



Southampton's private rented sector Scrutiny Inquiry Panel survey report

southampton
dataobservatory 

Data, Intelligence & Insight Team | *November 2023*

[Introduction](#)

[Who are the respondents?](#)

[Rent, tenancies & living arrangements](#)

- [Who are Southampton's landlords?](#)
- [How long have Southampton's residents been renting for?](#)
- [The cost of renting in Southampton](#)

[Communication with landlords](#)

- [Experiences of interactions with landlords](#)
- [Reporting issues to landlords](#)

[Free-text comments](#)

- [Things that have gotten *better*](#)
- [Things that have gotten *worse*](#)





Southampton City Council undertook public research into resident experiences of renting in the private sector, to inform the work of the Scrutiny Inquiry Panel into the same issue, due to take place from November 2023.

This online survey took place between **10/10/2023** – **23/10/2023** and received **599** responses. It was distributed to Southampton City Council's People's Panel; a public link was also made available on the Southampton City Council website.

As this research only concerns experiences of renting in the private sector in Southampton, respondents that said they were either not Southampton residents or did not rent privately were not asked to complete the survey; these respondents also do not count towards response totals in the following report.

This report provides a summary of the survey responses both for the consideration of decision makers and any interested individuals and stakeholders.



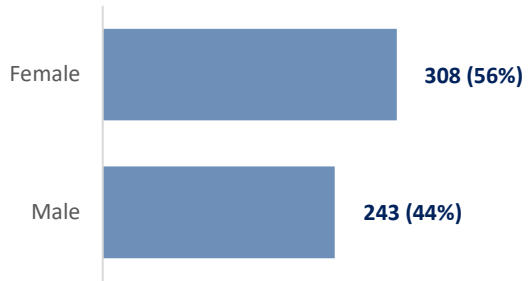
SOUTHAMPTON
CITY COUNCIL



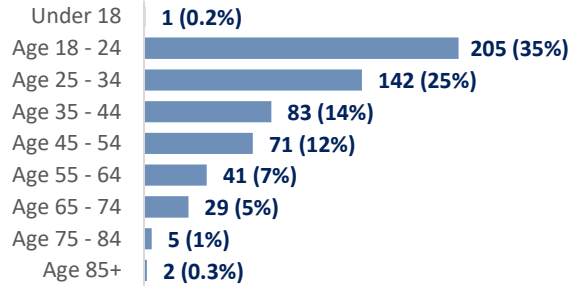
Total responses **599**

Graphs on this page are labelled as count (%).

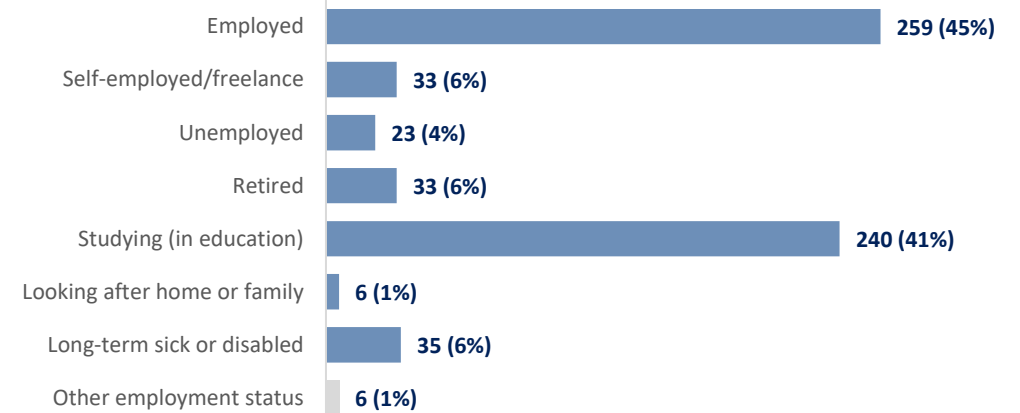
Sex



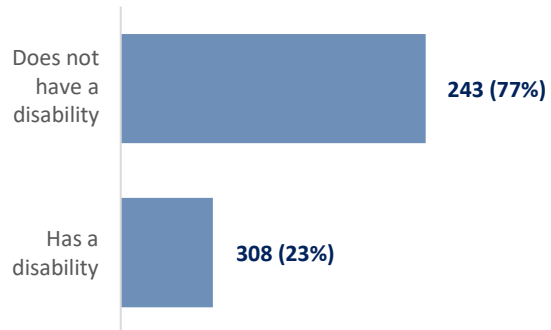
Age



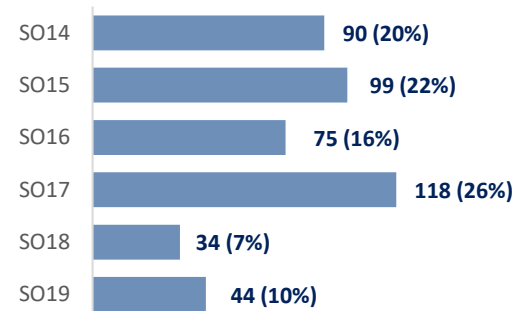
Employment status



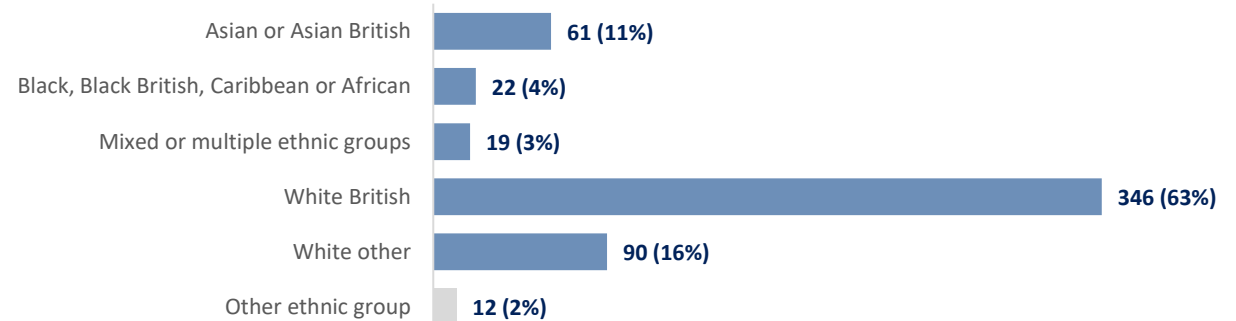
Disability



Postcode



Ethnicity





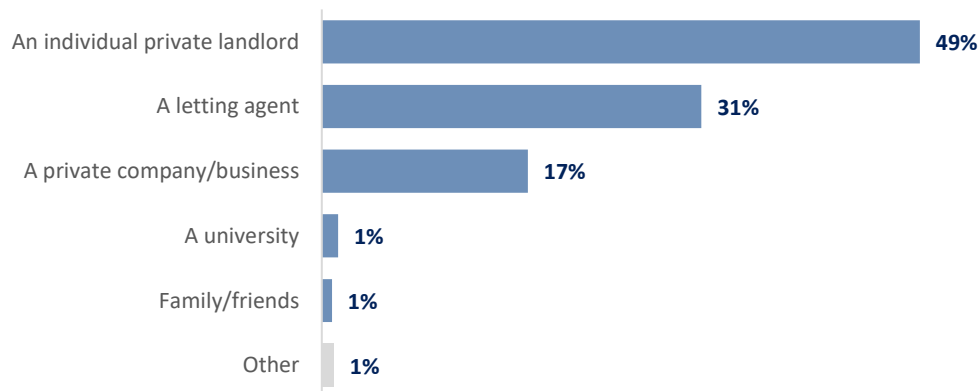
Rent, tenancies & living arrangements





Question 3 | Who are you currently renting from?

