



Survey of Services  
Draft report by FDS International

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### 1. Executive summary

The House of Commons Service delivers a range of support services to Members and their staff; these services provide them with any help they need to undertake their Parliamentary duties effectively.

The House is committed to providing these services as effectively as possible and has established a series of Corporate Core tasks and priorities in order to achieve this high quality service delivery. To support the management information around this service delivery, the House has undertaken to survey Members and their paid staff at regular intervals to assess their satisfaction levels.

The 2009 House of Commons Survey of Services was an attempted census of Members and their paid Staff; in total 160 Members and 757 Staff took part (representing 25% of Members, and 28% of Members' staff); for Members these were broadly representative of the make-up of the House (in terms of party, role, age and length of service).

This response rate is lower than that achieved in 2007 (when 45% of Members, and 54% of their staff responded); however, it is important to note that during the fieldwork period, press coverage of Members' expenses began, and it is believed that this has had an impact on the response rates achieved and influenced some specific responses provided to the survey.

#### Overall satisfaction

Members and their staff are generally satisfied with the services offered by the House. Three out of five Members (60%) and just over half (55%) of Members' staff are either extremely or very satisfied with the overall service they receive and only 4% and 2% of Members and their staff respectively state that they are dissatisfied.

The areas of service generally receiving high satisfaction ratings from both Members and their staff are:

- Information and research services
- Hansard
- Procedural services and advice
- Administration of pay and pensions

Over two thirds of both Members and staff consider themselves to be either extremely or very satisfied with these services.

Procedural services and advice are also considered to be the first most important service provided by the House amongst Members. Members' staff consider Information and Communication Technology (ICT) services to be the most important area to support their role, and it is the second most important service amongst Members. However, the services provided by the Parliamentary ICT service (PICT) do not receive such high satisfaction ratings. Only 40% of Members and 46% of their staff consider themselves to be either extremely or very satisfied with PICT services.

Cleaning and accommodation also have lower proportions of both Members and staff alike considering the service extremely or very satisfactory.

#### Management of the House

Responding Members and staff were asked whether over the past year they considered the House of Commons services to have become more effective, remained about the same or become less effective. Around a third of members (32%) and a fifth of their staff (20%) report that they consider

the House Services to have become more effective; while one in ten Members and one in twenty staff feel they have become less effective.

### House of Commons Service core services

As noted, the House has set itself four corporate core tasks:

- To provide the advice and services that enable the House and its committees to conduct their business effectively
- To provide the advice and services that enable individual Members and their staff to perform their Parliamentary duties effectively
- To promote public knowledge and understanding of the work and role of Parliament through the provision of information and access
- To maintain the heritage and integrity of the Palace of Westminster for the benefit of future generations

Around a third of Members and their staff consider the House needs to pay more attention and/or provide greater resources towards providing advice and services that enable individual Members and their staff to perform their Parliamentary duties effectively and to promote public knowledge and understanding of the work and role of Parliament through the provision of information and access. Although views on the latter of these are somewhat split with 13% of Members and 7% of their staff actually believing that less attention needs to be placed on this.

The other core tasks are generally considered to be appropriately attended to/resourced.

### Chamber and committee services

Members show high levels of satisfaction, and very low levels of dissatisfaction, with services provided by DCCS. Doorkeepers are particularly well regarded, with 87% of Members considering themselves to be either extremely or very satisfied.

### Procedural and Committee services

The Procedural and Committee services provide a number of services to Members and their staff including those delivered by the Table Office, by the Public Bill Office, that support for Select Committees, by the Vote Office, by the Official Report.

The **Table Office** is well regarded by Members and their staff with high levels of satisfaction expressed. There is a small group of Members' staff however, that note dissatisfaction with the courtesy of staff and this seems to be relating to different levels of service provided to staff compared to that provided to Members.

The **Public Bill Office** receives significantly greater levels of Members that are either extremely or very satisfied with the service than it does for Members' staff. However, even amongst staff the satisfaction levels are high, with around two-thirds rating the Public Bill Office as either extremely or very satisfactory.

Support for **Select Committees** is almost unanimously considered to be of high quality, with around two thirds of all Members that have served on a Select Committee in the past year considering the quality of written briefs, quality of draft reports and professionalism and knowledge of support staff to be either extremely or very satisfactory.

As with the other procedural services; the **Vote Office** is well regarded with high levels of satisfaction expressed by both Members and their staff.

The **Official Report** again is well regarded with the only area that receives any significant level of dissatisfactory ratings being the opportunity provided to Members to review speeches – one in ten Members considered themselves to be not very or not at all satisfied with this.

### Serjeant at Arms

The Serjeant at Arms is responsible for the security of the House and visitor services. While over half of all Members and their staff feel either extremely or very secure on the Parliamentary Estate, around two fifths (41% Members, 38% Members' staff) feel only either fairly or not very secure.

Members and their staff report high levels of satisfaction with the helpfulness and efficiency of **security staff** on the whole; however there is a sizable group – 13% of Members and 14% of their staff – who consider themselves to be either not very or not at all satisfied with the consistency of security staff.

While Members and staff spoken to in-depth do consider it to be a difficult balance to find between accessibility of the House to the public and watertight security; there were some concerns expressed around the consistency of security measures and several examples provided of specific security breaches or potential breaches which appear to lie behind the feeling of insecurity held by some.

The **Pass Office** again is considered satisfactory by most, however one in ten do express dissatisfaction with the speed of response.

**Visitor services** are well regarded by almost all Members and staff that responded to the survey. This said, there were a number of comments received around the impact on security, particularly security screening queues.

### Facilities

Facilities are responsible for the catering, food and retail outlets around the Estate, as well as cleaning, maintenance and the minimisation of the Houses' environmental impact.

**Catering and food outlets** are received positively; however Members staff are significantly more likely than Members to be either extremely or very satisfied with the various food outlets available. Amongst the comments about catering and food outlets were a number of mentions around over crowding during busy periods, as well as a few Members and staff calling for healthier and/or branded choices.

**Other retail** options around the estate received a mixed response from Members and their staff. While souvenir supply and banqueting services were generally considered satisfactory; almost one in five Members (18%) expressed some degree of dissatisfaction with meeting and conference room refreshments and almost a quarter of Members (24%) and almost half of their staff (45%) were not very or not at all satisfied with the vending machines provided around the Estate.

**Cleaning** and particularly the cleanliness of the toilet facilities closest to Members and their staffs' offices received low levels of satisfaction. Qualitative feedback suggests that Members and their staff believe that more thorough cleaning is needed, potentially with more checks on the work; the recess periods may be good times to clear some of the unavoidable paperwork from offices and give these a 'spring clean'.

**Maintenance** was an area that received mixed feedback from Members and their staff. While members of maintenance staff were considered to be courteous, and generally their work was considered to be of satisfactory standard, the time taken to answer calls and to fix problems was regarded by several Members and their staff to be unsatisfactory.

**Minimising the impact on the environment** of the activities of the House is an area of increasing interest amongst the management team and as such was included in the survey. Over a third of Members and their staff state that they are dissatisfied to some degree with the energy efficiency of the House and around a third are dissatisfied to some extent with the provision of environmental information.

There are no doubt specific issues with improving the environmental performance of the Palace being such a historic and important building in its own right; however Members and their staff do report a number of specific and general issues around energy use such as ineffectual heating and window use which may be addressed by the House management team.

### Information services

The **Library** provides support to Members and their staff through responses to enquiries, the production of briefing papers, access to printed and online material as well as providing training to Members and their staff. Satisfaction with the Library is high with over two thirds of Members and their staff reporting to be either extremely or very satisfied with all aspects covered in the survey.

Within the survey, Members and their staff were asked whether they would envisage using a range of new services that could potentially be provided by the Library. Of those tested, the greatest interest was for alerts of both Parliamentary and non-Parliamentary materials. Staff based in Westminster were significantly more likely to say they would use many of the new services than those based in constituency offices: including alerts for Parliamentary and non-Parliamentary materials, wider access to briefing papers across the Parliamentary Estate and short talks offered by the Library.

Both Members and their staff are very satisfied with the guided tours, school trip services and the welcome provided to visitors of the House, although there may be some issues around access for some visitors in terms of passing through security (see page four).

### Department of Resources

The Department of Resources (DR) provides services including pay and allowances for all Members and their paid staff, along with a range of other services that may be used on a more ad hoc basis, such as medical advice, pensions assistance and training courses for Members' staff.

In terms of the financial services, satisfaction with **payroll services** is high with only 6% of Members and 5% of their staff noting that they were dissatisfied to any extent. **Pensions advice** and assistance received slightly lower satisfaction ratings, however over half still consider this to be either extremely or very satisfactory.

No significant issues arose relating to the **Travel Office** with both Members and staff generally satisfied with this service.

There were less Members and staff that consider themselves to be able to assess the other services provided by the DR. Amongst those that did, there was reasonable level of satisfaction; although for some services this fell behind the average ratings provided in other areas.

Of note, there was relatively high levels of dissatisfaction expressed:

- amongst Members towards the advice on Freedom of Information Act and data protection issues (17% dissatisfied to some extent);
- amongst Members (15%) for the personnel advice and support provided
- amongst Members (11%) and their staff (18%) for medical and health and safety issues; and
- amongst Members staff (13%) towards non-IT training courses for Members' staff

This issue around Members' staff training may in some way be due to these tending to be provided in London. Some of the more in-depth discussions held with constituency staff highlighted this as an area of improvement.

### Parliamentary Information and Communications Technology (PICT)

A range of issues were identified by Members and their staff where they felt the services of PICT could be addressed. While many of those Members and staff spoken to in-depth acknowledged the potential difficulties experienced by PICT, particularly in providing a nationwide support service, the overall levels of satisfaction are amongst the lowest reported in the survey; and PICT is considered as the first most important area of House Services provided to Members' staff and the second most important to Members.

**Remote access** was an area of concern for many of the users of the service. However, it is an area currently being addressed by PICT and therefore improvements should be seen in next year's survey.

Satisfaction amongst Members and their staff towards the **hardware** provided by PICT was relatively low, with around a third of Members (35%) and two fifths of their staff (41%) considering themselves to be either extremely or very satisfied. Almost a third (28%) of Members, and one fifth (19%) of their staff were dissatisfied to some extent. Amongst the comments received, Dell appeared to be considered to be the main problem; although no underlying trend in rationale behind why the hardware was unsatisfactory was identified.

The **support** offered to users by PICT received somewhat mixed feedback with just over two fifths (41% of Members and 45% of their staff) considering this to be either extremely or very satisfactory and 27% and 17% of Members and staff respectively considering themselves to be either not very or not at all satisfied with support.

There were a number of comments received around the support provided, and while this uncovered a range of specific issues, a large proportion of these related to the remote nature of support and particularly for those in constituency offices; trying to resolve problems remotely appears to be frustrating.

**IT Training and other services** also receives lower satisfaction ratings compared to other services provided by the House. This is particularly noticeable for the arrangement for the purchase of additional equipment, whereby a quarter of Members (26%) and a fifth of their staff (19%) were to some extent dissatisfied.

Satisfaction with the telephone switchboard is high, with three quarters of Members, and 80% of their staff either extremely or very satisfied.

### Members' centre

The Members' centre received good levels of satisfaction, particularly relating to enquires, information and bookings, pay and allowances advice and access to computer facilities. Although, fewer Members and their staff felt able to provide a view on these services than many others covered in the survey.

### Communicating with Members' staff

One in five Members do not think that the House does enough to communicate with their staff. Although this obviously leaves the majority feeling the House does enough it does indicate potential issues that may exist and this area did arise during more in-depth discussions particularly with those staff based in constituency offices.

There appear to be a number of areas which may help with communications to staff including providing access to more detailed communications via the Internet and increasing the recognition of non-Westminster based staff within communications activity.

### Overall

The satisfaction expressed by both Members and their staff is generally high. Even for the lowest rated elements of service, the majority of staff consider them to be at least fairly satisfactory.

Within the feedback from Members and their staff there are however, some clear indicators for development of the service provided by the House. Each area of service covered by the survey is further detailed in the following pages.

### Comparisons with 2007 survey

Comparing these results to those obtained in 2007, similar issues are raised. There has been an improvement in Members and their staff's satisfaction with cleaning since 2007, with small increases in satisfaction particularly amongst Members; likewise, levels of dissatisfaction have fallen.

Perception of security on the Parliamentary Estate has remained static since 2007, both in terms of those feeling secure, and not very / not at all secure. However, there has been a marked improvement in satisfaction with services provided by the Visitor Assistants both amongst Members and their staff.

Responses regarding PICT have also remained steady. Overall, the PICT staff are considered a strength, attracting high levels of customer satisfaction even when issues remain unresolved.



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### 2. Introduction

The main role of the House of Commons Services is to “enable the House and its Members to perform their parliamentary duties effectively”. The House of Commons Services takes its responsibilities in this regard very seriously and seeks to provide Members of Parliament and their staff with exemplary service.

Members and their staff benefit from a wide range of support functions to assist them to undertake their Parliamentary duties.

The House of Commons Service has determined four key objectives for its work:

- Providing advice and services that enable the House and its committees to conduct their business effectively;
- Providing the advice and services that enable individual Members (and their staff) to perform their Parliamentary duties effectively;
- Promoting public knowledge and understanding of the work and role of Parliament through the provision of information and access; and
- Maintaining the heritage of the buildings, objects and documents.

These primary objectives are supported by a strategic plan, which recognises the need to develop, adapt and improve the service in light of the changing technological, environmental, social and constitutional contexts in which the House works.

Services of the House have undergone extensive changes over the past years including departmental mergers. Services are now provided through four House departments, a joint department of the two Houses and external contractors who allow the House to conduct its business in the most efficient manner. The four specific House departments are:-

- Department of Chamber and Committee Services (which provides advisory and other services that support the work of the Chambers and Committee Services, including security and ceremonial). This department includes:
  - Clerks Assistant's Directorate and the Legislation Directorate
  - Committee Directorate
  - Official Report Directorate
  - Serjeant at Arms Directorate.
- Department of Resources (which provides HR and finance support to the House Services and administers Members’ pay, pensions and allowances)
- Department of Information Services (which informs the work of the House and its Members and provides information and access to the public). This department includes:-
  - Public Information Directorate
  - Research & Information Services for Members Directorate.
- Department of Facilities (which provides the accommodation, catering and other facilities required by the House and maintains the fabric of the buildings). This department includes:-
  - Parliamentary Estates Directorate
  - Catering & Retail Services.

In addition, the Parliamentary ICT Service is now a joint House department and provides IT and communication services to both the House of Commons and the House of Lords.

In total, the House of Commons Service supports a significant number of people. Each of the 646 MPs alone employ their own permanent and temporary staff, as well as volunteers, students and interns to assist when called upon. The numbers of Members' staff on the payroll at the time of the 2009 survey was 2,681.

This survey forms part of the House of Commons Service management information set which helps it determine priorities and further develop the service it offers Members and their staff.

The 2009 survey forms the baseline for future surveys of opinion and particularly for measuring the performance of the House of Commons Services under the Balanced Scorecard approach, as recommended by Sir Kevin Tebbit in his review of House Services in 2007.

### Project objectives and scope

The research programme is intended to:

- To provide useable feedback on the range and quality of services provided to Members and their staff so that actions to improve and develop services can be identified if necessary;
- To identify areas where the quality of services fall short of acceptable standards and where there are good standards;
- To assess how the perception of service delivery changes over time, both at the macro level of overall service, but also for specific elements of service delivery; and
- To identify new areas where services may be of use to Members but are not currently provided, and assessing the demand for these in relation to existing services.

While not every element of the service provided by the House is covered in the survey, it does include questions on a wide variety of service areas.

The survey covers the views of both constituency and Westminster based staff.

### 3. Approach

FDS adopted a multi-mode, two part approach, with a focus on maximisation of response rates. Key to the success of the study was:

- An effective pre-research phase of communication about the rationale for, and importance of, the project undertaken by the communications team of the House of Commons; and
- Adopting a ‘multi-mode’ data collection approach: employing self-completion postal, online and interviewer-led ‘telephone reminders’ to secure as many respondents as possible.

This multi-mode approach was conducted in several stages:

1. **A self-completion questionnaire** was sent to all Members, accompanied by a covering letter giving them the option to either fill in the paper questionnaire and post it back (in the pre-paid envelope provided) or complete the survey online, using their unique log-in name and password as detailed in their covering letter. In light of feedback from the 2007 survey, Members’ staff were generally invited to participate by email<sup>1</sup>.
2. FDS then **followed up the initial approach using telephone and email reminders**. As part of the telephone reminders, non-responders were invited to either complete the survey there and then using CATI (Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing) technology, arrange an appointment to do it at a later date by telephone, complete online or by post.
3. When preliminary findings were available, FDS and the House of Commons Project Board reviewed these findings, and agreed on five areas of particular interest for further exploration. FDS then conducted a **programme of in-depth interviews and a focus group** with Members and their staff.

This document reports on all elements of the research programme, incorporating findings from the qualitative research to supplement the quantitative results.

#### Communication prior to and during the study

- Respondents received two official pieces of correspondence about the survey:
  - A letter which was circulated one week before the survey started, to give people an early warning that the survey would shortly be carried out. This was sent to Members only, and was from **Frank Doran MP, Chairman of the Administration Committee**. The letter also asked Members to encourage their staff to complete the survey
  - The covering letter which accompanied the paper questionnaire came from **Malcolm Jack, the Clerk of the House and Chief Executive**. **This was sent to all Members and their paid staff**. Those receiving a survey pack through the post received the letter as part of this pack. For those Members’ staff invited to participate by email, the text of the letter was reproduced in the email.
- During the fieldwork period, one email reminder was sent to remind non-respondents of their log-in details and the web address of the online survey, and encourage them to take part.

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<sup>1</sup> There were 537 Members’ staff for whom no email address was available. These individuals were sent a postal survey pack identical to those received by Members.

- In addition, non-respondents were telephoned and reminded to take part (and online details or a further paper survey were provided on request).
- A programme of internal publicity was carried out by the House of Commons Service which included posters around relevant areas of the Parliamentary Estate, flyers sent to each Member after the first week of the fieldwork period, and a follow-up email from the Chairman of the Administration Committee.

### Quantitative research programme

#### Pilot

Prior to finalisation of the questionnaire, a small pilot study was undertaken during which time a selection of Members were approached to give feedback on a draft version of the questionnaire. Their information was used to refine the questionnaire content prior to roll-out.

#### Paper self-completion questionnaire

The questionnaire was based on previous surveys and the advice given by the Project Board. Once drafted, members of the Administration Committee and their staff were asked to review the questionnaire for any potential difficulties of completion or any obvious omissions of content. The final design work was undertaken by House of Commons designers. The questionnaire covered 16 sides of A4 in landscape, booklet format.

Each questionnaire was printed with a serial number in the top right-hand corner of the front page.

All respondents completed the same questionnaire. The majority of questions were relevant to Members while Members' staff were asked to skip certain sections of questions which were not applicable to them. The questionnaire was designed to take 10-15 minutes to complete.

Telephone reminders were conducted from the FDS Telecentre. Members and their staff were called during working hours to check they had indeed received their copy of the questionnaire, to remind them of the closing date for the survey and remind them of their online log in details where necessary; we also offered the option of completing the interview over the telephone. Only one person took the opportunity to answer the survey over the telephone.

#### Online questionnaire

This questionnaire mirrored the format of the self-completion questionnaire as much as possible. Each individual was given a unique user ID and log-in password that privately and securely identified him or her within the survey, thus enabling the system to prevent access by anyone who was not using an appropriate access code.

Respondents were able to break off completion of the survey and return later to the point where they left off, so that they were not bound to complete the process at a single sitting.

#### Sample

The sample included all Members and their paid staff (i.e. staff on the payroll system). The sample of Members' staff did not include volunteers and interns.

Each individual on the contact list was assigned a unique serial number (printed in the top right-hand corner of the self-completion questionnaire) in order to allow FDS to track which surveys had been returned during the fieldwork period, thus allowing reminders to be sent to those people who had

not yet returned their questionnaire and so to avoid, as much as possible, re-contacting people who had already filled theirs in.

### Ensuring anonymity

The serial number was used for FDS tracking purposes only and the results and analysis of the survey passed by FDS to the House of Commons Service were anonymised and aggregated, and it was in no way possible for the House of Commons Service to identify any individuals or make any cross-reference to serial numbers.

The research was conducted in adherence to the Market Research Society code of conduct.

### Response rates

The paper questionnaire and covering letter were sent to a total of 3,327 people, of which 646 were Members of Parliament and 2,681 were Members' staff.

House of Commons staff were not included in this survey.

The overall response rate was 28%, which divided quite equally between Members and their staff: The Members' response rate was 25%, and Members' staff showed a 28% return. More details of the breakdown of the sample are found in section 16.

This response rate is lower than in previous waves of fieldwork. Previous response rates for similar surveys were as follows:

- 1999: 46% for MPs, and approximately 24% for their staff from a paper only survey;
- 2003: 23% for MPs and 28% for their staff from a primarily electronic survey with a paper option; and
- 2007: 45% for Members and 54% for their staff from a primarily paper questionnaire with online and telephone options.

This lower response rate is likely to be due to political developments during the fieldwork period.

When examining the data on a question by question basis, in many cases some respondents did not provide an answer, therefore the base number of respondents answering specific questions within each section fluctuates. People who did not provide an answer, who felt a question was not applicable to them or who did not know the answer to a question have generally been excluded from charts in order to provide a view based on those who have actual experience of a service. However, numbers of people excluded from analysis have been indicated where relevant.

Table 3.1 Responses to survey through online and paper modes

	Paper	Online	Total
Members	152	8	160
Members' staff	119*	638	757
Total	271	646	917

\*Includes one person answering the questionnaire over the telephone

#### Note on significant differences

As with all studies we see differences in the results between sub-groups. Some of these differences occur due to sampling error or chance; since we were not able to interview the whole population. Others will be a result of genuine differences in opinion or behaviour between groups. To determine the likelihood of whether differences are 'real', we look at whether the results are statistically significantly different from each other. This is undertaken by analysing the variance of each result.

Generally, throughout this report we have made comparisons between the two main groups involved, which are Members and Members' staff. We need to be sure that interesting differences between these two groups are not due to chance alone. Hence, for the remainder of the report we have used a 95% confidence level, thus a value is said to be significantly different from another only when there is a less than 5% chance that the difference in our survey population has occurred by chance alone.

For example, our survey found that 32% of Members said that the House of Commons services have become more effective over the past year compared with only 20% of staff. This is a statistically significant difference, thus we can say with a high degree of certainty (95%) that among the Members in the House a higher proportion believe House Services have improved compared with their staff. Hence, significance is based on the difference between the two groups (in this case Members and staff). In the commentary, references to these significant differences will be referred to as such, i.e. 'Members are significantly more....' whereas references to differences with no mention of significance mean just that. We therefore advise caution when making decisions based on non-statistically significant differences.

Please note, when determining which results are statistically significant, several factors play a part, primarily the sample size and the sample proportion it applies to. This means that there may be instances where a difference may be significant in one situation but the same size difference may not be significant in another situation.

#### Note on open-ended comments

Throughout the questionnaire, respondents were reminded that there was an opportunity in the final questions to elaborate on answers provided to pre-coded questions. Quotations are selected to highlight common themes; they should not be interpreted as 'the majority view', and are not statistically robust.

#### Base sizes

Although we received responses from 160 Members and 757 staff (totalling 917 responses), for the majority of the charts, the base sizes for the figures fluctuate. This is due to the fact that we have removed, where relevant:

- Respondents who did not answer the question;
- Respondents who did not know the answer to the question; and

- Respondents for whom the question was not applicable.

The number of respondents on whom each chart is based will be indicated and, where relevant, those not included in the base for the chart.

Please note that in charts, figures represent the *percentage* of respondents giving a particular response.

### Satisfaction levels

Generally, 'extremely' and 'very' satisfied have been grouped together to give an indication of levels of 'satisfaction'. 'Fairly' satisfied has been taken to be neutral and 'not very' and 'not at all' satisfied have been taken to be more negative scores.

### Comparisons with 2007 findings

With the inclusion of the Balanced Scorecard questions, this year's survey sets a base line for future satisfaction measurement studies. There are some questions in this year's survey however that were asked in the 2007 research project. Where there are interesting comparisons with the 2007 report, these have been included in clearly labelled blue boxes or tables.

### Qualitative research programme

Directly after the quantitative phase, a programme of qualitative research was undertaken to explore particular issues in more depth. In total, ten Members and five Members' constituency based staff were interviewed by telephone. Additionally, a focus group was convened at Portcullis House which was attended by seven Members' staff.

The sample interviewed was *inclusive* rather than representative – that is, selected so that each of the main political parties were represented.

Respondents to the current study were given the opportunity to 'opt out' of this qualitative phase. Those who 'opted in' or who did not respond to the current study were eligible to take part in the qualitative phase.

The question areas were agreed by the Project Board after examining preliminary data from the quantitative survey. These areas were:

- Security;
- Cleaning;
- The environment;
- Information and communications technology; and
- Working with constituency staff.

For each area, FDS met with representatives from the House of Commons Service to discuss particular question areas prior to the qualitative survey activity. FDS then produced a topic guide for use in interviews, which was approved by the project board.

The findings from this element of the research are inter-woven throughout this report, along with responses by Members and their staff to open-ended questions placed within the main survey.



## 4. Balanced scorecard questions

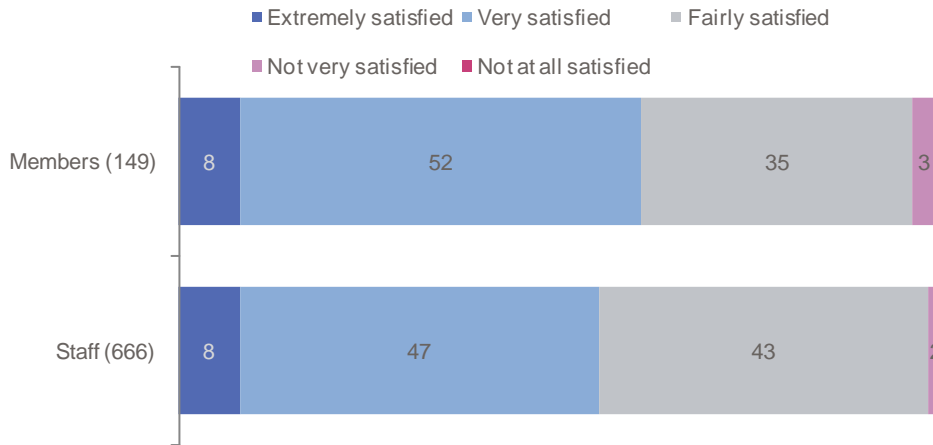
To assess overall satisfaction with House Services, and to set a benchmark which can be measured on a regular basis (annually), a series of questions were developed based on the *importance* Members and their staff attach to the difference House service areas, and their *satisfaction* with these services.

