



New Home Standard Survey

May 2019

Background



Commissioned by:

Executive Director of Customer Experience, Claire Stone

Rationale:

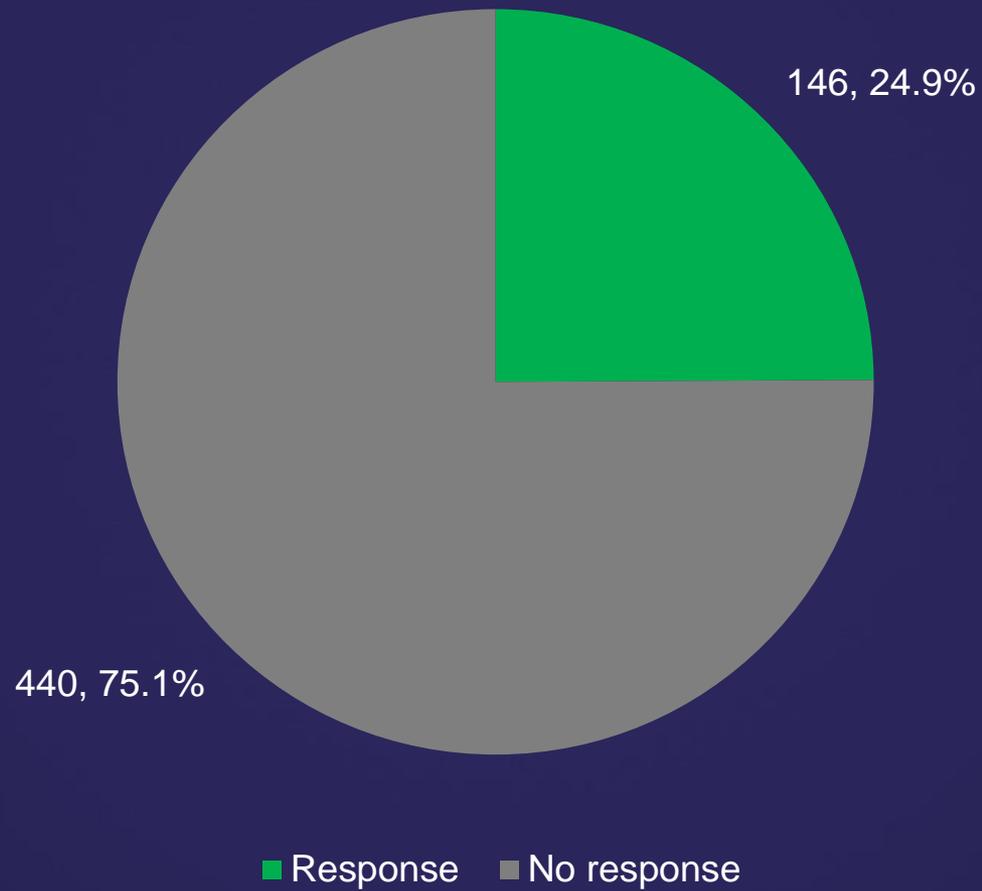
Accent offers lifetime tenancies, tenancy support services and aims to meet residents' needs at all stages of their lives. Few private landlords offer this. However; our properties are not usually fully decorated, may not have carpets or suitable floor coverings, and are not usually fitted with appliances such as fridges and washing machines.

We carried out a survey of residents to determine how important this is to prospective residents and how our offer compares to that of private landlords.

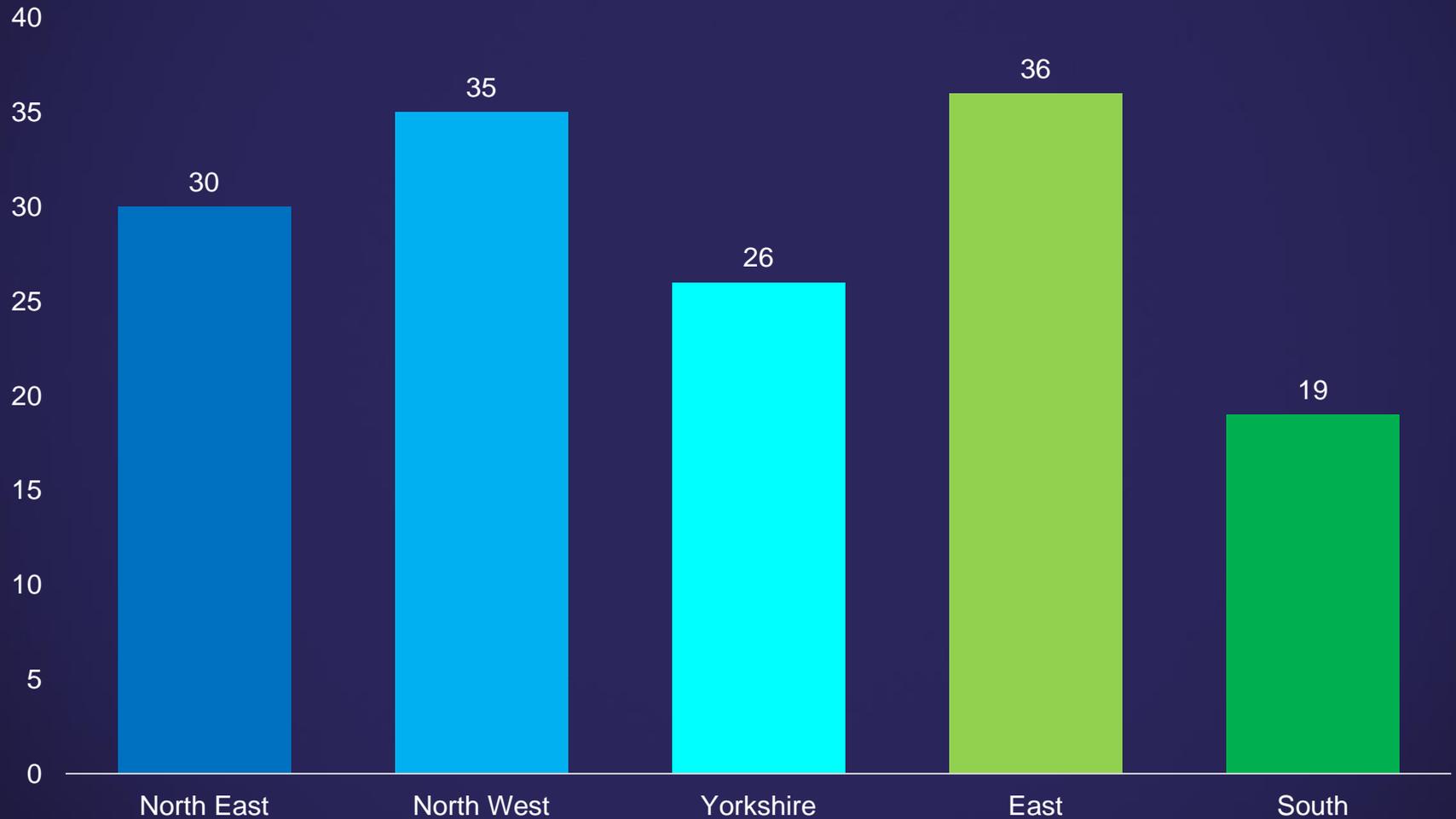
Sample size:

