



LEEDS HOUSING BOARD AGENDA

Meeting: Leeds Housing Board Meeting
Date: Wednesday 22nd November **Time:** 10:00–11:30
Location: via Teams

Item	Presented by	Time
1. Introductions and apologies	Councillor Lennox	10:00-10:05
2. Minutes of the Last Meeting	Councillor Lennox	10:05-10:10
3. TSM Q1 & Q2 data	Simon Baker/Frank Perrins/Ian Strickland	10:10-10:30
4. TSM Survey Methodology	Frank Perrins	10:30-10:45
5. Complaints Management Update	Ian Montgomery	10:45-10:55
6. Tenant Engagement Update	Ian Montgomery	10:55-11:05
7. Damp & Mould update	Adam Crampton	11:05-11:15
8. AOB	Councillor Lennox	11:15-11:30

Date and Time of Next Meeting: 1pm, Tuesday 23rd January 2024

Leeds Housing Board

Title: Tenant Satisfaction Measures Update

Author: Simon Baker/Frank Perrins

Meeting Date: November 2023

1. Background

- 1.1. Since April, social housing landlords have been required to collect information against the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM), which are a suite of twenty-two measures designed to give an accurate picture of a landlord’s performance.
- 1.2. Twelve of the measures are collected via tenant surveys. In Leeds these have been conducted quarterly since April 2022. The remaining ten are collected with reference to our internal data on a number of areas such as, for example, the number of gas safety inspections that have been conducted.
- 1.3. The Board has previously been informed of the 2023/24 Q1 results from the tenant survey. This report builds on that by presenting to the Board TSM data from Q1 and 2 for both tenant surveys and internal data, giving a picture of our performance against the TSMs half way through the municipal year.
- 1.4. We will be required to submit the results for the 2023/24 municipal year to the Regulator for Social Housing next summer, who will collate the publish the data from social housing providers from across the country and publish the results online.
- 1.5. The TSMs are:

Measured by landlords	Tenant Perception (TP) - measured by surveys
	TP01: Overall satisfaction
RP - Keeping properties in good repair	
RP01: Homes that do not meet the Decent Homes Standard	TP02: Satisfaction with repairs
RP02: Repairs completed within target timescale	TP03: Satisfaction with time taken to complete most recent repair
	TP04: Satisfaction that the home is well maintained and safe to live in
BS - Maintaining building safety	
BS01: Gas safety checks	TP05: Satisfaction that the home is safe
BS02: Fire safety checks	
BS03: Asbestos safety checks	
BS04: Water safety checks	
BS05: Lift safety checks	
RP - Respectful and helpful engagement	

Measured by landlords	Tenant Perception (TP) - measured by surveys
	TP06: Satisfaction that the landlord listens to tenant views and acts upon them
	TP07: Satisfaction that the landlord keeps tenants informed about things that matter to them
	TP08: Agreement that the landlord treats tenants fairly and with respect
CH - Effective handling of complaints	
CH01: Complaints relative to the size of the landlord	TP09: Satisfaction with the landlord's approach to handling of complaints
CH02: Complaints responded to within Complaint Handling Code timescales	
NM - Responsible neighbourhood management	
NM01: Anti-social behaviour cases relative to the size of the landlord	TP10: Satisfaction that the landlord keeps communal areas clean, safe and well maintained
	TP11: Satisfaction that the landlord makes a positive contribution to neighbourhoods
	TP12: Satisfaction with the landlord's approach to handling of anti-social behaviour

2. **Main Points**

2.1. **TSM survey Q2 results**

2.2. Results for the TSM questions (including BITMO) are listed below and include the Q1 results for comparison:

TSM Survey Results	22/23	Q1	Q2	Cum	Diff to 22/23
Count of total responses	2652	685	719	1404	
Statistical accuracy - confidence interval	1.9%	3.7%	3.6%	2.6%	
Overall					
Overall satisfaction with services provided	60%	62%	63%	63%	3%
The home					
Percentage of tenants who had a repair in the last 12 months	66%	68%	70%	69%	3%
Satisfaction with overall repairs service received in the last 12 months	66%	68%	71%	70%	4%
Satisfaction with time taken to complete most recent repair	61%	63%	67%	65%	4%
Satisfaction that landlord provides a home that is well maintained	61%	68%	65%	66%	5%
Satisfaction that landlord provides a home that is safe	61%	74%	73%	73%	12%
Contact and communication					
Satisfaction that your landlord listens to your views and acts upon them	44%	54%	54%	54%	10%
Satisfaction that you are kept informed about things that matter to you	53%	66%	65%	65%	12%
Percentage of tenants agreeing 'my landlord treats me fairly and with respect'	62%	75%	73%	74%	12%
Percentage who made a complaint in the last 12 months	32%	29%	26%	28%	-4%
Satisfaction with your landlord's approach to complaints handling	24%	29%	24%	27%	3%
Satisfaction that your landlord is easy to deal with*	56%	67%	65%	66%	10%
Neighbourhood and community					
Satisfaction that communal areas are kept clean and well maintained	56%	66%	62%	64%	8%
Satisfaction that landlord makes a positive contribution to your neighbourhood	44%	64%	59%	62%	18%
Satisfaction with your landlord's approach to handling anti-social behaviour	42%	50%	52%	51%	9%

- 2.3. Taking the learning from our detailed survey pilot we agreed for the upcoming period to conduct a combination of telephone surveys (80%) and email invitations to online surveys (20%) with text message reminders. Only the TSM questions, an open text comment and the further question 'landlord is easy to deal with' were included in the phone survey, with further questions included in the online survey only.
- 2.4. Due to the disproportionately large number of surveys required by BITMO for their findings to be useful, surveys for this group are being handled as a separate process. These are later merged with the LCC surveys and a weighting is applied to correct for the oversample, to produce a final figure for 2023/24.
- 2.5. During Q2 719 surveys were completed, 510 by telephone and 209 through an online survey.
- 2.6. Results for Q2 are consistent with Q1 on the whole. Where there is variation from Q1 to Q2 it falls within the margin for error (+/-3.6%), so should not be considered significant.
- 2.7. Cumulative results for 2023/24 compare favourably with 2022/23, and with a smaller margin for error (+/-2.6%) can be considered an improvement. Particularly notable improvements at this stage compared to 2022/23 include:
- Landlord makes a positive contribution to the neighbourhood (+18%).

- Landlord provides a home that is safe (+12%).
 - Being kept informed about things that matter (+12%).
 - Landlord treats me fairly and with respect (+12%).
- 2.8. HouseMark have offered to conduct mid-year benchmarking with our peers of TSM results for Q1 & Q2 combined. We have submitted results to take part and their report is expected on 6th November.
- 2.9. Our Contractor Acuity is to commence the telephone element of the Q3 survey from 6th to 18th November, with the online element conducted first from 30th October to 11th November.

3. TSM Management Information Q1 and Q2

- 3.1. Appendix 1 shows TSM performance for Q1 and Q2 where reported from internal management data, covering the TSMs in the left-hand column in the table at paragraph 1.5.
- 3.2. This data has been compiled from several sources; from LCC systems, a range of LCC officers working in various service areas, officers who work monitoring our PFI contracts and colleagues from the Belle Isle Tenant Management Organisation (BITMO) who compile their data independently.
- 3.3. The TSM performance has been calculated in accordance with the TSM definitions as provided by the Regulator. We are working with Internal Audit to receive independent validation that the calculation methodology used is in accordance with the Regulator's definitions.
- 3.4. The Council currently receives complaints at a rate of approximately fifty-six households for every one thousand homes.
- 3.5. A subsequent item on this meeting's agenda will look at the complaints handling performance in detail - at the end of Q2 82% of Stage 1 complaints and 78% of stage 2 complaints were responded to within the target timescale.
- 3.6. 3.9% of our stock is currently judged to not meet the Decent Homes Standard.
- 3.7. Regarding repairs performance, the current provisional figure (April to August) is that 73.34% of Housing Leeds repairs were completed within target timescales. It should be noted that this figure will change when the significant number of repairs jobs still open are completed/closed.
- 3.8. For BITMO 96.93% of repairs were completed within timescale and for stock managed via PFI contracts performance was 98%.
- 3.9. In terms of the safety checks that are conducted on a rolling basis, asbestos, water and lift safety checks all stand at 100%.
- 3.10. The current figure for fire safety checks completed is 92.9% But that figure does not illustrate that 100% of all higher risk sites (high rise, Retirement Life, Extra Care, community centres and offices) have been completed. Lower risk sites (e.g., A1F archetypes, converted Victorian properties) where access was previously an issue are now accessible due to an updated key management programme. This allows any outstanding checks to be completed and the figure is forecast to be 100% by the end of financial year.

3.11. The figure for gas safety checks completed is 99.8%. For each of the properties overdue a minimum of three appointed visits have been attempted prior to expiry of the Landlord's Gas Safety Record, in-line with our gas access procedure. In all cases, our well-established legal process is underway to ensure that access is achieved, and the gas safety check is completed.

4. Next steps

- 4.1. The TSM data will continue to be reported to the Board once each successive quarter's data is collected and analysed.
- 4.2. The first year's data, covering the 2023/24 financial year will be reported, along with that of other social housing landlords, in the summer of 2024 to the RSH.
- 4.3. The data will then be published online for tenants and stakeholders to consult and reference.
- 4.4. As more organisations are now beginning to report their TSM performance a priority for the next six months is to benchmark our performance with other organisations to review our improvement priorities.

5. Actions Underway to Improve TSM Performance

- 5.1. A big focus of team service plans for 2023/24 is to improve performance on the TSMs. It is well reported that customer satisfaction tends to be driven by the quality of a repairs and maintenance service along with the effectiveness of handling of customer contact. These areas are therefore a particular priority for the service. Other actions also being undertaken are outlined below.
- 5.2. **Repairs** – Backlogs of repairs have reduced significantly since the start of the calendar year which has resulted in both Mears and LBS having much greater capacity to plan, attend, and complete jobs within their target timescales. Since March this year, work in progress (WIP) levels (live repair jobs allocated to contractors), have reduced from a peak of c30,000 to c17,000 at present. This means that the service is only c1,000 jobs above the normal running target of c16,000 live jobs.
- 5.3. It should be noted that over the last twelve months, the volume of new repairs being reported has risen by c20%. This significant increase is believed to be, in the main, due to the under reporting of repairs during the pandemic and the subsequent recovery period. This increase has made recovery to normal WIP levels exceptionally challenging and has resulted in initiatives to increase contractor capacity, and accelerate to job completion rates, getting slowed down.
- 5.4. We continue to hold weekly meetings with Mears and LBS to monitor performance and agree improvement measures in order to ensure that performance against this indicator continues in a positive direction.
- 5.5. **Customer contact** – we have seen an improvement in contact centre call handling performance, improving to 87% of calls being answered for the first six months of 2023/24 (up from 73% for the same period 2022/23), largely linked to a 17% reduction in the volume of calls between the two

periods. The reduction in calls is in the main linked to a reduction in the repairs backlog and repeat customer contact. Regular meetings are in place between Housing Leeds and the Contact Centre to review performance, address any emerging contact issues and seek to improve the ongoing efficiency of customer contact. These meetings have helped to identify and resolve blockages in terms of repairs contact and to streamline customer contact on rent so that the contact is transferred directly to the correct Housing Office.

- 5.6. We are currently working with Civica to deliver an improved tenant portal via our Housing Management system, Cx. This will enable tenants to report a repair and monitor progress online, offering a digital solution which is expected to further reduce contact into the contact centre. Timescales for the delivery of the tenant portal should be available in the next couple of months.
- 5.7. **Customer Complaints** – a big focus has been placed on improving our complaints performance as outlined in the separate report on this agenda.
- 5.8. **Neighbourhoods and Community** - whilst performance is not where we want it to be on customer satisfaction with ASB, neighbourhoods and communal areas, it has been improving over recent quarters. We have arrangements in place with other Council teams for the management of ASB, the estate environment and communal cleaning. We are currently reviewing our ASB policy with Leeds Anti-social Behaviour Team to strengthen our management of ASB, and a customer satisfaction survey will resume to better understand customer feedback. We are also looking to embed more formal arrangements for monitoring services to ensure that services are closely aligned to the regulatory framework - hearing the voice of customers and using this to improve services.

