

ROTHERHAM RESIDENT SATISFACTION SURVEY

Wave 9

June 2019

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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To view previous reports on the Rotherham polling survey series 2015-2018, please visit:
http://www.rotherham.gov.uk/downloads/download/250/lga_resident_satisfaction_survey

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INTRODUCTION

During 2015 and 2016, the LGA undertook four polling surveys to find out what residents of Rotherham Borough thought about Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council (RMBC) and the Borough in general. The survey formed part of the improvement activity within the authority which began in May 2015, with the first survey taking place in June 2015. The survey asked about satisfaction with the Council, perceptions of value for money, responsiveness, trust and confidence in the Council, and satisfaction with aspects of life in Rotherham.

Following the ending of the LGA's support related to resident satisfaction, the Council has continued the surveys on to monitor satisfaction levels and the extent to which the views of residents have changed over time. The Council has also wished to explore residents' perceptions of safety, optimism about the future of the borough and town centre, and their views on community cohesion.

This report details the findings of the most recent resident's satisfaction survey (Wave 9). It makes comparisons with the previous eight waves of the survey in Rotherham and also to the LGA's most recent national survey of British residents. The latest national poll was made up of a representative random sample of 1,001 British adults (aged 18 or over), and was carried out by telephone by Populous Data Solutions in February 2019. The Rotherham survey sample was made up of 515 adults who were polled between 3rd and 11th June 2019.

Comparing Rotherham's results to the national picture provides useful context although many additional factors will influence resident views of councils at a local level. These include local demographics, social and economic factors, and media coverage prior to the survey. Therefore, whilst the results of the polling in Rotherham provides a good high-level indication of resident views of Rotherham and its council, it is important that they are seen as complementary to a wider approach to understanding and responding to communities at the local level.

As noted in the Methodology section, the relatively small sample size in Rotherham means that small variations from one survey wave to another should not be interpreted as indicating a significant change in opinion. The results of this survey should be seen in the wider context provided by the patterns of the nine surveys since 2015.

METHODOLOGY

Between 3rd and 11th June 2019, a statistically representative random sample of 515 Rotherham residents (aged 18 or over) was polled mainly by landline telephone using quotas set by age and gender. The data was further weighted to reflect the age, gender and social grade profile of Rotherham. This ensures that the sample is as representative of adults in the borough as possible as there is often a bias in the profile of people who respond to any survey. The use of landline telephones has become increasingly problematic in surveying young adults aged 18-34 so additional people were polled by mobile phone to boost the number of younger respondents. Previous surveys took place in June 2015, December 2015, June 2016, December 2016, June 2017, February 2018, June 2018 and December 2018.

The questions used in the Rotherham survey are outlined in Annex A for information. Most of the questions asked also feature in the LGA's regular national polling on resident satisfaction. These questions were developed and tested by the LGA and Ipsos MORI, then modified and agreed via consultation with wider local government. Core questions have been repeated across all nine Rotherham's surveys. Additional questions about perceptions of safety, community cohesion and optimism have also been asked since June 2017. A local question about satisfaction with Rotherham as place to live has been asked in each survey apart from Wave 5.

Where tables and figures report the base, this description refers to the whole group of people who were asked the question. The number provided refers to the unweighted number of respondents who answered each question.

As mentioned, this report includes comparisons with the LGA's national results, where the questions asked are the same. Differences between the national survey and Rotherham's results are only highlighted within the report where they are statistically significant. The confidence interval of the Rotherham survey is 4.3 per cent at the 95 per cent level which means that only a difference of five per cent or more between different survey results indicates a statistically significant change. Caution is needed when comparing the results of individual surveys and interpreting small variations between waves. Where results fluctuate it can be useful to consider the average of several waves combined to provide a larger sample size and reduce the effect of random variation. For example, the 95 per cent confidence interval for four waves combined would be 2.15 so a three per cent difference would be statistically significant.

Please note the following when reading this report:

- Throughout the report, percentages in figures and tables may add to more than 100 due to rounding.
- The following conventions are used in tables: '**' - less than 0.5 per cent; '0' – no observations; '-' – category not applicable/data not available.

KEY FINDINGS

Rotherham MBC commissioned a ninth survey (known as Wave 9) to capture what residents of Rotherham currently think about their local area, the wider Borough and the Council. The questions included six measures of resident satisfaction which also feature in the LGA's regular national polling. Additional questions were also asked about residents' feelings of safety, optimism about the future of the Borough and town centre, and their views on community cohesion.

Resident Satisfaction Measures

Considering the measures of resident satisfaction, the results from Wave 9 point to four key features of resident satisfaction (also see Figure 1).

- **Satisfaction with local area as a place to live:** The great majority of Rotherham residents are satisfied with their local area as a place to live (79 per cent of respondents were 'very' or 'fairly' satisfied), higher than in February 2018 but average overall. Satisfaction with the local area was slightly below the most recent national average of 81% although Rotherham matched the national score in June 2018 and exceeded it in December 2018.
- **Satisfaction with the way Rotherham MBC runs things:** 48 per cent reported feeling 'very satisfied' or 'fairly satisfied' with the way RMBC runs things – higher than the figure in June 2018 but below the average of 51 per cent across all nine surveys. Satisfaction with the council in Rotherham remains well below the national average of 60 per cent.
- **Trust in Rotherham MBC:** 50 per cent said they trusted Rotherham Council 'a great deal' or 'a fair amount – a higher proportion than most waves of the survey although lower than Waves 4 to 6. Whilst the national figure for trust in the council (60 per cent) is significantly higher than in Rotherham, the average level of trust in RMBC has increased from 44 per cent in the early Waves 1-3 to 49 per cent in the more recent Waves 4-9.
- **Provision of value for money:** The proportion of Rotherham respondents who agreed that RMBC provides value for money fell from 43 per cent in June 2017 to 36 per cent in February 2018. These were the highest and lowest results for this question across the six polls, illustrating the volatility in opinion as measured by the surveys. The December 2018 and June 2019 results were both 38 per cent, close to the average level of 39 per cent, slightly below the national average of 44 per cent.

