consultation and 1678% increase from 2023/24 rent consultation.



Questions asked in the consultation

- Tenants were asked the following questions as part of the rent consultation survey:
 - Do you agree with the proposal for Darlington Borough Council to increase the Council house rent in April by 2.7%?
 - Do you think the Council house rent you pay is value for money when compared to other landlords within the Darlington area?
 - Have you had problems paying your rent at any time over the past year?
 - Have you contacted the Council about struggling to pay rent?
 - Were the Housing Income team able to help you with the problem?
 - What are the reasons why you did not contact the Housing Income team?
 - Are you happy with the range of payment methods offered by the Council (direct debit, rent payment card, online payments, telephone payments, case, standing order)?



Results

Do you agree with the proposal for Darlington Borough Council to increase the Council house rent in April by 2.7%?



■ yes ■ no

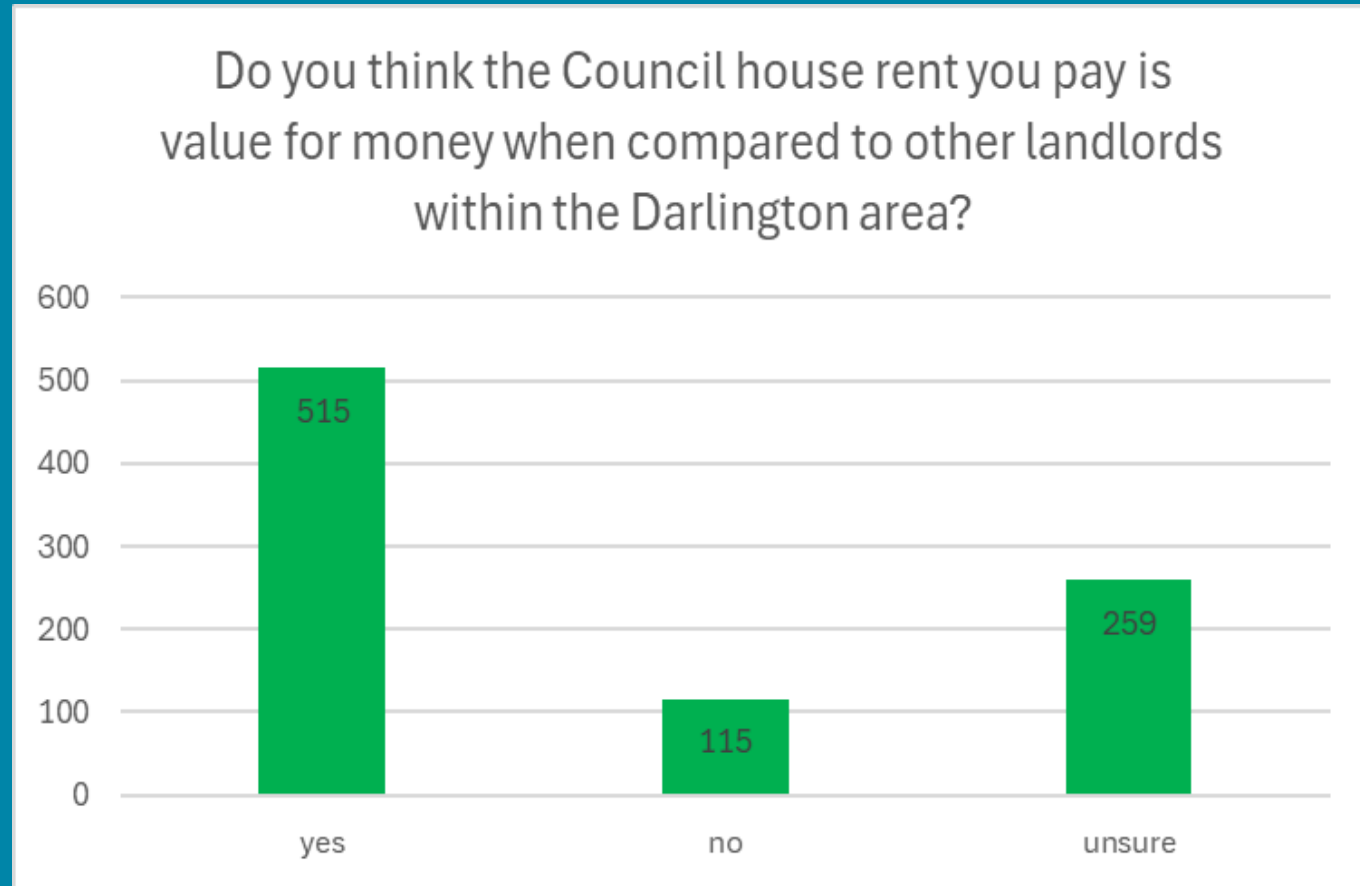
- 889 tenants responded to this question, with 30% of tenants agreeing.
- Comments included:
 - Low-income households who did not claim welfare benefits could struggle
 - The high cost of gas and electric in addition was a worry.
 - The repairs and maintenance was good
 - It's only going up a couple of pounds increase so manageable.



