



Running a regeneration programme

**The experiences of resident representatives on the boards  
of New Deal for Communities Partnerships**





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February 2010

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The findings and recommendations in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the Department for Communities and Local Government.

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# Summary

## 1. Introduction

This report provides insights into how and why local people get involved in running regeneration programmes in deprived neighbourhoods, and examines their experiences in this role. It presents findings from a survey of resident representatives on New Deal for Communities (NDC) boards. The New Deal for Communities Programme is one of the most important area-based initiatives ever implemented in England. Launched in 1998, the Programme's primary purpose is to 'reduce the gaps between some of the poorest neighbourhoods and the rest of the country'.<sup>1</sup> In 39 deprived neighbourhoods, each on average accommodating around 9,800 people, local NDC Partnerships are implementing approved 10 year delivery plans, each of which has attracted approximately £50m of Government investment. A key feature of the NDC Programme is that it places communities 'at the heart of regenerating their neighbourhoods'.<sup>2</sup> NDC Partnerships comprising residents and agencies are overseeing delivery of local NDC Programmes. On many NDC boards resident representatives constitute a majority: in 2008 more than 70 per cent of NDCs had majority resident representation on their boards.<sup>3</sup>

In the context of Government's priorities for increasing levels of participation and empowerment within local communities this is a rich source of evidence which presents an excellent opportunity to understand the experiences of a unique group of people involved in citizen governance at the local level. The findings will therefore be of wide interest to practitioners, policy makers and those involved in the leadership of local communities.

A total of 301 telephone interviews were completed with current and past resident board members. Respondents were asked about their experiences of sitting on an NDC board; the tasks they had been involved in; the level of contribution they felt they had been able to make to their local community; and any lasting impact they felt their experiences had had on their lives.

## 2. Engaging the community

NDCs have been able to recruit from within their local communities people with a lot to offer in terms of their local knowledge and relevant skills, experience and contacts with other local organisations. The characteristics of these people differ somewhat from the characteristics of the local population

<sup>1</sup> DETR (2001) *New Deal for Communities: Financial Guidance*

<sup>2</sup> ODPM (2004) *Transformation and sustainability: future support, management and monitoring of the New Deal for Communities programme*, 11

<sup>3</sup> CLG (2009) *The 2008 Partnership Survey: Evidence from the New Deal for Communities Programme*

(they are older, more likely to be white, in households without children, employed or retired and highly qualified). They are also more likely to be long-standing residents of the area and many have previous experience in community organisations in a voluntary and/or professional capacity.

Respondents most commonly heard about the opportunity to become a resident representative through existing social networks, via individuals already involved in the NDC and through other community organisations. Over four-fifths have been elected to the position by NDC residents, and eighty per cent of these have faced a contested election in which other candidates stood for the same seat.

### 3. Being a resident representative on an NDC board

Resident board members' experiences have been largely positive:

- most respondents are very, or fairly, involved in a range of high-level decision-making processes including the allocation of resources and strategic planning; over 90 per cent are involved in consultation and communication with other local residents and in the analysis of problems and issues in the NDC area
- the majority consider that they have made a difference to their area: their views are listened to and they can influence important decisions
- many report positive personal impacts as a result of their participation, including knowing more people in the area, increased confidence, and improved work-related skills.

However, some resident board members have more negative experiences, although this group represents a minority amongst the survey sample. The main criticisms relate to:

- frustration at things not getting done, or with the processes involved
- perceptions that money and time is being wasted.

### 4. The experiences of different groups

- current board members are, on the whole, more positive about their experiences than past board members; a greater proportion of current members feel they have been able to influence the allocation of resources and consider that they are making a difference in their area; they are more likely to identify positive personal impacts and less likely to feel frustrated by their experiences
- respondents who have, at some stage, held the positions of chair or vice-chair of the board are more commonly involved across the whole range of NDC activities and decision-making processes than the rest of the sample. Chairs and vice-chairs are generally more positive about their contribution

to, and experiences on, NDC boards and are more likely to have improved their work-related skills and feel empowered

- differences between men and women are generally small: men are slightly more likely to be involved in most board activities and a higher proportion of males have held the position of chair
- white respondents are more commonly involved in the allocation of resources and the recruitment of staff; non-white respondents are more likely to represent the NDC on other organisations' boards; a greater proportion of white resident board members feel that they have made a difference, while more non-white respondents sometimes feel out of their depth; a higher proportion of non-white board members said their work-related skills have improved
- differences between 'working-class' and 'middle-class' rates of involvement in decision-making processes are, on the whole, quite small; however, where there are notable differences it is working-class respondents who show consistently higher levels of involvement across a range of activities; despite this, middle-class board members are more likely to hold the position of chair, are more confident about their participation and have higher expectations of their role; nevertheless a greater proportion of working-class respondents have experienced positive personal impacts, especially in terms of increased confidence.

## 5. Conclusions and policy Implications

Resident representatives on NDC boards are listened to, can influence decisions affecting the allocation of resources and service delivery and can, in turn, make a difference to the communities in which they live.

These very positive views are an endorsement of the approach which NDCs have taken to involving local residents at a strategic level in the delivery of neighbourhood renewal programmes and respondents to this survey report positive impacts in their personal lives arising from being on NDC boards. This is particularly the case for those in lower social groupings, and for non-white respondents, many of whom identify increased confidence levels and improved work-related skills as outcomes arising from their participation.

Resident board members are more positive than their fellow residents in relation to satisfaction with the local area, thinking that the neighbourhood has improved, feeling part of the community and feeling that people from different backgrounds get on well together.

Respondents to this survey are disproportionately older, white males who are employed or retired, and who are highly qualified and in (or have been in) professional occupations. They have often become involved in NDCs through existing contacts and networks and are utilising skills developed in previous voluntary and professional capacities.



Many respondents indicate their willingness to continue using their skills by taking on other voluntary roles once the NDC Programme has finished. This is an important finding, as these volunteers now represent a significant source of expertise in relation to all aspects of community-based regeneration which future regeneration programmes might usefully draw upon.

There are three key policy implications arising from these findings:

- NDCs employ a range of support mechanisms to help resident representatives carry out their roles effectively; support mechanisms such as training in practical skills associated with conduct in meetings, programme leadership and community consultation; payment of honorariums and expenses; provision of laptops and internet services, and so on are resource intensive but may need to become standard features in programmes seeking to secure successful community governance.
- There is evidence that participation on NDC boards is particularly beneficial for lower income and non-white residents, but these groups are generally under-represented on NDC boards as are those from younger age groups; being a board member involves significant time commitments; this may not be appropriate in deprived, 'disenfranchised' communities, where other commitments and family responsibilities limit availability; regeneration programmes might therefore need to seek more innovative ways of engaging, and working with, local residents if the benefits of participation are to be spread more widely.
- Mechanisms need to be sought through which to harness, and utilise, the skills and experience of current, and former, resident representatives; many indicate a willingness to take on similar voluntary roles and it is likely that they will do so; but there may also be a case for a more formal approach to skills transfer, perhaps through linkages to the Guide Neighbourhoods Programme or through the work of the HCA Academy, or relevant third sector organisations.

# 1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Government's proposals for community participation and empowerment have been articulated in a range of discussion and policy documents, notably the empowerment white paper *Communities in Control: real people, real power* published in July 2008.<sup>4</sup> Collectively, these documents outline an agenda for increasing community involvement as a means of improving the responsiveness and effectiveness of public services, extending civic and democratic participation and contributing to the establishment of more cohesive and sustainable communities.
- 1.2. This report provides insights into how and why local people get involved in running regeneration programmes in deprived neighbourhoods, and examines their experiences in this role. It presents findings from a survey of resident representatives on New Deal for Communities (NDC) boards. The New Deal for Communities Programme is one of the most important area-based initiatives ever implemented in England. Launched in 1998, the Programme's primary purpose is to 'reduce the gaps between some of the poorest neighbourhoods and the rest of the country.'<sup>5</sup> In 39 deprived neighbourhoods, each on average accommodating around 9,800 people, local NDC Partnerships are implementing approved 10 year delivery plans, each of which has attracted approximately £50m of Government investment. A key feature of the NDC Programme is that it places communities 'at the heart of regenerating their neighbourhoods'.<sup>6</sup> NDC Partnerships comprising residents and agencies are overseeing delivery of local NDC Programmes. On many NDC boards resident representatives constitute a majority: in 2008 more than 70 per cent of NDCs had majority resident representation on their boards.<sup>7</sup>
- 1.3. This report presents findings from a survey of resident representatives on New Deal for Communities (NDC) boards, conducted by Ipsos MORI in February and March 2009 as part of the national evaluation of the NDC Programme. It provides evidence on:
  - who is been involved with NDC boards and the extent to which engagement is concentrated amongst different elements of the community
  - how resident representatives come to be involved in NDC boards
  - the nature of their involvement, including levels of responsibility and commitment
  - their perceptions of their experiences, how much they felt able to influence the work of the NDC and any impact on their own lives
  - contrasting experiences of different groups.

<sup>4</sup> CLG (2008) *Communities in Control: real people, real power*. London: The Stationery Office.

<sup>5</sup> DETR (2001) *New Deal for Communities: Financial Guidance*

<sup>6</sup> ODPM (2004) *Transformation and sustainability: future support, management and monitoring of the New Deal for Communities programme*, 11

<sup>7</sup> CLG (2009) *The 2008 Partnership Survey: Evidence from the New Deal for Communities Programme*

- 1.4. The views and experiences of this group of volunteers are a timely contribution to debates about the extent to which active engagement in neighbourhood-level decision making can impact positively on individuals and neighbourhoods. The review of evidence in relation to empowering communities to influence local decision-making, published recently by Communities and Local Government (CLG),<sup>8</sup> identifies citizen governance (which includes community representation on partnerships, boards and forums with the capacity to influence public services and policy), as a key mechanism through which to empower both those directly participating and also the wider community to help shape decision making. In this context this rich source of evidence presents an excellent opportunity to understand the experiences of a unique group of people involved in citizen governance at the local level. The findings will therefore be of wide interest to all those involved in the leadership of local communities.
- 1.5. The evidence presented in this report will be used to inform the final outputs from the NDC evaluation, due in 2010. Additional research on community involvement in NDC Partnerships is contained in two publications: CLG (2008) *Community Engagement: some lessons from the New Deal for Communities Programme*; and CLG (2009) *Improving Outcomes? Engaging local communities in the NDC Programme*.

## New Deal for Communities

- 1.6. The NDC Programme is one of the most important neighbourhood renewal initiatives ever launched in England. Announced in 1998, the Programme's primary purpose is to reduce the gaps between 39 deprived neighbourhoods and the rest of the country in relation to both 'people-' (health, worklessness, education), and 'place-' (housing and the physical environment, crime, community), related outcomes. In these 39 areas, each on average accommodating about 9,800 people, local NDC Partnerships are implementing approved 10 year Delivery Plans, each of which has attracted approximately £50m of NDC Programme investment.
- 1.7. From the outset, the NDC Programme has had a strong focus on community engagement, particularly through involving local residents in decision-making processes by their inclusion on Partnership boards.<sup>9</sup> All 39 NDCs have involved the community in this way. In 2008 the proportion of NDC board members living within their NDC area ranged from 36 per cent to 83 per cent, with residents constituting a majority on 26 Partnership boards.<sup>10</sup>
- 1.8. In 2001 the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, now CLG, commissioned a consortium of organisations headed up by the Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research (CRESR) at Sheffield Hallam University to undertake the first, 2001–2005, phase of the national evaluation. That phase of the

<sup>8</sup> CLG (2009) *Empowering communities to influence local decision making: A systematic review of the evidence*.

<sup>9</sup> See also CLG (2008) *Community Engagement: some lessons from the New Deal for Communities Programme*; CLG (2009) *Improving Outcomes? Engaging local communities in the NDC Programme*.

<sup>10</sup> CLG (2009) *The 2008 New Deal for Communities Partnership Survey*. (note: analysis based on 37 NDCs)

evaluation culminated in a 2005 Interim Evaluation<sup>11</sup> and a wide range of other outputs which can be accessed through the national evaluation's website.<sup>12</sup> In 2005 CRESR and its partners were awarded the second, 2006–2010, phase of the national evaluation.

## The resident board members survey

- 1.9. The survey sampling frame was provided by NDC Partnerships, with each giving details of as many past and/or current resident board members as possible.<sup>13</sup> Each potential respondent was contacted by letter and invited to take part in the research. A freephone number was provided for those who wished to opt out of the survey; the remainder were contacted by interviewers, who then conducted the questionnaire-based interviews by telephone. The achieved sample was therefore self-selecting: those both willing to take part and successfully reached by telephone during the period of fieldwork were included in the survey.
- 1.10. A total of 301 telephone interviews were completed, 218 with current, and 83 with past, resident representatives.<sup>14</sup> Each interview lasted a little over 20 minutes and used a survey tool designed by the research team and CLG. Respondents were asked about their experiences of sitting on an NDC board; the tasks they had been involved in; the level of contribution they felt they had been able to make to their local community; and any lasting impact they felt the experience had had on their lives.
- 1.11. Due to the way the sample was selected it cannot be assumed to be representative of the wider population: it was neither a random sample, nor was it targeted to reflect the characteristics of the population. Consequently it cannot be used to draw conclusions about all resident representatives on NDC boards.
- 1.12. A number of potential biases arise from the way the sample was chosen. First, Partnerships were in a position to act as gatekeepers, consciously or unconsciously influencing who was included in, or excluded from, the sampling frame. As mentioned above there was considerable variation in the number of contacts provided. This means that some NDCs had far more representation in the sample than others: responses might be skewed towards experiences of certain types of NDC boards. Partnerships were also much more likely to have up-to-date details of current, rather than past, board members. This is reflected in the make-up of the sample, with nearly three times as many current, as past, board members. It is likely that the views of past members are underrepresented in the survey findings.

<sup>11</sup> NRU/ODPM (2005) *New Deal for Communities 2001–2005: An Interim Evaluation, Research Report 17*. [www.neighbourhood.gov.uk/publications.asp?did=1625](http://www.neighbourhood.gov.uk/publications.asp?did=1625)

<sup>12</sup> [http://extra.shu.ac.uk/ndc/ndc\\_reports.htm](http://extra.shu.ac.uk/ndc/ndc_reports.htm)

<sup>13</sup> The number of leads varied considerably between Partnerships, ranging from as few as three, to as many as 48, past or current resident board members. Some Partnerships could only provide details of current board members.

<sup>14</sup> For the purposes of this survey, 'resident representative' refers to those living within an NDC area and representing their fellow residents or a local resident-based organisation on an NDC board. Other board members who happened to live within an NDC area, such as representatives of statutory agencies, were not included. In the remainder of this report, 'resident representative' and 'resident board member' are used interchangeably.

Furthermore, those past board members who were contactable were likely to be those who have stayed in the area, potentially omitting the views of board members who have moved away.

- 1.13. There might also be biases associated with the people choosing to take part in the research. Those finding the experience positive, feeling engaged with the NDC and its activities may have been more likely to participate than those feeling disillusioned. On the other hand, one might also expect a bias towards those with a particular grievance that they wished to air.
- 1.14. Nevertheless the sample size is relatively large as a proportion of the total population. It is unlikely that there have been more than around 1000 NDC resident board members in total;<sup>15</sup> this survey covers at least 30 per cent of that population.
- 1.15. The report also draws on other data:
  - a household survey, also undertaken in NDC areas by Ipsos MORI, in four waves running biennially from 2002 to 2008; the most recent wave included 15,838 respondents, representing approximately 400 households in each NDC area
  - a 2008 NDC Partnership survey, completed by staff teams from each of the 39 NDCs, gathering information about the organisational characteristics and operational features of NDC Partnerships<sup>16</sup>
  - administrative data provided by the Social Disadvantage Research Centre (SDRC) at the University of Oxford.
- 1.16. The structure of the report is as follows:
  - **Chapter 2** considers the types of people who have become resident board members and the ways in which they came to hear about and be involved in their local NDC Partnership
  - **Chapter 3** explores the extent and nature of resident board members' involvement, their perceptions on the value of their experiences, and whether or not there has been any lasting impact on their lives
  - **Chapter 4** looks at the contrasting experiences of different groups of NDC resident board members
  - **Chapter 5** contains conclusions and discusses the policy implications arising from the survey findings.

<sup>15</sup> This is an estimate; the exact number of resident representatives on NDC boards is not known. NDCs have taken different approaches to the election of resident representatives (see also CLG (2008) *Neighbourhood Governance: making NDC elections a significant event for partnerships and communities?*) but a common approach has been to run rolling programmes of elections every two years at which a number of resident representatives will stand for re-election. Partnership survey data indicates that in 2008 there were, on average, 12 resident representatives serving on each NDC board, a total of 468 across all 39 NDCs. If we assume that approximately half of these have changed at an election every two years since 2002 (so four election periods in total) there may have been a maximum total of 1,404 resident board members. However, in reality the number is likely to be smaller, because as discussed at 3.7, the average time of board membership for respondents to this survey is over four years, and not all NDCs hold biennial elections.

<sup>16</sup> CLG (2009) *The 2008 New Deal for Communities Partnership Survey*.

## 2. Characteristics of resident representatives on NDC boards

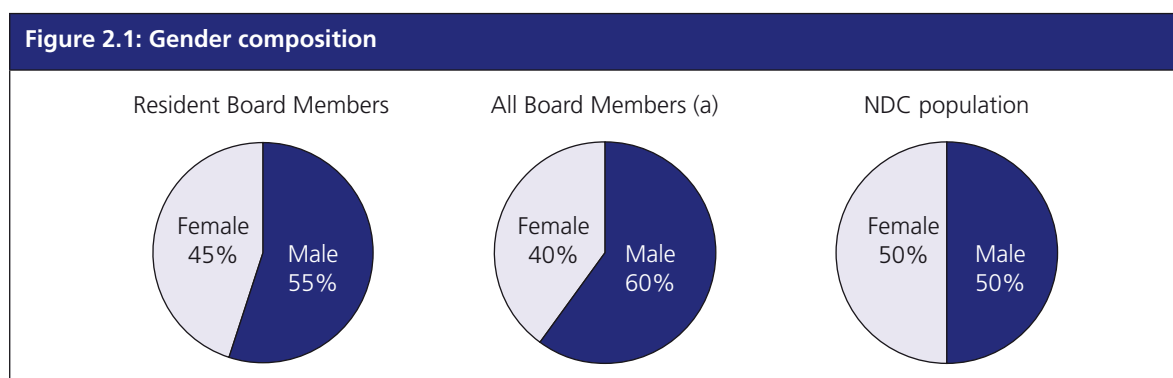
- 2.1. This chapter considers the types of people who become resident board members, both in terms of their socio-demographic characteristics and their previous experiences; and the ways in which people come to hear about and be involved in their local NDC Partnership.

### Characteristics of resident board members

- 2.2. This first section explores the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents to the survey, and compares these, where appropriate, with NDC board membership as a whole, the wider NDC population and national benchmarks.

#### Gender

- 2.3. Evidence from the 2008 NDC Partnership survey shows that men are overrepresented on NDC boards: in 2008 60 per cent of all board members were male, while the NDC population is split evenly between males and females.
- 2.4. While men are still overrepresented in relation to the NDC population, the sample of resident board members responding to the survey is more evenly divided: 55 per cent male and 45 per cent female (Figure 2.1).



Source: NDC resident board member survey 2009; NDC Partnership Survey 2008; SDRC mid-year population estimates 2007

Base: All; (a) data from 37 NDCs

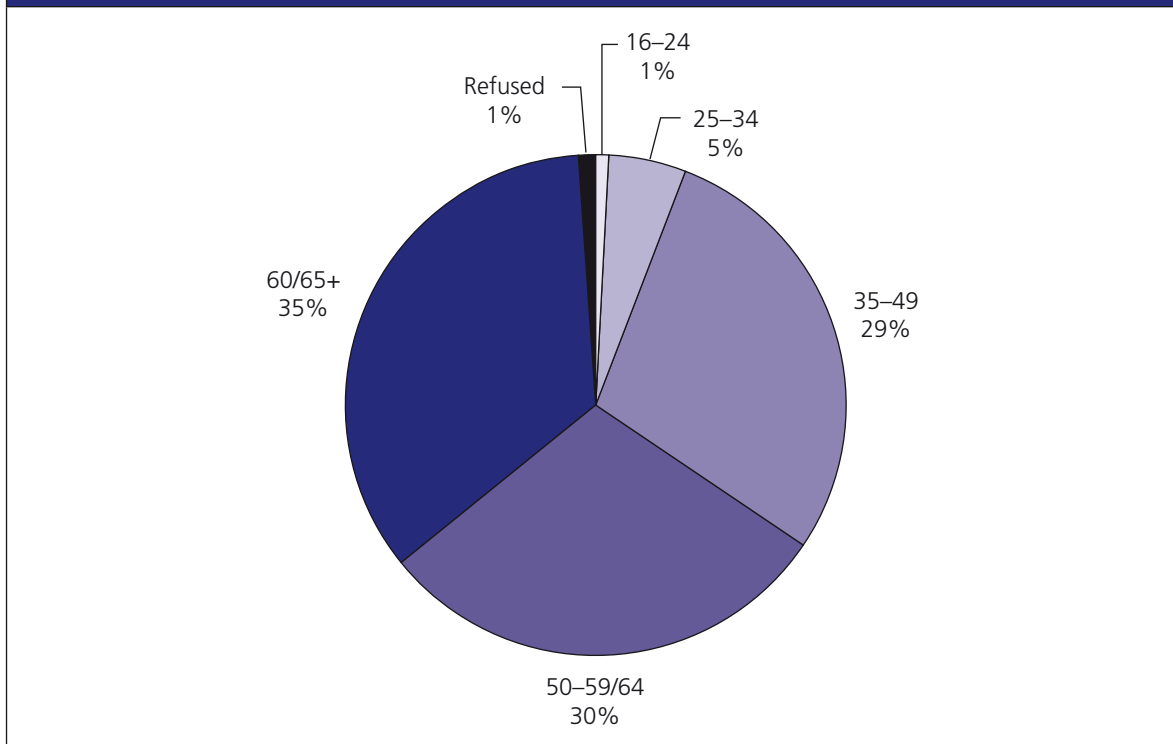
#### Age

- 2.5. Figure 2.2 shows the age profile of respondents. Over a third (35 per cent) are of pensionable age, defined as 60 or over for women and 65 or over for men. By comparison, only 13 per cent of the NDC population falls into

this category.<sup>17</sup> A further 30 per cent of respondents are aged between 50 and retirement age. Only 6 per cent are less than 35, and just 1 per cent are under 25.

