



## LEEDS HOUSING BOARD AGENDA

**Meeting:** Leeds Housing Board Meeting  
**Date:** Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> November **Time:** 10:30–12:00  
**Location:** via Teams

<b>Item</b>	<b>Presented by</b>	<b>Time</b>
<b>1. Introductions and apologies</b>	Councillor Lennox	10:30-10:35
<b>2. Minutes of the Last Meeting</b>	Councillor Lennox	10:35-10:40
<b>3. Draft Communications and Engagement Policy Workshop</b>	Ian Montgomery	10:40-11:05
<b>4. Consumer Standards Progress Update</b>	Mandy Sawyer	11:05-11:20
<b>5. TSMs Quarter 2</b>	Adam Crampton	11:20-11:35
<b>6. Complaints Management Update</b>	Ian Montgomery	11:35-11:45
<b>7. Damp and Mould Update</b>	Adam Crampton	11:45-11:55
<b>8. AOB</b>	Councillor Lennox	11:55-12:00

**Date and Time of Next Meeting: 2.30pm, Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2025**



## Minutes



<b>Meeting Name:</b>	<b>Leeds Housing Board</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	Thursday 7 <sup>th</sup> June 2024	<b>Time:</b> 10.00-11.30
<b>Location:</b>	Microsoft Teams	
<b>Chair:</b>	Cllr Jessica Lennox (JL)	
<b>Members Present:</b>	Cllr Kayleigh Brooks (KB), Cllr Barry Anderson (BA), Cllr Jordan Bowden (JB), Zioness-Amaka Curry (ZAC), John Gittos (JG)	
<b>Attendees Present:</b>	Gerard Tinsdale (GT), (MS), Simon Baker (SB), Rob Goor (RG), Ian Montgomery (IM), Kerrie Murray (KM)	
<b>Apologies:</b>	James Rogers, Mandy Sawyer, Cllr Fiona Venner	

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### Minutes

Item	
<b>1</b>	<b>Introductions and apologies</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Minutes of the Last Meeting</b>
	The Board accepted the minutes from June's meeting.
<b>3</b>	<b>Consumer Standards Self-Assessments</b>
3.1	GT gave the Board an overview of the work that has been done, as outlined in the report, to assess ourselves against the new Consumer Standards. Of 61 specific expectations, we have strong compliance in 41, compliant in 15 and are potentially non-compliant in five. We are in a good place but there is more to be done.
3.2	Temporary measures are being put in place to deliver 100% compliance. A small team, led by Mandy Sawyer, has been established to work on this, and is expected to last 6-12 months.
3.3	RG then updated the Board on the Safety & Quality Standard. Of 12 specific expectations the Standard contains, we have strong compliance with five, six with compliance and one with potential non-compliance. Discussions around this are ongoing with the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH).

3.4	74% of our stock has received a survey but full surveys haven't been done, which is a risk. Access is an issue – 30% of visits, even though pre-arranged, result in no access.
3.5	We are doing well in terms of the TSMs but haven't necessarily got policies in place – we are working with tenants to get buy in and support.
3.6	JG asked if we have enough data on our homes. RG responded that we are data rich but perhaps aren't using that as well as we could do. The priority is to use all the data to get that complete picture. Need to find the 'silent' residents, highlighting problem of no access. How we report Decency is within government guidelines but we need to see 100% of properties.
3.7	JG then asked if there is anything that can be done to bring down the 30% no access figure. RG replied that we need to be more innovative in tenant communications and every time we access a property for a repair or maintenance, we need to use that opportunity to combine that with a survey.
3.8	JL asked, given that the RSH and Housing Ombudsman require 100% compliance, if there is a target already in place that we aim for? RG replied that for the last few years he target has been 20% of stock per year. The Decent Homes guidance was comfortable with surveys not being carried out on properties if the tenants didn't want to engage as long as attempts were made, but the Consumer Standards have changed that. Where an issue is safety critical we have powers of access and can go to court to gain access. Unless powers of access change it is unlikely we will hit 100%.
3.9	BA asked if surveys are required to be carried out by specialists – if for example a Housing Manager visited a property could they do a partial visual inspection? Or could tenants do a self-assessment, such as a tick box visual inspection? RG replied that the use of Housing Officers has been ruled out, because a specialist is needed. Regarding tenant self-assessments, RG pointed out that a lot of tenants carry out unauthorised DIY, wiring, etc, so it needs a specialist to survey properties. A target of a survey every five years has been set and the RSH seems happy with that. We are looking at working with other teams and other agencies.
3.10	ZAC pointed out that when it comes to non-access, it relies on good relationships and communication with tenants to increase rates. Tenants are annoyed if LCC staff don't turn up for pre-arranged appointments, or if a non-access is recorded when a tenant cannot answer immediately because they are in the toilet, for example. Need honesty and transparency with tenants. RG agreed 100% and we are increasing digital functionality to help improve comms around improvements.
3.11	<p>GT then gave an overview of the Tenancy and Neighbourhood and Community Standards performance as outlined in the report, highlighting issues such as the need to improve the robustness of our IT systems, the imminent publication of the Vulnerability Strategy, and the urgent review of our web content. GT also outlined the engagement that is going on with the RSH in terms of potential self-referral.</p> <p>JG asked if there has been an assessment of the costing involved in this work, do we know a cost per head? GT responded that on top of the £400,000 per annum fees we now have to pay to the RSH, he estimated the work has</p>

	probably cost something in the region of £150-£200k. This all comes from the Housing Revenue Account.
<b>4</b>	<b>Regulatory Compliance Update</b>
4.1	SB briefed the Board on the wider work that is being done to meet the new regulatory requirements.
4.2	A Social Housing Regulations Project Board has been established. A large part of its work had been concerned with the Consumer Standards work outlined in the previous report, but it has also begun a range of work in other areas, such as preparatory work in relation to the proposed Competency and Conduct Standard, work related to ongoing regulatory process and continued compliance and preparing for an inspection, and the work underway to ensure the recommendations contained in the Housing Ombudsman's Spotlight Reports are being met. Staff training eLearning packages are being developed to ensure all staff are aware of the new requirements and their responsibilities.
4.3	DG then briefed the Board on a proposed review of the Board itself, how it is operating and how it can be improved, after a year's operation, which members supported.
<b>5</b>	<b>Housing Leeds Annual Report 2023-24</b>
5.1	IM briefed the Board on the Housing Service's annual report. The report is similar in format to that of previous years, including TSM data which has been prioritised from the residents' perspective to highlight the survey results, which residents are most interested in.
5.2	JL commented the report is a nice, neat package that is well laid out and informative.
5.3	JG asked if there are any TSMs we are unable to collect. IM informed him that we are fully compliant.
<b>6.</b>	<b>Tenant Satisfaction Measures Q1</b>
6.1	RG took the Board through the main trends in the report. Overall satisfaction is up 1% in the first quarter of 24/25 compared to the 23/24 full year figure. A lot of activity has been carried out to improve performance in relation to complaints. Complaints performance remains stable, with improvements in the time taken to complete repairs. There has been a 17% drop in ASB reports. Meeting Decency Standards remains a high priority. The 23/24 TSM data was successfully submitted to the Regulator of Social Housing after being scrutinised by Internal Audit.  GT commented that it is good to see the incremental improvements, and hopes to see continued improvement in Q2.
<b>7.</b>	<b>AOB</b>
	n/a

**Next Meeting (Housing Strategy)**

**Date:** Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> September 2024      **Time:** 10:00 – 11:30

**Location:** Microsoft Teams

## Title: Developing a new Communications and Engagement Policy

Author: Ian Montgomery/Mandy Sawyer  
2024

Meeting Date: 21 November

### 1. Purpose

- 1.1 The service would like to take the opportunity to consult with the board on our approach to communications, to influence a new Communications and Engagement Policy.

### 2. Main points:

- 2.1 The 2023 Social Housing (Regulation) Act introduced four updated Consumer Standards, including the [Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard](#) (TIA) standard, which set out a strengthened requirement for social landlords to be open with tenants and treat them with fairness and respect so that they can access services, raise complaints, influence decision making and hold their landlord to account.
- 2.2 There are specific expectations that landlords will:
  - Understand the diverse needs of customers and deliver fair and equitable outcomes.
  - Engage with customers to take residents' views into consideration in their decision making.
  - Communicate and share information with customers so that they are able to access services.
  - Collect and provide performance information to customers to enable them to scrutinise the landlord's performance.
  - Ensure that complaints are dealt with fairly, effectively, and promptly.
- 2.3 To robustly comply with these requirements, it is therefore necessary for the service to develop a clearer and more consistent approach to communications and engagement activity across Housing Leeds.
- 2.4 Throughout October 2024, to help us develop a new communications and engagement policy, we have been consulting with residents for their views on our current approach to communications and their views on some proposed communication service standards.
- 2.5 We would like to share this and other customer insight with the board and workshop this item so the board can proactively influence the creation of a new policy.
- 2.6 We have also consulted residents in recent months on an updated tenant engagement local offer, the outcomes from which will also be reflected in any new policy.

### **3. Recommendations**

- 3.1 For the board to participate in discussion related to our future approach to communications so that that board influence and help create a new Communications and Engagement Policy.



**Title: Consumer Standards progress update**

**Author: Mandy Sawyer**

**Meeting Date: November 2024**

## **1. Background**

- 1.1. A key part of the Social Housing (Regulation) Act has been to empower the Regulator for Social Housing (RSH) to renew the Consumer Standards.
- 1.2. The Consumer Standards set out the requirements that social housing providers are obligated to meet in the quality of the homes and services they provide their tenants.
- 1.3. Coming into force on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024, the current Consumer Standards are:
  - **Neighbourhood and Community Standard** – this specifies the outcomes landlords must deliver by engaging with other relevant parties so that tenants can live in safe and well-maintained neighbourhoods and feel safe in their homes.
  - **Safety and Quality Standard** – this standard specifies the outcomes landlords must deliver in relation to the safety and quality of tenants' homes.
  - **Tenancy Standard** – this standard specifies the outcomes landlords must deliver about the fair allocation and letting of homes and how tenancies are managed and ended by landlords.
  - **Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard** – this specifies the outcomes landlords must achieve about being open with tenants and treating them with fairness and respect so that tenants can access services, raise complaints, influence decision making and hold their landlord to account, including collecting and publishing the data required by the Tenant Satisfaction Measures
- 1.4. At its meeting in November 2023 the Leeds Housing Board received a report on preparations being undertaken to prepare for the implementation of the updated Standards.
- 1.5. The Board was appraised of the intention to undertake a comprehensive self-assessment against each of the four Standards, the criteria that would be used, and the results of the first self-assessment that was completed, against the Tenancy Standard.
- 1.6. At the meeting in July, the Board received a report detailing the results of those self-assessments and the Action Plans that were produced to identify work needed to be done to achieve compliance
- 1.7. This report brings the Board the latest position on progress against the Consumer Standards.

