

---

## MANAGEMENT BOARD

### 2010 MEMBERS' SURVEY OF SERVICES DRAFT REPORT

*Paper by the Head of the Office of the Chief Executive and Chair of the Survey of Services Project Board*

#### Purpose

1. This paper notes the completion of the 2010 Members' Survey of Services.
2. The Board is asked to:
  - Take note of the results (a summary report from FDS is appended to this paper).
  - Agree that the report should be published in a summary form on the Parliament website and the full report, including verbatim comments, on the Parliamentary Intranet Management Board Papers pages (para 14).
  - Agree that FDS be asked to conduct a third survey in October 2011, as part of the contractual agreement signed with them in 2008, after which a full review should be taken to determine the best way of seeking Members' views on House services (para 17).
  - Give its views on encouraging the wider use of the Survey of Services as a wider vehicle for gauging opinion and seeking views (para 19).

#### Consultation

3. The Survey of Services Project Board was sent the results and first draft of the report for comment. Where appropriate, project Board members shared these with their senior departmental colleagues. The final draft was agreed by the Project Board on 3 February, subject to final amendments.

#### Background

4. The Survey of Services was conducted between November-December 2010, and covered all Members and those Members' staff who were on the IPSA payroll; a response rate of approximately 25% was achieved. The survey was principally quantitative but provided opportunity for additional comments on most questions. There was a small scale qualitative follow-up phase to explore the reasoning behind some of the results. For the first time was offered to Members predominantly through an online questionnaire.
5. The 2009 questionnaire was reviewed and streamlined following consultation with Departments. The total number of possible questions was roughly the same as last year (for Members, 64 questions comprising around 180 response options). Some questions were simplified or removed but new questions were asked on the General

---

Election welcome and induction process, the new Strategy and use of accommodation across the Estate.

### Response rate

6. The survey period was set as 15-26 November, but was extended to provide respondents with a greater opportunity to participate. Overall 188 Members (27%) started the survey; approximately half were new Members although they only represent around one-third of the total. Not all Members finished their online questionnaire (very few opted for any form of paper version) but their responses up to the point they reached were included. Some 755 Members' staff responded (28% of salaried staff). The response rate is broadly in line with last year's survey but below the response rate of almost 50% achieved in 2007 when the survey formed part of the evidence gathering for the Tebbit review.
7. It is thought that the response rate may have been adversely affected not only by the length of survey, but also the unheralded publication of proposals under the Savings Programme on the launch date of the survey, and the concurrent running of the Administration Committee inquiry into catering services. Other factors that might have had an adverse effect on response rates include: a lack of clarity around the distinction between the roles of the House of Commons Service and IPSA; a press article which claimed to contain the response of one Member to the Survey when it was in fact in response to the Administration Committee inquiry; and a degree of dissatisfaction with the House Service which has not been seen in previous waves of the research. Despite these issues there remains confidence in the general direction of the results.

### Communications

8. An intensive communications strategy was employed before and during the survey, including a letter from the Speaker, posters, articles in key publications, emails, telephone calls and an intervention at Business Questions on the floor of the House.

### Results

9. As seen in previous years, Members and their staff are generally satisfied with the services offered by the House of Commons Service: 86% of Members and 91% of their staff are at least 'satisfied' overall, and two fifths are either 'very' or 'completely satisfied'.

10. A minority of Members (14%) and their staff (9%) are dissatisfied with services, and there are indications that this has increased since last year. (In 2009, just 2% expressed any dissatisfaction.)<sup>1</sup>
11. Levels of 'delight' are relatively low, with just 2% of Members and 5% of their staff saying they are 'completely satisfied' with the House services. No returned Member said they were 'completely satisfied', and only three new Members.
12. Comparing Members' assessment of the importance of services with their satisfaction, the greatest gaps in performance are for Members' accommodation at Westminster and ICT services, with a quarter and a third of Members respectively saying they are dissatisfied. Over half of Members rated accommodation as one of the top three most important services in enabling them to work effectively, and over three-quarters rated ICT services in this category.
13. The responses to the General Election welcome and induction programme show, in general, a high degree of satisfaction with the services provided. GEPG has now ended its work but the results of the survey appear to endorse the benefits of corporate planning for an undertaking of this nature.