2.6. The average age of respondents is 55. The youngest is 19 and the eldest 83.

**Figure 2.2: Age profile**



Source: NDC resident board member survey 2009  
Base: All

### Ethnicity

2.7. The 2008 NDC Partnership survey showed that black and minority ethnic residents were underrepresented on the majority of NDC boards. The survey of resident board members also suggests that white residents are slightly overrepresented compared with the aggregate NDC population, while Asian residents are underrepresented.

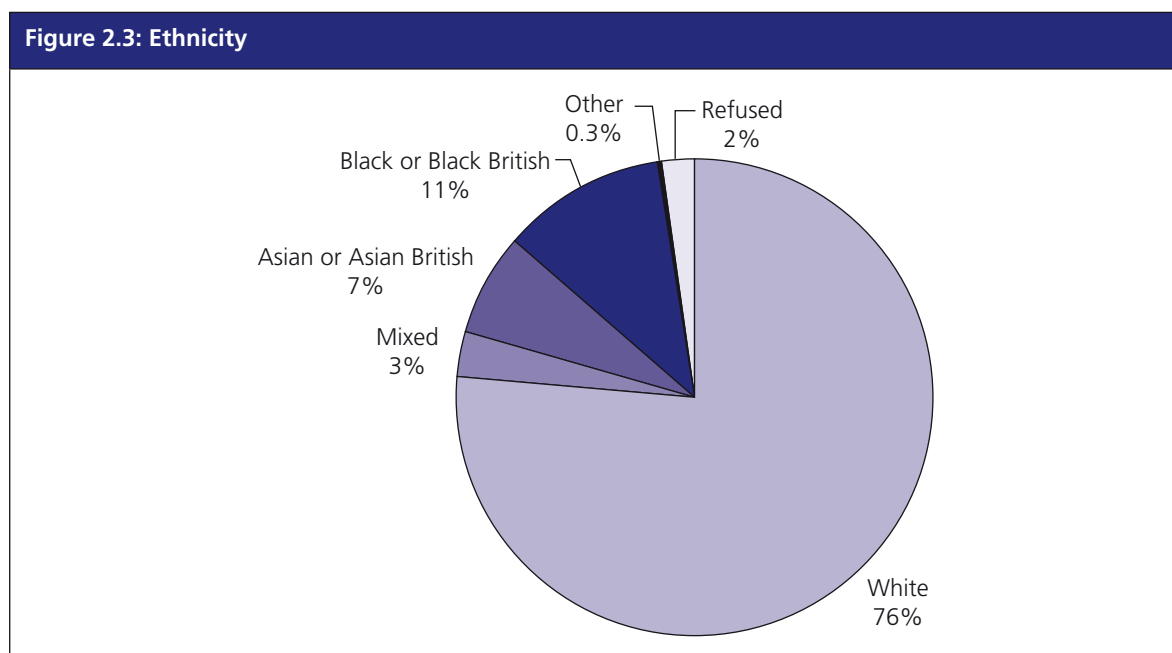
- 76 per cent of respondents are white (Figure 2.3), compared with 70 per cent across the NDC population<sup>18</sup>
- 11 per cent of respondents are black, the same proportion as black residents across NDC areas
- only 7 per cent are Asian, compared with 12 per cent in the NDC population as a whole.

<sup>17</sup> Source: SDRC mid-year population estimates 2007.

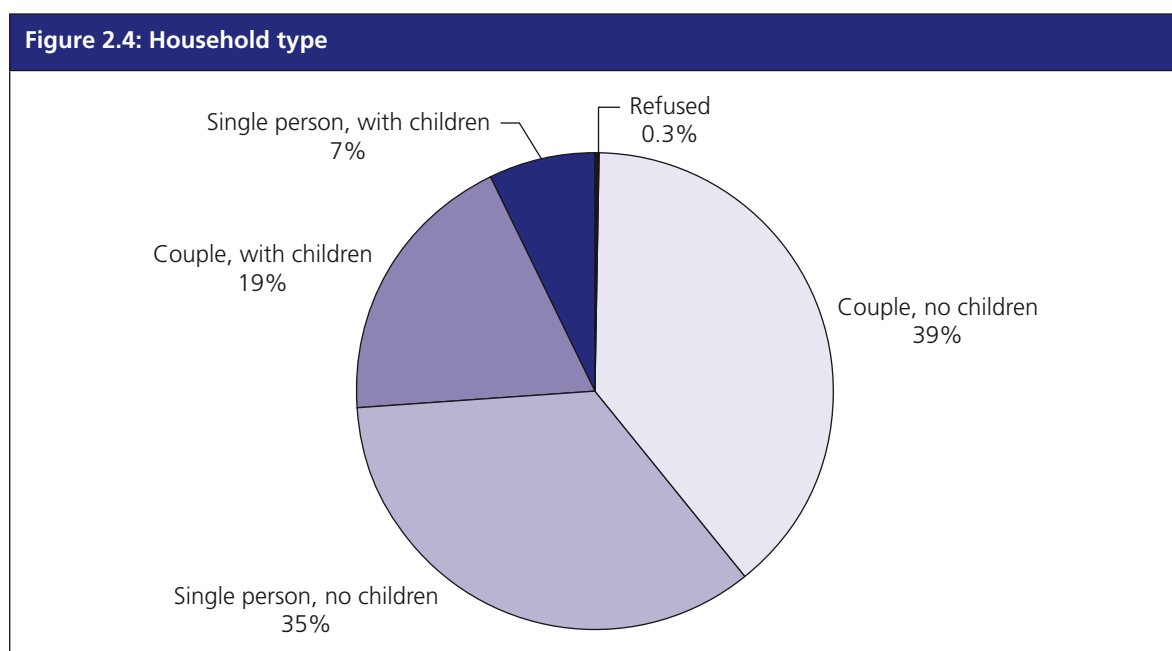
<sup>18</sup> Source: Ipsos MORI NDC Household Survey 2008.

### Household composition

- 2.8. Respondents tend not to have dependent children: nearly three-quarters (73 per cent) have no children under 18 living at home. This reflects the age profile of the sample, but might also suggest that those without dependent children are in a better position to volunteer for their local NDC, particularly given the time commitments involved (see 3.10).
- 2.9. Seven per cent of respondents are lone parents and 19 per cent are living as a couple with one or more children under 18 (Figure 2.4).



Source: NDC resident board member survey 2009  
Base: All



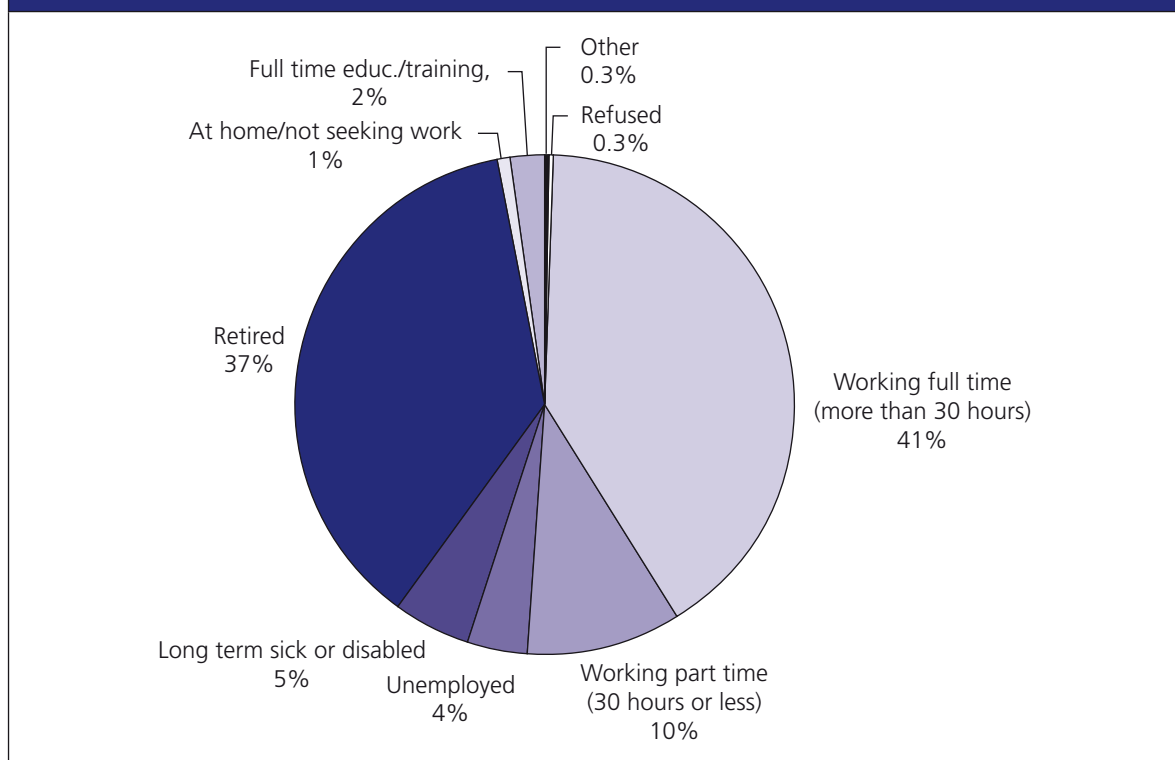
Source: NDC resident board member survey 2009  
Base: All



## Employment status

- 2.10. Over half of all respondents are employed, with 41 per cent in full-time work (Figure 2.5). A further 37 per cent are retired, reflecting the age profile described in paragraph 2.5 above.
- 2.11. When considering only working-age respondents,<sup>19</sup> fully 74 per cent are working either full- or part-time, close to the national average employment rate and much higher than the NDC aggregate figure of 54 per cent.<sup>20</sup>

Figure 2.5: Employment status



Source: NDC resident board member survey 2009  
Base: All

## Social grade

- 2.12. Using a series of questions on their current or most recent job, respondents were placed into one of six categories representing their social grade<sup>21</sup> (Table 2.1). The six social grades are then simplified into two broad categories: 'middle-class' (grades A, B and C1) and 'working-class' (grades C2, D and E).
- 2.13. It should be noted that this version of social grade differs slightly from the conventional model in that it is based on individual respondents and not on a household's chief income earner (CIE). One effect of this might be to skew

<sup>19</sup> Working age is defined here as 16–64 for males and 16–59 for females.

<sup>20</sup> Source: Ipsos MORI NDC Household Survey 2008.

<sup>21</sup> This classification system is most commonly used in market research and is designed to reflect households' spending power. Each household is usually assigned to a grade according to the employment status and occupation of its chief income earner (CIE). If the CIE is retired and has a pension from his or her previous job (as opposed to a state pension) the grade corresponding to this previous job is assigned. Although social grade bears a resemblance to other socio-economic classifications, such as the NS-SEC, it is not directly compatible.

results slightly ‘downwards’: if the respondent is not the CIE then it is likely that the household’s actual social grade would be the same as, or higher than, that assigned in this survey.

Table 2.1: Social grade: definitions		
Social grade	Social status	Chief income earner’s occupation
A	Upper middle-class	Higher managerial, administrative or professional
B	Middle-class	Intermediate managerial, administrative or professional
C1	Lower middle-class	Supervisory or clerical and junior managerial, administrative or professional
C2	Skilled working-class	Skilled manual workers
D	Working-class	Semi and unskilled manual workers
E	Lowest levels of subsistence	Casual or lowest grade workers, pensioners and others who depend on the state for their income

Source: NRS<sup>22</sup>

- 2.14. On the other hand, this method excludes those for whom there is no information about the most recent job: those who have not worked in the last 10 years. In usual calculations of social grade, households with a CIE who had been out of work for a long period, but who wasn’t retired, would be assigned to grade E. However, in this case it is unknown whether or not others in the household are in paid employment and so it would be unreasonable to assume that they are solely dependent on the state for their income. While this almost definitely skews results ‘upwards’, the effects of this do not substantially alter the overall messages emerging.<sup>23</sup>
- 2.15. Figure 2.6 shows the breakdown, by social grade, of respondents to the resident board member survey:
- over two-thirds (71 per cent) are broadly ‘middle-class’
  - almost half (48 per cent) fit into social grade C1 (lower middle-class); a further fifth are grade B (middle-class); 3 per cent are upper middle-class (A)
  - the broadly ‘working-class’ respondents are split fairly evenly between skilled (C2, 11 per cent) and unskilled (D, 12 per cent) manual workers, with a further 4 per cent in grade E.
- 2.16. To put this into context, analysis based on approximated social grade in the 2001 Census<sup>24</sup> found that, of all 16–74 year olds in NDC areas:

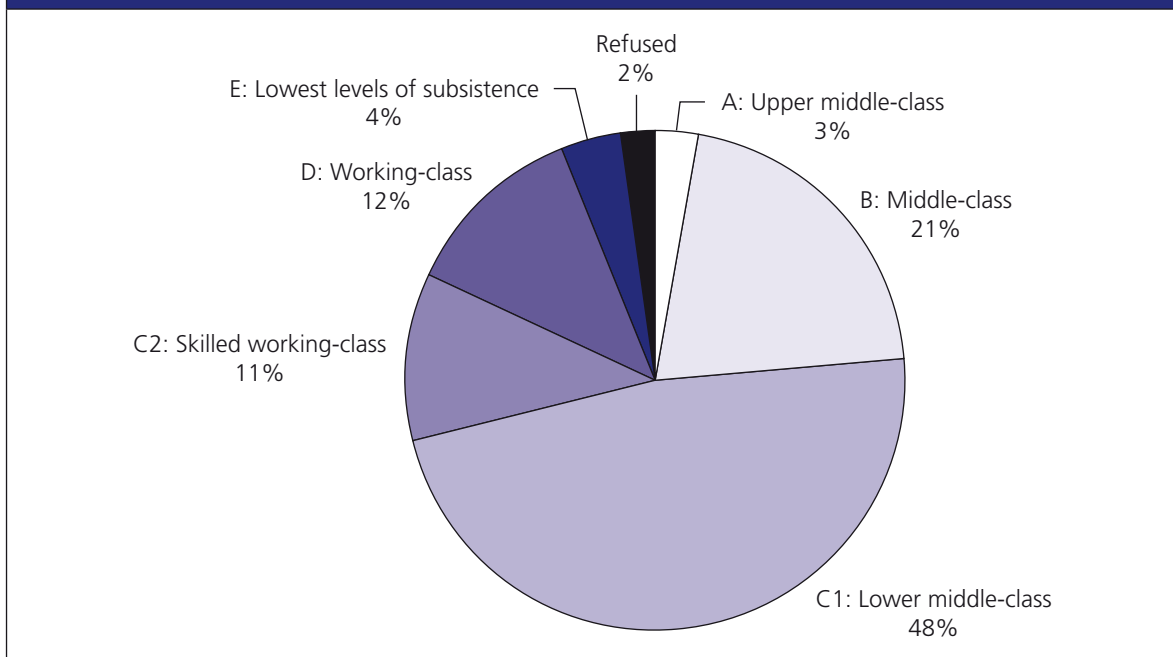
<sup>22</sup> National Readership Survey: [www.nrs.co.uk/about\\_nrs/data\\_available/definitions\\_of\\_social\\_grade](http://www.nrs.co.uk/about_nrs/data_available/definitions_of_social_grade)

<sup>23</sup> If, for the purposes of sensitivity analysis, the opposite extreme were adopted, and all those not retired but without a job in the last 10 years were included in grade E, the breakdown by social grade would be as follows: A=3%, B=20%, C1=45%, C2=10%, D=12%, E=10%, Refused=2%; broadly ‘middle-class’=67%; broadly ‘working-class’=32%. Despite a large (six percentage point) increase for grade E, the other categories would see little change, with the proportion broadly ‘middle-class’ remaining at more than two-thirds.

<sup>24</sup> Beatty, C., Jones, C. and Lawless, P. (2005) *The NDC Programme: An Overview of the 2001 Census, (Data Analysis Paper 29)*. Sheffield: CRESR.  
[http://extra.shu.ac.uk/ndc/downloads/reports/ndc%20programme\\_overview%20of%202001%20census.pdf](http://extra.shu.ac.uk/ndc/downloads/reports/ndc%20programme_overview%20of%202001%20census.pdf)

- 11 per cent were in grades A and B (22 per cent nationally)
- 23 per cent in grade C1 (30 per cent nationally)
- 15 per cent in grade C2 (15 per cent nationally)
- 26 per cent in grade D (17 per cent nationally)
- 25 per cent in grade E (16 per cent nationally).

**Figure 2.6: Social grade**



Source: NDC resident board member survey 2009

Base: All currently employed, retired or who have had a job in last 10 years (282)

- 2.17. Therefore, only 34 per cent of NDC residents aged 16–74, and 52 per cent across England and Wales, were broadly 'middle-class'. Both are much lower than the proportion of middle class resident board members in the survey (71 per cent).

### Educational qualifications

- 2.18. Half of all respondents have at least NVQ Level 3 qualifications, i.e. A Levels or higher (Figure 2.7). The equivalent figure across all NDC residents was 33 per cent in 2008.<sup>25</sup> Thirty-seven per cent have at least a degree (NVQ Level 4) and 16 per cent a postgraduate qualification (NVQ Level 5), compared with 19 per cent and five per cent respectively across the NDC population.

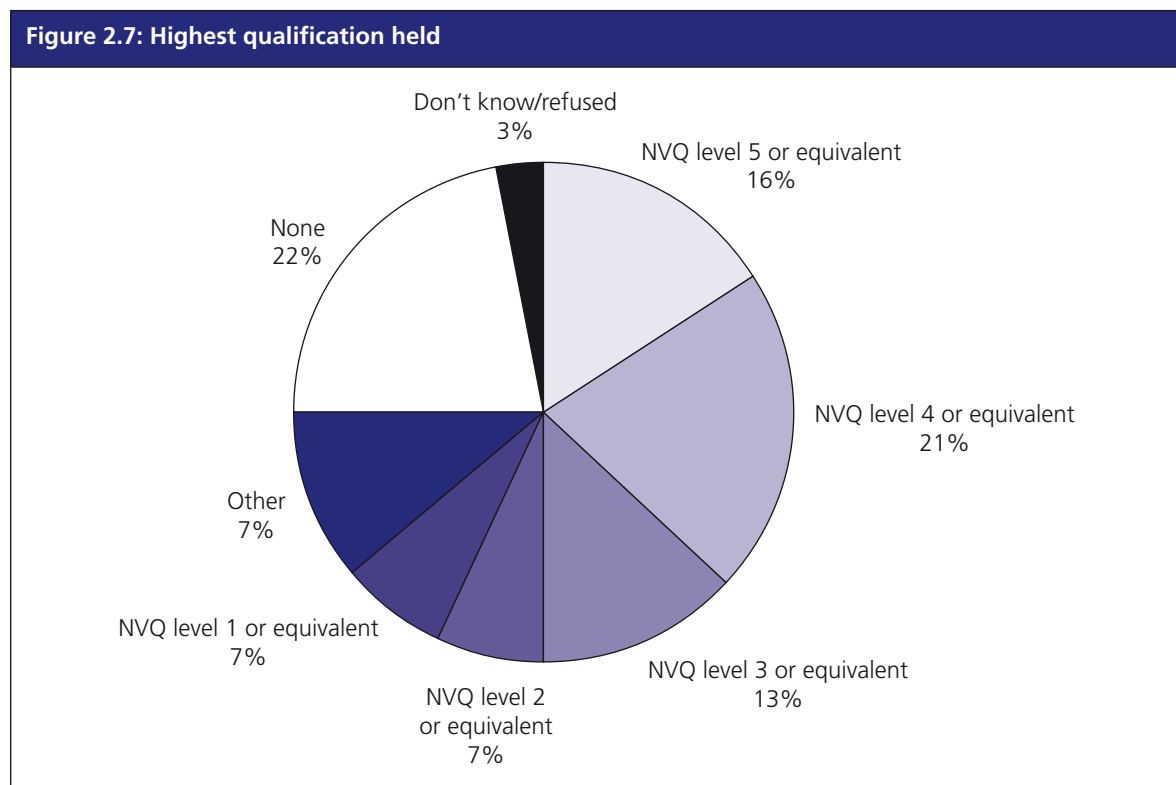
### Length of residence

- 2.19. In general, resident board members appear to be amongst the more established members of the community. On average, respondents have lived in their local NDC area for 29 years. Sixty-five per cent have lived in the

<sup>25</sup> Source: Ipsos MORI NDC Household Survey 2008.

area for 20 years or more. Only 2 per cent had been resident less than five years, compared with 27 per cent across the NDC population as a whole (Table 2.2).

2.20. The characteristics of NDC resident board members can be compared with national equivalents from the 2007–08 Citizenship Survey, produced by CLG.<sup>26</sup> Analysis is based on a subset of that survey: all respondents who have volunteered as a leader or committee member of a local community or neighbourhood group in the past 12 months.