### Overall satisfaction

Taking all House Services into account, 60% of Members, and 55% of Members’ staff, are satisfied with the services provided; only 4% of Members, and 2% of their staff, are dissatisfied. A little over half of Members are ‘very satisfied’ with the House Services overall, with a similar proportion of Members’ staff reporting the same.

Chart 4.1 Q43. Taking all these services together, how would you assess your satisfaction with the services provided by the House? (Figures are percentages)

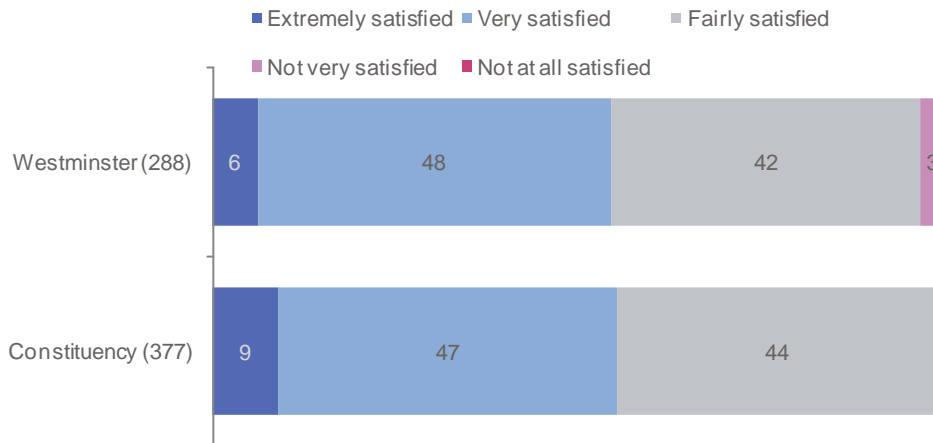
(Base: All answering)



There is very little difference between satisfaction with House Services between those staff working in Westminster and those in the constituency offices.

Chart 4.2 Q43. Taking all these services together, how would you assess your satisfaction with the services provided by the House? (Figures are percentages)

(Base: All Members’ staff answering)

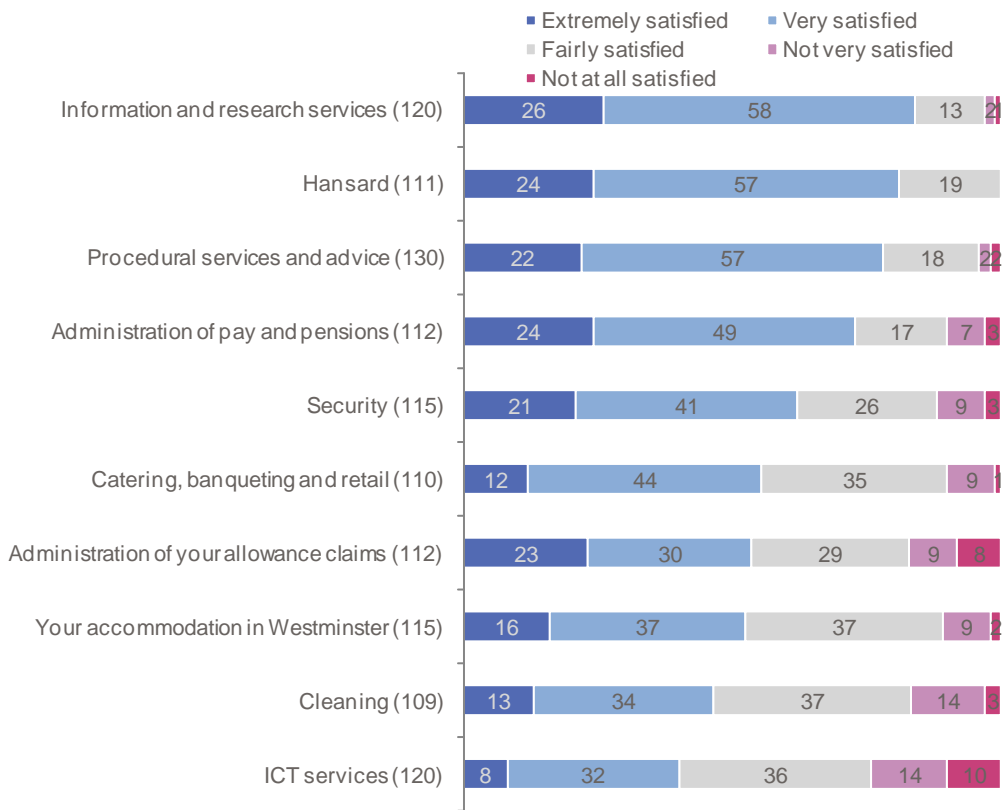


Satisfaction with services

Members

Looking at the various services individually, more than 50% of Members are satisfied with eight out of the ten service areas asked about in the survey. The highest rated services are information and research services and Hansard, for which over 80% of Members are satisfied. The two service areas where less than half of Members are satisfied are cleaning and ICT services (47% and 40% respectively).

Chart 4.3 Q42. Please tick to indicate your satisfaction with all of the service areas in the list below, even if you did not rank them as being important. (Figures refer to percentages)  
(Base: All Members answering)



**Members’ staff**

For Members’ staff, the story is similar, with information and research services and Hansard the highest rated amongst the different service areas, and the majority of Members’ staff satisfied with most services. ICT and Cleaning are lowest rated again (46% and 41%); also with below 50% satisfaction for Members’ staff is Westminster accommodation.

It is worth noting the variation in base sizes (Members’ staff answering each question) which occurs, is due to large numbers of Members’ staff feeling unable to give an opinion in certain areas – for example those based in the Members’ constituency may not have accommodation in Westminster.

Chart 4.4 Q42. Please tick to indicate your satisfaction with all of the service areas in the list below, even if you did not rank them as being important. (Figures refer to percentages)  
(Base: All **Members’ staff** answering)

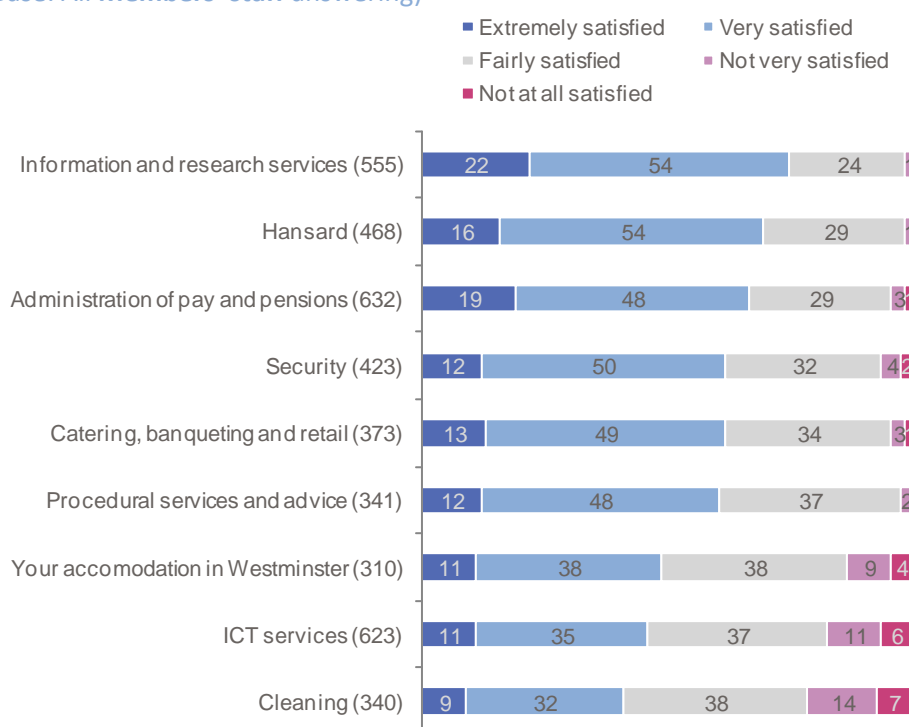


Table 4.1 Overall satisfaction with House Service areas.

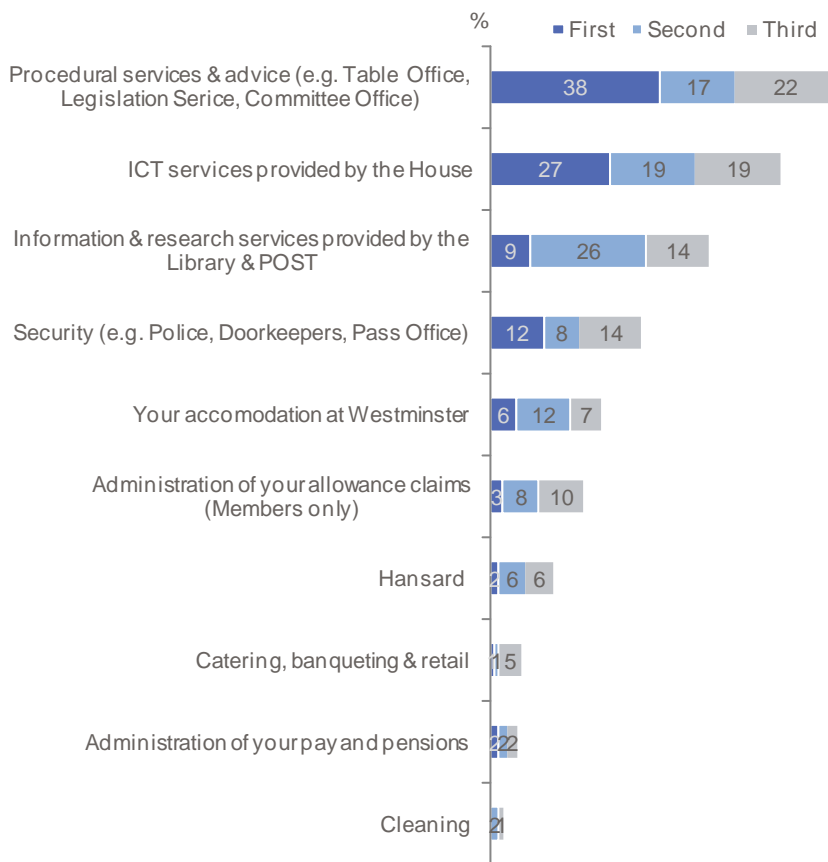
Members and their staff satisfaction	Satisfied		Dissatisfied	
	Members	Members’ Staff	Members	Members’ Staff
Information and research services	84	76	3	1
Hansard	81	70	0	1
Procedural services and advice	79	60	4	2
Administration of pay and pensions	73	67	10	4
Security	62	62	12	6
Catering, banqueting and retail	56	62	10	4
Administration of allowance claims	53	N/A	17	N/A
Your accommodation in Westminster	53	49	11	13
Cleaning	47	41	17	21
ICT services	40	46	24	17

Importance of services

Members

For Members, procedural services and advice is the most important service provided by the House Service, with 38% saying that this is the most important service, and over three quarters considering this to be one of the three most important services. ICT services are considered the second most important service overall, and around a quarter of Members say this is the most important service.

Chart 4.5 Q41. Please indicate which services you feel are the first, second and third most important for you in order to work effectively. Please do this by writing '1' next to the most important area, '2' next to the second, and '3' next to the third. (Figures in charts are percentages)  
 (Base: All Members answering (First - 135; Second - 133; Third - 129))

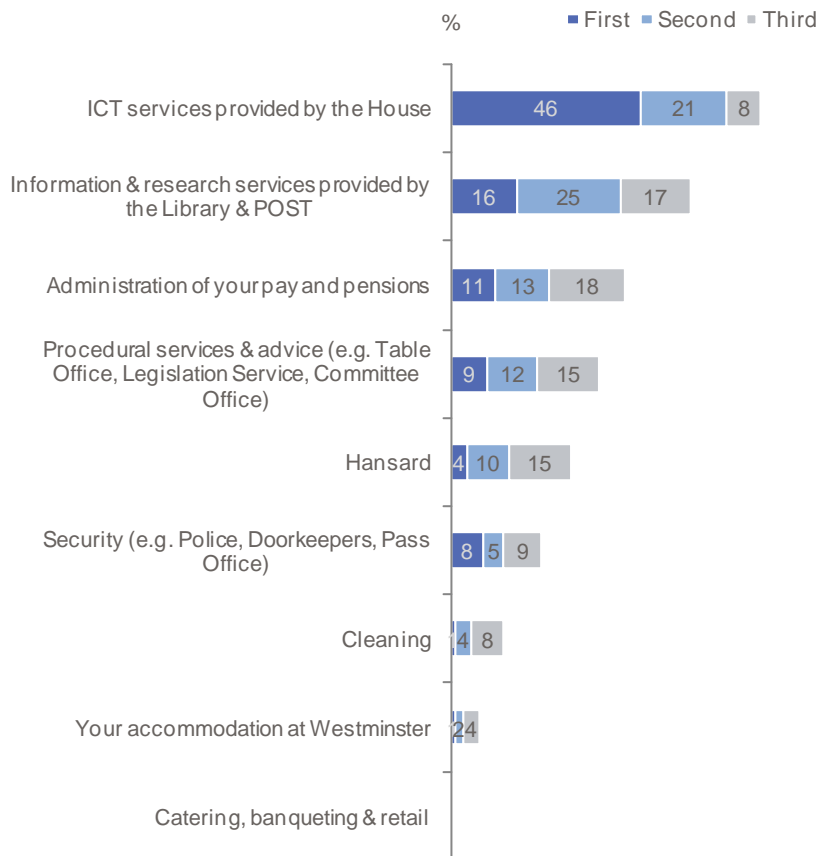


Information and research services are rated in the top three most important services by the third largest group of Members, although more Members rate security as their number one in terms of importance. Catering, administration of pay and pensions, and cleaning are not considered to be in the top three most important services by 90% of Members or more.

**Members’ staff**

For Members’ staff the results are similar to those provided by Members. ICT is considered the most important by Members’ staff, with nearly half of respondents saying this is the most important service to aid them with their work.

Chart 4.6 Q41. Please indicate which services you feel are the first, second and third most important for you in order to work effectively. Please do this by writing ‘1’ next to the most important area, ‘2’ next to the second, and ‘3’ next to the third. (Figures in charts are percentages)  
 (Base: All **Members’ staff** answering. (First - 672; Second - 668; Third - 664))



Relationship between satisfaction and importance

Members

When looking at the relationship between those factors that are considered to be most important and those considered to be most satisfactory, we see some interesting relationships. The following chart shows the percentage point difference compared to the mean score for both importance and satisfaction ratings. Effectively, the further towards the top of the chart a service is located, the more important it is compared to the other services tested; the further to the right, the more satisfactory Members find the service compared to the others tested.

Chart 4.7 Cross-tabulation satisfaction versus importance for Members (Base: All Members answering)



Procedural services and advice is considered more important than the other services tested, and is considered well above average in terms of satisfaction amongst Members. While the next most important service factor ICT, is 23 percentage points below the average.

The service factor receiving the next lowest overall satisfaction relative to the other areas tested, cleaning, is however not considered to be as important as others, receiving an importance ‘score’ 28 points below the average.

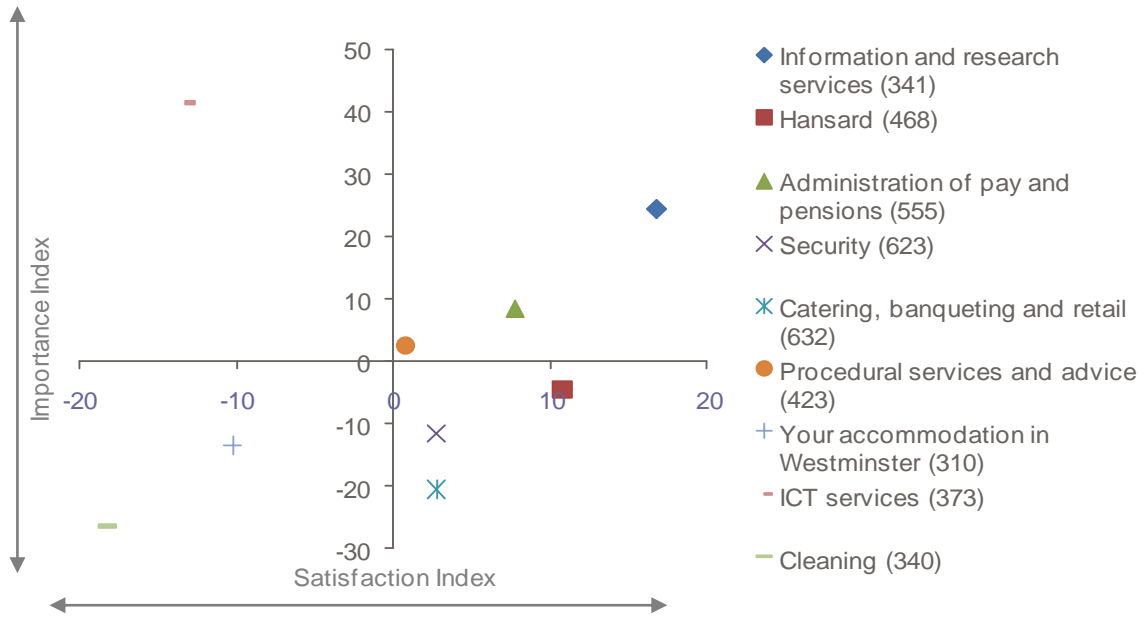
This process allows for clearer identification of priorities. This approach would suggest that attention should first be directed to ICT services and to a slightly lesser extent security as they occupy the top left hand quadrant where importance is above average and the satisfaction is below average.

**Members' staff**

The following chart repeats the process of comparing importance with satisfaction but for Members' staff.

Chart 4.8 Cross-tabulation satisfaction versus importance for Members' staff

(Base: All Members' staff answering)



For Members' staff by far the most important element is ICT; however as with Members satisfaction is well below average – approximately 13 points below the average satisfaction percentage.

Cleaning receives the lowest level of satisfaction compared with the other areas tested; however it is also considered to be the least important element. Therefore, while it is worthy of consideration for improvement, this needs to be put into context.

## 5. Management of the House Service

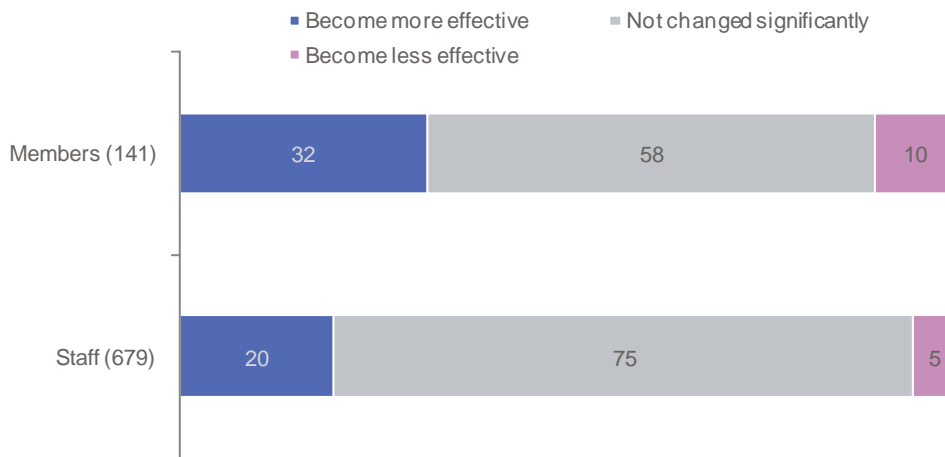
### Overall

Members are significantly more likely than their staff to believe that the House of Commons services have become more effective in the past year, with 32% of Members feeling that the services have become more effective compared with 20% of Members’ staff.

In 2007, 39% of Members and 36% of staff believed the House Services had become more effective, and 52% of Members and 60% of staff felt that the House Services had not changed significantly.

That said, fewer Members’ staff believe the services have become *less* effective over the past year than Members, with just 5% expressing this view. Again this difference is statistically significant. The majority of both groups believe that services have not changed significantly.

Chart 5.1 Q40. Over the past year do you consider the House of Commons Services to have...? (Figures in charts are percentages)  
(Base: All answering)



Amongst Members’ staff, those working in Westminster are significantly more likely to believe that House Services have become more effective over the past year (25% compared with 17%), while those based in constituency offices are significantly more likely to believe that services have not changed significantly (80% compared with 67%).



There is much positive feedback on how the House provides services to Members and their staff in open-ended comments.

*'Just to thank the staff for all they do for me and Members in general.'* (Member)

*'I think we are very well looked after at the House of Commons....thank you.'* (Member)

*'I have always been pleased with the way the place works and most, if not all, of the staff help us tremendously.'* (Member)

*'Thank you, our job as MPs would be impossible without the staff of the House.'* (Member)

*'DFA - cannot praise them enough - they have been invaluable.'* (Staff)

*'Mail delivery staff - always nice and cheerful. Serjeant at Arms staff - also very helpful and polite.'* (Staff)

*'By and large the people at PCH are brilliant - the desk people and the people who serve and [take the] cash at the Debate. Meals [are] terrific too!'* (Staff)

*'There are some excellent members of staff. Most of the POST team are brilliant and incredibly friendly. They feel like an extension of our team. Library staff are excellent and always happy to help. Tours staff are nice too'* (Staff)

Of course, not all believe that the House Services have improved over time:

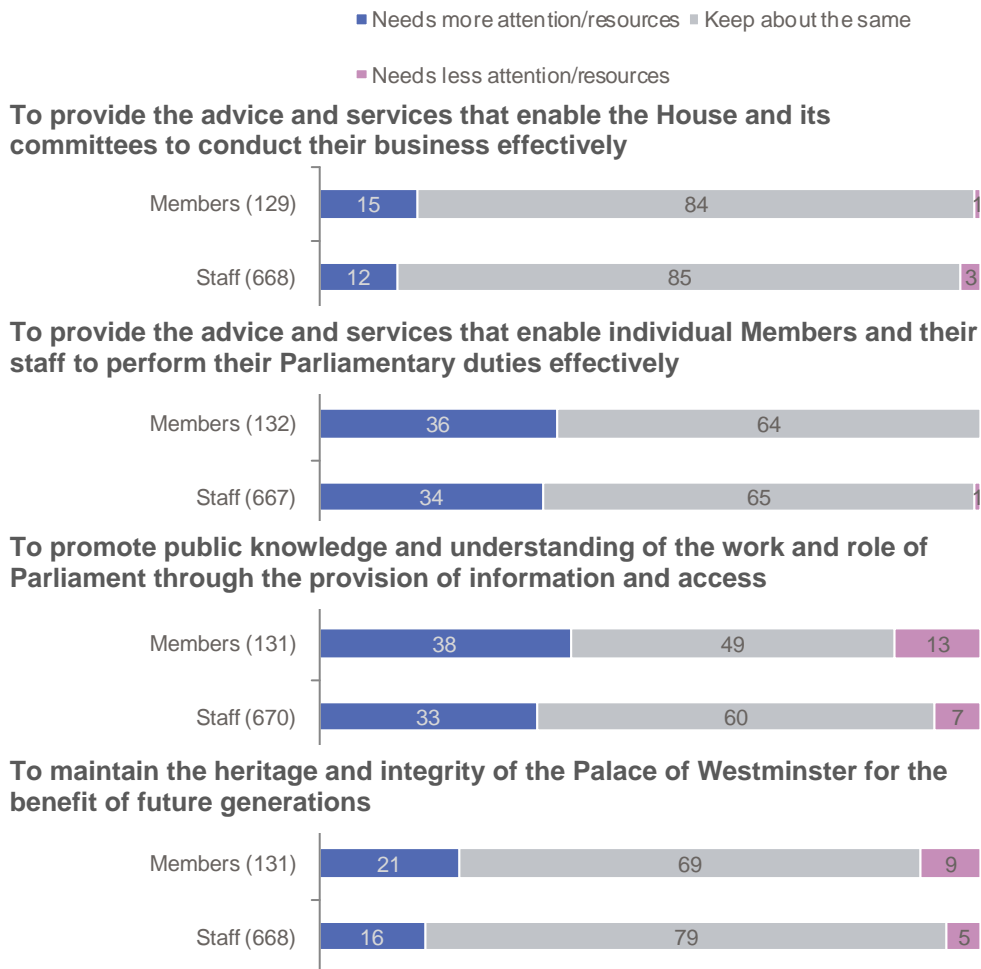
*'Recent changes – [the] Tebbit Review – have not enhanced or improved services to Members.'* (Member)

## 6. House of Commons Service core services

### Corporate core tasks

Most respondents feel that the House of Commons Service is devoting appropriate resource levels to each of the four corporate core tasks.

Chart 6.1 Q39: Given the finite resources available, which of the four corporate core tasks of the House of Commons Service do you think deserve more or less emphasis by the House of Commons Commission and the Management Board? (Figures in charts are percentages)  
(Base: All answering)



In particular, the overwhelming majority of Members and their staff believe that the amount of attention devoted to *‘providing the advice and services that enable to House and its committees to conduct their business effectively’* should remain the same (84% and 85% respectively). Only around one in six respondents feels that more attention should be paid to this task.

The majority of respondents also believe that the House Service is devoting appropriate attention to maintaining *‘the heritage and integrity of the Palace of Westminster for the benefit of future generations’*. Members’ staff are significantly more likely to hold this view, while Members are more likely to believe that more should be done in this area.

The core services that both Members and their staff are most likely to feel need more attention / resources should be devoted are the ‘*promotion of public knowledge and understanding of the work and role of Parliament*’ and ‘*advice and services for individual Members and their staff*’, with over a third of Members and staff believing this. However, 13% of Members believe that the promotion of knowledge of the work and role of Parliament deserves less attention, compared with 7% of Members’ staff.

### Complaints and communications

Within the sample who responded to the survey, 96 individuals say they have made a complaint in the past year. With such small numbers complaining through the various channels, it is difficult to analyse these with any degree of certainty. However, it is a concern that there appear to be a substantial number of complaints that have not been satisfactorily resolved.