6. Recommendations

- 6.1. Members are requested to note and comment on the TSM Q1 and Q2 results and actions being taken to improve performance.

TSM - Management Information - 12 month rolling performance		12 month rolling performance			Commentary
		2022/23 Year End	As at the end of Q1 (Jul 22 - Jun 22)	As at the end of Q1 (Oct 22 - Sep 23)	
CHO1	Complaints relative to the size of the landlord - the number of complaints the landlord receives for each 1,000 homes they own	55.07	56.14	56.20	
CH02 - Stage 1	Complaints responded to within Complaint Handling Code timescales - the percentage of complaints the landlord responds to within the times set by the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code.	74% - (2022/23 target = 15 days)	75%	78%	2023/24 YTD performance: Stage 1 = 82% Stage 2 = 78% Please see the 'Complaints Handling Performance' board report for analysis.
CH02 - Stage 2		65% - (2022/23 target = 15 days)	70%	72%	
NM01	Anti-social behaviour cases relative to the size of the landlord - the number of anti-social behaviour cases opened for each 1,000 homes the landlord owns, including the number of cases that involve hate incidents	20.45 - ASB cases 1.37 - ASB cases that involve hate incidents	20.34 - ASB cases 1.24 - ASB cases that involve hate incidents	21.09 - ASB cases 0.94 - ASB cases that involve hate incidents	

TSM - Management Information 2023/24 YTD		2023/24 YTD (Apr - Sep unless otherwise stated)	Commentary
RP01	Homes that do not meet the Decent Homes Standard	3.90%	
Repairs	Repairs completed within target timescale - LCC Overall	73.34% - Provisional	April to August provisional figures. These figures will also retrospectively change when the significant number of jobs still open in the system (just under 6,000) are closed.
	Repairs completed within target timescale - PFI	98.00%	
	Repairs completed within target timescale - BITMO	96.93%	
BS01	Gas safety checks - Proportion of homes for which all required gas safety checks have been carried out.	99.8%	For each of the properties overdue a minimum of three appointed visits have been attempted prior to expiry of the Landlord's Gas Safety Record, in-line with our gas access procedure. In all cases, our well-established legal process is underway to ensure that access is achieved and the gas safety check is completed.
BS02	Fire safety checks - Proportion of homes for which all required fire risk assessments have been carried out.	92.9%	100% of all higher risk sites (high rise, Retirement Life, Extra Care, community centres and offices) completed. Lower risk sites (e.g. A1F archetypes, converted Victorian properties) where access was previously an issue now accessible due to updated key management programme. Forecast to be 100% by end of financial year.

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Title: Tenant Satisfaction Measures Survey Methodology

Author: Frank Perrins

Meeting Date: 17th Nov 2023

1. Background

- 1.1. The Regulator of Social Housing has created a new system for assessing how well social housing landlords in England are doing at providing good quality homes and services, which came into effect from April 2023. There are twenty-two tenant satisfaction measures of which twelve will be measured through conducting tenant perception surveys. The Regulator has provided detailed guidance for how these are to be conducted in order to capture accurate, robust and representative satisfaction scores.
- 1.2. In the published requirements of the TSM survey the regulator states that *"It is ultimately the responsibility of Boards of private registered providers and governing bodies of local authority registered providers to ensure that the tenant perception TSMs are accurate and built on a survey methodology that meets the requirements"* (para 31).
- 1.3. The aim of this report is therefore to seek agreement from the Board that the choice of methodology for the TSM survey, which started in April 2023 and will run until March 2024, will ensure the results are accurate and will meet these requirements.
- 1.4. This report lists those requirements that most affect decisions around methodology. Most requirements in the guidance have been resolved through working with our telephone contractor Acuity, for example around structure of the questionnaire. The full 30 page list of requirements can be accessed from:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1140749/TSM_Tenant_survey_requirements.pdf

2. Trialling Different Approaches

- 2.1. To understand all the factors that need to be taken into consideration when planning our final approach for the TSM Surveys we piloted different combinations of the following methods during the 2022/23 year, which was before the survey became a regulatory requirement:
 - Online surveys sent by email and text messages.
 - Telephone surveys conducted by a third party contractor.
 - Postal surveys.

3. Statistical Accuracy

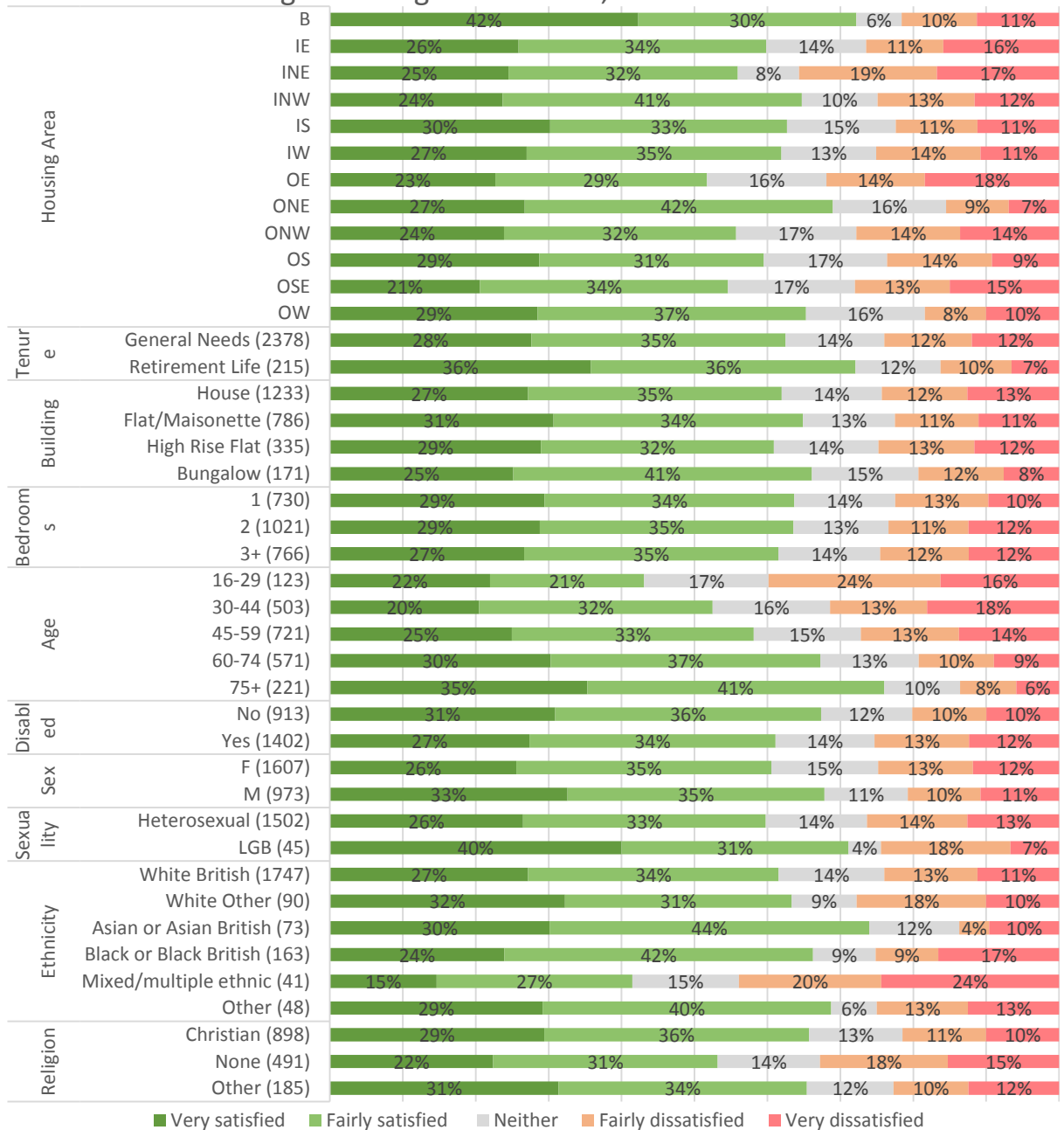
- 3.1. The survey requirements state: *"When undertaking a survey, providers must, as far as possible, generate a sample size for overall satisfaction (TP01) that meets the minimum level of statistical accuracy"* (para 42). For LCC (including BITMO) the margin of error listed is to be no more than +/-2% (at 95% confidence). This requires a sample of 2,300 survey completions per year.
- 3.2. **Survey quotas** have been designed to meet these requirements for LCC. BITMO have requested that we oversample this area to provide useful information at this subgroup level. This is allowed within the requirements, however we must apply a statistical weighting to take account of this:

Organisation	Population	Quarterly number of interviews	Quarterly margin of error	Annual number of interviews	Annual margin of error
LCC	52,633	555	±4.1%	2,220	±2.0%
BITMO	1,800	75	±11.1%	300	±5.2%
Total	54,433	630	±3.9%	2,520	±1.9%

4. Representativeness of responses

- 4.1. The survey requirements state: *"A survey that has met the sample size requirements can still be biased if groups of tenants who on average have higher satisfaction are over-represented"* (para 47). *"Providers must ensure that, as far as possible, survey responses used to calculate perception TSMs are representative of the relevant tenant population. Providers can meet this requirement through one of two routes:*
- a. **A representative sample:** This means there is no material under – or over – representation of tenant groups (compared to the relevant tenant population) that is likely to affect calculated satisfaction scores. Using this approach, providers must ensure that the achieved sample is representative of the relevant tenant population.*
- b. **Weighting responses:** If the achieved sample is not representative of the tenant population, then providers must appropriately weight the responses to ensure the TSMs reported are representative as far as possible."* (para 48)
- 4.2. We are working with the contractor to ensure that the survey responses are representative of the tenant population through targeting a representative sample (option a. above). As mentioned in 3.2 above a weighting will also be applied to take account of oversampling BITMO.
- 4.3. To understand which groups of tenants are most likely to affect satisfaction, the results from 2022/23 were considered by key groups – as shown in the following chart:

Taking everything into account, overall satisfaction



- 4.4. The characteristics that were found to most affect satisfaction scores, with the greatest differences between groups, were: Housing Area, Tenure (General Needs or Retirement Life) and Age. Other groups showing differences in satisfaction were seen to be either too small to be statistically significant (for example with mixed/multiple ethnicities) or linked to one of the above characteristics (in the case of Religion-None, which links strongly with younger tenants).
- 4.5. We have worked with the contractor to design a sampling approach that targets quotas of each of these key groups (Area, Tenure and Age) based on their proportions within the tenant profile. Survey completions from these groups in the overall survey response should be therefore representative of the tenant population. Since all characteristics are linked

to some extent with our chosen groups and the sampling is otherwise random, proportions of other groups should also reflect the tenant population. This will be monitored and reported as part of an assessment of representativeness (see item 6 below).

5. Survey collection method

- 5.1. Survey requirements: *"Providers must use an appropriate survey collection method or methods considering factors such as likely response rate, cost, addressing barriers to participation, tenant profile, and the representativeness of responses. As long the requirements of this document (and other applicable requirements) are met, providers can use any standard collection method including face-to-face, telephone, postal, or email/online delivery and may use more than one collection method."* (para 60) *"Providers must be able to demonstrate a rationale for the survey collection methods chosen with reference to the size and characteristics of their relevant tenant population."* (para 61)
- 5.2. The learning about the survey collection methods evaluated in the pilot survey 2022/23 was considered to assess each for suitability. These factors are explored in the following paragraphs.
- 5.3. **Representativeness** per method – table 2 below shows that responses from phone and online methods compared well with the tenant profile, whilst for postal surveys engagement was low for younger and high for older tenants, and Retirement Life tenants were greatly overrepresented.