Source: NDC resident board member survey 2009  
Base: All

**Table 2.2: Length of residence in area**

	Per cent	
	Resident board members	NDC population
Less than a year	0	9
1 year but less than 3 years	1	11
3 years but less than 5 years	1	7
5 years but less than 10 years	12	16
10 years but less than 20 years	21	20
20 years or more	65	38

Source: NDC resident board member survey 2009; Ipsos MORI NDC Household Survey 2008  
Base: All

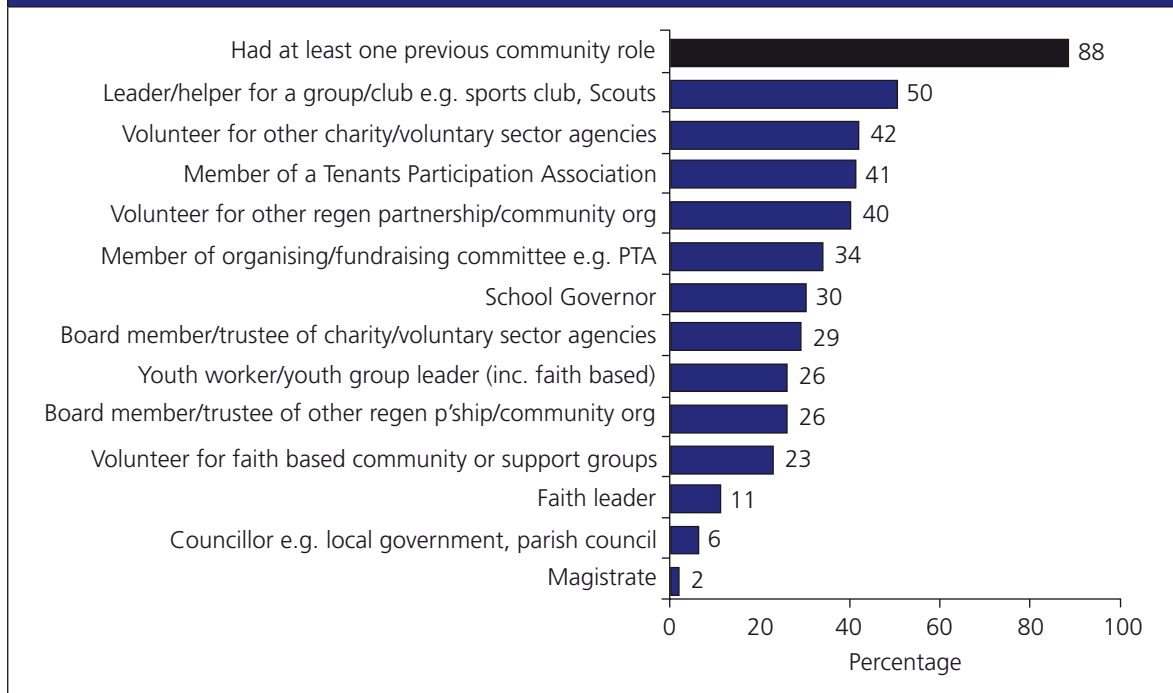
<sup>26</sup> Communities and Local Government. Race, Cohesion and Faith Research Unit and National Centre for Social Research, *Citizenship Survey, 2007* [computer file]. 6th Edition. Colchester, Essex: UK Data Archive [distributor], October 2008. SN: 5739. See also: [www.communities.gov.uk/publications/communities/citizenshipsurveyaprmar08](http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/communities/citizenshipsurveyaprmar08).

- 2.21. The results from the Citizenship Survey are broadly similar to those of the NDC resident board member survey, with volunteers typically from the older, white, employed and well-qualified sections of the community:
- one-third are over retirement age, the same proportion as for respondents to the NDC resident board member survey; however, 18 per cent are under 35, compared with only 6 per cent of NDC resident representatives
  - 90 per cent are white
  - 78 per cent of working age respondents are in employment
  - 52 per cent of those aged 16 to 69 have an undergraduate degree or higher
  - on the other hand, there are slightly more females than males amongst those captured in the Citizenship Survey: 52 per cent to 48 per cent; in the NDC resident board member survey 45 per cent are female and 55 per cent male.

## Previous experience of resident representatives on NDC boards

- 2.22. Our evidence suggests that those who have taken on board level roles in NDCs have considerable previous experience of formal volunteering. The vast majority (88 per cent) have been involved in local community organisations prior to their position on an NDC board (Figure 2.8). A sizeable number have some board-level experience: 29 per cent for a charity; 26 per cent for a regeneration partnership; and 30 per cent as a school governor. However, previous involvement is most commonly at a less strategic level: half have been a leader or helper for a group or club; 42 per cent have volunteered for a charity or voluntary sector agency; and 40 per cent have volunteered for another regeneration partnership or community organisation.
- 2.23. For each respondent it is possible to count how many of the 13 different types of role outlined in Figure 2.8 have been held prior to joining an NDC board. While this does not equate to the number of discrete positions held, it gives an illustration of the extent to which the same people tend to get involved in different local community organisations: on average, respondents held four of these different roles before joining an NDC board. Almost three-quarters (74 per cent) held at least two roles; one-third held five or more (Figure 2.9). However, for more than one in ten, being an NDC board member was their first experience of taking a role in the community.
- 2.24. There is also evidence that resident representatives on NDC boards are utilising skills developed in the workplace. A high proportion of resident board members have professional experience of community work. Of all those currently employed or retired, or who had had a job in the last 10 years, 65 per cent (61 per cent of all respondents) said their most recent job involved working with local residents or local communities.

**Figure 2.8: Previous community involvement**

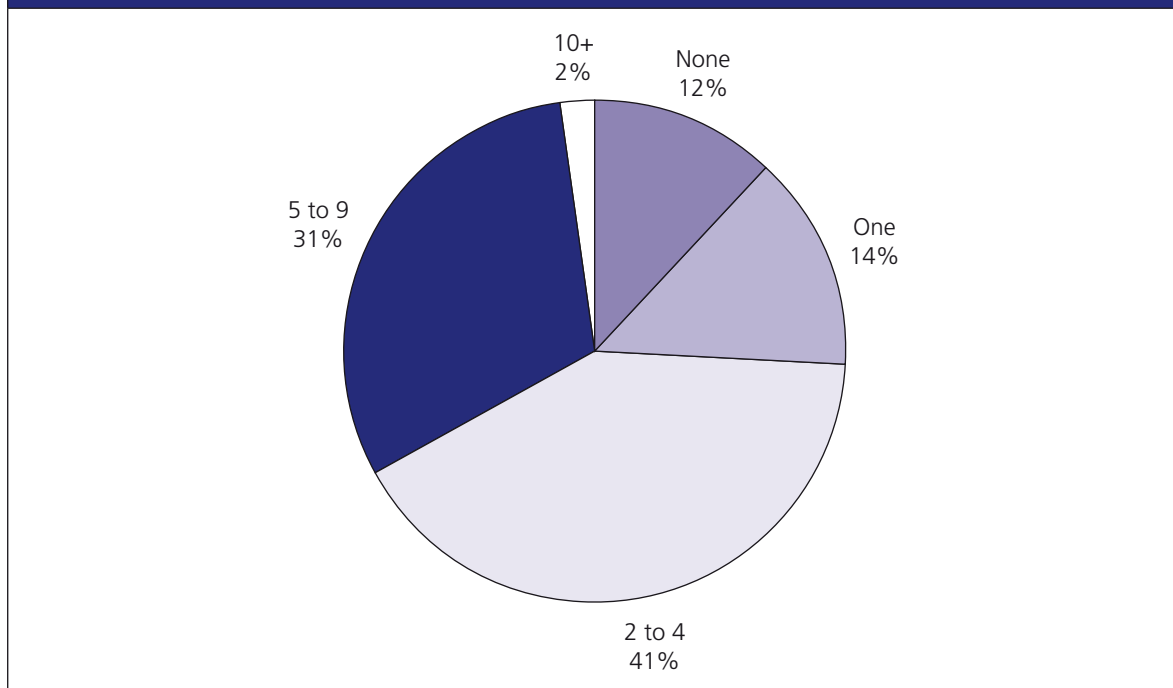


Source: NDC resident board member survey 2009

Base: All

Note: Respondents were allowed to give multiple responses

**Figure 2.9: Previous community involvement: number of different types of role**



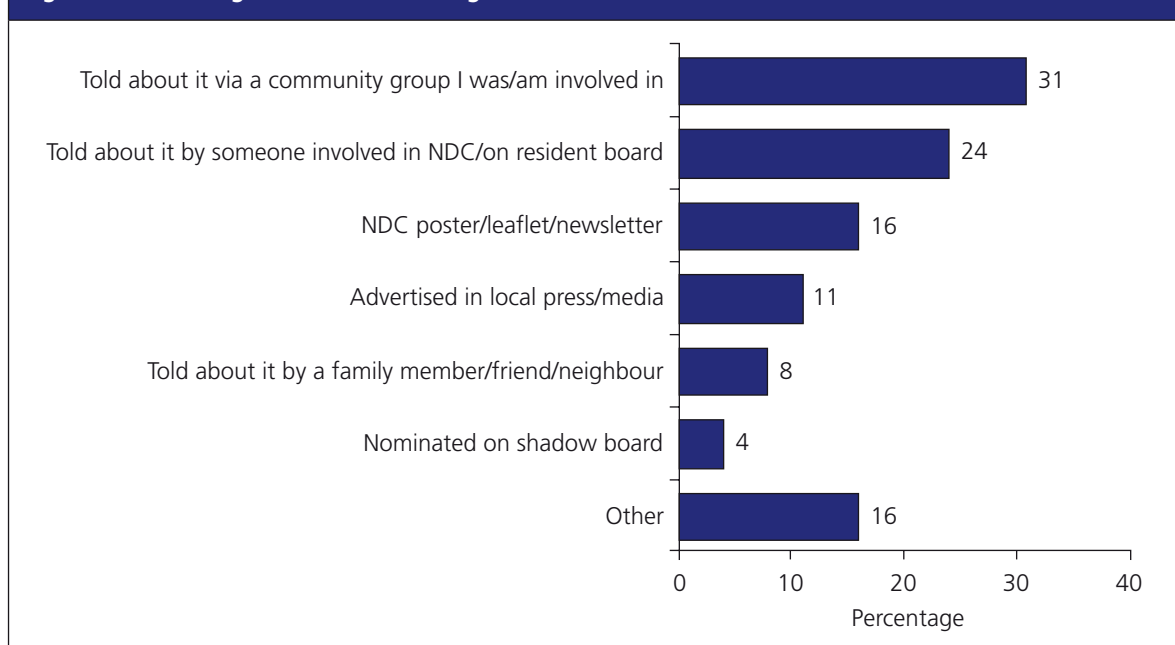
Source: NDC resident board member survey 2009

Base: All

## Routes onto the board

- 2.25. This section focuses on the processes by which NDC residents became involved in their Partnership board, including how they initially heard about it, their main reasons for wanting to take part, and how they were appointed to the position.
- 2.26. Respondents were asked to identify how they had found out about the opportunity to become a resident representative on an NDC board (Figure 2.10). The evidence suggests that existing networks play a greater role in raising awareness of the opportunity than more open or public forms of advertising. This is unsurprising given the extent to which resident representatives on NDC boards appear to be already involved in a wide range of community roles, as outlined at 2.22 above:
- almost a third (31 per cent) heard about NDC through a community group they were already part of and 24 per cent were told by someone involved in the NDC
  - 16 per cent saw an NDC poster, leaflet or newsletter and 11 per cent responded to advertisements in the local media.

**Figure 2.10: Finding out about becoming an NDC resident board member**



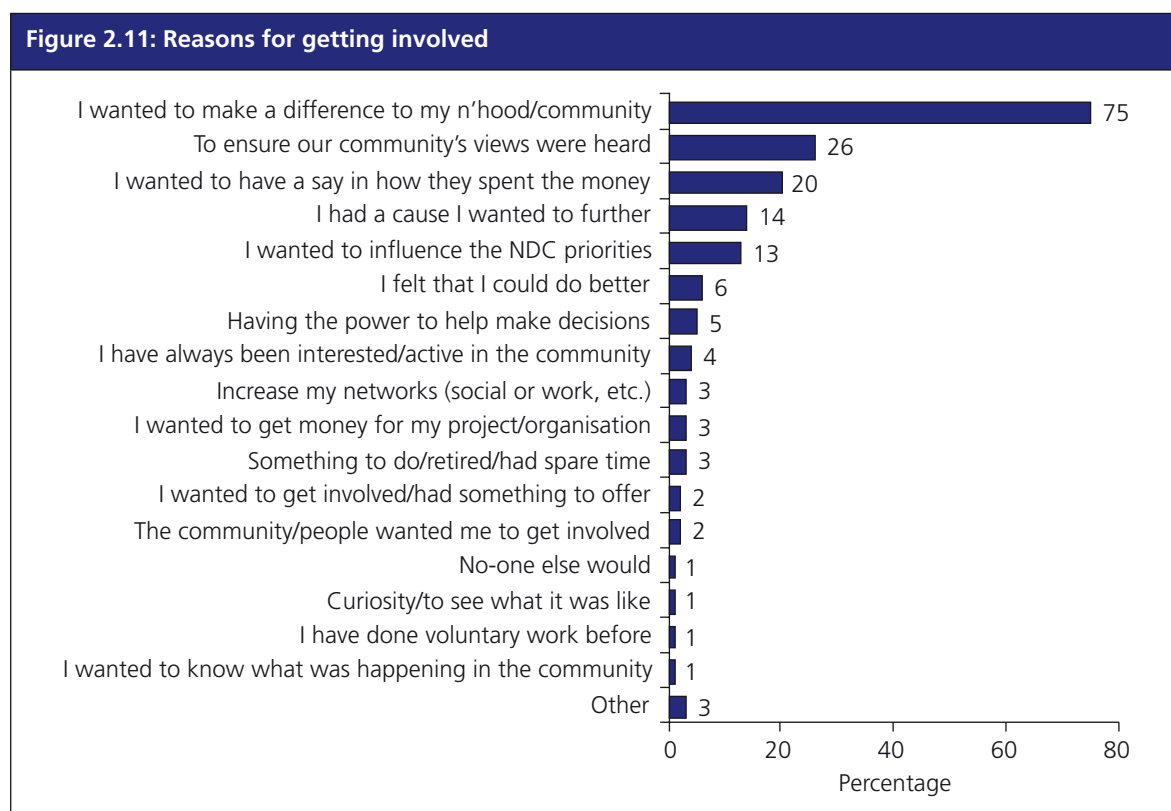
Source: NDC resident board member survey 2009

Base: All

Note: Respondents were allowed to give multiple responses

- 2.27. This is in line with evidence from the 2007–08 Citizenship Survey (see 2.20). Of all those taking part in any formal voluntary activity in the past 12 months, 55 per cent said they heard about it from somebody else already involved.

- 2.28. Respondents to the resident board member survey were also asked about their main reasons for getting involved. The full list is detailed in Figure 2.11. Most had been optimistic about the NDC's ability to bring about change to the area: 75 per cent said they had joined because they wanted to make a difference to their neighbourhood or community. Local residents were also attracted by the community-led nature of the Programme: 26 per cent wanted to ensure their community's views were heard and 20 per cent wanted to have a say in how the money was spent. More than one in ten had a specific cause they wanted to further and 3 per cent wanted to get money for their organisation or project.
- 2.29. After having heard about the opportunity and made the decision to get involved, the most common route onto the board was via NDC elections: 83 per cent of respondents had been elected to their position. Of these, 78 per cent (or 65 per cent of the total sample) had faced a contested election where there were other candidates standing for the same seat (Figure 2.12).
- 2.30. There was a fairly even spread in terms of the number of times respondents had stood for re-election to the board: 29 per cent of elected board members had never had to stand for re-election; 24 per cent had stood for re-election more than twice.



Source: NDC resident board member survey 2009

Base: All

Note: Respondents were allowed to give multiple responses

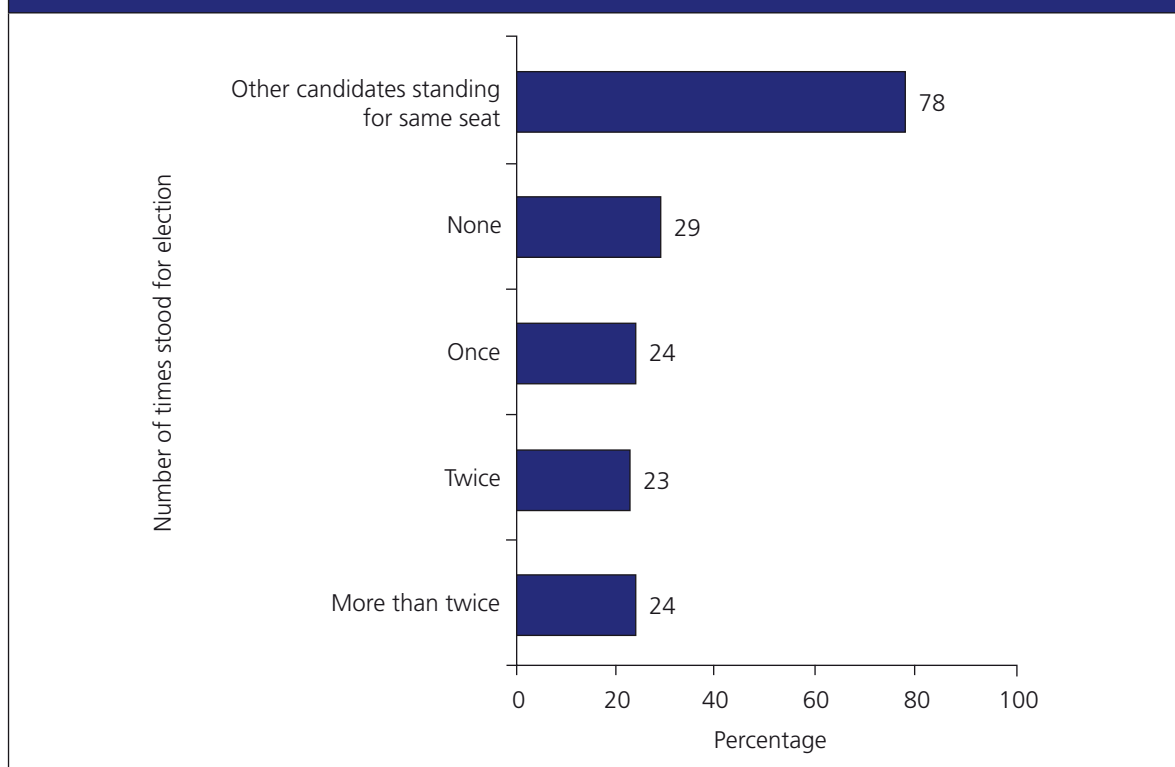
- 2.31. Resident representatives are, in most cases, elected by their fellow residents. However, evidence from the latest Partnership Survey shows that voter



turnout varies from one NDC to another but is generally low: between 2006 and 2008 across all NDC elections the average turnout was 23 per cent, ranging from 4 to 52 per cent.

- 2.32. Another recent study has looked at NDC elections in more detail, and has especially addressed issues relating to voter turnout,<sup>27</sup> including which types of people were more or less likely to vote. Two factors found to be significant predictors of likelihood of voting were age and educational qualifications. With the exception of the oldest age group (75+), the likelihood of voting in NDC elections was shown to increase with age. Those aged 65–74 were over five times as likely to vote as were 16–24 year olds. Similarly, the likelihood of voting increased with levels of educational qualifications. Those with at least NVQ Level 4 or equivalent qualifications were twice as likely to vote in NDC elections as were those with no formal qualifications.

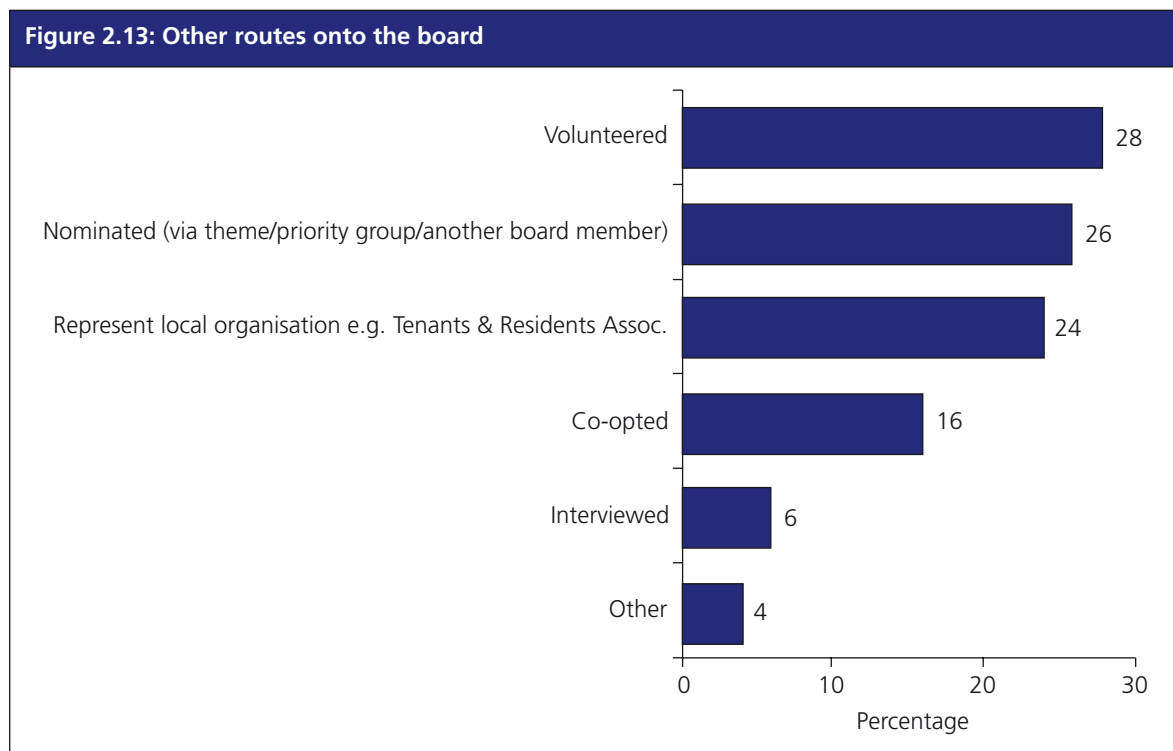
Figure 2.12: Elections



Source: NDC resident board member survey 2009  
Base: All who stood for election to the board (251)

- 2.33. A minority of resident board members are not appointed by open elections. Of all those not elected, 28 per cent simply volunteered for the role, 26 per cent were nominated by a theme group or existing board member and 24 per cent were representing a local organisation, such as a Tenants' and Residents' Association (Figure 2.13).