This survey was aimed at residents who have moved into an Accent property in the last 6 months. Transfers, mutual exchanges and successions were not included. Homeowners were not included. The survey was carried out exclusively by email and yielded 146/586 (24.9%) responses, with a margin of error of $\pm 7.5\%$.

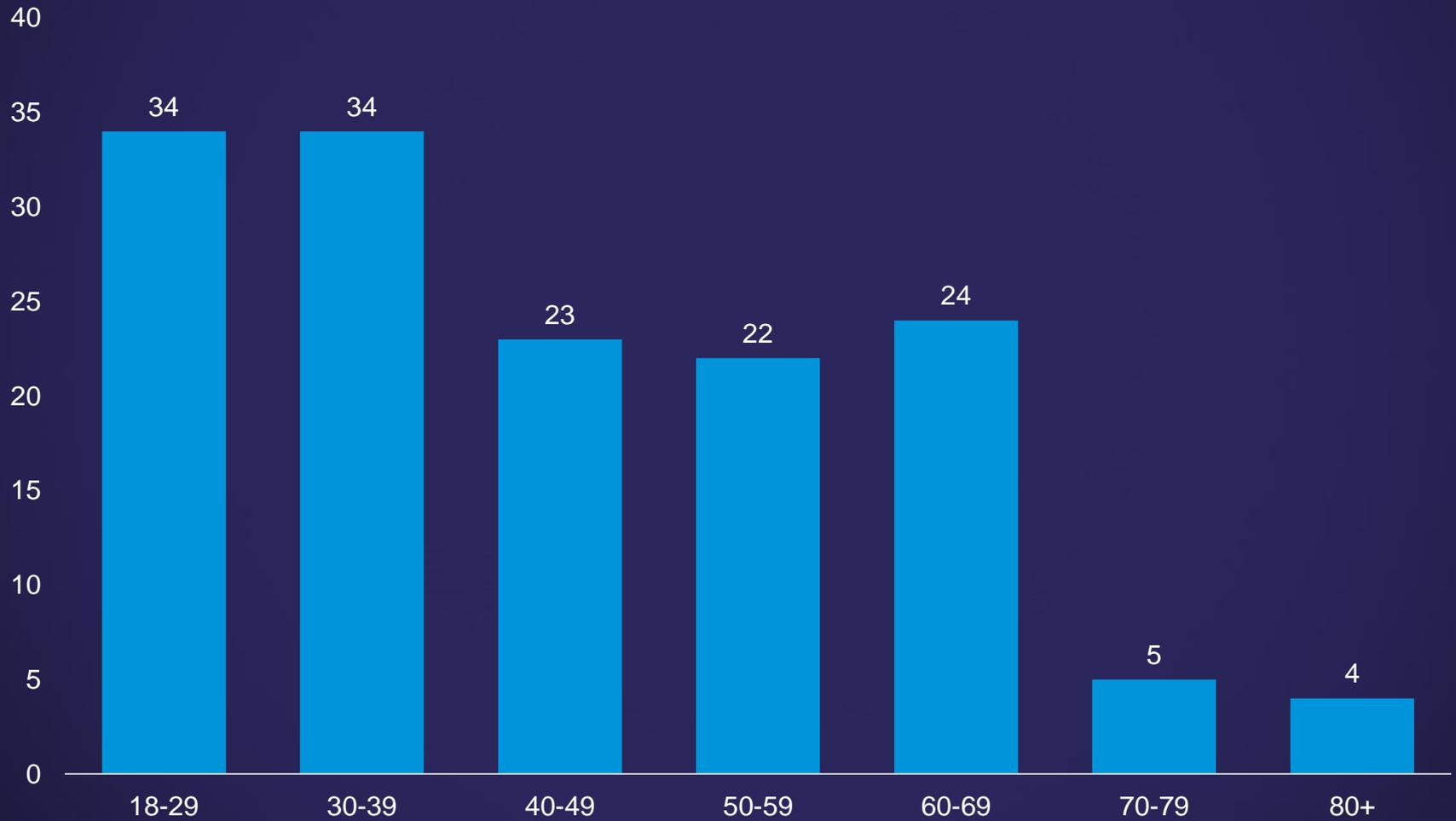
Responses



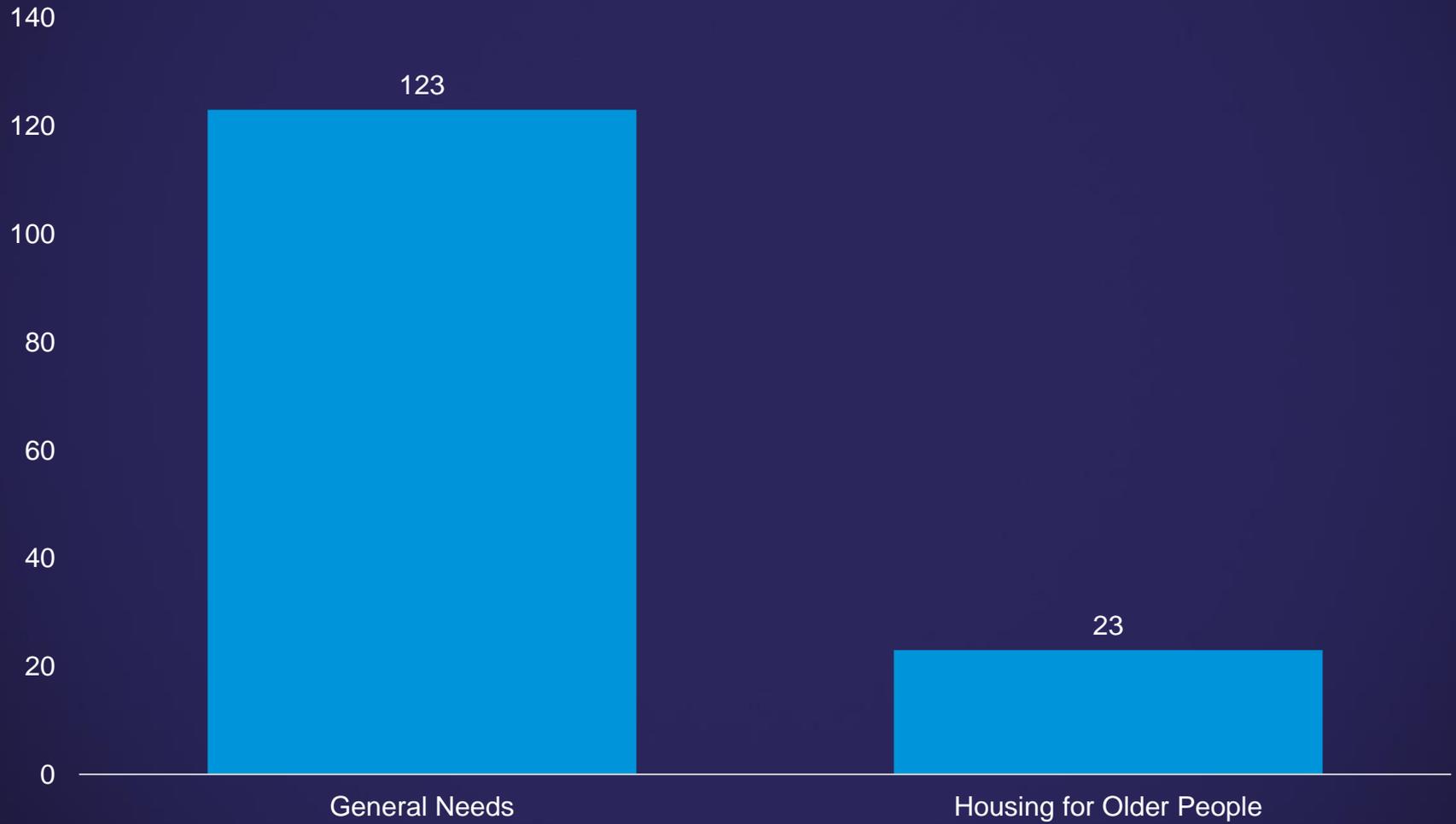
Responses by Region



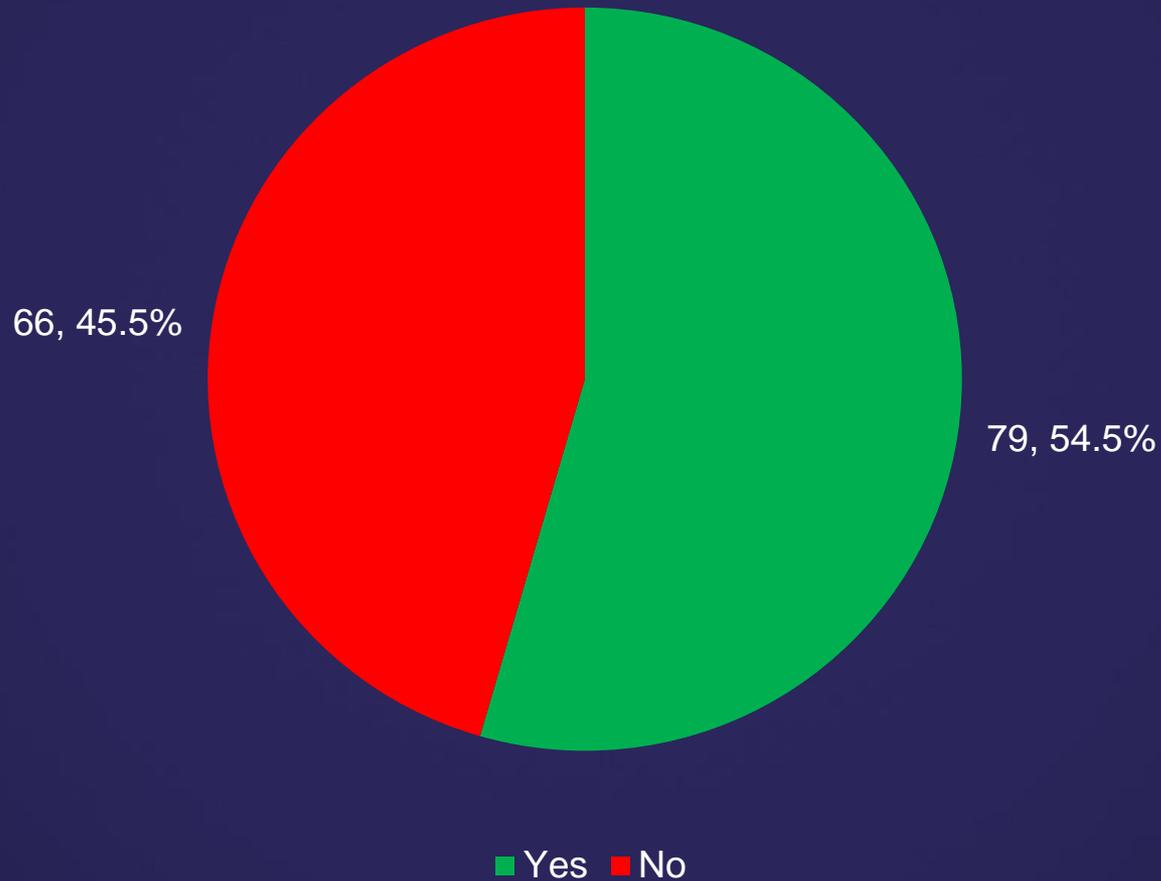
