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# 2024 Local Government Customer Services Report

Service Awareness, Engagement,  
Satisfaction and Sentiment

# Foreword

This is the fourth year we have published our **Local Government Customer Service Report**. The report tells us that people are using more channels to engage with local authorities. We see an increase in the use of social media and instant messaging and less use of websites by younger people while the demand for traditional in-person and phone services, as well local radio and newspapers, remains high, especially amongst those over 50 years.

The report also highlights important regional differences in how people like to engage. More in-person activities take place in rural areas, while in urban areas people are more likely to use email than in-person channels. This is important information as it helps local authorities to understand which channels people want to use allowing them to target services and information more effectively.

In addition, people felt local authorities were easy to engage with, were innovative, and that the online services had improved. A lot of work has been done over the past four years to improve communications, and the evidence suggests that this is working as the number of people agreeing that they are seeing more information about services and what's going on in their local area has increased since 2021.

Local authorities have a key role to play in 'place-making' so that people feel a sense of identity and pride in their local areas. The findings highlight that those with a strong sense of belonging to their local area, feel more positively about local authorities than other people. Therefore, a sense of belonging yields positive results for all; more satisfied customers and recognition of the positive work being done by local authorities in local areas.

In 2024, additional research was done to find out what local authorities could do to make engagement with them a better experience. While most people described their experience of engaging with local authorities as positive, there were several simple changes identified that, if implemented, would improve the customer service experience for many.

These changes included automatically acknowledging receipt of emails and clearly identifying who the appropriate contact persons were for services or information. People were also frustrated if they had to repeat their information if dealing with more than one staff members. Local authorities can now take this information and seek to address these issues through changes in procedures. As well as improving the experience of customers, it could also make service delivery and information provision an easier process for staff.

As with previous years, the report captures trends in engagement and highlights the areas where we are making improvements. It also provides valuable insights to help us understand and respond to the needs of our service users more effectively. We will continue to use this process to inform our programme of continual improvement.

Kieran Kehoe  
Chair  
CCMA Corporate and Emergency Planning Committee

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# Introduction

Since 2021, the LGMA has been responsible for an annual local government customer service research programme. This includes a national public survey and focus groups. The findings generated are used by local government to help efficiently deliver services for all members of the public.

The objective of the survey is to find out what people know about local authority services and what their views are on those services. Each year, one topic relating to service delivery is explored in detail, through additional survey questions and focus groups. In 2024, the research sought to find out what kind of experiences people were having when they engaged with local authorities, what was working well and what could be improved.

## Acknowledgments

### CCMA Corporate Data Working Group Members:

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The LGMA CDU staff who visualise this data for local authorities.

Thanks, are also due to all who completed the national survey and participated in the focus groups.

## 2024 Special Theme Customer Engagement Experience

- How aware are people of the services local authorities provide?
- What are the most common services used by the public?
- Are people satisfied with local authority services?
- How and when do people engage with their local authority?
- Where do people get information about their local authority?
- What is the public's sentiment towards local authorities generally?

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# 2024 Survey in Numbers

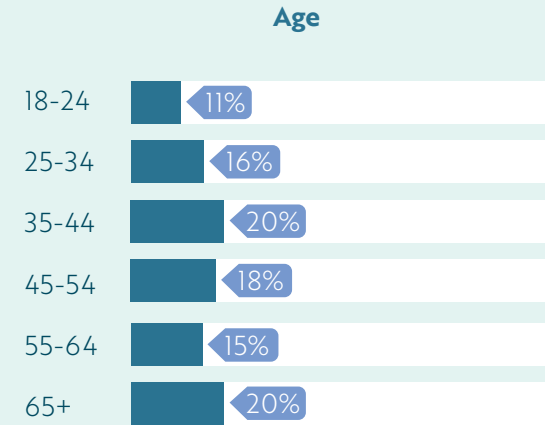
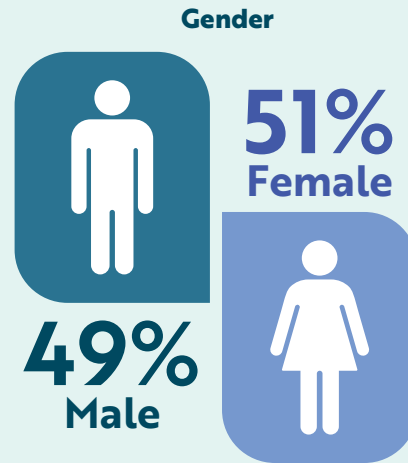
## Key Facts

Number of respondents: **2,139**

Survey Dates: **April 15th to May 14th 2024**

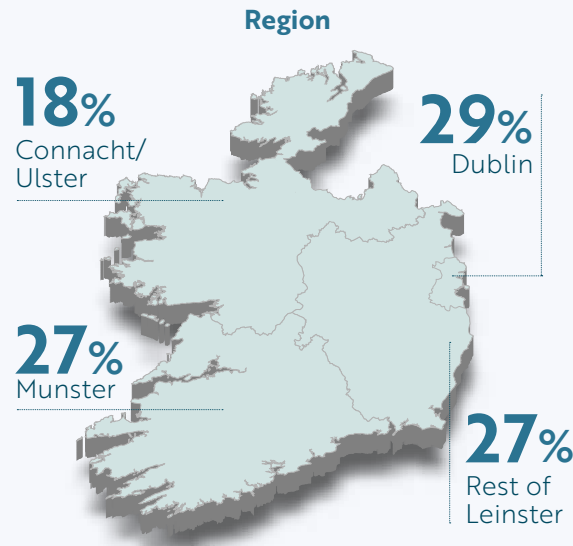
Survey Method: **REDC Omnibus Panel**

## Respondent Profile



## Survey Sample

- 2,139 respondents took part in this survey during the period 15th April – 14th May 2024.
- RED C Research conducted the national survey using RED C's online omnibus, the RED Line.
- Boost interviews were conducted to ensure a minimum quota of 50 persons per local authority.
- Data was weighted across gender, age, region and social class to ensure a nationally representative sample based on latest CSO 2022 Census figures.



## Sense of Belonging

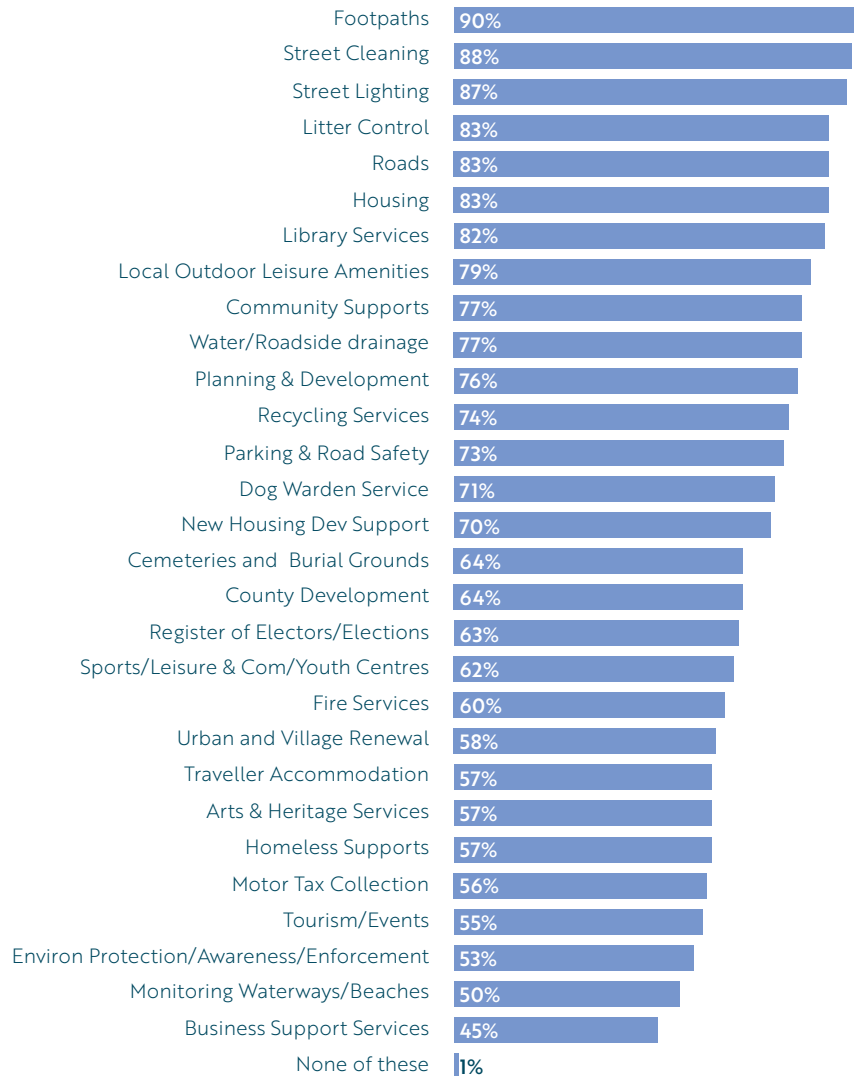
**71%** Reported a **strong sense of belonging** to their local area

**46%** Lived in their local area all of their life

**10%** Lived in their local area less than 5 years

# 2024 Service Awareness

Local authorities offer a wide range of services to the public. The survey assessed respondents' awareness of local authorities' responsibility in the provision of 29 key services.