Table 2. Response per method, by tenant characteristic (2022/23):

		Survey Responses				Tenants
		Online	Postal	Phone	All	
Age	18-39	21%	10%	23%	17%	26%
	40-59	43%	27%	35%	36%	40%
	60+	36%	63%	42%	46%	34%
Sex	F	65%	57%	65%	62%	61%
	M	35%	43%	35%	38%	39%
Sexuality	Heterosexual	97%	97%	98%	97%	98%
	LGB+	3%	3%	2%	3%	2%
Disabled	No	43%	34%	38%	39%	72%
	Yes	57%	66%	62%	61%	28%
Ethnicity	White:British	81%	85%	80%	82%	77%
	Ethnic Minority	19%	15%	20%	18%	23%
Religion	Christian	55%	63%	51%	57%	49%
	None	33%	27%	34%	31%	37%
	Other	13%	10%	15%	12%	14%
Number Of Bedrooms	1	26%	34%	27%	29%	28%
	2	42%	38%	43%	41%	41%
	3+	32%	29%	29%	28%	31%
Asset Type	Bedsit	1%	1%	0%	1%	0%
	Bungalow	5%	10%	4%	7%	5%
	Flat	27%	31%	31%	28%	26%
	High Rise Flat	14%	12%	16%	14%	13%
	House	51%	45%	47%	49%	53%
	Maisonette	3%	1%	2%	2%	2%
Tenure	General Needs	96%	84%	96%	92%	92%
	Retirement Life	4%	16%	4%	8%	8%

- 5.4. **Cost** per method – Online surveys were found to have close to zero cost, postal surveys cost around £6 per completion and phone surveys cost a little more at around £9 per interview (depending on provider).
- 5.5. **Satisfaction** per method – Online surveys were found to attract lower levels of satisfaction (at 57%) than phone and postal methods (at 65% each). These findings are supported by HouseMark, who advise that satisfaction levels for online are around 10% lower than other methods.
- 5.6. Further considerations – we have seen increased engagement through online methods, which are simple, quick and easy to conduct – indicating an appetite for this method from our tenants. Phone surveys are limited in the number of questions that can be asked, to keep call times reasonable. However, a benefit of phone surveys is that it is possible to target quotas during the fieldwork phase to get a representative response.
- 5.7. **Agreed method for 2023/24** – Housing Leeds’ SMT considered a range of options based on the findings from 2022/23 and agreed to use a combination of online and phone methods. Using more than one method would give tenants a choice of preference and both methods were seen to attract a generally representative response from different groups. Also:
 - Carrying out phone surveys provides quick feedback, including to flag any issues that need urgent attention, and enables quotas to be set for key groups to further improve representativeness. The questions asked however needed to be limited to mostly those set by the regulator, to keep call times reasonable.
 - Including online surveys would reduce costs and enable further questions to be asked to provide additional insight, whilst offering a method that tenants find quick and convenient. The proportion of online surveys was limited to 20% of the overall response, to minimise any detrimental effect on overall satisfaction.
- 5.8. The accompanying **EDCI Impact Assessment** has been undertaken to evaluate this decision and confirm that the chosen survey methods are accessible to a range of protected characteristics. This provides detail around how potential barriers to engagement will be mitigated, including through conducting interviews at a range of times (daytimes, evenings and weekends) and offering interviews in BSL and different languages.

6. Assessing the method

- 6.1. The Regulator’s Survey Requirements state that: *“Providers must undertake reasonable checks for differences between total survey responses and the relevant tenant population in terms of characteristics associated with different average satisfaction scores.” (para 49)*
- 6.2. Table 3 compares the survey response for each group of tenants with the tenant profile, using data from the current year 2023/24. Responses for each group closely match the profile of tenants and, most importantly, the key groups that have most effect on overall satisfaction match well (Age, Tenure and Area). This indicates that the system that we put in place with

the contractor, setting quotas based on the Age, Tenure and Area, is working well and building an overall survey response that is representative of the overall tenant population.

6.3. Table 3. Comparison of Q1 2023/24 response with tenant profile:

Characteristic	Group	Survey Responses	Tenant Profile
Panel Area	IE	13%	13%
	INE	5%	6%
	INW	6%	7%
	IS	12%	12%
	IW	15%	15%
	OE	8%	8%
	ONE	5%	4%
	ONW	7%	7%
	OS	9%	8%
	OSE	10%	10%
	OW	9%	9%
Age	0-24	2%	3%
	25-34	12%	13%
	35-44	20%	20%
	45-54	20%	20%
	55-64	20%	19%
	65-74	14%	13%
	75-84	8%	8%
	85+	4%	4%
Sex	F	58%	61%
	M	42%	39%
Disability	No	74%	72%
	Yes	26%	28%
Ethnicity	White: British	77%	77%
	Ethnic Minority	23%	23%
Asset Type	Bedsit	0%	0%
	Bungalow	6%	6%
	Flat	26%	26%
	High Rise	15%	13%
	House	51%	53%
	Maisonette	2%	2%
Tenure	General Needs	93%	92%
	Retirement Life	7%	8%

7. Recommendations

- 7.1. Members of the Leeds Housing Board are asked to consider the approach being used for the TSM Survey 2023/24, which was based on analysis of findings from the pilot survey 2022/23, provide comments and confirm agreement.

As a public authority we need to ensure that all our strategies, policies, service and functions, both current and proposed have given proper consideration to equality, diversity, cohesion and integration. In all appropriate instances we will need to carry out an equality, diversity, cohesion and integration impact assessment.

This form:

- can be used to prompt discussion when carrying out your impact assessment
- should be completed either during the assessment process or following completion of the assessment
- should include a brief explanation where a section is not applicable

Directorate: Resources	Service area: Intelligence and Policy
Lead person: Frank Perrins	Contact number: 0113 3786945
Date of the equality, diversity, cohesion and integration impact assessment: April 2023	

<p>1. Title: Tenant Satisfaction Measures Perception Survey 2023/24</p> <p>Is this a:</p> <p> <input type="checkbox"/> Strategy / Policy <input type="checkbox"/> Service / Function <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other </p> <p>If other, please specify This will be a perception survey to Housing Leeds and Belle Isle TMO tenants.</p>
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2. Members of the assessment team:

Name	Organisation	Role on assessment team For example, service user, manager of service, specialist
Frank Perrins		
Ian Montgomery		

3. Summary of strategy, policy, service or function that was assessed:

The Regulator of Social Housing has created a new system for assessing how well social housing landlords in England are doing at providing good quality homes and services. There are 22 tenant satisfaction measures of which 12 will be measured by landlords carrying out tenant perception surveys. The Regulator has provided detailed guidance around how the surveys are to be carried out to capture accurate, robust and representative satisfaction scores. This system comes into effect from April 2023.

Over the last year we have been trialling different approaches to surveying tenants. Throughout each quarter of 2022/23 we've piloted different combinations of 2 or 3 different methods with a sample of tenants, which has helped us to understand how they affect: levels of engagement from different demographics, satisfaction scores, costs and response rates:

- o Online surveys sent by email and text messages
- o Telephone surveys carried out by a third party contractor
- o Postal surveys

The findings have informed the proposed approach for carrying out the Tenant Satisfaction Measures Survey in 2023/24:

- o Carry out a '2-mode' approach of phone and online (email with text message reminder), targeted at receiving a 80/20 split across these methods.
- o Phone surveys will carry out a shorter questionnaire of just the TSM required questions, plus an open comment and a customer service question. The online surveys will receive a longer questionnaire to provide insight on a range of other issues.
- o Our learning to date suggests that this combination will represent tenants well. Alternative languages and methods will be offered to reduce barriers for some harder to reach tenants taking part.

4. Scope of the equality, diversity, cohesion and integration impact assessment
(complete - 4a. if you are assessing a strategy, policy or plan and 4b. if you are assessing a service, function or event)

4a. Strategy, policy or plan (please tick the appropriate box below)	
The vision and themes, objectives or outcomes	<input type="checkbox"/>
The vision and themes, objectives or outcomes and the supporting guidance	<input type="checkbox"/>
A specific section within the strategy, policy or plan	<input type="checkbox"/>
Please provide detail:	

4b. Service, function, event please tick the appropriate box below	
The whole service (including service provision and employment)	<input type="checkbox"/>
A specific part of the service (including service provision or employment or a specific section of the service)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Procuring of a service (by contract or grant)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Please provide detail: This is a statutory requirement that Housing carry out a perception survey. See above.	

5. Fact finding – what do we already know
Make a note here of all information you will be using to carry out this assessment. This could include: previous consultation, involvement, research, results from perception surveys, equality monitoring and customer/ staff feedback.

(priority should be given to equality, diversity, cohesion and integration related information)

The piloting of different approaches over the last 12 months has highlighted key factors to take into consideration. The table below details the tenant representativeness of the different survey methods trialled and overall shows:

- Online responses are fairly representative of the tenant profile, although slightly lower proportion of younger people, males, ethnic minorities and retirement life.
- Postal responses are very low for the younger age group and high for the older population, when compared to the tenant profile, with a much higher proportion of RSL tenants completing postal surveys.
- Phone responses were fairly representative of the tenant profile, although a slightly lower proportion of males. Note that a telephone contractor can work to quotas to target representative responses as surveys are completed.

Note that all modes showed a higher percentage of disabled respondents, indicating that the known tenant data doesn't match with tenant current perceptions from the survey.

Table 1: Tenant representation by mode:

		Survey Responses				Tenants	Notes
		Online	Postal	Phone	All		
Age	18-39	21%	10%	23%	17%	26%	Survey responses linked back to tenant data
	40-59	43%	27%	35%	36%	40%	
	60+	36%	63%	42%	46%	34%	
	% Known	100%	99%	100%	100%	100%	
Sex	F	65%	57%	65%	62%	61%	Survey responses linked back to tenant data
	M	35%	43%	35%	38%	39%	

	% Known	99%	99%	99%	99%	99%	
Sexuality	Heterosexual	97%	97%	98%	97%	98%	Survey responses linked back to tenant data
	LGB+	3%	3%	2%	3%	2%	
	% Known	62%	60%	49%	59%	61%	
Disabled	No	43%	34%	38%	39%	72%	Question asked in survey.
	Yes	57%	66%	62%	61%	28%	
	% Known	91%	88%	82%	89%	100%	
Ethnicity	White:British	81%	85%	80%	82%	77%	Question asked in survey
	Eth' Minority	19%	15%	20%	18%	23%	
	% Known	92%	95%	100%	94%	82%	
Religion	Christian	55%	63%	51%	57%	49%	Survey responses linked back to tenant data. Some Phone surveys anonymous
	None	33%	27%	34%	31%	37%	
	Other	13%	10%	15%	12%	14%	
	% Known	64%	60%	50%	60%	62%	
Number Of Bedrooms	1	26%	34%	27%	29%	28%	Survey responses linked back to tenant data. Some Phone surveys anonymous
	2	42%	38%	43%	41%	41%	
	3+	32%	29%	29%	28%	31%	
	% Known	100%	99%	79%	97%	100%	
Asset Type	Bedsit	1%	1%	0%	1%	0%	Survey responses linked back to tenant data. Some Phone surveys anonymous
	Bungalow	5%	10%	4%	7%	5%	
	Flat	27%	31%	31%	28%	26%	
	High Rise	14%	12%	16%	14%	13%	
	House	51%	45%	47%	49%	53%	
	Maisonette	3%	1%	2%	2%	2%	
	% Known	100%	99%	81%	97%	100%	
Category Type	GN	96%	84%	96%	92%	92%	Survey responses linked back to tenant data
	RLS	4%	16%	4%	8%	8%	
	% Known	100%	99%	100%	100%	100%	

Are there any gaps in equality and diversity information

Please provide detail:

1. The piloted questionnaires offered respondents the option to make contact to request translations of the survey. These were offered in the top 8 community languages. No requests were made for any translations. This offer to translate will continue to be available in the 2023/24 survey. The analysis of the ethnicity of respondents suggested representative numbers of respondents. We will continue to monitor that those whose first language is not English are taking part.
2. Although a higher proportion of disabled respondents completed the survey compared to the tenant profile, we must ensure the 2 approaches of online and telephone enable maximum participation, and specific groups such as tenants with hearing conditions / sight loss are not excluded from taking part.

Action required:

The survey will be offered to tenants either online or by telephone.

The chosen telephone provider offers a range of options to maximise participation which are listed below.

- Participants are offered the option to carry out the survey in the alternative method (phone if online, online if phone) if they would prefer.
- Quotas to ensure representative percentages of tenants included in the survey.
- Interviews offered in different languages and in all common community languages by their in-house team.
- Residents listed as deaf/ with hearing difficulties can be provided BSL interviews.
- Arrangements can be made for a more convenient time to call back.
- Interviews typically take place between 9.30 and 8pm Monday to Friday and 10am to 4pm on Saturday to maximise participation from full time workers.
- They allow the telephone to ring for a minimum of 25 seconds or until a voice-mail system kicks in, to ensure customers with mobility issues are given sufficient time to get to the phone.