Responses by Age Band



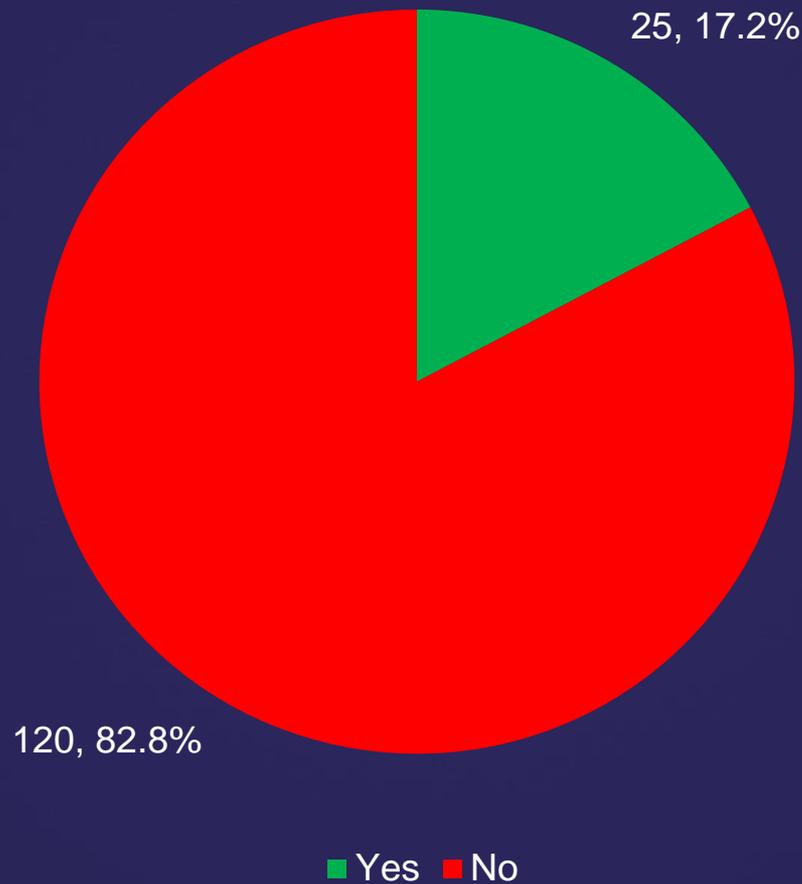
Responses by Tenure Type



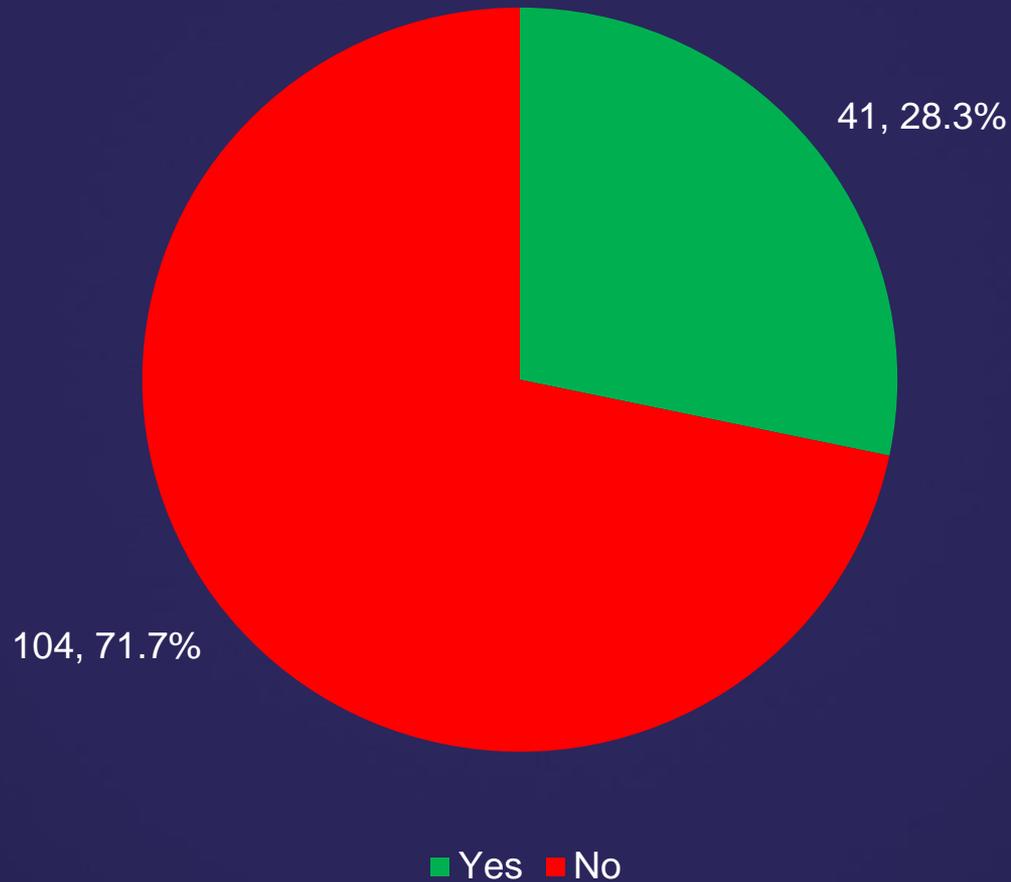
Did we advise you about the minimum standard your new home should meet?