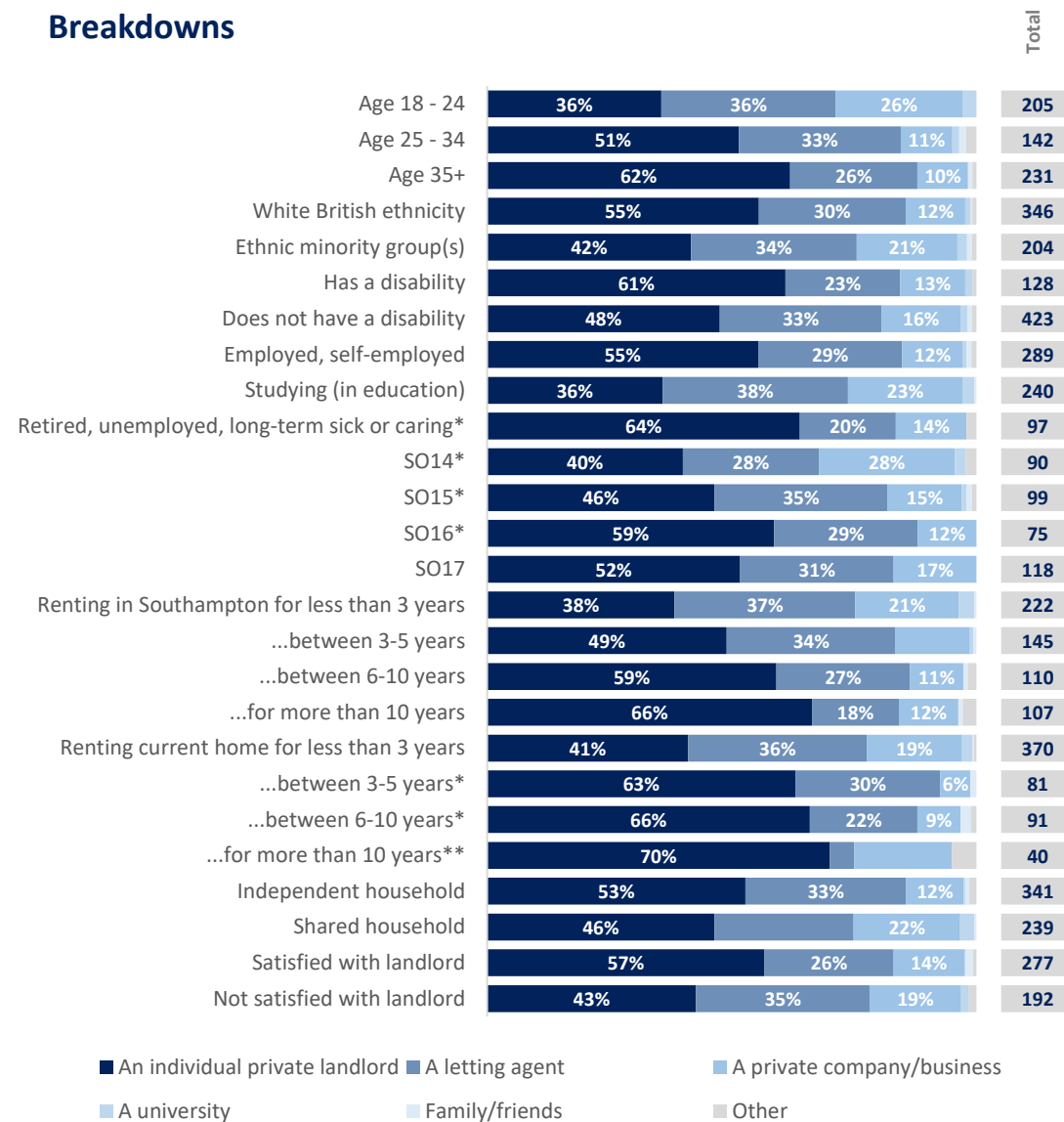
Respondents | 599



Key findings

- 62% of those aged over 35 rent via an individual landlord, as opposed to 36% of those aged 18 -24, who rent by individual landlords and letting agents at 36% each and private businesses at 26%
- 55% of respondents of a White British ethnicity rent by individual landlords, 13% points more than respondents from ethnic minority groups (42%)
- 61% of respondents with a disability rent from individual landlords, 13% points more than those that do not have a disability (48%), with the latter renting from letting agents 10% points more than the former (33% to 23%)
- Renting from individual landlords is most common among respondents in SO16 (59%), and is the least common in SO14 (40%), however in each postcode, renting from individual landlords is the most popular response
- Renting from individual landlords is more common among respondents that have been renting for longer: 66% of those that have been renting in Southampton for more than 10 years, and 70% of those that have been renting their current home for more than 10 years
- 57% of those that said they were satisfied with their landlord rent from an individual landlord

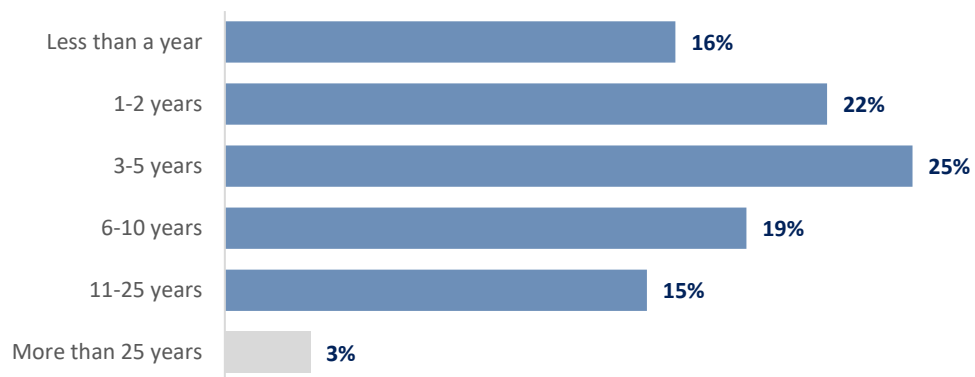
Breakdowns





Question 5 | How long have you been renting from private landlords in Southampton?

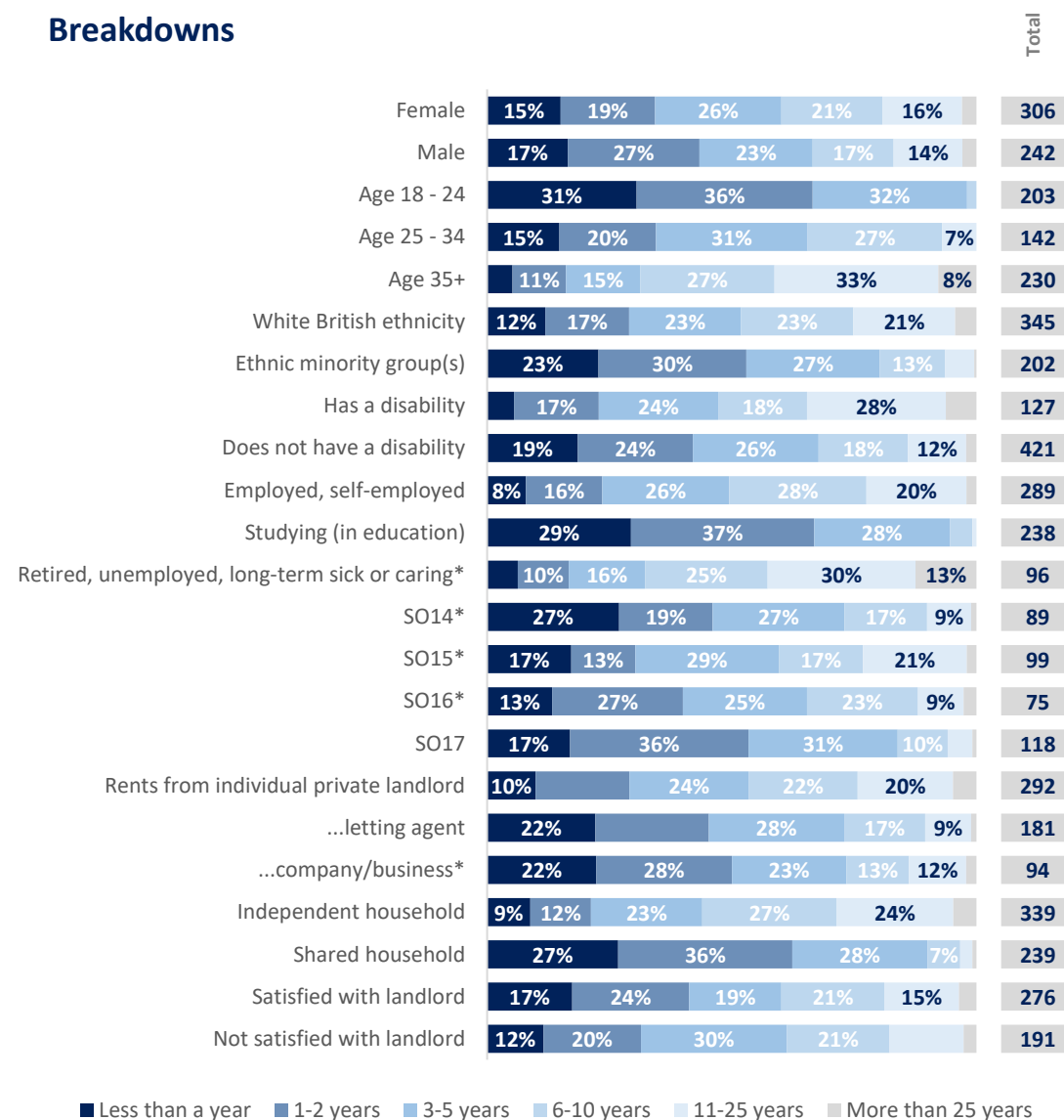
Respondents | 584



Key findings

- Male respondents said that they'd been renting for 1-2 years 8% points more than women, 27% to 19%
- Shorter amounts of time spent renting were more common among ethnic minority respondents than White British respondents; 53% of the former said they'd been renting for 1-2 years or less, compared to the latter, who responded the same at 29%
- It should be noted that some breakdowns show a pattern in response numbers which suggests a large number of undergraduate student respondents: respondents aged 18 – 24, respondents in education, respondents in postcode SO17, and those living in a shared household all show responses split roughly into thirds, between rental periods of less than a year, 1-2 years, and 3-5 years – these marry up with the three academic years of a standard full-time undergraduate degree. SO17 is also the main postcode of the University of Southampton's Highfield campus, with the lower response rate for rental periods of less than a year possibly explained by the number of students in halls of residence in their first year of study
- Residents that have a disability said that they've been renting for longer than those that do not have a disability; 28% of respondents with a disability have been renting between 11-25 years, compared to 12% of those without a disability

Breakdowns



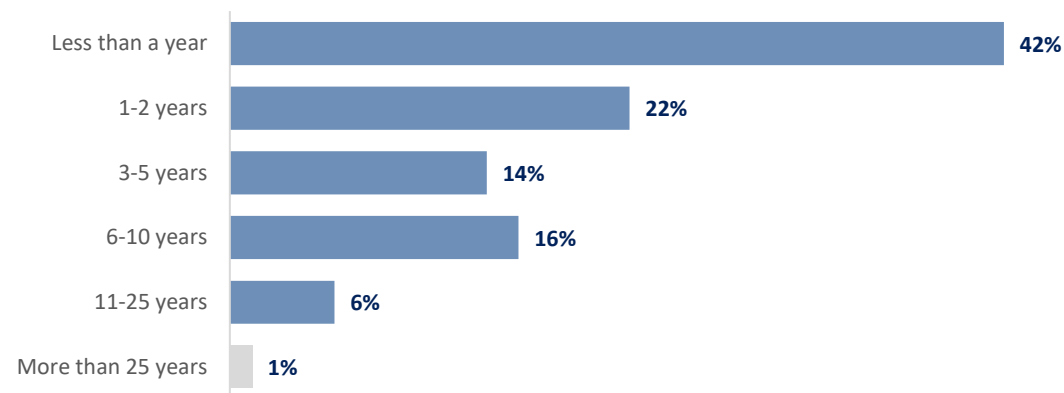
■ Less than a year ■ 1-2 years ■ 3-5 years ■ 6-10 years ■ 11-25 years ■ More than 25 years

*Less than 100 respondents; **less than 50 respondents.