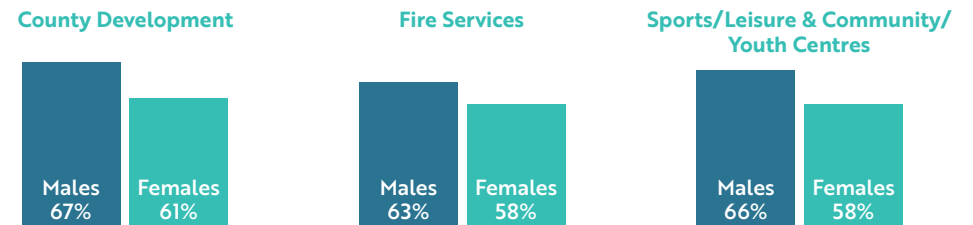


## AGE / older are more aware local authorities providing services

In general, awareness of local authority service provision was higher amongst those aged 55 and over, than in younger groups.

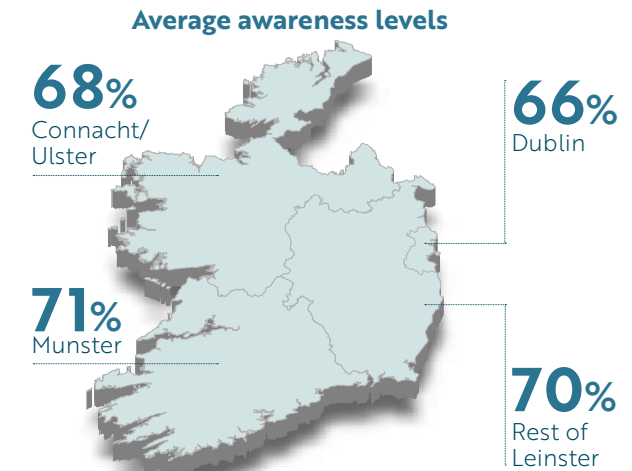
## GENDER/ roughly equivalent

The 2024 survey shows that men and women have **approximately the same awareness about local authority service provision** except for:



## REGION/ lowest in Dublin

Across the four regions, Munster had the highest awareness of local authority service provision with the lowest levels being in Dublin.



# 2024 Service Use

95% of respondents had used at least one of the 29 services in the previous 12 months.

## MOST Used Services In 2024

Recycling Services	67%
Litter Control	65%
Parking & Road Safety	63%
Roads	62%
Motor Tax Collection	47%
Library Services	42%

## LEAST Used Services in 2024

Business Support Services	2%
Homeless Supports	2%
Urban & Village Renewal	2%
Fire Services	2%
County Development	2%
Traveller Accommodation	1%

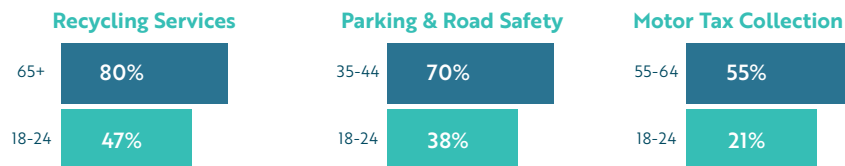
## AGE / Difference

### Stand Out Service Use Findings

More respondents aged 55+ used recycling services, motor tax and cemeteries/burial grounds than other age groups.

18-24 year olds reported higher use of tourism/ events, and community support services.

In 2024, the top three most pronounced differences by age in the use of local authority services were:



## REGION / Differences

Different patterns of service use were observed across the regions.

### Dublin

↓ Lower use of roads, motor tax and parking & road safety

### Rest of Leinster

↑ Higher use of parking & road safety and recycling services  
 ↓ Lower use of cemeteries and burial grounds

### Munster

↑ Higher use of cemeteries & burial grounds and motor tax collection

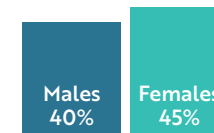
### Connacht/Ulster

↑ Higher use of tourism/events  
 ↓ Lower use of library services and local outdoor leisure amenities

## GENDER/ Evenly split

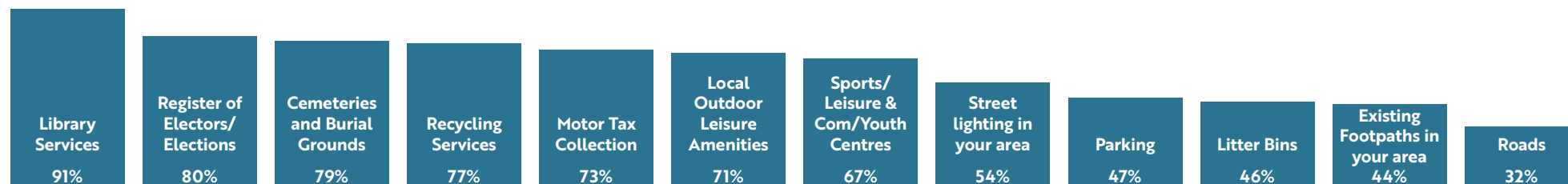
While the use of local authority services was evenly split in general, more females reported using library services than males.

### Library Services



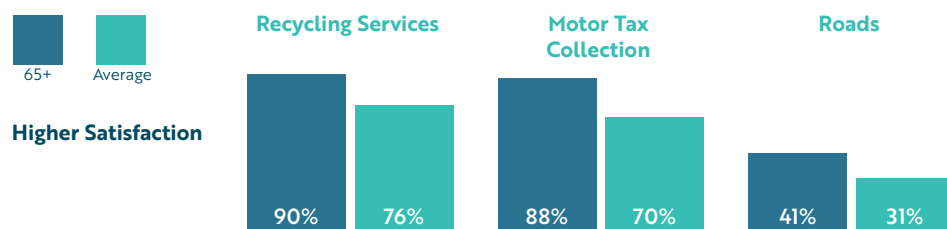
# 2024 Satisfaction with Services Used

Of the 28 services used by respondents, 12 services had more than 400 service users. In 2024, six of these services had satisfaction rates above 70%.

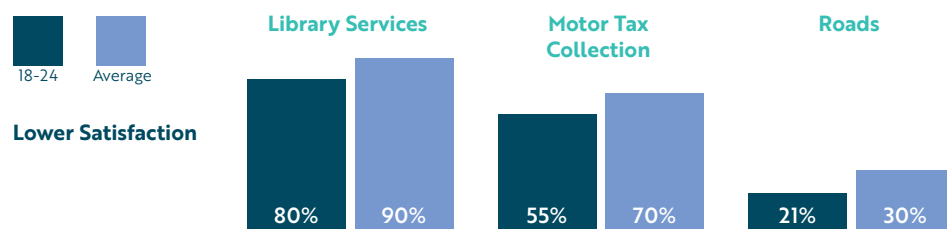


## AGE / 65+ most satisfied

Overall, the **65+ group reported the highest satisfaction** of all age groups. Satisfaction was particularly high for recycling, motor tax collection and roads.



**18 to 24-year-olds had the lowest satisfaction** for 11 services, particularly library services, motor tax collection and roads.