## 2. Main Points

- 2.1. At its July meeting the Board was appraised of the results of the self-assessments undertaken on each of the Consumer Standards.
- 2.2. Each Standard is made up of a number of 'specific expectations', and we gave ourselves a RAG ('Red, Amber, Green') rating against each of them.
- 2.3. The table below shows the updated RAG rating as of October.
- 2.4. The RAG ratings are defined as:
  - Red – potentially non-compliant
  - Amber – minimum compliance with improvement opportunities
  - Green – robust compliance
- 2.5. Each Consumer Standard has a named Head of Service lead who has responsibility for leading on each one. The Safety and Quality Standard lead is Adam Crampton and the lead for the remaining three Standards is Mandy Sawyer.

Consumer Standard	Number of Specific Expectations	RAG ratings					
		Green		Amber		Red	
		July 24	Oct 24	July 24	Oct 24	July 24	Oct 24
Safety & Quality	12	5	5	6	6	1	1
Tenancy	18 (two are non-applicable to LCC because we don't use fixed-term tenancies)	12	12	3	4	1	0
Transparency, Influence and Accountability	23	9	14	11	7	3	2
Neighbourhood and Community	9	6	6	3	3	0	0

- 2.6. Some good progress has been made since July in delivering actions to strengthen our compliance with regulatory standards. Whilst some expectations continue to be rated at red and amber, many of the actions are considerable pieces of work which will take a number of months to complete. We have taken a cautious approach to de-escalating RAG ratings, de-escalating only where there is a clear evidence to support that the expectation is fully met. An update on the self assessment and actions underway is outlined for each of the Consumer Standards below.

## 3. SAFETY AND QUALITY STANDARD

- 3.1. Of the twelve expectations within this Standard, we continue to assess ourselves as compliant with eleven and potentially non-compliant with one expectation. Of the eleven compliant expectations, six are identified as needing further work/improvement in order to achieve robust compliance.

An action plan is in place to deliver improvements to strengthen our compliance. Progress in delivering improvement actions is outlined below:

### **3.2. Stock Quality and Decency**

3.3. We continue to identify a potential area of non-compliance relating to the 'Stock Quality and Decency' expectation to have an accurate record at an individual property level of condition of their stock, with a requirement for all properties to have had a full stock condition survey within the last 5 years. As at the end of June 2024 74% of Council homes had received a stock condition survey within the last 5 years but only 36% had received a full stock condition survey, with the remaining properties receiving elemental surveys. We have a target in place to undertake stock condition surveys of 100% of stock by the end of June 2026. We have internal staffing resource capacity to deliver stock condition surveys to 20% of stock each year and surveyors are making good progress in completing surveys. As at the end of Q2 (September 2024) 48% of our stock has now received a full stock condition survey in the last 5 years. We have recently developed a Stock Condition Surveying Strategy and to accelerate the number of surveys completed we are currently procuring an external contractor to complete additional stock condition surveys to ensure that the 2 year target is met. We expect to mobilise the contract in early 2025. Alongside this we are currently reviewing our communications and no access procedures to maximise access to undertake surveys. We also continue to work with contractors and IDS colleagues to ensure automated integration between systems for the transfer of stock condition data.

### **3.4. Health and Safety**

3.5. Whilst robustly complying with Health and Safety legislative responsibilities the initial self assessments identified improvement opportunities to strengthen our compliance with health and safety expectations – updating some key health and safety policies, strengthened performance reporting and strengthened arrangements where landlord functions are undertaken by other Council teams. We have made some really good progress in actions to strengthen compliance in these areas. A number of key Health and Safety policies have recently been reviewed, including fire safety, electrical safety and legionella. We have developed a Building Safety dashboard which reports performance on key health and safety indicators on a monthly basis. We are also working with other Council teams to formalise service level and performance reporting arrangements for services provided to tenants.

### **3.6. Repairs, Maintenance and Planned Improvements**

3.7. Again, whilst robustly complying with legislative responsibilities the initial self assessments identified improvement opportunities to strengthen our compliance with repairs, maintenance and planned improvements expectations – identifying that an assessment of tenant vulnerability at the

point of raising a repair could be more robust, along with improvements in communication. Progress in delivering these actions are as outlined in the Transparency, Influence and Accountability section of this report. Customer satisfaction surveys have been re-introduced following the completion of planned investment works, meaning the feedback received from customers can now be used to inform future investment programmes, specifications and delivery performance.

#### **4. TENANCY STANDARD**

4.1. Of the 18 expectations within this Standard, we now assess ourselves as compliant with 16 and 2 were not applicable. Of the 16 compliant expectations 4 are identified as needing further work / improvement in order to achieve robust compliance. Progress in delivering improvement actions is outlined below.

##### **4.2. Allocations and Lettings**

4.3. Whilst achieving the minimum level of compliance the initial self assessments identified that compliance could be strengthened on some of the 'Allocations and Lettings' expectations. Local Lettings Policies (LLPs) in place for some localities have not been reviewed for a number of years and so are at risk of no longer being relevant or justified and we identified weaknesses in our quality assurance arrangements to evidence our application of the lettings policy and CORE returns, impacting on data quality. We have made some progress in progressing actions. We have made some positive progress in progressing actions – we have appointed a staffing resource who will co-ordinate a review of our LLPs, a proposed framework for LLP reviews has been developed and work is underway to gather evidence to start reviews once the framework has been considered as part of the Lettings Policy changes at Executive Board in February 2025. We are also currently part way through reviewing our QA arrangements of housing applications and lettings / CORE, ensuring that improved guidance is in place along with training to ensure that more robust data is recorded in systems.

##### **4.4. Mutual Exchanges**

4.5. The initial self assessment identified a potential area of non compliance in relation to mutual exchanges because we didn't robustly advise customers of the possible implications of a mutual exchange and there are opportunities to improve our communication of support available. Really good progress has now been made since then – we have now concluded a review of our Mutual Exchange procedures these areas and training is underway ahead of rolling out updated arrangements. We have also now published the potential implications on the mutual exchange web page, meaning that we are now compliant with this expectation.

## **5. TRANSPARENCY, INFLUENCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY STANDARD**

5.1. Of the 23 expectations within this Standard, we now assess ourselves as compliant with 21 and identified 2 expectations where we were potentially non-compliant. Of the 21 compliant expectations 7 are identified as still needing further work / improvement in order to achieve robust compliance. Progress in delivering improvement actions is outlined below.

### **5.2. Diverse Needs**

5.3. We continue to identify a potential area of non compliance in relation to the diverse needs expectations. Whilst we collect customer equality and vulnerability data there are process weaknesses around updating data and reporting and we also do not have a documented Vulnerability Policy which sets out a consistent approach to supporting customers with a vulnerability. We also have some gaps in our use of a CRM solution to record customer contact and consider vulnerability. Actions are progressing to strengthen our compliance on these expectations. We are currently reviewing arrangements for the recording and reporting of equality data and have made some improvements. We are also reviewing reports available to enable us to undertake analysis of access to services by equality data. Alongside this we have established a service wide Vulnerability Working Group which is currently leading our approach to developing a Vulnerability Policy which will set out how we will manage customer data on vulnerabilities, how this will be reported and how this will be used to assess accessibility and inform reasonable adjustments to service delivery. Housing is part of a Council wide Customer Strategy transformation project and a high level option appraisal of interim CRM improvements has been considered and detailed costed proposals are currently being developed.

### **5.4. Information about Landlord Services**

5.5. Whilst achieving the minimum level of compliance there continue to be improvement opportunities to strengthen compliance with the 'Information about Landlord Services' expectations as information that we share with customers on our website, in the tenant handbook and in routine communications is not robustly aligned to the Standard. We also continue to assess ourselves as potentially non compliant with expectation 4.2 because we don't routinely explain tenants rights and landlord responsibilities to customers as part of service communications. We have recently developed a Communication and Engagement Policy, which will be considered separately on this agenda, which sets out a consistent approach to how we manage customer communication and engagement. The policy will be rolled out during November and services will undertake self assessments of their compliance and develop action plans to strengthen compliance. Alongside this we have reviewed the repairs web pages to make urgent improvements and plans are underway to review all web content and the tenant handbook to be more closely aligned to the Standard.

## **5.6. Performance Information**

- 5.7. We continue to assess ourselves as achieving the minimum level of compliance with opportunities for improvement. Whilst the routine in year reporting of TSM management indicators is in place manual intervention and adjustments are required to ensure that performance is reported in accordance with the technical definition and arrangements are ad hoc. Work is underway to undertake system changes where possible and to standardise reporting arrangements and these are becoming embedded as we progress through the year.

## **6. NEIGHBOURHOOD AND COMMUNITY STANDARD**

- 6.1. Of the 9 expectations within this Standard, we continue to assess ourselves as compliant with all 9. However there are 3 expectations identified as needing further work / improvement in order to achieve robust compliance.
- 6.2. **ASB / Hate Incidents**
- 6.3. Whilst achieving the minimum level of compliance on the 'ASB / Hate Incidents' expectations compliance could be strengthened on some expectations due to our current ASB policy being out of date and weaknesses in ASB reporting. Some really good progress has been made in progressing actions. We have undertaken a robust review of our ASB policy, with customer engagement and this will be finalised and rolled out alongside updated customer communications and procedures in the next few weeks. ASB data sets have recently been reviewed and reports are also currently being developed to enable more robust trend and performance reporting on a monthly basis.