Question 6 | How long have you been renting your current home?

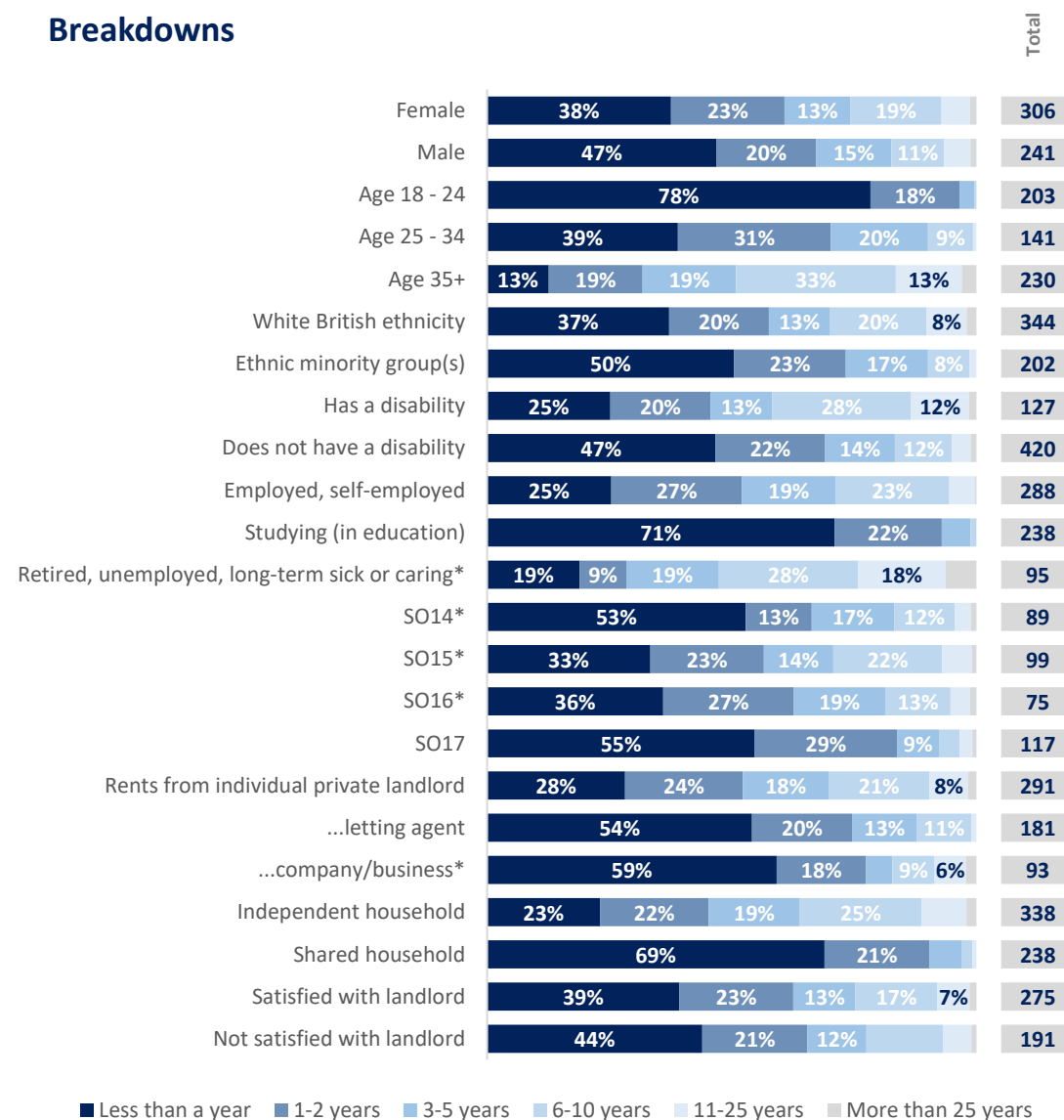
Respondents | 582



Key findings

- The duration of ongoing tenancies are shorter than the length of time respondents said they've been renting overall; while 15% of respondents said that they've been renting in Southampton between 11-25 years, for this question, 6% of respondents said they've been renting their current home for the same amount of time. Similarly, 42% of respondents said that they've been renting their current home for less than a year, compared to 16% that said they've been renting in Southampton generally for the same duration
- Again, tenancies of an ongoing duration of less than a year are most common in student demographics: 78% of 18-24 year-olds; 71% of those in education; 55% of residents of postcode SO17; and 69% of respondents living in shared households
- More men said they've been renting their current home for less than a year than women (47% to 38%), and respondents from an ethnic minority background said they've been living in their current home for less than a year 13% points more than respondents of a White British ethnicity (50% to 37%)
- Over half of respondents in postcode SO14 said they'd been renting their current home for less than a year (53%)
- Longer-term tenancies were more popular as a response with respondents that have a disability than those without; 42% of the former have been renting their current home between 6-10 years or more, while 17% of respondents without a disability said the same

Breakdowns

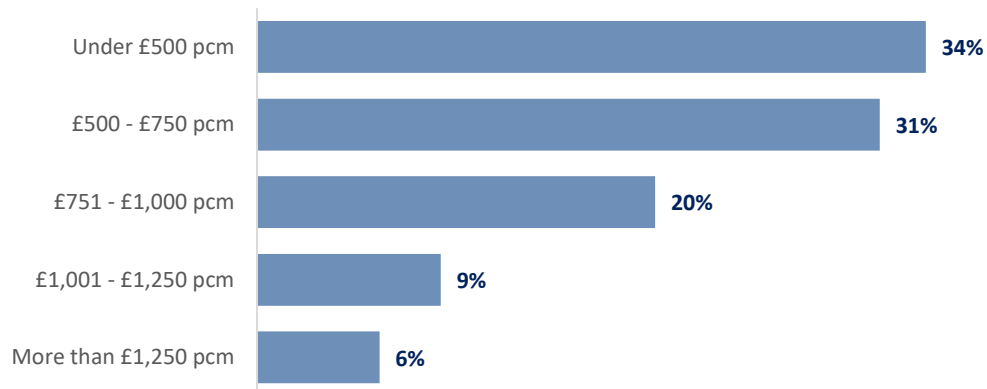


■ Less than a year ■ 1-2 years ■ 3-5 years ■ 6-10 years ■ 11-25 years ■ More than 25 years

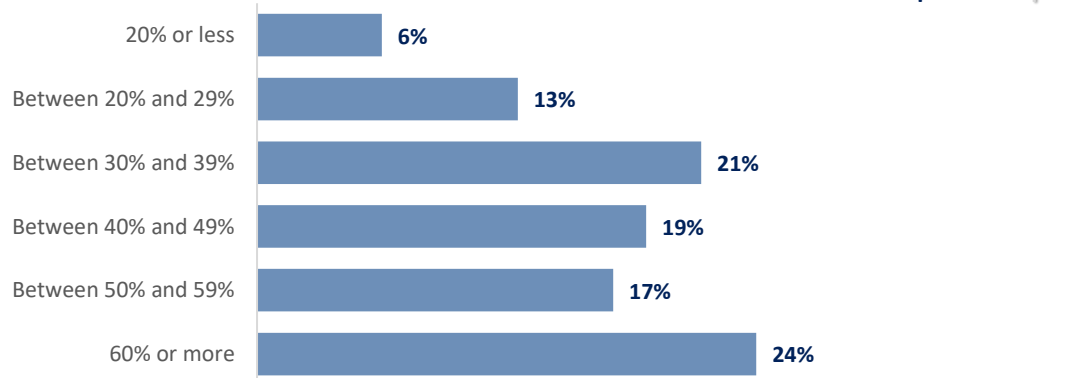
*Less than 100 respondents; **less than 50 respondents.



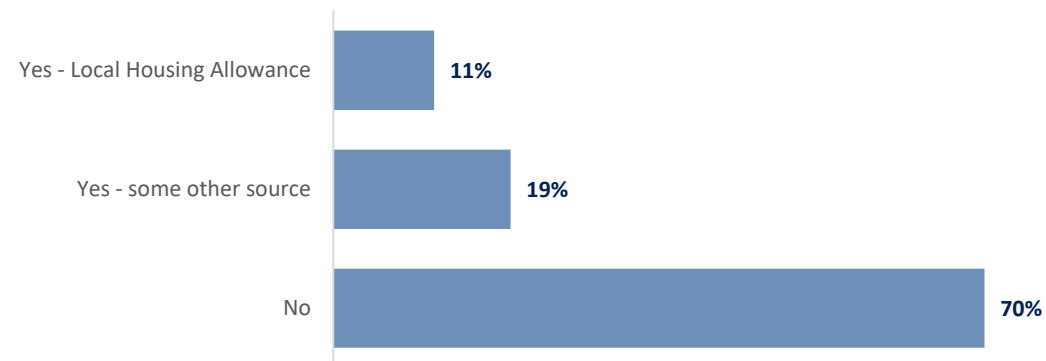
Question 9 | How much do you currently pay each month for your rent, excluding utility bills and Council Tax? Respondents | 391



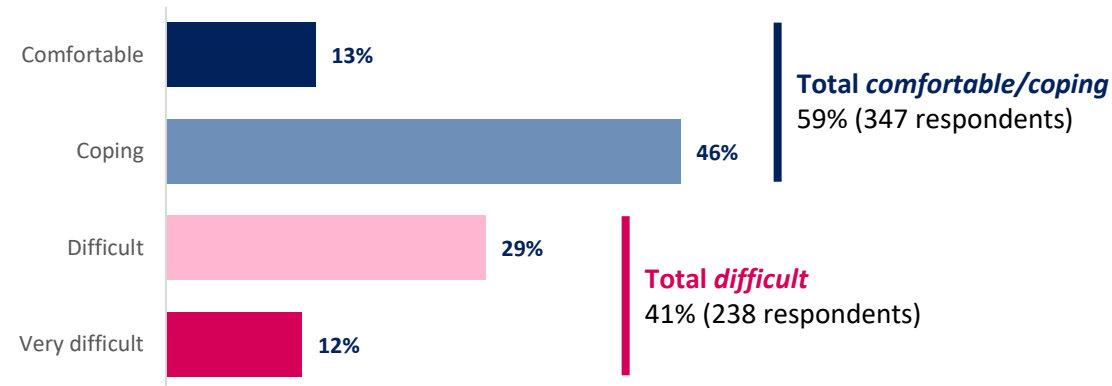
Question 10 | How much of your monthly income do you currently spend on rent? Respondents | 565