## REGION/

- In **Dublin**, satisfaction was higher for recycling services (82%), roads (37%) and local outdoor leisure amenities (77%)
- Respondents in the **Rest of Leinster** were most satisfied with library services (94%) and cemeteries and burial grounds (84%)
- Lower rates of satisfaction were reported in **Connacht/Ulster**, particularly for libraries (83%) and litter bins (39%)
- Satisfaction with roads was lowest in **Munster** (24%)

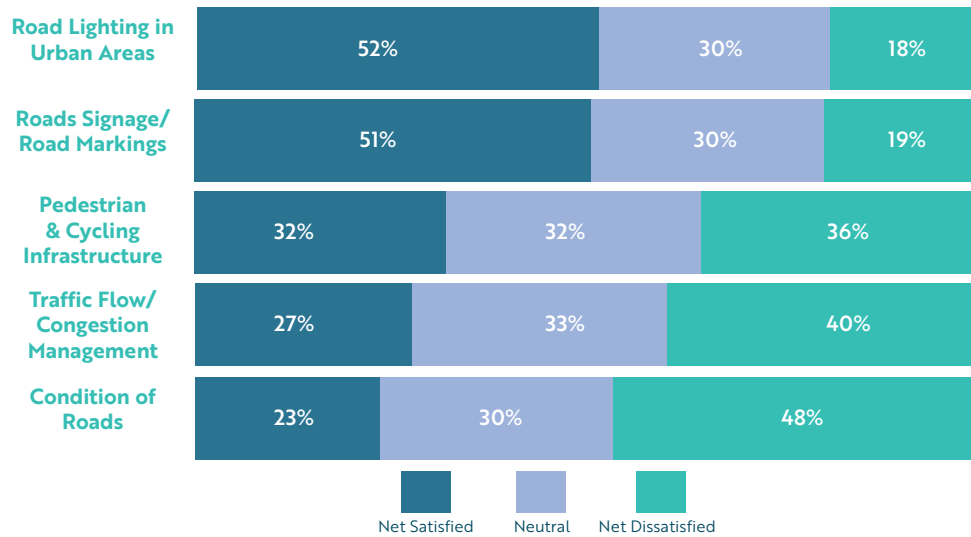
## GENDER/ Females most satisfied

Overall, females reported higher rates of satisfaction than males for most services, particularly for:

1. Recycling Services
2. Litter Bins
3. Motor Tax
4. Register of Electors
5. Sport/ Leisure and Community/Youth Centres

# 2024 Satisfaction with Roads

An additional question was added in to the 2024 survey to explore the low satisfaction rates with roads. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of satisfaction for five areas of road service delivery. A high level of neutrality was recorded in the responses.



## AGE / Satisfaction variances

Satisfaction for the five areas varied across the age groups.

	Highest Satisfaction	Lowest Satisfaction
Road Lighting in Urban Areas	65+ 56%	18-24 45%
Roads Signage/Road Markings	55-64 61%	45-54 46%
Pedestrian and Cycling Infrastructure	25-34 36%	35-44 30%
Traffic Flow/Congestion Management	55-64 30%	35-44 23%
Condition of Roads	25-34 28%	55-64 28%

## REGION / Different concerns in each region

Dublin had the highest satisfaction levels overall. However, satisfaction levels varied regionally across the five areas of road service delivery.

A distinct area of lower satisfaction was observed in each region:

### Dublin

↓ Traffic flow and congestion management **(22%)**

### Rest of Leinster

↓ Road lighting in urban areas **(48%)**

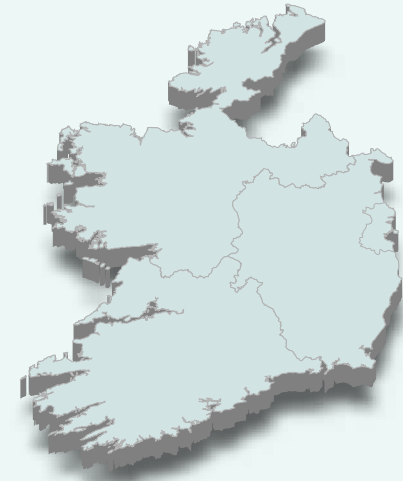
### Munster

↓ Condition of roads **(17%)**

### Connacht/Ulster

↓ Road Signs/Markings **(44%)**

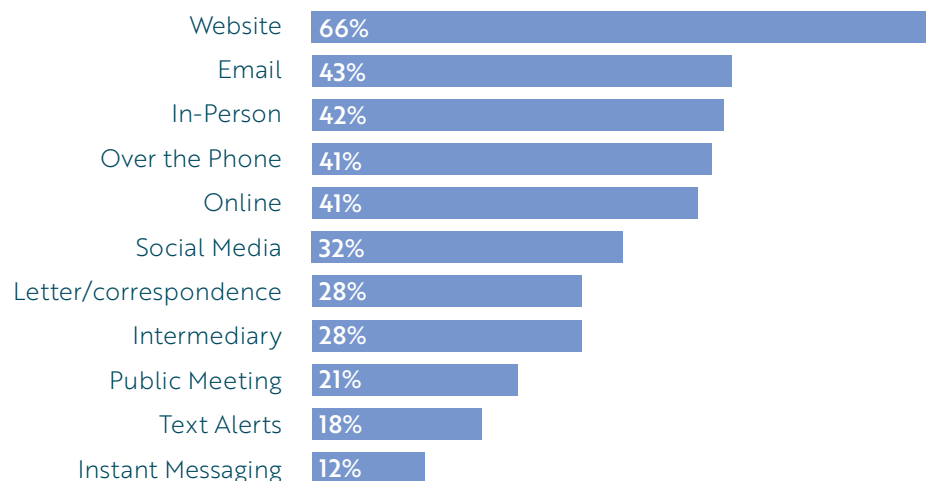
↓ Pedestrian and cycling infrastructure **(26%)**





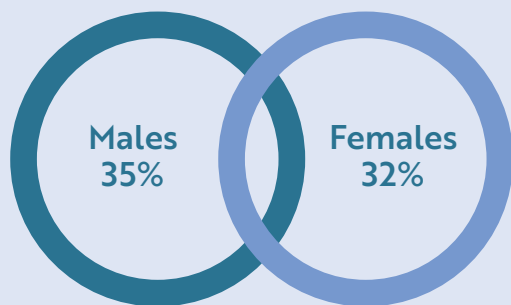
# 2024 Channels of Engagement

**Websites** were the most popular channel used to engage with local authorities within the past five years.



## GENDER / Slightly higher engagement of males

The 2024 survey showed that on average, males were slightly more engaged across all channels except *social media*.



## AGE / Highest engagement amongst 35-44s

18-24

Lower engagement via website, in-person, email, over the phone and online. Higher engagement via instant messaging.

35-44

Highest engagement across most channels, indicating a preference for a diversity of channels amongst this age group.

55+

Lower engagement via social media and letter. More likely to use traditional channels such as in person and over the phone.

## REGION/ Different preferences for in person engagements

### Dublin



Lower in person engagement (**37%**)



Higher engagement via email (**45%**)

### Munster



Higher engagement with websites (**68%**) and via an intermediary (**32%**)

### Connacht/Ulster

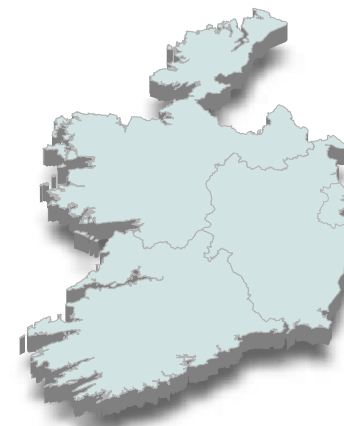


Higher engagement in person (**51%**), over the phone (**44%**) and online (**45%**)

### Rest of Leinster

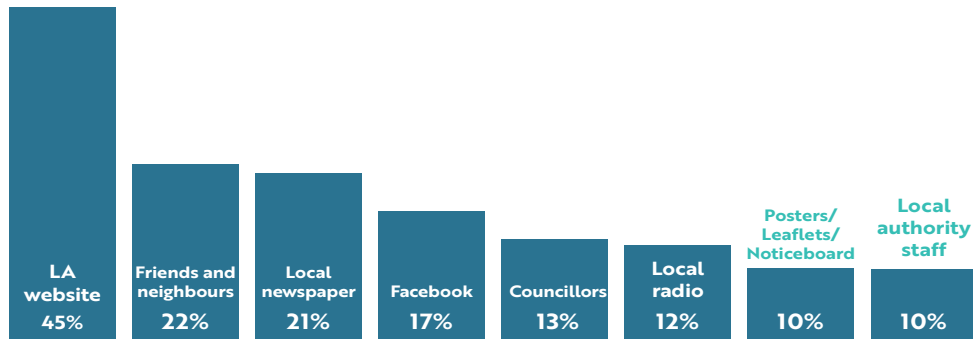


No notable differences compared to the national average across all channels of engagement



# Information Sources

Local authority websites were the most frequently used source of information at 45%.



## AGE / Oldest and youngest divide

Respondents aged **65+** were more reliant on **traditional sources of information** including:

- 31%** Local Newspapers
- 25%** Friends and Neighbours
- 24%** Contacting Councillors
- 21%** Local Radio
- 17%** Posters/Leaflets
- 17%** Local Authority Staff

The youngest cohort (**18-24**) had the highest engagement with:

- 14%** Instagram
- 12%** TV
- 9%** National Newspaper
- 9%** Twitter

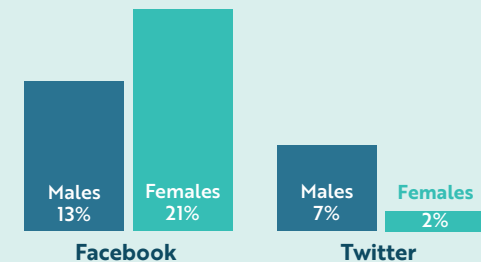
For the remaining 11 information sources usage rates were **below 10%**:

- TV
- Other Websites
- National Newspaper
- National Radio
- Instagram
- LA Newsletter
- Text Alerts
- LA Apps
- Twitter
- LinkedIn
- Other



## GENDER / Similar information sources

There was little variation in information sources used by males and females except for Twitter and Facebook.