Table 6.2 Q35. If you have complained about House Services within the last year, please indicate below which channels you used and also whether or not each channel achieved a satisfactory resolution. (Figures in charts are numbers of respondents *not percentages*)  
(Base: People who have made a complaint in the last year – 96 (caution multi-code response))

Members and their staff combined Channel used	Resolved satisfactorily?		
	Yes	No	Don't know
Administration Committee (26%)	4	12	9
A House Service helpline (22%)	11	9	1
Head of Department (21%)	12	6	1
Serjeant in the Chair (19%)	11	5	2
Party Whips (18%)	5	8	4
Parliamentary Question (10%)	3	6	1
House of Commons Commission (7%)	-	-	-
Leader of the House (6%)	-	-	-
Clerk of the House (4%)	-	-	-
Office of the Chief Executive (3%)	-	-	-
Other Officials (28%)	13	9	4

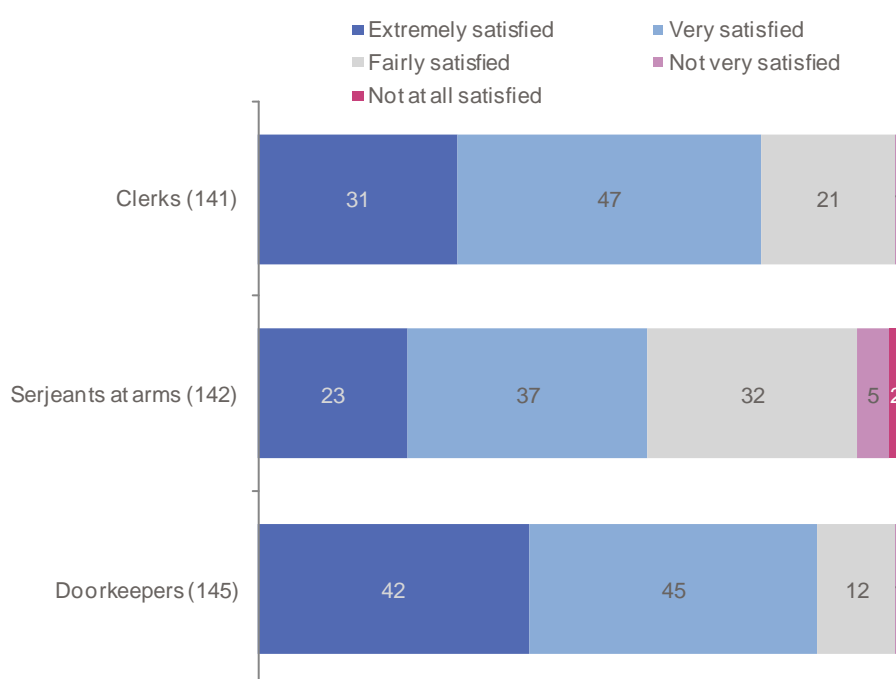
Note: Data are not shown where there are fewer than ten respondents in a section to preserve anonymity

## 7. Chamber and committee services

### Working in the Chamber and Committees

Members show high levels of satisfaction, and very low levels of dissatisfaction, with services provided in the Chamber and / or Westminster Hall. Doorkeepers (who are members of the Serjeant at Arms Directorate) receive particularly high satisfaction ratings, with 87% of Members satisfied (i.e. extremely or very satisfied) with the service they provide. The Serjeants at Arms receive an overall satisfaction rating of 60%. There are no significant differences between sub-groups in these areas.

Chart 7.1 Q6. Please tick the appropriate boxes to indicate satisfaction with the following Members' services provided in the Chamber and / or Westminster Hall (Figures in charts are percentages) (Base: All **Members** answering)



Amongst open-ended comments, there is some concern about the down-grading of the Serjeant at Arms department:

*'The downgrading of the role of Serjeants [at arms is a] major error.'* (Member)

*'My biggest concern is that the Speaker and Serjeants at Arms protect the security and integrity of Parliament and work in the interests of members. They (Speaker's Office) need to beef up their public presence and not leave Members to defend themselves.'* (Member)

One of the Members' staff respondents praised the doorkeepers' knowledge:

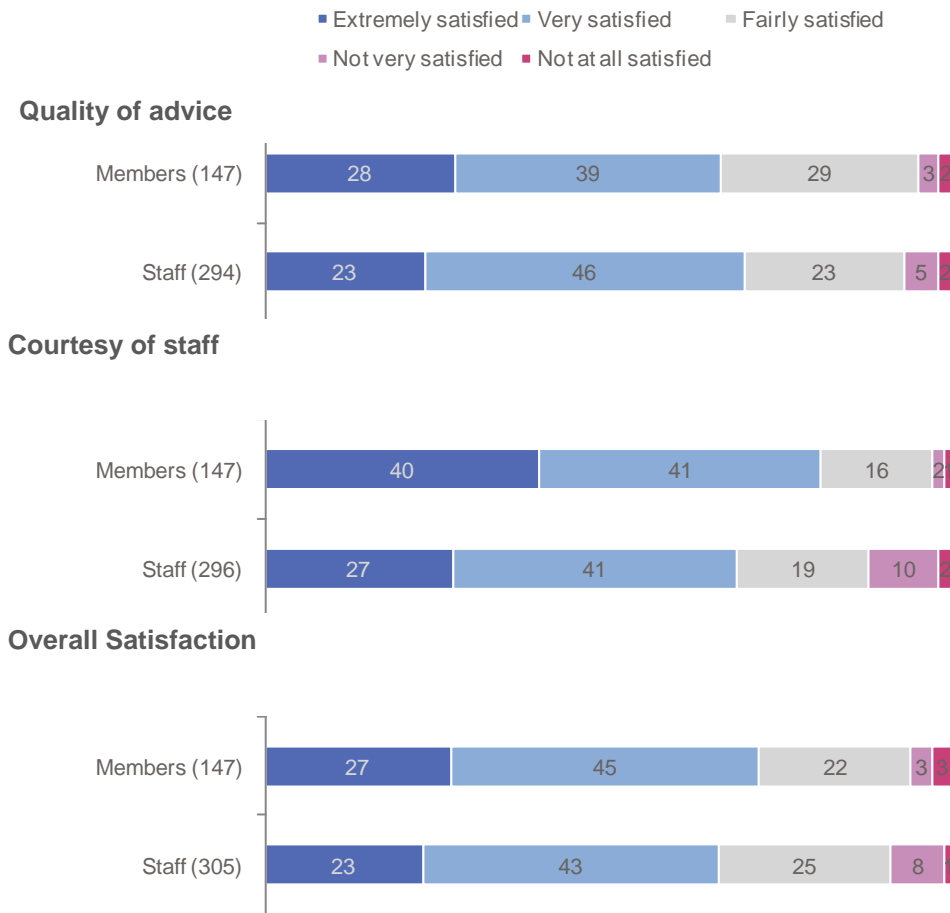
*'I believe the very best source of knowledge of the House on tours is by those guides who are also doorkeepers of the House - their knowledge is superb.'* (Staff)

## 8. Procedural & Committee services

### Table Office

Overall, both Members and their staff are very satisfied with services provided by the Table Office, with 72% of Members, and 66% of their staff saying they are satisfied with the service. Members are significantly more likely to be ‘extremely satisfied’ with the courtesy of staff, while their staff are significantly more dissatisfied with the courtesy of staff.

Chart 8.1: Q7. Please tick the appropriate boxes to indicate your satisfaction with the Table Office. (Figures in charts are percentages)  
(Base: All answering)



Some question the process and rationale for the wording / inclusion of Parliamentary Questions:

*‘Some PQs are refused – who takes these decisions?’ (Member)*

*‘[The] Table office can be a law unto themselves when it comes to wording of PQs.’ (Member)*

*'Over recent months the Table Office seems to have become stricter in terms of what they will allow to be tabled: often they say they do not understand the issue. Surely the clerks cannot be expected to know about every issue and it is for the answering department to determine what they know. In many cases the questions could be tabled and, if necessary, the department can answer "do not hold that information". The Table Office is, in some cases, preventing questions being tabled on important issues.'* (Staff)

Some note that Members' staff can have difficulty when dealing with the Table Office:

*'It would be extremely helpful if the Table Office coordinated PQ drafting with staff as it is usually staff who have drafted the question.'* (Member)

*'Whilst Members should have priority, I think people in the Table Office need to recognise that MPs' staff are working on behalf of an MP and therefore should not be refused a service.'* (Staff)

*'It would be helpful if more guidance or flexibility was offered by the Table Office in regards to placing and altering PQs- working for a member who is seldom in the Palace for prolonged periods of time it often falls to me to deal with queries related to the wording and permissibility of Questions, and it is very frustrating to find that sometimes a friendly clerk will allow me to approve changes, while on other occasions I am bluntly told that "I can only talk to a Member", apparently solely due to which person happens to pick up the phone on that occasion.'* (Staff)

*'It would help if the Table Office and those involved with the House procedures accepted that researchers actually exist and that the work we do is given to us by MPs. Their refusal to answer questions about PQs, EDMs etc is pointless and frustrating.'* (Staff)

For others, procedures at the Table Office could be more up to date:

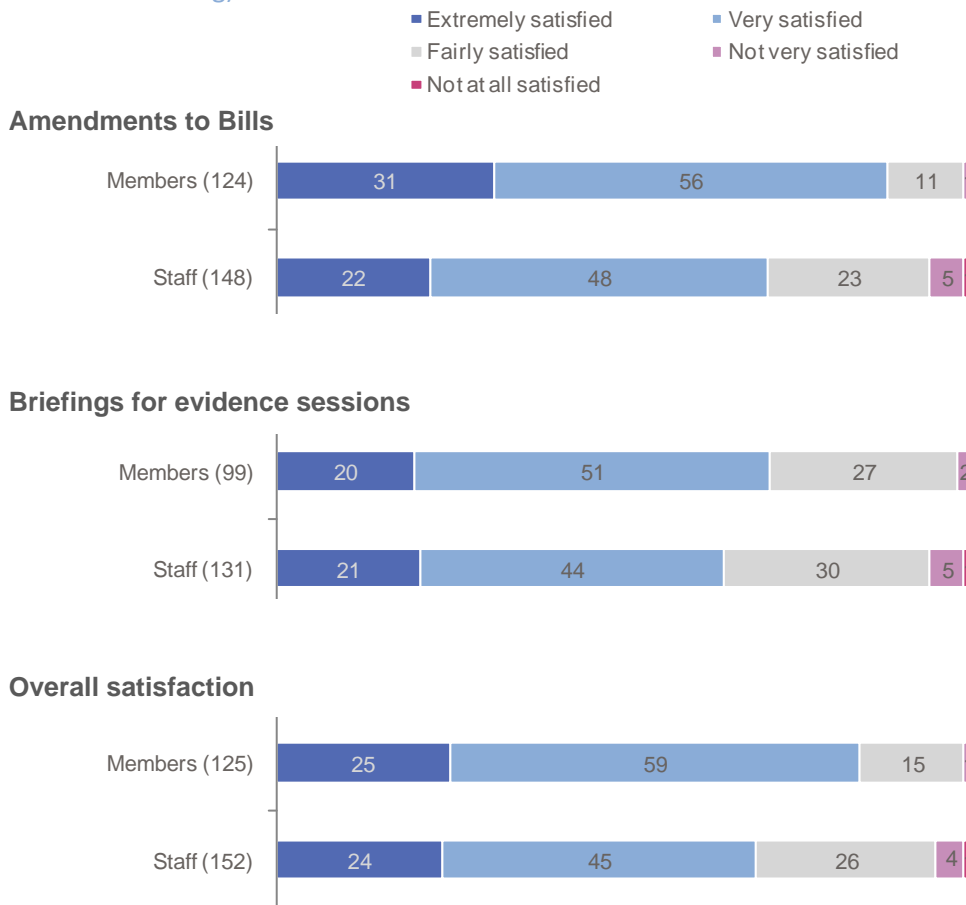
*'I find Table Office picky and old fashioned. This may be the rules they have to work within. Very helpful people though and generally few substantial problems.'* (Member)

*'It is a nonsense that e-tabled questions are printed out and recycled. It's a nonsense that EDM's cannot be signed online.'* (Member)

**Public Bill Office**

Members are significantly more likely than their staff to be satisfied with the Public Bill Office (PBO) overall, with 84% of Members satisfied (i.e. extremely or very satisfied) compared with 69% of Members’ staff. Members are also significantly more likely to be satisfied with the PBO’s treatment of Amendments to Bills. Members’ satisfaction with briefings for evidence sessions is 71%, for Members’ staff the figure is 65%.

Chart 8.2: Q8. Please tick the appropriate boxes to indicate usage and satisfaction with the services provided by the Public Bill Office which you have used in the past year in respect of Amendments to Bills; Private Members’ Bills and other aspects of legislation. (Figures in charts are percentages) (Base: All answering)



Two respondents (one Member, one Members’ staff) commented about the potential to update the service specifically mentioning the possibility of online provision:

*‘[The] Public Bill Office [is] not really part of the 21st century, with ‘introductions’ and no electronic tabling.’ (Member)*

*‘Greater online accessibility and availability of Public Bill and select committee work.’ (Staff)*

One member of Members’ staff, while acknowledging how busy the Public Bill Office is, considered that this could put opposition parties at a disadvantage:

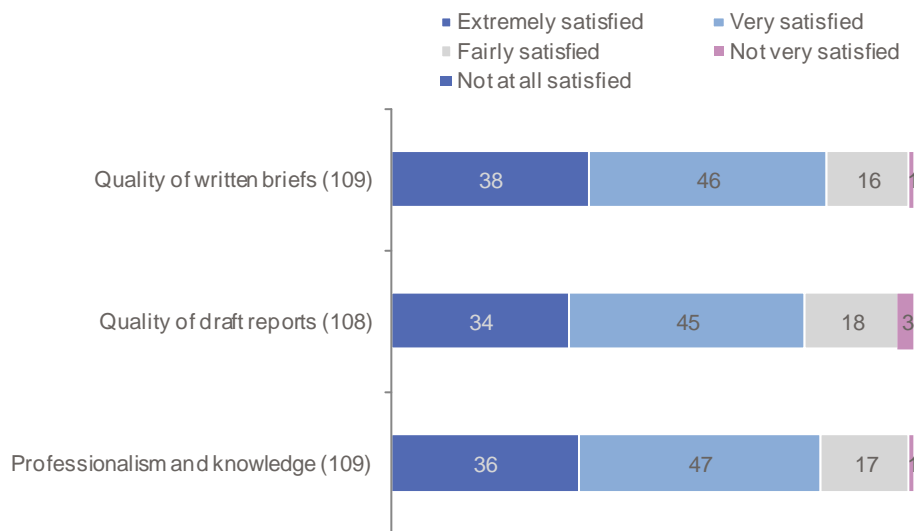
*‘The Public Bill Office are very helpful but are understandably busy. The lack of assistance puts us at even more of a disadvantage when compared to the Government who have the help of specialised civil servants.’ (Staff)*

### Select Committees

**Question asked to Members only**

Members who have served on Select Committees show high levels of satisfaction with the support they receive from Committee staff; around 80% are satisfied with all aspects of their support. There is very low dissatisfaction with any aspect of the support provided.

Chart 8.3 Q10. Please indicate how satisfied you were/are with the support provided by the Committee staff. (Figures in charts are percentages)  
 (Base: **Members** answering who have served on a Select Committee since the last General Election)



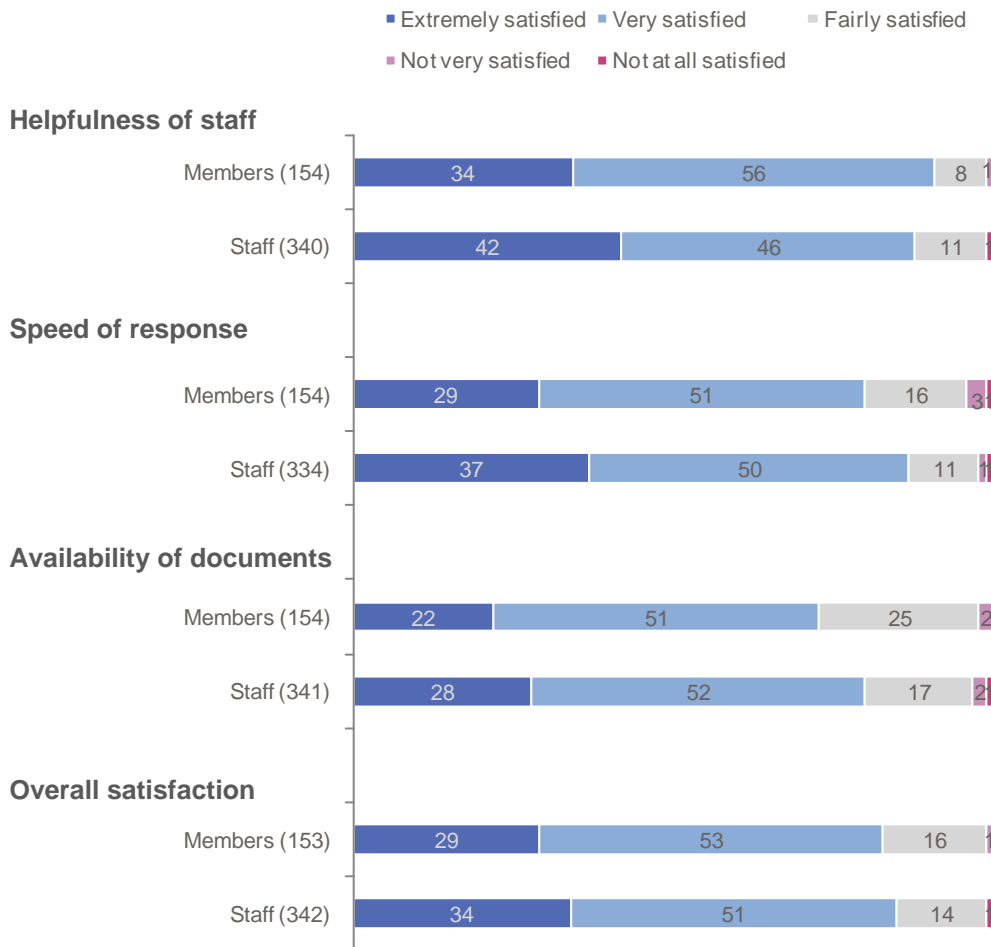


**Vote Office**

In many respects, satisfaction with the Vote Office is very high, and overall satisfaction is over 80% for both Members and their staff. Vote Office staff are considered to be very helpful, with a third of Members feeling extremely satisfied with the helpfulness of the Vote Office staff, and even more, 42%, of Members’ staff extremely satisfied.

Chart 8.4 Q11: Please tick the appropriate boxes to indicate how satisfied you are with the service you receive from the Vote Office. (Figures in charts are percentages)

(Base: All answering)



Three Members commented on the availability and time taken to supply Government documents:

*‘Availability of routine government documents too limited. Need to look at what Members put in special reports for and start supplying routinely.’ (Member)*

*‘Government departments do not provide all the documents required so it takes time to arrive at the Vote Office.’ (Member)*

*‘Large handwritten ledgers [are] quaint but utterly outdated and [the] availability of Government documents [is] very cumbersome sometimes.’ (Member)*

There were two comments from Members’ staff, about the length of time that materials are kept, and the availability of non-Parliamentary documents:

*‘[The] Vote Office [should keep] a greater backlog of material from earlier sessions.’ (Staff)*

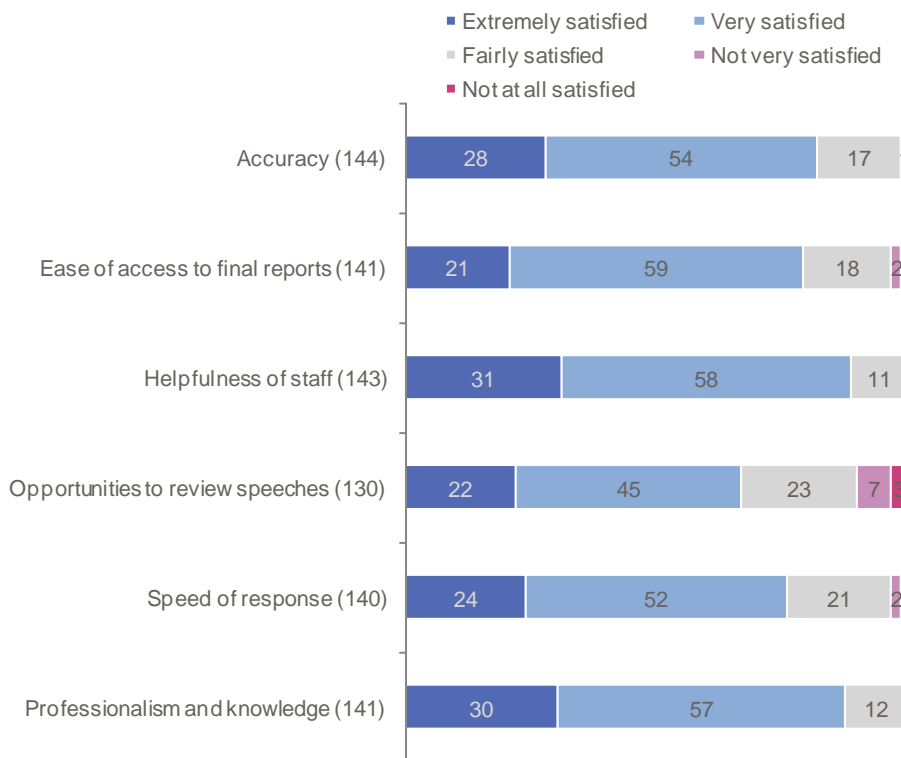
*‘The Vote Office could stock more Non-Parliamentary documents.’ (Staff)*

## Official Report

### Question asked to Members only

As seen in the Balanced Scorecard questions section, Hansard is regarded both as very important to Members, and as providing an excellent service. Looking in more detail, satisfaction is very high in many areas of the services provided. In particular almost 90% of Members are satisfied with the helpfulness of staff, and their knowledge and professionalism (89% and 87% respectively).

Chart 8.5 Q12. Thinking specifically about the Official Report staff and the reports they produce, please indicate how satisfied you are with their service. (Figures in charts are percentages)  
(Base: All **Members** answering)



Members are around twice as likely (or more) to be ‘very satisfied’ than ‘extremely satisfied’; this could point to potential improvements to the service, or reflect the very high expectations that Members have of the Official Report services.

Either way, dissatisfaction with Hansard services is very low: no one is dissatisfied with the professionalism and knowledge of Official Report staff, and only 1% are dissatisfied with the accuracy. Very slightly more express dissatisfaction with the ease of access to final reports, and the speed of response. One area for which there is some dissatisfaction is in the opportunities to review speeches before publication, where 10% of Members are either not very, or not at all, satisfied; this is an area for potential improvement for the Official Report.

Open-ended comments about Hansard focussed on the accuracy of reporting...

*'One used to be able to correct obvious errors e.g. where a word needed to be changed to make sense. There now seems to be a rigorous policy of Hansard stating what one actually said on the recording. I am not sure this inflexibility is helpful to readers of Hansard.'* (Member)

*'Hansard is not accurate-why are tapes/recordings not used?'* (Member)

*'Hansard's 'correction' of English into very old-fashioned English is quite irritating.'* (Member)

Three respondents say they would like better or longer opportunities to review Hansard reports before publication:

*'It would be helpful if Members were emailed a draft of Hansard reports as soon as they were completed - we rarely have time to go to the official report office to check.'* (Member)

*'Time to turn around comments from review of Westminster hall speeches is quite tight on email - often only 1 hour which is a problem if in chambers or committee since can't be done by email.'* (Member)

*'[The] Hansard website has an inaccessible format, plus [the] search engine [is] not good.'* (Staff)

## 9. Serjeant at Arms

This section focused on the House’s security staff and how they are able to assist Members and their staff to do their job effectively. This includes the Police, security staff and Serjeants at Arms.

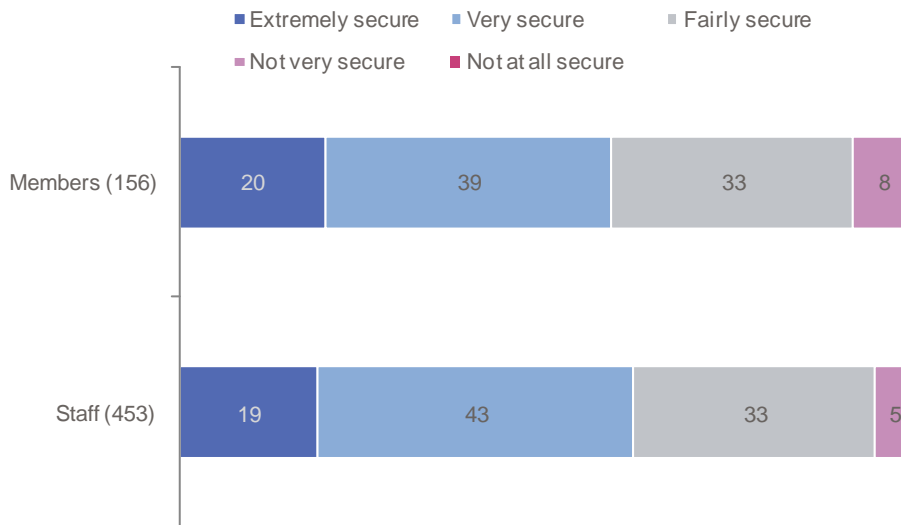
### Security around the Parliamentary Estate

No one who answered the questionnaire feels ‘not at all secure’ around the Parliamentary Estate, and fewer than 10% feel ‘not very secure’. Around three fifths feel either ‘extremely secure’ or ‘very secure’.

Those based mainly in constituency offices are significantly more likely to feel secure (i.e. ‘extremely secure’ or ‘very secure’) when on the Parliamentary Estate. This is perhaps due to the difference they experience when in Westminster to their constituency offices, or possibly, the ‘normality’ of the security arrangements to those working in Westminster more frequently.

Figures from 2007 were very similar, with 56% of Members, and 60% of their staff, feeling either ‘extremely’ or ‘very secure’ on the Parliamentary Estate. A third of respondents felt ‘fairly secure’, as with this wave of research. This indicates that more work is needed if the sense of security is to increase.

Chart 9.1 Q15. In the context of the current security climate, how secure do you feel on the Parliamentary Estate? (Figures in charts are percentages)  
(Base: All answering)



One area of concern is that a third of respondents feel only ‘fairly secure’; given the importance of security in general, security was one of the main areas included in the qualitative research phase.