Results

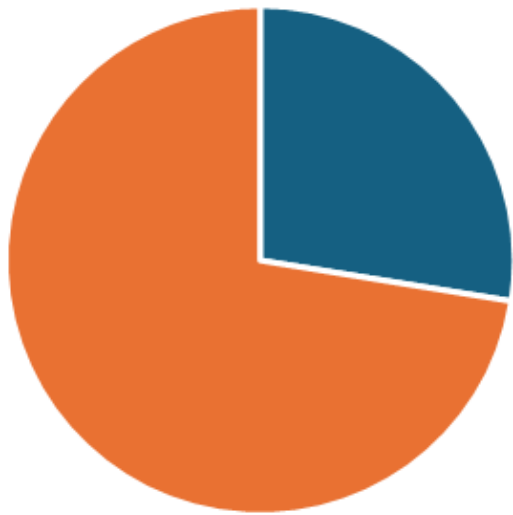
889 tenants responded to this question, with 58% of tenants stating they felt the rent charges to be value for money, 12% did not and 30% were unsure.

- Comments included:
 - I agree with the increase of council house rent, other landlords are usually more expensive.
 - Fair in the current market.
 - Don't have to worry about repairs like homeowners.
 - Suitable and adequate for the property I live in.
 - Don't have to worry about repairs like homeowners
 - Not aware of other rents



Results

Have you had problems paying your rent at any time over the past year?