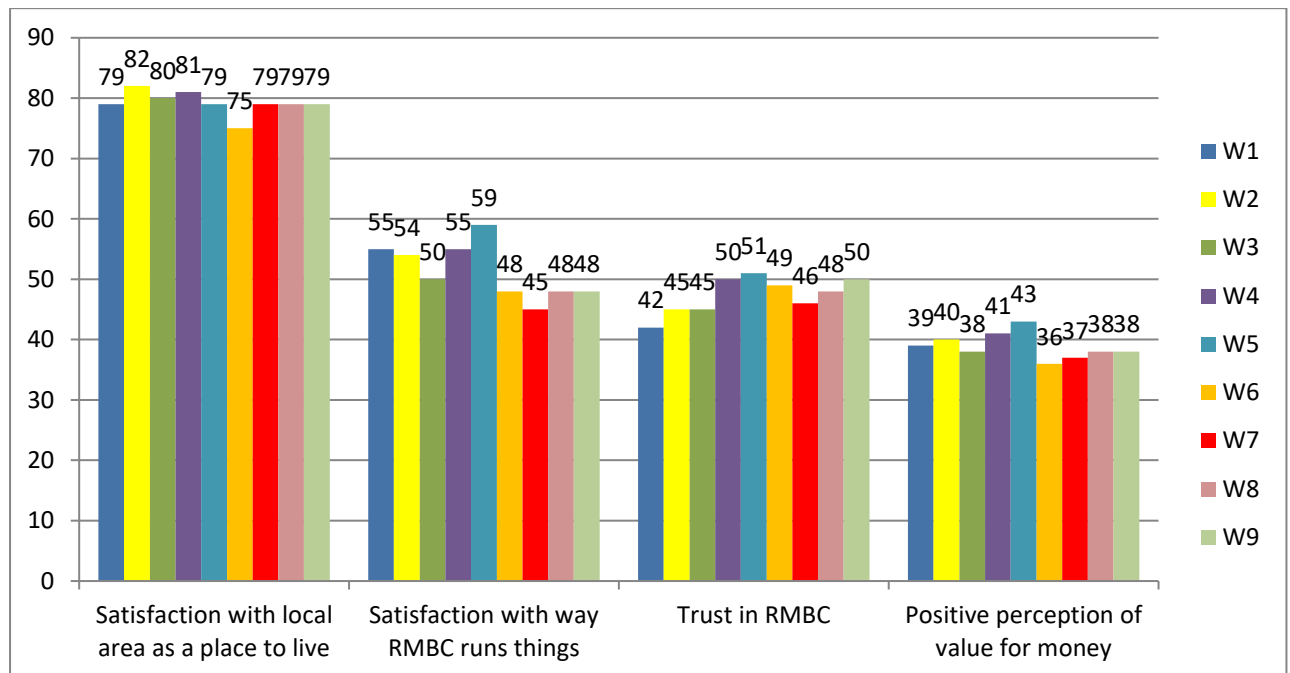
Opinions on how **well informed** residents were by RMBC have generally become more positive with the results in Waves 6 to 9 being significantly above the average of the first five polls (52.3 per cent and 46.5 per cent, respectively), although positive responses have fluctuated by up to ten percentage points between the polls.

However, the proportion of respondents replying favourably remains well below the national average (51 per cent and 59 per cent, respectively).

Views on the **responsiveness** of RMBC in June 2019 were slightly more positive at 51 per cent than the survey average of 47 per cent. Both this and the latest figure are well below the national average of 58 per cent.

Figure 1 Key Findings (Waves 1-9)

Resident satisfaction measures: key findings (%)



Base (all respondents – figure includes only those who gave a positive reply): June 2015: 531; Dec 2015: 528; June 2016: 520; Dec 2016: 520; June 2017: 520; Feb 2018: 517; June 2018: 515; Dec 2018: 515, June 2019: 515