### General Feeling of security on the Parliamentary Estate

For those who do have concerns about the security of the Parliamentary Estate, these tend to be fuelled by incidents when intruders have gained access to the Estate:

*‘[There was] the incident of the people on the roof, or the powder or whatever.’ (Member)*

*'I can't say that I feel completely secure – they haven't affected me but the fact is, you always observe them, whether it's Buzz or BA or the protesters on the roof or whatever, the fact that people are able to breach the security in some form must mean that there must be a [security] question.'* (Staff)

Many take the view that, should an intruder have sufficient desire to breach the security, there will always be a way to achieve this. Some believe that the only way to secure the Parliamentary Estate entirely would be to deny any access to members of the public, but acknowledge that this would not be a desirable strategy:

*'I think the security is as good as it possibly could be. This place will never be secure 100% because it's open to the public ... but given those circumstances, I don't think one could make it more secure without ...preventing the public from visiting it.'* (Member)

*'You could make this place very secure, but that would mean excluding the public pretty much. The whole point of Parliament is for the public to have access to it, and therefore the whole thing's a compromise from the start. And I think that it's probably about the right compromise.'* (Member)

As is clear from the quantitative findings, the majority of Members and their staff do feel secure on the Parliamentary Estate. There are, however, considered to be weaknesses in the security arrangements, either at specific points of entry, or in terms of the internal barriers which maintain certain areas secure whilst others are open to the public.

### Specific security weaknesses

A number of specific areas were identified by Members and their staff. These have been reported separately to the Serjeant at Arms department.

#### Pass checking at barriers

For many, there was a view that Members who do not use their passes to access the buildings, but rather ask the security staff to open the doors for them, raise a potential security risk:

*'The other thing that does irritate me, is Members of Parliament who make the police open [the doors] for them ... I have watched on several occasions a certain Member who makes the policeman come to the gate to open it for him.'* (Staff)

For a minority, however, this personal approach to security actually increases the strength of the barrier:

*'My criticism is that too few of the police officers and security staff now recognise individual Members and key staff. I work out of Parliament Street where it works brilliantly because a relatively modest number of people use the Parliament Street entrance, and I know all the security people and they*

*know me ... personal knowledge is the best form of security that there can possibly be; it's far better than relying on a technological solution.'* (Member)

**Consistency of approach**

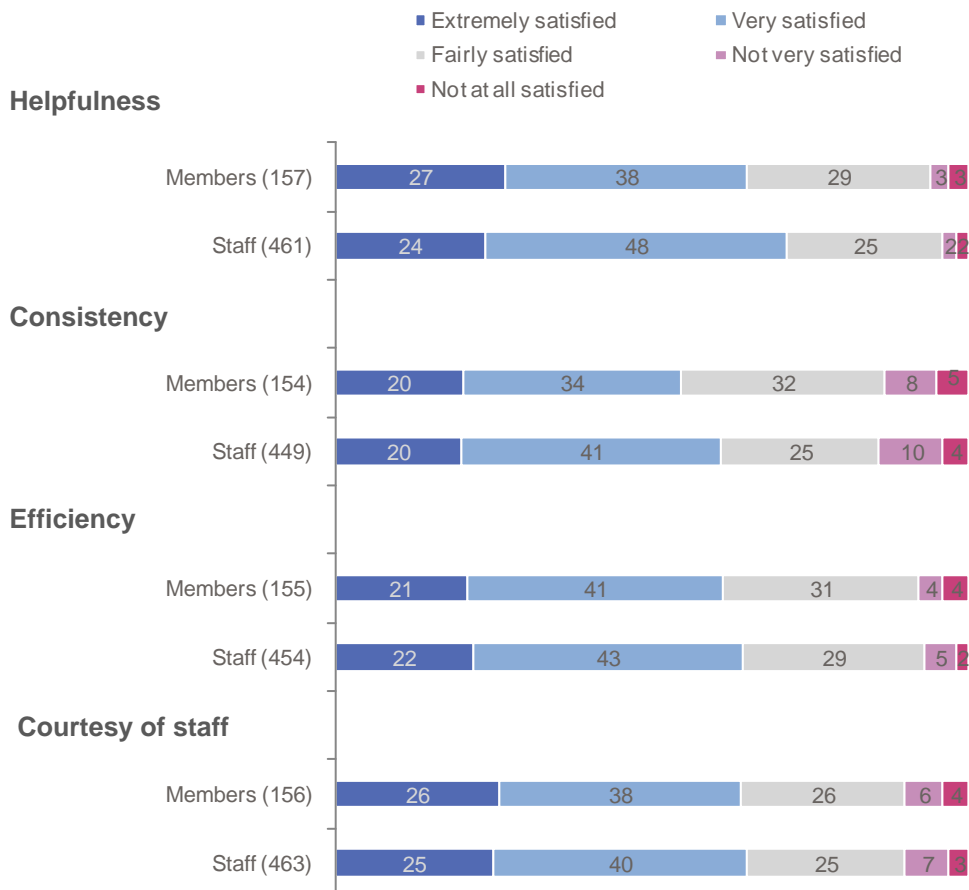
Many believe that there is a lack of consistency amongst the different security personnel, although it is generally acknowledged that individuals will always be different, and that this is unavoidable.

*'I think using the word consistent is probably not entirely accurate ... like you get the odd, I mean this is probably the same in any workplace, but you get the odd one here who are particularly officious and particularly kind of snooty and the ones who are massively laid back'* (Staff)

**Security staff**

Alongside how secure respondents feel on the Parliamentary Estate, the survey also asks respondents for their experiences of the security staff, and the Pass Office. In both cases, levels of satisfaction are reasonable, with more than half of respondents satisfied with the service they receive. Security staff are considered helpful and courteous, with around two thirds satisfied in these areas.

Chart 9.2 Q13. Thinking about the House of Commons security staff, please tick the appropriate boxes to indicate how satisfied you are with their service. (Figures in charts are percentages)  
(Base: All answering)



While the levels of dissatisfaction with security staff are low, they are high when compared to other services provided by the House. Consistency of approach is the area attracting the highest level of dissatisfaction, with 13% of Members, and 14% of Members’ staff not satisfied to some extent.

**The different security personnel**

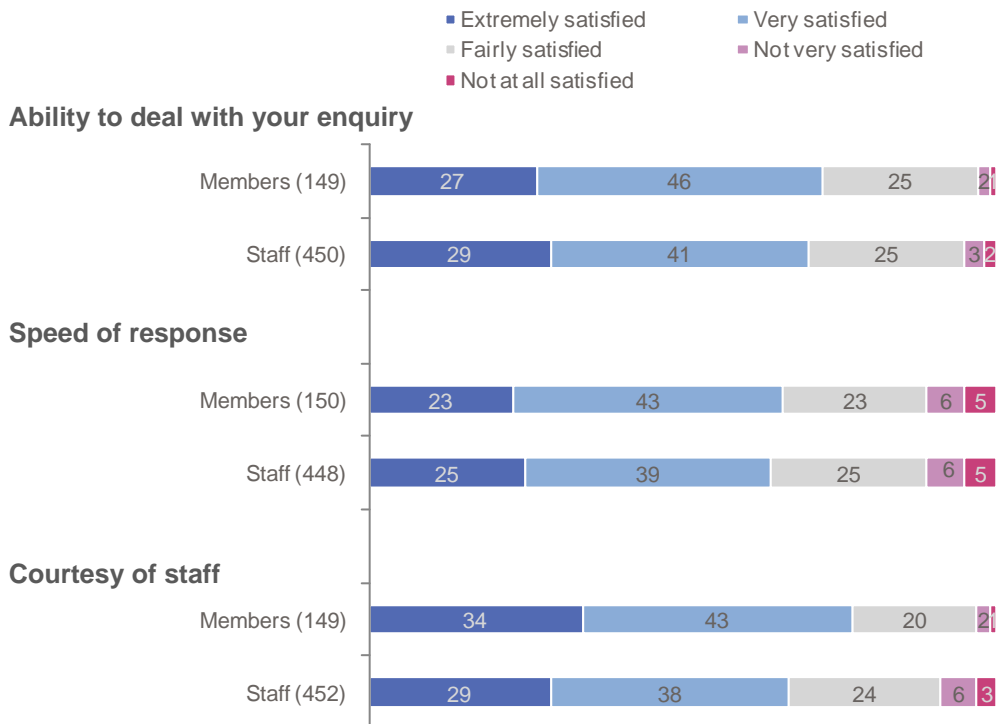
Security on the Parliamentary Estate is provided by the armed police, unarmed police and security staff. Most respondents tended to talk about the ‘police’ when talking about all three branches of security provision although, when asked directly, they were aware that the role was handled by different groups. There were few differences perceived in the service provided by each of these branches.

*‘I know about the armed and the normal police – not sure I know about the security officers. Who are they? What do they do? ... But I see them working closely together and they seem very efficient and generally pleasant and helpful.’ (Member)*

**Pass Office**

Satisfaction with the Pass Office is around 70%, with over a quarter of respondents saying they are ‘extremely satisfied’ with the services provided. Members are particularly satisfied with the courtesy of staff, with 77% satisfied. This is significantly higher than for Members’ staff.

Chart 9.3 Q14. How satisfied are you with the following aspects of the Pass Office’s performance? (Figures in charts are percentages) (Base: All answering)



The Pass Office is dealing with enquiries well, with only 3% of Members, and 5% of Members' staff dissatisfied with the service they receive. One area of slight dissatisfaction is the speed of response, where 11% of both Members and their staff were unhappy with the service. However, over 60% were satisfied with the speed of response from the Pass Office.

There were few open-ended comments about the process of obtaining passes, and the majority of comments related to how Pass Office staff deal with their customers:

*'The length of time taken always varies and the "we can't hurry the security services" line is too poor and frankly there is not enough openness about the procedures. Also anytime I intervene [on behalf of my staff], things miraculously speed up. Attitude to staff who have the temerity to ring up is poor.'* (Member)

*'Please insist that the staff in the Pass Office be more courteous to staff as it is incredibly frustrating being at the receiving end of their rudeness and inefficiency.'* (Staff)

*'When dealing with the Pass Office for my own needs, such as renewing a pass, they really do act as though everything is a great imposition on them. I'm sure they don't sigh and whine in the presence of Members.'* (Staff)

Two Members' staff commented that arrangements for constituency based staff could improve:

*'Arrangements for renewing a pass for the rare times we can get to London are obviously geared to people who are on the estate all the time and the Pass Office staff don't seem to understand the concept of constituency offices in towns and cities that aren't called "London".'* (Staff)

*'The Pass office are particularly difficult to deal with because when a Parliamentary pass expires we are expected to do everything over a couple of days rather than being able to book an appointment for the day we are in London to renew the pass.'* (Staff)



**Visitor services**

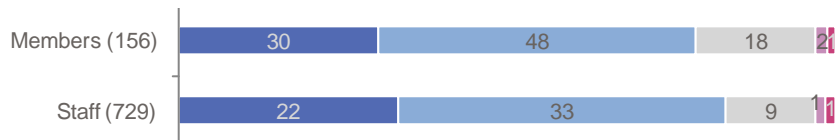
Members and their staff are very satisfied with the services provided to meet the needs of visitors to Westminster, with only around 2% of respondents dissatisfied with these services. Indeed, around a third of Members and their staff are ‘extremely satisfied’ with both guided tours and school workshops. Slightly fewer, between 22% and 31%, are ‘extremely satisfied’ with the welcome provided to visitors by the Visitor Assistants and visitor information, but again very few are unhappy with these services.

Chart 9.4 Q24. Parliament provides a number of services to meet the needs of visitors to Westminster. How satisfied are you with the following aspects of the service? (Figures in charts are percentages)

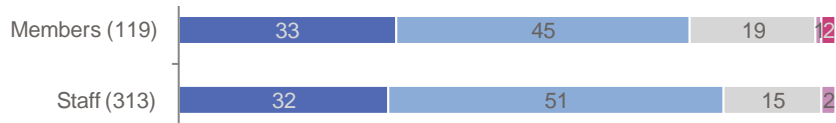
(Base: All answering)

■ Extremely satisfied ■ Very satisfied ■ Fairly satisfied  
 ■ Not very satisfied ■ Not at all satisfied

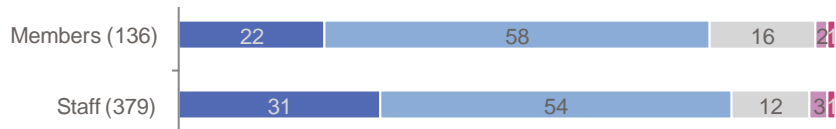
**Guided tours provided through the Central Tours Office**



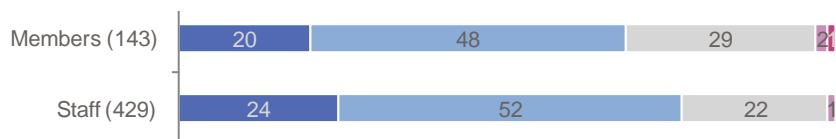
**School workshops provided by the Parliamentary Education Service**



**The welcome provided to your visitors by the Visitor Assistants**



**Visitor information (booklets, leaflets etc.) provided to visitors**



Some Members believe that there are increasingly too many visitors to the Palace of Westminster, making it more difficult for them to perform their Parliamentary duties:

*‘The visits service is taking over the House. While it is helpful for people to be able to visit the House, we are losing sight of the prime purpose of the House of Commons as a workplace for MPs.’*  
 (Member)

*‘There are too many visitors/strangers wandering around the Palace of Westminster unescorted. The Palace, particularly the House of Commons and Portcullis House, becomes more like the concourse of Euston Station as time goes on, and the place is treated like a museum rather than a working environment for MPs.’ (Member)*

There were a few mentions of the process involved in arranging tours and how this could be taken out of the hands of Members’ staff, such as this one:

*‘The process of booking tours of Parliament and Big Ben is incredibly time consuming and inefficient for MPs’ staff and constituents. We should not have to be so involved in the process, constituents should be able to contact the CTO, verify they are a UK resident and make arrangements directly. Having to go back and forth between CTO and the constituent can waste a lot of time.’ (Staff)*

### **Access for Members’ and their staff’s visitors**

Many report that, whilst the Portcullis House entrance generally deals well with those visiting the Parliamentary Estate, there are frequently times when visitors are delayed due to queues at the security point. Many believe that it should be possible for visitors who have meetings (rather than, say parties of school children) to be given priority at busy times, although it is acknowledged that it may be difficult to establish such a system.

*‘[When we have a visitor who is behind three school parties], we say to them “give us a call, one of us will come down and get you out the queue ... and school parties, why are they bringing them all in at the same point of entry?’ (Staff)*

*‘The new visitor entrance is much better, but it’s very slow on occasions getting people in here. I had a slight embarrassment of hosting an international event a few weeks ago and I had to go up and down the queue to find my delegation ... and pull them out and jump the queue to get them there in time. ... We could be doing with more slick planning for events like that.’ (Member)*

One Member had an upsetting experience when escorting a visitor onto the Parliamentary Estate, although had praise for the Officers throughout the Palace:

*‘My dissatisfaction related to the security arrangements for visitors. On several occasions recently I have accompanied a guest as they went through security. Some, not all staff were inexcusably rude both to me and my guest when no other visitors were being processed. I was told to “move along” and “wait outside”, and when I showed my pass, the order was repeated. If this is how visitors are treated, the welcome to the palace is poor. Numerous colleagues have had similar experiences. As the area was deserted, it was not done in the interests of crowd control and smacked of abuse of*

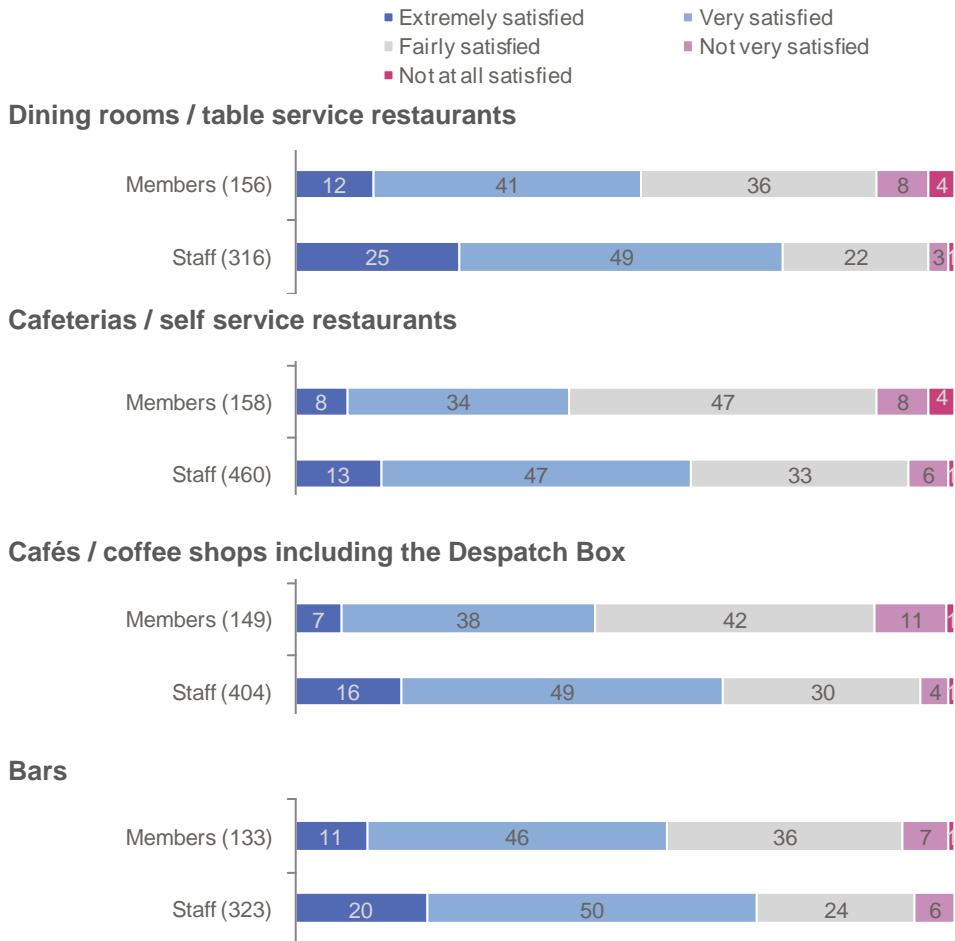
*power. The experience, on each occasion was unpleasant and unexpected. The officers throughout the Palace, in contrast, have excellent interpersonal skills.’ (Member)*

## 10. Facilities

### Restaurants, cafeterias and bars

Members and their staff vary considerably in their perceptions of the services provided in restaurants, cafés and bars on the Parliamentary Estate, with Members’ staff being significantly more satisfied than Members. Members are significantly more dissatisfied with the dining rooms / table service restaurants, and the cafés / coffee shops. These services receive correspondingly low satisfaction ratings from Members, with fewer than half of Members satisfied with the service they receive.

Chart 10.1 Q16. For each service, please tick the appropriate boxes to indicate your satisfaction, taking into account quality, choice and value for money. (Figures in charts are percentages)  
(Base: All answering)



These figures have changed very little from the 2007 survey, as shown for Members in the following table.

Table 10.1 Members' satisfaction with restaurant / bar services in 2007 and 2009

Members' results 2007 / 2009	Satisfied (%)		Dissatisfied (%)	
	2007	2009	2007	2009
Dining rooms / table service restaurants	53	53	10	12
Cafeterias / self service restaurants	47	42	13	12
Cafés / coffee shops	49	45	14	12
Bars	53	57	7	8

There were open-ended comments from Members' staff about how busy the various catering facilities can become at times.

*'The Debate is always FAR FAR too crowded at lunch with not enough cashiers working on the tills. By the time I have made it through the queue my lunch has gone cold!'* (Staff)

*'Catering facilities available to staff are often extremely over crowded at lunch times and the rules about non pass-holders using outlets between 12 and 2pm are not enforced. MPs are those most often bringing in visitors during this time and should really use the outlets provided for their exclusive use, but I realise Refreshment Department staff feel intimidated about challenging Members over this or not sure what could be done.'* (Staff)

Some asked for healthier options, or dishes catering for specific diets:

*'There is little variety for vegans and vegetarians and inadequate provisions for people with allergies.'* (Member)

*'Catering in the Terrace Cafeteria – at breakfast, please could brown toast be made readily available as well as white, it would encourage people to take the far healthier option!'* (Staff)

Various Members and their staff commented that service could occasionally be faster.

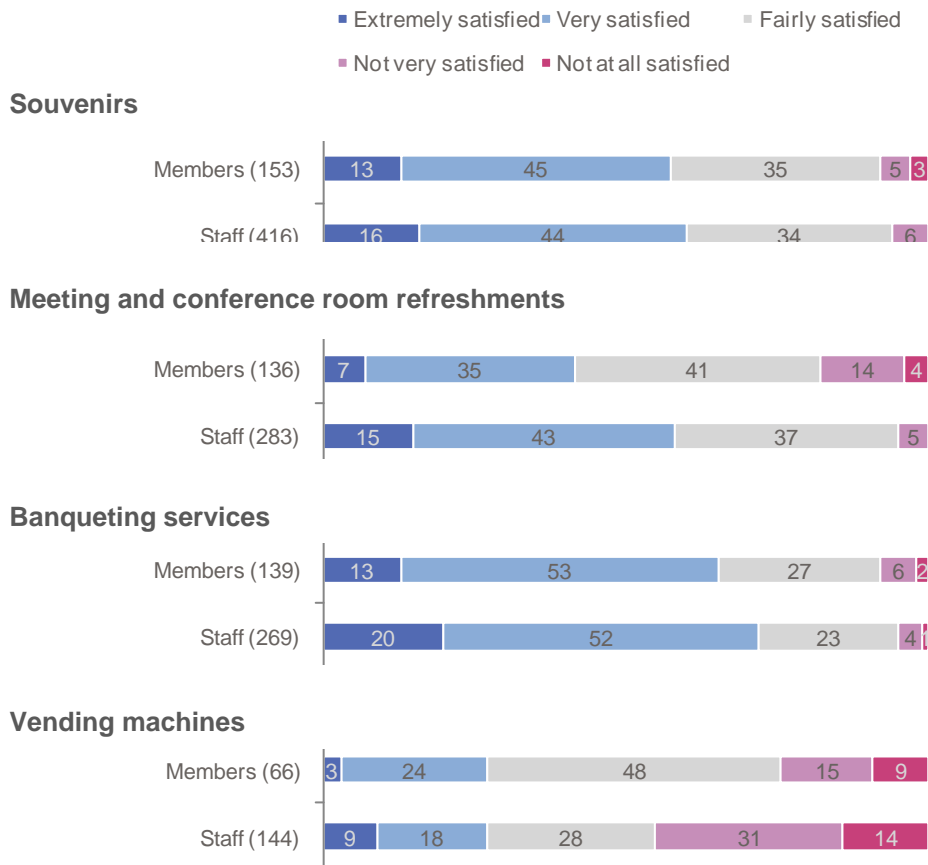
*'Service in the dining room is often rather slow and unresponsive.'* (Member)

*'I very rarely now dine in the Members dining room as the last time I did so - wrong dishes [were] delivered and table service [was] very slow.'* (Member)

**Other retail areas**

Looking at other refreshment services provided by the Department of Facilities, there is generally a higher level of satisfaction. Souvenirs and banqueting services in particular receive good satisfaction ratings from Members and their staff.

Chart 10.2 Q16. For each service, please tick the appropriate boxes to indicate your satisfaction, taking into account quality, choice and value for money. (Figures in charts are percentages)  
(Base: All answering)



However, there is lower satisfaction with meeting and conference room refreshments, particularly amongst Members where satisfaction is at only 42% and 18% are dissatisfied. Members are significantly more dissatisfied, and significantly less satisfied with this service than their staff.

Vending machines receive poor satisfaction ratings: almost a quarter of Members are dissatisfied with vending machine services, and almost half of Members’ staff. Correspondingly there are low satisfaction scores with vending machines, with only around a quarter being satisfied.

A handful of respondents suggested that private companies be allowed / encouraged to set up retail outlets (including restaurants / cafes) on the Parliamentary Estate:

*'Plenty of space in Parliament for an Indian or Pizza Express franchise, not to mention newsagents, bookshops etc.'* (Member)

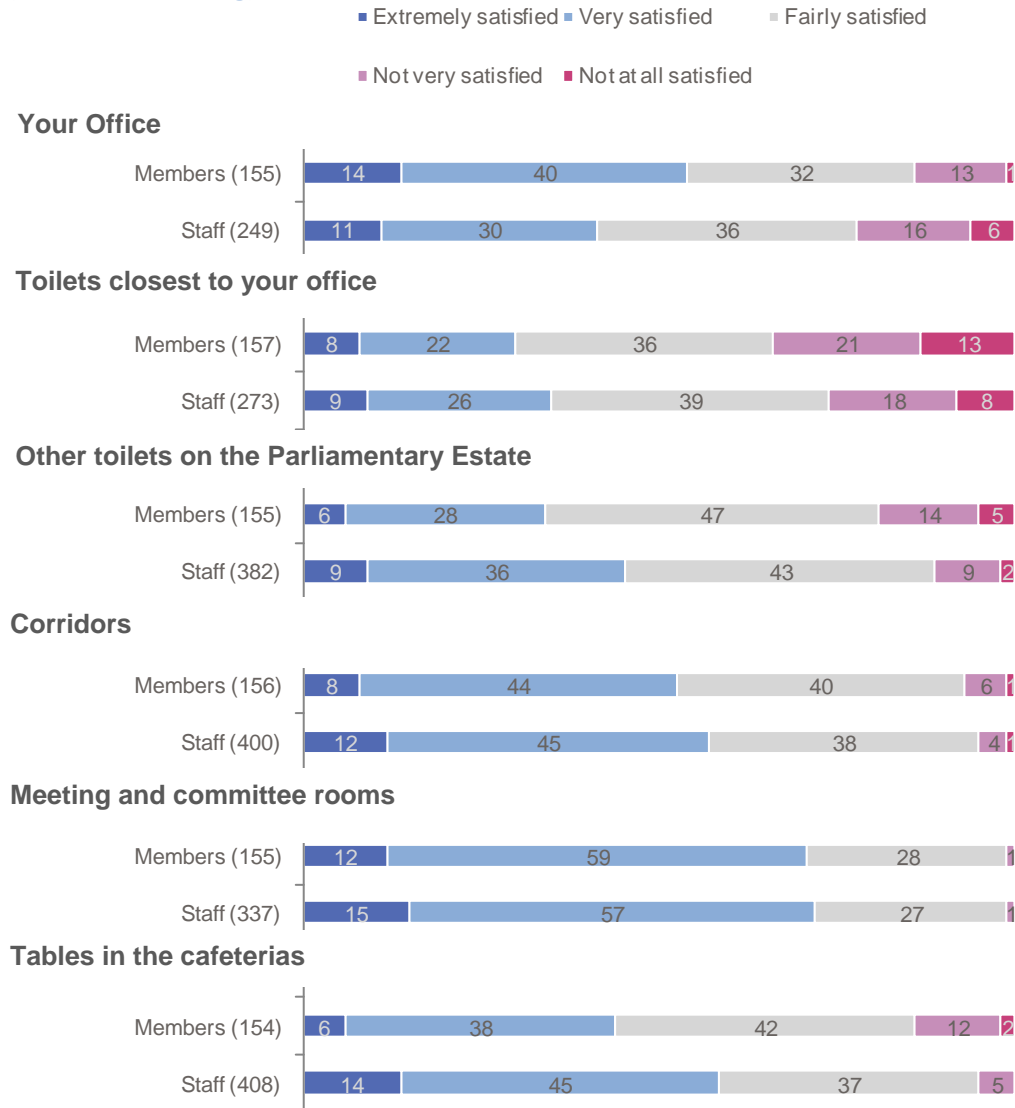
*'Why isn't space leased out to a chemist and a newsagent on the estate - there are 28,000 people with passes? Why can't there be a proper kiosk stuffed to the eaves with decent ordinary brands of refreshments and confectionary?'* (Staff)

**Cleaning**

Levels of satisfaction with the cleaning of areas of the Parliamentary Estate vary; the cleanliness of toilets is the area causing most dissatisfaction, with one third of Members dissatisfied with the toilets closest to their office, and 26% of their staff.