<sup>27</sup> CLG (2008) *Neighbourhood governance: making NDC elections a significant event for partnerships and communities? Some lessons from the New Deal for Communities Programme*. [www.communities.gov.uk/publications/communities/ndcelections](http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/communities/ndcelections)



Source: NDC resident board member survey 2009

Base: All who did not stand for election to the board (50)

Note: Respondents were allowed to give multiple responses

## Summary

- 2.34. The first part of this chapter looked at the characteristics of resident board members. Respondents to the survey are disproportionately:
- male
  - over fifty
  - white
  - in households without children
  - employed (if working age) or retired
  - 'middle class'
  - highly qualified
  - long-standing residents of the area.
- 2.35. The vast majority have previous experience in community organisations, either in a voluntary or professional capacity, or in many cases both.
- 2.36. Respondents most commonly hear about the opportunity to become a resident representative through existing social networks, including individuals already involved in the NDC and through other community organisations. Over four-fifths had been democratically elected to the position by NDC residents, and almost 80 per cent of these stood in a contested election.

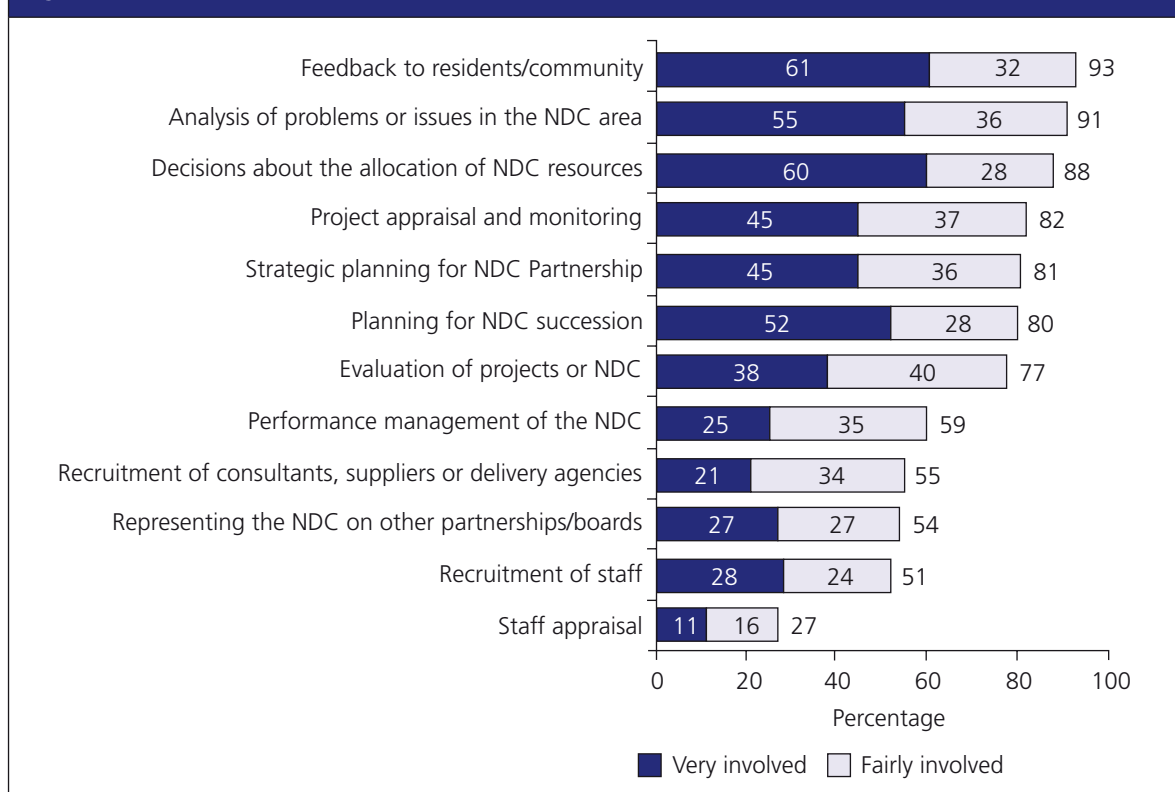
## 3. Being a resident representative on an NDC board

- 3.1. This chapter explores the experiences of being a resident representative on an NDC board. It includes the extent and nature of resident board members' involvement, their perceptions on the value of their experiences, and whether or not it has had, or is expected to have, any lasting impact on their lives.

### Nature of involvement

- 3.2. Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they are involved in a range of NDC activities and decision-making processes (Figure 3.1). For all but one of these, staff appraisal, over half of respondents feel that they are very, or fairly, involved.

**Figure 3.1: Involvement in NDC activities**



Source: NDC resident board member survey 2009

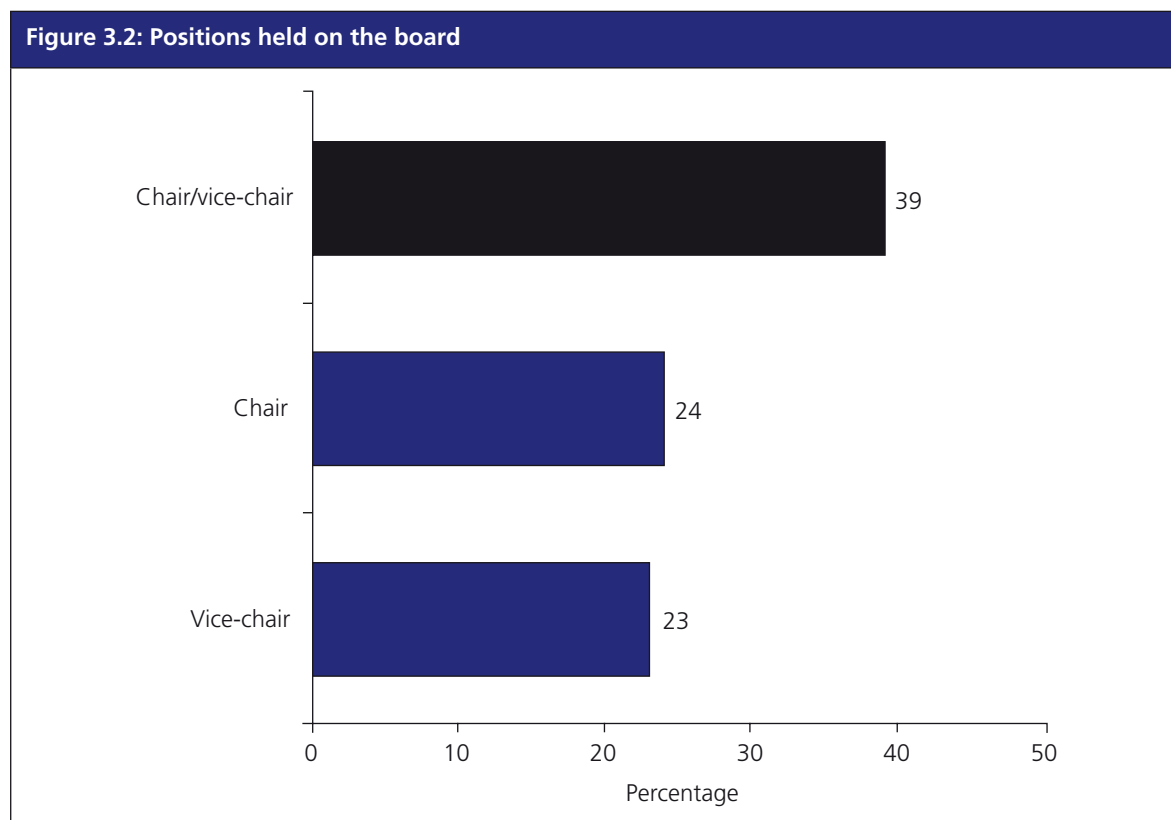
Base: All

Note: Figures for 'very involved' and 'fairly involved' may not sum to total, due to rounding

- 3.3. The results suggest that a key role for resident representatives is as a contact point between the board and local people: 93 per cent of respondents said

they are involved in giving feedback to the local community and 91 per cent in the analysis of problems or issues in the NDC area.

- 3.4. Respondents also feel included in decisions about spend: 88 per cent said they are involved (60 per cent very involved) in deciding about the allocation of NDC resources.
- 3.5. The majority of NDC boards are headed up by a local resident. Evidence from the most recent NDC Partnership survey shows that, in 2008, 25 boards (just under two-thirds) were chaired by a resident of the NDC area.
- 3.6. Nearly a quarter of respondents to the resident board member survey held the position of chair during their time on the board. Thirty-nine per cent have been either chair or vice-chair, or both (Figure 3.2).<sup>28</sup> Chapter Four explores the different experiences of those who have, and have not, held one or more of these positions on an NDC board.



Source: NDC resident board member survey 2009

Base: All

- 3.7. On average, respondents had served for four and a half years on an NDC board. Fifty per cent are on the board for between two and five years (Table 3.1). For past board members the average length of service was three years. For current members the average is five years.

<sup>28</sup> This high proportion could be a reflection of bias in the sample: those serving as chair or vice-chair were likely to be more strongly engaged with the Programme and potentially more likely to respond to the survey.

**Table 3.1: Length of service on NDC board**

Number of years on board	Percentage
1 or less	11
2–5	50
6–9	31
10 or more	2
Don't know	5

Source: NDC resident board member survey 2009

Base: All

- 3.8. For the majority of respondents (56 per cent), being a resident board member takes up less than 10 hours of a typical week (Table 3.2). However, given that many are in full-time employment, this is a significant commitment. Indeed, of all those working full-time, half spend five or more hours each week on NDC activity, equivalent to at least one hour each evening after work.
- 3.9. For a small group (5 per cent), involvement with the NDC board amounts to a full-time job, taking up 30 or more hours per week.

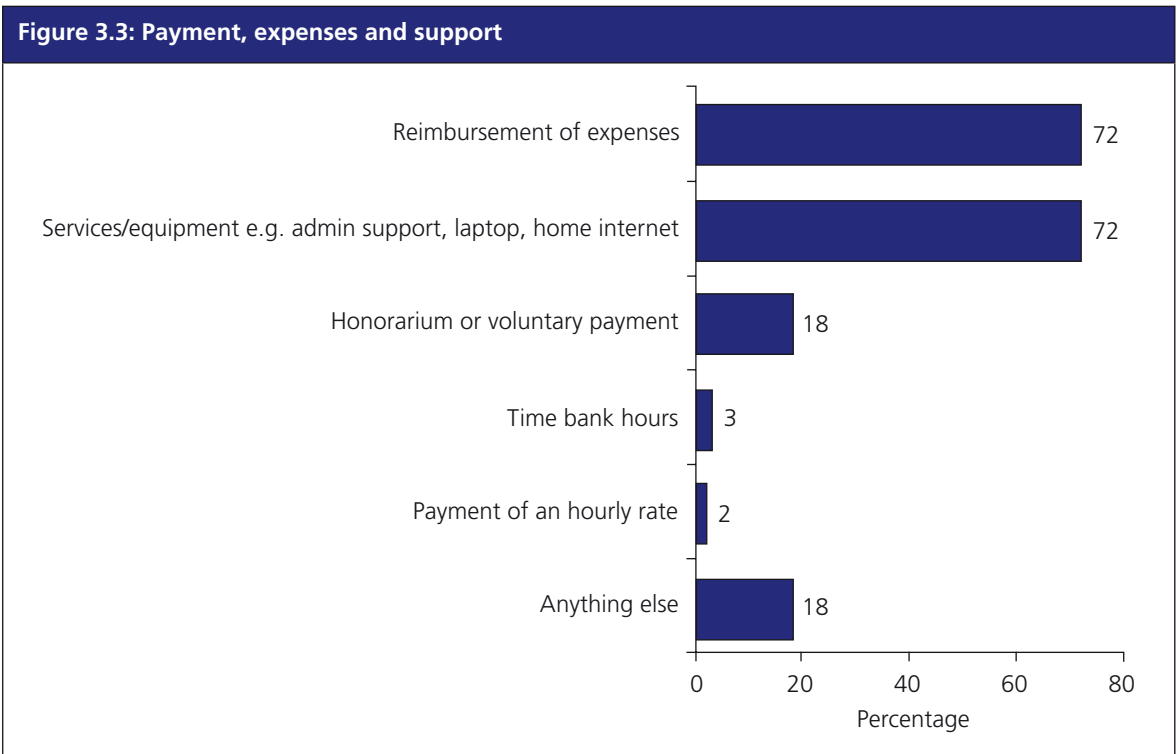
**Table 3.2: Number of hours spent per week on resident board member work**

Number of hours per week	Percentage
1–4	32
5–9	24
10–14	16
15–19	6
20–29	10
30–39	3
40–49	2
50+	1
Don't know	7

Source: NDC resident board member survey 2009

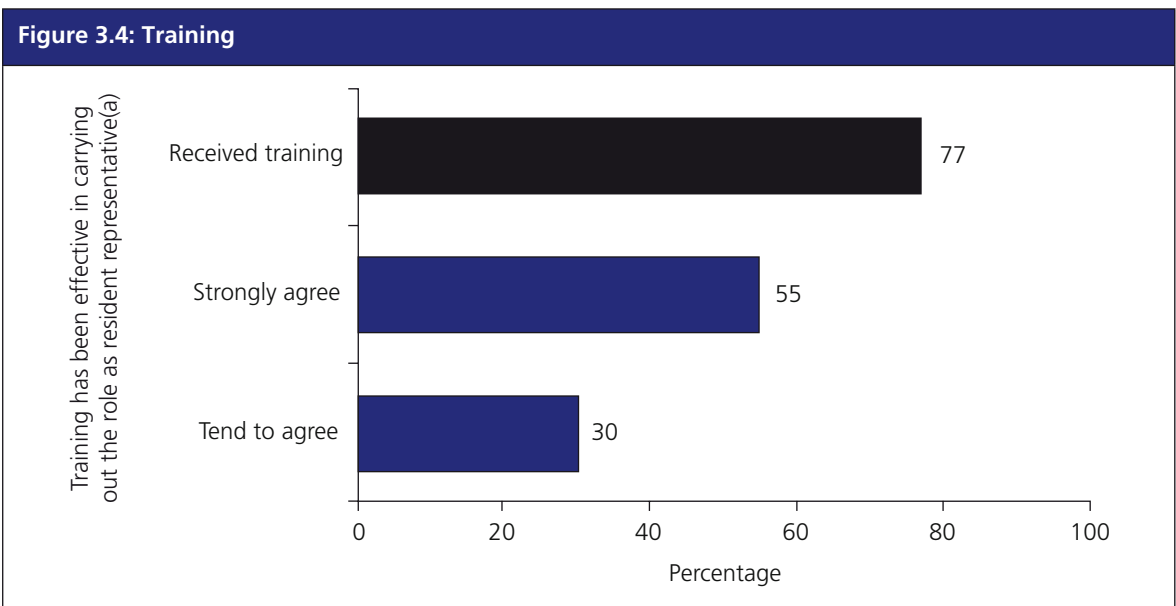
Base: All

- 3.10. There is some evidence that those without children are able to commit more time than those with children: 29 per cent of those with children under 18 spend 10 or more hours per week on NDC activities, compared with 40 per cent of those without.
- 3.11. Very few respondents (2 per cent) receive payment of an hourly rate (Figure 3.3). However, over 90 per cent said they receive some kind of payment, expenses or support in recognition of their efforts. Most common are the reimbursement of expenses and the provision of services and equipment, including administrative support, computer hardware, and so on.



Source: NDC resident board member survey 2009  
 Base: All  
 Note: Respondents were allowed to give multiple responses

3.12. Over three-quarters of respondents (77 per cent) have received training related to their position as a resident representative. Of these, 85 per cent have found this training effective in helping them to carry out their role (Figure 3.4).

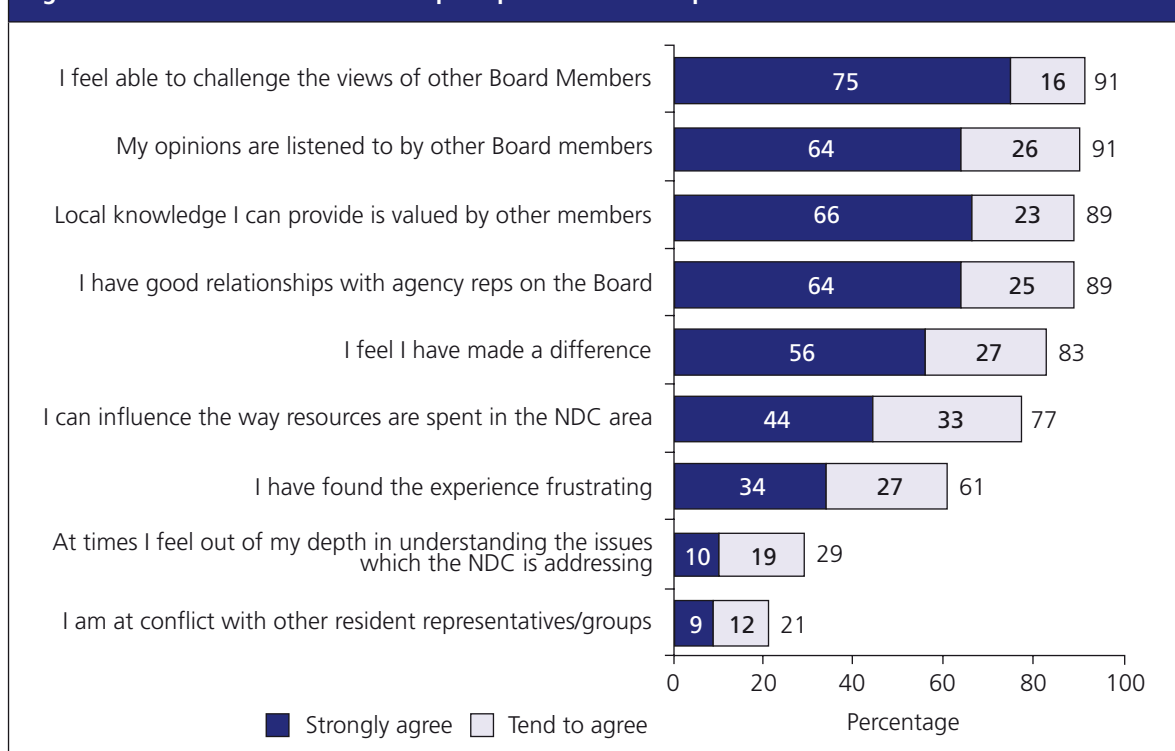


Source: NDC resident board member survey 2009  
 Base: All; (a) All who have received training (233)

## Experiences of being on the board

- 3.13. Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with a number of statements about their experiences on an NDC board. Their perceptions of their experiences are, on the whole, very positive (Figure 3.5).
- 3.14. Most respondents are happy about their interactions with other board members:
- 91 per cent feel able to challenge the views of other members
  - 91 per cent report that their opinions are listened to
  - 89 per cent say their local knowledge is valued by other board members
  - 89 per cent have good relationships with agency representatives.
- 3.15. The majority are positive about their contribution to the board: 83 per cent feel that they have made a difference, and 77 per cent say they can influence decisions around resource allocation.
- 3.16. Less than one-third of respondents (29 per cent) say they ever feel out of their depth in understanding NDC issues and 21 per cent feel they had been at conflict with other resident representatives or groups. However, well over half (61 per cent) say they have found being a resident representative a frustrating experience. In addition, 58 per cent have felt vulnerable to criticism from NDC residents at least some of the time.

**Figure 3.5: Resident board members perceptions of their experiences**

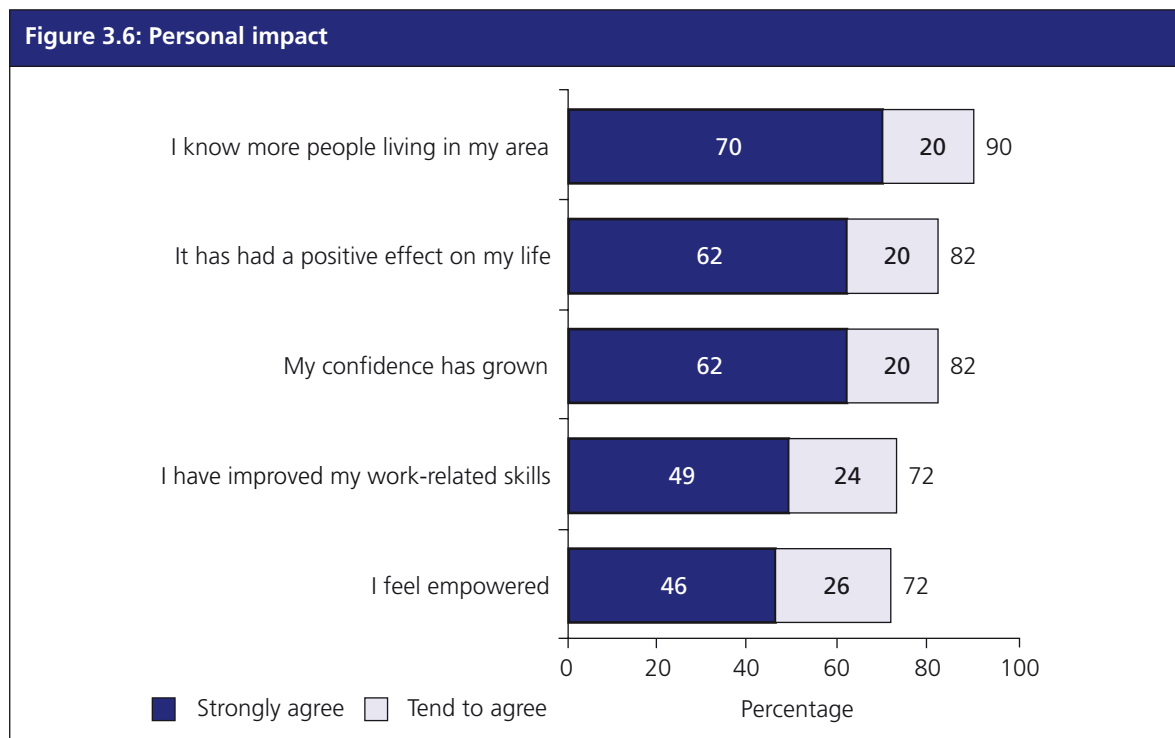


Source: NDC resident board member survey 2009

Base: All

Note: Figures for 'strongly agree' and 'tend to agree' may not sum to total, due to rounding

- 3.17. Most respondents are able to identify specific positive impacts on their own lives as a result of being on an NDC board (Figure 3.6). These include:
- knowing more people in the area (90 per cent)
  - increased confidence (82 per cent)
  - improved work-related skills (72 per cent).
- 3.18. Eighty-two per cent of respondents feel that their experiences have generally had a positive effect on their lives, with 72 per cent feeling empowered as a result.
- 3.19. Respondents were also given the opportunity to describe the three most positive and three most negative things about being a resident board member (Figures 3.7 and 3.8 respectively).
- 3.20. By far the most commonly cited positive factor is the ability to help, influence, make a difference to, or be involved in, the local community. This is mentioned by 54 per cent of respondents. Other common responses include meeting or working with new people (34 per cent), and gaining knowledge (29 per cent).
- 3.21. Positive comments are concentrated in a relatively small number of areas, but there is less agreement about the negative aspects of being on an NDC board. This suggests that there are a wider range of problems, but these are likely to be specific to certain NDCs or groups of people.