## REGION / Differences

Respondents in **Dublin** were less likely to use local radio (4%) local newspapers (17%), and more likely to use posters/leaflets (15%) and local authority newsletters (11%).

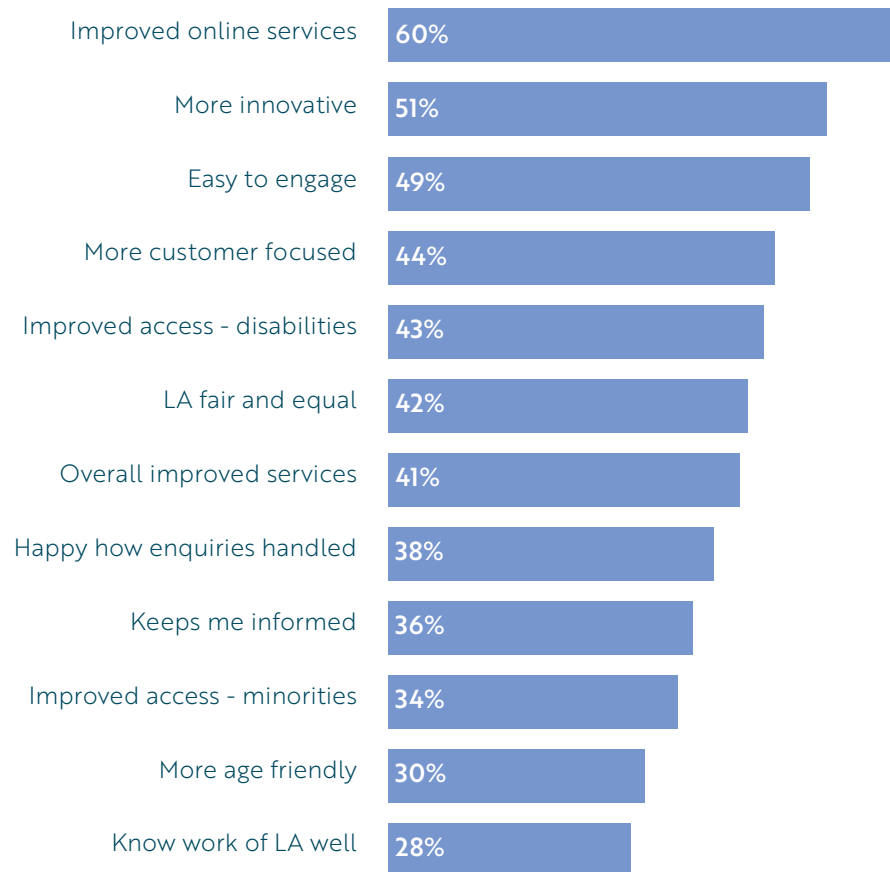
Respondents in **Munster** reported a higher use of local radio (18%) and local newspaper (24%).

**Connacht/Ulster** had the highest use of local authority website (48%). Lowest use of local authority website was in **Rest of Leinster** (43%).

# 2024 Sentiment

The survey included 12 sentiment statements. Respondents<sup>1</sup> were asked the extent to which they agreed with the statements. The results provide an indication of the public's sentiment in relation to the selected topics.

## Agreement with sentiment statements



## AGE / Youngest and oldest most positive

The highest levels of agreement occurred amongst the 18-24-year-olds and those aged 65 and over. Those aged 65+ had the highest levels of agreement for three of the sentiment statements:

- 73%** Improved Online Services
- 58%** More Innovative
- 55%** More customer focused

The **18-24s** had the highest levels of agreement for for six sentiments, particularly:

- 48%** Keeps me Informed
- 41%** More Age Friendly

The youngest cohort were less likely to agree that local authority digital services had improved (44%).

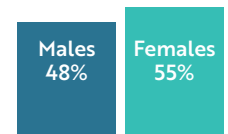
## REGION/ Connacht/Ulster lower agreement

- Respondents in **Connacht/Ulster** had the lowest levels of agreement for all 12 sentiment statements
- Respondents in **Munster** had higher levels of agreement across 9 of the 12 sentiment statements

## GENDER/ Similar sentiment

Agreement levels were similar for males and females for most sentiments except one. Males were less likely to agree that the local authority has become more innovative overtime.

### More Innovative

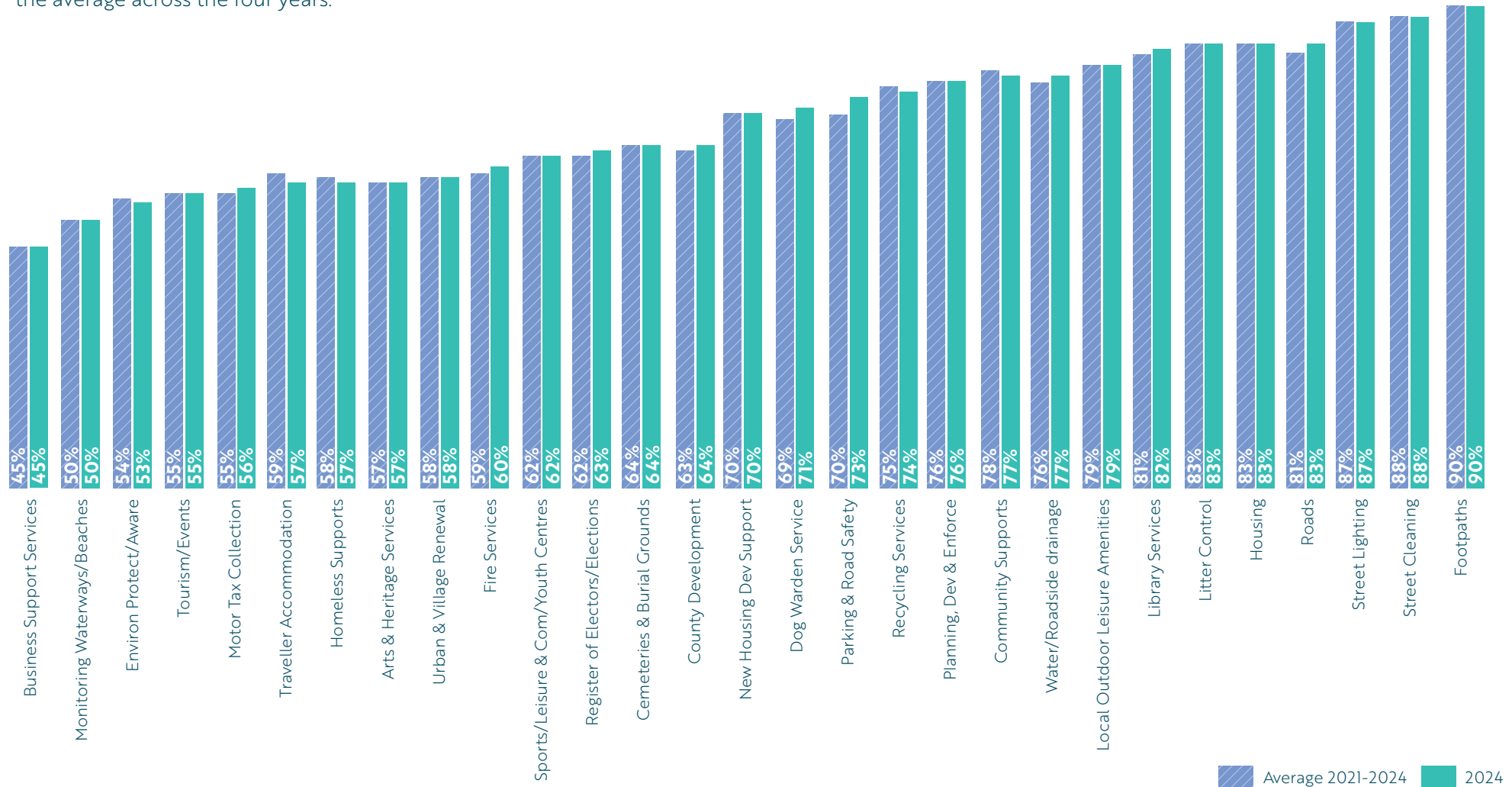


<sup>1</sup> Respondents were asked the sentiment questions approximately two weeks after the full survey was completed

