# DHC Customer Survey Nov/Dec 2024

Devon Home Choice ran a customer survey during from 11th November 2024 to 12th December 2024 to seek views on the Devon Home Choice website, application form, how homes are advertised, property alerts and bidding for properties.

The survey was hosted and publicised on the DHC website, by individual DHC partners and emails were sent to active DHC applicants to encourage people to complete the survey. The survey received 2564 responses.

Charts 1 to 4 below show the demographics of applicants responding to the survey. The figures in the charts largely follow the make-up of the housing register in terms of local authority, band, bedroom need and age group.
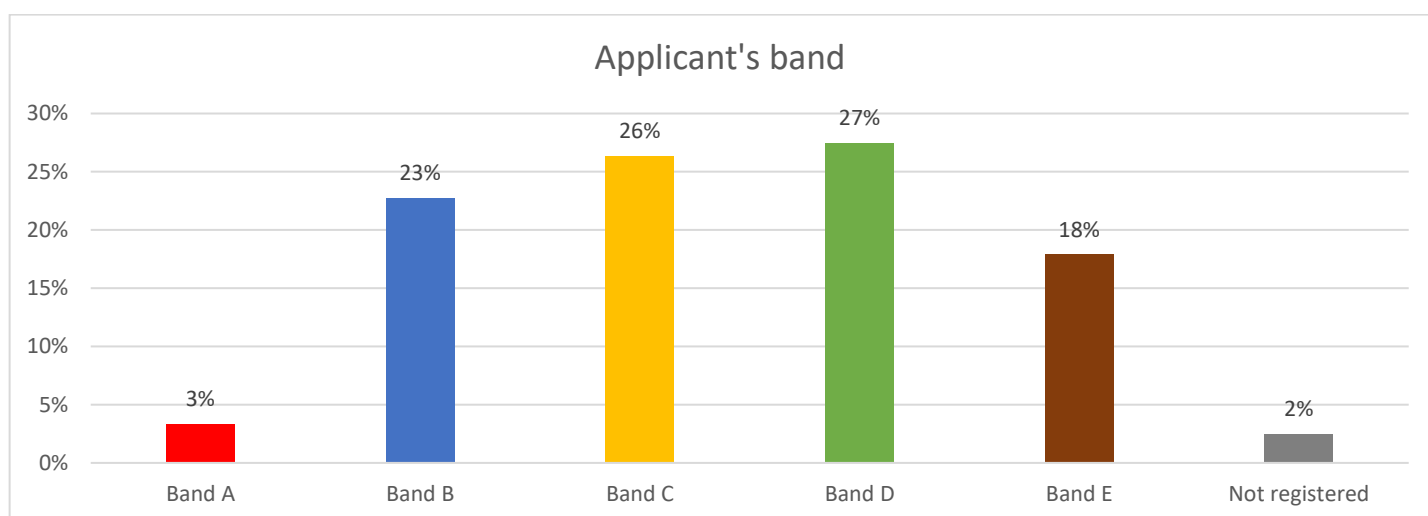
Q1. Which local authority handles your/your client's Devon Home Choice application?
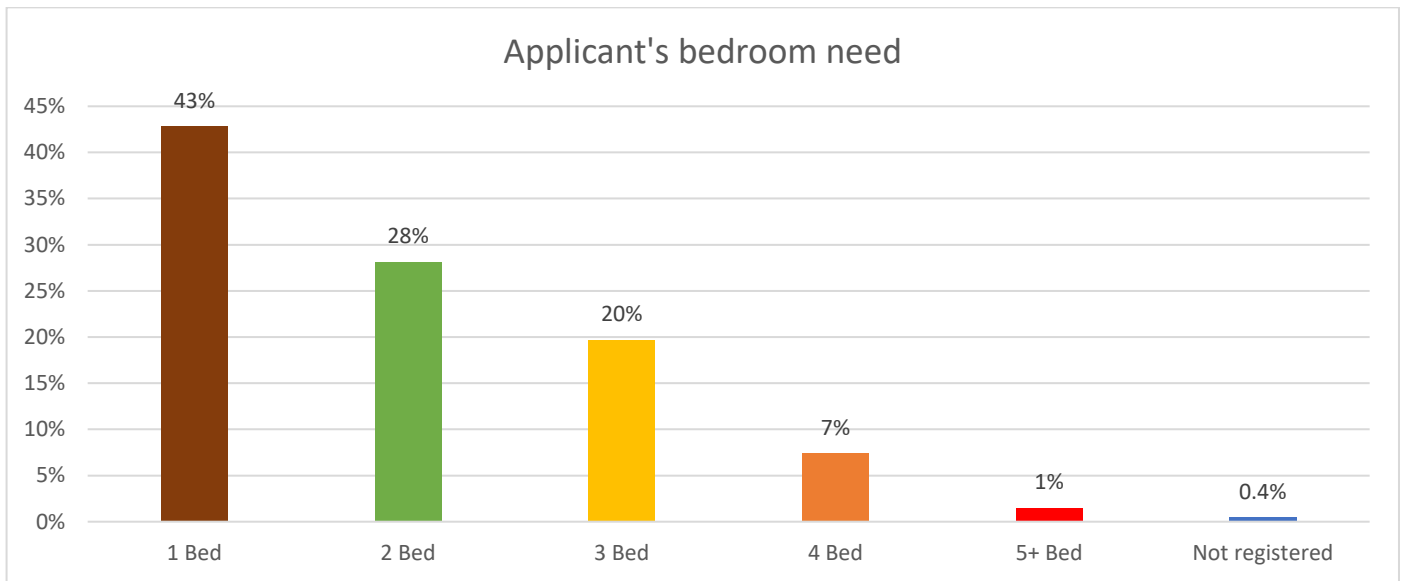
Chart 1: LA handling the application
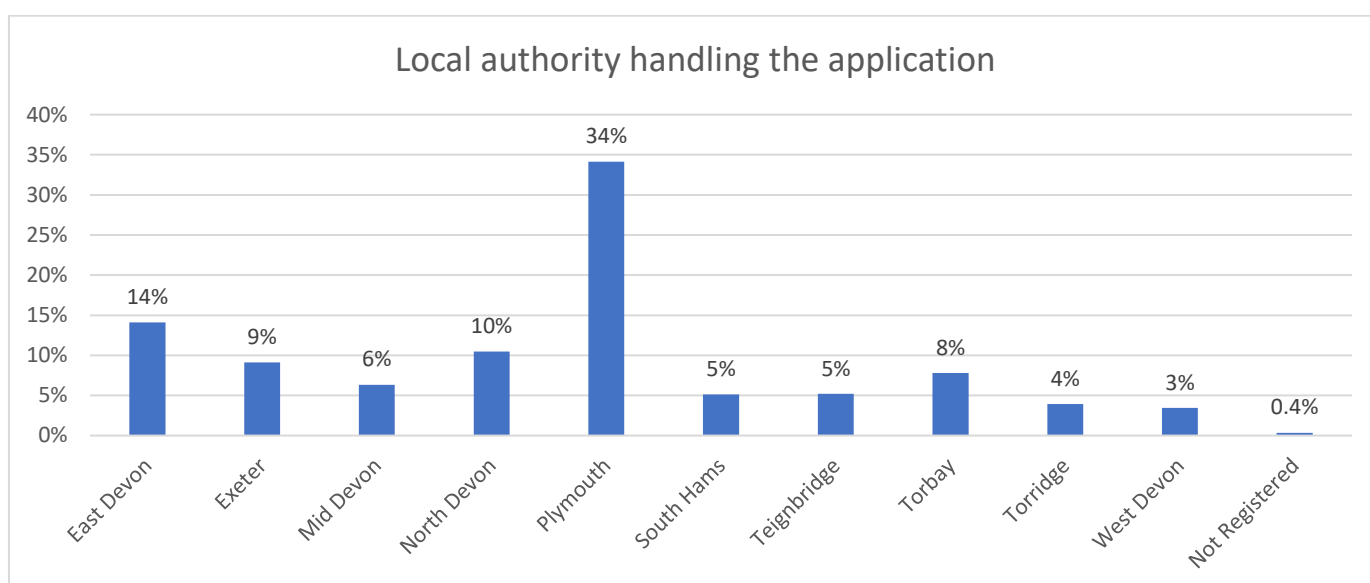
Q2. What is the current band of your/your client's Devon Home Choice application?