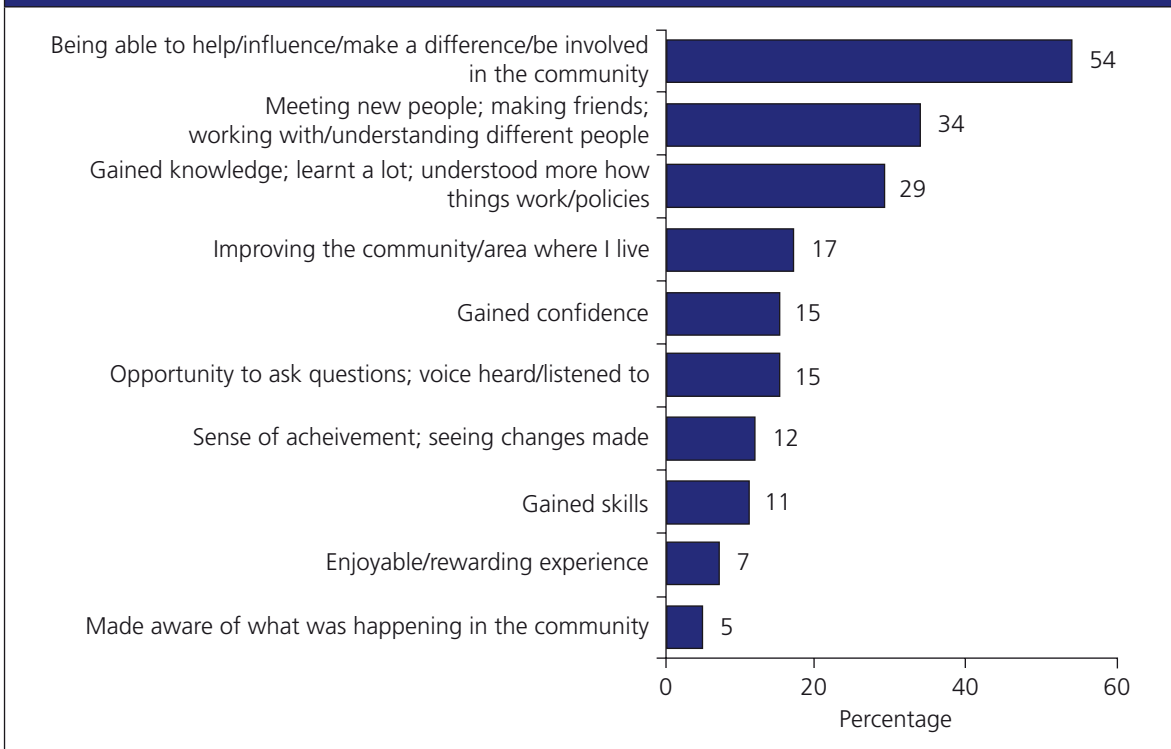


Source: NDC resident board member survey 2009

Base: All

Note: Figures for 'strongly agree' and 'tend to agree' may not sum to total, due to rounding

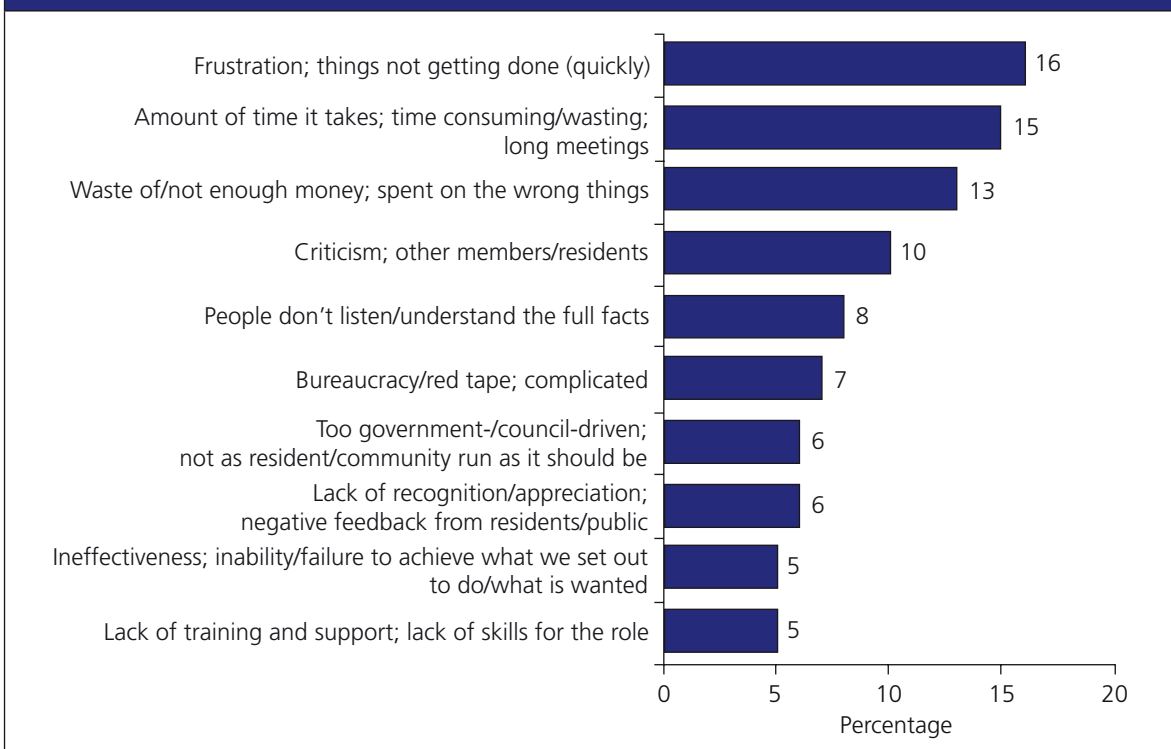


**Figure 3.7: Most positive things about being a resident board member**

Source: NDC resident board member survey 2009

Base: All

Note: Respondents were allowed to give three responses

**Figure 3.8: Most negative things about being a resident board member**

Source: NDC resident board member survey 2009

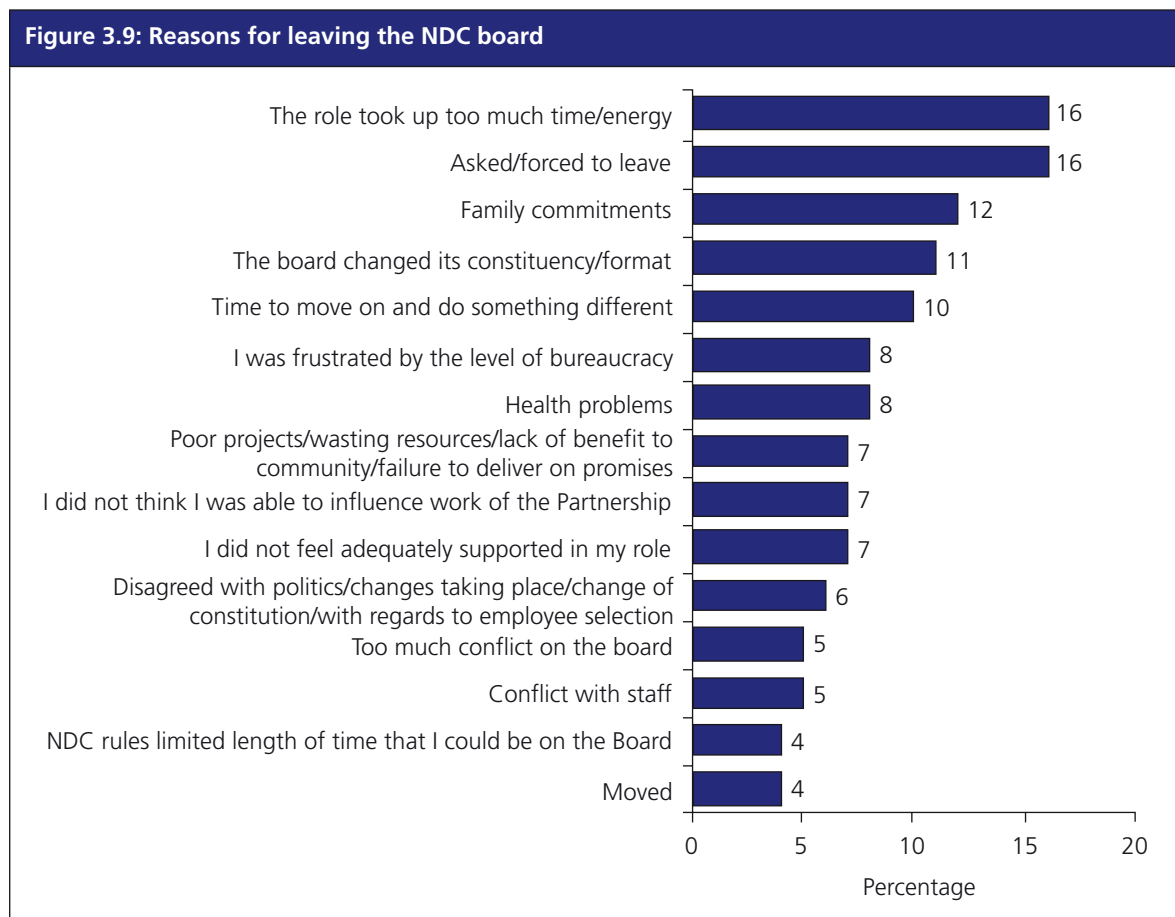
Base: All

Note: Respondents were allowed to give three responses

3.22. As is highlighted in 3.16 above, many resident board members experience a degree of frustration in their role, and the most common complaint about being on an NDC board is frustration with things not getting done, mentioned by 16 per cent of respondents. Similarly, 15 per cent feel like a lot of time is wasted and 13 per cent think that money is wasted or spent on the wrong things.

3.23. All past members were asked to explain the main reasons for leaving a board (Figure 3.9). In many cases the reasons were personal:

- 16 per cent say that the role took up too much time or energy
- 12 per cent left due to family commitments
- 10 per cent thought it was time to move on and do something different.



Source: NDC resident board member survey 2009  
 Base: All past board members (83)  
 Note: Respondents were allowed to give multiple responses

3.24. However, there is some evidence of conflict and frustration acting as contributory factors:

- 16 per cent said they were asked or forced to leave
- 8 per cent were frustrated by bureaucracy

- 7 per cent cited failure to deliver or a waste of resources
  - 5 per cent referred to conflict on the board, and 5 per cent to conflict with staff.
- 3.25. Only 4 per cent left because of a limit on the length of time for which they could serve.

## Perceptions of the area

- 3.26. Respondents were asked a series of questions about their perceptions of the NDC area (Table 3.3). The same questions were also asked in the Ipsos MORI household survey, allowing for comparison between resident board members and NDC residents as a whole. The results are positive:
- 84 per cent of respondents are satisfied with their area, compared with 74 per cent of all NDC residents
  - 73 per cent think their area had improved in the past two years, 31 percentage points higher than in the NDC as a whole
  - 94 per cent feel part of their local community, over twice the NDC aggregate proportion
  - 85 per cent agree that people from different backgrounds get along together in their local area, compared with 68 per cent across all NDC residents.

**Table 3.3: Perceptions of the NDC area**

	Resident board members	NDC aggregate
Very/fairly satisfied with area as a place to live	84	74
Area got much/slightly better over past two years (a)	73	42
Feel part of the community a great deal/fair amount	94	45
People from different backgrounds get along together	85	68

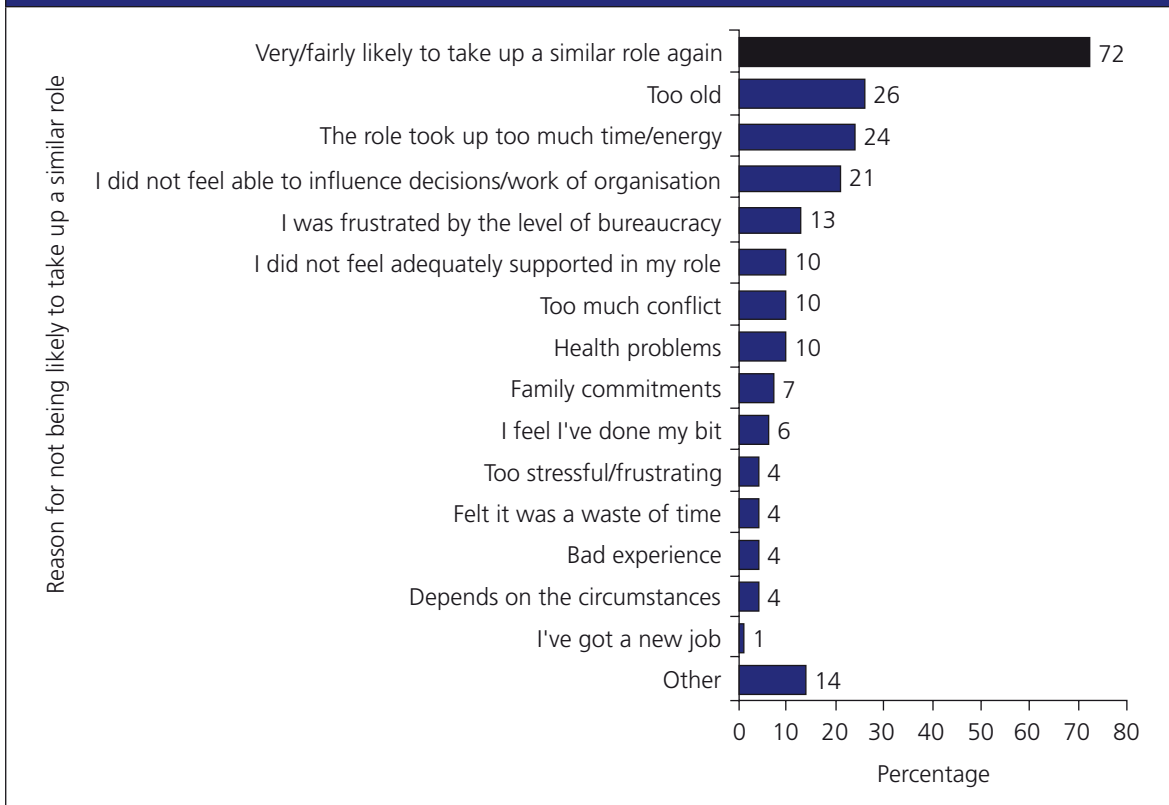
Source: NDC resident board member survey 2009; Ipsos MORI NDC Household Survey 2008  
Base: All; (a) All lived in the area two or more years

## Future involvement

- 3.27. Another indicator of resident board members' satisfaction with their involvement is their willingness, or otherwise, to do it again. Seventy-two per cent of respondents say they would be very, or fairly, likely to take up a similar role again in the future (Figure 3.10).
- 3.28. The remainder were asked for the main reasons they feel unlikely to take up a similar role:

- 26 per cent say they are too old
- 24 per cent feel that the role takes up too much time or energy
- just over a fifth (21 per cent) do not feel that they had been able to influence decisions or the work of the organisation.

**Figure 3.10: Likelihood of taking up similar role again; reasons against doing so**



Source: NDC resident board member survey 2009

Base: All; (a) All those not likely to take up a similar role in the future (84)

Note: Respondents were allowed to give multiple responses

3.29. Respondents were also asked whether they would take up a different type of voluntary role in the future. Eighty-one per cent say they would.

## Summary

3.30. This chapter has explored resident board members' own views about being involved with their local NDC Partnership. Their experiences are broadly positive:

- most respondents are very, or fairly, involved in a range of high level decision-making processes including the allocation of resources and strategic planning; over 90 per cent are involved in consultation and communication with other local residents and in the analysis of problems and issues in the NDC area

- the majority feel like they have made a difference: their views are listened to and they are able to influence important decisions
- many report positive personal impacts as a result of taking part, including knowing more people in the area, increased confidence, and improved work-related skills.

3.31. However, some resident board members have had more negative experiences, although this group represents a minority amongst the survey sample. The main criticisms relate to:

- frustration at things not getting done, or with the processes involved
- money and time being wasted.

## 4. The experiences of different groups

4.1. This chapter looks at the contrasting experiences of different groups of NDC resident board members. The following pairs of groups are compared:

- current and past board members
- chairs/vice-chairs and other board members
- male and female
- white and non-white
- middle- and working-class.

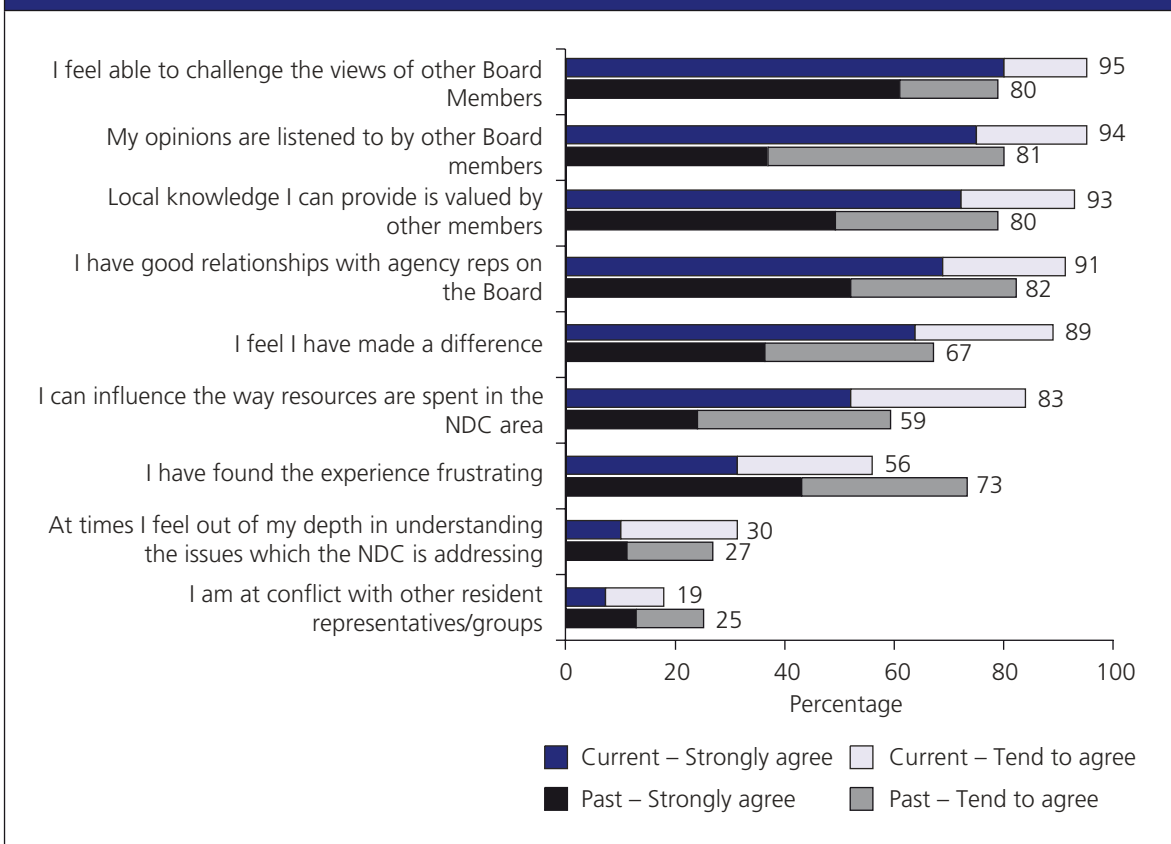
### Current and past board members

4.2. As identified at 1.9, those in the sample who are currently on the NDC board outnumber former members by nearly three to one. This section explores some differences between the experiences of these two groups. On the whole, current board members are more positive than past members (Figure 4.1). In the early days of the Programme many NDC boards, charged with building partnerships at the same time as delivering regeneration programmes, experienced a period of uncertainty, and sometimes conflict, whilst relationships, priorities and boundaries were being established. Over time, most NDCs have overcome these issues and the interim evaluation of the NDC Programme highlighted that although there was local variation, the majority of boards were stable and functioning effectively.<sup>29</sup> But it is perhaps inevitable that these early tensions will have impacted negatively on the experiences of former resident representatives on NDC boards.

4.3. The greatest differences between the two groups are in the proportion:

- feeling able to influence the spending of resources (83 per cent of current members, 59 per cent of past members)
- feeling like they have made a difference (89 per cent of current members, 67 per cent of past members)
- finding the experience frustrating (56 per cent of current members, 73 per cent of past members).