Question 11 | Do you receive any financial help with your rent? Respondents | 571



Question 12 | Which of the following best describes your household finances? Respondents | 585





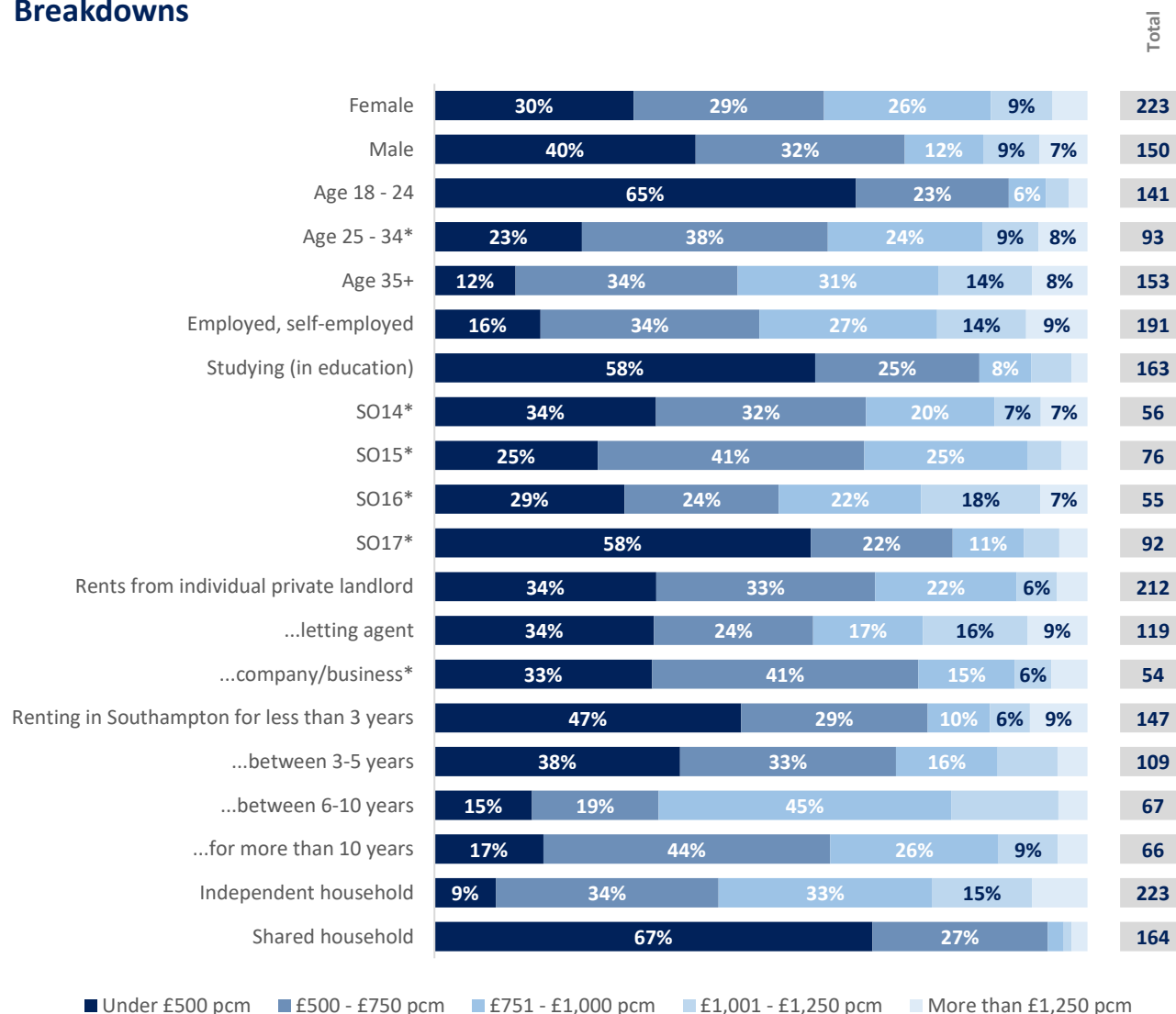
Question 9 | How much do you currently pay each month for your rent, excluding utility bills and Council Tax? *free-text question*

Respondents | 391

Key findings

- Men said that they paid less than £500 pcm in rent 10% points more than women, 40% to 30%
- The proportion of respondents saying that they pay more than £750 pcm in rent increases with age, from 12% of 18 – 24 year-olds to 40% of 25-34 year-olds and 54% of those aged 35 or older
- Respondents said that the different types of landlord in the breakdowns (individual, letting agent, or business) each provided rent under £500 pcm at similar levels (between 33% and 34%). For other rent levels, the landlord types differed, with 33% of respondents with individual private landlords paying between £500 - £750 pcm in rent, compared to 24% of respondents renting from a letting agent. 33% of respondents with individual private landlords pay more than £750 pcm in rent, compared to 42% of those renting from a letting agent
- Responses further indicate that rent appears to increase the longer the respondent has been renting; 47% of respondents that have been renting privately for less than 3 years pay less than £500 pcm in rent, compared to 17% of those that have been renting for more than 10 years. The most popular response on rent levels for those that have been renting between 6 – 10 years is between £751 - £1,000 pcm at 45%, whereas the most popular response with those that have rented for more than 10 years is between £500 - £750 pcm at 44%. Thus the rent level of the most popular response increases from respondents renting for less than 3 years to those having rented for between 6 – 10 years, before falling again among respondents having rented for over a decade

Breakdowns



■ Under £500 pcm ■ £500 - £750 pcm ■ £751 - £1,000 pcm ■ £1,001 - £1,250 pcm ■ More than £1,250 pcm

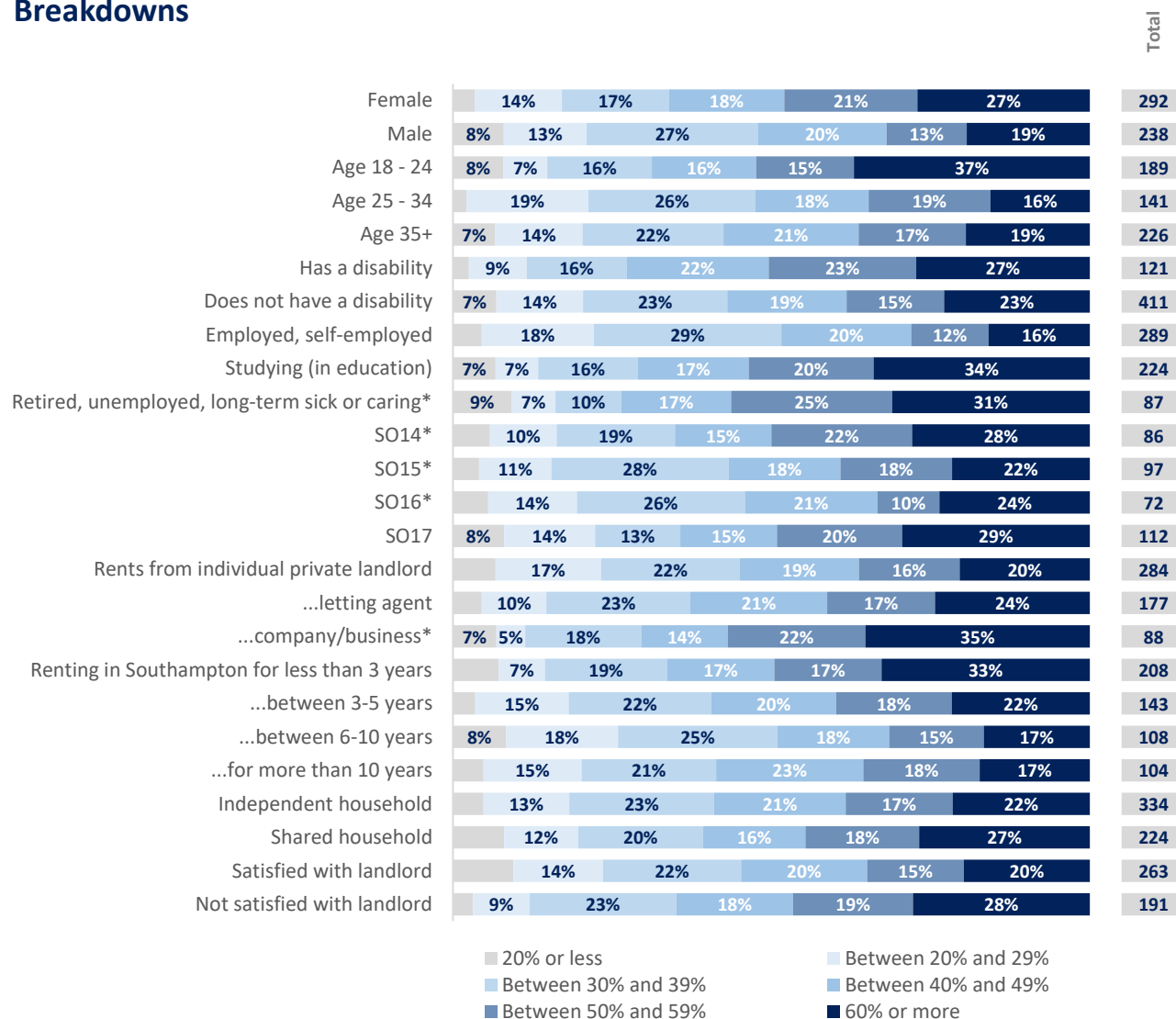


Question 10 | How much of your monthly income do you currently spend on rent? Respondents | 565