Chart 10.3 Q17. In your office and its immediate vicinity, as well as elsewhere on the Parliamentary Estate, how satisfied are you with the general standard of cleanliness of the facilities? (Figures in charts are percentages)

(Base: All answering)



Members’ staff are significantly more dissatisfied with the cleaning in their offices, while Members are significantly more satisfied in this area. Satisfaction levels are highest in communal spaces – the corridors and meeting and discussion rooms, where more than half of Members and their staff are satisfied and very few are dissatisfied.



Generally satisfaction with cleaning services has increased slightly since the 2007 survey, particularly around communal areas such as corridors and meeting rooms. Likewise, dissatisfaction has tended to decrease.

Table 10.2 Members' satisfaction with cleaning services in 2007 and 2009

Members' results 2007 / 2009	Satisfied (%)		Dissatisfied (%)	
	2007	2009	2007	2009
Your Office	48	44	18	14
The toilets closest to your office	31	30	36	34
Other toilets on the Parliamentary Estate	27	34	26	19
Corridors	47	52	12	7
Meeting rooms	63	71	5	1
Tables in the cafeterias	41	44	13	14

Table 10.3 Members' staff satisfaction with cleaning services in 2007 and 2009

Members' staff results 2007 / 2009	Satisfied (%)		Dissatisfied (%)	
	2007	2009	2007	2009
Your Office	46	41	22	22
The toilets closest to your office	39	35	25	26
Other toilets on the Parliamentary Estate	41	45	14	11
Corridors	45	57	9	5
Meeting rooms	69	72	1	1
Tables in the cafeterias	58	59	6	5

Cleaning was identified in the quantitative work as an area for further investigation, and was included in the proceeding qualitative research.

### Qualitative findings

With regard to cleaning of offices, the main issue appears to be the extent to which offices are cleaned rather than whether they are cleaned at all. Many mention that, although a cleaner does visit their office, the attention to detail is a cause for concern. Many mention that more thorough cleaning is needed:

*'[The cleaners] fly in, grab waste paper and stuff and fly out again, that's about it.'* (Member)

*'[The cleaners] Hoover, but do not dust, so we have to do that ourselves.'* (Member)

In other cases, respondents report that cleaning has not been done at all.

*'I would rather say the cleaning standard in the offices falls beneath everything that would be acceptable in any other place that you would work. I think that they marginally clean and Hoover [but] that it's disgusting that desks are not wiped, the VDUs are never wiped, the phones are never wiped...'* (Staff)

*'I was going to say the kitchen areas, I don't work in Portcullis House, we work in one of the next buildings down, and that seems to be a bit of a grey area. So the loos in the offices they might not be cleaned well but they cover them, whereas [in] the kitchen they just wipe the surface down but there are no cleaning products ... our fridge wasn't cleaned for four years!'* (Staff)

Others are generally happy, and even point out that it is part of everybody's responsibility not to make mess in the first place:

*'The general clearing away litter, the dusting, the vacuuming is pretty good and I'm impressed and grateful. And the loos are generally kept pretty good. [But] some of my colleagues are obviously not as house-trained as they ought to be.'* (Member)

*'I wash all [my cups] up myself and put it all away, but other people don't and no one seems to want to take responsibility.'* (Staff)

Many also recognise that cleaning is not easy when offices contain large amounts of potentially sensitive paperwork, which cleaners should leave alone.

*'Unless you've got a clear desk policy, it's not going to work.'* (Member)

*'They always seem to clean around the [mess that I leave], and every now and then I clean everything up and it gets a good clean.'* (Member)

It is suggested by some that more checking could be done to ensure that the cleaners have completed their tasks.

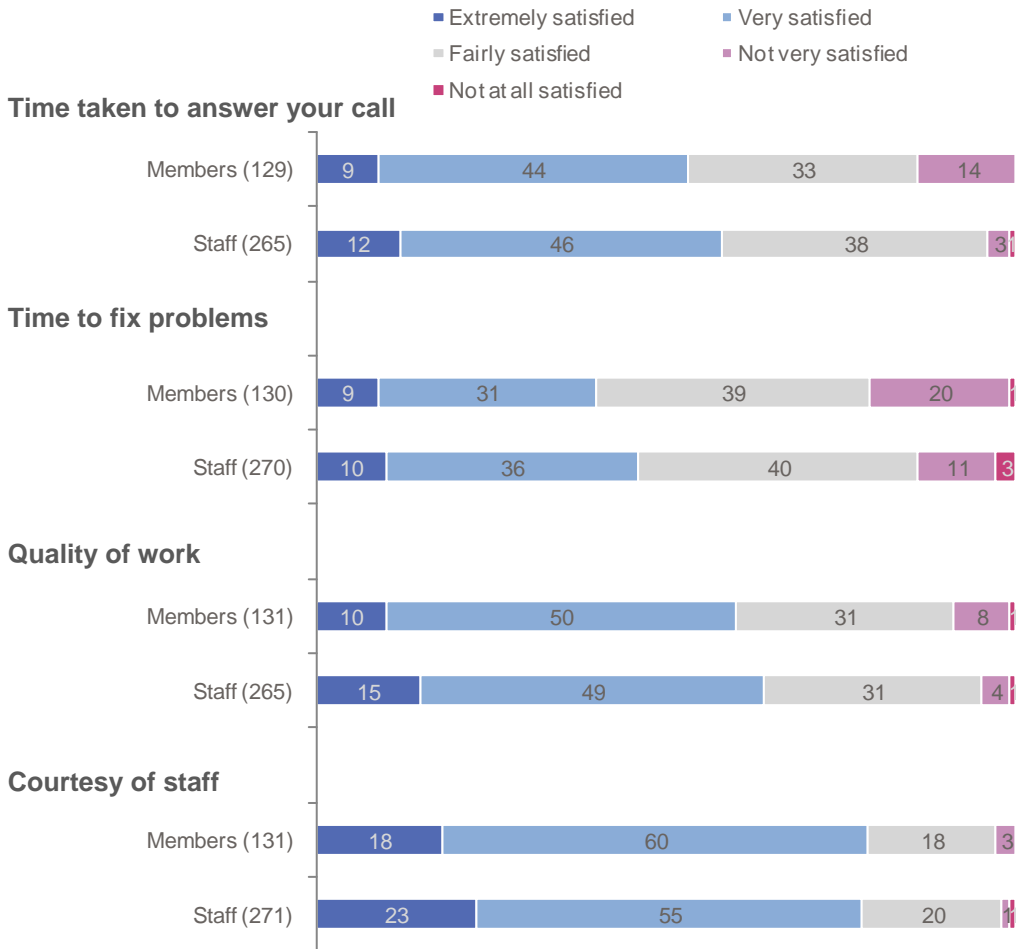
*'If it were my department I would walk around and check if it's clean or not and want to know why not...'* (Staff)

Many suggested that recess periods would be good times to complete many cleaning (and maintenance) tasks may otherwise impede Members in their work, and that a thorough 'spring clean' could be achieved in this period.

**Maintenance**

Satisfaction with services provided by the Parliamentary Estates Directorate is somewhat mixed; Parliamentary Estates Directorate (PED) receives high satisfaction ratings for courtesy of staff, with over 75% of Members and their staff satisfied in this area. The quality of work is also considered to be good, although there are pockets of dissatisfaction. However, there are more issues with the time taken to fix problems, where there is low overall satisfaction (under 50%), and 21% of Members (and 14% of their staff) are dissatisfied with the time taken to fix problems. Calls are generally answered in a satisfactory time period, although one in six Members are dissatisfied with the time taken to answer their calls.

Chart 10.4 Q18. Please tick the appropriate boxes to indicate how satisfied you are, generally speaking, with the services provided by PED. (Figures in charts are percentages)  
(Base: All answering)



Many open-ended comments mentioned the apparent lack of control over temperature in the buildings, both in terms of comfort and the environmental implications.

*'Ventilation and temperature in PCH is still inconsistent.'* (Member)

*'I would still list the temperature levels in Portcullis House as a major factor that affects my day to day work. Our office is very often uncomfortably warm and there are no suitable doors or windows available to allow fresh air into the room. This is a problem in both the winter and particularly the summer. I don't feel that the ventilation system works efficiently at all and the carpet vents are always blocked. I requested assistance with this last year and got one vent replaced, but it was simply replaced with what seems to be a second hand vent. This is going to increasingly get worse in the coming months.'* (Staff)

Other comments tended to revolve around specific pieces of equipment that are faulty or broken. One Members' staff suggested that cleaning staff could alert the maintenance units to faulty or broken equipment.

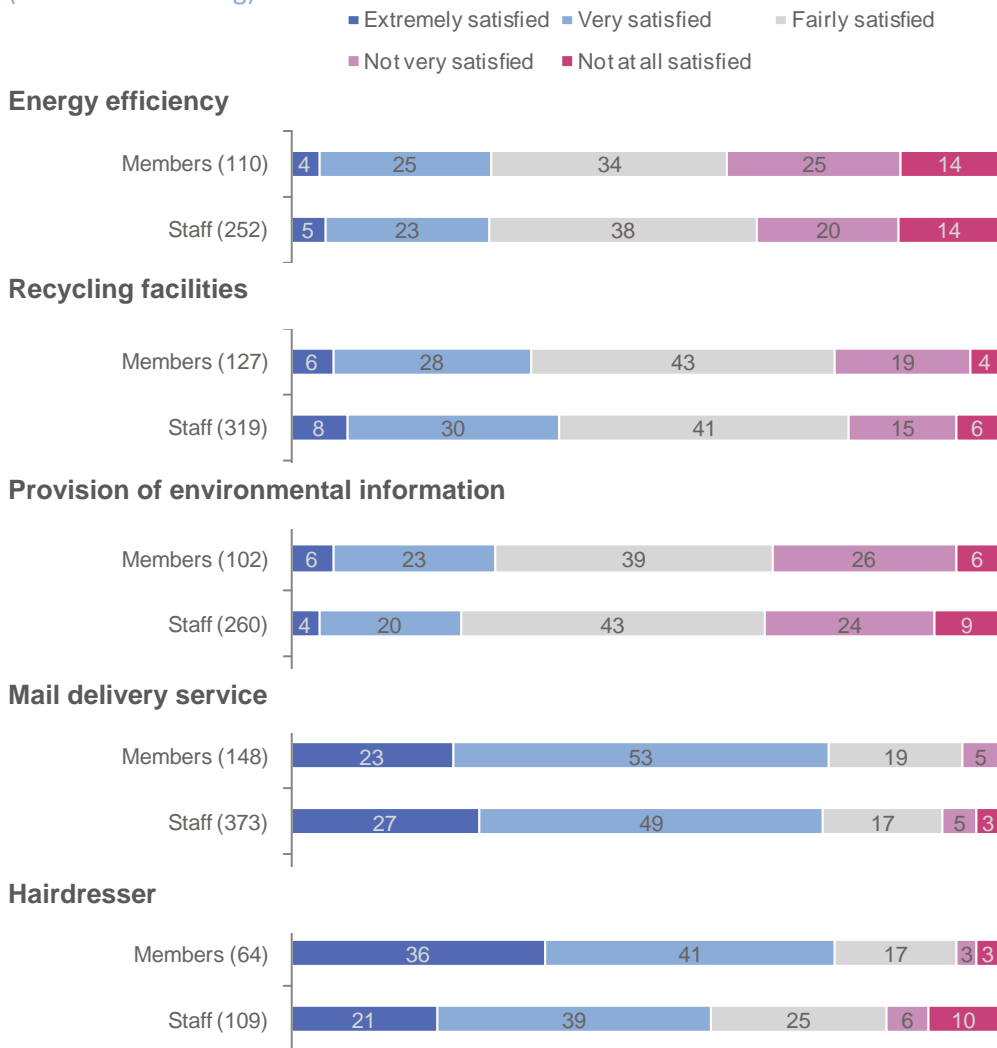
*'Cleaning staff should be required to report at once anything that needs attention. All too often broken equipment in lavatories is ignored by cleaning staff and stays unattended for weeks and have to be reported by Members or their staff.'* (Staff)

**Other services**

One new area of questioning in this year’s survey is the House of Commons’ environmental performance. It is interesting to see that both Members and their staff believe that the House could be doing much more on the environment. Around a third of those surveyed were dissatisfied with both energy efficiency and the provision of environmental information, and around 20% were dissatisfied with the recycling facilities.

For both energy efficiency and the provision of environmental information, there were more dissatisfied respondents than satisfied ones. As such, this was an area taken forward into the qualitative work, as detailed below. However, both the mail delivery service and the House of Commons hairdresser receive good satisfaction ratings. Members in particular are satisfied with the hairdresser, significantly more so than their staff, who are significantly more dissatisfied.

Chart 10.5 Q19. How satisfied are you with other services from the Department of Facilities. (Figures in charts are percentages)  
(Base: All answering)



A number of Members and their staff made comments within the survey relating to the environmental performance of the House, many related to areas of energy or recycling:

*'Lights left on overnight all over Estate. Norman Shaw South corridor lights on during the day. Hot radiators on during warm weather.'* (Member)

*'Rooms are too hot in summer and cold in winter. [The] heating system cannot be turned off in the room, [which means a] high level of energy waste.'* (Member)

*'More education needs to be done regarding energy efficiency. People should be encouraged to switch off lights when leaving rooms to save energy. Too often lights are left on where there is no need. However, we need to ensure public areas are always properly lit. Some time ago energy saving measures led to dark corridors in recesses, a hazard for staff working here.'* (Staff)

*'Why [are there] no plastic recycling in offices or nearby?'* (Member)

*'More recycling sites would be useful.'* (Member)

*'As a 'green' and vegetarian, I would like to see less plastic used in the cafeterias, more vegetarian options (virtually every other sandwich is chicken!) and more recycling facilities, e.g. you could even consider small compost caddies in the kitchens. We've all got to change in that direction so where better to set the example?.'* (Staff)

## Qualitative findings

For all those we spoke to, 'environmental considerations' implied a response to man-made effects on the climate. However, the scope of this response varied, with some mentioning quite advanced energy management approaches, while for the majority, environmental considerations implied initiatives such as the use of energy efficient light bulbs or not leaving electronic equipment on standby.

*Moderator: 'Are you aware of any steps that the House is taking to address its environmental impact?'*

*Respondent: 'I'm not sure I understand your question – by using recycling, that sort of thing?'* (Staff)

Almost universally accepted is the idea that the historic nature of the Palace of Westminster gives rise to particular challenges in terms of environmental initiatives, as there are certain limitations to how the building can be adapted.

*'I think you've got to be realistic about the nature of the building. The idea that many of the Victorian and Georgian buildings that form the broader Parliament will ever become 'A star rated' is a joke – it's not going to happen.'* (Member)

Perhaps in line with this accepted limitation, suggestions for how the House should be addressing environmental factors tended to relate to reasonably tactical, rather than strategic, initiatives such as recycling, not using bottled water and adopting motion sensor lights. In that sense, although many claimed they would like the House of Commons to be ‘leading the way’ in terms of environmental initiatives, this may not always be possible:

*‘It would be nice if [the Parliamentary Estate] was a leading light, but I suspect there’s so much that goes against it given the factor of the buildings that there’s probably a limit to what they can do without making massively expensive alternations.’ (Member)*

One Member suggested that outside help should be sought to reduce the environmental impact of Parliament:

*‘There are a few firms, in fact there’s one based in my constituency ... which is right at the top of these environmental office issues and it wouldn’t do any harm for somebody to have a chat with them.’ (Member)*

Others focused on the climate control systems in Parliamentary Estate, and how these could be refined to provide not only lower impact outcomes, but also at a lower cost and giving a more pleasant working environment for those using the buildings.

*‘For example the air conditioning system in Parliament Street is so archaic that first of all the degree of control in individual offices is inadequate. Secondly, the way in which it’s designed is I suspect fairly costly.’ (Member)*

More than one respondent questioned whether paper placed in designated waste containers is in fact recycled.

*‘I religiously put all the paper in one [bin] and everything else in the other. My secretary tells me, I don’t know whether it’s true or not, that it’s a waste of time [as] it all gets slung in the same bin.’ (Member)*

*‘[The Member I work for] literally two weeks ago said to me “you realise they just bag it all in together?’, and in the three or four years I’ve been here, I’ve been sorting the paper stuff, and I just realised that actually it appears as if they bag it all up and then you see them throw all the bags into a big thing. Now whether somebody sorts it...?’ (Staff)*

For many, there is low awareness of any environmental initiatives currently undertaken by the House Services.

*'I don't know what actually goes on to be able to [talk about it], but I think it would be really good [for the House Services to tell] us what great things they are doing.'* (Staff)

Most would welcome communications outlining what is being done, including reminders for staff to, for example, separate their waste, or turn off their monitors at the end of the day.

*'I don't think there's any harm in reminding people, because I think some people get lazy and leave things on. I think particularly in the communal areas, so things like the Members' Library where there are IT facilities that people can use and things like that.'* (Member)



## 11. Information services

### Core services

The Library provides support to Members and their staff through responses to enquiries, the production of briefing papers, access to printed and online material as well as providing training to Members and their staff.

Historically, satisfaction with the Library service has been high, and the same is true this year. Overall, the Library is the House Service with which respondents are most satisfied as seen in the Balanced Scorecard questions.

In each of the four core areas of Library activity, satisfaction is very high, with low levels of dissatisfaction. Considering that, when looking for areas of improvement, the Library may look at areas where more users are ‘fairly satisfied’; in this case, around a fifth of respondents are ‘fairly’ rather than ‘very’ or ‘extremely satisfied’ with the facilities provided in the Library reading rooms.

Chart 11.1 Q20. Please tick to indicate your satisfaction with the following areas? (Figures in charts are percentages)

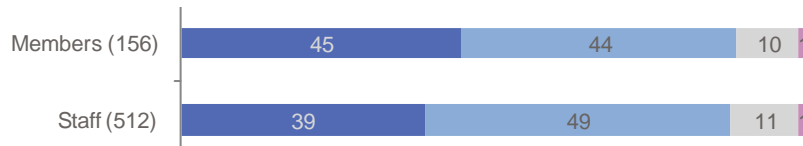
(Base: All answering)



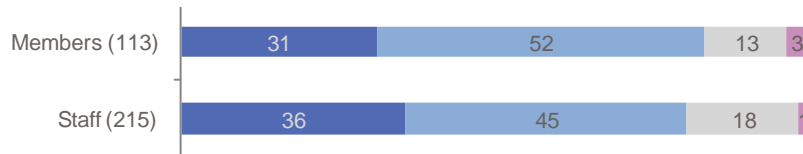
#### The Library’s answers to your enquiries



#### The Library’s briefing papers (research papers, standard notes and debate packs)



#### POST’s “POSTnotes”, seminars, etc, on science and technology issues



#### The facilities and services provided in the Library reading rooms



It is striking that there are many positive comments about the Library in response to open-ended questions:

*'As I work in the constituency the service we receive when we contact the Library is more than satisfactory.'* (Staff)

*'I am very happy with the Library services. The staff have always been very helpful, efficient and prompt.'* (Staff)

One member of Members' staff, though a satisfied user, did have some suggestions:

*'As a very satisfied Library user these comments are meant as friendly suggestions.*

*I think more physical facilities need to be made available to Members' staff which are currently only available to Members. I often find it difficult to write speeches or complex articles and briefings at my desk in Portcullis House as the phone is ringing, my interns are here and my Member is also working in the adjacent office. When the e-Library existed I could go down and try to work there for 30/40 minutes and at least get my head round detailed issues in peace and quiet. I find it difficult to do that now. But I am always struck by the excellently resourced and spacious Members' Library and reading rooms in the palace - of which - a small section could easily be made available for Members' staff to use, perhaps by appointment only to stop over-crowding.*

*Also, it would be useful if the Library had a slightly more comprehensive and accessible training for new members of staff. I use the Library every day, but I am sure there are services that I am not aware of. While I do send my interns on a Library induction, I often find them coming back with more questions, and perhaps the induction needs to be focussed on what services they are likely to use as office assistants such as PIMS etc.'* (Staff)

Another respondent commented on a lack of awareness of Library services, in relation to POST.

*'I am not as familiar with the services provided by POST as those by the Library, even though my job involves a lot of work in science policy. It would be good to know more about what they do, and whether they are able to answer science related enquiries/provide briefing notes like the Library. I have not used the Library reading rooms.'* (Staff)

Responses to enquiries were generally thought to be very good; when suggestions were made, they frequently related to the time taken to respond to enquiries, or at least that enquiries be prioritised more effectively.

*'Be able to have a quick one hour response system and a system for longer responses.'* (Staff)

*'Far speedier answers needed to questions to the Library.'* (Staff)

A few commented on the amount of space, and computer facilities, provided by the Library.

*'Could do with a few more PCs in a place where there is still mobile phone reception - the move from what was the e-Library down to Derby Gate means less able to keep in touch while working. Could consider finding a dedicated computer room in one of the Norman Shaw buildings, with 12-20 machines for people to go and work on as and when. Similarly, if space could be found easier access to computers in the Palace itself would be helpful while on the move.'* (Staff)

*'My main concern is with the lack of space for Members staff to work in the Library. Since the Members Centre opened in Portcullis House, as far as I am aware, there is only desk space for a maximum of 4-6 members of staff to work at a desk where there is no computer in Library rooms. I think there may be other places to work but I am not really aware of where they are.'* (Staff)

*'[There is] no separate reading newspaper area like we used to have.'* (Member)

A small number of respondents commented that the Internet / intranet site could be easier to use.

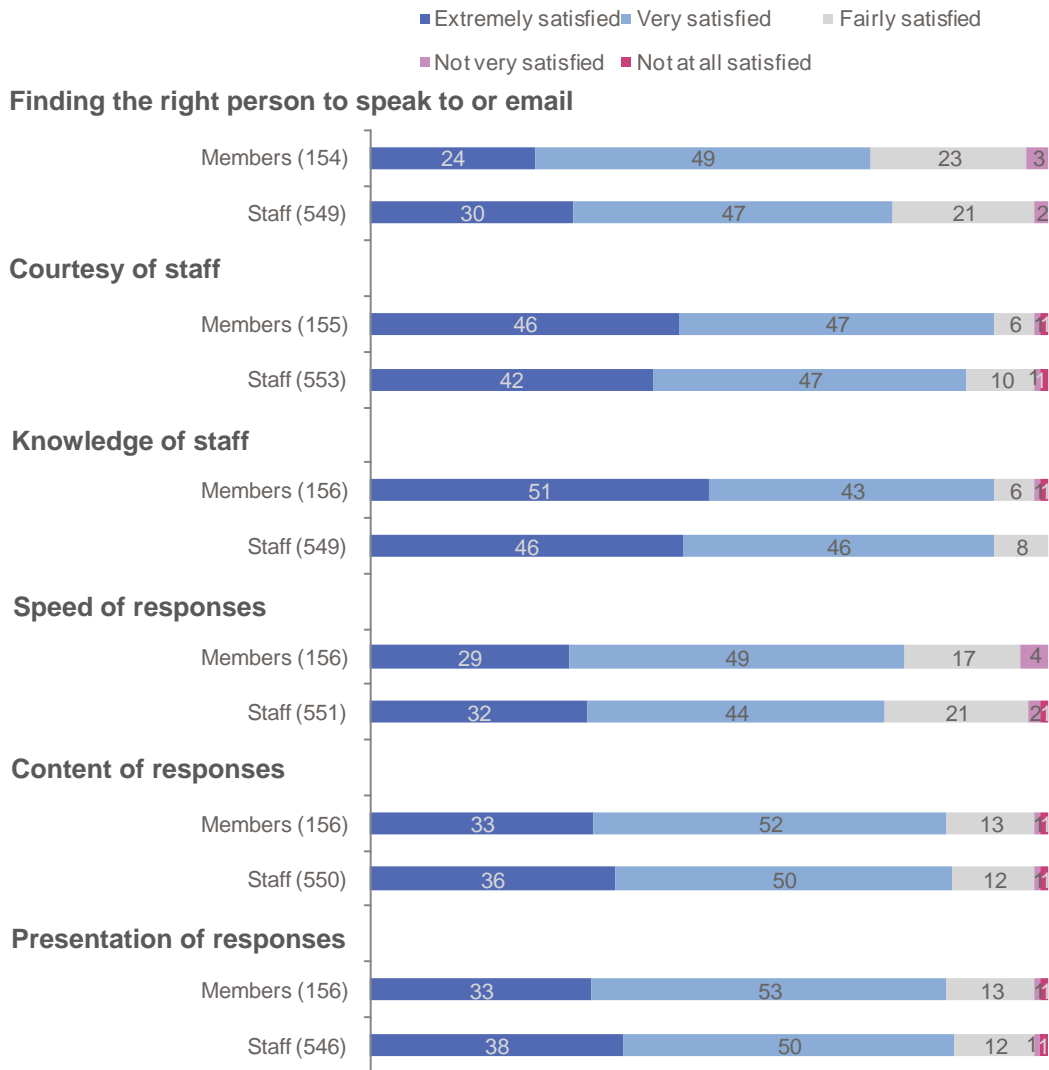
*'Better intranet site for Research papers and standard notes.'* (Staff)

*'Easier access to online journals through a single system.'* (Staff)

**Enquiry handling**

We asked specifically about enquiry handling, and found uneven satisfaction levels. Staff are clearly one of the most appreciated elements of the service, with very high levels of ‘extremely satisfied’ respondents - around 50% for knowledge and courtesy of staff. Other aspects receive similar levels of ‘very satisfied’ respondents, but fewer ‘extremely satisfied’ users; this is most noticeable with finding the right person to speak to, and the speed of responses.