<sup>29</sup> Office of the Deputy Prime Minister/Neighbourhood Renewal Unit (2008) *Research Report 17, New Deal for Communities 2001–2005: An interim evaluation*. <http://collections.europarchive.org/tna/20090106142604/http://www.neighbourhood.gov.uk/publications.asp?did=1625>

**Figure 4.1: Perceptions of their experiences: Current and past board members**

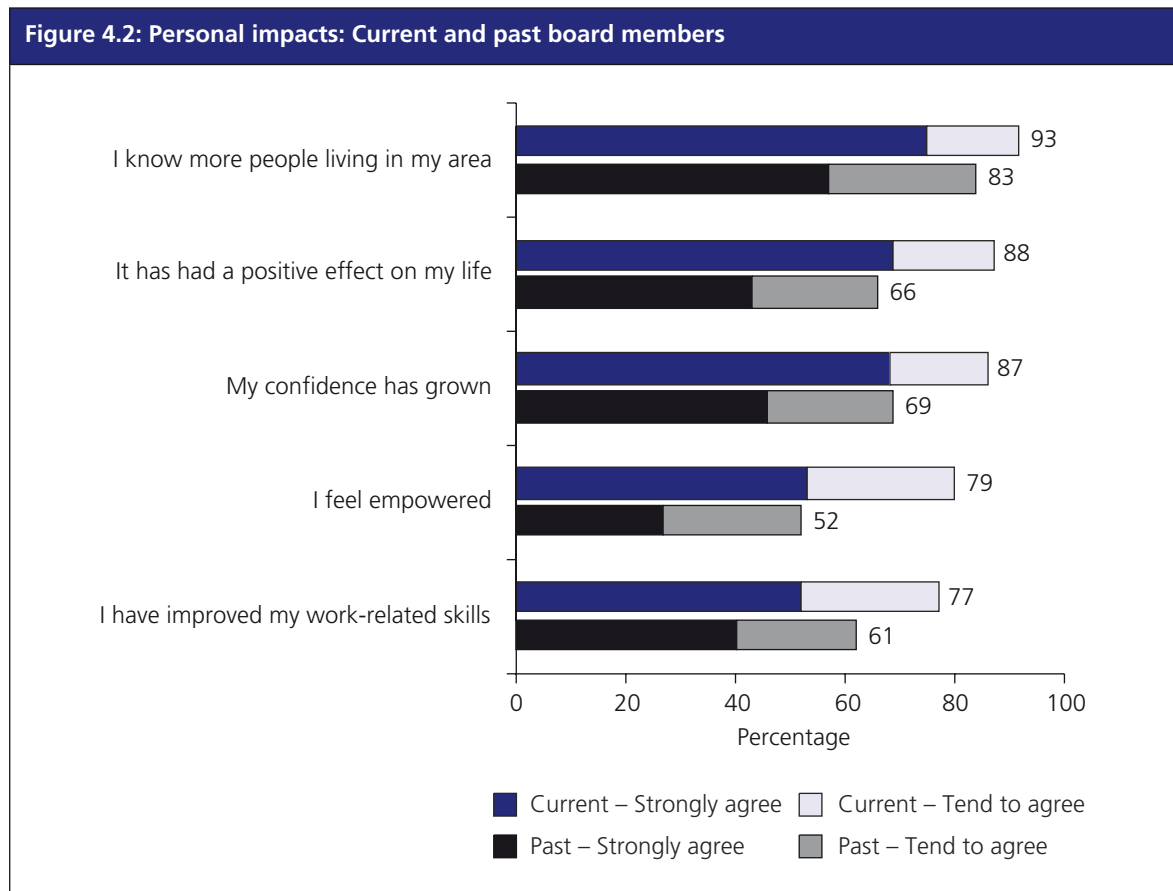
Source: NDC resident board member survey 2009

Base: All current board members (218); all past board members (83)

Note: Figures for 'strongly agree' and 'tend to agree' may not sum to total, due to rounding

4.4. Similarly, a greater proportion of current board members are able to identify positive personal impacts from their experiences (Figure 4.2):

- 79 per cent feel empowered, compared with 52 per cent of past members
- 87 per cent say their confidence has grown, compared with 69 per cent of past members
- 88 per cent point to a general positive effect on their lives, compared with 66 per cent of past members.



Source: NDC resident board member survey 2009

Base: All current board members (218); all past board members (83)

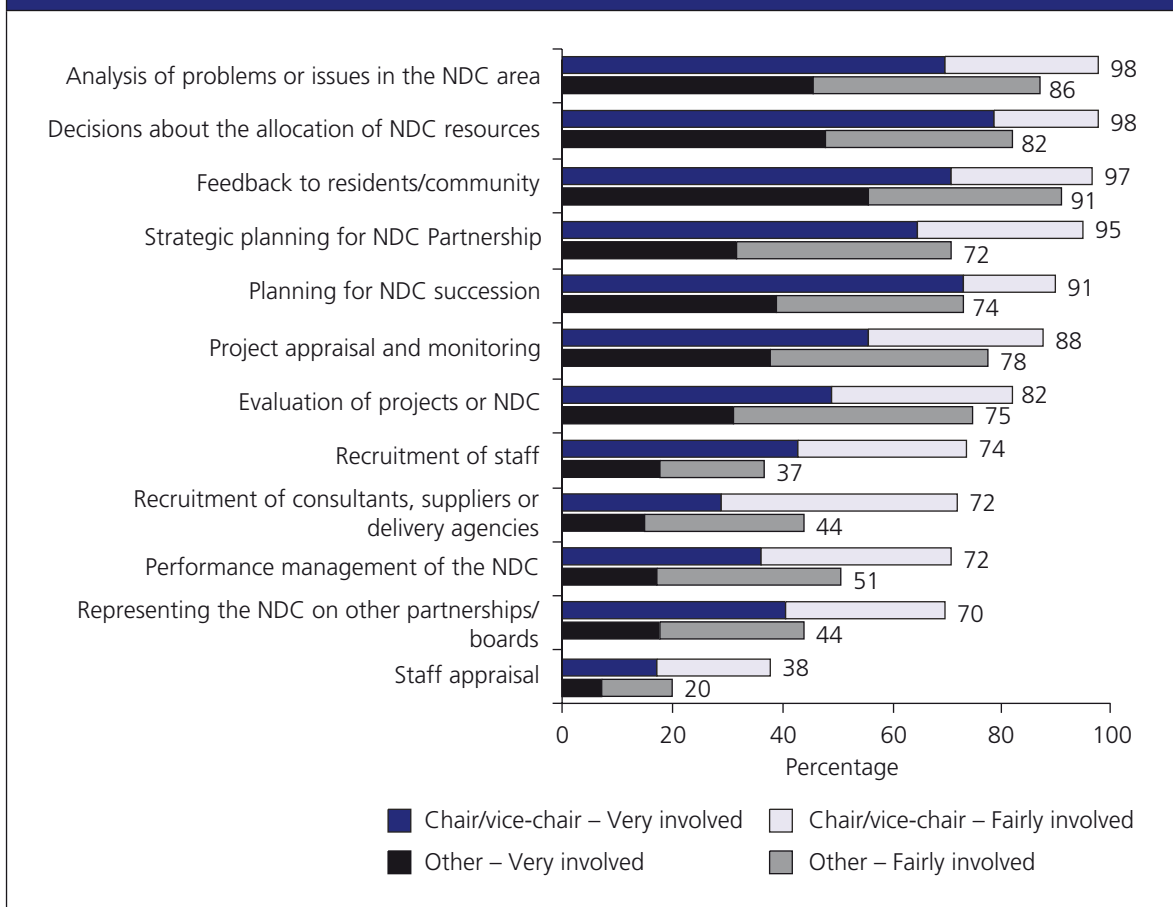
Note: Figures for 'strongly agree' and 'tend to agree' may not sum to total, due to rounding

## Chairs/vice-chairs and other board members

4.5. As identified at 3.6, 39 per cent of respondents to the survey have held the position of chair or vice-chair of an NDC board. Therefore it is possible to compare the experiences of resident representatives who have held these positions of authority with those who have not. Perhaps unsurprisingly, respondents who have, at some stage, served as a chair or vice-chair on an NDC board are more likely to have a say in many decision making processes (Figure 4.3). The biggest differences are in the proportion involved in:

- recruitment of staff (74 per cent of chairs/vice-chairs, 37 per cent of others)
- recruitment of consultants, suppliers or delivery agencies (72 per cent of chairs/vice-chairs, 44 per cent of others)
- representing the NDC on other partnerships/boards (70 per cent of chairs/vice-chairs, 44 per cent of others).



**Figure 4.3: Involvement in NDC activities: Chairs/vice-chairs and other board members**

Source: NDC resident board member survey 2009

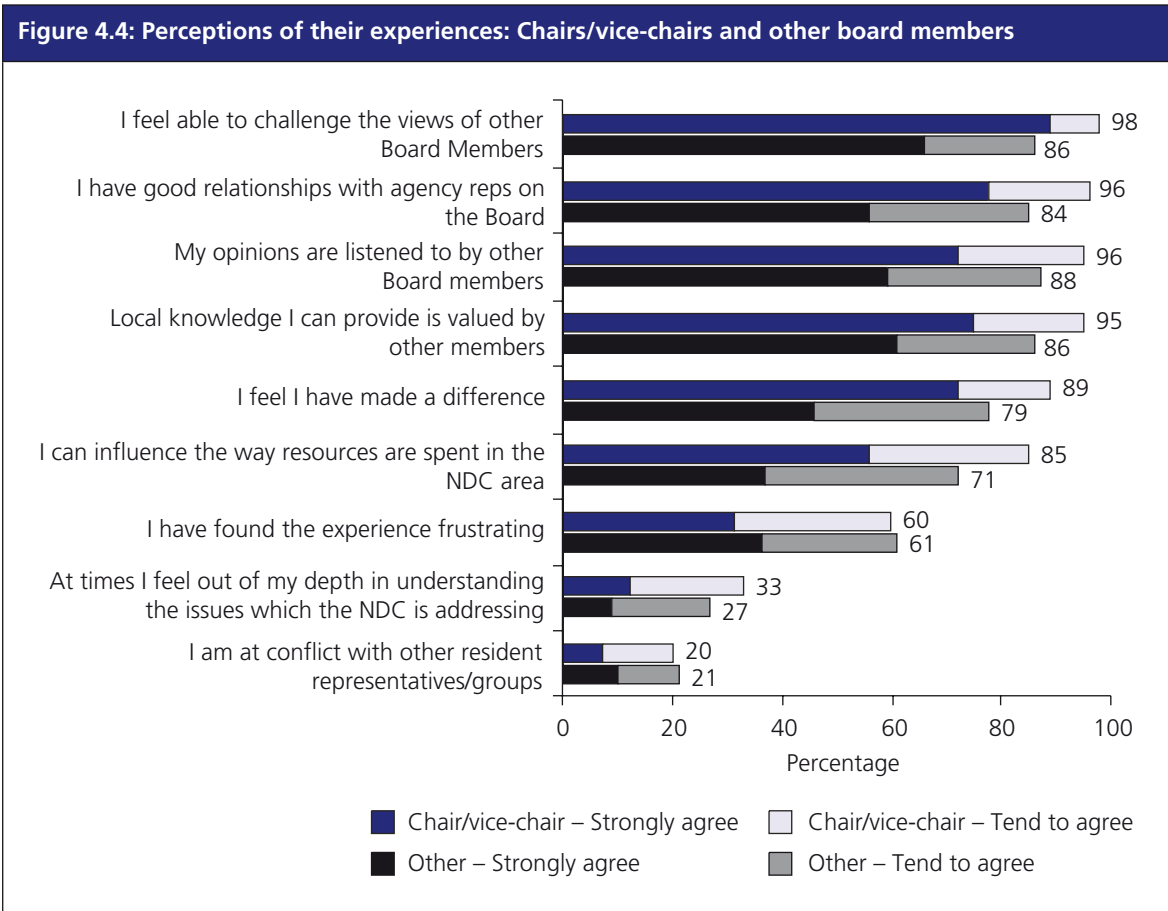
Base: All been chair/vice-chair (116); all other respondents (185)

Note: Figures for 'very involved' and 'fairly involved' may not sum to total, due to rounding

4.6. Chairs and vice-chairs are also generally more positive about their experiences than other NDC board members (Figure 4.4):

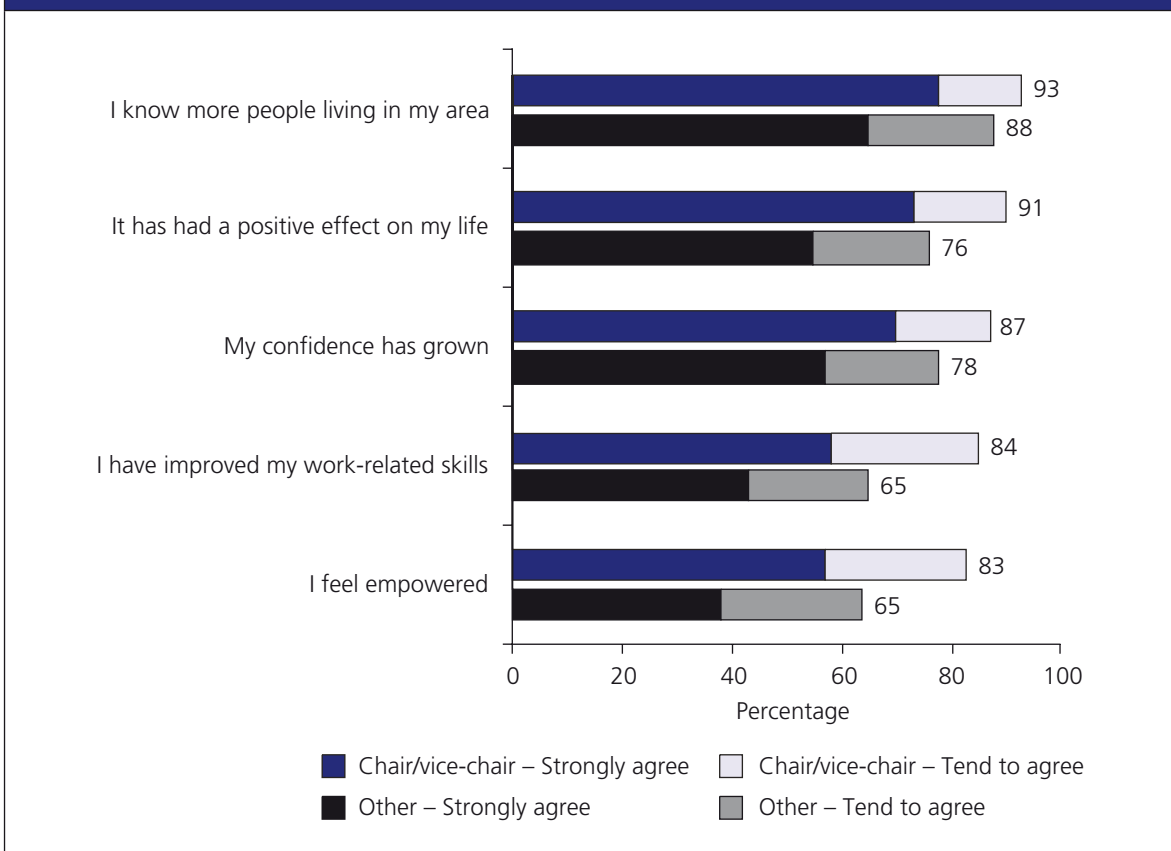
- 85 per cent say they are able to influence the spending of NDC resources, compared with 71 per cent of other board members
- almost all chairs/vice-chairs (98 per cent) feel able to challenge the views of others on the board; 96 per cent have good relationships with agency representatives; and the same proportion feel their opinions are listened to by others on the board.

4.7. However, there is little difference between the two groups in the proportion finding their experiences frustrating or reporting being at conflict with others.



Source: NDC resident board member survey 2009  
 Base: All been chair/vice-chair (116); all other respondents (185)  
 Note: Figures for 'strongly agree' and 'tend to agree' may not sum to total, due to rounding

- 4.8. A higher proportion of chairs and vice-chairs identify positive personal impacts than is the case for other resident board members (Figure 4.5):
- 91 per cent report a general positive effect on their lives, compared with 76 per cent of non-chairs/vice-chairs
  - 84 per cent feel their work-related skills have improved and 83 per cent feel empowered by their experiences, both nearly 20 percentage points higher than the equivalent for other board members.
- 4.9. The evidence above suggests that the experience of NDC board membership is better for chairs and vice-chairs than for other board members: they have more power to influence decisions, are more positive about various aspects of the experience and more likely to see positive impacts on their own lives as a result of taking part. Consideration of which socio-demographic groups are more likely to become chairs and vice-chairs is included in the remaining sections of this chapter.

**Figure 4.5: Personal impacts: Chairs/vice-chairs and other board members**

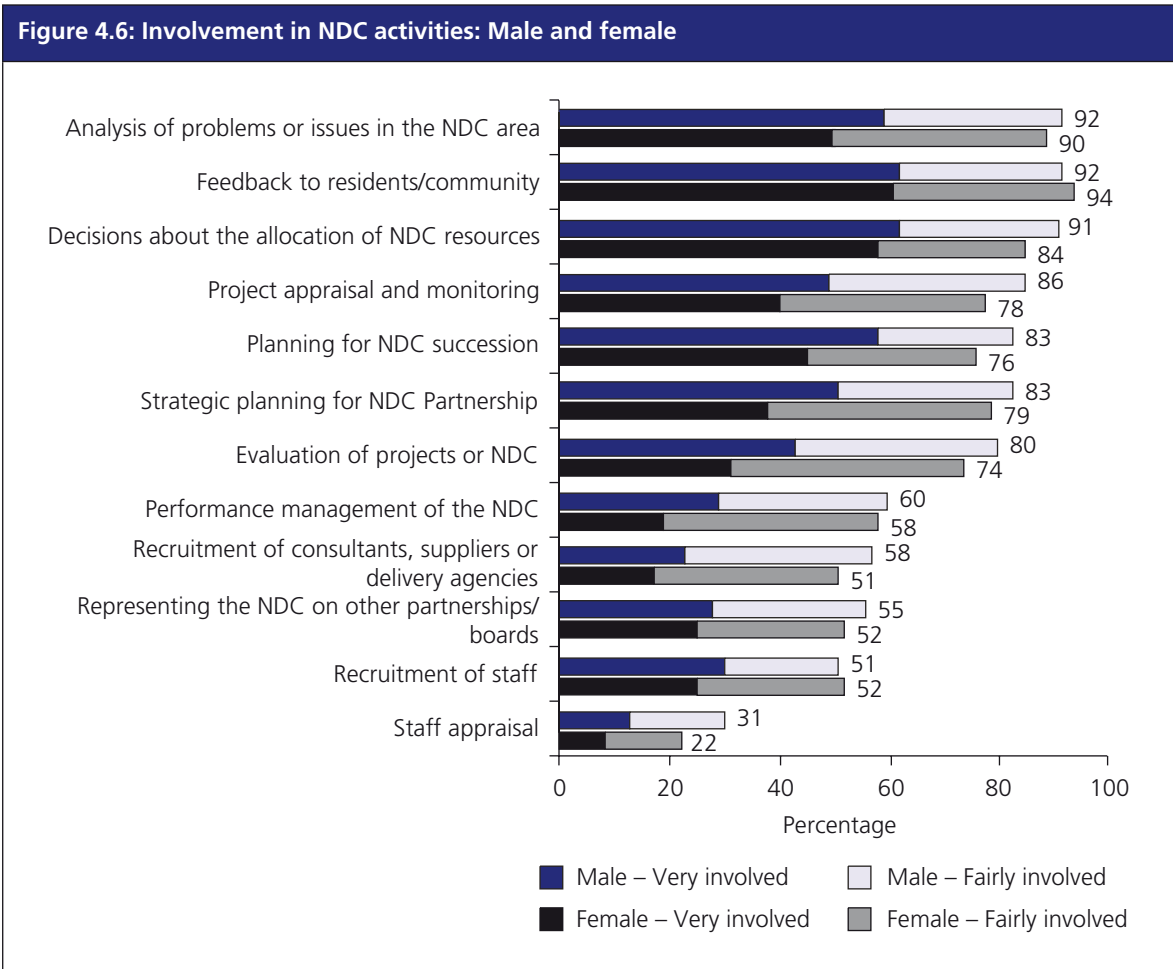
Source: NDC resident board member survey 2009

Base: All been chair/vice-chair (116); all other respondents (185)

Note: Figures for 'strongly agree' and 'tend to agree' may not sum to total, due to rounding

## Male and female

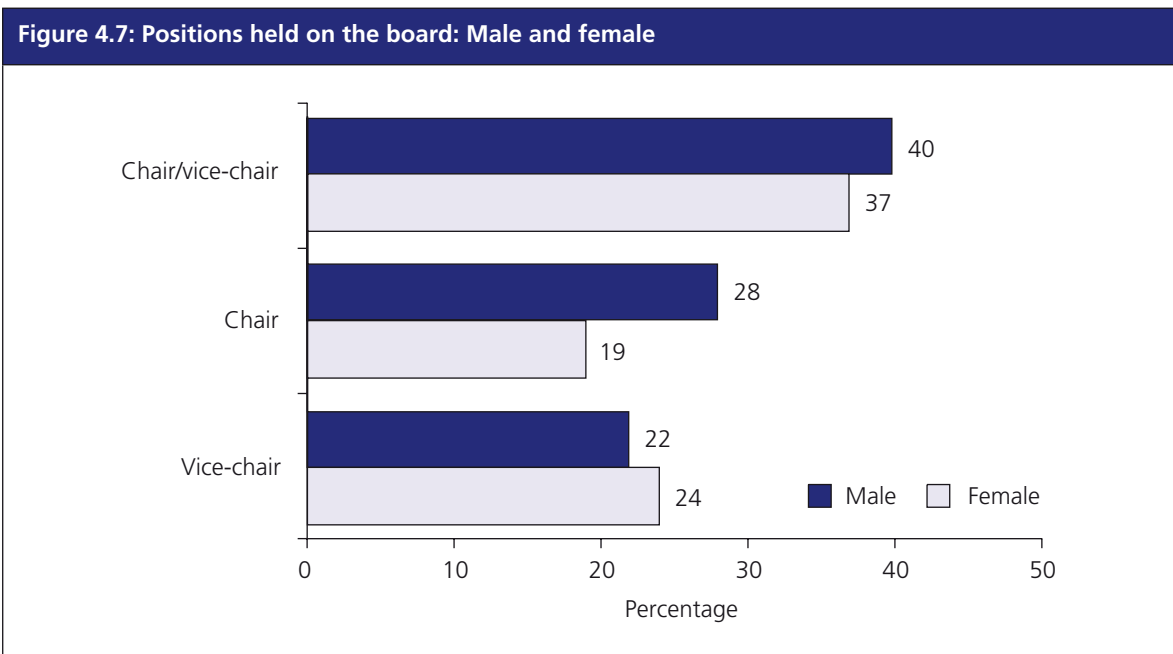
- 4.10. There are small differences in the rates of male and female involvement in NDC activities and decision-making processes (Figure 4.6). For most activities a higher proportion of men are involved, but these differences should not be overstated given the sample sizes. The biggest difference is in the proportion involved in staff appraisal (nine percentage points).
- 4.11. Men are also more likely to occupy the position of chair: 28 per cent of male respondents have been chair of their NDC board, compared to 19 per cent of females (Figure 4.7).
- 4.12. Again, there are only small differences in relation to male and female perceptions of their experiences (Figure 4.8). The main exception is conflict with others on the board: over a quarter of men (26 per cent) had experienced such conflict, compared with only 14 per cent of women.