Tenants without a phone number will be offered an online version of the survey by email. Tenants who are not digitally engaged will be offered a telephone survey.

6. Wider involvement – have you involved groups of people who are most likely to be affected or interested

Yes

No

Please provide detail:

Regular communication with tenants has taken place throughout the year, particularly when each Quarterly survey was about to go live, informing tenants that a random sample of tenants will be asked to take part via a range of methods. These communications encouraged tenants to respond when requested. Further communications were later shared with tenants of the ongoing findings.

Action required:

Continue to keep tenants informed of the survey when it is live, of the findings, and any actions resulting from the findings.

7. Who may be affected by this activity?

please tick all relevant and significant equality characteristics, stakeholders and barriers that apply to your strategy, policy, service or function

Equality characteristics

Age

Carers

Disability

EDC impact assessment

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Template updated January 2014

5

Gender reassignment		Race	Religion or Belief
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sex (male or female)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sexual orientation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Other - Area of the city		
<p>(Other can include – marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, and those areas that impact on or relate to equality: tackling poverty and improving health and well-being) Please specify:</p>			
Stakeholders			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Services users	<input type="checkbox"/>	Employees
		<input type="checkbox"/>	Trade Unions
<input type="checkbox"/>	Partners	<input type="checkbox"/>	Members
		<input type="checkbox"/>	Suppliers
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other please specify		
Potential barriers			
<input type="checkbox"/>	Built environment	<input type="checkbox"/>	Location of premises and services
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Information and communication	<input type="checkbox"/>	Customer care
<input type="checkbox"/>	Timing	<input type="checkbox"/>	Stereotypes and assumptions
<input type="checkbox"/>	Cost	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Consultation and involvement
<input type="checkbox"/>	Financial exclusion	<input type="checkbox"/>	Employment and training
<input type="checkbox"/>	specific barriers to the strategy, policy, services or function		
<p>Please specify The survey is aimed at maximum participation by tenants. The combination of different methods and options built into the approach are designed to minimise potential barriers to involvement.</p>			

8. Positive and negative impact
Think about what you are assessing (scope), the fact finding information, the potential

positive and negative impact on equality characteristics, stakeholders and the effect of the barriers
8a. Positive impact:
By maximising participation from tenants from a range of protected characteristics, the findings of the survey will provide actionable insights to inform future decision making and lead to improvements in service delivery, based on information that is robust and representative of the tenant population. It will also ensure we are treating tenants fairly and that we give all a chance to share their views.
Action required:
Continual assessment of survey findings and consequent development of service improvements, with regular feedback to tenants on progress.

8b. Negative impact:
If the Tenant Satisfaction Measures Survey does not reach all groups of tenants, then their views will not be given the opportunity to feed into service improvements. At the same time, any service improvements would not reflect the needs and views of all tenants. Risk of underrepresentation in particular for those that don't speak English as a first language and those with hearing or speech impediment.
Action required:
Continue to monitor how representative the survey response is by protected characteristic, and in particular that those whose first language is not English are taking part. Also monitor uptake of support offered from telephone contractor including: interviews in common community languages (by their in-house team) and provision of BSL interviews for those that are deaf or with hearing difficulties.

9. Will this activity promote strong and positive relationships between the groups/communities identified?
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Please provide detail:
Understanding what actions would improve tenants' satisfaction with their home and

neighbourhood, and taking steps to make these changes, is likely to help promote stronger and more positive relationships within communities.

Action required:
Continue to survey tenant satisfaction, monitoring trends and communicating findings with tenants.

10. Does this activity bring groups/communities into increased contact with each other? (for example, in schools, neighbourhood, workplace)

Yes No

Please provide detail:

Action required:

11. Could this activity be perceived as benefiting one group at the expense of another? (for example where your activity or decision is aimed at adults could it have an impact on children and young people)

Yes No

Please provide detail:

Action required:

12. Equality, diversity, cohesion and integration action plan

(insert all your actions from your assessment here, set timescales, measures and identify a lead person for each action)

Action	Timescale	Measure	Lead person
<p>The survey will be offered to tenants either online or by telephone.</p> <p>The chosen telephone provider offers a range of options to maximise participation from a broad range of tenants including those that work and those of harder to reach protected characteristics. These will be fully discussed in the start-up meeting.</p>	Discuss at Start-up meeting with telephone provider in April.	Confirm and agree arrangements	Frank Perrins
Tenants without a phone number will be offered an online version of the survey by email. Tenants who are not digitally engaged will be offered a telephone survey.	Discuss at Start-up meeting with telephone provider in April.	Confirm and agree arrangements	Frank Perrins
Continue to keep tenants informed of the survey when it is live, of the findings, and any actions resulting from the findings.	Ongoing	Informing and feedback process to tenants	Ian Montgomery
Continual assessment of survey findings by protected characteristic – to support service improvement	Ongoing	Analysis of survey results	Frank Perrins

Action	Timescale	Measure	Lead person
Continue to monitor the tenant representativeness of the survey responses.	Ongoing	Levels of tenant representativeness	Frank Perrins
Monitor uptake of support offer to maximise participation from a broad range of tenants.	Ongoing	Request from telephone provider.	Frank Perrins
Continue to survey tenant satisfaction and provide trend analysis to see where change is taking place.	Ongoing	Trend analysis	Frank Perrins

13. Governance, ownership and approval

State here who has approved the actions and outcomes from the equality, diversity, cohesion and integration impact assessment

Name	Job title	Date
Date impact assessment completed		

14. Monitoring progress for equality, diversity, cohesion and integration actions (please tick)

- As part of Service Planning performance monitoring
- As part of Project monitoring
- Update report will be agreed and provided to the appropriate board
Please specify which board
- Other (please specify)

15. Publishing

Though **all** key decisions are required to give due regard to equality the council **only** publishes those related to **Executive Board, Full Council, Key Delegated Decisions** or a **Significant Operational Decision**.

A copy of this equality impact assessment should be attached as an appendix to the decision making report:

- Governance Services will publish those relating to Executive Board and Full Council.
- The appropriate directorate will publish those relating to Delegated Decisions and Significant Operational Decisions.
- A copy of all other equality impact assessments that are not to be published should be sent to equalityteam@leeds.gov.uk for record.

Complete the appropriate section below with the date the report and attached assessment was sent:

For Executive Board or Full Council – sent to Governance Services	Date sent:
For Delegated Decisions or Significant Operational Decisions – sent to appropriate Directorate	Date sent:
All other decisions – sent to equalityteam@leeds.gov.uk	Date sent:

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Leeds Housing Board

Title: Complaints Handling Performance

Author: Roisin Donnelly/Ian Montgomery

Meeting Date: 22 Nov 2023

1. Introduction

1.1. The service wishes to update the Leeds Housing Board on activity related to the management of complaints, specifically:

- a) Complaints performance for Q1 and Q2 2023/24
- b) An overview of complaints by type and issue
- c) Complaints' satisfaction monitoring findings
- d) Our wider complaints management activity

2. Performance update for Q1 and Q2

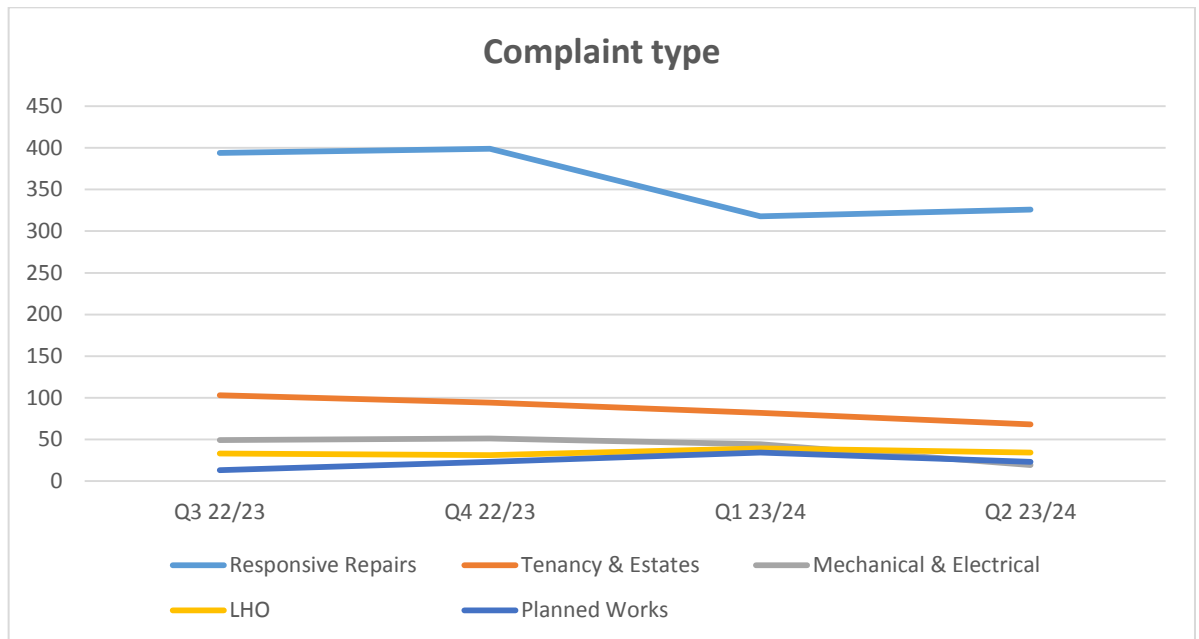
A summary of performance is below:

Indicator	Apr – Jun 2023	Jul – Sep 2023	Total to date
Stage 1 complaints received	590	530	1,120
<i>Previous year comparison</i>	553	535	1,088
Stage 1 responded in 10 working days	80%	86%	83%
<i>Previous year comparison</i>	59%	61%	60%

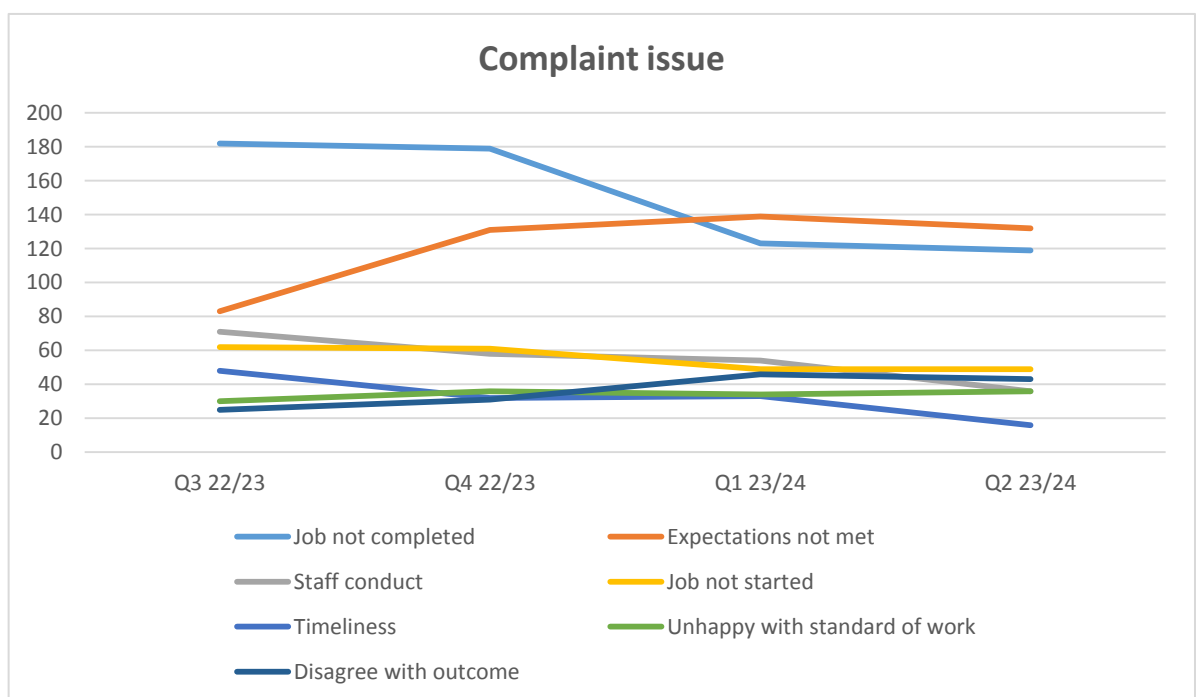
Indicator	Apr – Jun 2023	Jul – Sep 2023	Total to date
Stage 2 complaints received	139	143	282
<i>Previous year comparison</i>	114	118	232
Stage 2 responded in 20 working days	80%	76%	78%
<i>Previous year comparison</i>	61%	67%	65%

- 2.1. From April 2023, we are reporting to the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code timescales – 10 days at stage 1 and 20 days at stage 2. There remains an increased focus on timescales by the HOS, who are currently also consulting councils on a joint code with the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.
- 2.2. Performance for the first two quarters has increased from year end 2022/23 and is significantly improved from the same period last year. Please see the update on wider management activity below.
- 2.3. For September 2023, our latest full performance month available, we responded to 90% of stage 1 complaints within timescale (provisionally 87% for October) and 87% of stage 2 complaints in timescale (provisionally 100% for October). This is an indication that performance is improving and that the measures put in place to improve are having an impact.