## **7. Next Steps**

- 7.1. Leadership of the Consumer Standard Action plans will continue to be provided by Adam Crampton and Mandy Sawyer as Heads of Service, and their role will continue to be to oversee and drive the implementation of actions. This includes working with BITMO, PFI and other service providers to assess their compliance and agree actions to strengthen compliance.
- 7.2. Progress in delivering the action plans will continue to be reported into the monthly Social Housing Regulation Board, chaired by Gerard Tinsdale. Each month the self assessment RAG ratings are reviewed, taking into account actions undertaken and ratings are escalated or de-escalated accordingly.
- 7.3. The self assessment outcomes and action plans are being shared with the Tenant Scrutiny Board for their input and challenge of the approach. To date the Tenancy Standard and Neighbourhood and Community Standard have been considered by the Tenant Scrutiny Board, with the remaining 2

standards being considered in November and December. The Board has been broadly supportive of the approach and identified priorities.

- 7.4. Internal Audit are currently undertaking an audit of the self assessments completed earlier this year to assess the robustness of the assessment undertaken. The outcome and key findings from this audit will be reported to a future Board meeting.
- 7.5. A further meeting is arranged with the Regulator of Social Housing in early December to review progress in the delivery of actions to strengthen Consumer Standard compliance. The outcome of this meeting will be shared with the Board at a future Board meeting.
- 7.6. The Leeds Housing Board will continue to be kept informed of progress with strengthening our compliance.

## **8. Recommendations**

- 8.1. The Leeds Housing Board is asked to note and comment on the latest work being done to achieve full compliance with the Consumer Standards.

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# Leeds Housing Board

**Title: Tenant Satisfaction Measures Q1 Update**

**Authors: Frank Perrins/Simon Baker**

**Meeting Date: 21 November 2024**

## **1. Background**

- 1.1. Since April 2023 the TSM survey has become a compulsory requirement and the findings for 2023/24 have recently been reported to the regulator. We are now working towards collecting enough surveys to meet our targets for 2024/25 and report to the regulator after March 2025.
- 1.2. The Leeds Housing Board received quarterly updates on the data as it was collected throughout the year.
- 1.3. This report shares the Q2 24/25 results with the Board.
- 1.4. This survey is now a compulsory requirement. Results for 2023/24 have been submitted to the regulator and we are now working to meet our targets for 2024/25, to be reported to regulator after March 2025.
- 1.5. Acuity continues to carry out surveys through a combination of telephone calls (80%) and email invitations to an online survey (20%) with text message reminders. Only the TSM questions, an open text comment and the further question 'landlord is easy to deal with' are included in the phone survey, with additional questions in the online survey only. We continue to over-sample BITMO to ensure findings are useful.

## **2. Main Points**

### **2.1. TSM survey Q2 results**

- 2.2. During Q2 630 surveys were completed, 504 by telephone and 126 through an online survey.
- 2.3. Many questions have shown lower scores in Q2 than Q1, including overall satisfaction, which dropped 4 percentage points since Q1 (to 63%).
- 2.4. Although the overall trend appears to improve throughout 2023/24 and then decrease through the first two quarters of 2024/25, it may be that Q4 was the outlier with unusually high satisfaction, and we've returned to a level consistent with Q1 and Q2 last year.
- 2.5. Comparing Q2 figures with full year 2023/24 results, the differences for most of the questions (including overall satisfaction) are within the quarterly margin of error (approx. +/-4%), with the exception of:
  - Provides a home that is safe: 69% compared to 74% for full year 23/24.
  - Communal areas are kept clean and well maintained: 51% compared to 65% for full year 23/24.

- Makes a positive contribution to your neighbourhood: 54% compared to 60% for full year 23/24. Approach to handling anti-social behaviour: 45% compared to 53% for full year 23/24.
- 2.6. These questions are related to safety, the local area and anti-social behaviour. During Q2 last year we also saw lower results for these indicators, suggesting that these could be affected by seasonal conditions such as warmer weather and longer daylight hours.
- 2.7. Considering Q2 last year looking for any seasonal trends, we saw decreases in many of the same indicators, however, there is a greater difference in these indicators in 2024/25. It could be that tenant perceptions around safety, the local area and anti-social behaviour have been impacted by media coverage of the recent disorder and riots, since the field work was carried out during and after the time of these events.

TSM Survey Results	2023/24					2024/25			Trend	Diff to 23/24
	Full Year	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Full Year		
Count of total completed responses	2571	644	672	632	623	631	630	1261		
Statistical accuracy - confidence interval	1.9%	3.8%	3.8%	3.9%	3.9%	3.9%	3.9%	2.7%		
<b>Overall</b>										
Overall satisfaction with services provided	66%	62%	63%	68%	70%	67%	63%	65%		-1%
<b>The home</b>										
Percentage of tenants who had a repair in the last 12 months	69%	67%	70%	70%	70%	70%	71%	70%		1%
Satisfaction with overall repairs service received in the last 12 months	70%	68%	71%	71%	71%	72%	68%	70%		0%
Satisfaction with time taken to complete most recent repair	67%	63%	67%	67%	71%	69%	68%	68%		1%
Satisfaction that landlord provides a home that is well maintained	68%	67%	65%	69%	69%	68%	66%	67%		-1%
Satisfaction that landlord provides a home that is safe	74%	73%	73%	76%	73%	73%	69%	71%		-3%
<b>Contact and communication</b>										
Satisfaction that your landlord listens to your views and acts upon them	55%	54%	54%	57%	56%	55%	51%	53%		-2%
Satisfaction that you are kept informed about things that matter to you	67%	66%	65%	69%	69%	68%	66%	67%		0%
Percentage of tenants agreeing 'my landlord treats me fairly and with respect'	74%	75%	73%	75%	73%	74%	71%	72%		-2%
Percentage who made a complaint in the last 12 months	28%	29%	26%	27%	27%	26%	31%	28%		0%
Satisfaction with your landlord's approach to complaints handling	29%	29%	25%	34%	27%	25%	22%	23%		-6%
Satisfaction that your landlord is easy to deal with*	66%	67%	65%	66%	65%	67%	64%	65%		-1%
<b>Neighbourhood and community</b>										
Satisfaction that communal areas are kept clean and well maintained	65%	66%	62%	68%	64%	66%	51%	61%		-4%
Satisfaction that landlord makes a positive contribution to your neighbourhood	60%	64%	59%	61%	58%	63%	54%	59%		-1%
Satisfaction with your landlord's approach to handling anti-social behaviour	53%	50%	52%	55%	55%	56%	45%	51%		-2%

\*Included in telephone survey as key customer services indicator

- 2.8. 500 comments from Q2 24/25 were analysed and categorised into themes and compared against Q4 23/24 (when results were most positive).
- 2.9. Analysis showed that:
- The most common themes in Q2 with a negative sentiment were 'Disrepair or repairs needed/outstanding' (14% of comments), 'Repair timescales too long' (10%) and 'Poor/improve customer service' (10%).
  - The most common themes in Q2 with a positive sentiment were 'Repairs completed on time/well' (11%) and 'Good/fast service' (11%)
- 2.10. Analysis also showed that the proportion of comments for some themes increased in Q2 24/25 compared to Q4 23/24, including:

- Unreliable repair appointments/attendance/communication (75% increase) and Poor quality repairs/contractors (33% increase) – when linked to the, admittedly not statistically significant, decrease in repairs satisfaction for Q2, this could suggest issues with the contractor.
- Grass, hedges, parking, litter etc issues (200% increase) - supporting the survey findings around ASB and the local area.

### 3. TSM Management Information Q2

<b>Complaints</b>	<b>2023/24 year-end</b>	<b>Q1 Jul 23 - Jun 24 - Provisional</b>	<b>Q2 Sep 23 - Aug 24 - Provisional</b>
Complaints relative to the size of the landlord - Stage One (per 1,000 homes)	41.1	42.0	41.7
Complaints relative to the size of the landlord - Stage Two (per 1,000 homes)	10.4	11.0	10.9
Stage One complaints responded to within Complaint Handling Code timescales.	88.0%	90.0%	91.6%
Stage Two complaints responded to within Complaint Handling Code timescales.	87.6%	89.7%	89.6%
<b>Anti-social behaviour cases relative to the size of the landlord</b>	<b>2024/25 year to date as at end of Q1 - Provisional</b>	<b>2024/25 year to date as at end of Q2 - Provisional</b>	
Anti-social behaviour cases opened (per 1,000 homes)	18.4	41.1	
Anti-social behaviour cases that involved hate incidents opened (per 1,000 homes)	1.5	1.8	
<b>Homes that do not meet the Decent Homes Standard</b>	<b>2023/24 year-end</b>	<b>Q1 2024/25 YTD position (as at the end of June 2024)</b>	<b>Q2 2024/25 YTD position (as at the end of September 2024)</b>
Proportion of homes that do not meet the Decent Homes Standard	3.3%	4.6%	4.5%
<b>Repairs completed within target timescale</b>	<b>2023/24 year-end</b>	<b>Q1 June 23 - May 24 - Provisional</b>	<b>Q2 September 23 - August 24 - Provisional</b>
Number of non-emergency responsive repairs completed within the provider's target timescale	82.3%	84.0%	86.6%
Number of emergency responsive repairs completed within the provider's target timescale	93.7%	94.2%	94.8%
<b>Safety Checks</b>	<b>2023/24 year-end</b>	<b>2024/25 YTD position</b>	
<b>BS01 – Gas safety checks:</b> Proportion of homes for which all required gas safety checks have been carried out	99.4%	99.5%	
<b>BS02 – Fire safety checks:</b> Proportion of homes for which all required fire risk assessments have been carried out. ( <i>The LCC fire safety team have complied with the requirements of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 - all properties requiring a Fire Risk</i>	100.0%	99.8%	

<i>Assessment are visited in line with the scheduled program of inspections. In the case of the small number where access cannot be achieved due to use of unsuited locks, the officer attending submits a work order to have the lock changed to a suited lock and will revisit when locks have been changed.)</i>		
<b>BS03 – Asbestos safety checks:</b> Proportion of homes for which all required asbestos management surveys or re-inspections have been carried out.	100.0%	100.0%
<b>BS04 – Water safety checks:</b> Proportion of homes for which all required legionella risk assessments have been carried out.	100.0%	100.0%
<b>BS05 – Lift safety checks:</b> Proportion of homes for which all required communal passenger lift safety checks have been carried out.	100.0%	98.4%

#### **4. Improvement works underway**

- 4.1. Work is underway to embed the routine in year reporting of TSM performance as much as possible via Council systems, minimising the need for manual data manipulation. Arrangements are also being reviewed to ensure that quality assurance arrangements of data sets are robust.
- 4.2. Over the last couple of months we have done some detailed analysis of trends with three of the Contact and Communications TSMs – Satisfaction that your landlord listens to your views and acts upon them, Satisfaction that you are kept informed of things that matter to you and agreement whether the landlord treats you fairly, taking into account the tenant profile by tenant satisfaction levels and comments. This highlighted that the main issues identified as contributing towards lower satisfaction were poor communication, a delay on incomplete repairs, difficulty getting hold of the right person, inconvenient or unreliable appointments and the impact on vulnerable tenants. All of these points will be assisted by strengthening our communication and engagement policy approach.
- 4.3. We continue to work with Housemark to benchmark our TSM and wider performance indicators across the sector but also with a bespoke peer group of other large urban landlords. This benchmarking of unofficial TSM performance for 2023/24 highlights that for the TSM measures measured by tenant survey seven TSMs we are above average for our peer group and five are below average for our peer group including overall satisfaction, satisfaction with the repairs service in the last 12 months, treating tenants fairly and with respect, satisfaction with complaints handling and ASB approach.
- 4.4. Actions underway to improve our performance on the TSMs is in the main being driven via our Consumer Standard Action Plans, as TSMs are largely an indicator of strength of performance on the Consumer Standards. These

actions are outlined within the Consumer Standards Progress Update paper on this agenda.