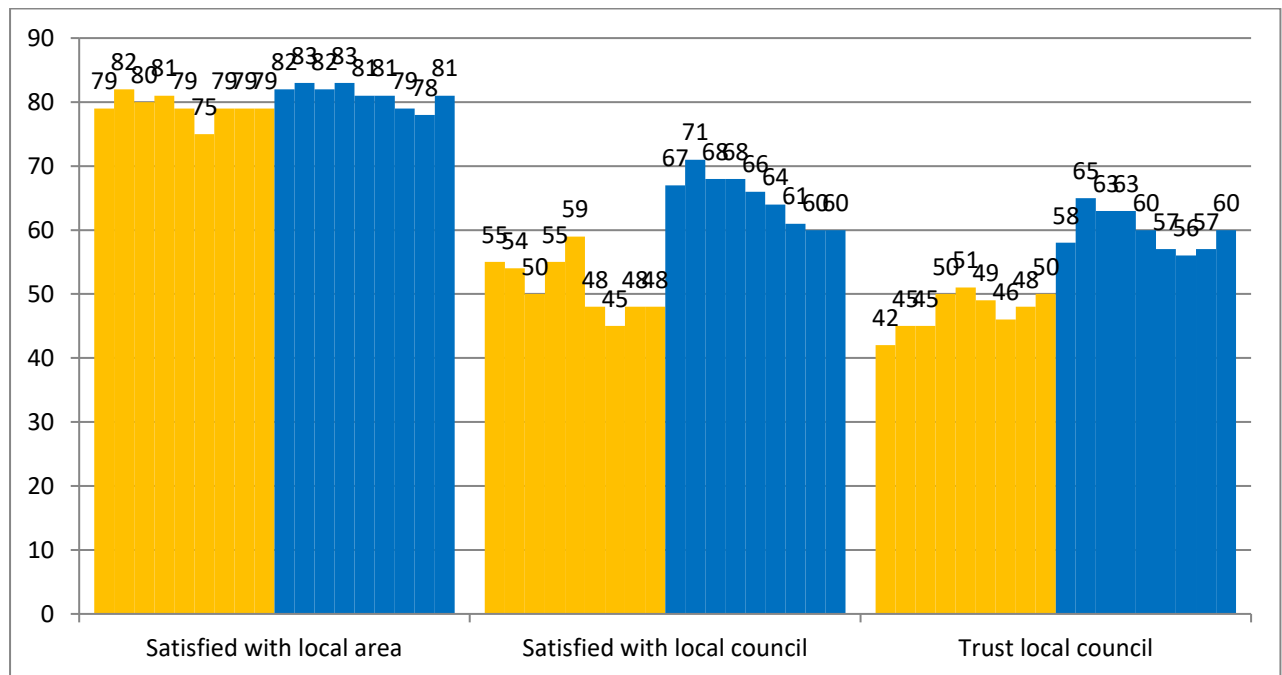
Figure 1 summarises the survey results for four indicators of resident satisfaction used in the Rotherham survey, combining the positive results achieved for each question (e.g. ‘a great amount’ and ‘a fair amount’).

Figure 1 shows a consistently high level of satisfaction with residents’ local area as a place to live and people remain far more satisfied on this measure than any other. Although satisfaction with the way the Council runs things is lower than in 2015-16, trust in the Council has increased since 2015-16. Positive perceptions of value for money are consistently the lowest of the four measures, averaging 39 per cent with no result being more than four per cent different.

Figure 2 summarises the results for three indicators of resident satisfaction used in the Rotherham survey, combining the positive results for each question (e.g. ‘a great amount’ and ‘a fair amount’). The results are presented alongside those from the LGA’s national polling survey (in blue), for the nearest comparable time period.

Figure 2 Results for Key Indicators (Rotherham and GB)

Resident satisfaction (%) Rotherham Waves 1-9 (orange) and GB 2015-19 (blue)

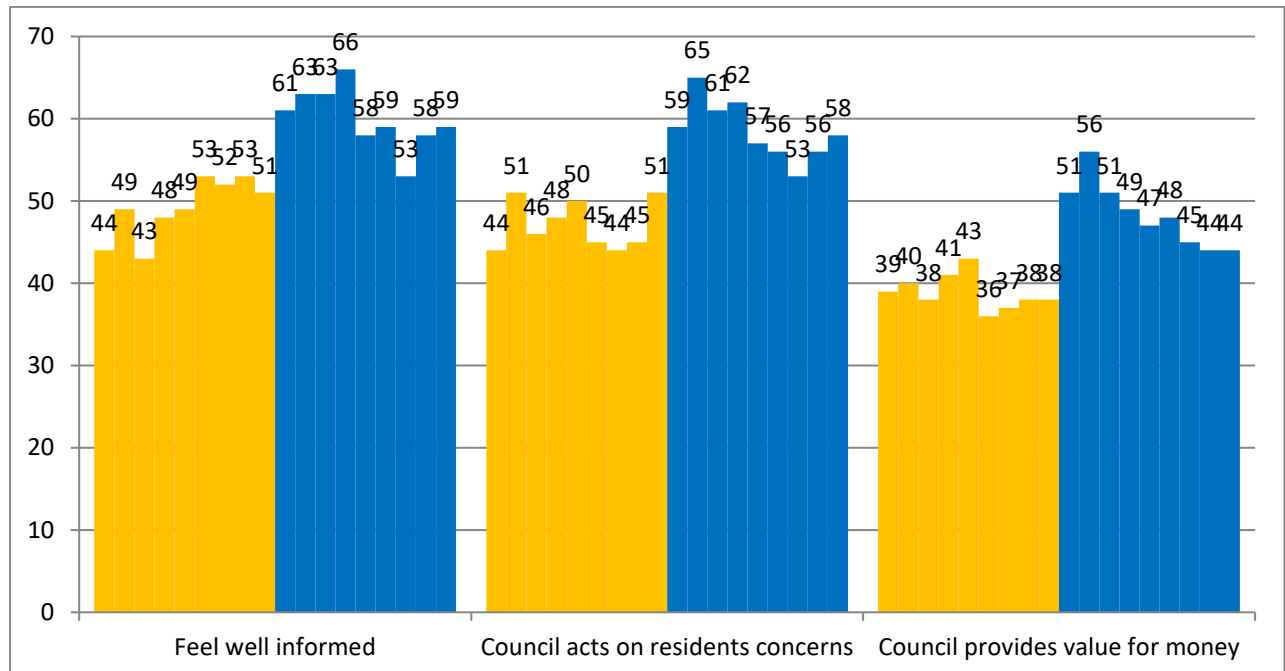


Base (all respondents – figure includes only those who gave a positive reply): June 2015 Rotherham: 531; Dec 2015: 528; June 2016: 520; Dec 2016: 520; June 2017: 520; Feb 2018 Rotherham: 517; June 2018: 515; Dec 2018: 515; June 2019: 515; Feb 2019 GB: 1,001

Figure 2 shows consistently high and stable satisfaction with resident's local area as a place to live, which is the only survey result where Rotherham mirrors the national average. Satisfaction with councils nationally has fallen steadily since December 2015 whilst the picture in Rotherham is less clear. Trust in Rotherham Council has tended to be higher since 2016 than previously which initially contrasted with declining trust in councils nationally, although this is now improving in line with an improvement in Rotherham.