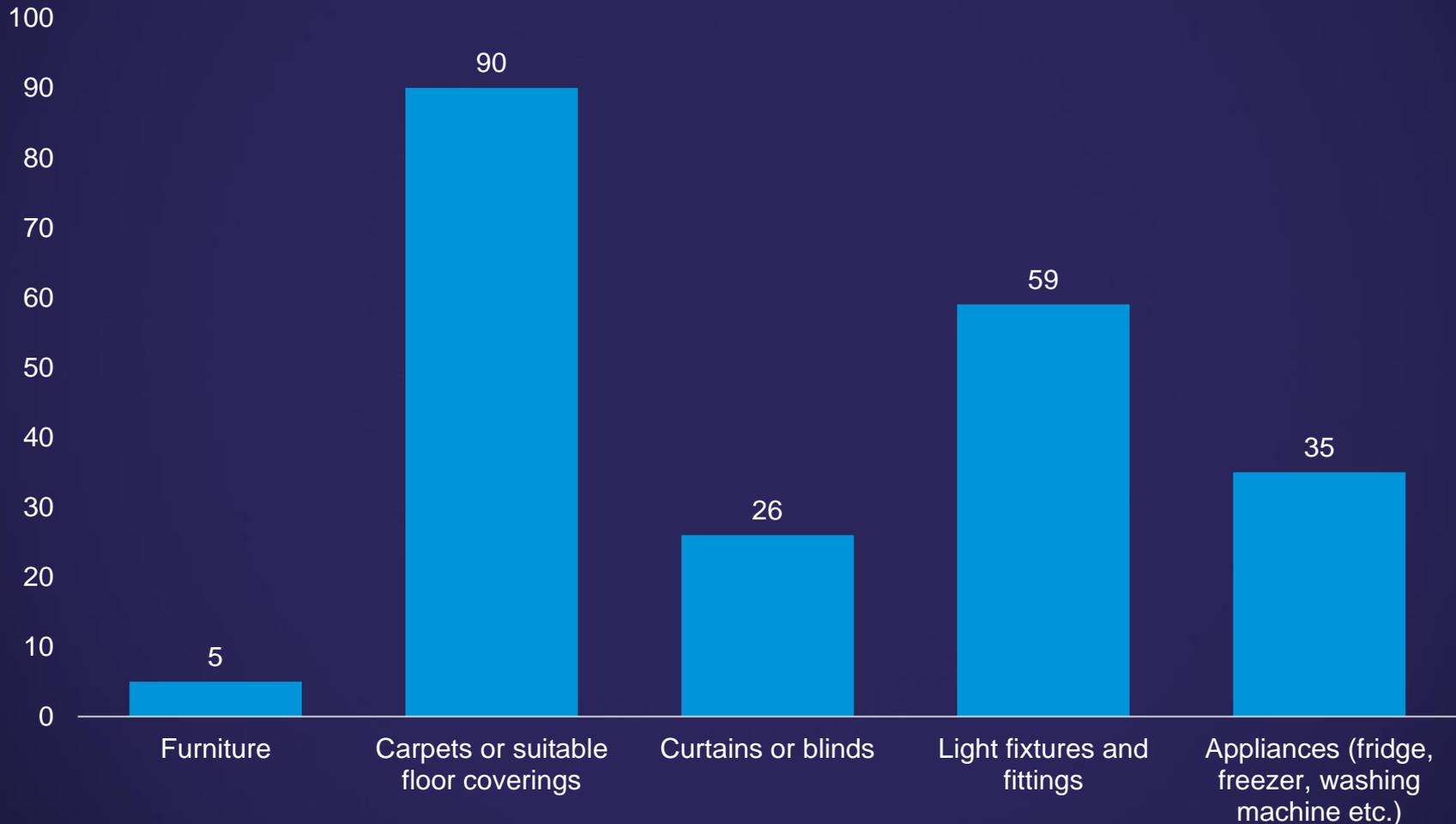
Did we advise you about how much it might cost to furnish and decorate your new home?