- 4.5. Repairs service - Performance relating to repairs completed within timescale continues to improve and perform well against the peer group information available to date. Satisfaction with the repairs service remains stable with marginally improved performance from Q4 of last year.
- 4.6. Proportion of homes that do not meet the Decent Homes Standard - Work continues to improve data quality regarding stock condition with significant activity underway to support this approach. A slight drop in homes not meeting the Decent Homes Standard was anticipated and procurement activity is underway to ensure delivery avenues are in place to address areas of non-decency in homes.

## **5. Discussion Points**

- 5.1. Q2 is showing lower scores – overall satisfaction is down 4% - consider what factors might be influencing this.
- 5.2. There is an opportunity for the Board to discuss how we are performing in relation to our peers in response to the Housemark findings mentioned above.

## **6. Recommendations**

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

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# Leeds Housing Board

**Title: Complaints Handling Performance**

**Authors: Roisin Donnelly/Ian Montgomery - with a supporting statement from Cllr Lennox, Member Responsible for Complaints**

**Meeting Date: 21 Nov 2024**

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. The service wishes to update the Board on activity related to the management of complaints, specifically:
- a) Recent complaints performance for Q1 and Q2 2024/25 including an analysis of complaints by type and issue
  - b) An overview of Ombudsman activity and our learning from complaints including a recently introduced Ombudsman 'Learning Log'
  - c) An update on our complaints' satisfaction monitoring
  - d) Our wider complaints management activity
  - e) A statement from the Member Responsible for Complaints (MRC)

## 2. Performance update

A summary of the services performance broken down into most recent four quarters is below:

Indicator	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2*
Stage 1 complaints received	543	696	631	558
<i>Previous year comparison</i>	655	668	590	532
Stage 1 responded in code (10 working days or with an extension)	88.2%	87.5%	90%	94%*
<i>Previous year comparison</i>	76.0%	73.2%	82.7%	93%

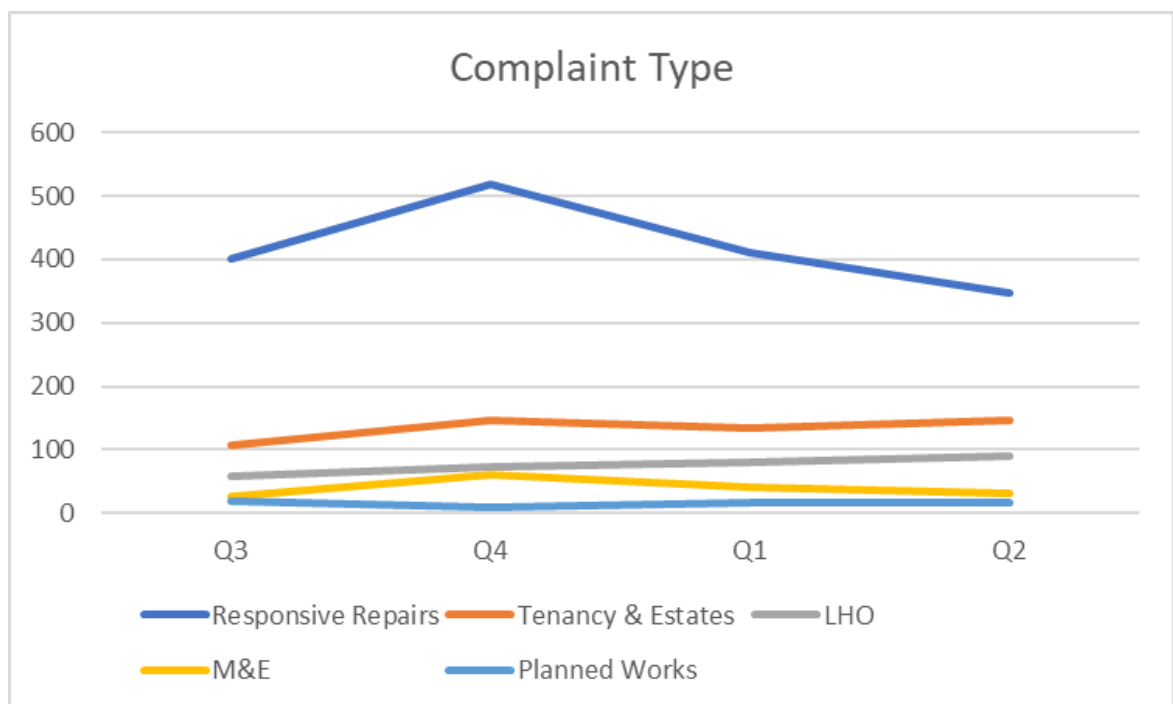
Indicator	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2*
Stage 2 complaints received	134	173	168	138
<i>Previous year comparison</i>	145	136	139	143
Stage 2 responded in code (20 working days or with an extension)	83.6%	90.8%	93%	99%*
<i>Previous year comparison</i>	67.6%	63.4%	88.5%	88.8%

\* 24/25 Q2 performance currently only includes July and August 2024. This will be updated when September performance is available.

- 2.1. Tenant Satisfaction Measures (or TSMs) performance related to complaints will be provided to the board separately.
- 2.2. Performance in the last 12 months was positive, improving (or maintaining) from each quarter to the next. 89.4% of stage 1 complaints and 91.1% of stage 2 complaints received a response in timescale or were

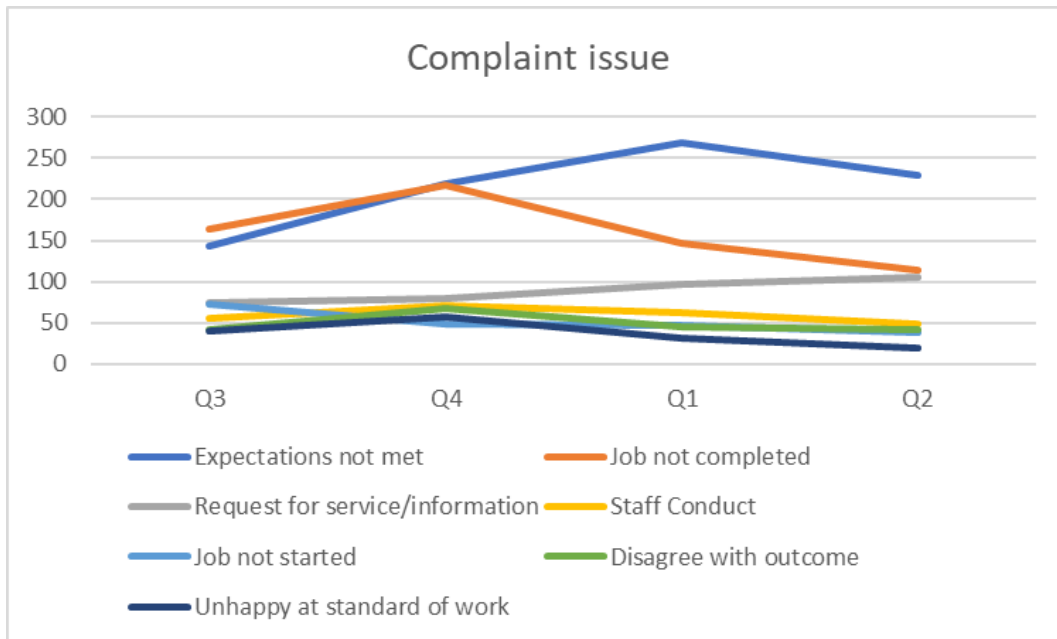
compliant with the complaint handling code, an improvement from 80.5% (stage 1) and 77.1% (stage 2) in the preceding 12 months.

- 2.3. For August 2024, our latest full performance month, we are currently responding to 93.3% of stage 1 complaints within code requirements and 100% of stage 2 complaints.
- 2.4. The most common complaints by type remains those which relate to our day-to-day repairs service, reflecting the volume and nature of the activity undertaken, having completed over 204,000 repairs during 2023/34. Based on this volume, less than 1% of repairs result 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 – Responsive repairs, tenancy and estate management, Leeds Housing Options, mechanical and electrical and planned works.
- 2.5. The volume of complaints received in quarter 2 this year is similar to Q2 in 23/24; a little higher at stage 1 and a little lower at stage 2. Volumes received in the last 12 months show that complaint volumes were greater during the colder months in Q4 as repair related complaints increased.