Chart 2: Band of applicant

Q3. What is the bedroom need on you/your client's application?
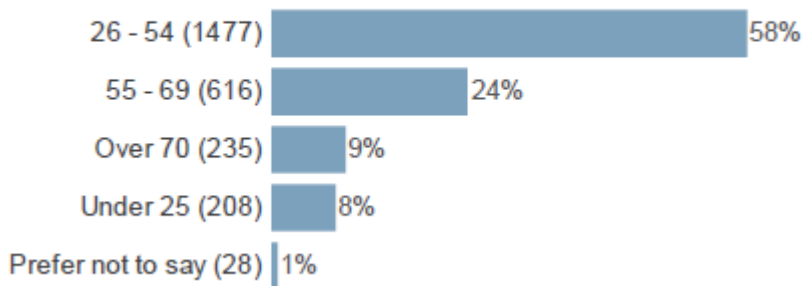
Chart 3: Applicant's bedroom need

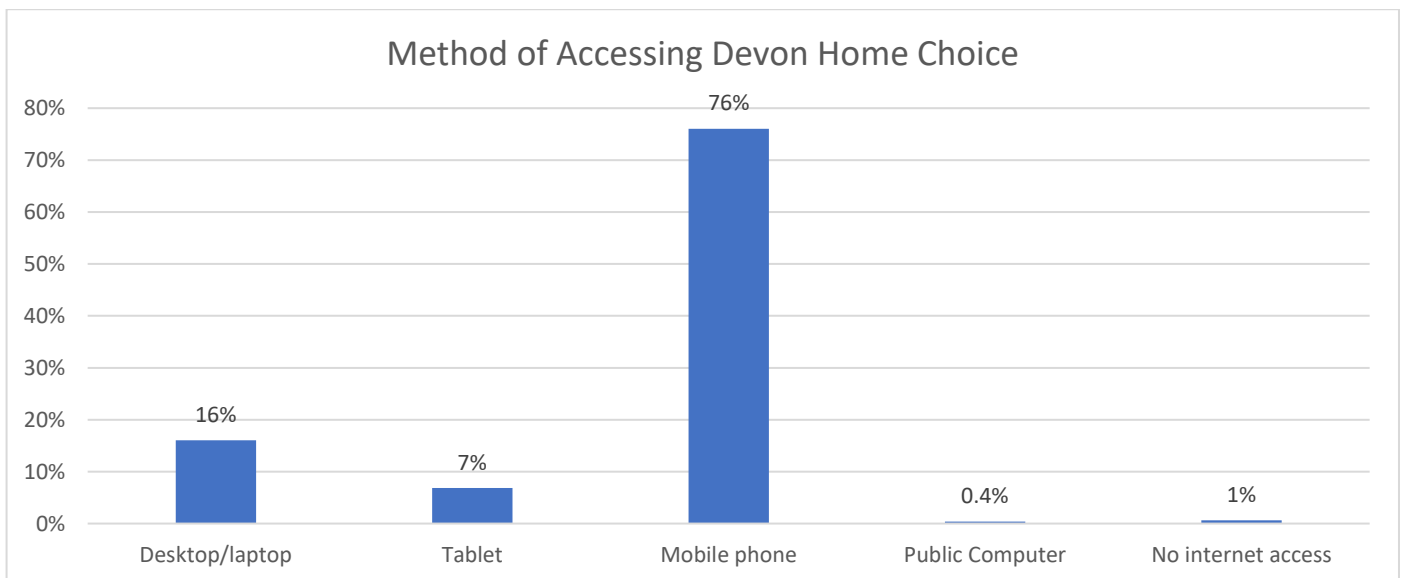
Q4. What is your/your client's age group?

Chart 4: Age group of applicant

Q5. How do you/your client usually access the internet?

Chart 5: How applicants access the internet

Q6. Do you/your client experience any barriers to accessing Devon Home Choice?

Chart 6: Percentage of applicants who advise that they experience barriers in accessing Devon Home Choice

Do you experience barriers to accessing Devon Home Choice?
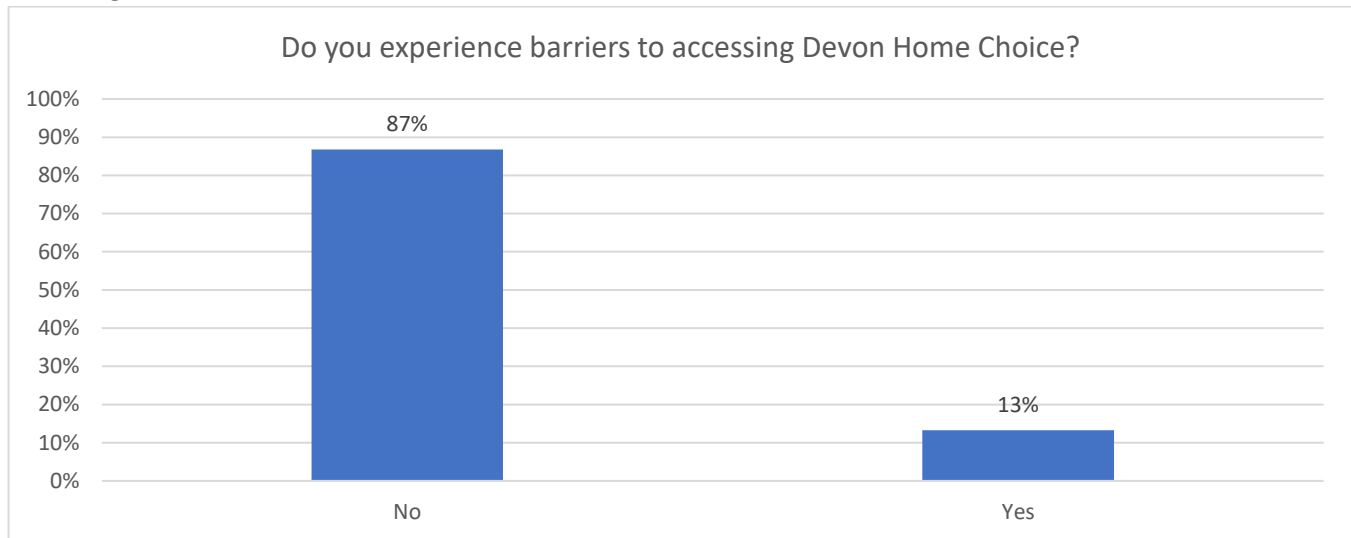
87% of respondents advised that they do not experience barriers to accessing Devon Home Choice. Of the 339 respondents (13%) who advised that they experience barriers to accessing Devon Home Choice, the most common barrier to access cited was IT issues followed by Login Issues – see tables 1 and 2 below.