Figure 3: Polling Results for Council Indicators (Rotherham and GB)

Resident satisfaction (%) Rotherham Waves 1-9 (orange) and GB 2015-19 (blue)



Base (all respondents – figure includes only those who gave a positive reply): Rotherham: June 2015: 531; Dec 2015: 528; June 2016: 520; Dec 2016: 520; June 2017: 520; Feb 2018: 517; June 2018: 515; Dec 2018: 515. GB: between 1,001 and 1,009.

Figure 3 follows the format of Figure 1 in comparing the nine local waves to the national picture (in blue). The chart shows that people in Rotherham now feel better informed about council services than in 2015/16 whilst nationally this is not the case. Nationally, the proportion of people who think their council provides value for money has fallen but the picture in Rotherham is less clear. The patterns for councils acting on residents’ concerns are less clear although the more recent data shows a slight increase locally.

Confidence in RMBC

In each survey wave, respondents were asked to state the extent to which they had confidence in RMBC. In Wave 9, 48 per cent said they had a ‘great’ or ‘moderate’ amount of confidence in the Council. This was slightly lower than in 2016-17 but higher than all the other surveys – suggesting that confidence increased slightly and fell back again before rising recently. There is no national comparison for this question.

Feelings of Safety, Optimism and Cohesion

The following results were obtained in relation to three additional questions that were added to the polling survey in Waves 5 to 9:

Feelings of safety: Significantly lower feelings of safety in the local area were reported by respondents in Rotherham than those reported nationally. Eighty seven per cent felt 'very safe' or 'fairly safe' during the day and 59 per cent felt the same after dark (94 per cent and 76 per cent, nationally). There was a significant gender difference in feelings of safety after dark – 66 per cent of men said they felt 'very safe' or 'fairly safe' but only 53 per cent of women.

Feelings of optimism: Optimism among respondents about the future of Rotherham as a place to live was 52 per cent (either 'very optimistic' or 'fairly optimistic'), but only 22 per cent felt the same about the future of Rotherham town centre (either 'very optimistic' or 'fairly optimistic'), the latter being lower than in June 2017 but slightly better than more recent results. There is no national comparison for these questions.

Community cohesion perceptions: The results show no consensus as to whether or not Rotherham is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together (32 per cent agree, 28 per cent gave a neutral response and 39 per cent disagree in Wave 9). The equivalent measure to the former National Indicator 1 (community cohesion), which excluded neutral responses, would be 45 per cent, slightly higher than in the previous survey. There is no national comparison for this question.

ROTHERHAM'S SURVEY RESULTS

This section outlines the full set of results for the ninth Rotherham survey which took place in June 2019 (Wave 9). Eight previous surveys have been conducted, one in June 2015 (Wave 1) to establish a baseline picture of residents' views of Rotherham and the Council, a second in December 2015 (Wave 2), a third in June 2016 (Wave 3), a fourth in December 2016 (Wave 4), a fifth in June 2017 (Wave 5), a sixth in February 2018 (Wave 6), a seventh in June 2018 (Wave 7) and an eighth in December 2018 (Wave 8).

Satisfaction with Local Area as a Place to Live

Satisfaction with the local area within Rotherham as a place to live has remained high and fairly stable since the first satisfaction survey in June 2015 (see Table 1). Across the eight waves, the average level of satisfaction has been 79 per cent and no survey result has varied from this by more than four per cent. Importantly, the proportion of respondents who were either 'very satisfied' or 'fairly satisfied' across all eight polls was very similar to the national average over the same time period.

Seventy nine per cent of respondents in Wave 9 reported feeling ‘very satisfied’ or ‘fairly satisfied’ which is the average for Rotherham over all the waves although slightly below the proportion observed nationally in February 2019. Young adults (aged 18-24 years) were the *least* likely to report being ‘very satisfied’ although a large percentage expressed a neutral view. Older middle aged people (aged 55-64 years) are the *most* likely to be satisfied with their local area.

It should be noted that the ‘local area’ refers to the local neighbourhood or village where residents live and not the whole of Rotherham. Resident’s satisfaction with their local area far exceeds their satisfaction with Rotherham Borough which was only 58 per cent in Wave 9 (see Table 11).