Key findings

- More than half of respondents in multiple breakdowns spend over 50% of their monthly income on rent: 18 – 24 year-olds (52%), has a disability (50%), in education (54%), retired, unemployed, long-term sick or with caring responsibilities (56%), postcode SO14 (50%), those that rent from a company or business (57%), and those that have been renting in Southampton for less than 3 years (50%)
- Women said that they spend over 60% of their monthly income on rent 12% points more than men, 27% to 19%; 48% of women said they spend more than 50% of their monthly income on rent, more than 16% points more than men at 32%
- There is a similar situation in the disability breakdown: respondents with a disability said that they spend more than 50% of their monthly income on rent 12% points more than those without a disability, 50% to 38%
- Respondents that rent from a company or business pay more than 50% of their income on rent 16% points more than those that rent from a letting agent and 21% points more than those that rent from an individual private landlord
- The proportion of their incomes respondents say they spend on rent decreases with longer tenancies: 50% of those renting for less than 3 years pay more than 50% of their income on rent, compared to 36% of those that have been renting for over a decade

Breakdowns





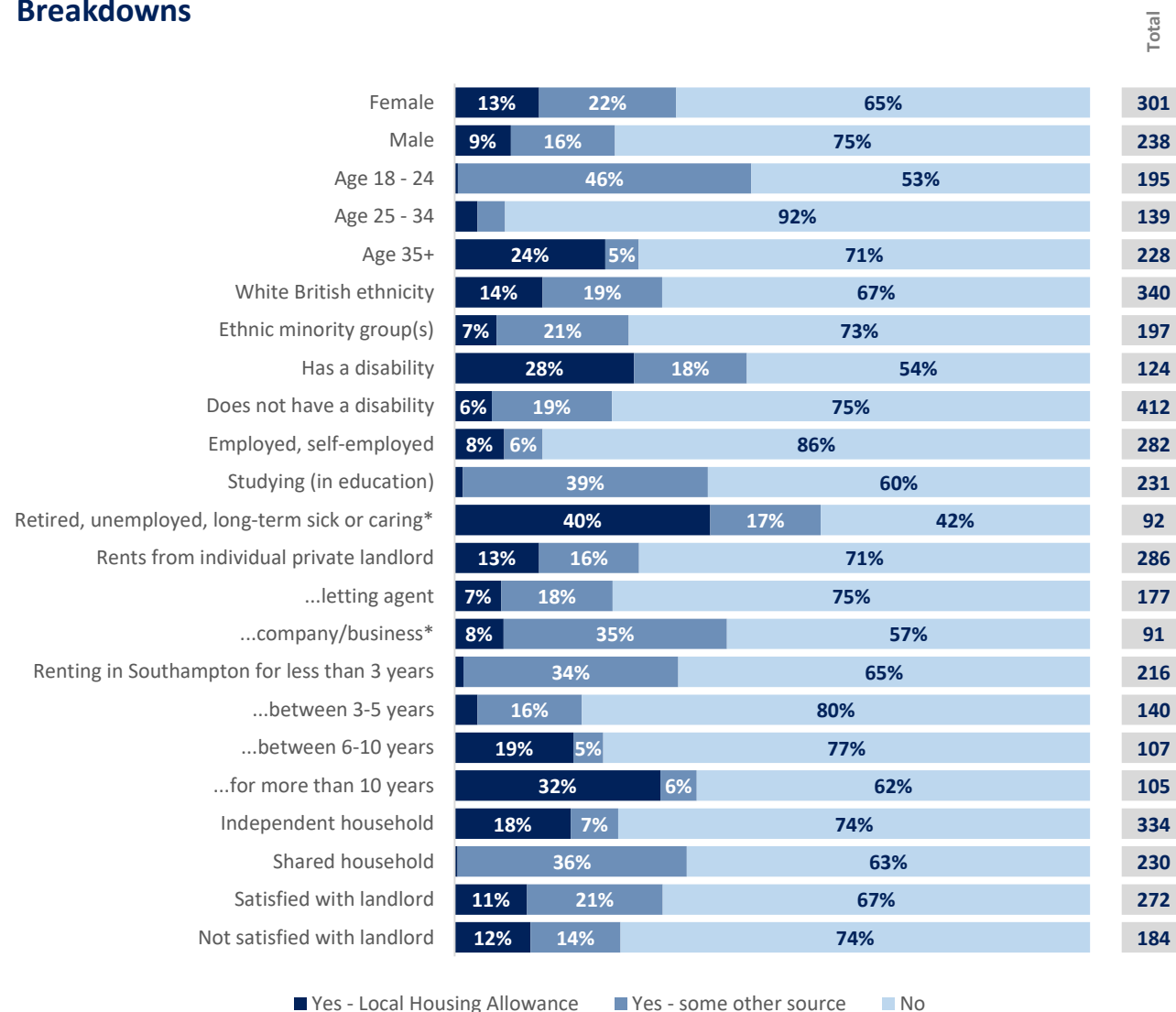
Question 11 | Do you receive any financial help with your rent?

Respondents | 571

Key findings

- 35% of female respondents said that they receive support with their rent, compared to 25% of men
- 8% of 25 – 34 year-old respondents said they receive financial help with their rent, compared to 29% of those aged over 35 that said that they do
- Respondents that have been renting for longer said that they receive Local Housing Allowance (LHA) to a greater extent than others: 32% of those renting for over a decade said they receive LHA, compared to 19% of those renting between 6 – 10 years and 4% of those renting between 3 – 5 years
- Respondents that said they are satisfied with their landlord confirmed they receive financial support with their rent to a greater extent than those dissatisfied with their landlord, 32% to 26%

Breakdowns



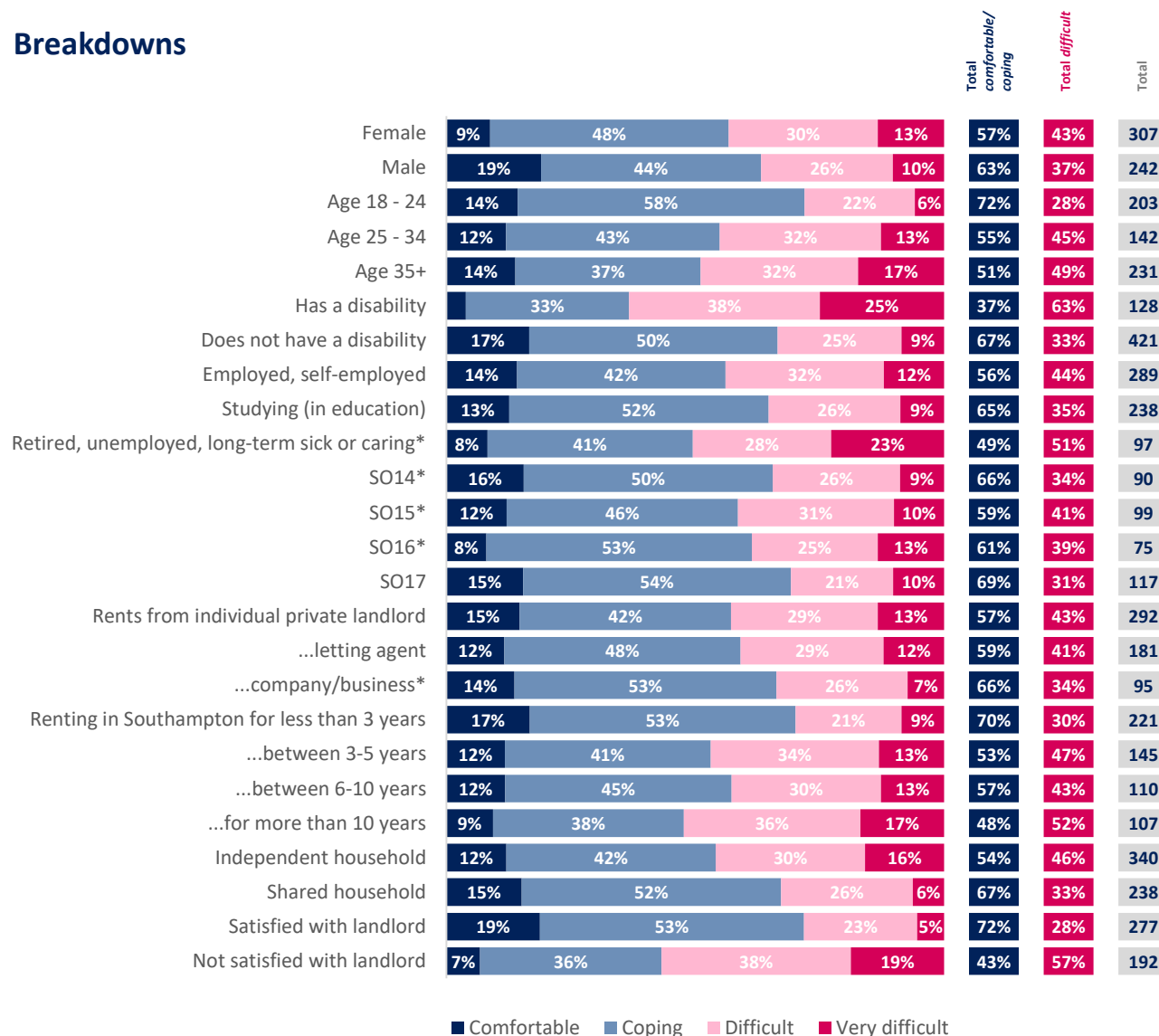


Question 13 | Which of the following best describes your current household finances?
Respondents | 585