Table 1: Breakdown of reported barriers to accessing Devon Home Choice

Type of barriers experienced	No of Respondents
Affordability	1
Band/Bedroom/assessment issues	11
Contradictory advice	1
Difficulty contacting LA	18
Don't understand how it works	24
Evidence requirement	1
Health reason	15
IT issues	100
Login issues	91
No access to computer or device	4
No log in on menu	1
Not enough homes to bid for	27
Not specified	7
Processing time too long	28
Restrictions on adverts	9
Unable to engage during office hours due to work	1
Total	339

Table 2: Breakdown of IT issues reported as being a barrier to applicants accessing Devon Home Choice

Breakdown of IT issues	No of Respondents
Difficulty accessing internet	18
Difficulty navigating	6
Difficulty using online form	1
Difficulty with navigating	3
IT issues	4
Technical issues	1
Unable to use IT	11
Unstable/slow website or App	56
Total	100

Chart 7: Percentage applicants reporting difficulty in contacting LA by LA area

Applicants reporting difficulty in contacting LA

East Devon 22%
Mid Devon 6%
Plymouth 39%
South Hams 17%
Torbay 17%

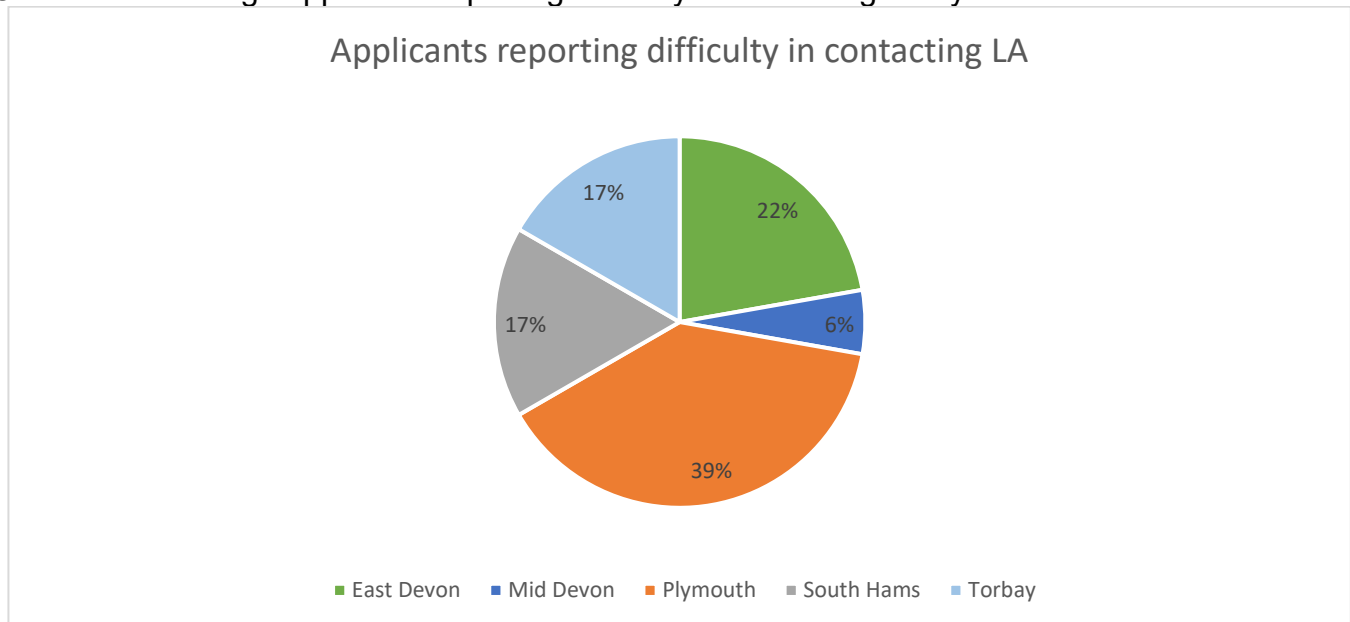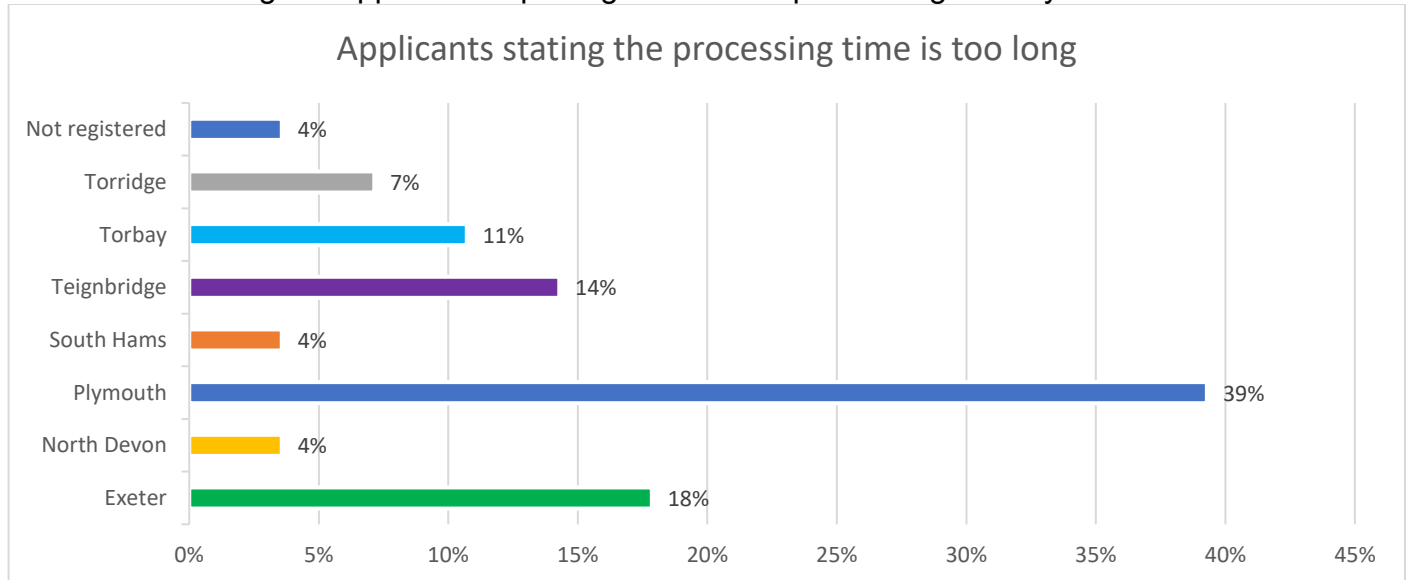■ East Devon ■ Mid Devon ■ Plymouth ■ South Hams ■ Torbay