Table 1: Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your local area (within a 15-20 minute walk from your home) as a place to live?										
	Jun 15	Dec 15	Jun 16	Dec 16	Jun 17	Feb 18	Jun 18	Dec 18	Feb 18	Feb 19
	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3	Wave 4	Wave 5	Wave 6	Wave 7	Wave 8	Wave 9	GB
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Very or fairly satisfied	79	82	80	81	79	75	79	79	79	81
Very satisfied	35	31	35	35	35	29	33	32	30	28
Fairly satisfied	44	51	45	45	44	46	46	47	49	53
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	9	6	9	8	8	11	8	7	9	11
Fairly dissatisfied	7	6	6	7	8	9	7	10	7	6
Very dissatisfied	5	6	5	4	4	5	6	5	5	2
Don't know	-	-	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*

Base (all respondents): June 2015 Rotherham: 531; Dec 2015: 528; June 2016: 520; Dec 2016: 520; June 2017: 520; Feb 2018: 517; June 2018: 515; Dec 2018: 515; June 2019: 515 Feb 2019 GB: 1,001

Satisfaction with how Rotherham MBC runs things

Forty eight per cent of respondents in Wave 9 were ‘very satisfied’ or ‘fairly satisfied’ with the way RMBC runs things (see Table 2). This was higher than in June 2018 but significantly lower than in the June 2017 survey (59 per cent) and below the survey average (51%). The youngest respondents (aged 16-24) were most likely to report being satisfied with the way the Council runs things. Older middle aged people (aged 55-64 years) are most likely to be dissatisfied.

Compared to the most recent national figure for satisfaction with the council (60 per cent), the figure for Rotherham is significantly lower.

Table 2: Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council runs things?										
	Jun 2015	Dec 2015	Jun 2016	Dec 2016	Jun 2017	Feb 2018	Jun 2018	Dec 2018	Jun 2019	Feb 2019
	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3	Wave 4	Wave 5	Wave 6	Wave 7	Wave 8	Wave 9	GB
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Very or fairly satisfied	55	54	50	55	59	48	45	48	48	60
Very satisfied	12	15	12	14	15	10	11	12	10	13
Fairly satisfied	42	39	38	41	43	38	33	36	38	48
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	14	16	17	13	15	14	14	14	18	20
Fairly dissatisfied	16	18	20	19	17	21	22	22	17	12
Very dissatisfied	14	12	13	11	9	16	19	16	17	7
Don't know	*	*	*	1	*	*	1	*	*	*

Base (all respondents): June 2015 Rotherham: 531; Dec 2015: 528; June 2016: 520; Dec 2016: 520; June 2017: 520; Feb 2018: 517; June 2018: 515; Dec 2018: 515; June 2019: 515; Feb 2019 GB: 1,001

Provision of Value for Money by Rotherham MBC

Thirty eight per cent of respondents would 'tend to agree' or 'strongly agree' that Rotherham MBC provides value for money (see Table 3). This is close to the average level of satisfaction for this question across all nine polls (opinion rarely varies enough to indicate a significant change). The result is significantly lower than the proportion observed nationally (44 per cent).

It is notable that on average, 28 per cent of respondents expressed a neutral opinion and 27 per cent expressed a negative view. Young adults (aged 18-24 years) and older people (aged 65 and above) were most likely to agree that the Council provides value for money whilst middle aged people (aged 45-54 years) were least likely to agree.

Table 3: To what extent do you think that the Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council provides value for money?										
	Jun 2015	Dec 2015	Jun 2016	Dec 2016	Jun 2017	Feb 2018	Jun 2018	Dec 2018	Jun 2019	Feb 2019
	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3	Wave 4	Wave 5	Wave 6	Wave 7	Wave 8	Wave 9	GB
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Strongly or tend to agree	39	40	38	41	43	36	37	38	38	44
Strongly agree	8	10	7	7	9	7	8	8	7	8
Tend to agree	31	31	31	34	34	30	29	30	32	36
Neither agree nor disagree	28	33	29	30	30	27	28	28	29	31
Tend to disagree	19	17	19	19	19	21	22	20	18	16
Strongly disagree	13	8	13	9	7	14	13	13	14	8
Don't know	1	1	*	2	1	1	1	1	1	1

Base (all respondents): June 2015 Rotherham: 531; Dec 2015: 528; June 2016: 520; Dec 2016: 520; June 2017: 520; Feb 2018: 517; June 2018: 515; Dec 2018: 515; June 2019: 515; Feb 2019 GB: 1,001

The reduction of five percentage points since June 2017 could well be linked to publicity about and awareness of council tax rises alongside continued budget cuts, which could have encouraged a more negative perception of value for money.

Responsiveness of Rotherham MBC

Council responsiveness is an important measure of local accountability as it relates to whether councils are perceived to be receptive to local issues and problems raised (see Table 4). Residents were asked for their opinion about services provided by the Council to the community as a whole, as well as to their own household.

Fifty one per cent of respondents in Rotherham answered positively when asked about the extent to which RMBC acts on the concerns of local residents (i.e. ‘a great deal’ or ‘a fair amount’). This is higher than the findings of the previous three surveys and the average of all nine waves (47 per cent) but considerably lower than the national result (58 per cent). The youngest respondents (aged 18-24) were most likely to think that the Council acts on the concerns of local residents whilst those aged 55-64 were least likely to have this view.

Table 4: To what extent do you think that the Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council acts on the concerns of local residents?										
	Jun 2015	Dec 2015	Jun 2016	Dec 2016	Jun 2017	Feb 2018	Jun 2018	Dec 2018	Jun 2019	Oct 2018
	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3	Wave 4	Wave 5	Wave 6	Wave 7	Wave 8	Wave 9	GB
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
A great deal or fair amount	44	51	46	48	50	45	44	45	51	56
A great deal	5	7	6	6	8	5	6	6	5	8
A fair amount	39	44	40	42	42	41	38	39	46	48
Not very much	37	36	37	36	37	37	39	36	34	32
Not at all	12	9	13	11	9	13	13	14	12	9
Don't know	7	4	4	5	3	5	4	6	3	3

Base (all respondents): June 2015 Rotherham: 531; Dec 2015: 528; June 2016: 520; Dec 2016: 520; June 2017: 520; Feb 2018: 517; June 2018: 515; Dec 2018: 515; June 2019: 515; Feb 2019 GB: 1,001

Keeping Residents Informed

Fifty one per cent of Rotherham respondents in Wave 9 said that RMBC keeps residents ‘very well’ or ‘fairly well’ informed about the services and benefits it provides (see Table 5). This is below the most recent national result (59 per cent) but above the average for Rotherham surveys (49 per cent) and eight percentage points higher than in June 2016. The average of 52 per cent for 2018-19 was notably higher than the average of 46 per cent for 2015-16. Younger respondents (aged 18-44) were more likely to think that the Council keeps residents well informed than older people.