2.4. Complaints by type - The largest complaints by type relate to our day-to-day repairs service, reflecting the volume of activity undertaken. We undertake approximately 200,000 repairs a year, with less than 1% of repairs resulting in a stage one complaint being received. The chart below presents complaints by volume over the last four quarters for the five highest service areas.



2.5. For each complaint received, we record the key issue in terms of what has led to the failure or complaint being received.



2.6 All managers have access to a complaints dashboard which gives an overview of complaints by stage, area, type, issue, and sub issue. Teams can filter this to produce meaningful information for their specific area and highlight any trends or concerns. The dashboard also records the date a complaint was received for managers to monitor complaints responses in timescales.

2.7 A summary of BITMO performance for the same period is below:

Indicator	Apr – Jun 2023	Jul – Sep 2023	Total to date
Stage 1 complaints received	10	10	20
<i>Previous year comparison</i>	4	1	5
Stage 1 responded in 10 working days	90%	90%	90%
<i>Previous year comparison</i>	25%	100%	40%
Indicator	Apr – Jun 2023	Jul – Sep 2023	Total to date
Stage 2 complaints received	3	2	5
<i>Previous year comparison</i>	2	1	3
Stage 2 responded in 20 working days	100%	100%	100%
<i>Previous year comparison</i>	100%	0%	67%

2.8 In terms of Ombudsman cases, during Q1 and Q2 2023/24 we received:

	HOS assessment	HOS Formal*	LGSCO assessment	LGSCO formal
Q1	7	6	2	5
<i>Q1 last year</i>	8	14	0	5
Q2	7	9	3	6
<i>Q2 last year</i>	7	11	1	1

*Formal cases are those which the Ombudsman will investigate, whereas assessment requests are where the Ombudsman asks us for information, and these may progress to formal cases. The HOS are more likely to progress straight to formal investigation than the LGSCO.

2.6 Outcomes received so far during 2023/24 are*:

- 10 cases were closed after the initial enquiry with no further action required or were outside of jurisdiction
- 4 cases were not upheld
- 15 cases were upheld (with a decision letter and remedies outlined)
- 11 cases the HOS found a service failure (with a decision letter and remedies outlined)

* These cases date back to January 2022 onwards – length of time to receive an outcome is dependent on how long it takes the HOS/LGSCO to

investigate and formally close a case when recommendations have been completed.

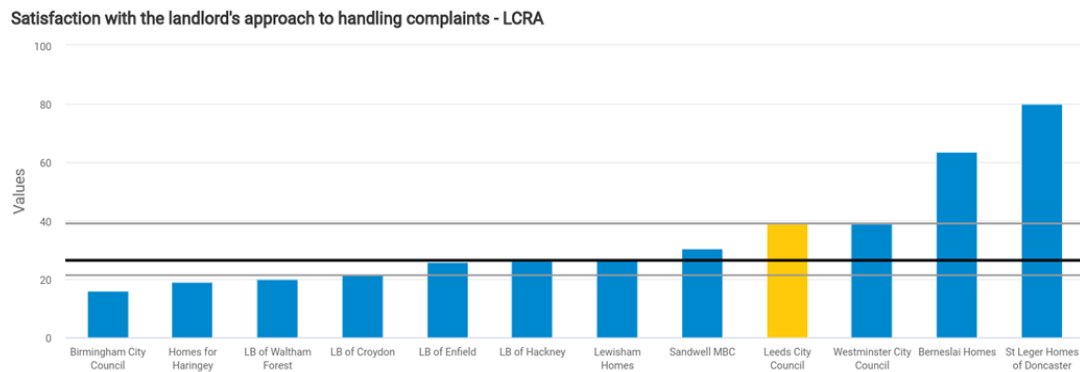
Outcome decision	
Closed after initial enquiry – no further action	6
Closed after initial enquiry – out of jurisdiction	4
HOS (Housing Ombudsman Service) service failure	11
Not upheld – no further action	2
Not upheld – no maladministration	2
Upheld – maladministration, no injustice	3
Upheld – maladministration and injustice	10
Report issued – upheld, maladministration and injustice	2

3. Satisfaction Monitoring

- 3.1. The Housing Ombudsman’s Complaint Handling Code requires all social landlords to create a ‘*positive complaint handling culture through continuous learning and improvement*’. To help do this, we undertake monthly satisfaction surveys to try and better understand the customer experience of the complaints process. In the second week of the month, a text message is sent with a survey link to those customers who have had a complaint closed in the previous month. There were 271 responses informing the findings for 2022/23. For Q1 2023/24 (Apr-Jun) we received 42 responses. Data is currently being processed for Q2.
- 3.2. The survey is likely to achieve lower results by the nature of the topic and how it is difficult to separate the complaint outcome (which may or may not be upheld) with the overall quality of the process. The survey design is therefore focused on the quality of the process in terms of how well we communicate, listen, and respond to the complaint – not about the complaint outcome. The survey is also completed by a relatively small numbers of residents, and we know residents are more likely to complete if they remain unhappy. We therefore use the results as a guide to identify learning opportunities.
- 3.3. **Summary from Q1 2023/24**
- 3.4. When comparing satisfaction for Q1 to year end 2022/23, the key findings from our own internal satisfaction monitoring are that:
- **Overall satisfaction** with how we handle complaints has **increased** from 20% to 26%
 - Satisfaction with the **speed with which we manage complaints** has **risen** from 28% to 33%
 - Satisfaction with how **well we have kept a resident informed** about the progress of their complaint has **risen** from 21% to 38%
 - Satisfaction with **how well we listened and understood** a person's complaint has **risen** from 21% to 34%

- Satisfaction with how well we took a **resident's individual circumstances into account** has **risen** from 18% to 29%
- Satisfaction with **how much we cared about putting the complaint right** has **risen** from 17% to 24%
- 88% of respondents said they would **feel confident making a complaint again**, which is an **increase** of 21% from last year's 67%.
- The survey includes a final question, "Is there anything you would like to tell us about how we managed your complaint?" In Q1 **33%** of respondents had something **positive to say**, which is up from 8% last year.

3.5. The service is currently submitting data to contribute to the national Housemark mid-year 2023/24 data collection exercise what will give us more information about how our complaint management performance compares to others. However, when looking at the available data from participating landlords at the end of 2022/23, we compare similarly, or slightly above a number of London Boroughs and large stock retaining councils.



3.6. Information from recent satisfaction monitoring has helped us to:

- Provide practical advice and reminders that we share in a monthly learning from complaints feature in Housing Leeds Matters, the internal staff bulletin.
- Identify those cases where satisfaction is poor or if there is an issue outstanding so we can highlight to the relevant team and proactively intervene if there is value or benefit for the customer in doing so.
- Make changes to the standard response templates to help Investigating Officers to write clearer, customer friendly responses that:
 - acknowledge the customers concerns and the impact that this has had on them,
 - apologise for any service failures,
 - put things right for the customer with agreed timescales and actions,
 - acknowledge any wider learning for the service and how the customer can feed into service improvements more generally.

4. Analysis of high-rise related complaints

- 4.1. Related to the Building Safety Act and to seek a more systematic approach to learning from complaints, we have undertaken an analysis of all complaints from high rise residents between April 2022 and August 2023. The analysis aims to identify any patterns or trends related to building safety that may not be visible to the service when responding to individual complaints and to help highlight any building safety concerns.
- 4.2. This initial exercise was useful, with key officers involved in the response to the Building Safety Act drilling down into different types of high rises, customers, and complaint types. In this first analysis, no specific building safety issues were identified, with any trends being in proportion to the scale of work or prevalence of block(s). For example, higher volumes of complaints in certain wards with the highest number of blocks or blocks with additional complaints where we have undertaken major improvement work compared to those with no works taking place. We are considering further how we best carry out this analysis on a regular basis going forward, in line with the commitments in our high rise resident engagement strategy and can report a summary of findings when in a more regular pattern of analysis to the board in future.

5. Wider complaints management activity

- 5.1. To strengthen our approach to complaints management we have undertaken the following actions:
 - a) In the most recent appraisal window, all staff have been set a complaints related objective.
 - b) We continue to deliver monthly 'Investigating Officer' training/refresher sessions for investigating officers from across the service. This reminds investigating officers about good practice and requirements of the complaints process, especially the importance of contacting the customer to understand their complaint so we can effectively respond. We will continue to offer training and support for those staff and teams who need this.
 - c) Over the last 18 months, the service has undertaken several Quality Assurance checks on a sample of complaints responses. These checks compare our responses to the requirements of the Complaint Handling Code and have been used to identify service improvements, training needs and content for regular reminders about good complaints handling in the staff bulletin. The most recent Quality Assurance exercise undertaken in September identified we were achieving high adherence to the standards of the code, with only some minor learning points that we picked up with individual teams.
 - d) Each December, we complete the Complaint Handling Code Self-Assessment and [publish a summary on the website](#). To strengthen our self-assessment further, the service would welcome the input of the tenant members of the Board to help be our critical friends as we undertake our self-assessment in late November/early December.

- e) BITMO will undertake their own self-assessment against the code (in line with good practice), however, Housing Leeds remain responsible for BITMO's management of complaints as whole. We will ensure reporting and compliance against the code from BITMO as part of our future assurance framework with them.
- f) The Housing Ombudsman continue to share 'Spotlight' reports and cases of severe maladministration from social landlords nationally that are reviewed by the service to identify lessons learnt and integrate this within existing service improvement plans. In May the HOS published a Spotlight report on '[Knowledge and Information Management](#)'. This includes twenty-one recommendations for landlords to improve how the sector records, manages and uses data so we have the knowledge we need to develop services and ensure high levels of customer care. This is currently being reviewed by the service. In addition the service has promoted to tenants the opportunity to take part in consultation for a future spotlight report on [communications, relationships and vulnerability](#).
- g) The Tenant Scrutiny Board has reviewed a number of published damp and mould related cases from the HOS to inform their recent review into the advice and support we give to residents to help inform their recommendations for improvement.
- h) We continue to collect and monitor performance against the Tenant Satisfaction Measures. The percentage of tenants who have made a complaint in the last 12 months at 22/23 year end was 32% which reduced to 28% taking both Q1 and Q2 into account. In terms of the linked question, and if so 'how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your landlord's approach to complaint handling.' For 2022/23 our satisfaction was 24%, with cumulative Q1 and Q2 satisfaction increasing slightly to 27%.
- i) The service is participating in a mid-year benchmarking exercise via Housemark for us to understand how our complaints performance compares with similar landlords and will be able to provide more information to the board in due course. Earlier benchmarking with a smaller group of landlords suggests Housing Leeds performance is similar to other large urban councils, and somewhat above that of a number of London Boroughs.
- j) We continue to engage with other landlords through the Housing Quality Network (HQN) to discuss and share best practice.

6. Recommendations

- 6.1. The Leeds Housing Board is asked to note and comment on the data included in this report.
- 6.2. For the Board to consider a request for tenant board members to support the forthcoming HOS self-assessment.

Title: Tenant Engagement Update

Author: Ian Montgomery

Meeting Date: November 2023

1. Background

- 1.1. This report gives the Leeds Housing Board the opportunity to influence a draft Tenant Engagement Strategy, and to update the Leeds Housing Board on recent activity in relation to tenant engagement.