Chart 7 above shows the percentage breakdown by LA of applicants who advised that they had difficulty in contacting their LA as a barrier to them participating in Devon Home Choice. 29% of applicants who gave this response advised that they are registered in Plymouth.

Chart 8 below shows the percentage breakdown by LA of applicants who advised that the time taken to process applications is a barrier to them participating in Devon Home Choice.
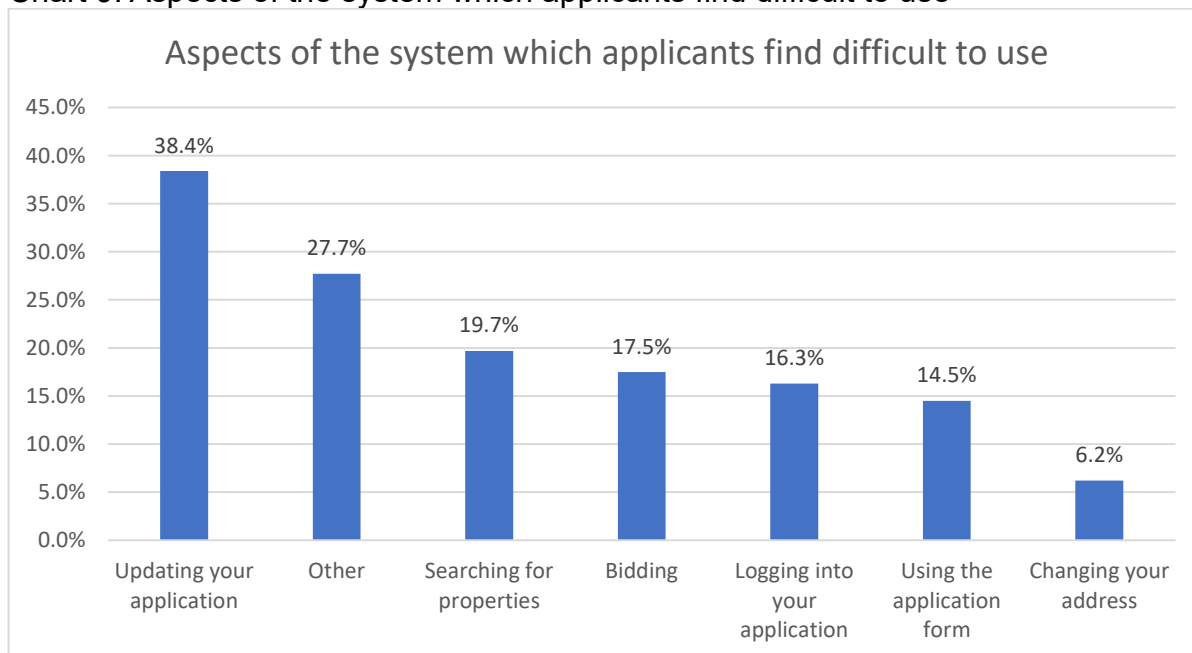
Chart 8: Percentage of applicants reporting issues with processing time by LA area

Applicants stating the processing time is too long

LA area	Percentage
Not registered	4%
Torridge	7%
Torbay	11%
Teignbridge	14%
South Hams	4%
Plymouth	39%
North Devon	4%
Exeter	18%

Q9 Do you/your client find any aspects of the system difficult to use? (Please select all that apply and provide comments)

Chart 9 below shows that 38.4% of applicants found difficulty in updating their application on the system.