Table 5: Overall, how well informed do you think Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council keeps residents about the services and benefits it provides?										
	Jun 2015	Dec 2015	Jun 2016	Dec 2016	Jun 2017	Feb 2018	Jun 2018	Dec 2018	Jun 2019	Feb 2019
	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3	Wave 4	Wave 5	Wave 6	Wave 7	Wave 8	Wave 9	GB
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Very or fairly well informed	44	49	43	48	49	53	52	53	51	59
Very well informed	6	8	7	8	7	7	10	9	7	10
Fairly well informed	38	42	36	40	42	46	42	45	44	49
Not very well informed	37	35	38	34	39	34	31	31	34	28
Not well informed at all	15	14	18	17	11	13	16	15	14	12
Don't know	3	2	*	1	1	1	1	1	*	1

Base (all respondents): June 2015 Rotherham: 531; Dec 2015: 528; June 2016: 520; Dec 2016: 520; June 2017: 520; Feb 2018: 517; June 2018: 515; Dec 2018: 515; June 2019: 515; Feb 2019 GB: 1,001

Trust in Rotherham MBC

Fifty per cent of respondents said they trusted Rotherham Council 'a great deal' or 'a fair amount' (see Table 6), slightly above the average of the last four Rotherham surveys of 48 per cent. Trust in councils nationally is 60 per cent, significantly higher than trust in Rotherham MBC.

The local survey results since December 2016, averaging 49 per cent show an improvement in trust compared to the first three polls (average 44 per cent). The level of trust in RMBC is lowest amongst people aged 55-64 and highest amongst those aged 18-24 years. This local improvement contrasts with a reduction in trust in councils nationally since 2015-16.

Table 6: How much do you trust Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council?										
	Jun 2015	Dec 2015	Jun 2016	Dec 2016	Jun 2017	Feb 2018	Jun 2018	Dec 2018	Jun 2019	Feb 2019
	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3	Wave 4	Wave 5	Wave 6	Wave 7	Wave 8	Wave 9	GB
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
A great deal or fair amount	42	45	45	50	51	49	46	48	50	60
A great deal	6	7	5	9	9	8	8	7	4	9
A fair amount	35	38	40	42	43	41	38	42	46	50
Not very much	34	39	32	32	32	30	34	33	33	28
Not at all	22	15	22	15	15	20	18	17	16	11
Don't know	2	1	1	2	2	2	1	2	1	1

Base (all respondents): June 2015 Rotherham: 531; Dec 2015: 528; June 2016: 520; Dec 2016: 520; June 2017: 520; Feb 2018: 517; June 2018: 515; Dec 2018: 515; June 2019: 515 Feb 2019 GB: 1,001

Resident’s trust in their council is an important aspect of reputation which is likely to impact on issues such as democratic legitimacy and engagement. In terms of what the word ‘trust’ means to residents, it is useful to look at the results of the cognitive testing carried out as part of the review to develop this question.

The testing indicated that respondents based their answers on criteria including: transparency and openness, upholding promises, responding to residents, reliability and recollection of ‘scandal’. Recollection of the past failings of RMBC in relation to CSE is likely to be one factor which makes trust in Rotherham MBC lower than the national average for councils.

Confidence in Rotherham MBC

As Table 7 shows, 48 per cent of respondents in Wave 9 stated that they have confidence in Rotherham MBC (either ‘to a great extent’ or ‘to a moderate extent’). This is a significantly higher proportion than for Wave 1 (June 2015) and in line with the average of the last six polls (47 per cent), which show an improvement in confidence since the first three polls (average 43 per cent). The youngest respondents (aged 18-24) have the highest confidence in the Council. There is no national comparison for this question.

The results for trust (Table 6) and confidence (Table 7) in the Council show a very close alignment which demonstrates a strong association between the two in the public mind. People who trust the Council are almost certain to have confidence in the organisation.

Table 7: To what extent would you say that you have confidence in Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council?									
	Jun 2015	Dec 2015	Jun 2016	Dec 2016	Jun 2017	Feb 2018	Jun 2018	Dec 2018	Jun 2019
	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3	Wave 4	Wave 5	Wave 6	Wave 7	Wave 8	Wave 9
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
To a great or moderate extent	41	45	44	49	50	46	45	45	48
To a great extent	6	7	4	7	7	6	8	7	6
To a moderate extent	35	38	39	42	43	41	38	38	42
To a small extent	33	37	32	31	35	33	35	35	34
Not at all	25	18	23	19	14	20	20	20	18
Don't know	1	*	1	1	1	*	*	*	1

Base (all respondents): June 2015 Rotherham: 531; Dec 2015: 528; June 2016: 520; Dec 2016: 520; June 2017: 520; Feb 2018: 517; June 2018: 515; Dec 2018: 515; June 2019: 515

Feelings of Safety

The last five Rotherham surveys asked two questions about feelings of personal safety, which also feature in the LGA's national survey. Eighty seven per cent of respondents in Rotherham said they felt 'very safe' or 'fairly safe' during the day when outside in their local area. Only 59 per cent reported the same feelings of safety after dark, similar to the average for the last five surveys (58 per cent), whilst 25 per cent felt unsafe.