# 2021-2024 Survey Trends

## SERVICE AWARENESS / Trend

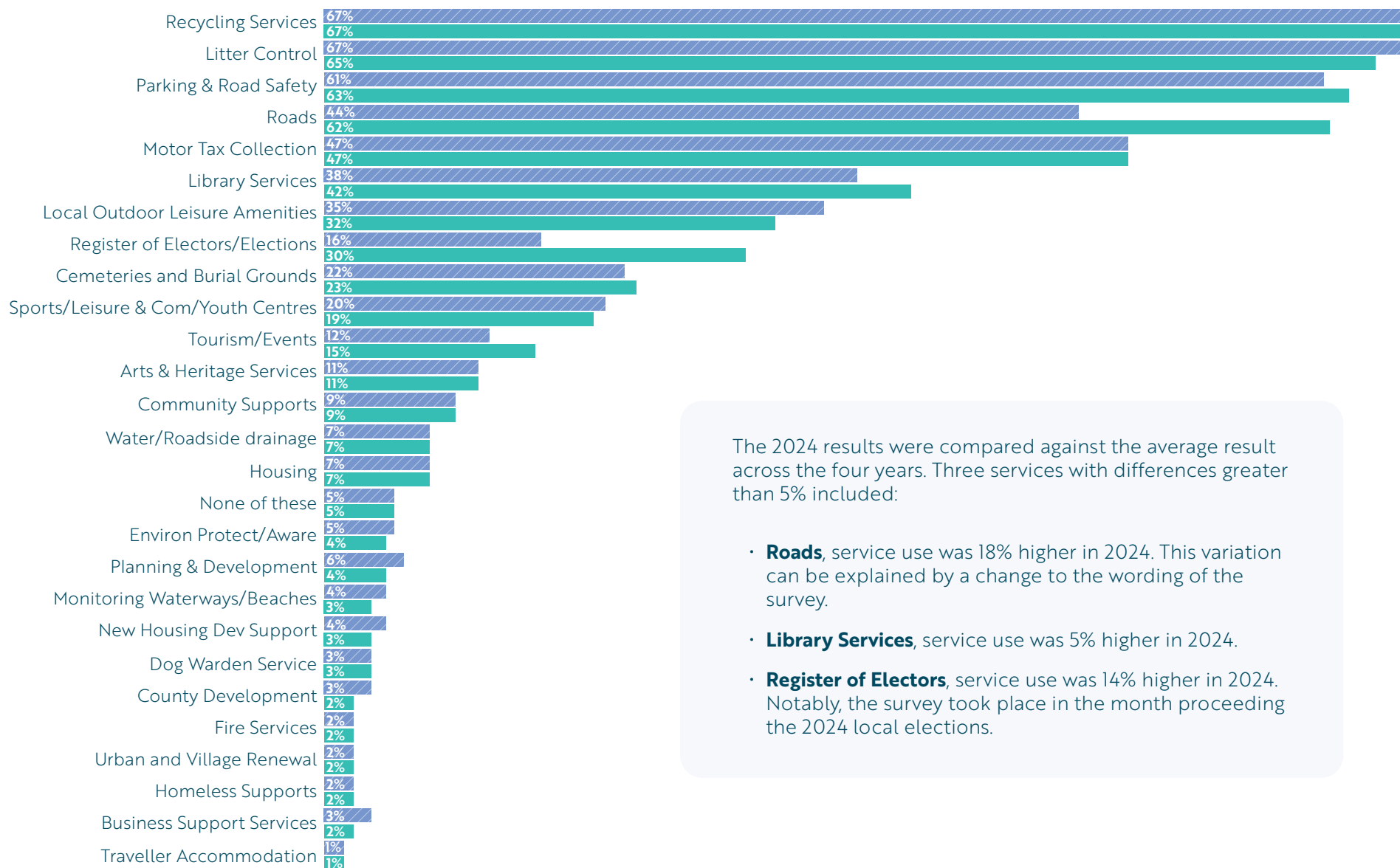
Minimal variances were noted in relation to levels of awareness about local authority service provision, 2021-2024. The 2024 data was consistent with the average across the four years.



# 2021-2024 Survey Trends

## SERVICE USE / Trend

Average 2021-2024 2024

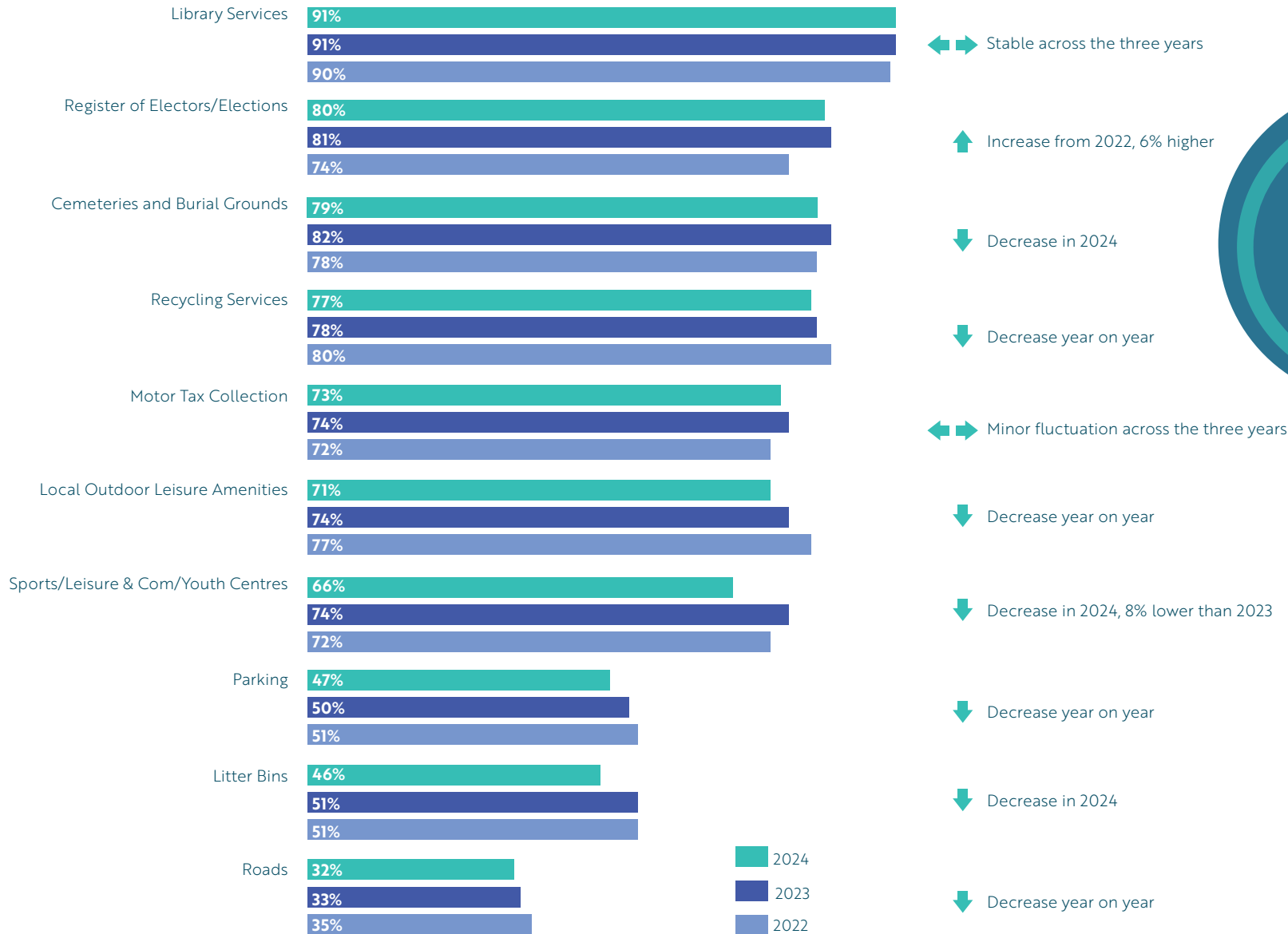


The 2024 results were compared against the average result across the four years. Three services with differences greater than 5% included:

- **Roads**, service use was 18% higher in 2024. This variation can be explained by a change to the wording of the survey.
- **Library Services**, service use was 5% higher in 2024.
- **Register of Electors**, service use was 14% higher in 2024. Notably, the survey took place in the month preceding the 2024 local elections.