Key findings

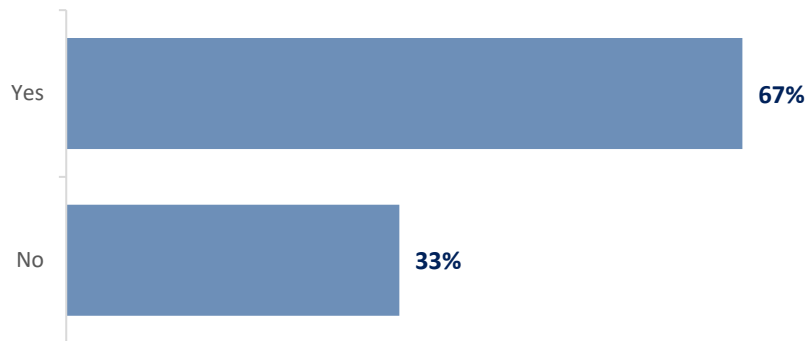
- Female respondents said that their household finances are *difficult* 6% points more than men, 43% to 37%, although both responded either *comfortable* or *coping* by more than 50%
- 72% of respondents between 18 – 24 years-old said that their household finances were *comfortable* or *coping*, the highest of any breakdown, 21% points more than respondents aged over 35 (51% *comfortable* or *coping*)
- Respondents with a disability said that their household finances were *difficult* at 63%, including 25% that said they were *very difficult*
- 52% of respondents that have been renting in Southampton for more than 10 years said that their household finances were *difficult*, and 57% of those not satisfied with their landlord responded the same

Breakdowns

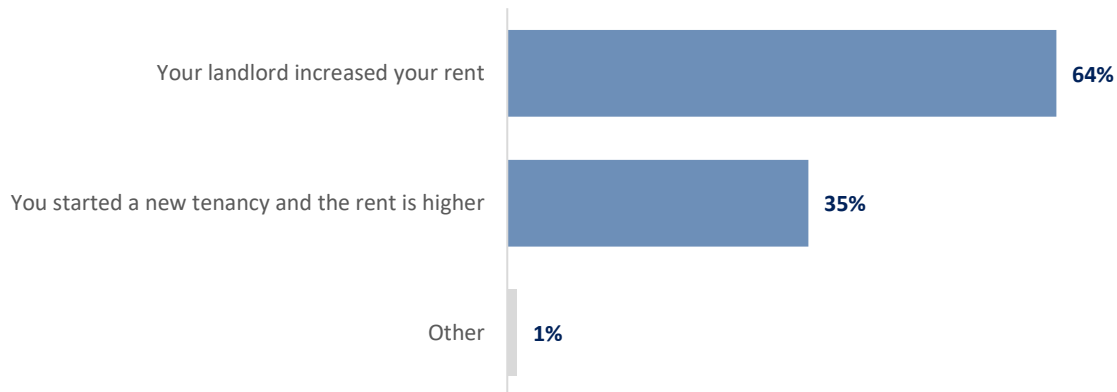




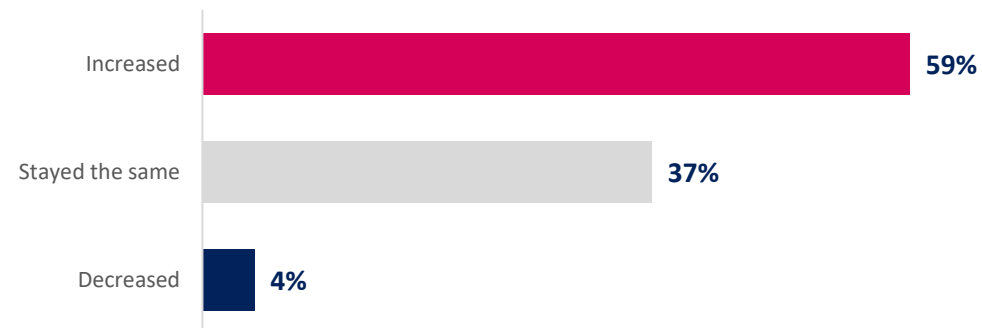
Question 14 | Have you started a new tenancy or renewed an existing tenancy at any point in the last 12 months? Respondents | 585



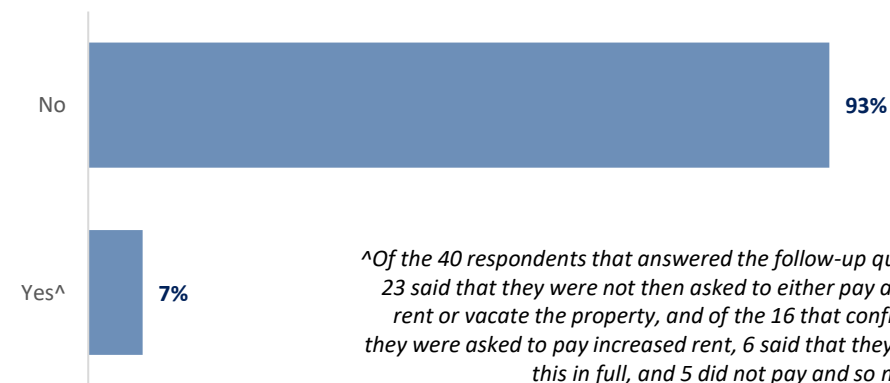
Question 16 | Which of the following best describes why your rent has increased? Respondents | 340



Question 15 | Has your rent increased, decreased, or stayed the same over the last 12 months? Respondents | 581



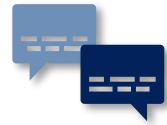
Question 18 | In the last five years, have you ever been served an eviction (Section 21) notice by your landlord? Respondents | 587



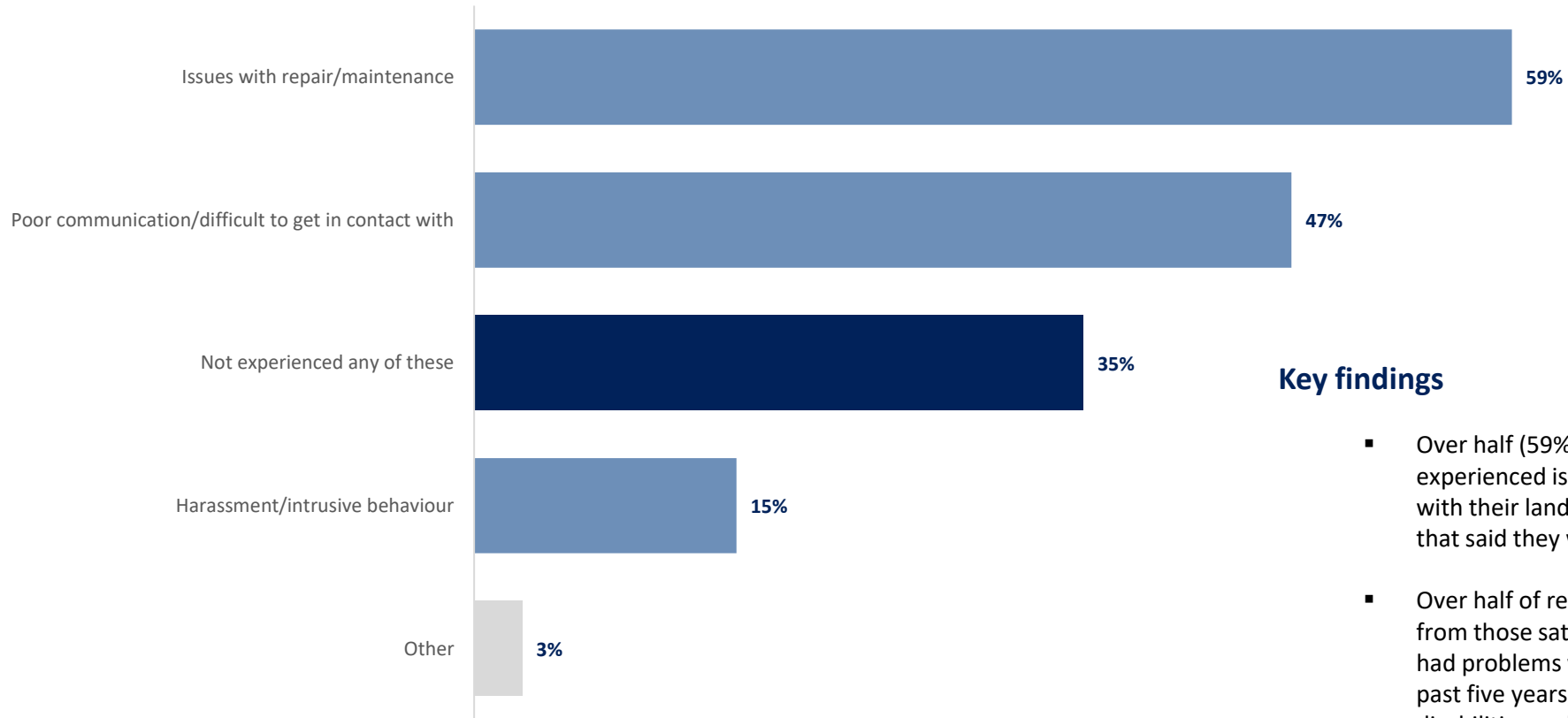
[^]Of the 40 respondents that answered the follow-up question 19, 23 said that they were not then asked to either pay an increase rent or vacate the property, and of the 16 that confirmed that they were asked to pay increased rent, 6 said that they then paid this in full, and 5 did not pay and so moved out.