#### Publication

14. Following advice from the Head of Central Communications it is recommended that the full report is published on the parliamentary INTRANET with a summary version (excluding verbatim comments) appearing on the parliamentary WEBSITE. Does the Board agree?

#### Process issues

15. A summary of the lessons learned on the process side is attached as Annex A.
16. The House has a three-year contract with the survey company, FDS International, this being the second survey in the series. On current plans, FDS would run a third survey in October 2011, and an option for a fourth survey is in the contract. Before a new contracting round is initiated, however, consideration needs to be given to whether the current annual questionnaire is the best means of gathering Members' views on services. FDS could be asked to draw up options for a different approach. For example, a more frequent survey, possibly capturing the views of a 25% sample of Members each quarter over a range of issues, or a smaller survey with an enhanced qualitative phase, might provide more insight.

---

<sup>1</sup> There were some differences in the wording of the satisfaction scale compared to the 2009 survey (see p11 of the report), which may have had a minor affect on comparability of the two surveys.

17. We **recommend** that:
- a. a third survey be conducted along similar lines to the 2010 Survey in October/November 2011, but shorter, with fewer questions and some changes in style. If the Board agrees to this timing, a new Project Board will need to be constituted at least five months prior to the next survey, effectively from April 2011. It would also be helpful were greater editorial authority/autonomy to be given to the Project Chair/SRO.
  - b. a full review should be taken to determine the best way of seeking Members' views on House services (as set out in para 16).
18. The Project Board feels there is currently little incentive to encourage the wider House Administration to see the Survey of Services as a vehicle for specific issues they may wish to probe. For instance, there is interest in the Savings Programme taking the views of Members. While the timing of the Savings Programme may not dovetail perfectly with the timelines for the next survey, there would be merit in exploring whether more could be done to help the Programme to "piggy-back" on the work of the Survey, bringing efficiencies and costs savings, as well as an opportunity to align the gathering of Members' (and Members' staff) views in a corporate, strategic context.
19. The Board is asked for its views on encouraging the use of the Survey of Services as a wider vehicle for gauging Members' opinion and seeking views.

#### Corporate issues

20. An output of the Survey of Services is a presentation of results to the Administration Committee by FDS, which is scheduled to take place on 28th February. The Committee is not expecting at this stage a formal response from the Board but is likely to ask what actions management is taking in response to the results. It was decided in 2009 that the Project would not deliver an Action Plan as such; instead specific issues would be addressed at departmental level. However, the Board may wish to identify some more corporate issues that emerge from the survey and on which it is taking action.
21. [s.36(2)(b) and s.36(2)(c)]

Matthew Hamlyn  
Head of the OCE

Robert Twigger  
Project Board Chair

11 February 2011



ANNEX

<b>Survey of Services 2010 LESSONS LEARNED</b>	
<b>No.</b>	<b>Lesson</b>
1.	A shorter survey, taking roughly ten minutes to complete, is preferable to a longer, portmanteau affair.
2.	A clearer sense of purpose at the outset coupled with a more assertive editorial process over the framing of questions is required.
3.	A "straw man" version produced by the survey company at the start of the next survey cycle, possibly based on previous higher scoring areas of dissatisfaction, will help to provide momentum and focus.
4.	Plan for, and cost, more detailed evaluative follow up in the event that a shorter survey prompts requests from departments for more probing scrutiny of responses.
5.	The Project Board and survey company should bear in mind the growing appetite, especially amongst Members, to use smaller portable devices as their key working tool, and explore ways of adapting surveys to this format in ways that will still deliver meaningful results.
6.	An early decision on timing will be crucial for the planning assumptions but will need to take into account potential Commission and other surveys that may feature in the coming months.
7.	There should be an early discussion with the survey company about the flexibility around delivery options for the third survey, in the event of deferral or other factors affecting timing and scope.
8.	Early notice should be given to both PICT and IPSA to supply valid, timely and accurate data for the data set
9.	Access to secure data transfer links need to be established early on with PICT, IPSA and the survey company in order to transfer data securely.