2. Main Points

2.1. An updated Tenant Engagement Strategy

- 2.2. The service has previously relied on a 'Tenant Engagement Framework' – that illustrates our local and strategic engagement offer. Due to the creation of the Tenant Voice Panel and other new ways of working we are now updating and strengthening this framework, which will become a new Tenant Engagement Strategy.
- 2.3. A draft Tenant Engagement Strategy is below (see appendix 1).
- 2.4. A key theme running throughout the reforms to social housing regulation and within the proposed consumer standards, is how landlords strengthen the way we listen, learn and respond to the wider tenant voice. The proposed draft Tenant Engagement Strategy therefore seeks to describe how we will do this and how we will make our engagement offer more inclusive so that we are compliant with the future [Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard](#).
- 2.5. The draft strategy is intentionally concise, so that it is more accessible to a wider audience. Subject to any initial feedback from the Board the strategy can also be shared more widely with Tenant Voice Panel members for feedback and once finalised, shared with residents as a whole. The Board is reminded that key parts of the activity that make up the strategy, such as the Tenant Voice Panel, was designed with input from the Tenant Scrutiny Board in their previous review. We envisage the strategy also being re-presented using LCC branding and adopting a similar look and feel to other public facing strategies.

3. Update on Tenant Engagement Activity

- 3.1. **The Tenant Voice Panel** - since the last update to the board, membership of the panel has increased from 130 to 194 residents. This includes widespread geographical representation, 48 residents living in high rise homes and 16 living in retirement life accommodation.
- 3.2. Promotion of the Panel is ongoing, using a variety of means. For example, in a recent email to all high-rise residents, which thanked TVP members for their input with a task and using this as a chance to promote to others the opportunity to join. Digital promotion of the panel is supplemented with flyers and posters for community noticeboards and other community locations.
- 3.3. We continue to hold informal quarterly 'induction' sessions, inviting any new panel member, or those longer standing members who would like a refresher, to join officers to talk about the panel, share examples of recent work and examples of what's coming up for residents to contribute to in the months ahead. These are online and in-person events, held at a different location each time.
- 3.4. Whilst the overall numbers of residents on the panel is increasing, there are some groups who are under-represented. For example, we are over represented by residents within the 45-64 age range but under-represented in the 18-29 age range (with 10 residents within this age group on the board). Similarly, there are 25 residents from an ethnicity other than white British which is below the proportion of non-white tenants as a whole. One in four panel members have some form of disability or impairment.
- 3.5. In recent months, different members of the panel through a combination of surveys and online or hybrid meetings have:
 - Been appointed to the Leeds Housing Board.
 - Helped design and shape the content of August's Annual Report for Tenants.
 - Helped design and shape the content of September's first annual High Rise Building Safety Newsletter.
 - Taken part in a focus group with the Retirement Life Service, for initial feedback on what residents value the most about the service and to help shape a future consultation approach with Retirement Life residents as a whole.
 - Reviewed key documents related to customer care standards for a new gas servicing contract.
 - Taken part in a workshop with IT colleagues to help design and test the 'High Rise Building Safety Hub', a web page for high rise residents to log in and access information about their building and their home.

- Given feedback on the Regulator for Social Housing proposed Consumer Standards, to add tenant feedback to the wider Housing Leeds response to the consultation.
 - Three TVP members have joined the Tenant Scrutiny Board and have taken part in helping gather evidence to inform the TSB's report into Damp and Mould and the advice and support we give to residents.
- 3.6. Future areas for development of the panel include:
- Undertaking a review of the first year of operation, since its launch in February 2023 as an opportunity to understand who is taking part and to identify gaps in any representation of certain customer groups. This is also an opportunity to get panel members' feedback on their experience of the engagement, or what we can do to make it easier for panel members to take part.
 - Establishing how we involve more panel members in the more strategic assessment and review of our services and self-assessments against the Regulator for Housing Consumer Standards.
- 3.7. In October the **Tenant Scrutiny Board** completed a review into the advice and support we give to residents about damp and mould. Following sessions speaking with various officers, reviewing information from other landlords and having undertaken a survey with residents who have recently had a general surveyor's inspection for damp and mould the Board are due to publish their report following their meeting on the 17th November. The report describes what the board did in terms of research and gathering evidence, what they found and thanks those who helped them, including the three members of the Tenant Voice Panel who joined them in this work.
- 3.8. The report has 12 recommendations, with the delivery of these improvements being monitored by the board during 2024. The report is in the process of being signed off by the board and will then be shared with residents more widely on social media and in the citywide tenant email.
- 3.9. The Board is now reviewing a range of performance and satisfaction information and will be speaking to senior officers and the Executive Member for Housing to help identify their next topic for review. The Board will also evaluate what has worked well in their last review and seek to further open membership to those on the TVP who may wish to help them on a review-by-review basis.
- 3.10. As of the beginning of November, the 11 **Housing Advisory Panels (or HAPs)** have supported funding for 119 local community and environmental projects to a value of £175,000. This equates to 44% of the available budget, with a further £222,000 currently uncommitted.

Due to some long-term absences, the Engagement Team have made some changes to the officers supporting the HAPs so that all HAPs are presented with a range of projects and choices to enable them to utilise funding in their local area.

- 3.11. The projects supported continue to help address local issues and priorities. HAPs also help connect tenants with local housing management teams and regular updates about performance and other issues or initiatives are shared with HAP members.
- 3.12. Following **consultation with high-rise residents** the service has progressed its engagement and communication with high-rise residents. Over recent months we have:
- With input from residents from the Tenant Voice Panel, shared with all high-rise residents a copy of our first [high-rise building safety newsletter](#). This focused on sharing key building safety information, along with promoting the availability of new information in line with the Building Safety Act.
 - Re-issued in all blocks an updated suite of posters for high-rise residents with key information about building safety and how to contact us. Where possible using more images and presenting information in an 'easy read' style. We are also in the process of installing two electronic noticeboards in the two largest blocks, Cottingley Heights and Towers.
 - Published our first [high-rise building safety resident engagement strategy](#). This is citywide strategy that describes to all high-rise residents how we share information, the advice and support we give, how we listen and respond to feedback and how we will measure the success of this strategy in future.
 - Improved residents access to information about building safety, launching a '[request safety information for a high-rise building](#)' and a '[report a building safety concern](#)' web page. In November we are scheduled to launch a 'high rise building safety hub', as part of the 'Golden Thread' requirements of the Building Safety Act. High-rise residents will be able to log on to a web page and in addition to the above, have more instant access information unique to their block and flat. For example, a copy of the most recent fire risk assessment, lift inspection certificate or flat entrance door inspection.
 - We continue to issue [bi-monthly updates](#) to high-rise residents with content influenced by residents and staff teams, in line with the themes of the resident engagement strategy.
- 3.13. Over the summer the service met residents from six high-rise blocks across the city to talk about the future of their blocks and support for rehousing. Engagement with residents was held at various times and

dates including evenings and weekends to reflect the respective resident profiles and was a variety of drop-in sessions using the mobile office, home visits and phone appointments. By the end of September, we had met with 80% of the 360 households. This engagement has been invaluable in helping inform residents, being able to respond to any concerns and talk through the support available.

- 3.14. Our priority tasks over the winter include working with residents on developing individual block resident engagement strategies and undertaking our second high rise resident survey to measure residents understanding of building safety so that we can focus on the key issues and assess how well our communications approach is working.
- 3.15. We have now undertaken 11 **virtual walkabouts** as an enhancement to the traditional walkabout offer. Offering walkabouts in this way increases the level of engagement with residents to help manage the environmental appearance of areas. Tenants within an area of interest are invited to participate and when convenient to them, give feedback by placing a pin on a map with a suggestion about what they would like to see improved/addressed or what they like and want to recognise about their local area. An example is the '[Holtdales Walkabout](#)'. This particular walkabout was visited by 159 residents who are now aware of this as an engagement opportunity, 58 of these viewed additional information and looked at other people's comments, with eight residents actively engaging, giving 55 comments and suggestions.
- 3.16. We are now in a regular pattern of undertaking satisfaction surveys quarterly and in line with the Regulator for Social Housing's '**Tenant Satisfaction Measures**' or TSMs. The approach to collecting this information and the most recently available results is the subject of a separate report to the Board. We have used, or are currently using the data to:
- Inform service planning and priorities for 2024/25.
 - Share with the Tenant Scrutiny Board to help them understand the wider tenant experience to influence their selection of future review topic(s).
 - Refresh local HAP priorities.
 - Monitor the effectiveness of a number of key strategies including our approach to high rise engagement amongst other key pieces of work and service improvement'
- 3.17. As previously reported to the board, with more up to date information about what tenants think about our services and in line with regulatory expectations on sharing more information and being more transparent, we have commenced sharing satisfaction information on a quarterly

basis. A summary of the Quarter 2 satisfaction information is drafted and ready to be shared in the November tenant email along with a hard copy insert in the rent statement that goes into more detail about what actions we are taking in response.

- 3.18. Our Retirement Life Teams continue to support **health and well-being activities** in the communal facilities of the many retirement life schemes, with new equipment recently purchased (via the local HAP) for Gascoigne House residents. Local housing management teams have also undertaken or are planning a number of estate action/clean up days or are key stakeholders taking part in cost-of-living related help and support events.
- 3.19. The circulation of our **monthly e-bulletin** to all tenants with an email address is rising slowly, as more email addresses are recorded. The October circulation was to 39,700 residents. This has an open rate of 45% and remains a useful way to share information about the help and support for residents, as well as to promote engagement opportunities – for example, giving feedback on how members of the Tenant Voice Panel have helped us shape services.
- 3.20. Local engagement continues through our support for the circa 60 **tenants, residents and community groups**. Our service offer, called [‘Communities on Top’](#) is used as the basis for more supportive conversations with residents groups across the city, with ABCD principles part of this. In October we provided further funding to West Yorkshire Community Accounting Service (WYCAS) to enable them to undertake free accounts checks for local groups so they can manage their money well and be better able to successfully attract funding.
- 3.21. Key services, alongside Voluntary Action Leeds and Leeds Community Foundation are now meeting regularly to work on a re-launch of [Funding Leeds](#) following the release of an updated website. This gives groups free access to local, regional and national funding opportunities. During September 2023, the site was visited 27,000 times and content accessed by 206 different groups across Leeds.

4. Priorities for year ahead

- 4.1. To evaluate the activity of the Tenant Voice Panel, and trial/put in place engagement with tenants about how they influence and help hold us to account in a more strategic way – for example, reviewing our self-assessments against the Regulator for Social Housing Consumer Standards.

- 4.2. Accompanying a new Tenant Engagement Strategy, we are also seeking to develop a more accessible and meaningful reporting mechanism to demonstrate our engagement activity and outcomes – in the form of an impact dashboard. This can be shared with a range of audiences including Tenant Voice Panel members, the Tenant Scrutiny Board, to residents via our regular communications and to the Leeds Housing Board and internal teams.

5. Recommendations

- 5.1. The Leeds Housing Board are requested to note and comment on recent activity related to tenant engagement and offer support/comment on the updated Tenant Engagement Strategy.

Appendix 1:

Draft Housing Leeds Tenant Engagement Strategy

Potential forward by the Executive Member for Housing?

The voice and influence of tenants, residents and leaseholders can make a positive contribution to everything we do.

We want to listen, learn and respond to tenants, residents and leaseholders so that we can:

- Deliver high quality services.
- Improve tenant satisfaction.
- Develop a strong engagement culture where we value and act on all forms of resident feedback.
- Meet or exceed the future expectations of the Regulator for Social Housing and the future '[Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard](#)'
- Comply with linked legislative requirements such as the Building Safety Act

This strategy sets out how we will do this.

Principles of our approach

- What we do and how we do it, is in line with our council values: to be open, honest and trusted; treating people fairly; working with communities; working as a team for Leeds and spending money wisely.

Our approach:

Our engagement activity will seek to:

- **Offer choice** for residents to give feedback and be involved should you wish. Acknowledging that not all residents have the same access to technology, skills or confidences or availability to take part.
- **Make it easy to give feedback** so that it's convenient and planned in a way to try and remove any barriers.
- Actively seek and act on the feedback of residents from **a diverse range of backgrounds and communities** as possible. We recognise some communities are less heard, so targeting our resources and tailoring our approaches to work with under-represented groups.
- Use **insight from the wider tenant voice**, as well as working closely in smaller groups to help us interpret and analyse. We don't expect a small number of tenants to represent or speak on behalf of all tenants.
- Involve those with **direct recent experiences** of our services, who are well placed to tell us about the on the ground reality.
- Adopt a '**go to them**' approach, making the best use of local resources, like using community rooms, and other locations where residents already come together. We also have a mobile office when no community venues exist.
- Be **honest about where we are in the decision making process**, setting out what we are hoping to achieve with input from residents, what other feedback has been and what will happen when.