Communication with landlords

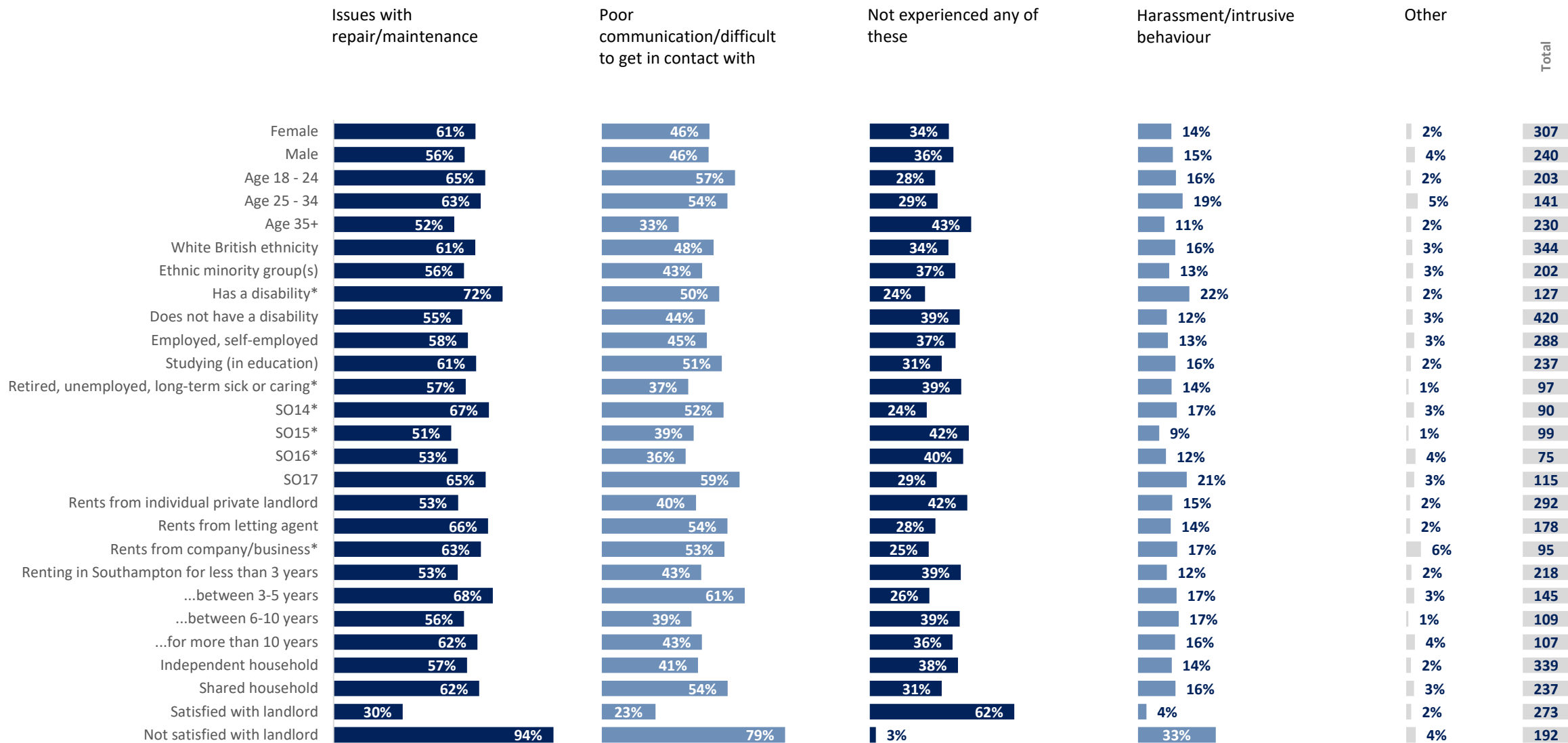


Question 20 | Over the last five years of renting privately in Southampton, have you experienced any of the following problems with your landlord or letting agent? multiple-choice question Respondents | 571



Key findings

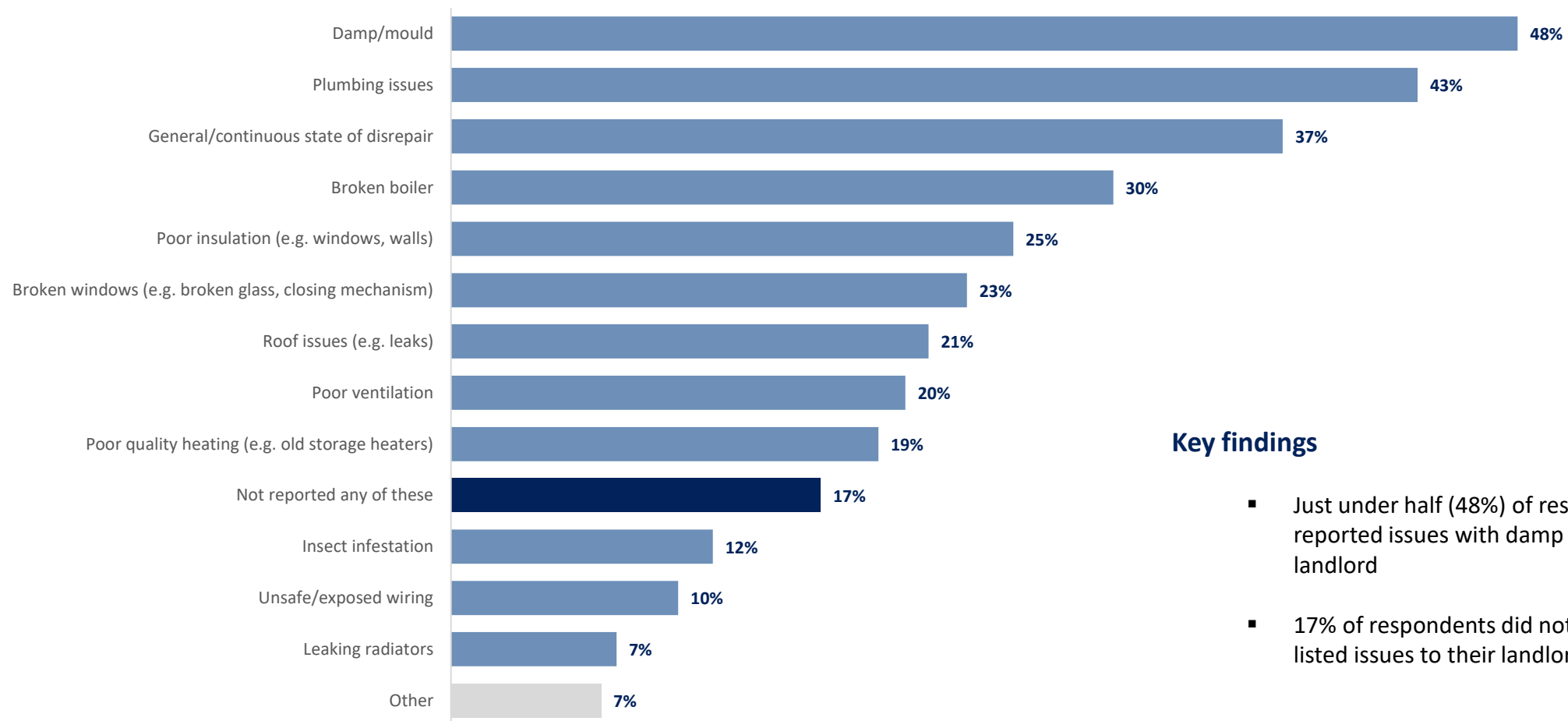
- Over half (59%) over respondents said that they experienced issues with repairs or maintenance with their landlord, including 94% of respondents that said they were dissatisfied with their landlord
- Over half of respondents in every breakdown (apart from those satisfied with their landlord) said they had problems with repairs and maintenance in the past five years, including 72% of respondents with disabilities and 65% of those aged between 18 - 24





Question 22 | Have you ever reported any of the following problems about the condition of your home to your landlord? *multiple-choice question*

Respondents | 578



Key findings

- Just under half (48%) of respondents have reported issues with damp or mould to their landlord
- 17% of respondents did not report any of the listed issues to their landlord

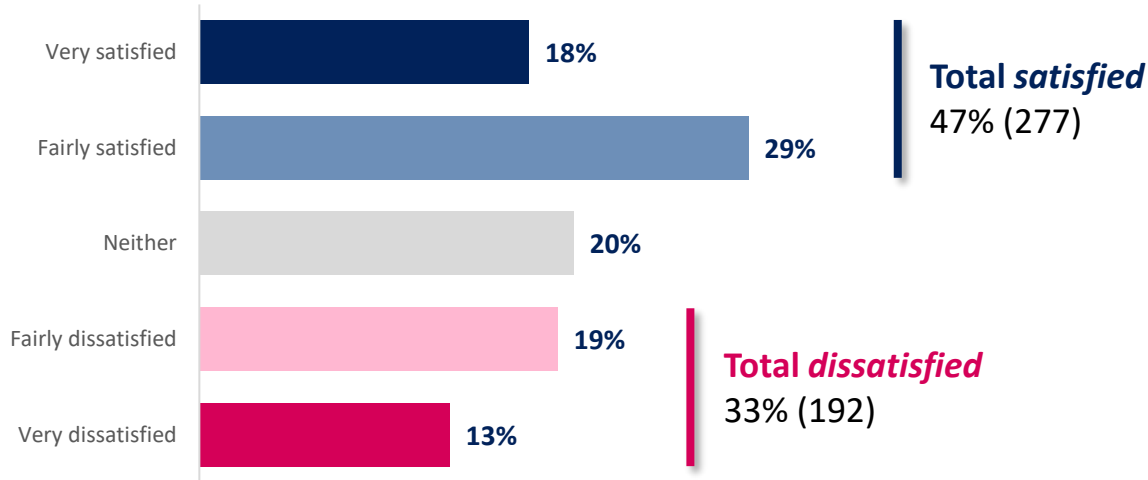


Reporting issues to landlords | Breakdowns[^]

[^]Breakdowns where overall respondents totalled 100 or more.