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





- 2.8 To assist managers in identifying trends and to monitor individual service performance, managers have access to a 'complaints dashboard' which gives an overview of complaints by stage, area, type, issue, and sub-issue. They can filter this to produce meaningful information for their service area and highlight any trends and discuss opportunities for learning and improvement with their teams. The dashboard also records the date a complaint was received to help us monitor complaints responses in timescales.
- 2.9 In relation to making service improvements to tackle 'expectations not met', we have recently updated our [repairs web pages](#) to make it clearer how residents access the repairs service, our service standards and our responsibilities, and what to do if something doesn't go right. Residents can now also book non-emergency repairs through their Tenant Portal account. Whilst this may not cover all the issues within this complaint type, we hope this will give additional information to residents at the point in time when they start their customer journey and will have a positive impact.
- 2.10 In response to complaints that include residents feedback about the conduct our workers, and the communication around access to complete repairs, we will be undertaking a large-scale resident consultation throughout November. The consultation will capture insight and feedback that will allow us to make customer led improvements to these areas of the service.
- 2.11 Other examples of learning from complaints include the updating of the customer FAQ's related to the bungalows linked to the Extra Care Scheme in Middleton, to make the eligibility criteria clearer for potential applicants.
- 2.12 BITMO complaints are included in the overall performance figures at the head of this section. Across Q1 and Q2 all BITMO complaints received a response within Complaint Handling Code timescales.

### 2.13 Ombudsman cases, during Q1 and Q2 2024/25 we've received:

	HOS assessment	HOS Formal*	LGO assessment	LGO formal
Q3	9	10	0	1
<i>Q3 last year</i>	5	8	1	2
Q4	13	16	5	2
<i>Q4 last year</i>	4	10	3	3
Q1	20	22	3	6
<i>Q1 last year</i>	7	6	2	5
Q2	18	21	1	1
<i>Q2 last year</i>	7	10	3	6

\*Formal cases are those which the Housing Ombudsman will investigate, whereas assessment requests are where the Housing Ombudsman asks us for information, and these may or may not progress to formal cases. The HOS are more likely to progress straight to formal investigation than the LGO.

### 2.12 Outcomes received during 2024/25 so far are:

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

In Q1 and Q2 the outcomes from Housing Ombudsman cases were:

- 20 cases where fault was identified (8 Maladministration & Service Failure, 10 Maladministration only and 2 service failure only).
- 8 cases were investigated found no fault.
- 3 additional cases were closed without full investigation and no further action required.

In the same period, the outcomes from Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman cases were:

- 3 cases identified fault/injustice.
- 2 cases were closed outside of jurisdiction.

2.14 On the 16th October the Housing Ombudsman published a [learning from Severe Maladministration report](#). This included severe maladministration cases from over 100 landlords, published by them ahead of Awaab's Law to help highlight and prevent future failings. Whilst Housing Leeds are not included in the main body of the report, due to the large number of damp and mould related cases reviewed by the Ombudsman two Leeds cases are included and listed within the supporting Annex.

- 2.15 Both these cases had an aspect related to damp and mould, with subsequent case reviews being completed by the service which identified number of learning points. Both cases pre-date the work within the service on improvement to our damp and mould management including the creation of a dedicated damp and mould team for responding to damp and mould reports, improved training for all customer facing staff, contractors and partners, and improvements to our resident engagement on damp and mould, improving the availability and quality of advice and support for residents.
- 2.16 Since the last update to the board, we have implemented a 'Housing Ombudsman Learning Log'. We are now using this to better monitor the outcomes, actions, and learning from Ombudsman cases. This helps strengthen our compliance with the requirements of the Complaint Handling Code and other requirements linked to Housing Ombudsman Spotlight Reports. It also allows us to better report outcomes to the management team, the board and seeks to put learning outcomes in one place so we can report back more proactively our learning to residents.
- 2.17 Since April this year there have been 5 policy related learning outcomes (e.g. updating our fencing policy to ensure takes into account customer disabilities or vulnerabilities when making decisions related to fencing requests), 2 service improvement related actions (e.g. to consider sharing copies of ASB action plans with victims to outline the steps we are taking) and 3 training related actions (e.g. identifying a training need in relation to a specific type of customer circumstances and the application of a 'direct let'). These and other actions are now being tracked to ensure completion.
- 2.18 In August the Housing Ombudsman released our Landlord Performance Report (see appendix 1). Based on the Housing Ombudsman's overall rating they view Leeds City Council as overall performing well when compared to similar landlords by size and type. Our maladministration and severe-maladministration levels being lower than other local authorities and those landlords with more than 59,000 units. In line with national trends, the total amount of compensation paid during 2023/24 was significantly higher than the previous year, however, with improved compliance against the Complaint Handling Code and improvements to complaint handling we hope to see this amount reduce in future years. The Housing Ombudsman has also recently published a sector wide [Annual Complaints Review](#) outlining national complaints management trends.

### **3. Satisfaction Monitoring**

- 3.1. We continue to 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 who have had a complaint closed in the previous month. There were 271 responses informing the findings for 2022/23, 204 for 2023/24 and for the first quarter this year we have received 41 responses, which if this continues equates to 163 a year (the lowest since inception).

- 3.2. As the survey so far this year has been completed by a relatively small number of respondents there is a risk that the responses are unreliable, though it does appear that overall satisfaction has fallen from last year. We need to consider in more detail what is influencing the fall in response rates and if this reflects that more residents are having a more positive or negative experience. We have shared our approach to satisfaction monitoring with the Tenant Scrutiny Board as part of their review into how we learn from complaints and we hope to incorporate their feedback and any proposals for new approaches when they publish their report at the end of the year.
- 3.3. Information from satisfaction monitoring will continue to identify and provide practical advice and reminders for sharing with staff in our monthly learning from complaints feature in Housing Leeds Matters, the internal staff bulletin. It also helps identify those cases where satisfaction is poorest or if there is an issue outstanding so we can highlight to the relevant team and proactively intervene if value to the customer in doing so.



#### **4. Wider complaints management activity**

4.1. To strengthen our approach to complaints management:

- a) Continue to deliver monthly 'Investigating Officer' training/refresher sessions for investigating officers. This reminds investigating officers about good practice and requirements of the Complaint Handling Code, especially the importance of contacting the customer to fully understand their complaint so we can effectively respond.
- b) Promoted to residents and ward members the opportunity to take part in the 'call to evidence' for a future Housing Ombudsman Spotlight Report called '[Repairing Trust](#)'. The report aims to highlight some of the positive changes landlords have made to 'rise to the maintenance challenge and prepare for the introduction of Awaab's Law, which will set statutory repair timescales and record-keeping requirements. When published, the report will also include recommendations that will be used by Housing Leeds to inform our service improvement activity.
- c) We have volunteered to take part in some research led by Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) linked to the national [Make Things Right campaign](#). This campaign sought to raise awareness for tenants in how to raise issues and make complaints if they have problems with their home or landlord. MCHLG are wishing to speak to landlords to hear their experiences of complaints management and to explore what could landlords with their work.
- d) The Tenant Scrutiny Board are now nearing the end of their current review into complaints, specifically, how we can ensure all complaints are responded to within compliance of the code, how we learn from complaints and how we share the learning from complaints back to customers. The board are likely to present to the service a range of recommendations. Their most recent meeting having looked at examples

from other landlords on how they share learning with residents that we may wish to adopt in Leeds.

- e) We will seek to include a more detailed benchmarking information in the annual complaints and performance improvement report that will be presented to the board after year end, however, mid-year benchmarking tell us that in comparison with other local authorities and ALMOs our performance is relatively strong, with a fairly wide range of performance being experienced across the sector.

Year 2024		Month September		Peer Group All LAs and ALMOs		KPI Multiple selections		
September 2024		Trend (last 12 months)	Previous Month	September	Quartile	Quartile 3	Median	Quartile 1
Customer Experience								
All LAs and ALMOs								
Formal Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints received per 1,000 properties			-	4.00	3	2.05	4.61	5.98
Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints resolved within timescale (%)			-	94.67	2	63.67	80.95	100.00

- f) The service is currently recruiting to the two tenant board member vacancies, undertaking 'taster' sessions for those that have expressed an interest. The taster session includes sharing information about complaints and our complaints performance as an example of an issue overseen by the board to help develop a strong learning from complaints culture.
- g) The service continues to receive compliments on its complaint handling for example, a recent compliment received in the Repairs Intervention Team, stated "I wanted to express my appreciation for the outstanding customer service provided by Lianne Vickers during my case. Her way of handling the situation with empathy and professionalism made a significant difference to the customer experience".
- h) Following review of repairs and maintenance related complaints earlier this year, changes have been made to improve the handling of property related complaints with a focus on strengthening consistency of approach, quality of resident engagement, and aftercare. The service are currently implementing the second phase of these changes by bringing in the complaint handling function from Leeds Building Services. The final phase of these changes will happen in the new year when one team, aligned to the Intervention Team, will take on the function of managing all property related complaints, including planned improvements and mechanical and electrical.

## 5. Member Responsible for Complaints (MRC)

- 5.1. The Code requires that a 'Member Responsible for Complaints' (or MRC) is appointed. The member is responsible for supporting a positive complaint handling culture and ensuring that insight on complaint handling and performance is shared with the 'governing body'.

5.2. Following additional advice from Legal Services the formal aspects of the MRC role will now be undertaken by Councillor Lennox, with support and working closely with Councillor Bowden. To meet the expectations of the [MRC role](#) this and future reports to the board will include a statement from the MRC about the report content.

5.3. Statement from the Member Responsible for Complaints:

*It's positive to note that performance in terms of complaints responded to within timescales is improving consistently over time and thank the service for managing this more closely. Whilst we have focussed on ensuring a timely response in line with the Complaint Handling Code, it would be useful in future to also share with the Board the escalation rates from Stage 1 to Stage 2 so that we can use this as a measure of the quality of responses. Both factors are important.*

*I look forward to receiving the Tenant Scrutiny Board's recommendations as agree with their focus of trying to improve how we learn from complaints and crucially, how we share this back with customers to build trust in the service. I feel there is scope to do more on this and would like the service to consider including more detail about how we report outcomes to customers in future reports to this board.*

*Councillor Jess Lennox – Member Responsible for Complaints, Chair of the Leeds Housing Board and Executive Member for Housing.*

## **6. Discussion Points**

- 6.1. We have improved performance in terms of responses in timescales – but it's equally important for residents to receive quality responses. What future assurance could we provide to the Board to ensure high quality complaints responses?
- 6.2. Housemark have concluded that the volume of tenants saying they have 'complained in the last 12 months' in our tenant perception (TSM's) data, is greater than the volume of complaints landlords actually receive, or are entering the formal complaints process – why do we think this is the case?
- 6.3. Is there other information related to complaints the board would wish to see in future complaints reporting?
- 6.4. The Tenant Scrutiny Board will shortly be completing their review into complaints, how would the board like to be updated on the work of the Tenant Scrutiny Board and their complaints recommendations?