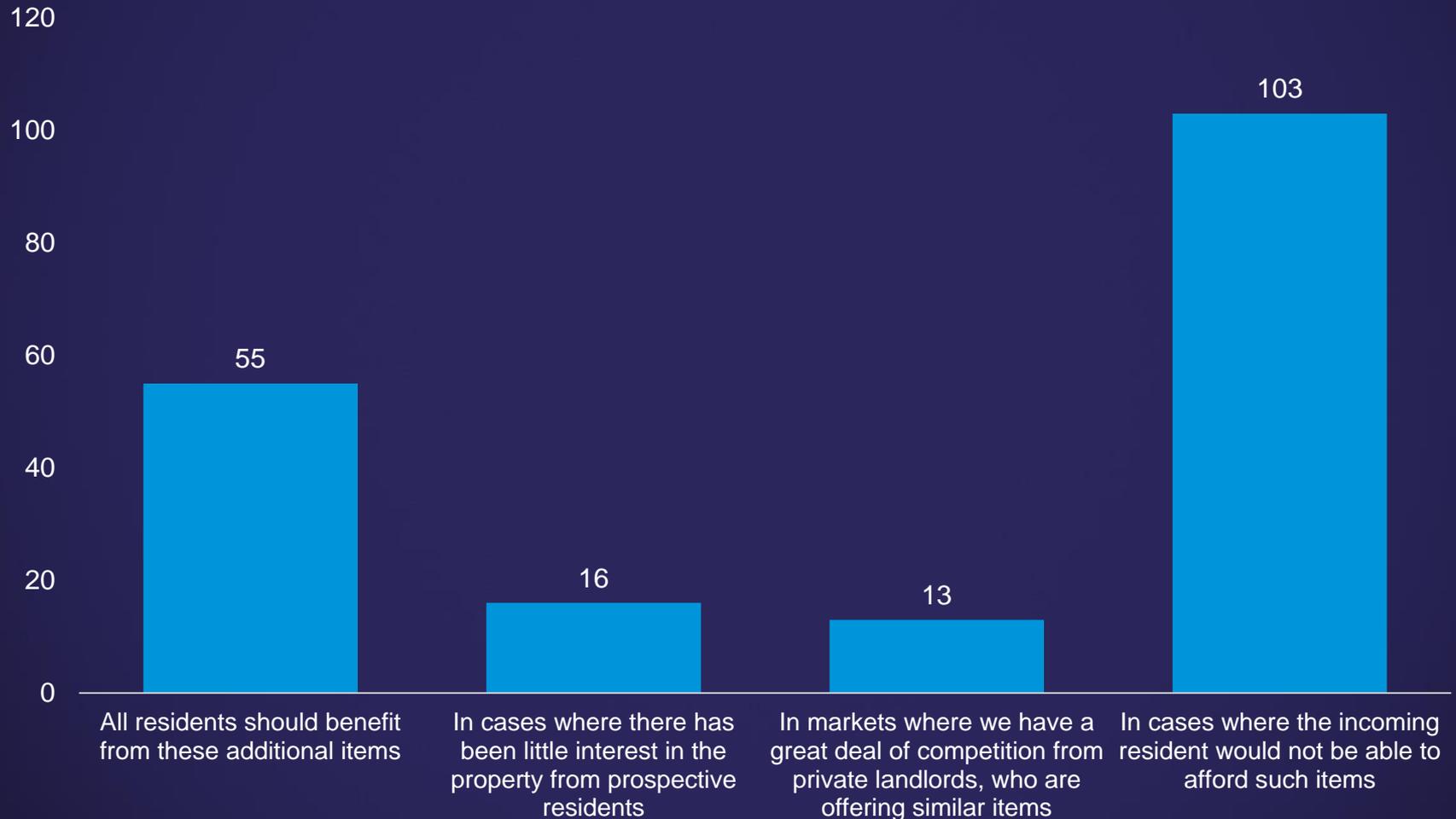
Did we offer you any advice about how to furnish and decorate your home affordably?



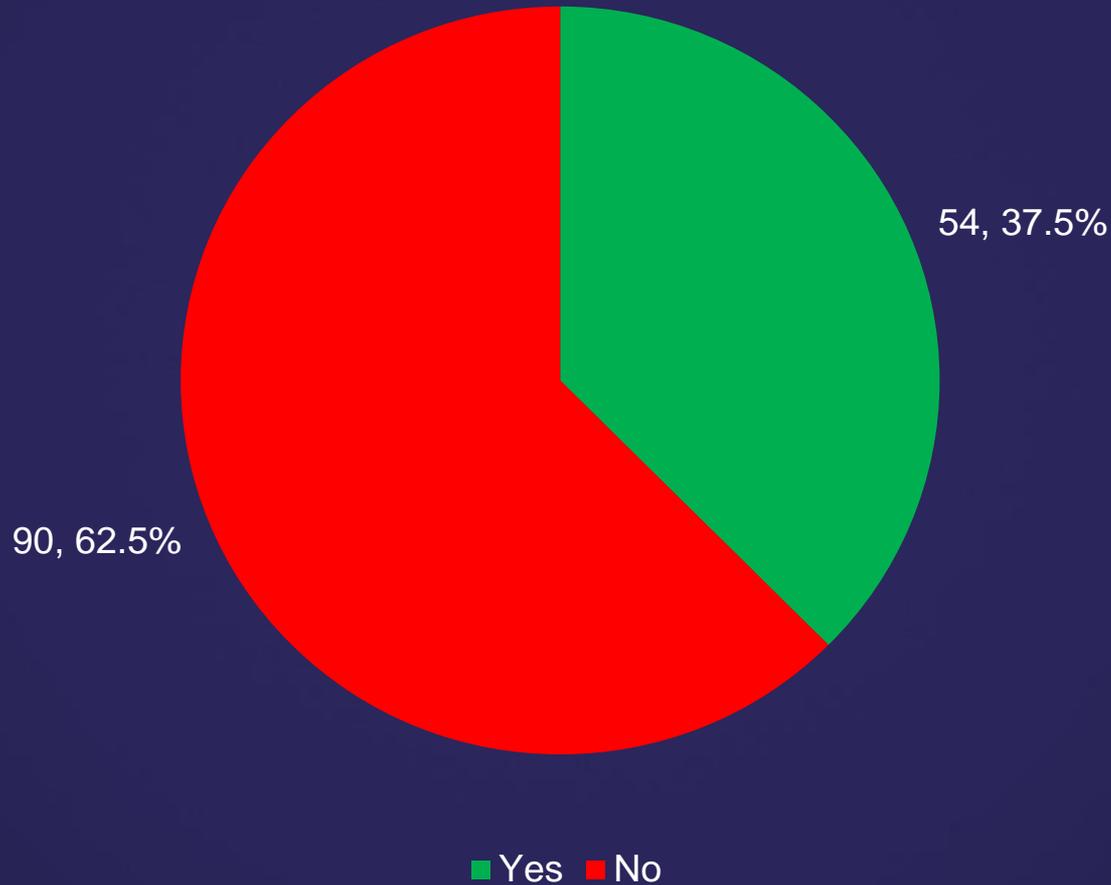
As well as ensuring that your home is safe and in a good state of repair, which of the following would you have expected to be provided?