- Communicate clearly and regularly the impact feedback has had, i.e., **you said we did**.
- **Innovate** in what we do, designing the most effective ways to capture and use the tenant voice with tenants themselves.
- Working in **partnership with others**, inside and outside of LCC
- **Invest in training and support** for those involved in any aspect of the Tenant Engagement. For example, attending events or conferences and meeting tenants from other landlords.
- Provide **support to help tenants, residents and community groups** achieve their aims.
- When working with communities, **start with what's strong** (not wrong), using asset-based approaches to build relationships and support others.
- Consider how we can **use the social value of partnerships** and contractors to support our engagement work.
- Maintain our **membership with [TPAS](#)** – the national tenant engagement experts who provide access to training, support and good practice regionally and nationally.
- Devote resources within a **Tenant Engagement Team** to deliver on our commitments.

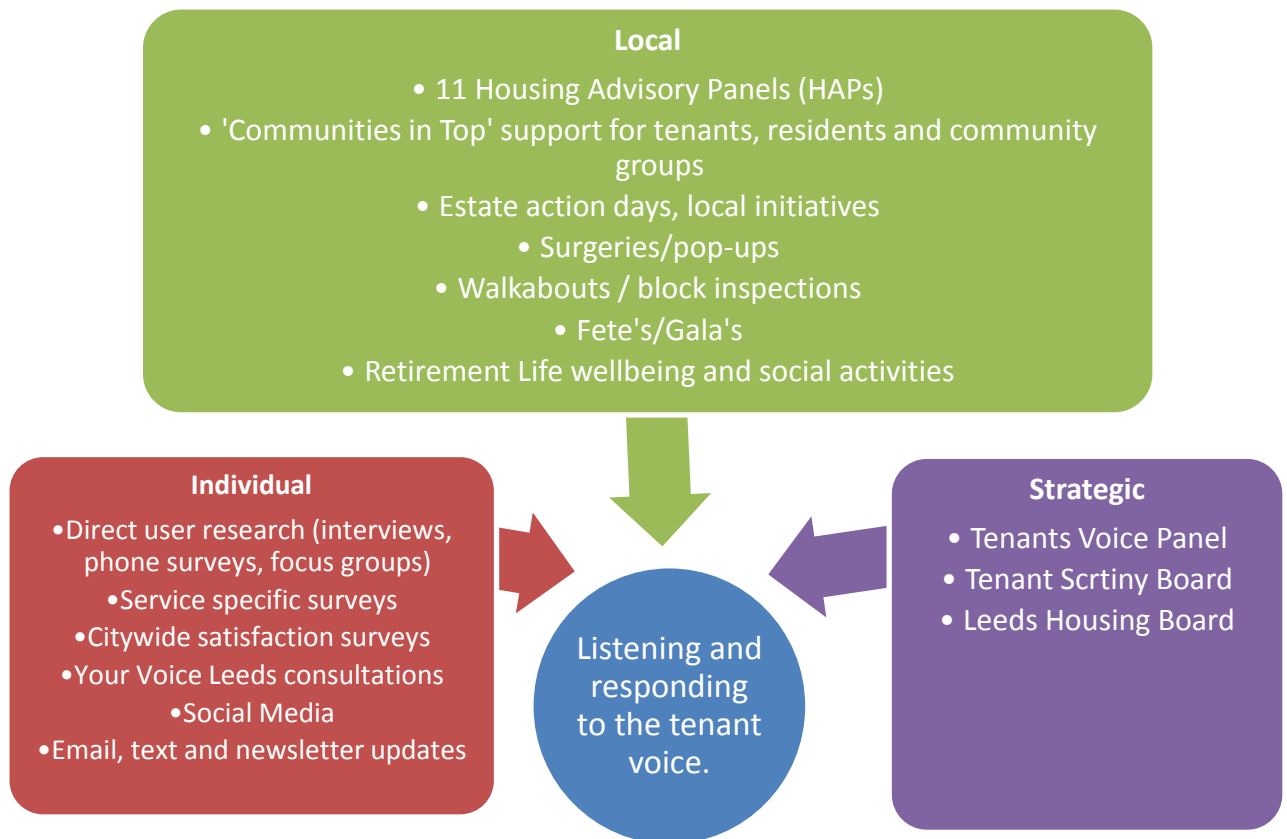
How we are going to deliver this:

The ways we involve and use feedback can be categorised as:

Local – the opportunities to effect change in the local communities where residents live

Individual – the opportunities all residents have to influence our services, regardless of whether someone is part of a group.

Strategic – how the tenant voice is used to influence our strategies, policies and decision making.



There is no one right way. We will use a combination of all the below for different issues at different times and look to find new ways of involving residents with residents themselves.
How will we know if our approach is working?

We will report to the Leeds Housing Board, the Tenant Scrutiny Board, the Tenant Voice Panel and to residents more widely how we are performing using the following measures:

- The overall satisfaction with the services provided.
- Satisfaction that we listen to your views and act upon them.
- Satisfaction that you are kept informed about the things that matter to you.

These are standard measures all landlords are required to collect. We will therefore be able to compare our performance to others. We will also assess our performance against the Regulator for Social Housing Consumer Standards, including the [‘Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard’](#).

For more information visit our website www.leeds.gov.uk/tenantinvolvement, email housing.involvement@leeds.gov.uk or call 0113 378 3330

Title: Damp & Mould Update

Author: Robert Goor

Meeting Date: 22 November 2023

1. Background

- 1.1. This report provides Members of the Leeds Housing Board with an update on damp and mould within council managed homes and gives an overview of the further proactive action taken since the Damp and Mould report was presented to the Executive Board in February this year.
- 1.2. The report in February set out the measures in place to tackle damp and mould and gave good assurance that the council's approach to tackling damp and mould in council managed homes is robust. This report provides assurance that good progress continues to be made in relation to implementing proactive measures to tackle damp, particularly as we enter the colder winter months. The report sets out how the focus, during the summer months, was shifted to increasing the proactive measures in place to tackle damp and mould, and our readiness for the winter, with the aim of reducing both the frequency and severity of future cases.
- 1.3. Amongst the key areas of progress which have been made since the report to the Executive Board; the new Damp and Mould measures are now in place and operational processes have been redesigned so that potentially hazardous mould is now removed more quickly. The roll out of a large-scale damp and mould training programme is now well advanced across all frontline housing teams and contractors, which is better equipping staff to identify and deal with damp and mould problems. The training underpins the Damp and Mould Policy principles and 'zero tolerance' culture which has been adopted by the council. The damp and mould communication and engagement strategy continues to develop also.
- 1.4. The strategy is driving good communication and engagement with residents and other stakeholders, with a good balance between encouraging tenants to report damp and mould problems to the council, particularly those groups who have in the past under-reported, and robust self-help advice and support. The pending report from the Tenant Scrutiny Board, following their recent review into the advice and support Housing Leeds gives to residents with damp and mould in their homes, will provide valuable feedback that will drive further tenant lead improvements in this area.

2. Main Points

- 2.1. Damp and mould is one of the 29 hazards listed under the Housing Health & Safety Rating System (Housing Act 2004) which the council, as landlord,

- has a legal duty to mitigate where any hazard found is duly assessed as a category 1 hazard.
- 2.2. This responsibility is fully understood, and the council has taken a proactive approach to dealing with damp and mould in homes for many years. This approach is embedded into operational procedures and wider strategies to make sure that all reports of damp and mould are assessed in a timely manner and that proactive prevention work contributes towards damp and mould reduction.
 - 2.3. Category 1 hazards under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) are those hazards that pose a serious and immediate risk to a person's health and safety. Other hazards which are less serious or less urgent are classed as category 2 hazards.
 - 2.4. The damp and mould report to Executive Board in February sets out the proactive work that the council are undertaking to tackle damp and mould as part of the longstanding commitment to provide homes of good quality.
 - 2.5. The paper also sets out how the council is responding to the 26 recommendations made by the Housing Ombudsman Service within their 2021 report, 'Spotlight on Damp and Mould', all of which the council have adopted. A link to the Housing Ombudsman's report can be found within the background documents to this report.
 - 2.6. The Executive Board paper also sets out the council's response to the coroner's findings into the tragic death of Awaab Ishak, the toddler who died from severe respiratory condition caused due to prolonged exposure to mould in his home environment, which prompted The Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to call on all landlords to improve their approaches to dealing with damp and mould.
 - 2.7. It was reported to the Executive Board that in November 2022, the service saw a circa 120% increase on normal levels of damp and mould reports. Whilst winter demand is always the highest for this type of activity, the increase in media attention at the time had a significant impact on the volume of reports also.
 - 2.8. Following an initial spike in reports of damp and mould in October 2022, a slight fall in reports was recorded from November 2022. As anticipated, this continued during the spring and summer months due to higher average temperatures and a tendency for homes to be ventilated more. That said, the volume of new damp and mould reports was up c12% on the same period last year during the summer. Levels will increase however as we now enter the colder winter months again when damp and mould is most prevalent. Whilst this reflects the most problematic time of the year for residents, and places strain on frontline resources, increased reporting allows the service to put into effect improved triage of cases and quicker response to hazards due to realignment of resources.
 - 2.9. At the time of the February Executive Board report, the council's priority was on dealing with the unprecedented high volumes of damp and mould reports on a reactive basis. During the warmer summer months, focus of

the service shifted to further increasing the proactive measures in place to tackle damp and mould and preparedness for this winter.

- 2.10. The following activity/updates have taken place since the Executive Board Report was presented:
- a) The Damp & Mould policy was signed off at the March Damp and Mould Prevention Board and has now become a live policy document (Appendix B). This document sets out the scope of the council's approach to damp and mould and provides a framework for the handling of damp and mould cases.
 - b) All staff appraisals for 2023/24 included an objective around damp and mould. This approach will ensure that damp and mould is discussed at all one to ones and appraisals and this will underpin the damp and mould policy by ensuring that all staff recognise their part to play in the councils 'zero tolerance' approach to damp and mould.
 - c) A large-scale programme of damp and mould awareness training has commenced and is being rolled out to all frontline staff and contractors. The training has been completed to the majority of housing management teams with further sessions booked in to deliver to the remainder. The training package, which has been delivered to teams face to face, underpins the damp and mould policy principles. This will ensure that all staff are able to identify damp and mould problems and recognise the health hazards, enable staff to be able give advice to residents on how to control damp and mould, and ensure all staff know the process to follow when they identify a problem. Feedback from members of the Tenant Scrutiny Board, who have attended sessions, has been positive and has helped to further improve the training.
 - d) Housing Leeds joint work with the West Yorkshire Housing Partnership has included the development an e-learning package for both technical and non-technical staff. The training package is now ready and being tested by staff, ahead of being rolled out to support the wider face to face training package and 'refresher' option.
 - e) Further technical training around damp and mould has been delivered to all frontline technical staff. The training will improve the diagnosis of damp and mould problems and solution design, and also increase the capacity of the service to identify and action problems proactively during all areas of property related inspection.
 - f) Following the successful launch of the Damp and Mould task team late last year, approval has been given to the recruitment of five additional FTEs to the team on a permanent basis. These posts have been recruited to and have increased the capacity of the team in terms of both frontline technical resource and back-office planning function. This will enable more proactive work to be undertaken during the summer months and provide greater reactive capacity during the colder winter months.
 - g) Further analysis of damp and mould activity has identified some key findings which are now being addressed through further realignment of

existing resources and further process improvement. Based on predicted demand during the winter months, an additional 4 FTEs are required to service the additional winter demand in 'reasonable timescales', which we anticipate will align to prescribed timescales set out in the pending Awaab's Law legislation. Additionally, however our data tells us that 20% of all current physical visits could be avoided through more robust triage and better advice to residents about things that they can do themselves such as wiping down condensation, treating small areas of mould and more effective use of heating and ventilation etc. Work is underway to put improved triage procedures in place ahead of the winter months, using the training and information already in place, in-order to ease the demand on physical inspection visits. This is particularly important given the current financial challenges.