## **7. Recommendations**

- 6.5. The Board are asked to note and comment on any information included in this report.
- 6.6. The Board note the clarification related to the MRC role and consider the statement on this latest period by the MRC.

**Housing**  
Ombudsman Service

**LANDLORD  
PERFORMANCE  
REPORT**

**2023/2024**

Leeds City Council

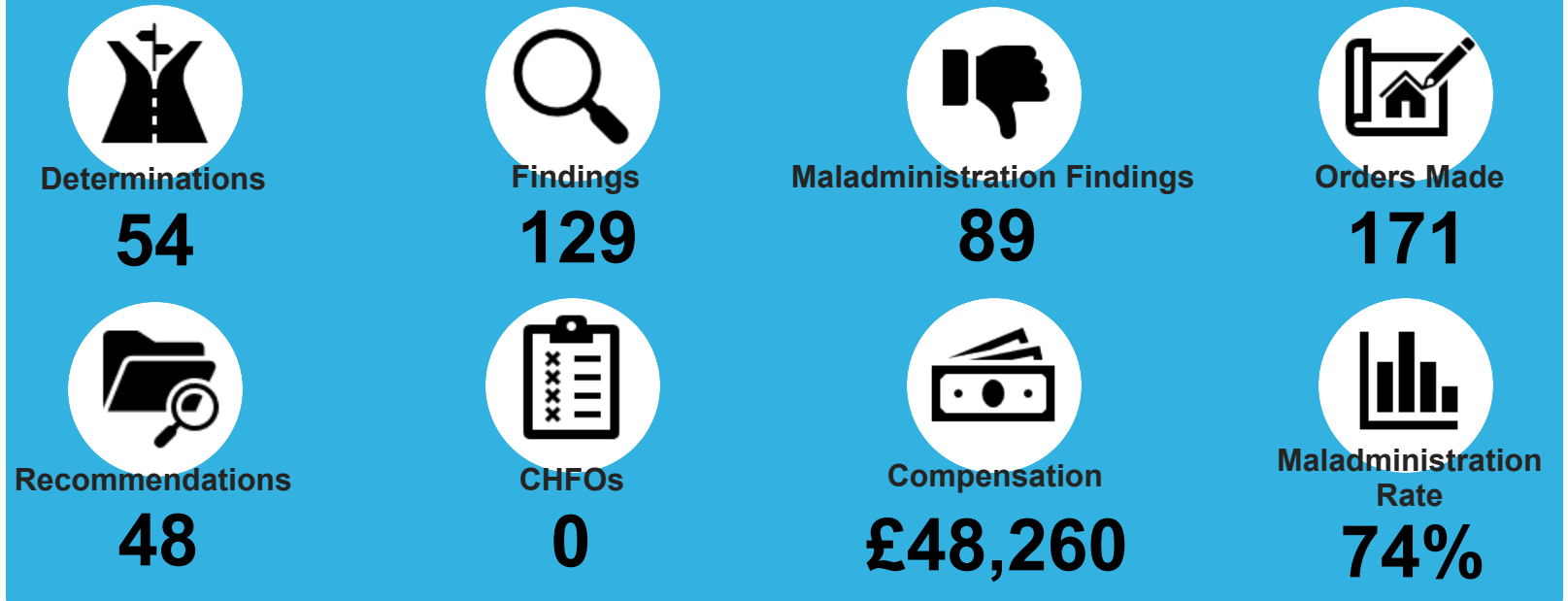
Leeds City Council

Landlord:

Landlord Homes: 55,688

Landlord Type: Local Authority / ALMO or TMO

**PERFORMANCE AT A GLANCE**



**PERFORMANCE 2022-2023**

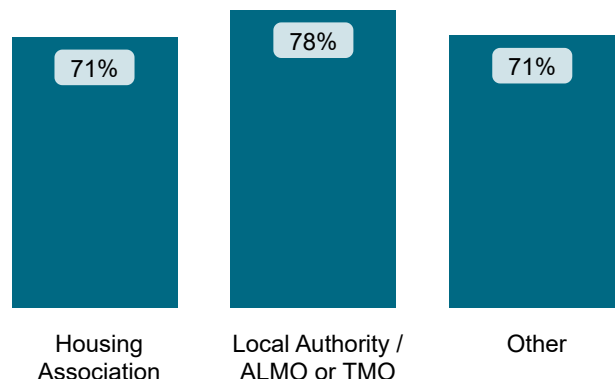
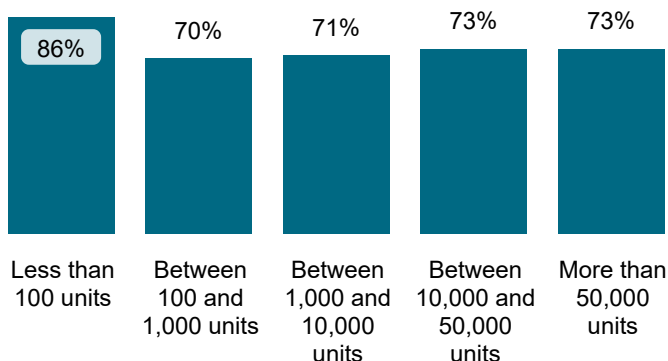


**Maladministration Rate Comparison** | Cases determined between April 2023 - March 2024

**NATIONAL MALADMINISTRATION RATE: 73%** The landlord performed well when compared to similar landlords by size and type.

National Mal Rate by Landlord Size: [Table 1.1](#)

by Landlord Type: [Table 1.2](#)





**Findings Comparison** | Cases determined between April 2023 - March 2024

**National Performance by Landlord Size:** Table 2.1

Outcome	Less than 100 units	Between 100 and 1,000 units	Between 1,000 and 10,000 units	Between 10,000 and 50,000 units	More than 50,000 units	Total
Severe Maladministration	13%	6%	4%	8%	7%	7%
Maladministration	39%	37%	41%	42%	43%	42%
Service failure	17%	18%	20%	18%	19%	19%
Mediation	0%	0%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Redress	0%	6%	7%	8%	12%	9%
No maladministration	11%	21%	20%	16%	12%	15%
Outside Jurisdiction	20%	11%	8%	7%	5%	7%
Withdrawn	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Leeds City Council	
Outcome	% Findings
Severe Maladministration	4%
Maladministration	39%
Service failure	26%
Mediation	0%
Redress	5%
No maladministration	19%
Outside Jurisdiction	7%
Withdrawn	0%

**National Performance by Landlord Type:** Table 2.2

Outcome	Housing Association	Local Authority / ALMO or TMO	Other	Total
Severe Maladministration	6%	9%	6%	7%
Maladministration	41%	45%	37%	42%
Service failure	19%	18%	20%	19%
Mediation	1%	1%	0%	1%
Redress	12%	4%	5%	9%
No maladministration	15%	15%	20%	15%
Outside Jurisdiction	6%	9%	11%	7%
Withdrawn	0%	0%	0%	0%

Outcome	% Findings
Severe Maladministration	4%
Maladministration	39%
Service failure	26%
Mediation	0%
Redress	5%
No maladministration	19%
Outside Jurisdiction	7%
Withdrawn	0%

**Landlord Findings by Category** | Cases determined between April 2023 - March 2024

Table 2.3

Category	Severe Maladministration	Maladministration	Service failure	Mediation	Redress	No maladministration	Outside Jurisdiction	Withdrawn	Total
Property Condition	4	23	16	0	2	15	2	0	62
Complaints Handling	1	20	9	0	2	0	0	0	32
Anti-Social Behaviour	0	2	4	0	0	3	2	0	11
Health and Safety (inc. building safety)	0	1	2	0	1	2	0	0	6
Staff	0	0	1	0	1	2	2	0	6
Charges	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	3
Estate Management	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	3
Moving to a Property	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	3
Information and data management	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Occupancy Rights	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>129</b>

**Findings by Category Comparison** | Cases determined between April 2023 - March 2024

**Top Categories for Leeds City Council**

Table 3.1

Category	# Landlord Findings	% Landlord Maladministration	% National Maladministration
Property Condition	60	72%	73%
Complaints Handling	32	94%	84%
Anti-Social Behaviour	9	67%	68%

**National Maladministration Rate by Landlord Size:** Table 3.2

Category	Less than 100 units	Between 100 and 1,000 units	Between 1,000 and 10,000 units	Between 10,000 and 50,000 units	More than 50,000 units	% Landlord Maladministration
Anti-Social Behaviour	71%	61%	60%	67%	75%	67%
Complaints Handling	100%	87%	87%	86%	81%	94%
Property Condition	80%	63%	72%	74%	74%	72%

**National Maladministration Rate by Landlord Type:** Table 3.3

Category	Housing Association	Local Authority / ALMO or TMO	Other	% Landlord Maladministration
Anti-Social Behaviour	68%	70%	67%	67%
Complaints Handling	81%	91%	91%	94%
Property Condition	72%	77%	61%	72%

**Findings by Sub-Category** | Cases Determined between April 2023 - March 2024 Table 3.4

Highlighted Service Delivery Sub-Categories only:

Sub-Category	Severe Maladministration	Maladministration	Service failure	Mediation	Redress	No maladministration	Outside Jurisdiction	Withdrawn	Total
Responsive repairs - general	1	11	10	0	2	5	2	0	31
Responsive repairs – leaks / damp / mould	3	9	3	0	0	5	0	0	20
Staff conduct	0	0	1	0	1	2	2	0	6
Pest control (within property)	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	3
Electrical safety	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	2
Noise	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	2
Structural safety	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2
Decants (temp. or permanent)	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Fire Safety	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Gas inspections and safety	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Responsive repairs – heating and hot water	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>70</b>