	Damp/mould	Plumbing issues	General/ continuous state of disrepair	Broken boiler	Poor insulation (e.g. windows, walls)	Broken windows (e.g. broken glass, closing mechanism)	Roof issues (e.g. leaks)	Poor ventilation	Total
Female	53%	42%	38%	31%	25%	25%	25%	18%	307
Male	41%	45%	37%	28%	25%	21%	17%	22%	236
Age 18 - 24	57%	44%	42%	23%	29%	23%	15%	28%	200
Age 25 - 34	54%	43%	44%	31%	24%	28%	26%	24%	140
Age 35+	37%	44%	30%	35%	23%	21%	25%	12%	230
White British ethnicity	51%	47%	37%	34%	27%	23%	24%	21%	342
Ethnic minority group(s)	43%	38%	38%	25%	21%	23%	18%	19%	200
Has a disability	59%	48%	41%	36%	36%	27%	31%	21%	128
Does not have a disability	43%	42%	36%	27%	22%	21%	18%	20%	415
Employed, self-employed	44%	44%	35%	36%	23%	25%	27%	18%	285
Studying (in education)	55%	43%	39%	23%	29%	23%	14%	27%	235
Retired, unemployed, long-term sick or caring*	50%	42%	40%	29%	28%	22%	25%	14%	96
SO14*	46%	44%	38%	21%	22%	23%	20%	22%	87
SO15*	46%	44%	35%	32%	20%	26%	26%	15%	98
SO16*	39%	46%	35%	31%	27%	32%	27%	19%	74
SO17	61%	53%	46%	27%	34%	24%	20%	32%	117
Rents from individual private landlord	48%	44%	37%	31%	26%	26%	23%	20%	288
Rents from letting agent	51%	38%	39%	28%	25%	22%	23%	19%	180
Rents from company/business*	43%	49%	35%	27%	22%	15%	14%	17%	93
Renting in Southampton for less than 3 years	45%	39%	36%	18%	21%	18%	11%	22%	217
...between 3-5 years	62%	49%	45%	31%	34%	30%	23%	29%	143
...between 6-10 years	40%	39%	32%	38%	17%	21%	32%	13%	108
...for more than 10 years	45%	51%	36%	43%	33%	26%	30%	15%	107
Independent household	43%	42%	34%	32%	23%	23%	24%	15%	338
Shared household	56%	46%	43%	26%	28%	24%	18%	28%	234
Satisfied with landlord	32%	31%	16%	22%	12%	13%	16%	6%	269
Not satisfied with landlord	68%	59%	69%	42%	42%	36%	32%	39%	192

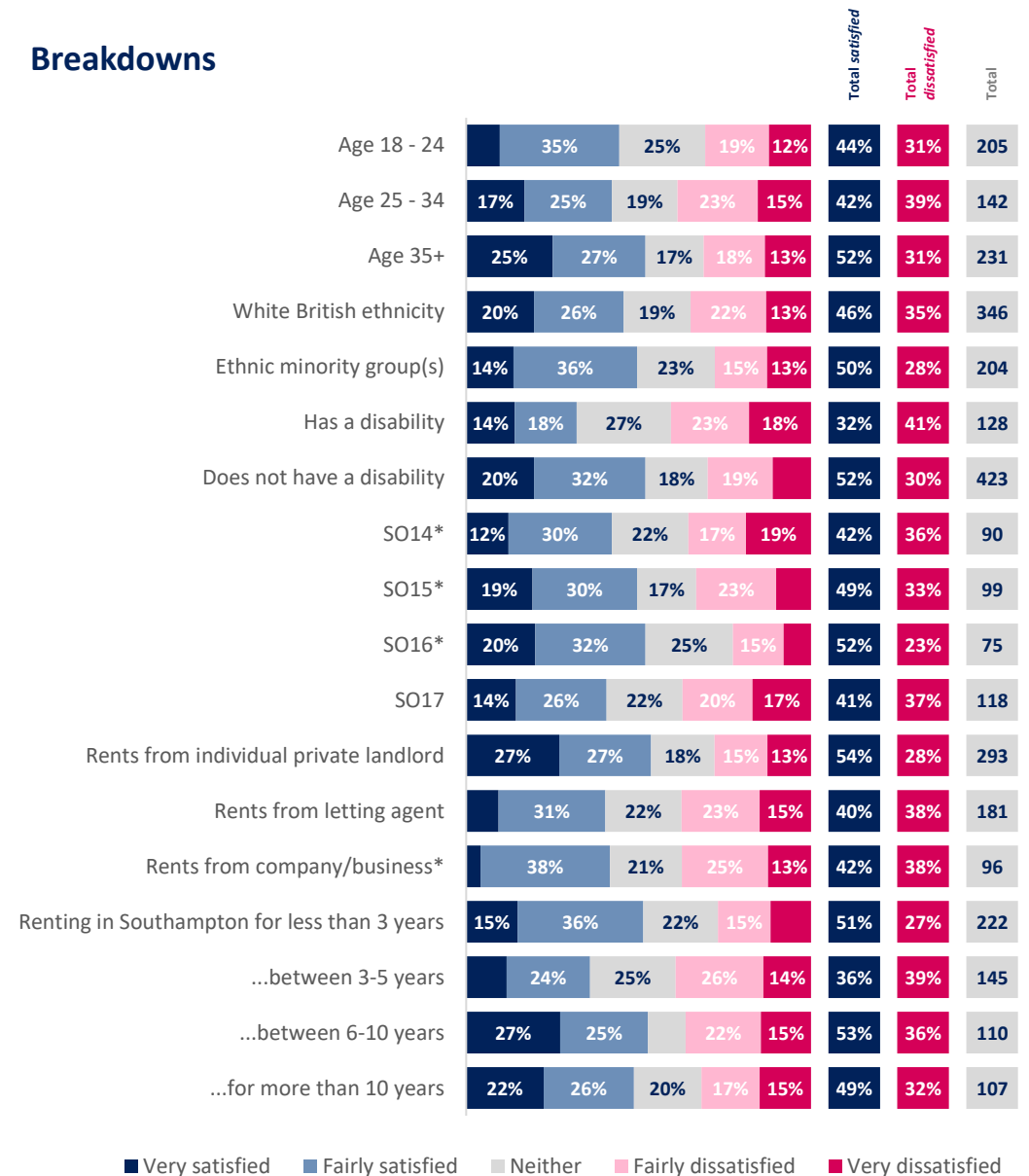
Question 24 | To what extent are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the service your landlord provides overall? Respondents | 587



Key findings

- 47% of respondents said they were satisfied with their landlords, compared to 33% that are dissatisfied
- Those that rent from an individual landlord responded overall *satisfied* to a greater extent than either those that rent from a letting agent or those that rent from a business (54% compared to 40% and 42% respectively)
- Respondents with a disability responded *satisfied* 20% points less than those without a disability (32% to 52%)
- Those that have been renting for between 3 – 5 years responded *satisfied* at 36%, compared to the range of 49% to 53% of the other tenure breakdowns

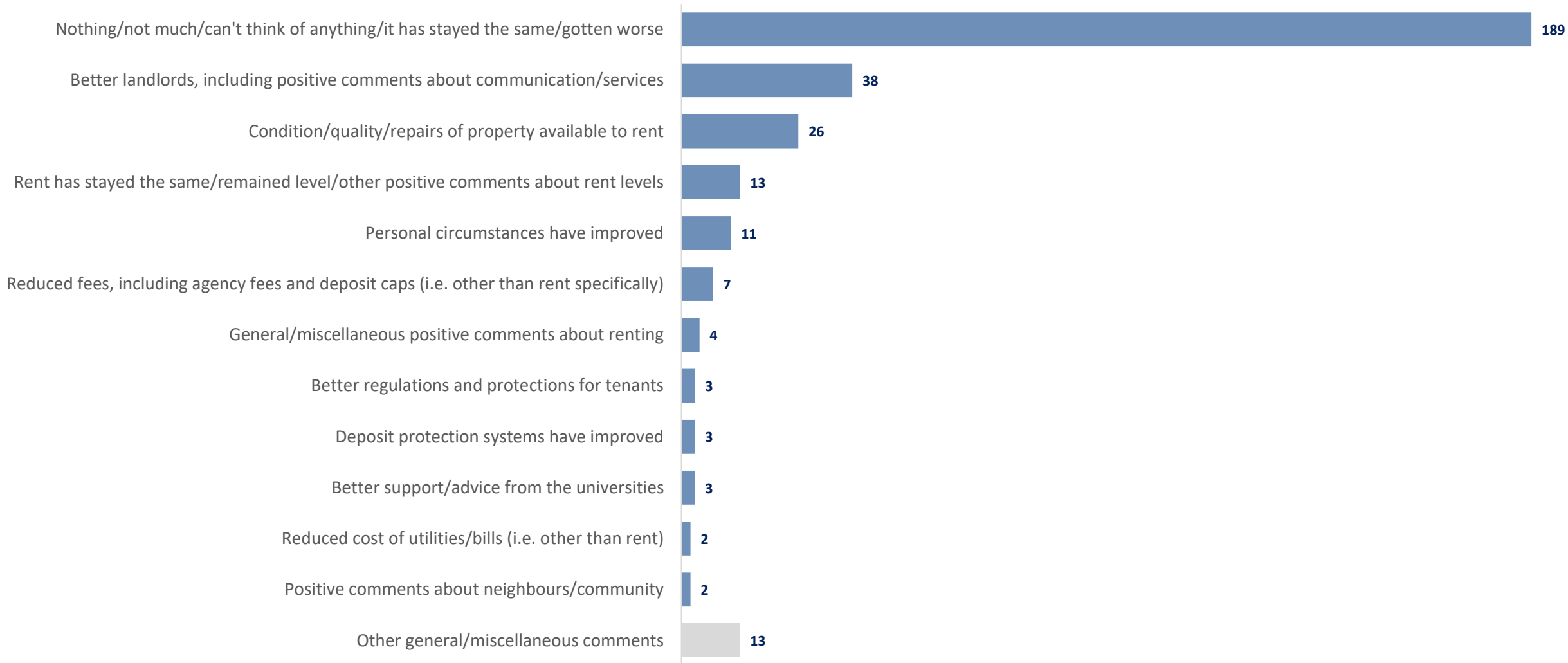
Breakdowns



*Less than 100 respondents; **less than 50 respondents.



Question 25 | What is one thing about renting privately in Southampton that has got **better** over the last five years?





Question 26 | What is one thing about renting privately in Southampton that has got **worse** over the last five years?