Chart 11.2 Q22. Thinking in particular about the way in which the Library answers your enquiries, how satisfied are you with the following aspects of the service? (Figures in charts are percentages) (Base: All answering)



In terms of finding the right person to speak to, many note that the book containing the names and contact details of Library staff and their specialisms is a key resource in this task.

Comments about enquiry handling tended to be positive, although one respondent did mention that more detailed responses would sometimes be preferable:

*'Have always found the staff most helpful when I have made any enquiries from the Constituency Office.'* (Staff)

*'I am satisfied with the responses I receive to queries I raise with the Library - usually excellent.'* (Staff)

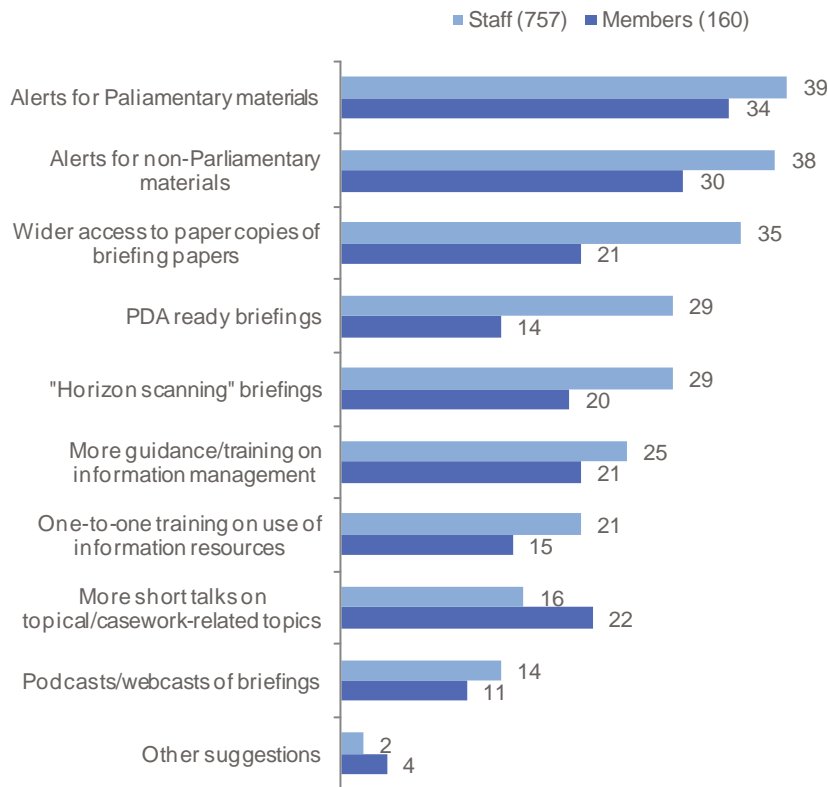
*'Generally I have been happy with the answers from the Library to enquiries, although sometimes the information has not been comprehensive enough.'* (Staff)

**New services**

The Library is seeking to develop ways of using new technology to enhance the service provided to users. As such, respondents were asked which potential services they would use, were these to be offered. Respondents were invited to indicate as many services as they wished.

Most popular were alerts, both for Parliamentary and non-Parliamentary materials (such as casework materials); these were the most endorsed ideas for both Members and their staff. Wider access to paper copies of briefing papers across the Parliamentary Estate would be welcomed, particularly by Members but also one fifth of staff.

Chart 11.3 Q23. The Library is seeking to adapt its services to new technology and changes in Members’ working practices. Which, if any, of the following services would you use if they were offered? (Figures in charts are percentages)  
(Base: All answering<sup>2</sup>)



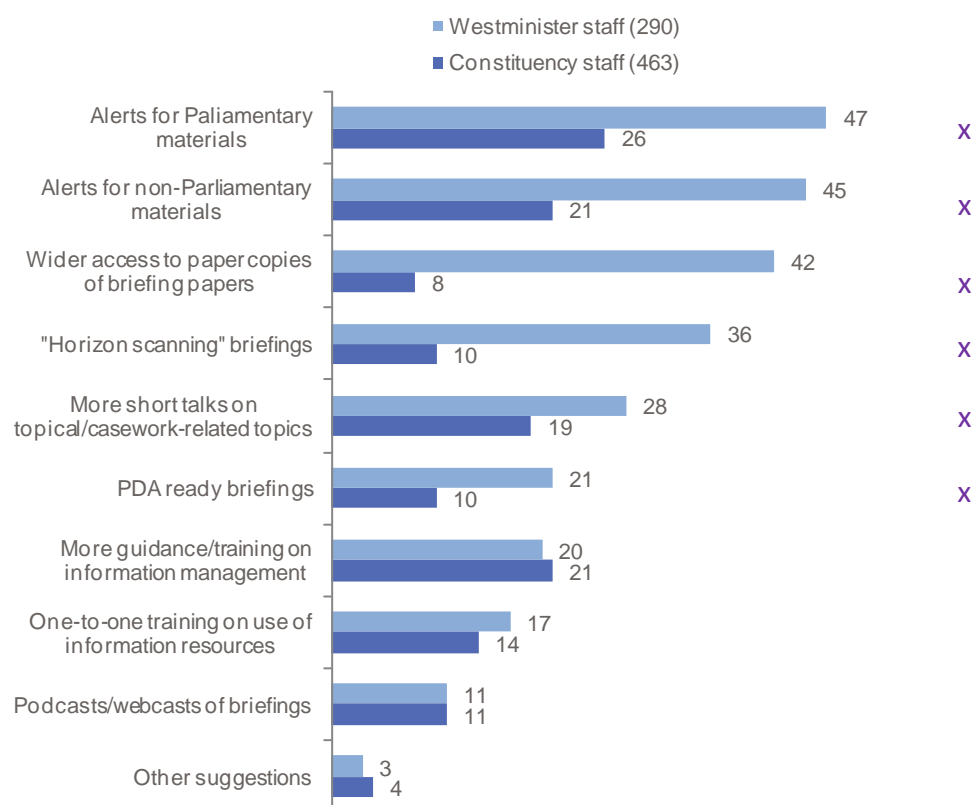
Members’ staff would appreciate more short talks on topical / casework-related issues, while Members are more positive about PDA ready briefing materials. Members are also significantly more likely to say they would use ‘Horizon scanning’ briefings.

When we look at Members’ staff in more detail, dividing responses between those based in Westminster / constituency offices, a clear picture emerges with Westminster-based staff significantly more likely to say they would use a number of potential new services. This is true for all services indicated by a cross in the chart below.

<sup>2</sup> Please note that due to self-completion nature of the question, some respondents may have not answered this question.

Chart 11.4 Q23. The Library is seeking to adapt its services to new technology and changes in Members’ working practices. Which, if any, of the following services would you use if they were offered? (Figures in charts are percentages)

(Base: All **Members’ staff** answering)



As a general rule, these new services appeal much more to younger users, particularly those aged 34 or under. Both Parliamentary and non-Parliamentary alerts, “Horizon Scanning” briefings and short talks appeal significantly more to under 35 year olds than all other age groups.

Respondents were invited to suggest other services which could aid them in their Parliamentary work. As these are reasonably few in number, they are listed in full below.

**Members**

*‘Shorter briefs.’*

*‘Weekend service as often I prepare for the following week over the weekend.’*

**Staff**

*‘A summary of key Parliamentary dates easily accessible either on intranet or e-mail.’*

*‘As mentioned before, improved intranet pages.’*

*‘Casework Topics to talks to be grouped together on one day to make it worthwhile for constituency staff to attend.’*

*‘Constituency based training as I can’t get to London or nearby cities.’*

*'Greater clarity of the website - takes an age to find things.'*

*'I prefer reading briefings etc., but e-mail is fine.'*

*'Less emphasis on the Parliamentary Estate based staff and make an effort to support constituency based staff.'*

*'Making more information available to constituency based staff.'*

*'More constituency based training on Library resources.'*

*'More material on issues of the day would be helpful; briefings are great for long-term policy issues but big issues come up frequently that will be important for ministerial question times for which no briefings are available.'*

*'More training in immigration/refugee casework.'*

*'Not accessible for us in the constituency.'*

*'Podcasts/Webcasts of Library Specialist Talks, for constituency staff who can't get to Westminster'*

*'Possibly link talks to Committee chairman/vice-chairman introductions.'*

*'"Short talks" available as webcast/podcast for constituency-based staff.'*

*'These services are fine as long as they don't impact on the service the Library already provides.'*

*'Training in Parliamentary procedure.'*

*'Up to date briefings regarding current issues raised in EDMs.'*

*'Web-based training for constituency-based staff.'*

*'Written briefings on case-worker related topics rather than talks for constituency-bound caseworkers.'*



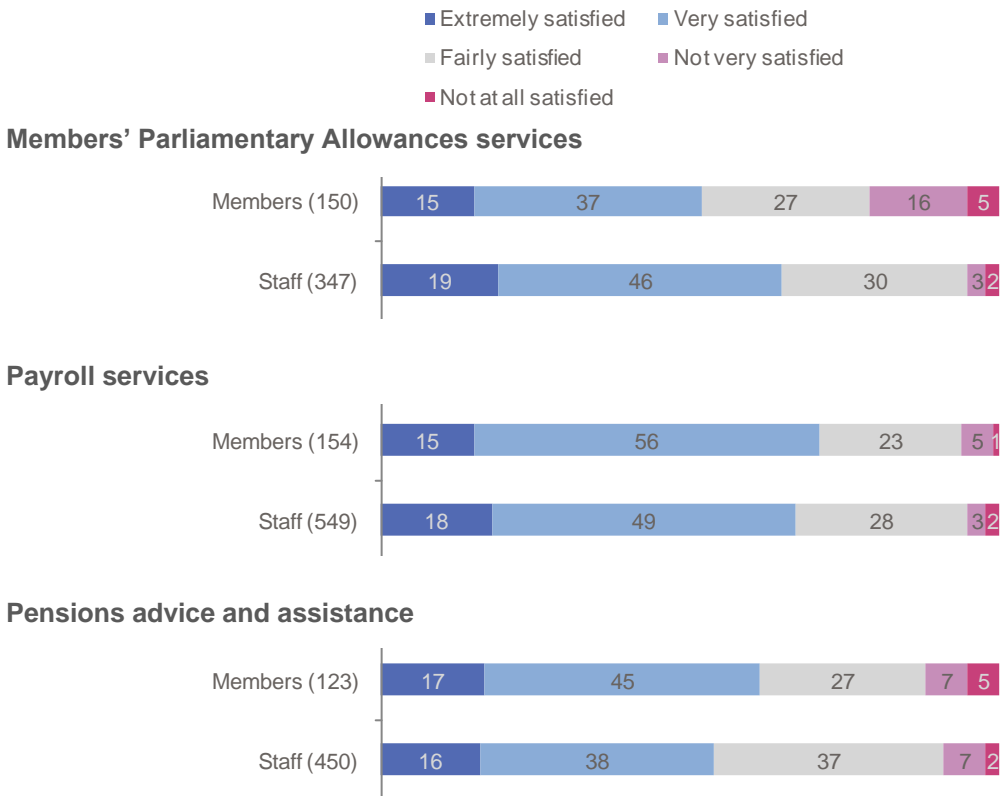
## 12. Department of Resources

The Department of Resources (DR) provides services including pay and allowances for all Members and their paid staff, and other services that may be used on a more ad hoc basis, such as medical advice, pensions assistance and training courses for Members’ staff on, for example, public speaking and dealing with the media.

### Financial services

Both Members and their staff are reasonably satisfied with most financial advice services from the Department of Resources. Payroll services are the most approved of, with around 70% of Members and their staff satisfied with these services, and low levels of dissatisfaction.

Chart 12.1 Q25. For each of the following services provided by DR, please tick the appropriate boxes to indicate how satisfied you are with the service. (Figures in charts are percentages)  
(Base: All answering)



Members and their staff are slightly less satisfied with the pensions advice and assistance they receive, although still more than 60% of Members are satisfied. Their staff are less satisfied, albeit not significantly so. There is a significant body of Members (21%) who are dissatisfied with Parliamentary Allowances services, significantly more so than their staff. This is perhaps unsurprising given the wider context of the survey<sup>3</sup>. One Member makes direct reference to this:

<sup>3</sup> During the fieldwork period, there was considerable press coverage regarding details of Members’ allowances claims, causing political upheaval. It is likely that this context has affected some of the findings in this report.

*'Dept of Resources have made the situation of MPs expenditure very difficult in the public mind.'*  
(Member)

Some make reference to more training being needed to provide Members with accurate information:

*'Department of Resources staff are not highly enough qualified.'* (Member)

This has certainly been affected by recent events:

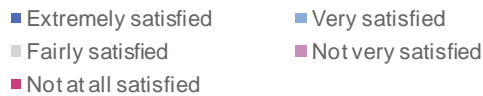
*'[I took advice,] like many other MPs, on what I could use my parliamentary allowances for, in good faith. Now I feel like a crook even though I have never abused or broken any rules. Despite this when the receipts are published I am sure opposition parties will portray me as "on the make".'* (Member)

**Travel**

Members’ staff are significantly more satisfied with the Travel Office than Members, with over 70% of Members’ staff satisfied with this service compared with 60% of Members. Even so, there is little dissatisfaction from either Members or their staff with the Travel Office. Members are satisfied with their Travelcard services, with 69% satisfied with this service.

Chart 12.2 Q25. For each of the following services provided by DR, please tick the appropriate boxes to indicate how satisfied you are with the service. (Figures in charts are percentages)

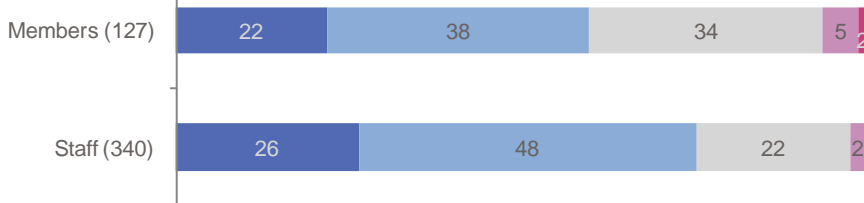
(Base: All answering)



**Travel card (Members only)**



**Travel Office**



Some Members believe the system for applying for Travelcards could be easier to complete:

*‘The Travelcard is excessively bureaucratic.’ (Member)*

Others believe that Travelcards should also be available to Members’ staff:

*‘Oyster cards should be made available to Members and staff.’ (Member)*

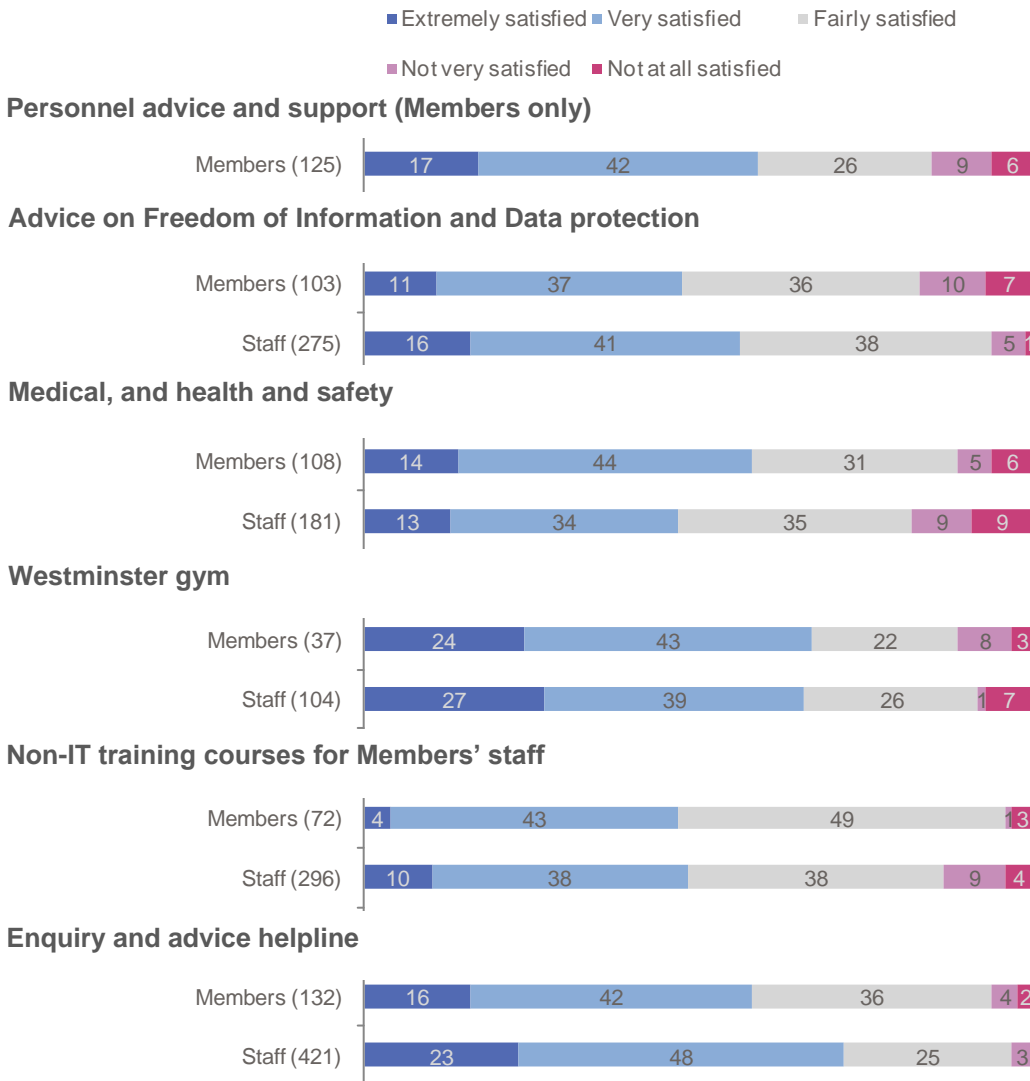
One member of Members’ staff notes that the Travel Office’s opening hours for staff enquiries has reduced, causing occasional difficulties:

*‘Access for Members’ staff enquiries is now limited to Mondays and Fridays. This is often unsatisfactory.’ (Staff)*

**Other services**

Satisfaction with other services offered by DR is mixed. The Westminster gym scores highly with those Members and staff who use the facility, with around two thirds of users satisfied with the gymnasium; this service receives the highest proportion of ‘extremely satisfied’ users. Members are slightly more satisfied with the medical, and health and safety facilities, although there are 11% of Members, and nearly 20% of their staff who are dissatisfied with this service; one or two respondents suggested that there should be a doctor situated on the Parliamentary Estate to respond to medical issues.

Chart 12.3: Q25: For each of the following services provided by DR, please tick the appropriate boxes to indicate how satisfied you are with the service. (Figures in charts are percentages)  
 Q26. Please tick the appropriate box to indicate how satisfied you are with the helpline overall.  
 Base: All responding



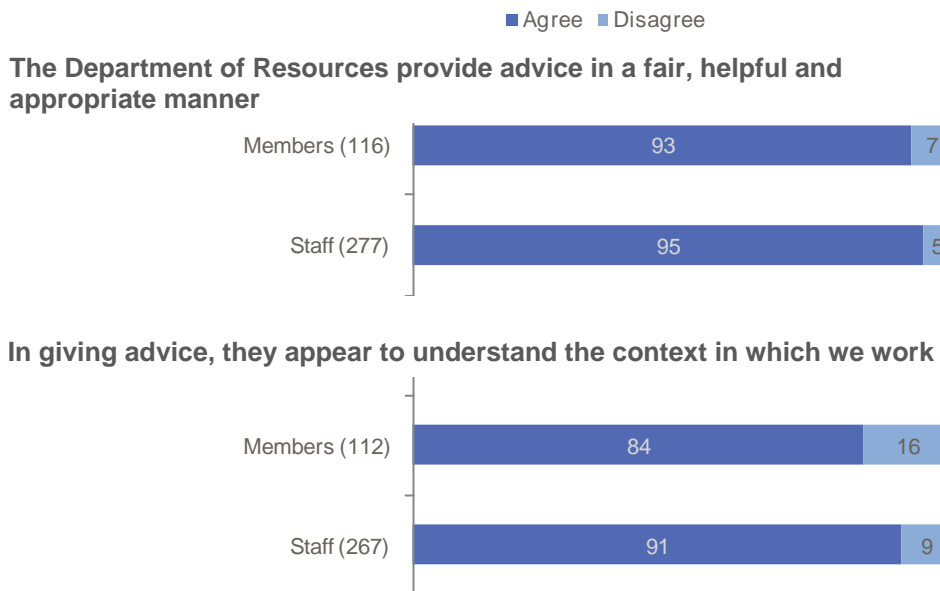
Non-IT training for Members’ staff receives relatively low ‘extremely satisfied’ endorsements, at 10% for staff and just 4% for Members (who will not have used the service themselves); however there are low levels of dissatisfaction with the non-IT training available to Members’ staff.

**Advice on the Green Book**

Both Members and their staff are very satisfied with the advice provided by DR with regard to the Green Book, with over 90% of Members and their staff agreeing that DR provides advice in a fair, helpful and appropriate manner, and 95% of Members’ staff agreeing with this statement.

Likewise Members and their staff are satisfied that DR understands the context in which Members and their staff work, again with around 90% agreement with this statement.

Chart 12.4 Q27. DR officials are required to give advice on the contents of the Green Book and other issues. In considering how well they give this advice, which of these statements do you agree with? (Figures in charts are percentages) (Base: All answering)



A couple of Members’ open-ended comments suggest that inconsistency of advice lies behind those disagreeing with the statements:

*‘It is frankly hit and miss.’ (Member)*

*‘Only sometimes, and they do sometimes contradict each other.’ (Member)*

### 13. Information and communication technology (PICT)

As seen in the Balanced Scorecard questions, both Members and their staff consider information and communication technology services (supplied by Parliamentary Information and Communications Technology services - PICT) to be one of the most important House Services. However, compared with other departments, satisfaction levels tend to be lower. Given the importance and reach of the role PICT plays (PICT was considered to be the 2<sup>nd</sup> most important service to Members, and the most important to their staff), it is perhaps unsurprising that when computer equipment fails, those who rely on it can become frustrated very quickly.

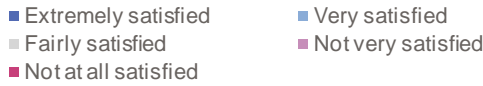
As in previous waves of research, PICT performs less well than other services in many areas. However, there are positives to pick out, particularly regarding the PICT service staff, who are regarded as courteous, and the telephone switchboard which receives good satisfaction ratings from Members and their staff. PICT services were selected for further investigation in the qualitative stage, and findings from these interviews are found in the following pages.

**Remote access**

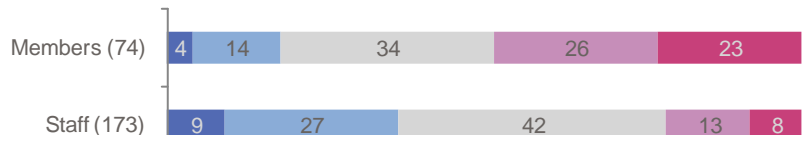
Users’ opinions of the various ways to access the Parliamentary network from remote locations varies considerably, with many experiencing a satisfactory service whilst others are dissatisfied with remote access arrangements. In general, Members are more dissatisfied with these services than their staff, significantly so with regard to remote access via Citrix and VPN over broadband. Indeed, nearly half of Members are dissatisfied with these services. Likewise, Members’ staff are significantly more satisfied with these services, as well as with remote access via the web-based token service. Across all remote access services, around a third of Members’ staff are satisfied, and just under a quarter of Members.

Chart 13.1 Q28. For each of the IT services listed in the grid below, please tick the appropriate boxes to indicate how satisfied you are with the IT services provided by the House of Commons in terms of both quality and reliability. (Figures in charts are percentages)

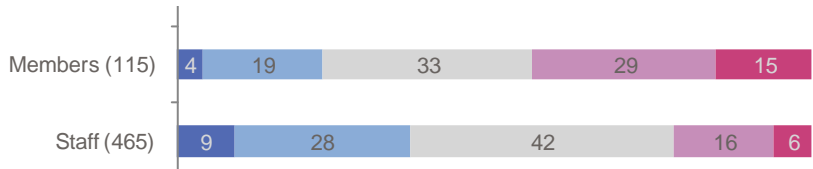
(Base: All answering)



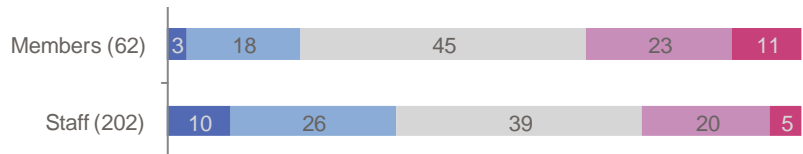
**Remote access to the Parliamentary network via Citrix**



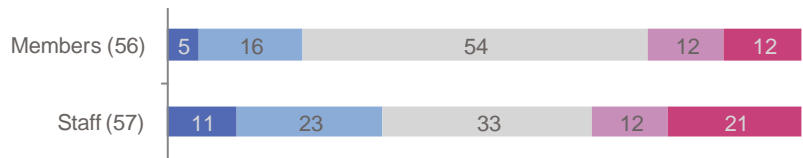
**Remote access to the Parliamentary network via VPN over broadband**



**Remote access to the Parliamentary network via the web based token service (SSL/VPN)**



**Remote access to the Parliamentary network using a Parliamentary issued handheld device (PDA)**



Many report that their access to the Parliamentary network from remote locations is functional, but that speed and reliability of connection can be a real issue.

*'ICT VPN stability and speed have been frustrating to the point of being debilitating recently. As this is the main service for which we rely on HOC services, this colours my attitude somewhat. However, the helpfulness of individual staff has never been an issue.'* (Staff)

*'As a remote user of VPN services, I would like to see more consideration of MPs' staff outside Westminster when it comes to major IT changes, for example the recent security update.'* (Staff)

Of the different methods of connecting to the Parliamentary network, Citrix seems to cause the most problems for Members' staff.