# 2021-2024 Survey Trends

## SATISFACTION WITH SERVICES/ Trend



**Consistent high satisfaction for Library Services**

**Increase in satisfaction for Register of Electors**

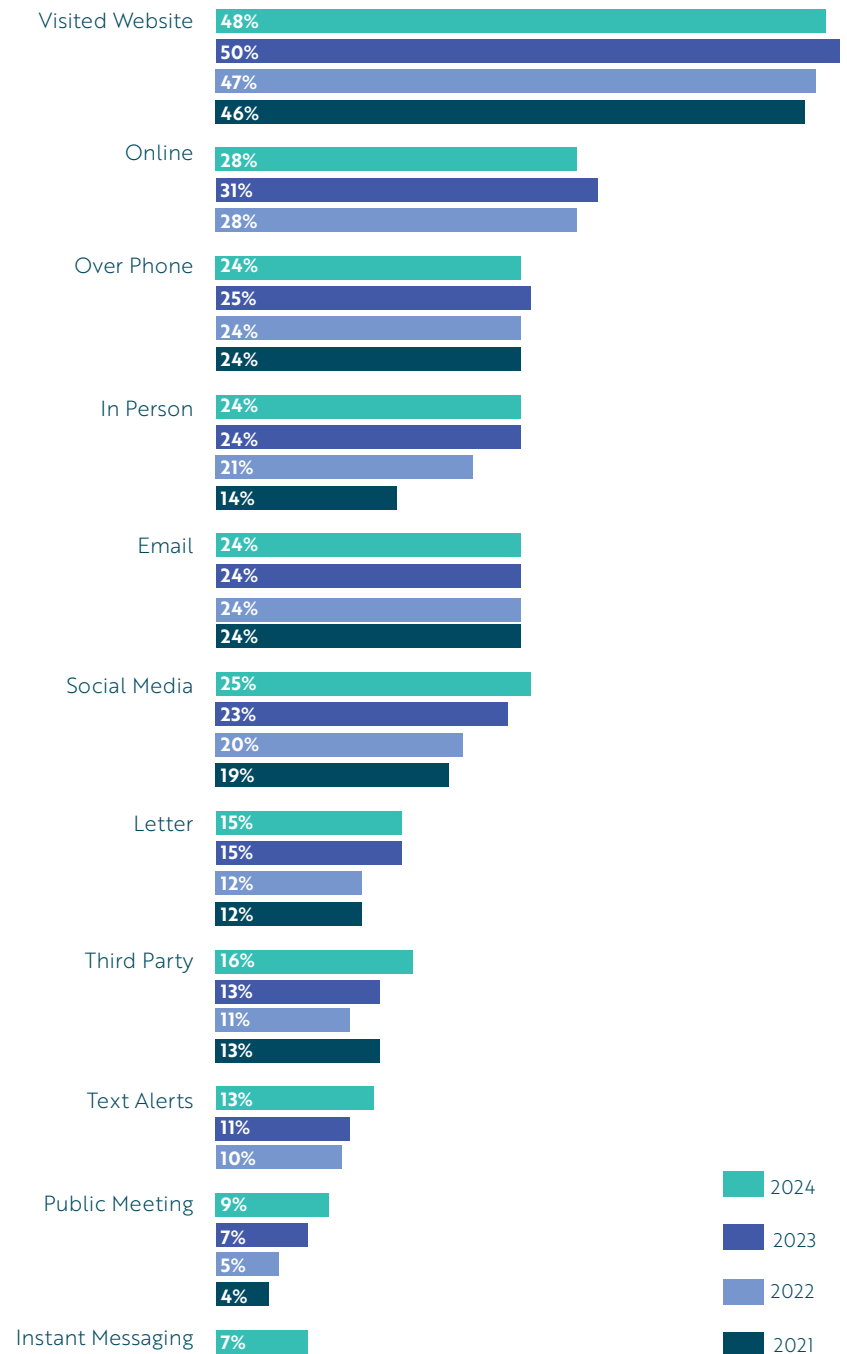
**Decreases in satisfaction for 7 of 10 services**

# 2021-2024 Survey Trends

## Channels Of Engagement

The data for channel of engagement used within the previous twelve months was compared across the four years.

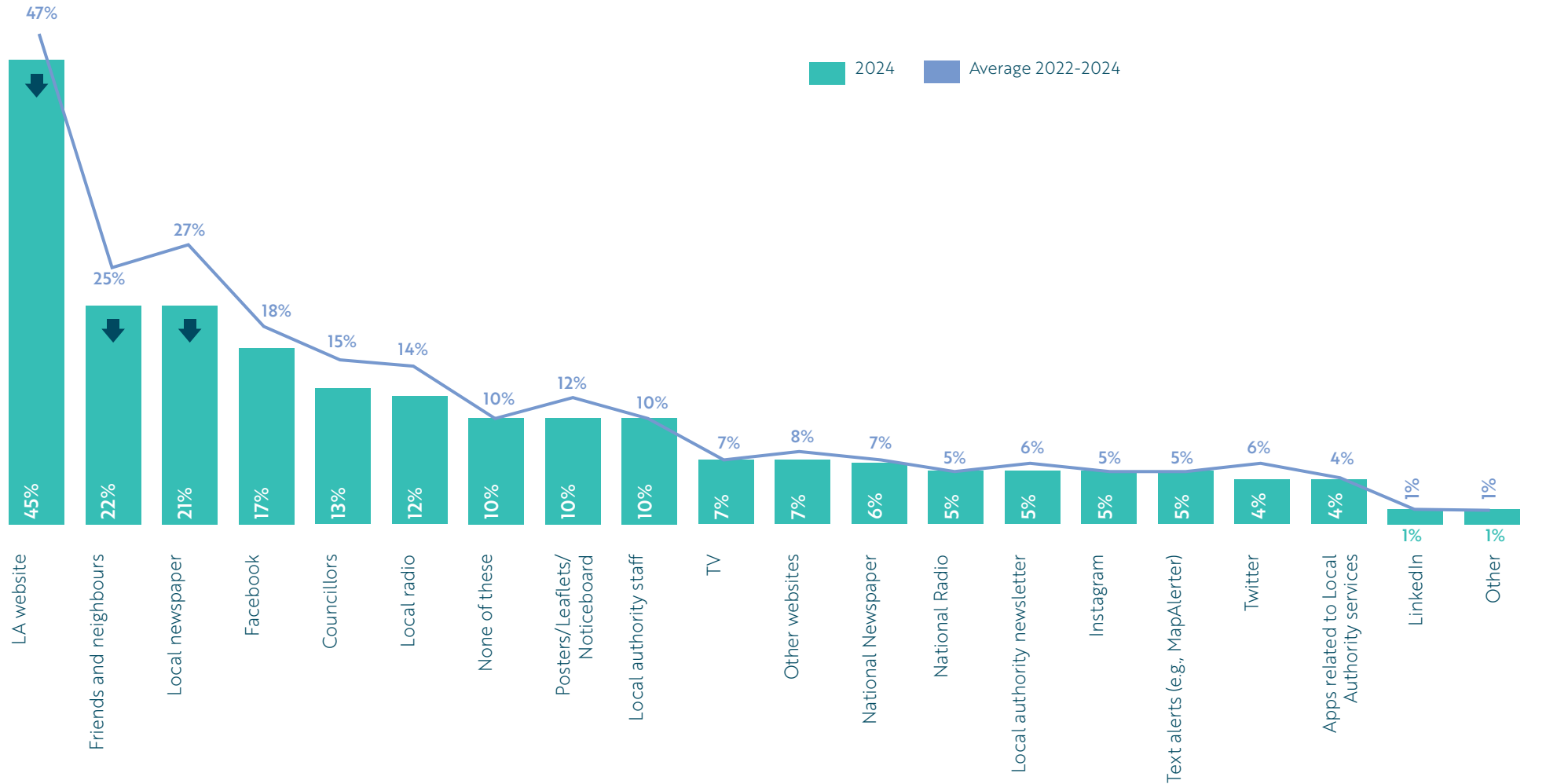
- **Websites** were the most important channel each year
- Consistent use of **phone and email** as channel of engagement
- Increase in **in-person** engagements and **public meetings** post pandemic
- Increase each year in engagement via **social media** and **text alerts**
- Increase in 2024 for those engaging via a **third party**
- **Instant messaging** category introduced in 2024



# 2021-2024 Survey Trends

## SOURCES OF INFORMATION/ Trend

Overall, for nine sources of information there was no change between the 2024 result and the average across the three years. Decreases of note were in the use of local authority websites, friends and neighbours and local newspapers as sources of information.