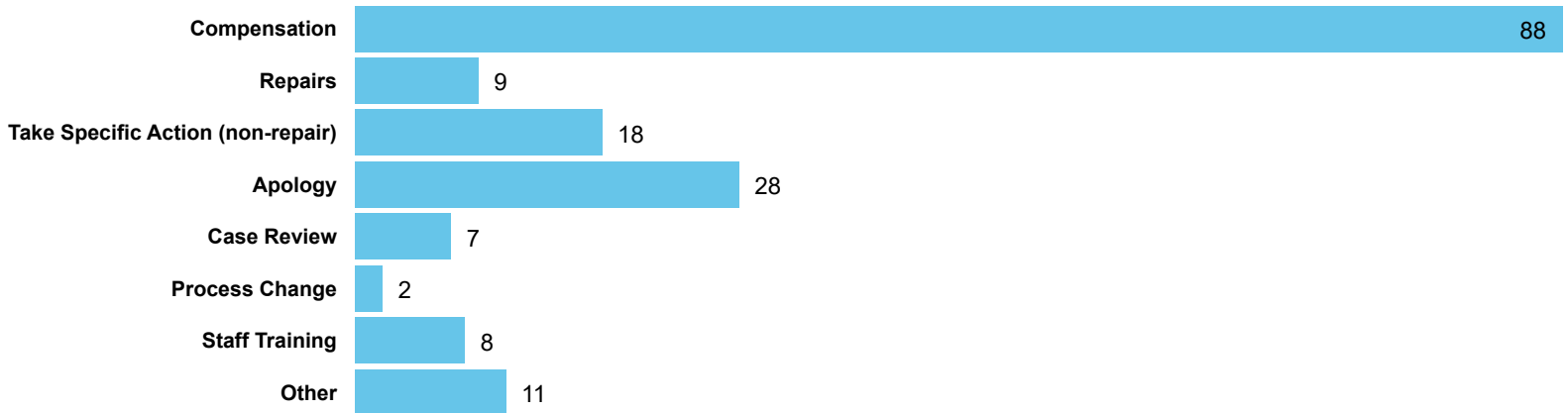
**Top Sub-Categories** | *Cases determined between April 2023 - March 2024*

Table 3.5



**Orders Made by Type** | *Orders on cases determined between April 2023 - March 2024*

Table 4.1



**Order Compliance** | *Order target dates between April 2023 - March 2024*

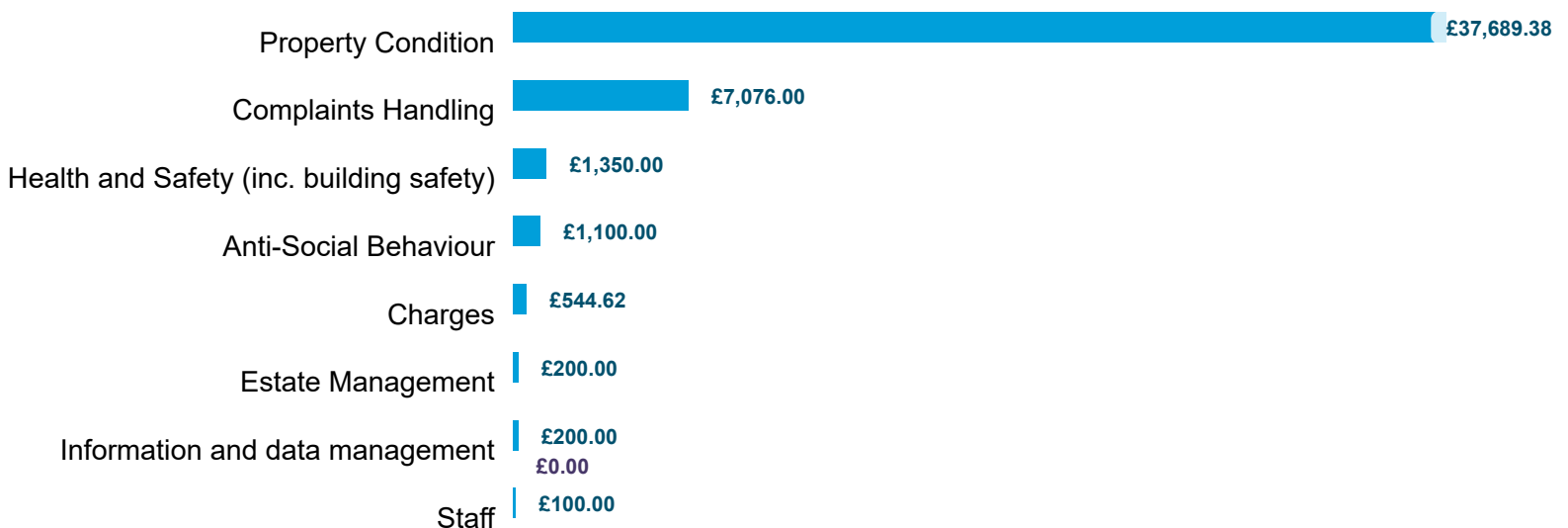
Table 4.2

Order Complete?	Within 3 Months		Within 6 Months	
	Count	%	Count	%
Complied	157	98%	3	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>98%</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2%</b>

**Compensation Ordered** | *Cases Determined between April 2023 - March 2024*

Table 5.1

● Ordered ● Recommended



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**Title: Damp and Mould Update**

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**Meeting Date: 21 November 2024**

## **1. Background**

- 1.1 Tackling Damp and Mould remains an extremely high priority for the council, and for the wider social housing sector, and this remains at the heart of regulatory reform of the sector. Leeds have made significant progress over recent years in strengthening our 'zero tolerance' policy approach to damp and mould, and we have continued to build on the positive work that was last updated to this board in November 2023.
- 1.2 Since the last update was provided, central governments consultation on the new Awaab's Law legislation ([Awaab's Law: Consultation on timescales for repairs in the social rented sector - GOV.UK](#)) has concluded. The introduction of Awaab's Law will bring about a landmark change to the responsibilities on landlords to deal with damp and mould, as well as other property hazards. For the first time, this new legislation will prescribe timescales and standards for landlords to adhere to when dealing with damp and mould, along with new sanctions for not doing so.
- 1.3 Whilst we are yet to see the introduction of this new Awaab's legislation, due to the change in government this summer, the sector heavily anticipates that the new government will be implemented it in 2025. As part of central governments drive to tackle damp and mould however, they have updated their damp and mould guidance for landlords. The latest [government guidance 'Understanding and addressing the health risks of damp and mould in the home'](#) which was updated in August 2024, delivers on the government's commitment in response to the Coroner's 'prevention of future deaths' report on the death of 2-year-old Awaab Ishak due to mould in the home.
- 1.4 As part of the Housing Leeds preparedness for Awaab's law, and in-order to test the services current approach to damp and mould, a self-assessment against the latest guidance has been undertaken. This paper provides a summary of the key findings of this self-assessment, along with next steps.

## **2. Main Points**

- 2.1 This initial self-assessment has been made against the approach to damp and mould by Housing Leeds teams. The scope does not include the approach

taken by BITMO and the PFI contract areas. The 'Next Steps' section of this report covers the recommendation for these areas.

2.2 The self-assessment has identified several areas where our current approach to damp and mould aligns favourably against the expectations set out against the new guidance. In addition, the exercise has identified several areas where further development of the service is required. These key areas are summarised as:

### 2.3 **Areas that already align to the recommendations**

- Channels for reporting damp and mould D&M are well publicised and flexible,
- Procedures for responding to D&M are established and there is a dedicated D&M team,
- Training is robust, in-line with expectations and delivered across staff, support teams, contractors, and partners,
- Information and support for residents is well balanced, accessible, and has had scrutiny and endorsement from tenants,
- Hazards are remedied through the responsive repairs programme where there are clear timescales in-place, and procedures to decant residents where not possible in a timely manner,
- Stock condition surveys take place, and assess hazards (including D&M), and a plan is in place to meet the recommended 5 year rolling programme,
- Support for tenants in financial difficulty and struggling to heat their home is available,

### 2.4 **Areas requiring further development**

- IT systems do not currently enable recording, monitoring, or follow up action relating to D&M reports without manual intervention,
- The lack of digital mobile working impacts on the services ability to efficiently monitor and keep residents updated throughout the D&M journey, and restricts our ability to make every contact count,
- Stock condition data requires reconciliation to ensure that it is accurately informing investment decisions and Decency,
- Current gaps in person data restrict our ability to identify vulnerability factors and target measures proactively,
- We don't currently have a service to follow up completed D&M works (minimum 6 weeks after completion) as recommended in the guidance,
- Times to complete remedial works by service providers are not currently monitored outside of routine repairs,
- Our information to tenants lacks the message that they should contact a health professional if they are suffering health symptoms that could be D&M related.

### 3. **Detailed Assessment:**

Further detail is provided here in relation to the assessment against the guidance (specific areas of the guidance in bold italics) and the areas that align to the guidance, as well as the areas where further development is required.

#### 3.1 ***Understanding Health Impacts / Risks (Physical & Mental, People/groups most at risk)***

- *Landlords and their staff and partners should have a good sound knowledge of the risks associated to damp and mould and those people and groups at most risk.*

**Aligned** - This is covered well in our face to face and e-learning training packages and our information for staff, partners, and residents.

- *Landlords should advise any tenant who is concerned about the symptoms they are experiencing to consult a healthcare professional. Landlords should not delay action to await medical evidence or opinion - medical evidence is not a requirement for action, and damp and mould should always be addressed promptly to protect tenant health.*

**Development required** – We do not currently expressly say this and have not included this in our training or information. This needs to be amended.

- *Landlords should understand and have records of their residents and their needs and vulnerability factors so that this can be considered when assessing damp and mould and appropriate action.*

**Action required** – Improvements to our collection of, recording, and management of person data, is being prioritised through the 'Vulnerability Strategy' project which is underway.

#### 3.2 ***Housing conditions that increase tenants' risk of living in a home with damp and mould***

- *To meet the Decent Homes Standard, social housing must be free from dangerous 'category 1' hazards.*

**Aligned** – Cat 1 hazards are dealt with via the responsive repairs programme.

**Development required** - Further work ongoing to strengthen the identification of hazards through stock condition surveys and increase the frequency of surveys to a maximum 5 years. Training is being arranged to enable full HHSRS surveys to be undertaken by the service.

#### 3.3 ***People who are most likely to face barriers to reporting damp and mould***

- *Tenants may face barriers which may mean they struggle to report damp and mould to their landlord. This may be due to knowledge, language, literacy or communication barriers, personal circumstances, a lack of*

*awareness of legal standards and housing rights in England, or fear of eviction or discrimination, among other things*

**Aligned** – We provide good quality information about reporting damp and mould and residents can report to us through accessible channels.