*'There is something called CITRIX LAN which [gives you] second class user status.'* (Staff)

Some have just given up, and may be unaware of improvements in the service over the years:

*'Well it doesn't work very well. The remote access is what my secretary using our machines has to use. I found it when I first came here to be absolutely useless. I don't even bother now.'* (Member)

For others, the new (non-dial up) VPN system is very good:

*'I found it works very well. It's a huge improvement on what we had before which was a sort of dial up system.'* (Staff)

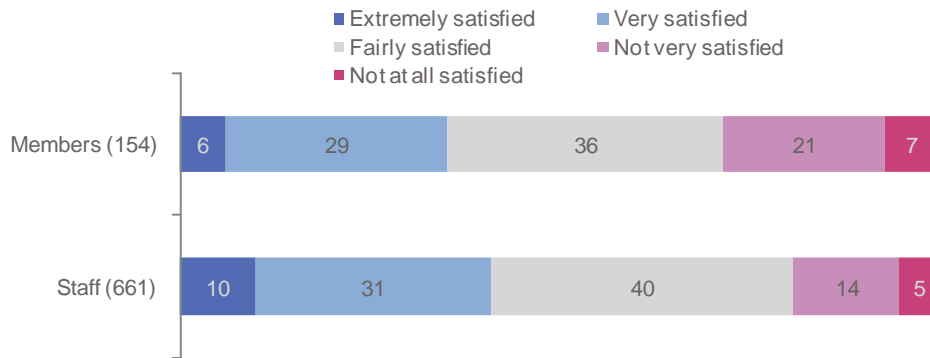


**PICT provided equipment**

There is some concern over equipment supplied by PICT to Members and their staff. Overall 35% of Members, and 41% of their staff, are satisfied with the equipment PICT supplies, while over a quarter of Members, and around a fifth of their staff are dissatisfied with the equipment with which they are provided.

Chart 13.2 Q28. Please tick the appropriate boxes to indicate how satisfied you are with [the PCs, laptops and printers provided by PICT], generally speaking. (Figures in charts are percentages)

(Base: All answering)



Dissatisfaction revolves around three main areas: the quality of the equipment; how up-to-date the equipment is; and how quickly problems are resolved when they arise.

For some, the problem is the Dell equipment.

*'Get rid of Dell Computers.'* (Staff)

However, many respondents reported that overall they were satisfied with the equipment they receive:

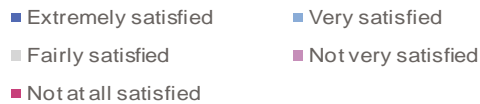
*'I'm quite happy with Dell to be honest. I've got a Dell computer at home and I'm familiar with Dell so I'm quite happy. I've no particular complaints with that, and they get replaced, don't they, every so often.'* (Staff)

Further detail is provided over the following pages.

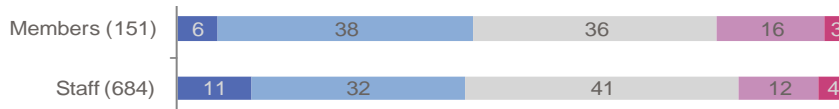
**Specific pieces of equipment**

Desktop PCs and laptops are the most highly rated equipment by Members and their staff, with printers causing the most dissatisfaction. ICT support is described in more detail in succeeding pages, but Members are significantly more dissatisfied than their staff with the overall support they receive (27% compared with 17%). Members’ staff are slightly more satisfied with installation arrangements.

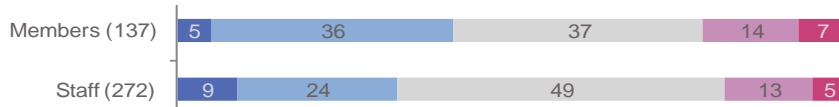
Chart 13.3 Q29. For each item in the grid below, please tick the appropriate boxes to indicate how satisfied you are with it, generally speaking. (Figures in charts are percentages)  
(Base: All answering)



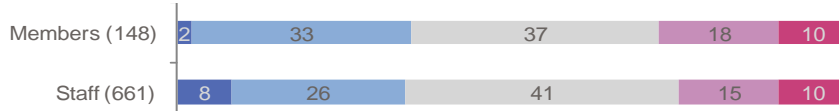
**Desktop PCs**



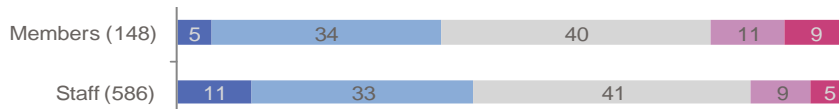
**Laptops**



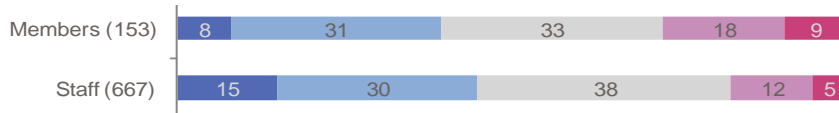
**Printers**



**Installation**



**Support**



A number of comments were received about the hardware supplied by PICT, including specific comments about pieces of equipment:

**Desktops and laptops**

*‘My laptop is incredibly slow even on the Parliamentary Estate despite several PICT attempts to improve its performance.’ (Member)*

*'Our computer equipment is awful. Our computers (the old Dell Optiplex GX280s) are barely able to complete the simplest tasks and their lack of speed and frequent crashes causes a huge amount of stress in our office.'* (Staff)

*'The standard software provided on PCs now lags massively behind most companies. It can't be that difficult to provide modern versions of Word, etc. This failure directly impacts on efficiency.'* (Staff)

### **Printers**

*'Need better printer for envelopes. Cumbersome paper tray change, when using two paper trays a lot. Slow.'* (Member)

*'I had considerable problems with my Dell printer. When it malfunctions, I have no other means to print. Recently I could not use it from a Tuesday lunchtime until a Friday afternoon. The Dell engineer came in December and had to come again in March, but the printer was new in June 2007.'* (Staff)

*'The printers with which we have been provided at Westminster are totally unsuitable - a point made forcefully at the time they were enforced upon us but to no avail.'* (Staff)

*'At least once a year we have to replace our Dell printer because it's broken again. Dell are terrible at delivering the right equipment, on time delivery, and invoicing us (once received an invoice 18 months late and sent to another office).'* (Staff)

### **Installation and support**

**A number of Members noted issues surrounding the support provided:**

*'[It's] impossible to get any support.'* (Member)

*'PICT often ignores the reality of how MPs and their offices work. The recent (before Easter) debacle over the security patch was an appalling example. My constituency office was [disrupted] for nearly a whole week and I had to come back to Westminster in the recess to get my laptop reconnected.'* (Member)

*'PICT support not good enough-needs to be 24/7 with a recognition of urgency of things that happen out of normal office hours.'* (Member)

### Support to constituency offices

There is a feeling amongst many constituency based staff that their ICT needs are somewhat neglected:

*‘There is negligible support for constituency staff, who have poor quality equipment foisted on us and which we are then expected to cope with for several years after it would have been scrapped in a business.’ (Staff)*

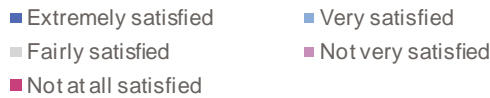
*‘The PICT staff are always extremely helpful in trying to resolve a problem. But there is a sense that constituency based computer problems are not given the same degree of priority by management as those in Westminster. With major problems we should be given the option of getting IT contractors in to fix matters. Recently, following the installation of a new anti-virus system I had no access to my computer for well over a week.’ (Staff)*

**IT training and other services**

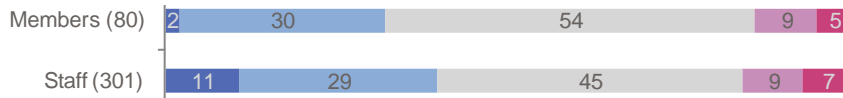
Satisfaction with IT training and other services is reasonable, although pockets of dissatisfaction remain. Members’ staff are slightly more satisfied than Members with the training they receive. Most Members’ staff and 42% of Members are satisfied with the spam blocking facilities provided, and around 40% are satisfied with the voicemail service.

Chart 13.4 Q28. For each item in the grid below, please tick the appropriate boxes to indicate how satisfied you are with it, generally speaking. (Figures in charts are percentages)

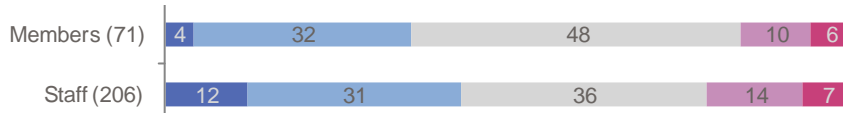
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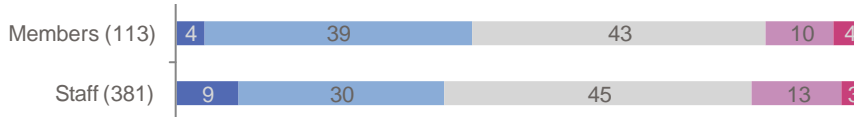
**IT training (new user IT induction)**



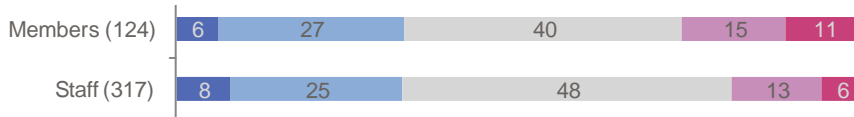
**IT training for Members’ staff (provided by Capita)**



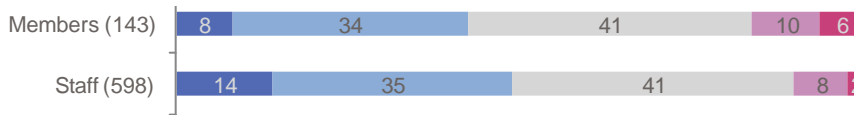
**Voicemail service**



**Arrangement for the purchase of additional equipment**



**Spam blocking (email filtering)**



**IT training**

As with other aspects of training, the main issues appear to be for those working in constituency offices. Of those we spoke to, only a small number had attended any formal training sessions in the past year, with most citing lack of time, or the fact that it was difficult for them to attend training courses which are predominately offered in London, as the reason for not going.

Amongst Members, many were of the opinion that, although they viewed their computer skills as average at best, this was not a particular impediment to doing their work.

*'I take the view that I know what I need to know, and [for] the other things I can usual ask [a member of my staff].'* (Member)

Even for those based near London, the commute, and the necessity to claim back the expenses, puts some people off.

*'I have a feeling that most of the training for things is in Westminster which I know is fairly convenient for us because we're only in [home county] but obviously it does require us to travel down and then try and be reimbursed which in the current climate...'* (Staff)

*'Again, the frustration of being in the constituency I suppose is that a lot of the IT training which I think is really good ... are mainly based in London and well, obviously having a day out is nice but you're got to catch up.'* (Staff)

### **Purchase of additional equipment**

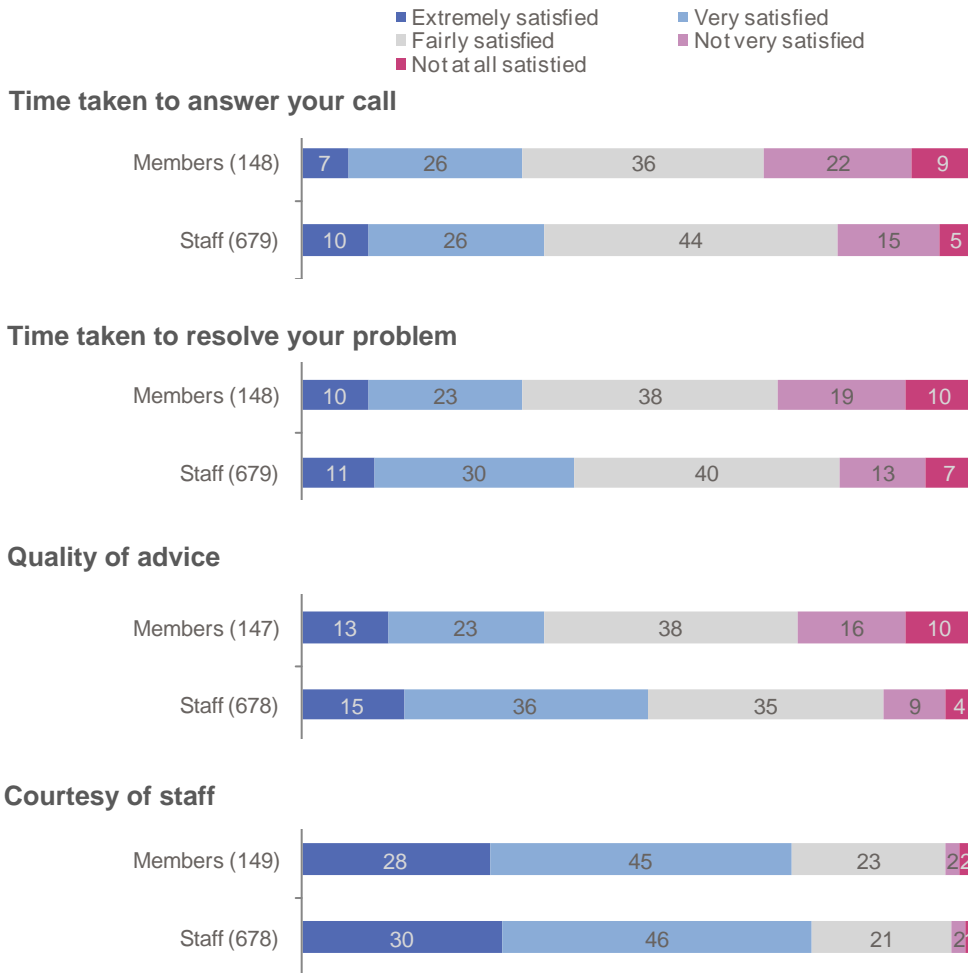
The lowest levels of satisfaction are in the arrangements for the purchase of additional equipment, where a quarter of Members and 19% of their staff are dissatisfied. Some Members' staff commented in qualitative discussions that the purchase of equipment for Dell printers is a particular problem, as this equipment (for example printer cartridges and toner) are only available from Dell and not from other retail outlets:

*'[Dell] said that they wouldn't come and collect them [incorrectly ordered toner units] and they would replace them, but it took months and months and we were kind of running out of toner, and I thought what a waste that there is all this toner we've got and they basically just saying throw it in the bin because they are not going to collect it which is really stupid. And also if you desperately need toner at the last minute, and I ordered it on the next day delivery, it still took 3 days to get here and there is nowhere else to get it, you can't go to the High Street and buy it because nobody sells it except Dell.'* (Staff)

**PICT service desk**

As with other PICT services, staff are considered a strength, while other areas are regarded as unsatisfactory by many. Both Members and their staff emphasise in qualitative discussions the importance of a quick response to problems, as their work often depends on the smooth operation of their ICT equipment. Many report delays in receiving the support they need to correct problems when they occur, stating that they are on hold for lengthy periods when telephoning the service desk; 31% of Members and 20% of their staff are dissatisfied with the time taken to answer their calls, and similar numbers are dissatisfied with the time taken to resolve their problems.

Chart 13.5 Q30. Please tick the appropriate boxes to indicate how satisfied you are with the PICT service desk (formerly called the helpdesk) on extension 2001. (Figures in charts are percentages)  
(Base: All answering)



Many note that, often, more than one telephone call is required to resolve a problem, and that this can take a considerable amount of time and persistence:

*'Most frustrating is IT support - whenever myself or my colleagues have had a problem it has led to hours, usually within one day, on the phone whilst being talked through the solution to the problem. On many occasions I have spent 4-5 hours in a day on the phone to technicians who, in the end, tell me a supervisor will ring me - inevitably - they don't and I end up ringing them - getting another technician, going through the whole process again, most of which is on our phone bill.'* (Staff)

Interestingly, staff in constituency offices are significantly more likely than those based in Westminster to be 'extremely satisfied' with the time taken to answer calls, the quality of advice and the courtesy of staff on the service desk.

Once through to the correct person, the quality of advice provided by the PICT service desk is reasonably satisfactory to Members and their staff, although there is still dissatisfaction in this area, particularly for Members, 26% of whom are dissatisfied. Many report that advice is often too technical, and that service desk personnel do not always appreciate the limitations of callers' IT knowledge:

*'There is very little willingness to come out and fix a problem usually we are talked through this at home but the advisers do not always appreciate that we are not IT experts!'* (Member)

*'The staff on the helpdesk are very variable – some are excellent and persevere until the fault is sorted, others seem to make any suggestion they can think of to get the MP to go away.'* (Member)

There were also comments received regarding the number and knowledge of helpline resources:

*'The PICT phone number is constantly under-staffed, it has been [known] to be left on hold for over 20 minutes recently. On more than one occasion before getting through the line goes dead.'* (Member)

*'Better ICT services with more staff - there always appear to be a high volume of calls so you are queuing for a long time every time!'* (Staff)

*'I find that whenever I contact the PICT helpline the "experts" do not have the level of knowledge that one would expect. Frequently, staff have had to refer to text books to assist in the resolution of minor computer errors.'* (Staff)

That said, for many, the courtesy and friendliness of ICT support staff is one of the best aspects of the service, with many reporting that, although problem resolution is considered patchy, telephone staff are very polite.



One Members' staff suggested that, where there are widespread problems, it may be useful for a message to be recorded to that effect on the help desk telephone number:

*'I think sometimes it would be helpful if they just had a message on the help desk number to say "we're experiencing difficulties" rather than just have a long queue ... so you're not holding on for twenty minutes.'* (Staff)

Keeping users informed of the progress with regard to the resolution of ICT issues is important for many:

*'They ring back or they don't ring back and you're chasing it up, waiting for a call.'* (Staff)

It should be noted that for some, there are no problems whatsoever:

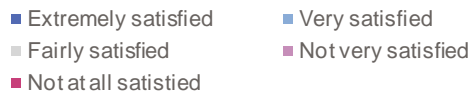
*'[Apart from not having regional engineers], they're brilliant. I've got no complaints about PICT. They're always very responsive and very helpful.'* (Staff)

**Assistance in person**

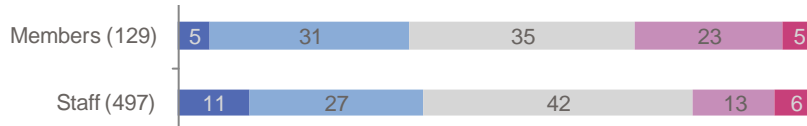
Again, three quarters of respondents are satisfied with the courtesy of the staff who attend to their IT problems in person; the main issues appear to be arranging an appointment for someone to attend to IT problems and the speed of repair, where there is substantial dissatisfaction.

Chart 13.6 Q31. Not all IT problems can be resolved over the telephone. Please indicate how satisfied you are with the service you receive from PICT or contracted staff who attend to your IT equipment. (Figures in charts are percentages)

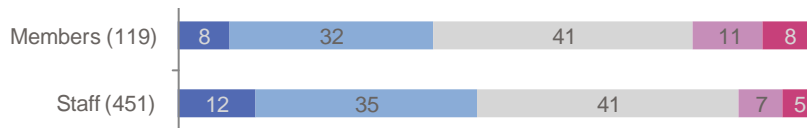
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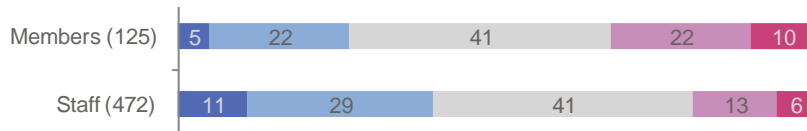
**Time taken to respond to my initial request for help**



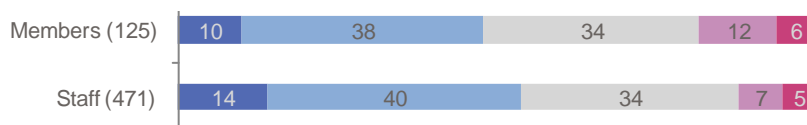
**Convenience of appointment**



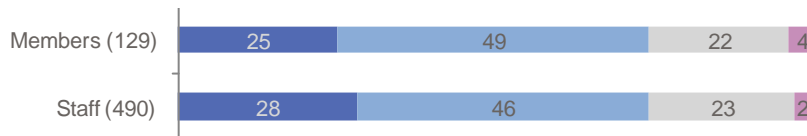
**Speed of repair**



**Quality of work**



**Courtesy of staff**



Members' staff are significantly more satisfied with the speed of repair than Members, with 40% of Members' staff satisfied in this area; Members are significantly more dissatisfied with speed of repair.

### Expected response times

Most respondents working in constituency offices emphasised how vital it is for them to have uninterrupted access to the internet, and that broken connections, like faulty equipment, can cause considerable stress and, in many cases, a poorer service for constituents. It was recognised, however, that in more remote locations, it is unreasonable to expect instant repair work if problems cannot be fixed over the telephone.

*'[My ICT problems] have always been resolved very quickly ... on one occasion ... they had to send an engineer down to fix something which they couldn't fix over the phone, and they came the next day. That was quite satisfactory.'* (Member)

Indeed, a 24 hour resolution time was widely considered to be sufficient, both on the Parliamentary Estate and in constituency offices. Any longer than this and respondents said this would begin to cause real problems and dissatisfaction.

*'We have had problems with all the computers in our office ever since I began work here. We have had to call PICT on a weekly basis and had re-builds on numerous occasions. As a caseworker, I deal with around 50 letters/emails a day so if the printer stops working or my computer freezes, like it does on many occasions, you can imagine how frustrating it is. I do not see why we simply cannot have new equipment! PICT tell us all the time we can't and they will 'send another engineer' but what good is this if the engineer is a different one from the previous one and doesn't have the slightest idea what is wrong?'* (Staff)

For some, actually getting an engineer to attend to problems in person was a challenge in itself.

*'As I am based in the constituency, I use very little of the House Services - however, in terms of IT support, I think the PICT could operate more effectively with more staff - we have had a problem in our office with one of the computers, which has proved impossible to resolve using the remote access facility, and the unavailability of an engineer to come to our office (which is only an hour from London by train or 2 hours on the M1) has not helped.'* (Staff)

Many recognised that PICT cannot have offices all over the country to deal with ICT problems in remote locations both for cost and practical reasons; one Member suggested that PICT may engage local suppliers who could assist them with remote problems:

*'A, it would provide me with a service, and B it would be far more cost effective. And it seems to me that certainly in the remoter constituencies, every constituency has someone who is qualified and it would be much more cost effective and provide a better service if they could be certified by PICT. They'd come in and they might charge £100 for a visit, but that's £500 less than a return [train ticket for a PICT engineer to come from London.]'* (Member)

For a small number of those we spoke to, assistance in person was not sought from PICT but rather a Member would contract an external supplier when having a problem with ICT equipment in a constituency office:

*Moderator: 'What about if it goes wrong in the constituency?'*

*Member: 'Well I deal with that myself. I've got a couple of little computer companies and I just pick up the damned machine and mutter under my breath, then take it down to them.'* (Member)

### **Additional equipment**

Overall, 40% of Members say they purchase additional ICT equipment for their work, reporting expenditure ranging from low cost items such as Internet security packages for home computers, to more expensive items. Of those who do buy additional equipment, many purchase additional local IT support, for 'a few hundred pounds a year', although one claims to have spent 'several thousand pounds' on IT support for constituency offices.<sup>4</sup>

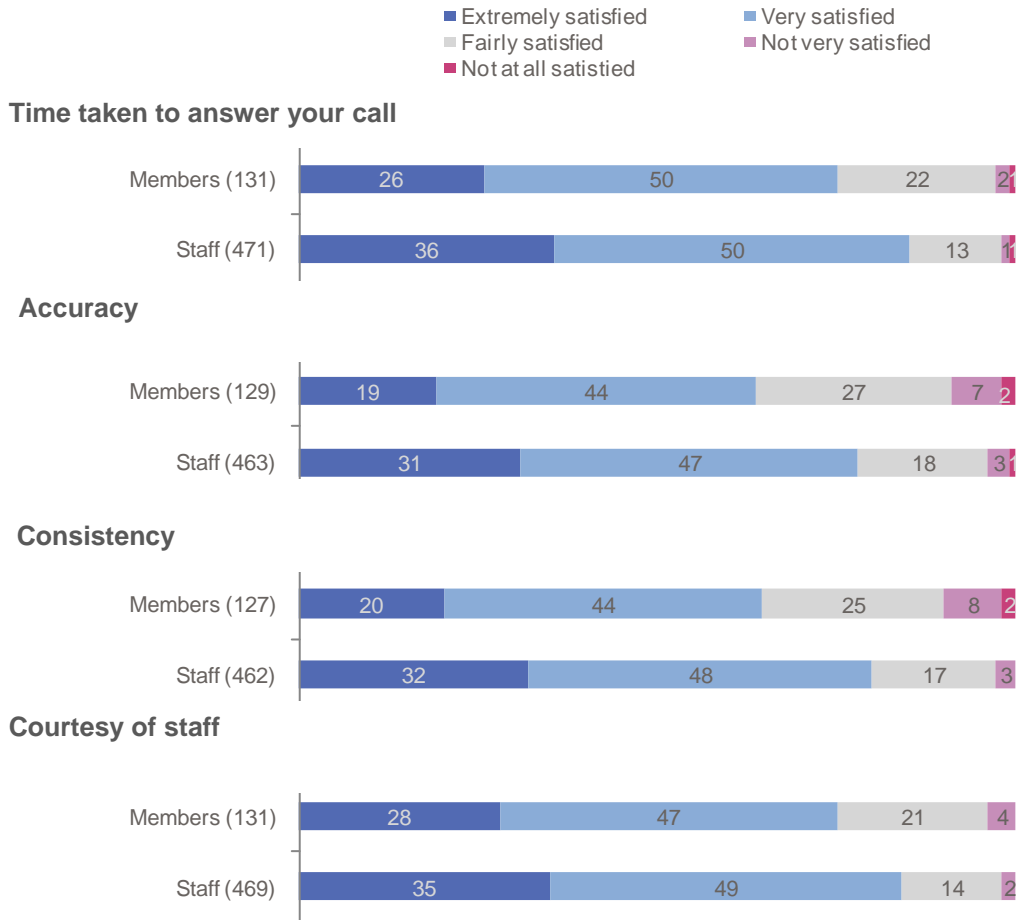
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<sup>4</sup> A full list of responses has been provided to PICT, but has not been reproduced here as it is beyond the scope of this document.

**Telephone switchboard**

Satisfaction with the telephone switchboard is high, with three quarters of Members, and 80% of their staff, satisfied with the switchboard. In all categories, Members’ staff are significantly more satisfied than Members with the services provided.