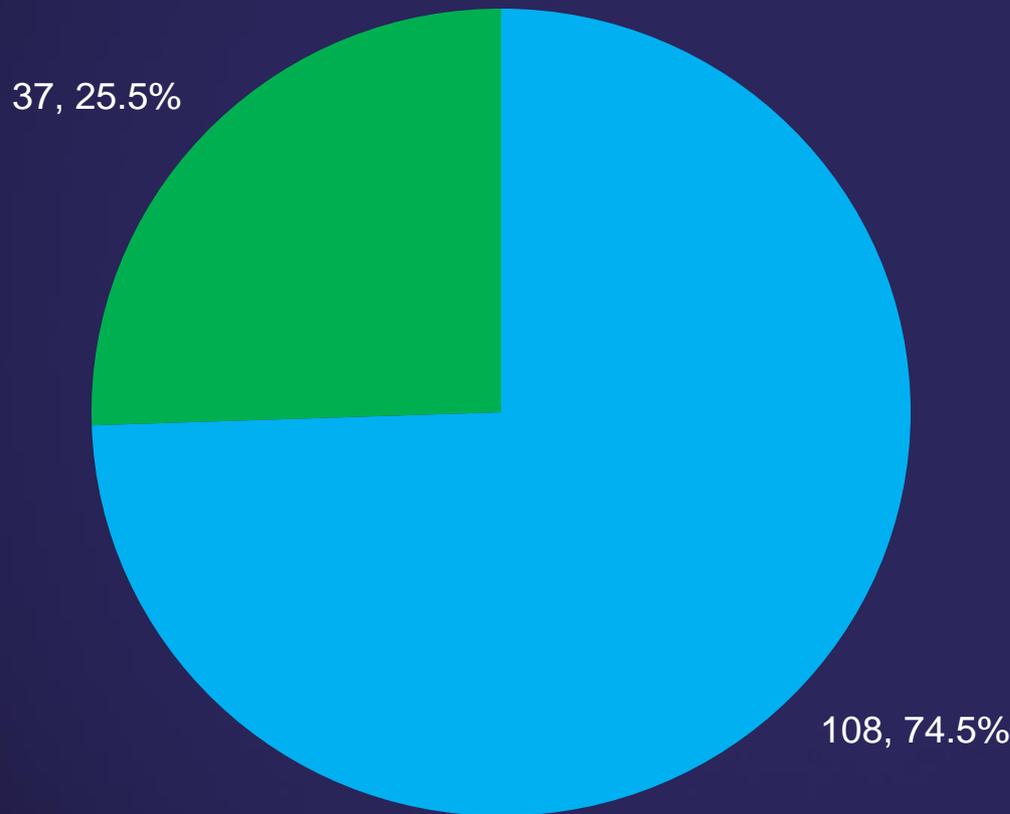
Under what circumstances should Accent offer these additional items? (Tick all that apply)



If Accent were to provide such items, do you think we should also be responsible for repairing them and replacing them?

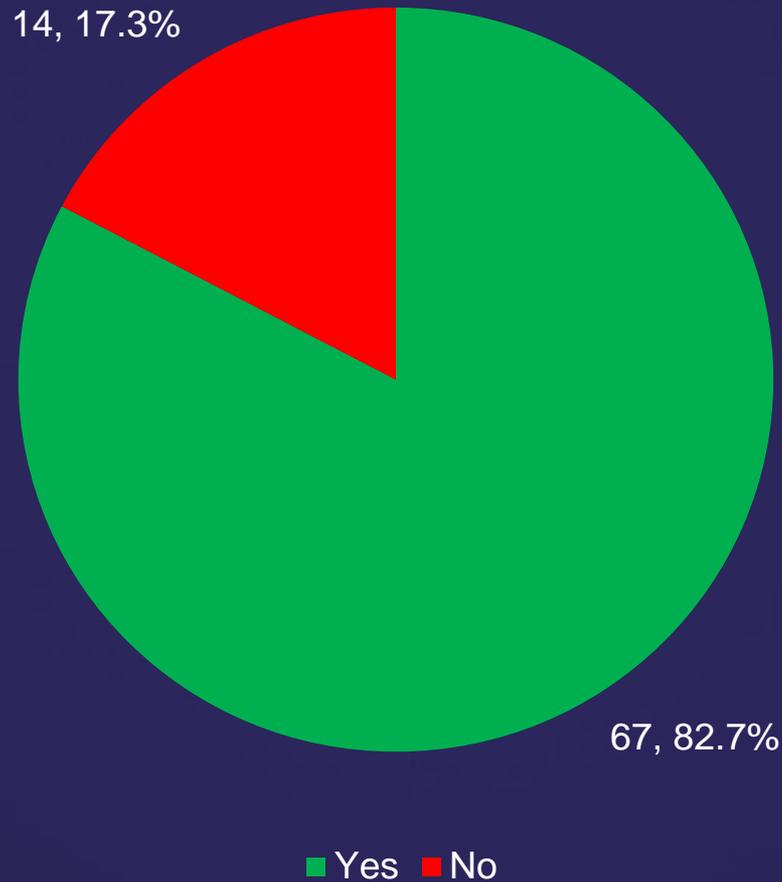


In some cases, we have to let properties which are in poor decorative condition. Which solution better describes your preference?