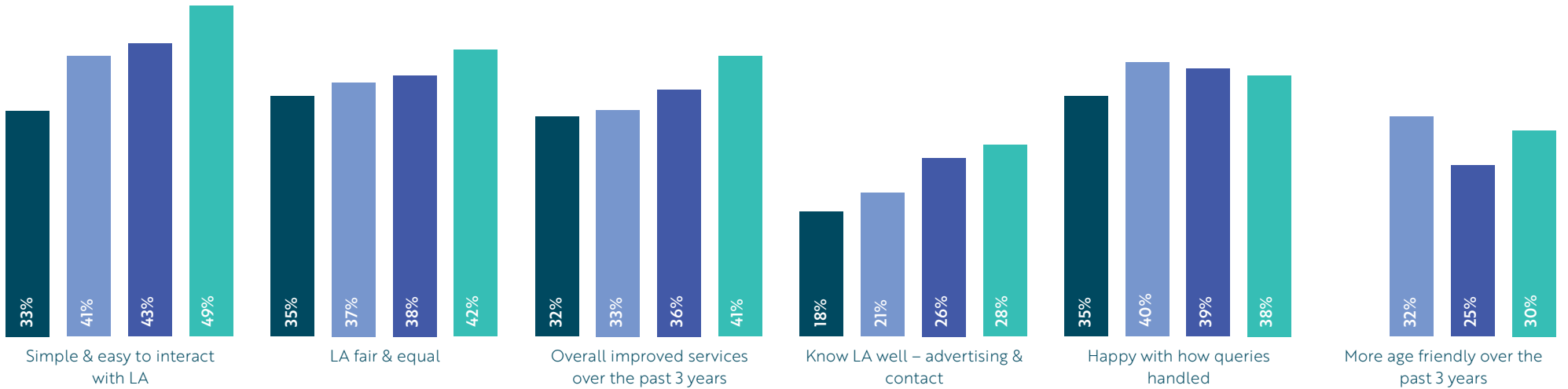


SENTIMENT / Trend

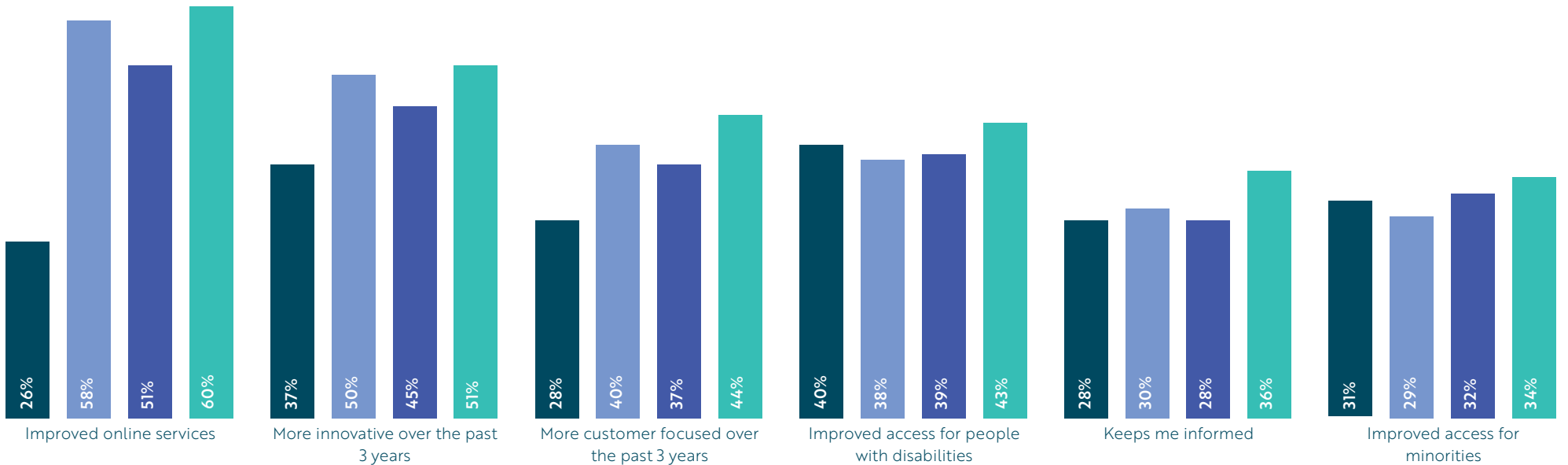
2021 2022 2023 2024

**Gradual increase in agreement each year**

**Fluctuations in agreement**



**Increase in agreement in 2024, improvements since 2021**



# 2024 SURVEY SPECIAL THEME

## Customer Engagement Experience

Each year, a topic relating to service delivery is explored in detail, through additional survey questions and focus groups. In 2024, the special theme was customer engagement experiences

## Type Of Engagements

**Direct engagements:** In person, phone and public meeting

**Indirect engagements:** Online, email, letter, social media and instant messaging

## Reason For Contact

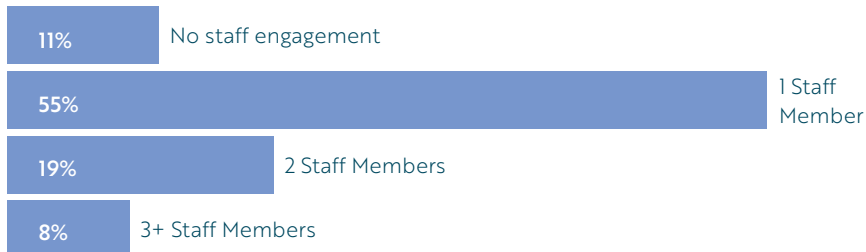
The three primary reasons for engaging with Local Authorities were:



Other stated reasons for engaging were to **make a complaint (10%)**, give **feedback (6%)** and **say thanks (3%)**.

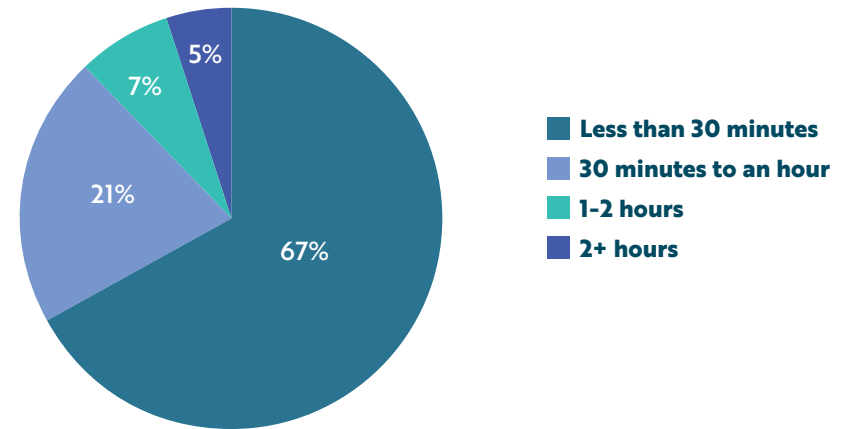
## Number Of Staff Contacted

7% answered 'Don't Know'

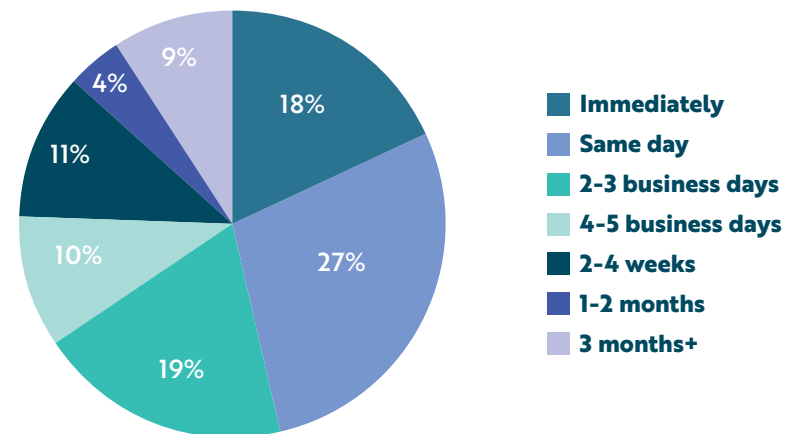


## Length of Engagement

88% of all **direct engagements** in person, by phone or in a public meeting were concluded in under an hour.



Response times for **indirect engagements** took longer on average.



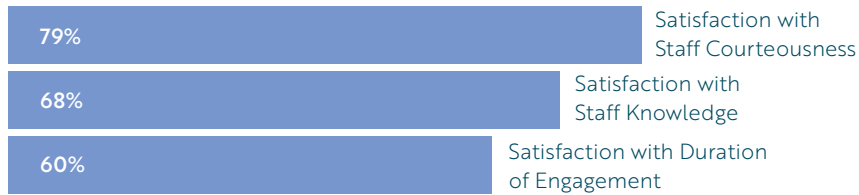
# 2024 SURVEY SPECIAL THEME

## Customer Engagement Experience

### Satisfaction With Engagement

#### Direct Engagements

Respondents engaging in-person, by phone or at a public meeting were asked to rate their satisfaction on three elements related to the engagement:



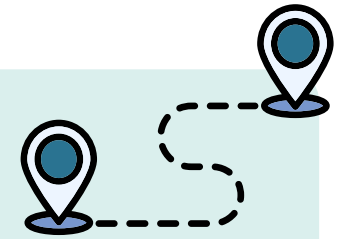
#### Indirect Engagements

Respondents engaging indirectly (by email, online, social media, letters or instant messaging) rated their satisfaction on two elements related to their engagement.