Chart 13.7 Q32. Please tick the appropriate boxes to indicate satisfaction with the telephone switchboard (extension 3000) and messaging service. (Figures in charts are percentages)  
(Base: All answering)

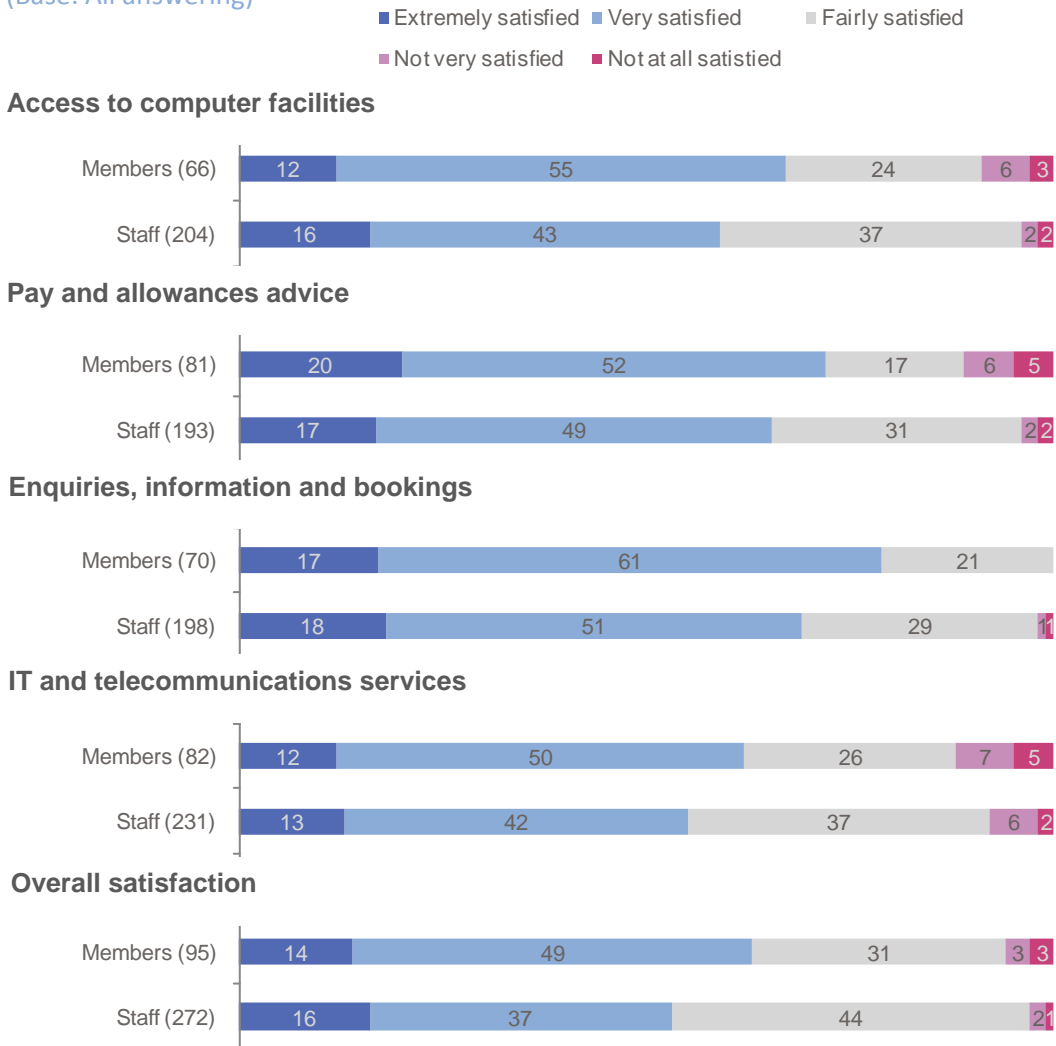


Telephone service staff are considered courteous, and both Members and their staff are very satisfied with the time taken to answer calls. However, there is a minority of Members (around 10%) who are dissatisfied with the accuracy and consistency of the telephone service.

## 14. Members’ Centre

The Members’ Centre is a relatively new development from the House of Commons Service. Both Members and their staff are reasonably satisfied with the services they receive from the Members’ Centre, although overall satisfaction is lower than satisfaction with specific services provided. Generally, Members are more satisfied with the Members’ Centre than their staff, although only a small percentage of staff use the Members’ Centre at all.

Chart 14.1 Q36: Please tick the appropriate boxes to indicate your satisfaction with the following. (Figures in charts are percentages)  
(Base: All answering)



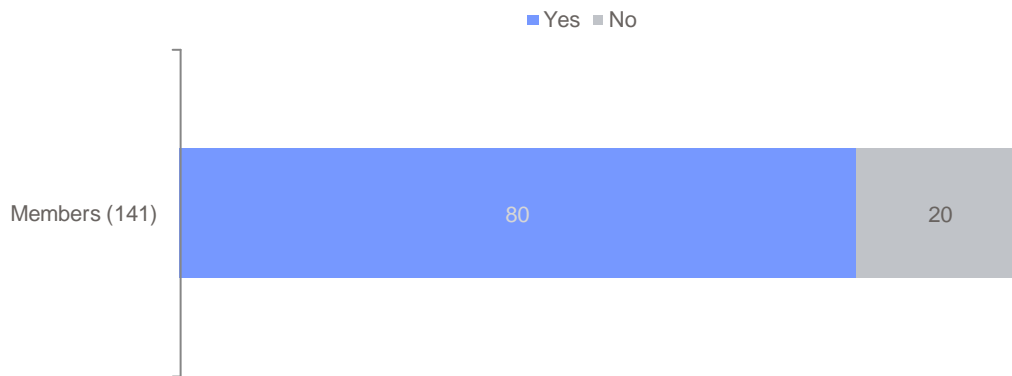
Enquiries, information and booking services receive high satisfaction ratings, with no Members dissatisfied with these services and 78% satisfied. It is a similar story with access to computer facilities, pay and allowances advice and IT and telecommunications services, with high proportions of Members and their staff satisfied with these services.

There were very few open-ended comments about the Members’ Centre, however a few suggestions emerged: that scanners in the Members’ Centre be linked to the central computer system, that the amount of space the Members’ Centre occupies be reduced, and (conversely) that more space should be provided (all comments by Members’ staff).

## 15. Communicating with Members' staff

The majority of Members (80%) believe that the House does enough to communicate with their staff.

Chart 15.1 Q37. Do you think the House does enough to communicate with your staff? (Figures in charts are percentages)  
(Base: All **Members** answering)



When asked what more the House could do to communicate with Members' staff, the following responses were given.

### In Westminster

*'More training and staff socials.'*

*'A regular e-bulletin.'*

*'[The House] communicates reasonably well, but interferes too much.'*

*'E-newsletter, e-mail alerts, personal briefings at meetings.'*

*'Have a single point of contact.'*

*'It doesn't (usually) need more it needs clarity.'*

*'More information via the internet.'*

*'More regular newsletters.'*

*'More respect should be shown to staff. They work hard for my constituents.'*

*'On-going external/internal work affecting access working conditions and refreshments facilities. Not enough consideration given to staff working in the office in the House of Commons.'*

*'Perhaps face to face meetings to explain issues?'*

*'Talk to them as equals!'*

*'There is a gap between house staff and MPs' staff - [I'm] not sure of how it can be bridged.'*

*'Treat them with some respect and give them "access" to information on our behalf.'*

*'You'd have to ask them really.'*

## In the constituencies

*'Better information on the intranet about who to contact for specific problems. Easy guides on the intranet on how to do things.'*

*'1. My staff are not based at Westminster so they are totally disregarded and treated as 2nd class citizens. 2. Understand they work at a disadvantage to London staff. 3. Provide access to training locally or reserve places on courses before they are all snapped up by interns who then do not show up.'*

*'All my staff are in London'*

*'Annual house events/training for constituency staff.'*

*'More outreach work so HOC staff actually understand constituency work.'*

*'Ask them: go and visit them. Really reach out to ask them what would help them do their work.'*

*'Communication with constituency staff is abysmal, they are second class citizens!'*

*'E-newsletter, e-mail alerts, offer meetings including regional locations, telephone them.'*

*'Have a single point of contact.'*

*'Improve the reliability of remote access to parliamentary network.'*

*'In every respect PICT provide a poorer service in the constituency compared to London.'*

*'Information sessions/briefings should be held outside London.'*

*'Newsletter, email prompts.'*

*'Provide better IT back-up.'*

*'Maybe more help sheets or dedicated staff helpline.'*

*'You will have to consult them.'*

*'Sometimes causes are for House based staff only but it is not clear on the information. Virtually all my staff are in the constituency so this is not very helpful.'*

*'Talk to them as equals! Get some experience of what a constituency office is actually like and keep better records of layout, IT use and configuration etc.'*

*'The biggest problem is the support from PICT; they are loathed to send engineers.'*

*'Non-Westminster staff [are treated] as if [they] don't exist – very very poor service in all aspects.'*

*'Yes, remote working can be lonely so more events and training opportunities for them.'*



## 16. Sample breakdown

Chart 16.1 Total sample break down  
(Base: All answering)

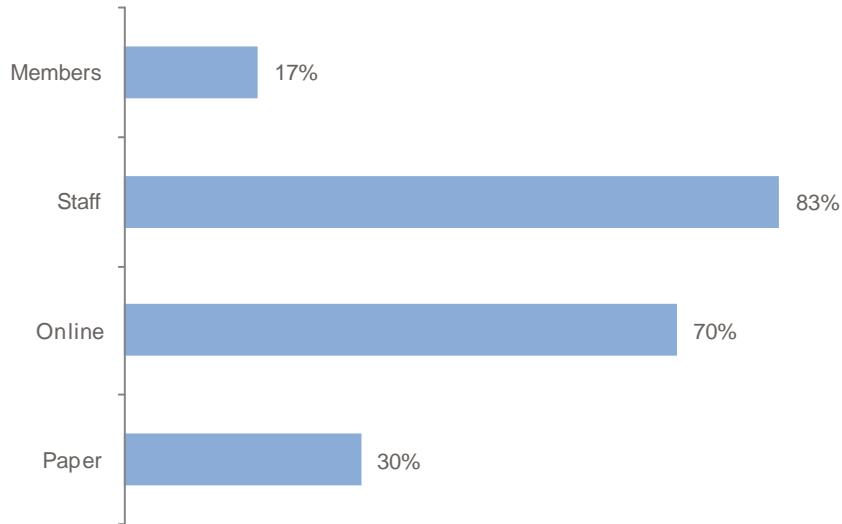


Chart 16.2 Q40. Members' sample by gender  
(Base: All **Members** answering – 141)

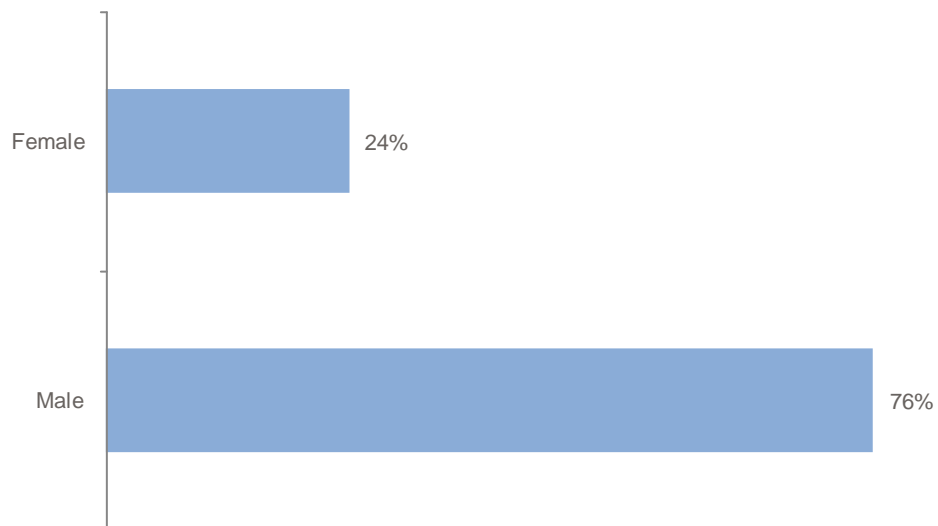


Chart 16.3 Q40. Total sample by gender  
(Base: All answering – 877)

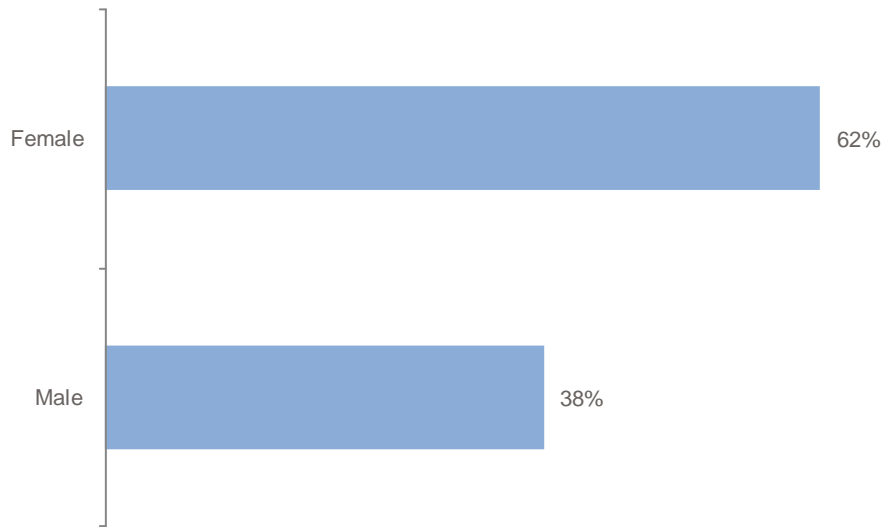


Chart 16.4 Q39 / Q40. Total sample by age and gender  
(Base: All answering Q39 who also answered Q40 – 871)

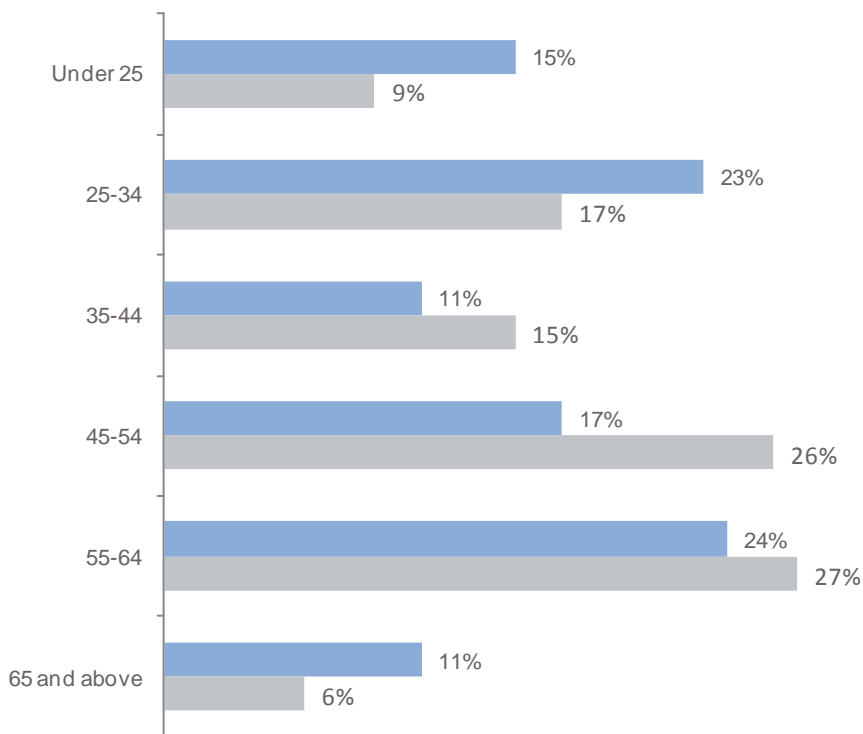


Chart 16.5 Q1. Proportions of each role within Members' sample  
(Base: All **Members** answering– 149)

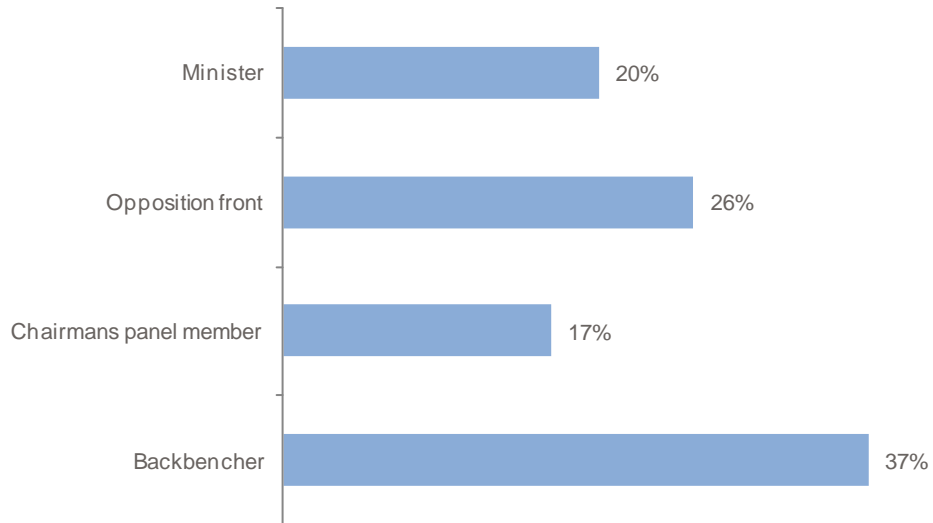


Chart 16.6 Q1. Work locations of Members' staff  
(Base: All **staff** answering– 753)

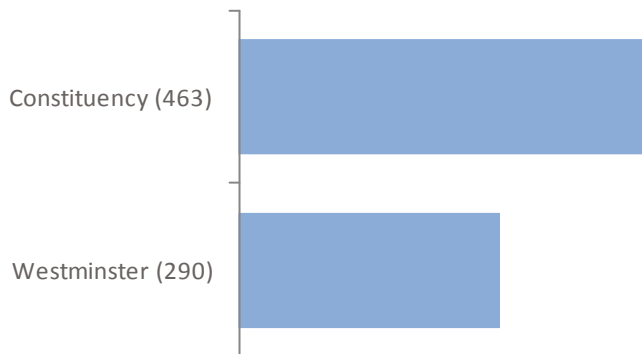


Chart 16.7 Q5. Work locations of Members' staff  
(Base: All **staff** answering– 719)

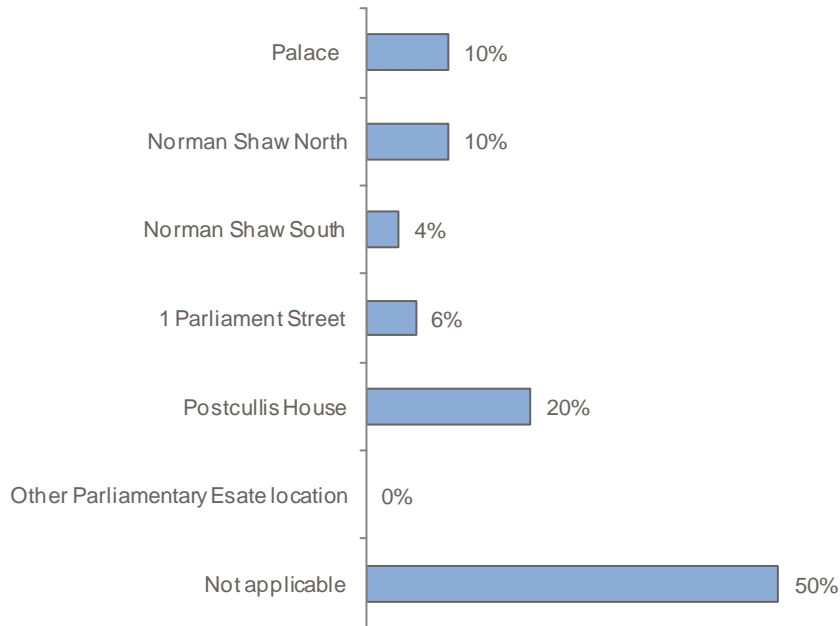


Chart 16.8 Q2. General Election at which Members were first elected  
(Base: All **Members** answering – 149)

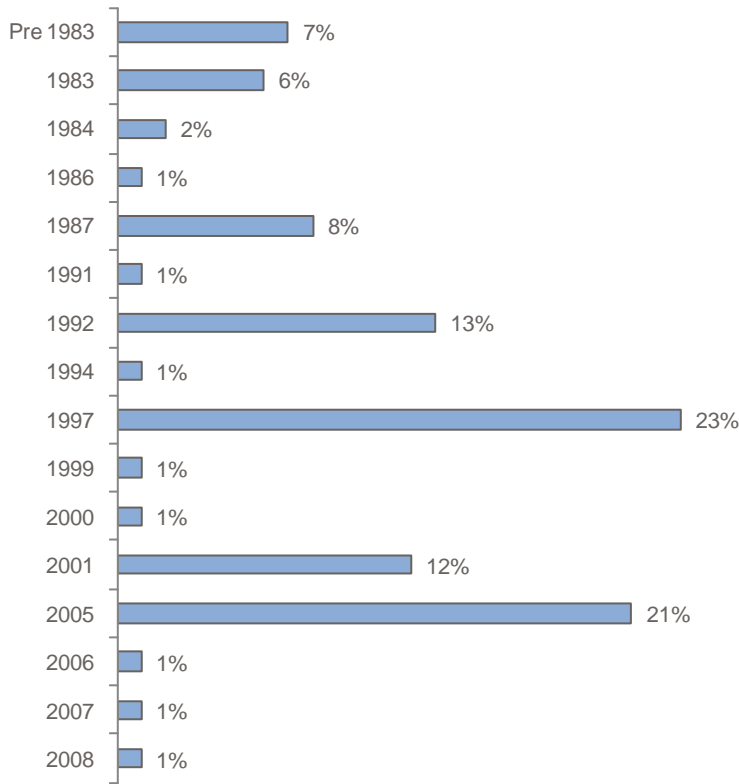


Chart 16.9 Q4. Members: Which political party are you a Member of?  
Staff: Which political party does your Member belong to?  
Base: All Members answering – 153  
All staff answering – 752

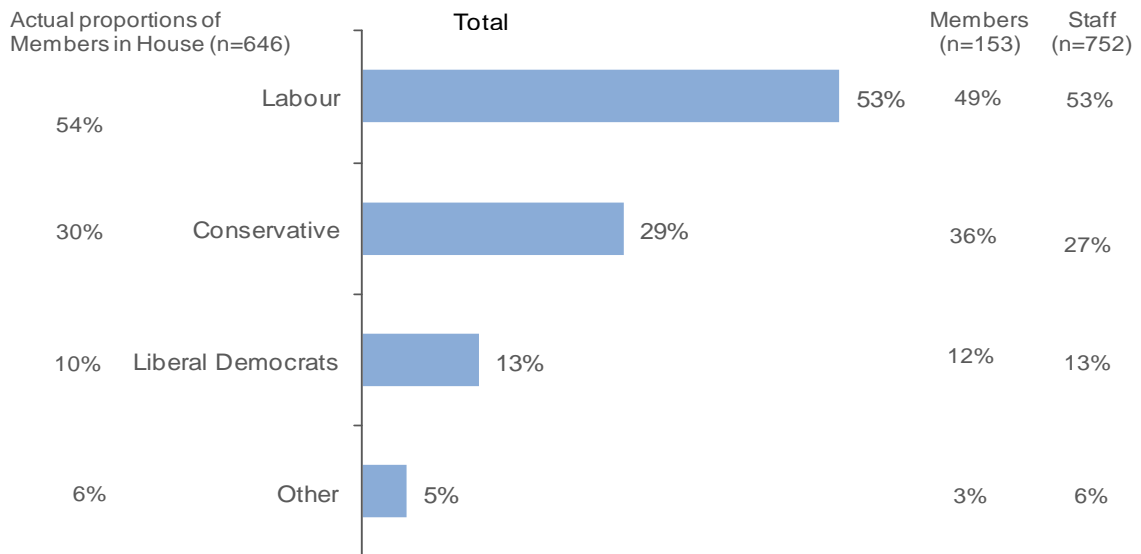


Chart 16.10 Q3. Length of time staff have spent working for a Member  
 (Base: All staff answering – 756)

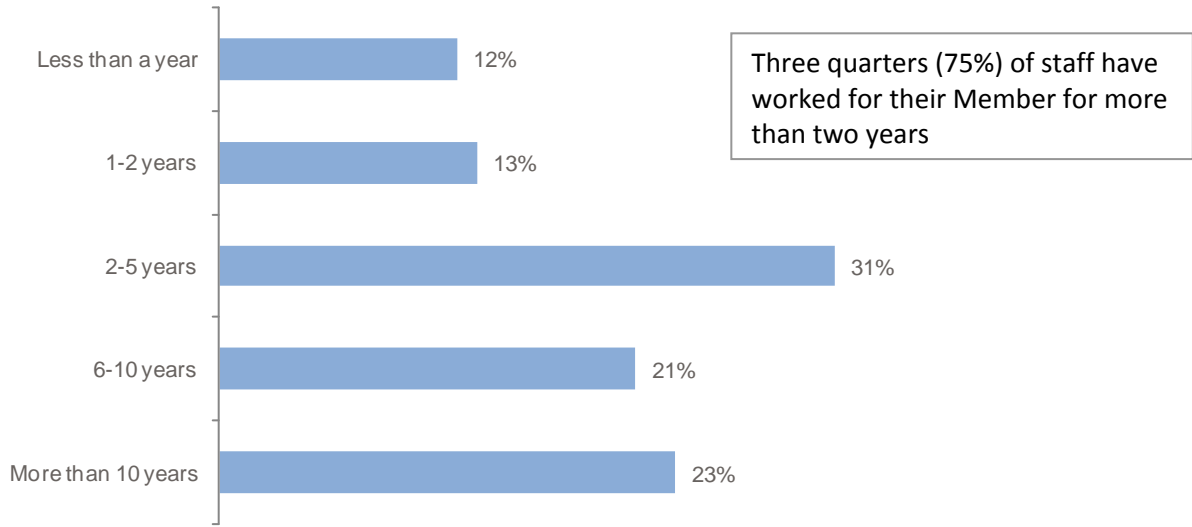


Chart 16.11 Q2/3. Time in service for Members and staff  
 (Base: All Members answering Q2 – 148  
 All staff answering Q3 – 752)