Both results are lower than the proportions observed nationally, particularly so for safety after dark. A much smaller proportion of respondents in Rotherham said they felt 'very safe' in their local area compared with the national figures and a significantly higher proportion felt very or fairly unsafe.

There has been no clear trend in the local results for safety after dark but the latest figure is close to the average of 58 per cent for all five surveys.

Table 8: How safe or unsafe do you feel when outside in your local area during the day? How safe do you feel when outside in your local area after dark?												
	During the day						After dark					
	Jun 2017	Feb 2018	Jun 2018	Dec 2018	Jun 2019	Feb 2019	Jun 2017	Feb 2018	Jun 2018	Dec 2018	Jun 2019	Feb 2019
	Wave 5	Wave 6	Wave 7	Wave 8	Wave 9	GB	Wave 5	Wave 6	Wave 7	Wave 8	Wave 9	GB
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Very safe or fairly safe	83	88	83	85	87	94	59	58	61	54	59	76
Very safe	34	42	45	39	40	59	17	15	17	14	15	30
Fairly safe	49	46	39	46	47	35	43	43	44	41	44	46
Neither safe nor unsafe	7	6	9	5	6	3	10	15	13	13	15	10
Fairly unsafe	5	4	6	6	5	2	18	17	17	20	16	9
Very unsafe	4	2	1	3	2	1	10	8	7	11	9	5
Don't know	*	*	1	*	-	-	2	3	1	1	1	1

Base (all respondents): June 2017 Rotherham: 520; February 2018: 517; June 2018: 515; December 2018: 515; June 2019: 515; February 2019 GB: 1,001

There was a significant difference between men and women's feelings of safety after dark in the Rotherham survey, with 64 per cent of men reporting feeling 'very safe' or 'fairly safe' compared to only 45 per cent of women. People aged 65 and above are most likely to feel safe after dark and those aged 25-34 least likely to feel safe, which may relate to the places people in these age groups visit after dark. People with low skilled manual occupational backgrounds are least likely to feel safe, probably because they are more likely to live in areas where crime and ASB rates are high.

Feelings of Optimism

The last five Rotherham surveys asked two questions about people’s feelings of optimism about Rotherham as a place to live and Rotherham town centre. A majority of respondents (52 per cent) reported feeling ‘very optimistic’ or ‘fairly optimistic’ about the future of Rotherham as a place to live (see Table 9), very similar to the responses in previous surveys. Younger respondents (aged 25-44) were the most likely to be very optimistic about the future of Rotherham and women were more optimistic than men overall.

Far fewer respondents felt as positive about the future Rotherham town centre (22 per cent felt ‘very optimistic’ or ‘fairly optimistic’) as they did about the future of the wider borough. This is in line with the average of 21 per cent for all five surveys although the last four results were lower than in June 2017, which could reflect more empty retail units. Forty one per cent of residents were not optimistic at all about the town centre, lower than in the previous survey. People aged 35-54 years were most likely not to be optimistic at all whilst young people aged 18-24 years were the most optimistic. Low skilled workers were notably more optimistic than professional and managerial workers. There is no comparable national data for these questions.

Table 9: How optimistic do you feel about the future of Rotherham as a place to live? And, more specifically, how optimistic do you feel about the future of Rotherham town centre?										
	Rotherham as a place to live					Rotherham town centre				
	Jun 2017	Feb 2018	Jun 2018	Dec 2018	Jun 2019	Jun 2017	Feb 2018	Jun 2018	Dec 2018	Jun 2019
	Wave 5	Wave 6	Wave 7	Wave 8	Wave 9	Wave 5	Wave 6	Wave 7	Wave 8	Wave 9
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Very optimistic or fairly optimistic	53	52	54	53	52	26	18	21	19	22
Very optimistic	7	10	10	11	8	5	4	3	2	3
Fairly optimistic	45	42	44	42	45	21	14	17	16	19
Not very optimistic	34	30	29	28	32	38	34	36	32	35
Not optimistic at all	13	17	16	18	15	33	43	41	47	41
Don't know	*	1	1	1	1	3	4	2	3	2

Base (all respondents): June 2017: 520; February 2018: 517; June 2018: 515; December 2018: 515; June 2019: 515

Community Cohesion Perceptions

The last five Rotherham surveys have asked a question about people’s views on whether people from different backgrounds get on well together. This is a question commonly used to measure community cohesion and the survey has consistently generated mixed responses about perceptions. There was no consensus among respondents as to whether or not they saw Rotherham as a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together, with 32 per cent agreeing with the statement, 28 per cent giving a neutral response and 39 per disagreeing.

Interpretation of the question could relate to views about resident’s local area and/or perceptions about Rotherham as a whole, but views about community relations are generally not positive.

A notable feature of the results is that far more respondents strongly disagreed than strongly agreed with the statement and the improvement in Wave 9 reflects more people who tend to agree rather than strongly agree. There was no significant change between the survey results between June 2017 and June 2018. The same question (without the explanation of get on well together) was previously used to generate the former National Indicator 1 (NI 1) of community cohesion, which excluded neutral responses and don’t knows. The survey data would have given Rotherham a NI 1 score of 47 per cent in Waves 5 and 6, 46 per cent in Wave 7, 41 per cent in Wave 8 and 45 per cent in Wave 9, with the average being 45 per cent.