# 49%

of survey respondents would not change anything about their engagement experience.



### SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS

- 25%** Easier to Find Staff Contact Information
- 18%** Minimise Number of Interactions
- 10%** More Helpful Responses
- 7%** More Extensive Contact Hours
- 6%** Other



# 2024 FOCUS GROUPS

## Customer Engagement Experience

### Key Facts



7

#### Online Focus Groups

- Led by an independent consultant in May 2024



36

#### Attendees

- 23 Female
- 13 Male



#### Local Authority Recruitment Channels

- Phone
- Email
- In person
- Social Media



15

#### Local authorities represented across participants recruited

Clare  
Cork County  
Dublin City  
Dun-Laoghaire Rathdown  
Donegal  
Fingal  
Galway City  
Kilkenny  
Kildare  
Laois  
Mayo  
Monaghan  
Sligo  
Tipperary  
Wexford

### Focus Group Themes

The main themes addressed in the focus groups were:

- The purpose of their engagement with local authority
- The channel/s they used e.g. phone, email, etc.
- A description of their engagement - how things were resolved or concluded
- How they rated the engagement
- The most and least appealing features of dealing with their local authority
- What they considered important when delivering good customer care
- Examples of good customer care

# 2024 FOCUS GROUPS

## Customer Engagement Experience

### Channel of Most Recent Engagement

The majority had engaged with their local authority in person or by phone:

- 13 In person
- 13 By phone
- 6 Email
- 1 Social media
- 1 Online
- 1 Consultation
- 1 WhatsApp

### Purpose Of Engagement

There were multiple reasons for people contacting their local authority including:

- 8 Making an enquiry
- 8 Making a complaint/reporting a fault
- 5 Using a service
- 4 Motor tax
- 4 Community groups/grants
- 4 Work related
- 2 Library
- 1 Other

### Description of Engagement

**Ease of engagement**  
« 'The communication was easy; it was a good experience.' »

**Efficient service**  
'The service was really good, really quick. When I rang them, they directed me straight away as to what to do...'

**Ease of engagement**  
'My interactions are almost exclusively very, very good. I'm probably ringing every week about something, and probably because I know my way around as well...'

**Polite and helpful staff**  
« '...I have found all local authorities at that first point of contact to be very polite' »

**Less positive engagements**  
'It took ages to find out who was the right person to deal with my query'  
'There are always problems with making calls and it dropping out or being transferred...'  
'When I sent the first email I didn't get an acknowledgment, and nothing happened for months...'

# 2024 FOCUS GROUPS

## Customer Engagement Experience

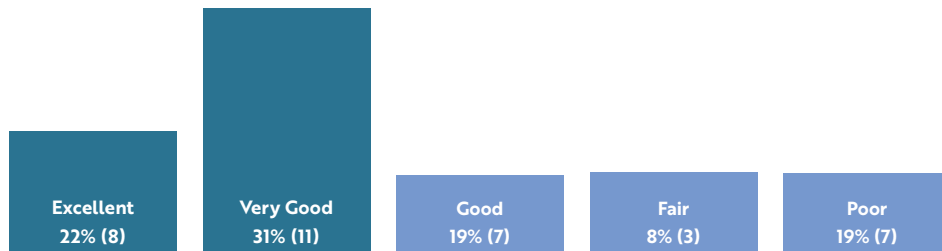
### Quality of Engagement

Most people had positive engagement experience



### Satisfaction with Duration of Engagement

Mixed satisfaction with duration of engagement



Participants with **positive experiences** referred mainly to **staff**:

- Helpful, accommodating and friendly
- Directing them to the correct contact



Participants with **fair or poor** experiences mentioned:

- Security and privacy concerns in person
- No email acknowledgements
- Need to follow up/chase emails and phone calls

**Participants with positive experiences were satisfied with the quick turnaround.**



Participants with **fair or poor** experiences mentioned:

- Protracted engagements
- Lengthy/complicated engagements
- Lack of response to emails/phone calls

# 2024 FOCUS GROUPS

## Customer Engagement Experience

### What people want when engaging with local authorities

The findings highlight three areas important for local authorities in maintaining positive customer engagement experiences. Some of

these features are present within local authorities already and this was evidenced by comments outlining positive customer engagements throughout the focus group sessions.

#### 1 Improved Engagement Processes



Confirmation of email or voicemail



Information about how long the queue or process will take



Clear referral system if staff are out of office

#### 2 Ease of Engagement



Multiple engagement channels, including webchats



Improvements to local authority websites

#### 3 Good Interpersonal Skills



Friendly, knowledgeable and responsive staff



Clear simple communication

# SUMMARY

## Overall Survey Findings & Trend

### SERVICE AWARENESS



**High awareness** (over 70%) of local authority service provision for 15 of 29 services.

**Consistent levels** of awareness across the four years.

### SERVICE SATISFACTION



**Satisfaction highest** for library services, register of electors and cemeteries/burial grounds. Lowest satisfaction for roads.

**Decrease in satisfaction levels** for 7 services in 2024.

### SOURCES OF INFORMATION



**Top 3** information sources = websites, friends & neighbours and local newspapers.

**Some decreases** in use noted in 2024, particularly for local newspapers at 21% compared to average of 27%.

### SERVICE USE



**Most used services** = recycling services, litter control and parking & road safety.

**Increase in use** of library services and register of electors.

### CHANNELS OF ENGAGEMENT



Website was the **most popular channel** to engage with local authorities.

**Increases in number of channels** being used by respondents.

### SENTIMENT



**Highest agreement** with improved online services, LA is becoming more innovative and easy to engage with LA.

**Increases in agreement** with sentiments. However **room for improvement** noted, particularly for know work of LA well.



# SUMMARY

## AGE

### Youngest Respondents (18-24)

- **Lower overall service awareness** and lower use of the most used services - recycling, litter control, parking, roads and motor tax
- **Lower engagement** in-person, over the phone, via websites and online. More likely to use instant messaging
- **Higher agreement** with LA keeps me informed and LA more age friendly. **Less likely to agree** local authorities are improving online services.

### Oldest Respondents (65+)

- **Higher overall service awareness** and higher use of recycling services, motor tax and cemeteries and burial grounds
- **Higher use of traditional information sources** – local newspapers, LA staff, local radio and councillors
- **Higher satisfaction** with services overall
- **Higher levels of agreement** for improved online services, LA is becoming more innovative and LA more customer focused.

## REGION

### Dublin

- **Lower average awareness** levels of local authority service provision. Lower use but higher satisfaction with roads
- **Lower in person engagements.** More likely to use email.

### Rest of Leinster

- **Higher use** of parking & road safety and recycling services
- **Most satisfied** with library services and cemeteries and burial grounds.

### Munster

- **More likely to use** local newspaper and radio
- **Lowest satisfaction** with roads
- **Highest levels of agreement** across 9 sentiment statements.

### Connacht/Ulster

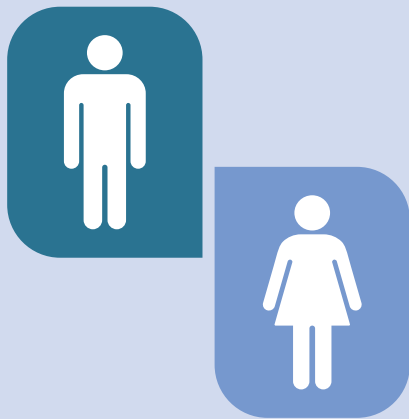
- **Higher in person engagements**
- **Lowest levels of agreement** for all 12 sentiment statements.

# SUMMARY

## GENDER

The variances between the genders were minimal, with a few exceptions.

- Males had higher awareness of local authority service provision for fire services, county development and sports/leisure centres
- Females more likely to use libraries
- On average, males were slightly more engaged across all channels except social media
- Females reported higher rates of satisfaction than males for most services
- Males were less likely to agree that their local authority was becoming more innovative.



## SPECIAL THEME

### Customer Engagement Experience – Survey

- The three **primary reasons for engaging** with local authorities were making an enquiry, using a service and reporting a fault
- **High satisfaction** with staff knowledge and courteousness.
- Just under two thirds **were satisfied with the duration of their engagement**
- Almost half of the respondents **would not change anything about their engagement experience.**

### Customer Engagement Experience – Focus Groups

- The majority of participants were **satisfied with the quality of the engagement**
- There was **mixed satisfaction with duration** of engagement
- **Improved engagement processes, ease of engagement and good interpersonal skills** were seen as key priorities for good customer service.