Chart 9: Aspects of the system which applicants find difficult to use

Aspects of the system which applicants find difficult to use

Aspect	Percentage
Updating your application	38.4%
Other	27.7%
Searching for properties	19.7%
Bidding	17.5%
Logging into your application	16.3%
Using the application form	14.5%
Changing your address	6.2%

As a follow up to this question, we asked applicants who listed other to provide details of why they find aspects of this system hard to use. Details of the responses are shown in Table 3.

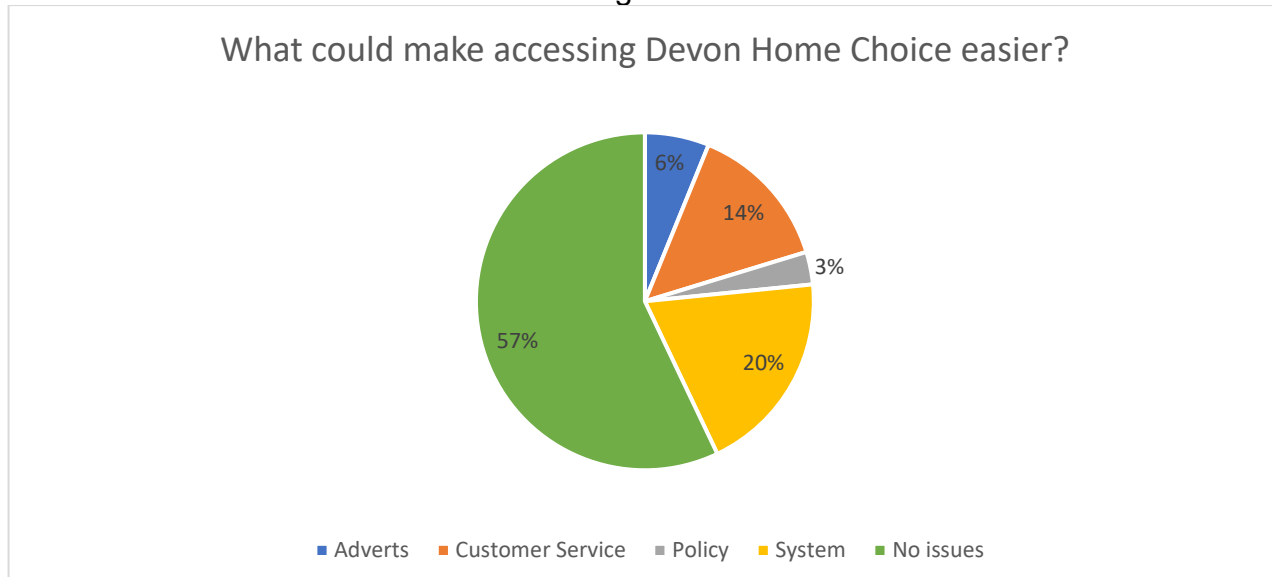Table 3: Other Reasons why respondents find aspects of the system difficult to use

Advertised property not identifiable	1
Band/Bedroom Assessment issues	9
Being made to re-do a new application	1
Difficulty contacting LA	1
Don't understand how it works	3
IT issues	6
Login Issues	2
Map	1
No internal photos of properties	1
No support given	1
None	76
Not confident with using IT	2
Not enough homes to bid for	1
Not specified	1
Not successful when bidding	2
Property not suitably checked before advertising	2
Unsatisfied with banding	2
Updating application	1
Web/App design	6

64% of those who had listed other stated that they had no difficulties with the system, just that there was no option to put none for this question. Of those with Other as a reason, the highest reason was being unsatisfied with their Band/Bedroom assessment (8%). This was followed by IT issues (6%) for the system being slow and unstable or not liking the Web/App design (6%).

Q10 What would make accessing Devon Home Choice easier for you/your client?
The responses to this question could be split as follows:-
Chart 10: Areas of the scheme where changes could make access to Devon Home Choice Easier

What could make accessing Devon Home Choice easier?

Legend: Adverts, Customer Service, Policy, System, No issues

Values shown: 6%, 14%, 3%, 20%, 57%

A breakdown of the System Improvements suggested is shown in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Breakdown of system improvements

Ability to add a note to bids	4
Ability to just upload document	2
Ability to update from app	4
Accurate bid position taking into account preferences and advert restrictions	12
After looking at property details, to go back to the same place on the list where you left off	26
Availability in multiple languages	1
Better property alerts	1
Better search	2
Biometric/Face ID access to app	6
Doesn't save search preferences	40
Easier form	29
Easier login	53
Easier renewals	10
Easier update	47
IT issues	20
Make app/website more accessible	4
More User Friendly website/app	110
No issues	1463
Not specified	39
Notifications on app e.g. start of let cycle, bid is updated	9
Positive feedback	70
Property alerts not working	6
Separate login tab on menu	3
Shortlists updated quicker	2
Sign language on videos	1

Some comments from respondents included suggestions of not suspending the ability to bid when an update to an application is made, not requiring staff to review minor changes, the fact that when using the search function and going into property details, coming out of individual property means losing the place in the main search page meaning applicants would have to scroll down the page to find their place, as well as filters being reset. Some respondents said that they could not bid due to work and inability to fit around family life showing that they were still unaware that they could bid anytime in the let cycle week of Wednesday to Monday. Local connection restrictions and lack of properties to bid for also strongly featured in comments.