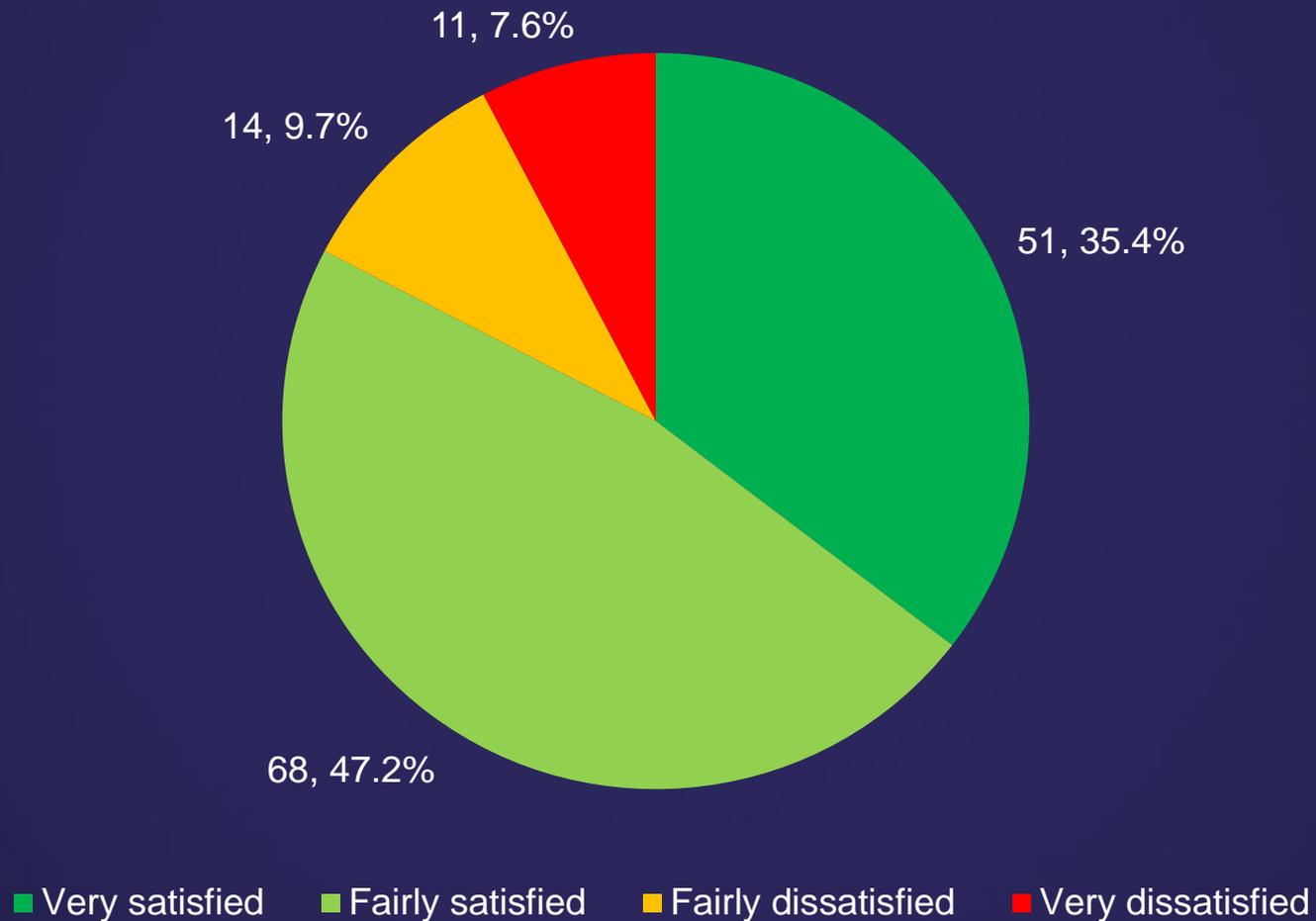


- We offer you a decorating voucher. It may not cover the cost of fully decorating the property, but you can decorate it to your taste.
- We paint and decorate the property for you, but you may not have any choice in how we do this.

Would you have expected for the garden to have been tidied before you moved in?



How satisfied were you with the condition of the property when you moved in?



Is there anything more you would have expected Accent to do, before letting the property?



Carpets should certainly have been on floors. A cooker would have been a great help to me as I had no cooking facilities (except microwave) with which to prepare food.

A check in with manager to see how things work. Also, if possible, a detailed measure of the rooms.

The carpets would have been a must for us... being on a low income. We paid £364 to have living room carpet and hallway carpet with underlay as the floor is concrete. It took a big chunk and had to sell things to survive the month. We can't decorate now as we need to catch up with bills.

I am very angry with the whole matter of moving in and all the things which they said they would fix or clean were not done even still to this day! It was left in such a state but was ignored. The money I have had to spend to get it into a livable condition has got me into such debt.

Is there anything more you would have expected Accent to do, before letting the property?



I did struggle without a cooker, fridge and washing machine for the first few months and although Accent kindly funded a second-hand cooker after six months I think this could have been discussed earlier.

I do not feel like I was informed of everything before moving in. I have encountered numerous problems with the billing of my gas and... no one has helped. I feel that things such as gas and electric meters should be checked that there are efficiently working before allowing someone to move in - especially when its someone's first home who does not know about all of this, such as myself.

I love my property I have been given. It has taken me a while to carpet the bedrooms and hanging curtains... I hadn't the money, and the deposit for all the windows for a weekly blind company is £220. I do believe in certain circumstances that maybe blinds and carpet could be fitted and added on top of rent of instalments?

If the property is offered on a lifetime tenancy and is for the over 50s, then consideration needs to be given as to the issues that this age group might have, such as reduced mobility. Having to arrange decoration and carpeting before moving in caused me additional stress.

Conclusions



- Almost half of the respondents were not advised about the minimum standard that their property should meet. Some respondents had the impression that Accent was desperate to let the property and did not properly explain what was, and what was not included.
- ¼ respondents said that they had been offered advice about how to furnish and decorate their home affordably. Respondents who received help from Accent were very grateful, but some indicated that this could have been discussed earlier.
- Most respondents would have liked their property to have been let with carpets or suitable floor coverings. This was the item that incoming residents most struggled to afford. Some suggested they would have been happy to pay for this in instalments, on top of their rent.
- Some respondents felt that appliances should have been provided. Respondents' comments revealed that some residents were without cooking facilities for months after moving in.
- Respondents tended to agree that those who are struggling the most financial should be prioritised for additional items.

Conclusions



- The majority of respondents agreed that Accent should not be responsible for repairing or replacing any additional items that are offered.
- $\frac{3}{4}$ respondents would prefer to receive a decorating voucher than to have the property painted and decorated for them.
- Decorating vouchers are less favoured by older residents, who may struggle to paint and decorate their properties themselves.
- Respondents who had a garden with their property would generally have expected for it to have been tidied before moving in. Respondents' comments indicated that many had problems with fencing when they moved in.
- 83% respondents were satisfied with the condition of their property when they moved in. Those who were dissatisfied pointed out some significant issues.
- In addition, respondents' comments revealed that mould was a problem for some incoming residents. Some respondents felt that more thorough checks should have been carried out to ensure that the electrics were working properly.