Survey of Services 2010  
Summary by FDS International

Prepared for  
House of Commons  
7849/ds

February 2011

---

### General

- Broadly successful survey delivery. Method was revised this year with predominately online data collection for both Members and their staff (with the option to print out a survey, or complete a telephone interview). The survey was conducted later in the year to allow new Members and their staff to adjust to their posts and gain familiarity with the House services.
- Response rates were comparable with last year – 188 Member and 755 staff engaged with the survey, equating to around a quarter of those invited to participate.
  - There is no indication that the change in survey method has had any effect on response rates; however it is more cost effective, accurate, and delivers environmental benefits.
- The sample was broadly representative of the make-up of the House – however New Members were slightly more likely to respond than returning Members.
- Note – several factors are thought to have had an adverse effect on response rates, including:
  - Lack of clarity around the distinction between the roles of the House of Commons Service and IPSA;
  - The fact that other surveys were taking place on similar topics at the same time;
  - A press article which claimed to contain the response of one Member to another research project; and
  - A degree of dissatisfaction with the House Service which has not been seen in previous waves of the research.
- Note – this year, the satisfaction rating scale was changed in order to increase granularity of findings and remove inconsistency of interpretation of the meaning of ‘fairly satisfied’; a consequence of this is that findings are not directly comparable with previous surveys although broad comparisons can be made.

### Overall

- As seen in previous years, Members and their staff are generally satisfied with the services offered by the House of Commons Service - 86% of Members and 91% of their staff are at least ‘satisfied’ overall, and two fifths are either ‘very’ or ‘completely satisfied’.
- However, this does leave a minority of Members (14%) and their staff (9%) who are dissatisfied with services, and there are indications that this has increased since last year. (In 2009, just 2% expressed any dissatisfaction.)
  - Likewise, levels of ‘delight’ are relatively low, with just 2% of Members and 5% of their staff saying they are ‘completely satisfied’ with the House services. No returned Member said they were ‘completely satisfied’, and only three new Members.
- Few Members were aware of the **House of Commons Service’s Strategy** prior to being interviewed, and many are sceptical that it will inevitably lead to better outcomes.

### General Election 2010

- Generally Members were satisfied with the House of Commons’ performance during the transition period
  - the New Members’ Reception Area and orientation process were rated highly