A breakdown of service improvements suggested is shown in Table 5 below.

Table 5: Breakdown of service improvements

Band/Bedroom assessment issue	1
Better feedback	17
Clearer instructions	25
Don't use IT	15
Easier bidding	17
Faster processing time	167
Feedback why unsuccessful for so long	41
Friendlier wording on letters/emails	4
Human assistance	68
online chat	3
other language options	1
Specific issue	3

Q11. Do you/your client use? (Please tick all that apply)

Chart 11: Use of system functions
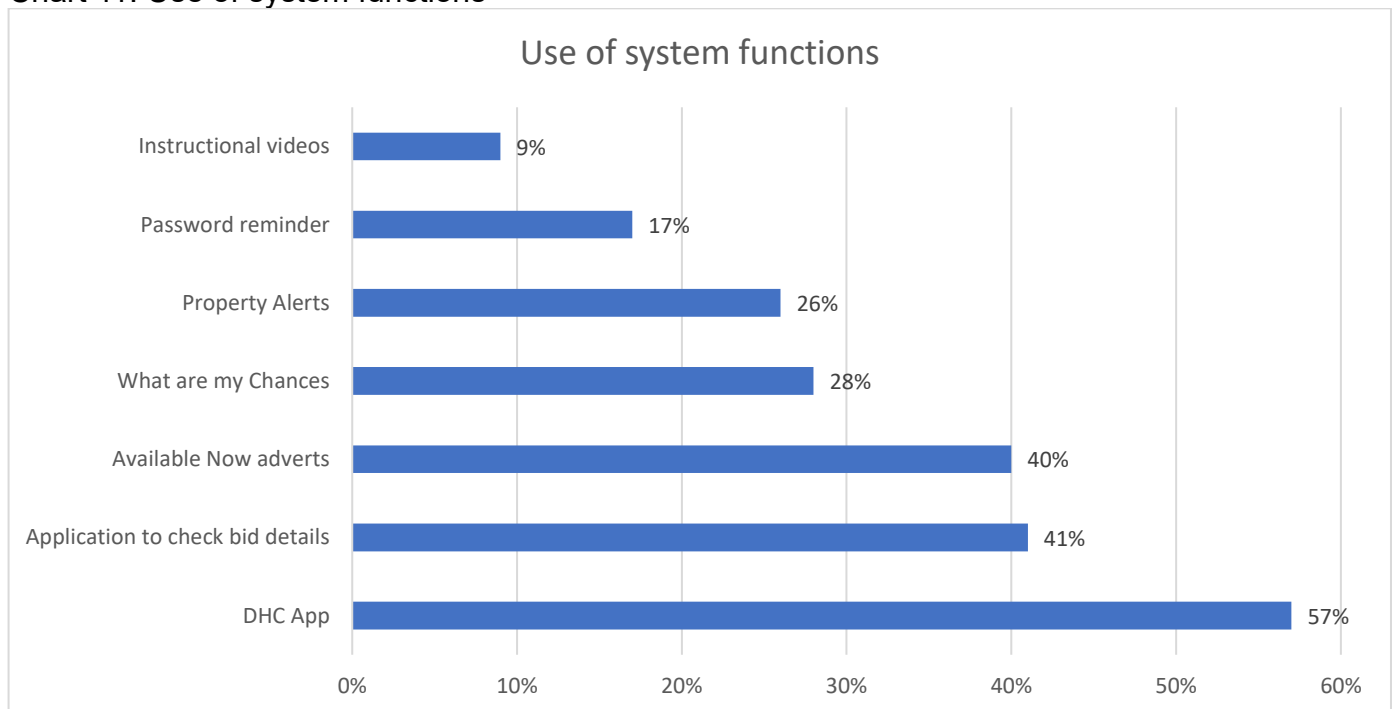
57% of respondents advised that they use the mobile app. Approximately one third of bids are placed via the app.

Only 17% use the password reminder function.

As a follow on to this question we ask applicants to provide comments on these functions. There were a total of 395 comments. A breakdown of the response is shown in Table 6 below. Although a lot of issues were raised there were also a lot of positive comments made covering most of the functions available (17%).

13% of applicants were not aware of the functions available so we should review how these are promoted. Many of the comments regarding the lack of feedback relate to bidding, bid lists not being updated and banding/bedroom assessments.

Table 6: Comments about system functions

	No.	%
App issues	28	7%
Don't understand	33	8%
Don't use any of the functions	20	5%
Frustrated on lack of progress	61	15%
Lack of awareness	50	13%
Lack of feedback	20	5%
Lack of Social Housing in preferred area	34	9%
Login problems	25	6%
No BSL videos	1	0%
Positive feedback	67	17%
Property alerts issues	14	4%
Website issues	30	8%
What are my chances not clear	12	3%

Q13. Are you/your client bidding regularly?

Chart 12: Percentage of applicants bidding regularly

Are you bidding regularly?