Young people (aged 18-24) were more likely than average to agree that people from different backgrounds get on well together whilst people aged 35-44 were the most likely to disagree with the statement. Skilled manual workers were most likely to strongly disagree with the statement.

Table 10: To what extent do you agree or disagree that Rotherham is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together?					
	Jun-17	Feb-18	Jun-18	Dec-18	Jun-19
	Wave 5	Wave 6	Wave 7	Wave 8	Wave 9
	%	%	%	%	%
Strongly agree or tend to agree	34	32	32	29	32
Strongly agree	5	7	7	7	6
Tend to agree	28	25	24	21	26
Neither agree nor disagree	27	29	30	27	28
Tend to disagree	23	18	20	23	20
Strongly disagree	15	18	17	19	19
Don't know	2	3	1	3	1

Base (all respondents): June 2017: 520; February 2018: 517; June 2018: 515; December 2018: 515; June 2019: 515

The following explanation was added after this question: “By getting on well together, we mean living alongside each other with respect.”

Satisfaction with Rotherham as a Place to Live

Finally, respondents were asked, all things considered, how satisfied or dissatisfied they were with Rotherham Borough as a place to live. Fifty eight per cent of respondents said, overall, that they were satisfied. This was below the average of the eight relevant surveys (61 per cent) although there has been considerable fluctuation between waves. The average of the four most recent surveys (58 per cent) is notably lower than in the first four most recent waves (64.5 per cent).

The variation in satisfaction with the Borough as a place to live differs from residents' more consistent satisfaction with their local area as a place to live (Table 1).

Residents are significantly more satisfied with their own local area (average 79 per cent) than the Borough as a whole (average 58 per cent). This could reflect the lower levels of optimism about the future of Rotherham as a place to live and the much lower level of optimism about the town centre (Table 9).

Within Wave 9, respondents aged 65 and above were most likely to feel satisfied with Rotherham as a place to live, with 64 per cent satisfied. Respondents aged 18-24 had the lowest level of satisfaction with Rotherham as a place to live, with only 49 per cent satisfied. Dissatisfaction with Rotherham as a place to live was highest amongst people aged 55-64 and skilled manual workers.

This question was not asked in Wave 5 so there is no data for this in Table 11. There is no national comparison for this question.

Table 11: Overall, all things considered, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with Rotherham Borough as a place to live?									
	Jun 2015	Dec 2015	Jun 2016	Dec 2016	Jun 2017	Feb 2018	Jun 2018	Dec 2018	Jun 2019
	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3	Wave 4	Wave 5	Wave 6	Wave 7	Wave 8	Wave 9
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Very or fairly satisfied	69	61	62	66	-	56	57	61	58
Very satisfied	19	18	18	19	-	13	17	14	15
Fairly satisfied	50	43	44	47	-	43	41	46	43
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	15	20	17	15	-	21	18	15	16
Fairly dissatisfied	9	11	13	12	-	15	14	14	15
Very dissatisfied	7	7	8	7	-	8	11	10	10
Don't know	-	-	*	*	-	*	*	*	1

Base (all respondents): June 2015 Rotherham: 531; Dec 2015: 528; June 2016: 520; Dec 2016: 520; Feb 2018: 517; June 2018: 515; December 2018: 515; June 2019: 515

ANNEX A: POLLING QUESTIONS

1. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your local area as a place to live? *Please consider your local area to be the area within 15-20 minutes walking distance from your home.*

- Very satisfied
- Fairly satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Fairly dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied
- Don't know

Your local area receives services from Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council. Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council is responsible for a range of services such as refuse collection, street cleaning, planning, education, social care services and road maintenance.

2. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council runs things?

- Very satisfied
- Fairly satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Fairly dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied
- Don't know

In considering the next question, please think about the range of services Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council provides to the community as a whole, as well as the services your household uses. It does not matter if you do not know all of the services Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council provides to the community. We would like your general opinion.

3. To what extent do you agree or disagree that Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council provides value for money?

- Strongly agree
- Tend to agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Tend to disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

4. To what extent do you think Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council acts on the concerns of local residents?

- A great deal
- A fair amount
- Not very much
- Not at all

5. Overall, how well informed do you think Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council keeps residents?

- Very well informed
- Fairly well informed
- Not very well informed
- Not well informed at all

6. How much do you trust Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council?

- A great deal
- A fair amount
- Not very much
- Not at all

7. To what extent would you say that you have confidence in Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council?

- To a great extent
- To a moderate extent
- To a small extent
- Not at all

8. How safe or unsafe do you feel when outside in your local area after dark?

Please consider your local area to be the area within 15 – 20 minutes walking distance from your home

- Very safe
- Fairly safe
- Neither safe nor unsafe
- Fairly unsafe
- Very unsafe

9. How safe or unsafe do you feel when outside in your local area during the day?

Please consider your local area to be the area within 15 – 20 minutes walking distance from your home

10. How optimistic do you feel about the future of Rotherham as a place to live?

- Very optimistic
- Fairly optimistic
- Not very optimistic
- Not optimistic at all

11. And, more specifically, how optimistic do you feel about the future of Rotherham town centre?

- Very optimistic
- Fairly optimistic
- Not very optimistic
- Not optimistic at all

12. To what extent do you agree or disagree that Rotherham is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together? *By getting on well together, we mean living alongside each other with respect.*

- Strongly agree
- Tend to agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Tend to disagree
- Strongly disagree

13. Overall, all things considered, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with Rotherham Borough as a place to live?

- Very satisfied
- Fairly satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Fairly dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied
- Don't know

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