- h) Self-Assessment against the Housing Ombudsman's Service's 26 recommendations from their Spotlight on 'Damp and Mould' report has been updated and submitted to the Housing Ombudsman Service. The self-assessment is included as Appendix C to this report. Progress shows currently 19 of the 26 recommendations now implemented (73%) and seven in progress (27%).
- i) The building of digital maps is developing which will allow the service to overlay damp data, property types and demographics to better predict where proactive preventative interventions can be undertaken and prevent problems before they occur.
- j) A significant process change has been made in-order to improve the speed in which the presence of mould is removed from within homes. This change aligns to anticipated forthcoming changes to damp and mould legislation. Under the new process, the first priority is to treat any mould growth ahead of any survey visits or other activity. This means that potentially hazardous mould growth is removed quicker than it has been previously, and therefore prioritises the safety of residents.
- k) As the cost-of-living crisis has more and more of an impact on the presence of damp and mould, more work is being done across teams to support tenants, particularly those in fuel poverty. In April, this year's British Gas fuel voucher scheme came to an end which saw the council successfully issue £140,000 of free fuel vouchers to council tenant with pre-payment meters. We have signed back up to that scheme for this winter where a further £100,000 has been allocated to us in addition to other schemes through the British Gas charity that are available to help tenants who are in debt with their energy accounts. Hundreds of free mould sprays have been made available to tenants to help them to treat small areas of mould, where they are able to do so themselves, at no cost to them. Assessment of this scheme will be carried out later in the year to determine take up versus impact on the number of treatments that the council carry out. In addition, proactive advice is being given to

tenants which will help them avoid costly damage to their own possessions, through damp and mould.

3. Regarding our communication and engagement activity on damp and mould, since December we have:

- a) Promoted the creation of the dedicated Damp and Mould Team in our monthly tenant emails, sent to 39,000 tenants with an email address, linking to new website content informing residents on how to report damp and mould issues with the team directly and giving advice on how to help prevent damp and mould from occurring.
- b) Distributed hard copies of the damp and mould leaflet with staff and contractors, for them to give to residents reporting or receiving damp and mould related activity or treatment. This includes a QR code to direct to further website content.
- c) Translated the above into key community languages (Urdu, Arabic, Czech, Slovak, and Tigrinyan) and sharing this with Community Hubs in the most ethnically diverse areas for them to share with residents.
- d) Continued to undertake social media releases, with a combination of content around disrepair warnings, scam callers, the importance of reporting repairs to us, condensation and damp and mould advice. A paid social media release specifically on damp and mould and how to contact us reached 21,700 people and periodic paid releases are part of a social media forward plan.
- e) Recognised that the majority of disrepair claims have a damp and mould component, analysing the areas and ages of residents most likely to make disrepair claims and sending emails to these residents with content on advice on reporting repairs, what residents can do to help prevent damp and mould and the importance of contacting us with any outstanding repairs. This included providing a translation box informing what the message was about in the six most commonly spoken community languages.
- f) Providing updates to staff on the importance of everyone having a responsibility to help identify damp and mould
- g) Via our ongoing partnership with Equans, a national repairs and maintenance contractor, regularly promoting a bespoke short information film with advice about how to reduce condensation and mould in your home.
- h) In April, the Tenant Scrutiny Board also confirmed their intention to undertake a review into damp and mould, exploring the following themes:

- i) The advice and support given to residents to help prevent and reduce damp and mould
 - ii) The nature of follow up activity with those who have received some form of action or intervention in response to damp and mould (i.e., have the actions of Housing Leeds helped solve the problem)
 - iii) How do we inform and train staff (inc. Hubs, Contact Centre and Contractors) to be able to give the right advice and respond to tenants effectively.
- 3.1. We look forward to working with the Tenant Scrutiny Board and receiving their recommendations.
- 3.2. The service has in place a communication plan that captures the above and other actions, with regular review meetings in place with lead officers to keep updated and plan ahead so that we are able to give updated/fresh messages with residents in the Autumn. This includes reviewing additional information shared by Public Health colleagues to allow us to develop more bespoke/targeted communications to specific customer groups and in certain locations or property types who are most at risk.
- 3.3. The current financial climate is a double-edged sword in that not only is this a significant challenge to the council's resources; the cost of delivery of some elements of the repairs and maintenance service has increase by up to 40%, but equally the impact of the cost of living crisis on tenant's own finances is exasperating the problem of condensation damp and mould within homes as they struggle to heat and ventilate their homes effectively. These challenges are ubiquitous amongst social housing landlords at present.
- 3.4. As was the position in the February Executive Board report; there remain no homes in the management of Housing Leeds containing a Category 1 damp and mould hazard. This information was gathered utilising a combination of asset data obtained through stock condition surveys and via repairs data.
- 3.5. It was reported to the Executive Board that 1,692 homes contained Category 2 damp and mould. At the end of September, this number has reduced by 45%. Again, in all cases work is either now complete or is ongoing to ensure the symptom (mould) and the root cause is accurately diagnosed and resolved at the earliest opportunity. It should be noted that some discussion has taken place with the Regulator of Social Housing in relation to reporting damp cases. Leeds classifies all damp and mould cases as either Category 1 or Category 2 hazards in-line with the Housing Health and Safety Legislation (HHSRS) guidance which is the only guidance available in relation to categorising damp and mould. Other landlords are reporting different categories of 'Notable' damp and mould, outside of the HHSRS categories meaning that some are reporting less Category 2 cases pro rata of stock despite damp and mould being present in the home. This point has been fed back to the regulator and it remains Leeds position that reporting strictly in-line with the HHSRS categories remains the

most transparent way of reporting and the best way of the council maintaining focus on the actual scale of the damp and mould problem.

- 3.6 The Council's approach to damp and mould will ensure that homes are maintained safely and are free from damp and mould related health hazards as far as possible, and that reports of damp and mould are handled promptly and professionally and appropriate action taken as a priority.
- 3.7 The health and safety of residents is our number one priority. However, it should be highlighted that an effective and efficient approach to damp prevention is directly linked to the efficiency of resources, spending money wisely and also to tenancy satisfaction levels.
- 3.8 Board members will note the direct link between the effective management of damp and mould in council homes and costly disrepair claims against the council where damp and mould has not been addressed in a timely manner.
- 3.9 Similarly, the deployment of effective damp and mould procedures will reduce the risk of fines and reputational damage from the Housing Ombudsman Service due to maladministration or claims brought under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 for poor housing conditions which are a statutory nuisance.
- 3.10 The effective collection and use of stock condition data will ensure that the council are able to inform future planned works and investment programmes and target the worst performing housing stock first.
- 3.11 Frontline staff are able to offer support to vulnerable tenants who are impacted by the financial crisis by providing practical advice on how to control damp and mould, signposting to support agencies and applying for free fuel vouchers for tenants in fuel poverty. This will help ensure that tenants in fuel poverty do not suffer disproportionately due to damp and mould in their homes.
- 3.12 Better use of data and a targeted approach through Annual Tenancy Contacts will help to identify those tenants who do not ordinarily engage with the service and report damp and mould issues and therefore will help to identify the 'silent sufferers.' The 2023/24 Annual Tenancy Contact programme will benefit from the roll out of the damp and mould awareness training to visiting staff and will better equip staff to have good quality conversations with tenants about damp and mould problems and offer self-help advice and support where appropriate.
- 3.13 The further development and implementation of the Communication and Engagement Plan specific to damp and mould will encourage tenant engagement based on the diverse needs of the Housing Leeds communities and not a one size fits all approach.

4. Key risks

- 4.1. The Government are currently reviewing the guidance on damp and mould, as well as other hazards, for assessments under the Housing Act 2004.

There are several key risks aligned to this approach:

- Resources – Internal and Contracted. As a result of key events set out within this report (Housing Ombudsman report publication and national media coverage around damp and mould), the profile of damp and mould issues within the social housing sector has risen significantly.

This is positive in that it has helped raise the profile of the issue and has driven forward improvements. The increased volume associated with this however has happened at a pace that the service has struggled to adapt to. This has been mitigated through the creation of the damp and mould team and through working with service providers to re-align resources to the damp and mould priority.

- The current Construction Industry labour market is making it incredibly difficult to be able recruit and retain suitably skilled technical staff and trade operatives to work in the social housing sector. The shortage of skilled labour is perhaps the biggest single risk at present and is restricting the capability of the service to expand capacity to meet current demand. In mitigation of this risk, extensive efforts are ongoing to recruit to posts innovatively and to review current working procedures in-order to create additional capacity through improved efficiency.
- Reputational Damage – As a result of the raised profile of damp and mould within the sector; landlords have come under increased scrutiny from the Regulator of Social Housing and Housing Ombudsman Service. Whilst this scrutiny is positive in that it is helping to drive up housing standards; the consequences of poor service delivery and maladministration of damp and mould reports has risen significantly. Cases are now regularly published nationally, and reported in the media, which is causing significant reputational damage to Local Authority landlords. The council have adopted the Housing Ombudsman Service’s recommendations around damp and mould, and have reviewed the approach to damp and mould, in-order to mitigate against this.
- Cost of Delivery – A severe hike in inflation across financial markets has resulted in significant increases in the cost of the delivery of works. In some areas, price increases of 40% have been seen, meaning that in real terms, budgets have shrunk. This is impacting significantly on the repairs service. Mitigation measures have been put in place including the review of activity and review of specifications. However, given that the lion’s share of repairs and maintenance activity is statutory provision, there is little scope to cut back on services. We will continue to prioritise essential repairs and maintenance work (including damp and mould treatments) however we must continue to look at ways to reduce non-essential spend to ensure that this can continue to be achieved.
- Cost of Living Crisis – The cost-of-living crisis is heavily compounding damp and mould problems within council homes and adding additional burden to council resources and budgets. Steep increases in energy costs over the last twelve months has resulted in more and more homes falling into fuel poverty which in turn means that less tenants are able to heat their homes efficiently and/or run mechanical

extractor fans. This is leading to more instances of condensation and mould. Our data tells us that 70% of reported damp relates to condensation in the home. Frontline staff are equipped with tools to support and signpost tenants, who are in financial difficulty, such as signposting to financial support, referrals to The Green Doctor (who can help implement energy efficiency advice and ensure best energy deals) and make applications for free energy vouchers. This is going some way to helping to ensure that those in fuel poverty are not disproportionately affected by damp and mould.

- Tenant Expectations – A key message within the Housing Ombudsman Service’s Spotlight on Damp & Mould is that landlords should not infer blame when dealing with cases of damp and mould within homes on ‘Lifestyle Issues.’ Whilst the council fully support this message in terms of understanding it’s landlord responsibilities for making sure that repair factors are not contributing to damp and mould, ensuring that hazards are identified and removed, and sharing information with tenants so that they can take practical steps within their home to reduce the chances of condensation damp and mould occurring; the message is more unclear for tenants and other stakeholders. Lifestyle issues do contribute heavily to condensation and damp mould within homes and therefore Housing Leeds has reviewed the information it provides, and language used, to encourage tenants to work together and put in place simple and practical measures to help reduce the risks of damp and mould and in doing so, protect the finances of both tenants and the council. The roll out of damp and mould awareness training and delivery of the communication and engagement strategy provides good mitigation to this risk. The findings of the Tenant Scrutiny Board review of damp and mould will provide feedback which will further enable us to develop our resident engagement strategy.

5 Next steps

5.3 A number of key success measures will be used to monitor the success of the approach being taken to address damp and mould. These include:

- Tenants’ satisfaction levels with the quality of the home.
- Time taken to resolve damp and mould repairs.
- The volume of new damp and mould cases reported.
- Complaint levels relating to damp and mould.
- Decent Homes Standard monitoring / Level of damp and mould prevention investment
- Levels of successful disrepair claims received relating to damp and mould
- The number of complaints (reactive/proactive reporting) received from the private rented sector.
- The number of homes with category 1 and 2 hazards relating to damp and mould including those where the hazard has been addressed and reduced

6 Recommendations

Members of Leeds Housing Board are requested to:

- a) Note and comment on the contents of this report, and;
- b) support the measures which have been put in place to reduce damp and mould in tenant's homes and improve how reports of damp and mould in tenant's homes are managed.