Yes 73%
No 27%
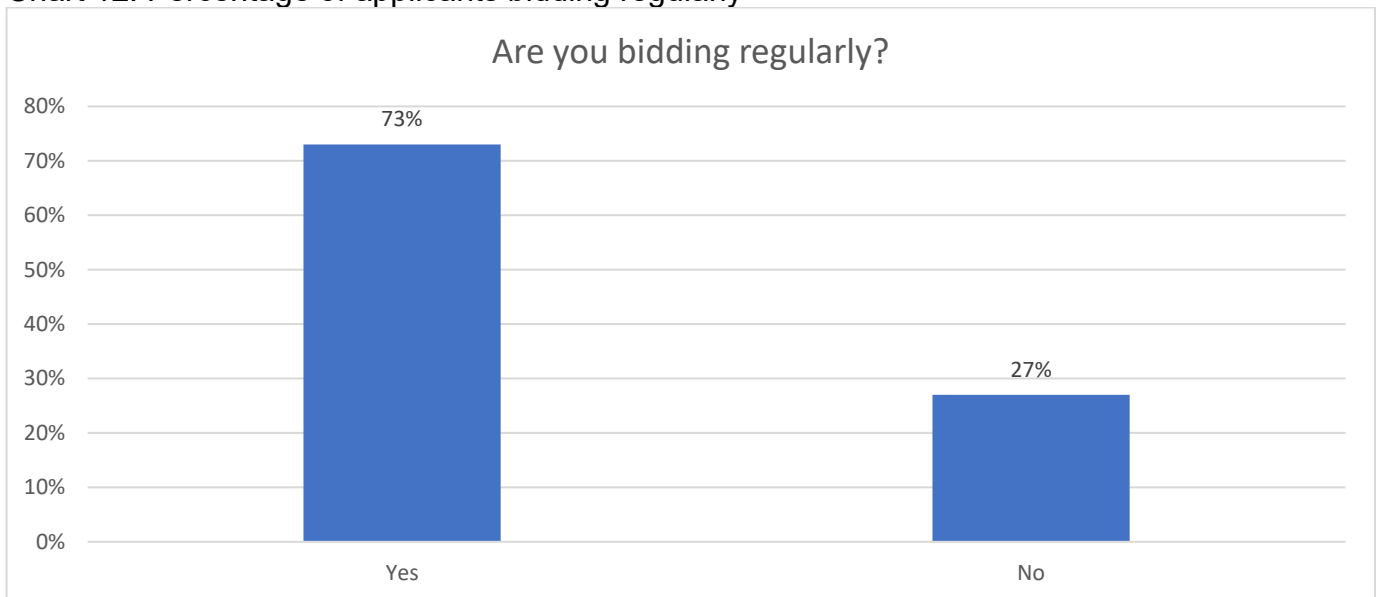
As a follow on question we asked applicants for the reasons why they are not bidding. A breakdown of the responses is shown in table 7 below.

Table 7: Reasons why applicants are not bidding regularly

Advert restrictions	8
Awaiting activation	18
Can't access	1
Can't afford to move	11
Don't know how	24
Forget to Bid	9
Lack of older person homes	1
Lack of properties	363
Little chance of success	95
Log in issues	64
No access	8
No reason	3
No time to Bid	1
Not applied	4
Not looking to move	34
Pets not allowed	13
RentPlus	2
Waiting to submit proof	2
Want more bedrooms	6
Website issues	1

A lack of available or suitable homes was the most common reason cited for not bidding regularly with specific reasons provided including a lack of:
- Ground floor flats
- Bungalows
- 4+ bed homes
- Not in specific location

With regard to advert restrictions, local connection, age and pets were the ones most commonly cited.

Highlighted issues
The responses to the survey highlighted the following about the system and scheme:-

- There is still the misconception that when a bid is placed has a bearing on the outcome.
- Applicants have raised frustrations at the length of time for processing updates which causes their application to be suspended and not being able to bid.
- Missing log in link on menu of the website
- Lack of feedback about their applications and bids
- Log in issues
- Lack of properties
- Incorrect/lack of details/photos on adverts

Thank you for taking the time to take part in the survey. We will now look to improving our services based on your feedback.

Management Board Comments/Responses

Actions

- We will look to re-add the log in link on the menu of the website.
- We will look to work around log in issues with the system supplier to make logging in easier.
- We will look to adding clearer instructions on the website and correspondence templates.
- We will look to work around search filters not saving with the system supplier to resolve the issue of preferences not saving.
- We will look to seeing if there are ways to make our website/app more user friendly.
- We will look into giving better feedback on why applicants have been unsuccessful for so long.
- We will look to promoting the available system functions to increase awareness.
- Results relating to individual local authorities, for example with regard to delays or difficulty contacting staff have been fed back to the relevant authority.
- Feedback on the content of adverts has been fed back to all partner landlords.

Additional Comments

- Whilst we are unable to leave applications active whilst waiting for change of circumstances to be re-assessed, we have made a minor change to allow local connection updates to be non-assessment based which means that applicants are able to update their local connection without their account having to be suspended, just like if they were updating their contact number or email address.
- We have taken on new partners to increase the number of available housing.