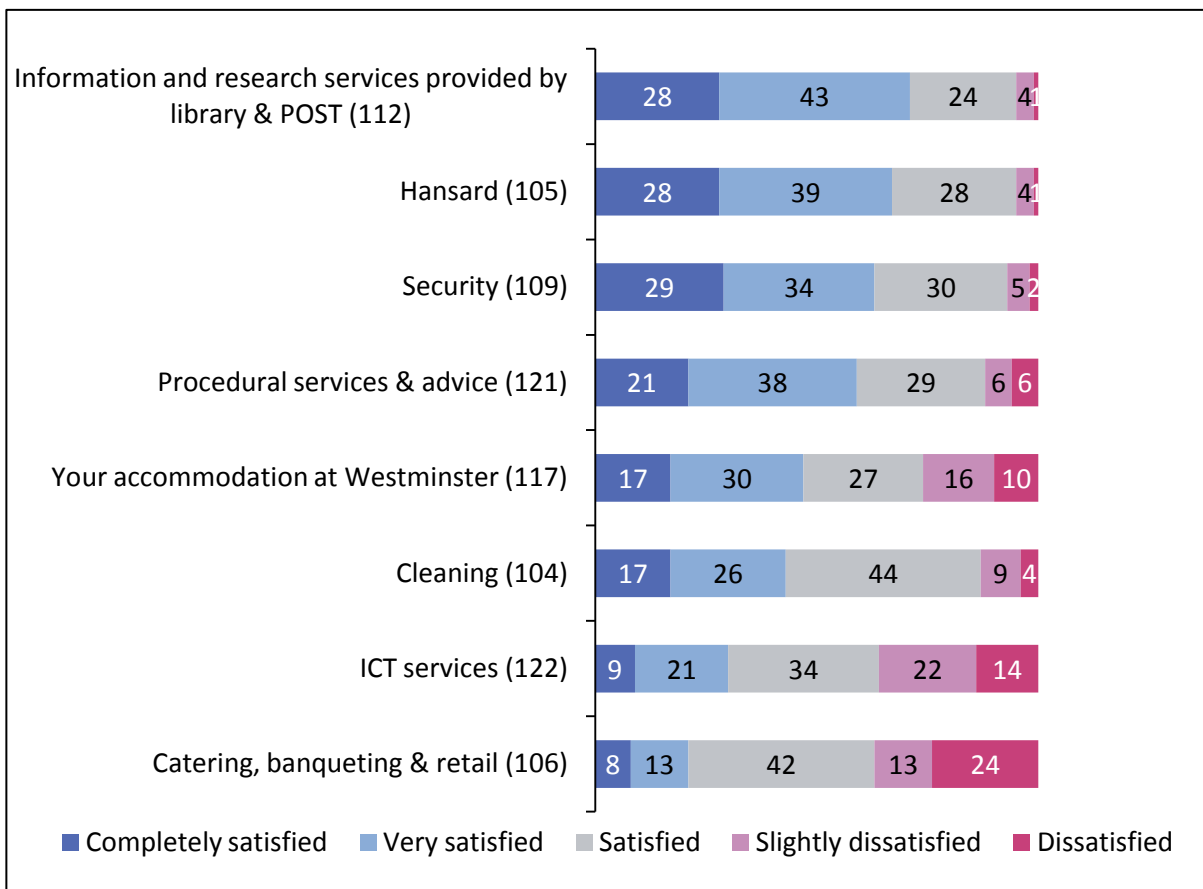


- However, although not wholly within the remit of the House of Commons Service, there were perceived delays in the allocation of offices which caused some dissatisfaction.
- Arrangements specifically for **temporary accommodation after the General Election** caused dissatisfaction for some; however it was generally accepted that disruption around this time is inevitable and that the House of Commons Service can best assist through the rapid provision of technical support and stationery.

### Main findings

#### Chart: Members' satisfaction with service areas, compared with stated importance

(Number of responses to each question indicated in brackets; importance based on the proportion of Members saying each area is the top three most important)



- Comparing importance with satisfaction, the greatest gap in performance is for Members' **accommodation at Westminster** and **ICT services**, with a quarter and a third of Members respectively saying they are dissatisfied. Over half of Members rated their accommodation as one of their top three important issues, and over three-quarters, ICT services.
- Satisfaction with **information services** has remained very high.
- Likewise satisfaction with the **Official Report** is once again very high, with staff being particularly highly regarded.
- The **Chamber Services** continue to attract high levels of satisfaction, with doorkeepers once again receiving high satisfaction ratings.

- The **Procedural Committee** offices once again achieve high levels of satisfaction. With a new influx of Members there are some suggestions for updating procedures within the Table Office, and for the Public Bill Office to further training in Chamber procedures.
- **Serjeant at Arms** – there has been an increase in the proportion of Members and staff feeling secure on the Parliamentary Estate – up 9% for Member and 5% for their staff. As seen last year, there are some concerns about inconsistency of security staff.
- The majority are satisfied with **cleaning** services across the Parliamentary Estate although a one in ten Members, and a fifth of Members’ staff, are dissatisfied with the cleaning of their office.
- There are significant areas where improvements in **PICT** service would lead to higher levels of satisfaction.
  - **Connection to the parliamentary network** is considered unsatisfactory for at least a fifth of Members and their staff, rising to more than half of Members when considering wireless access across the Estate.
  - **Arrangements for the purchase of additional equipment** also cause widespread dissatisfaction, particularly around the cost of printer cartridges and the limited number of laptops Members may purchase.
- That said, overall the majority of Members and Members’ staff are satisfied with the services provided by **PICT**, with staff considered one of the strengths of the service.
- There has been a sharp decline in satisfaction with **catering, banqueting & retail** services since 2009, seemingly generated by price rises/withdrawal of subsidies. The provision of vending machines across the Estate remains an issue for some.
- Although the majority of Members and their staff are satisfied with **Personnel and related services**, there are large pockets of dissatisfaction. From open-ended comments it appears that some of this is generated by potential confusion between the role of the House of Commons Service and IPSA.