Source: NDC resident board member survey 2009

Base: All male (166); all female (135)

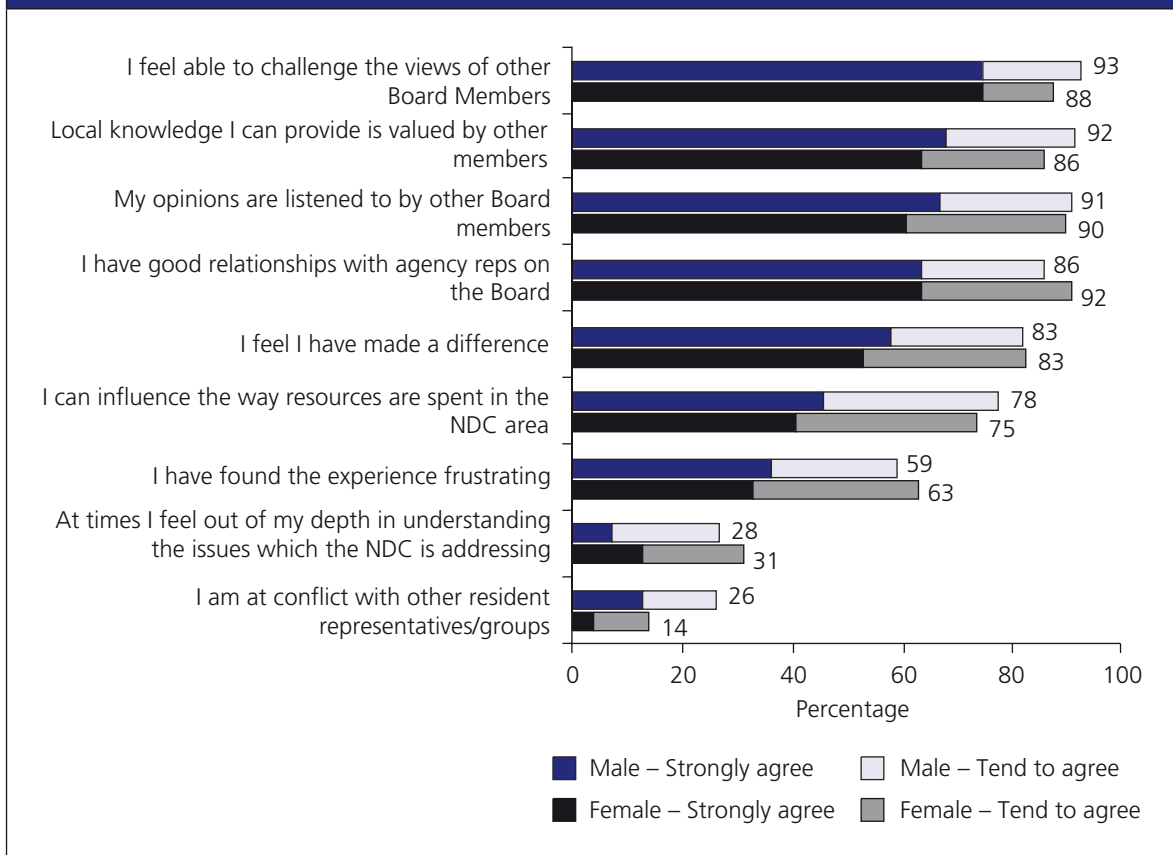
Note: Figures for 'very involved' and 'fairly involved' may not sum to total, due to rounding



Source: NDC resident board member survey 2009

Base: All male (166); all female (135)

Figure 4.8: Perceptions of the experience: Male and female

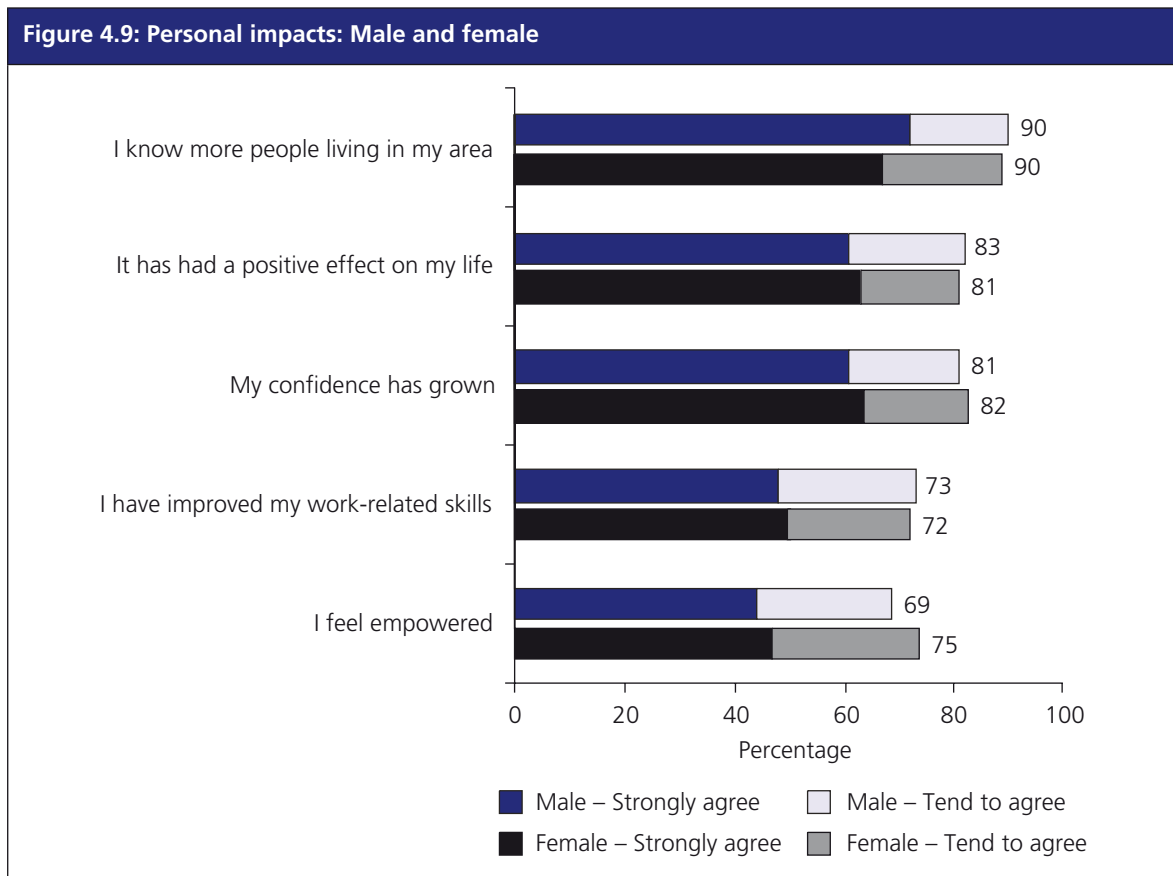


Source: NDC resident board member survey 2009

Base: All male (166); all female (135)

Note: Figures for 'strongly agree' and 'tend to agree' may not sum to total, due to rounding

- 4.13. The personal impacts of being a resident representative are also broadly similar for men and women (Figure 4.9). Differences are less than two percentage points for all but one of the impacts identified: the proportion of women feeling empowered (75 per cent) is six percentage points higher than that of men.



Source: NDC resident board member survey 2009

Base: All male (166); all female (135)

Note: Figures for 'strongly agree' and 'tend to agree' may not sum to total, due to rounding

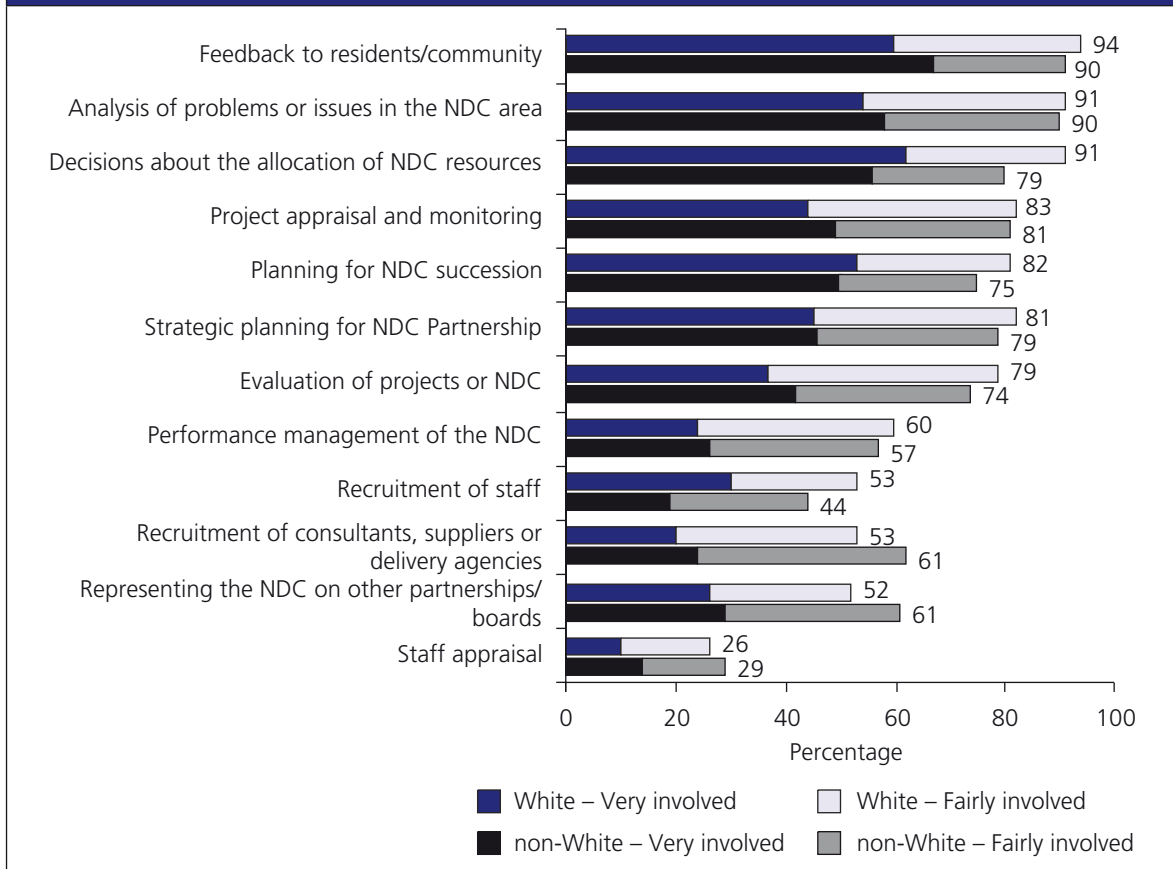
## Ethnicity

4.14. It is also possible to use ethnicity as a variable in looking at the experiences of different groups of resident representatives. However, the sample size is not large enough to allow for detailed analysis and as such this section looks at differences in experiences between white and non-white groups. As discussed at 2.7, white residents appear to be overrepresented both amongst NDC board members as a whole and amongst the sample of resident representatives. Figure 4.10 highlights some of the differences in levels of involvement between white and non-white resident board members. These differences vary across activities:

- 91 per cent of white respondents are involved in decisions about the allocation of resources, compared to 79 per cent of non-white respondents; white respondents are also more likely to be involved in the recruitment of staff
- on the other hand, a higher proportion of non-white board members represent their NDC on other organisations' boards (61 per cent, compared with 52 per cent of white respondents) and are involved in the recruitment of consultants, suppliers or delivery agencies (61 per cent, compared with 53 per cent of white respondents)

- other differences are fairly small; white respondents generally show higher rates of involvement in most activities but these differences should not be overstated due to the relatively small number of non-white respondents in the sample.

**Figure 4.10: Involvement in NDC activities: white and non-white respondents**



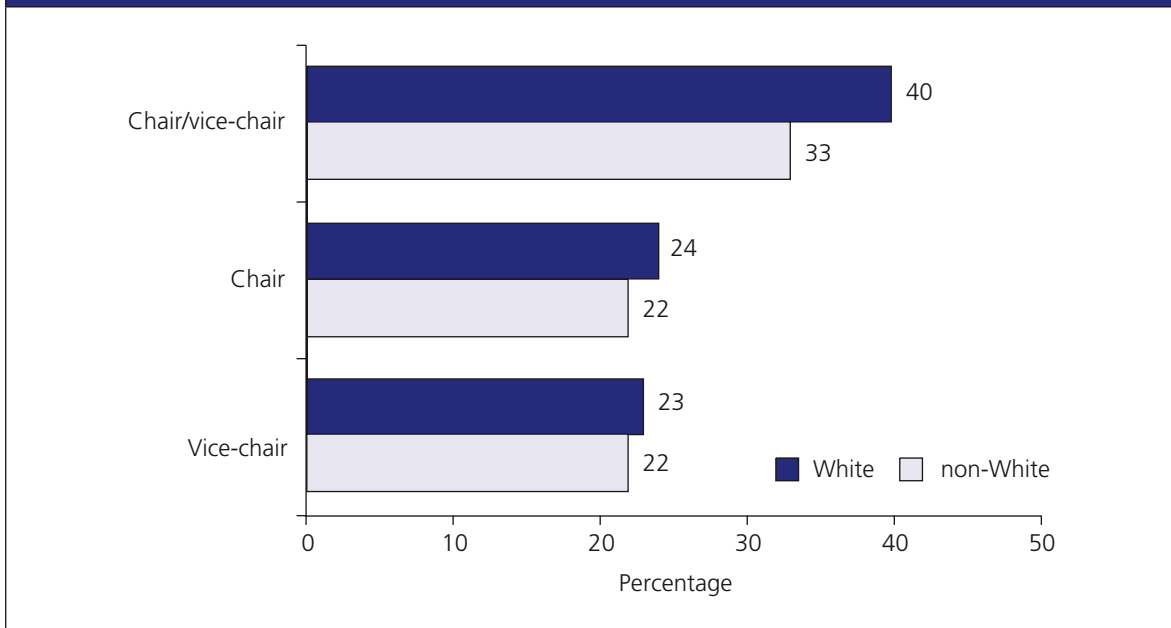
Source: NDC resident board member survey 2009

Base: All white respondents (229); all non-white respondents (72)

Note: Figures for 'very involved' and 'fairly involved' may not sum to total, due to rounding

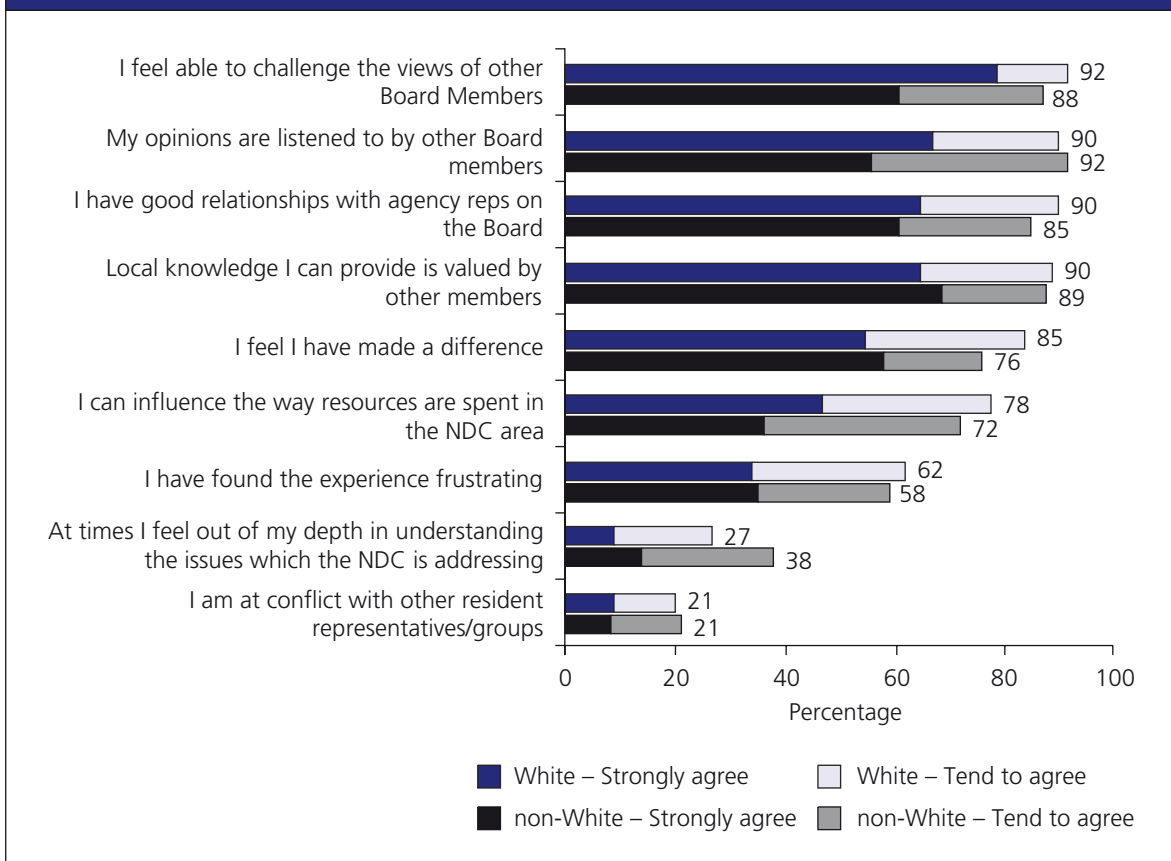
- 4.15. There is little difference in the proportions of white and non-white board members holding the position of chair, or vice-chair (Figure 4.11). However, there are larger differences in the proportion of those holding at least one of these two positions: 40 per cent of white respondents have been chair or vice-chair of the board, compared with 33 per cent of non-white respondents.
- 4.16. Differences between the experiences of white and non-white NDC resident board members are mostly small (Figure 4.12). The main exceptions are in:
- being able to make a difference; 85 per cent of white respondents feel they have made a difference by being involved as a resident representative, compared with 76 per cent of non-white respondents
  - feeling out of their depth; nearly two-fifths (38 per cent) of non-white respondents said they sometimes feel out of their depth in understanding NDC issues, compared with 27 per cent of white respondents.

**Figure 4.11: Positions held on the board: white and non-white respondents**



Source: NDC resident board member survey 2009  
 Base: All white respondents (229); all non-white respondents (72)

**Figure 4.12: Perceptions of their experiences: white and non-white respondents**

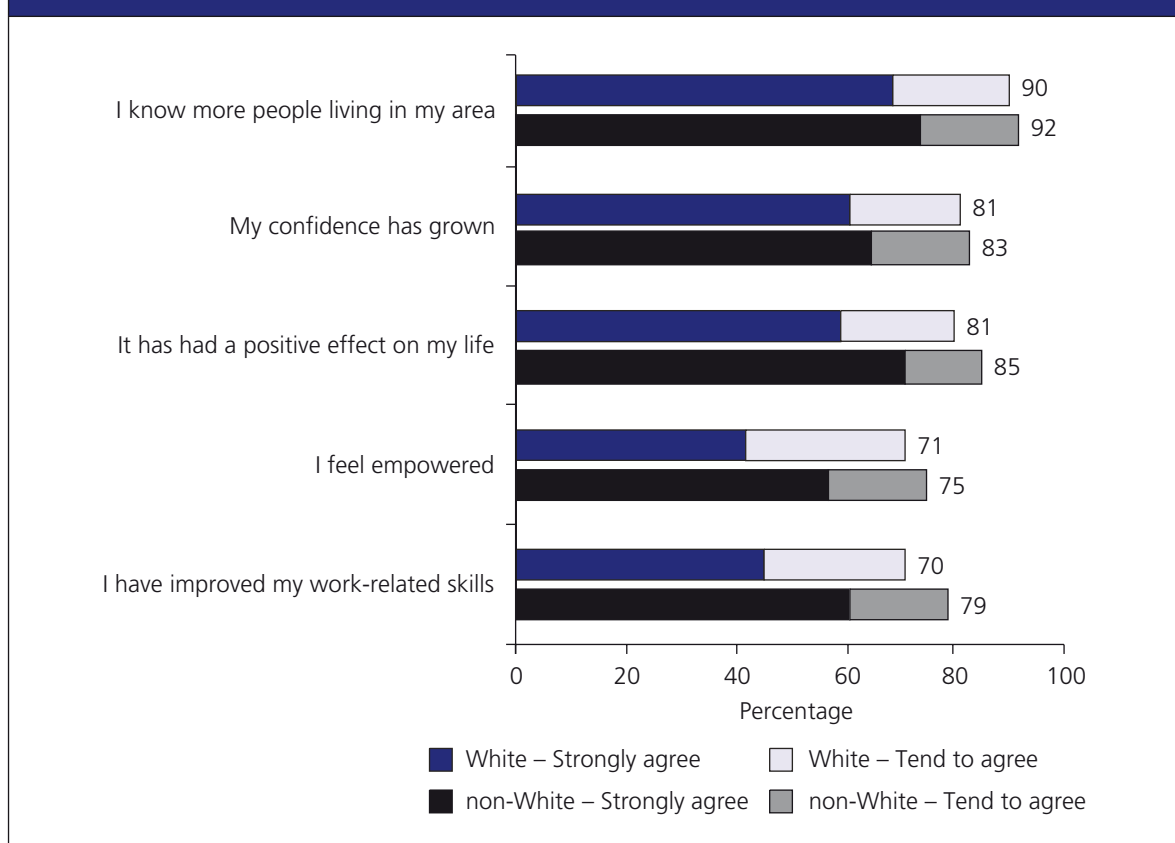


Source: NDC resident board member survey 2009  
 Base: All white respondents (229); all non-white respondents (72)  
 Note: Figures for 'strongly agree' and 'tend to agree' may not sum to total, due to rounding



- 4.17. A greater proportion of non-white respondents report positive personal impacts arising from the experience of being a resident representative on an NDC board. However, these differences are all around four percentage points or less, with one exception: 79 per cent of non-white respondents say their work-related skills have improved, nine percentage points higher than the equivalent for white respondents.