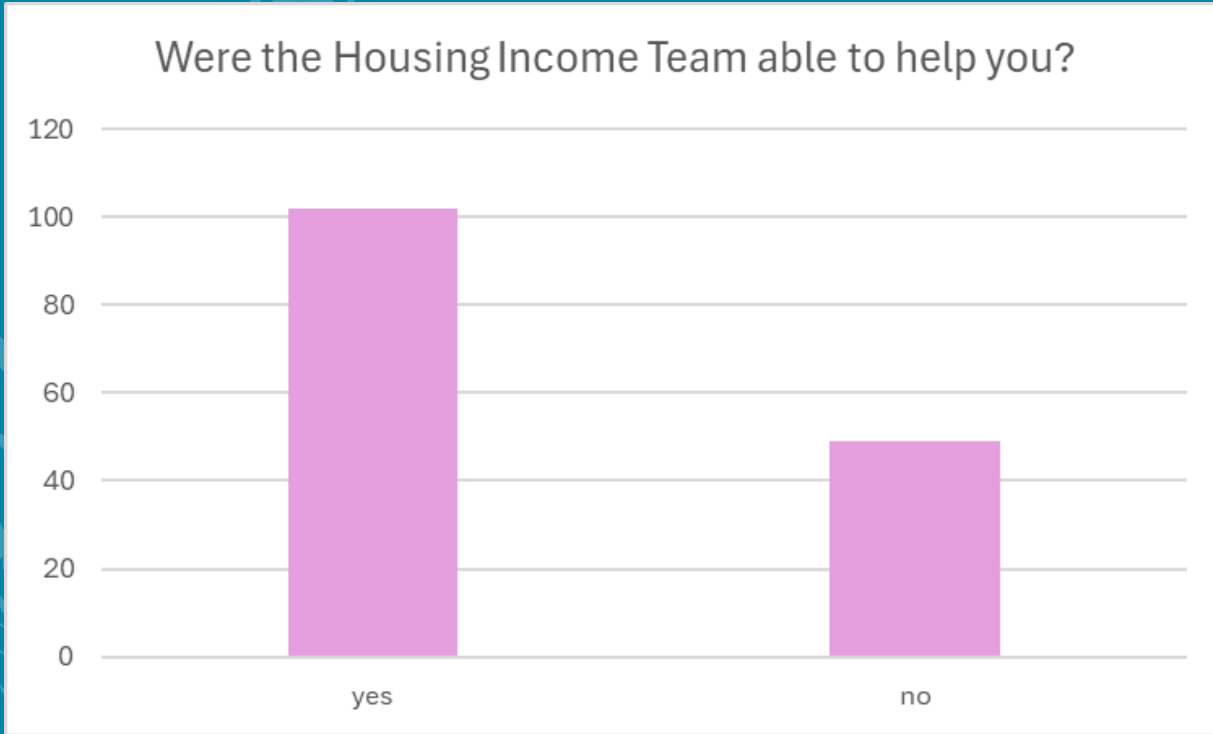


■ yes ■ no

- 889 tenants responded to this question, with 73% of tenants stating they had not had problems paying their rent and 27% (245) stating they had.



Results

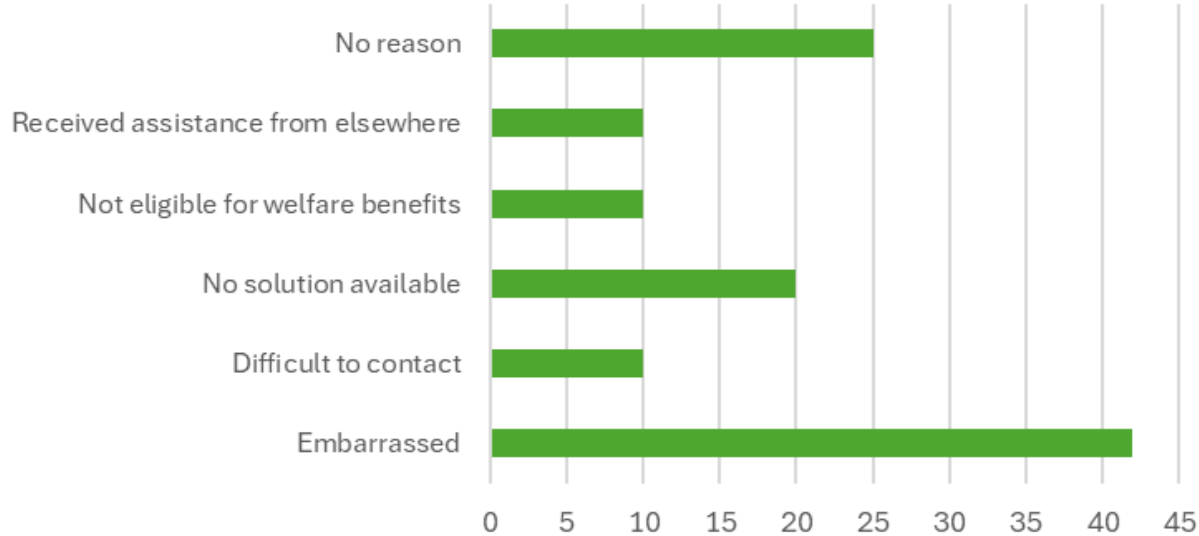


Of the 245 people that stated they had struggled to pay their rent, 63% had contacted Housing Income team for assistance and 68% of those that had contacted stated the team had helped them.



Results

Reasons for not contacting the Housing Income Team



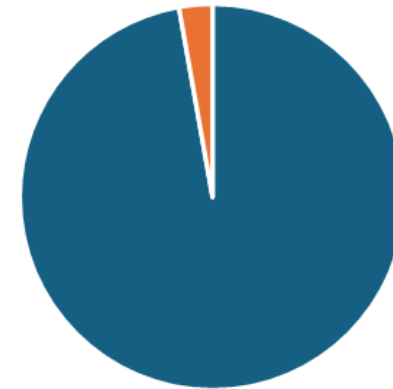
- Those tenants that had not contacted the team for assistance around their rent in the last 12 months gave the attached reasons for not doing so.



Results

- 857 tenants responded to this question with an overwhelming 97% happy with the current range of rent payment methods offered by the Council.

Are you happy with the range of rent payment methods offered by the Council?



Questions?



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