**Figure 4.13: Personal impacts: white and non-white respondents**



Source: NDC resident board member survey 2009

Base: All white respondents (229); all non-white respondents (72)

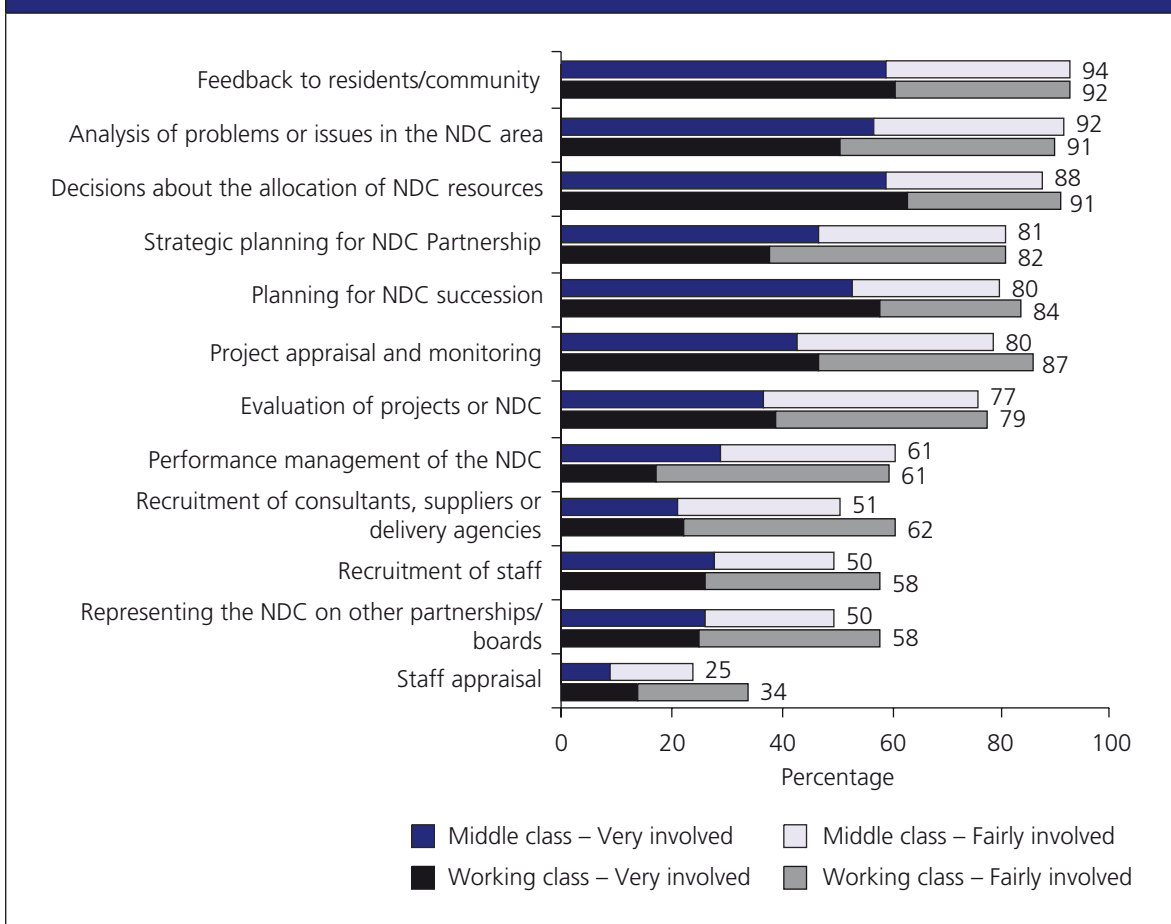
Note: Figures for 'strongly agree' and 'tend to agree' may not sum to total, due to rounding

## Middle- and working-class

- 4.18. As discussed at 2.12, respondents can be divided into six social grades, which in turn can be further simplified into two broad categories: 'middle-class' and 'working-class'. Analysis using these socio-economic groupings allows us to explore the extent to which the experience of NDC board membership has differed across social grades.
- 4.19. Figure 4.14 compares these two groups in terms of their involvement in various NDC activities and decision making processes. For many of these, rates of involvement are similar. Where there are notable differences it is working-class respondents who show consistently higher levels of involvement:

- 62 per cent are involved in the recruitment of consultants, suppliers or delivery agencies, compared with 51 per cent of middle-class respondents
- over a third conduct staff appraisals, compared with a quarter of middle-class respondents
- 58 per cent represent the NDC on other partnerships or boards, compared with 50 per cent of middle-class respondents
- 58 per cent are involved in recruiting staff, compared with 50 per cent of middle-class respondents.

**Figure 4.14: Involvement in NDC activities: Middle- and working-class**



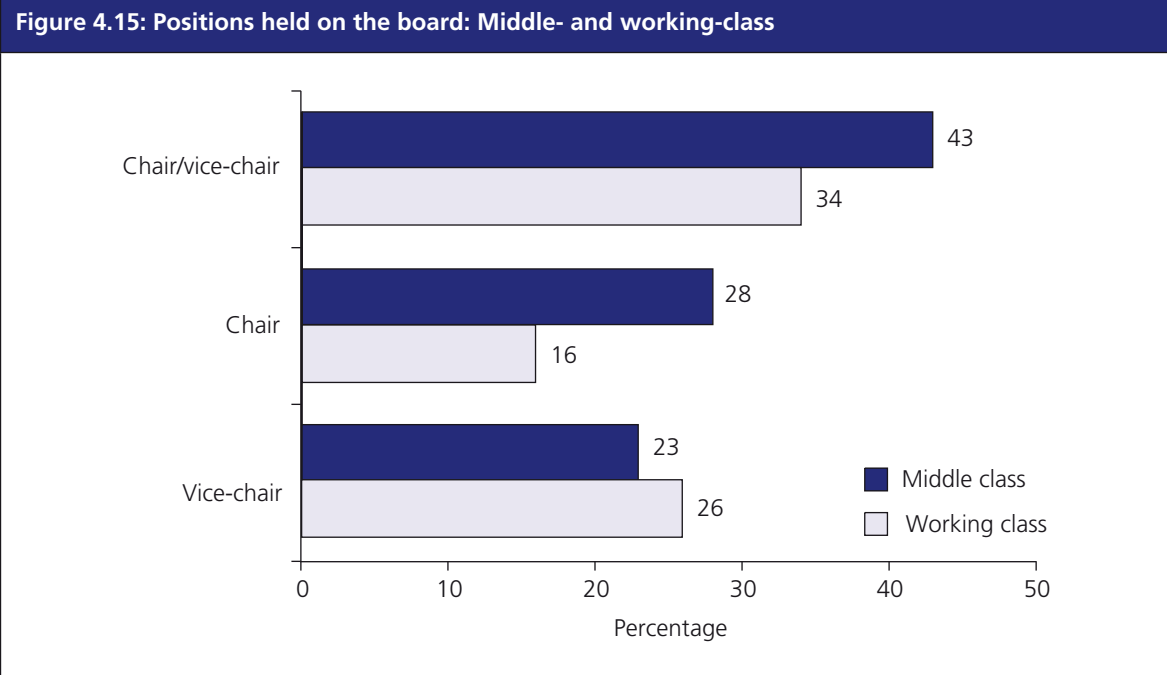
Source: NDC resident board member survey 2009

Base: All middle-class respondents (201); all working-class respondents (76)

Note: Figures for 'very involved' and 'fairly involved' may not sum to total, due to rounding

Middle class = social grades A, B, C1; working class = social grades C2, D, E

4.20. However, middle-class resident representatives are much more likely to hold the position of chair: 28 per cent of middle-class respondents have, at some point, been chair of their NDC board, compared with only 16 per cent of working-class respondents (Figure 4.15).



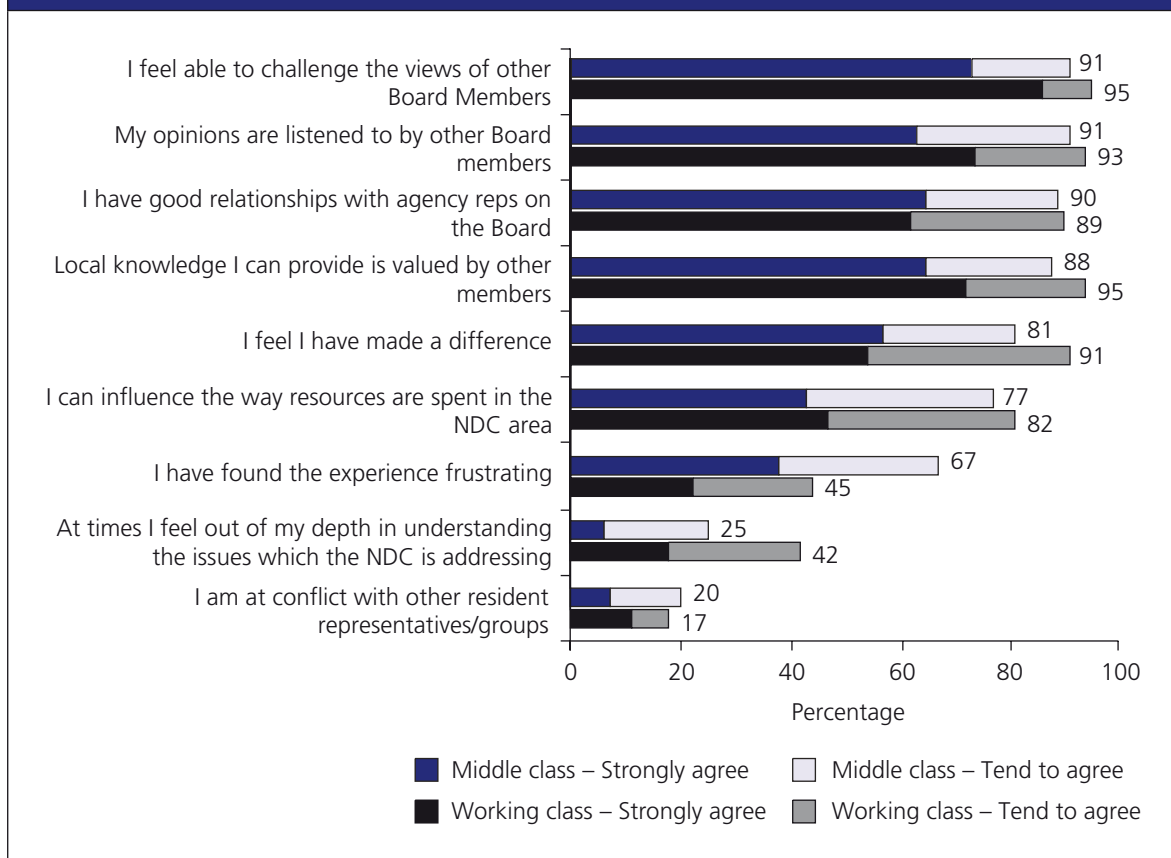
Source: NDC resident board member survey 2009

Base: All middle-class respondents (201); all working-class respondents (76)

Middle class = social grades A, B, C1; working class = social grades C2, D, E

4.21. Analysis of resident board members' perceptions of their experiences suggests that the middle-class group are, on the whole, more confident about their role, but also more likely to feel frustrated by their involvement on NDC boards, and less likely to feel that their contribution is making a difference (Figure 4.16):

- a higher proportion of working-class respondents feel out of their depth in understanding NDC issues: 42 per cent, compared with 25 per cent of middle-class respondents
- fully two-thirds of middle-class respondents find the experience frustrating, compared with 45 per cent of working-class respondents
- 91 per cent of working-class respondents feel that their involvement makes a difference, ten percentage points higher than the equivalent middle-class proportion.

**Figure 4.16: Perceptions of their experiences: Middle- and working-class**

Source: NDC resident board member survey 2009

Base: All middle-class respondents (201); all working-class respondents (76)

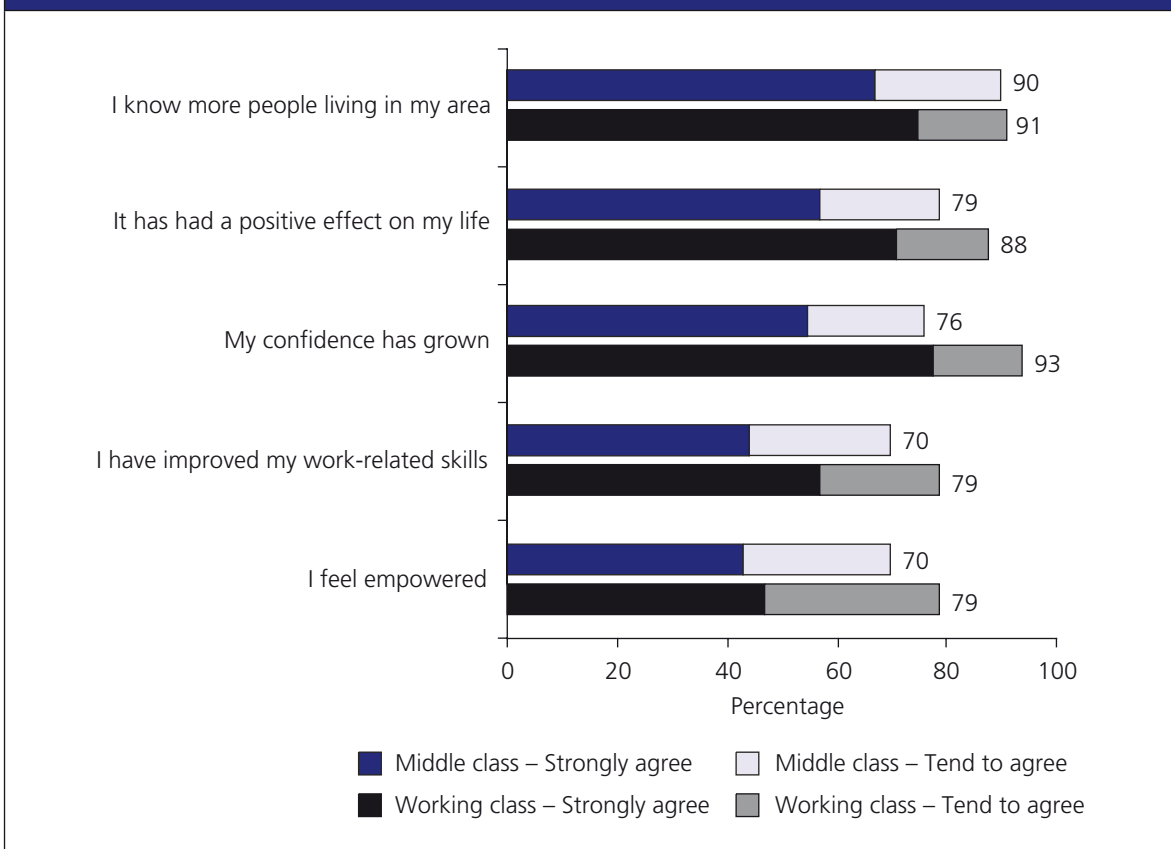
Note: Figures for 'strongly agree' and 'tend to agree' may not sum to total, due to rounding

Middle class = social grades A, B, C1; working class = social grades C2, D, E

4.22. Working-class respondents on the other hand are more likely to report positive personal impacts as a result of their board membership (Figure 4.17):

- 93 per cent say that their confidence has grown, compared with 76 per cent of middle-class respondents
- 79 per cent feel that their work-related skills have improved, compared with 70 per cent of middle-class respondents
- 88 per cent report a general positive effect on their lives and 79 per cent feel empowered, compared with 79 and 70 per cent of middle-class respondents respectively.

Figure 4.17: Personal impacts: Middle- and working-class



Source: NDC resident board member survey 2009

Base: All middle-class respondents (201); all working-class respondents (76)

Note: Figures for 'strongly agree' and 'tend to agree' may not sum to total, due to rounding

Middle class = social grades A, B, C1; working class = social grades C2, D, E

## Summary

4.23. This chapter has highlighted variations in the ways that different groups of resident representatives have found their time on NDC boards. In summary:

- current board members are, on the whole, more positive about their experiences than past board members; a greater proportion of current members feel they have been able to influence the allocation of resources and make a difference in their area; they are more likely to identify positive personal impacts and less likely to feel frustrated by the experience
- respondents who have, at some stage, been chair or vice-chair of the board are more commonly involved than the rest of the sample across the whole range of NDC activities and decision making processes. Chairs and vice-chairs are generally more positive about their contribution to, and experiences on, NDC boards and are more likely than board members who have not held these positions to have improved their work-related skills and feel empowered

- differences between men and women are generally much smaller; men appear to be involved in a wider range of board activities and a higher proportion of males hold the position of chair
- white respondents are more commonly involved in the allocation of resources and the recruitment of staff. On the other hand non-white respondents are more likely to represent the NDC on other organisations' boards. A greater proportion of white resident board members feel they have made a difference, while more non-white respondents sometimes feel out of their depth; a higher rate of non-white board members say that their work-related skills had improved
- differences between working-class and middle-class rates of involvement in decision-making processes are, on the whole, quite small, although where there are notable differences it is working-class respondents who consistently show higher levels of involvement. Middle-class board members are more likely to hold the position of chair, are more confident and have higher expectations of their role; but a greater proportion of working-class respondents experience positive personal impacts, especially in terms of increased confidence.

## 5. Conclusions and policy implications

- 5.1. The evidence contained in this report provides a unique opportunity to capture the views of residents involved in the governance of their communities. In general the report identifies very positive views of the experiences of resident representatives on NDC boards. Whilst former resident board members, for a number of reasons, tend to be slightly less positive about their experiences, on the whole, resident representatives on NDC boards are listened to, can influence decisions affecting the allocation of resources and service delivery and can, in turn, make a difference to the communities in which they live.
- 5.2. This very positive view is an endorsement of the approach which NDCs have taken to involving local residents at a strategic level in the delivery of neighbourhood renewal programmes: resident representatives have been in a majority on many NDC boards, and they have been supported through training and the reimbursement of time and expenses to carry out their roles effectively.
- 5.3. As a result, respondents to this survey report positive impacts in their personal lives arising from being on NDC boards. This is particularly the case for those in lower social groupings, and for residents from black ethnic groups, many of whom identify increased confidence levels and improved work-related skills as outcomes arising from their participation.
- 5.4. Resident board members are also more positive than their fellow residents in relation to satisfaction with the local area, thinking that the neighbourhood has improved, feeling part of the community and feeling that people from different backgrounds get on well together.
- 5.5. The characteristics of respondents to this survey differ from those of the wider NDC population. Resident representatives on NDC boards tend to be older, white males who are employed or retired, and who are highly qualified and in (or have been in) professional occupations. This is not necessarily a problem, as the primary criterion for recruitment has been only that they live within an NDC area. There are opposing views on whether residents engaged in citizen governance can, or indeed should, ever be truly representative of the communities in which they serve and the evidence-based lessons on empowering local communities to influence local decision making<sup>30</sup>, acknowledge that residents who currently engage tend to be those with the capacity and skills to do so. Certainly this seems to hold true here: respondents in many cases have become involved in NDCs through existing contacts and networks and are utilising skills developed in previous voluntary and professional capacities.

<sup>30</sup> CLG (2009) *Empowering communities to influence local decision making: Evidence-based lessons for policy-makers and practitioners*

- 5.6. But many respondents also indicate their willingness to continue using their skills by taking on other voluntary roles once the NDC Programme has finished. This is an important finding, as these volunteers now represent a significant source of expertise in relation to all aspects of community-based regeneration which future regeneration programmes might usefully draw upon.
- 5.7. There are perhaps three key policy implications arising from these findings:
- NDCs employ a range of support mechanisms to help resident representatives carry out their roles effectively. Support mechanisms such as training in practical skills associated with conduct in meetings, programme leadership and community consultation; payment of honorariums and expenses; provision of laptops and internet services, and so on are resource intensive but may need to become a standard features in programmes seeking to secure successful community governance.
  - There is evidence that participation on NDC boards is particularly beneficial for lower income and non-white residents, but these groups are generally under-represented on NDC boards, as are those from younger age groups. The NDC 'model' has been based on local elections, members drawn from which are involved in significant time commitments; this may not be appropriate in deprived, 'disenfranchised' communities, where other commitments and family responsibilities limit availability. Regeneration programmes might therefore need to seek more innovative ways of engaging, and working with, local residents if the benefits of participation are to be spread more widely.
  - Mechanisms need to be sought through which to harness, and utilise, the skills and experience of current, and former, resident representatives; many indicate a willingness to take on similar voluntary roles and it is likely that they will do so. But there may also be a case for a more formal approach to skills transfer, perhaps through linkages to the Guide Neighbourhoods Programme or through the work of the HCA Academy, or relevant third sector organisations.





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