Information is readily available in the most common community languages and can be produced in other languages and formats. Staff have access to translators and interpreters.

**Development required** - Work underway through vulnerability strategy to develop more robust person data, communication preferences etc, and ensure systems able to store and use this to meet individual needs.

### 3.4 ***Legal standards for housing providers***

- *Social housing specifically must meet the Decent Homes Standard (DHS)*

**Aligned** – Asset Management Strategy and Capital Programme in place and aligned to maintaining the Decent Homes Standard (Decency). Decency is recorded in Keystone and reported as appropriate.

**Development required** – Work is underway to accelerate a five year rolling programme of Stock Condition Survey's and review the survey template.

### 3.5 ***Complying with the standards***

- *Landlords should regularly inspect their properties, remedy deficiencies promptly and ensure that they have a regular programme of maintenance and management.*

**Aligned** - Stock condition programme is in place. Robust responsive and void repair services operating alongside a just in time replacement programme. Category 1 hazards are remedied through the responsive repairs programme.

- *landlords should always respond promptly and address the issue as a matter of urgency when there is significant damp and mould and/or when there is a significant concern for tenant health.*

**Aligned** – We have a dedicated D&M team in place. Aligned responsive repairs service and minor works team to complete more complex remedial works.

- **Development required** – Times to complete remedial works by service providers are not robustly monitored outside of general repairs. New procedures are being developed to improve reporting. Contractor resources require review and re-alignment to the D&M team in-line with demand levels.

### 3.6 ***Understanding damp and mould***

- *landlords are legally responsible for addressing damp and mould (see 'Legal standards on damp and mould in rented homes') and should work with qualified professionals*



**Aligned** – Training material is robust and has been delivered to frontline housing teams, contractors and support services. Information for staff, contractors and residents is robust. The material has been audited and endorsed by the Tenant Voice Panel giving assurance that it meets residents’ expectations.

**Development required** – Significant training and equipment for staff has been invested in. As such, internal staff are relied on almost exclusively for assessing and diagnosing D&M. Further consideration needs to be given to where ‘specialists’ would assist in the process.

### 3.7 ***Responding with urgency and sensitivity, and taking tenants’ needs into consideration***

- *Tenants should be informed about what is being done to resolve the issue and what the likely timescales for the work will be Comms to improve.*

**Development required** – The guidance contains new reporting requirements, ahead of the implementation of Awaabs Law, which will best be delivered through a mobile digital working solution. Solutions are currently being appraised and interim solutions designed.

- *Any tenant who is concerned about any symptoms they are experiencing should be advised to consult a healthcare professional.*

**Development required** – This advice is not currently included in our training or information material. Review of material is to be undertaken and include as standard message in training, webpage etc.

- *Where landlords have been made aware of these [health] vulnerabilities, and especially if they are aware that the damp and mould is having an effect on health, landlords must ensure occupants are not left living with the damp and mould. When responding to tenants, landlords should take tenants’ personal circumstances and vulnerabilities into consideration.*

**Aligned** – This approach is included in standard procedures and training material.

**Development required** – Improving the quality of our person data through the Vulnerability Strategy project will strengthen this approach.

- *When a concern has been raised about tenant health (either by the tenant or a third party), landlords should consider whether tenants can be offered suitable alternative accommodation, subject to the tenant’s agreement, while the damp and mould is rectified.*

**Aligned** – This approach is included as part of standard procedures

- *Landlords should try to understand any barriers related to language, culture, disability, and/or neurodiversity that tenants may face. Landlords may wish to consider using Relay UK, a free national telephone service and app from BT and the Royal National Institute for Deaf People, for tenants who are deaf or hard of hearing.*

**Aligned** – This is a standard part of off all frontline procedures.

**Development required** – Enhanced person data, driven through the Vulnerability Strategy project, will enhance this approach.

### 3.8 **Identifying the root causes of damp and mould**

- *To address the underlying causes of damp and mould, and to prevent them from returning, landlords should identify and address all sources of water damage and condensation from both inside and outside the home.*  
**Aligned** – Dedicated D&M team in place. Significant programme of training and equipment invested in.
- *Simply removing surface mould will not prevent the damp and mould from reappearing.*  
**Development required** – We need to further review our approach to ensure we get the balance right between removing low level mould before it spreads and becomes a health hazard, and undertaking assessment and providing education and support. We are also reviewing our reporting to enable better proactive targeting of repeat occurrences.

### 3.9 **Removing mould**

- Once damp and mould have been identified, it is essential that the mould is removed promptly, reducing health risks for tenants.  
**Aligned** – This aligns to our policy and standard targets.  
**Development required** – We need to review our service standard timescales and agree robust delivery models/Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) with contractors.
- *While most tenants could reasonably be expected to remove condensation and very small amounts of mould using an appropriate mould and mildew cleaner, larger areas of mould should only be addressed by qualified professionals.*
- **Aligned** – We support residents to remove small areas of mould where they can do so but our standard approach is to remove mould through our contractors. We make available mould sprays and moisture traps free of charge.
- *When identifying an experienced contractor, landlords should check training, qualifications and references.*  
**Development required** – We do not currently do this and need to incorporate into standard contract management procedures and procurements.
- *Tenant management of condensation and small amounts of mould should not be a substitute for assessing and addressing the underlying issue, which should always be the priority.*  
**Aligned** – We have a good balance between supporting residents to remove small areas of mould themselves and taking action ourselves to

do the work. Residents have been involved and helped us shape our approach and provide support through free mould sprays.

### 3.10 **Addressing condensation**

- *There are a number of means to address condensation:*
  - *addressing building deficiencies (as above)*
  - *improving ventilation*
  - *improving energy efficiency and addressing inadequate heating systems*
  - *working with tenants to make small, reasonable adjustments to their behaviour, if appropriate, to reduce their damp and mould risk*

**Aligned** – Our approach ranges from self-help advice and support, professional assessment of defect, and design of remedial solutions, training for staff, and improvements through the capital programme.

### 3.11 **Improving energy efficiency and inadequate heating**

- *Investment in energy efficiency measures (such as improvements to heating systems, loft and wall insulation and glazing) can be an effective means of increasing indoor temperature but must be undertaken with consideration for any necessary additional ventilation.*

**Aligned** – Our capital improvement programme delivers energy efficiency improvements, and we actively seek external funding to increase our available resources.

**Development required** – Work is ongoing to increase our stock condition information and improve the quality of our data to ensure that we are targeting the right stock and meeting the 2030 target of all homes meeting Band C EPC rating.

- *Try to understand tenants' circumstances and consider signposting them to support with their energy costs or consider if there is any additional support that could be provided*

**Aligned** – We have good signposting in place to support residents for money advice and energy support. We have a track record of working with the British Gas Energy Trust to issue free fuel vouchers each winter to residents in most need.

**Development required** – Review where information around the various support strands is available and ensure this is easily accessible to staff.

### 3.12 **Working with tenants**

- *it may be beneficial to work with tenants to help them make small, reasonable adjustments to their behaviour, if appropriate, to reduce their damp and mould risk. It is essential that working with tenants must sit*

*alongside - and not be a substitute for - tackling the root causes of the issue*

**Aligned** – This aligns to our approach, which has been endorsed by the Tenant Voice Panel on behalf of residents. We have a good balance and recognise where to support, and where we need to act.

### 3.13 **Following up to ensure the issue has been addressed**

- *To ensure that treatment has been effective, and damp and mould has not reappeared, any improvement work should be accompanied by a follow up visit to the property. Landlords should allow at least 6 weeks after the initial treatment to revisit the dwelling.*

**Action required** – We do not currently do this. Move to this approach will require many additional visits each year. A business case is currently under development to assess resources required to plug this gap.

### 3.14 **Clear processes to report and monitor damp and mould**

*All landlords should have:*

- *clear processes for tenants to report damp and mould, which are easy for tenants to understand and use*

**Aligned** – Tenants can report direct to the D&M team via email or by telephone. These channels are clearly set out on the LCC website and handbook.

**Development required** – A review of LCC D&M policy is required in-light of the publication of this guidance. Review capability in Tenant Portal to accept detailed D&M reports through this channel.

- *having clear processes for other professionals (both internal staff and external contractors) to report concerns regarding damp and mould in a tenant's property*

**Aligned** – Established D&M team accessible to tenants and staff and also external partners through the Asthma Pathways and Breath Easy programmes.

- *having a system which makes it clear what will happen as a result of a damp and mould report, for example, when tenants may expect to be contacted following a report, an explanation that a home inspection may be required, and details of how to complain if so thing goes wrong*

**Development required** – Preperation for Awaab's law requires procedure and system change in-line with the reporting requirements of the new legislation. This will not be finalised until the details of the final legislation is known. The final legislation will also drive a further review of the Housing Leeds Damp and Mould webpage to ensure that serv

- *setting timescales to assess damp and mould and carry out remedial work, and reviewing these periodically*

- **Development required** – Whilst there are clear timescales for the completion of D&M remedial works, these are not monitored separately outside of routine repairs. A review of timescales and KPI monitoring is required with contractors and a separation of D&M remedial work and routine repairs monitoring requires assessing and appraising.
- *having a system which includes checks in between tenancies. This should include checking ventilation and heating systems are working effectively, and that signs of damp and mould are not apparent*  
**Aligned** – We have a robust void procedure during which these essential checks and remedial actions are completed.

### 3.15 **Property condition monitoring**

- *Landlords should periodically check properties for damp and mould, and for any risk factors such as inadequate ventilation and condensation (see above 'Identifying the root causes of damp and mould')*  
**Aligned** – We have a plan in place to return the service to a 5-year rolling programme of stock condition surveys and we have robust procedures in place for void servicing.
- *Landlords should also adopt a 'making every contact count' approach to identifying damp and mould.*  
**Aligned** – All frontline staff are trained to identify D&M and take appropriate action.

### 3.16 **Adopting a strategic approach to energy efficiency improvements**

- *A number of funding streams for improvement work are set out in Annex D: energy efficiency funding. It is advisable to prioritise the least energy efficient homes and homes with tenants who are struggling to adequately heat them.*  
**Aligned** – External funding opportunities are actively sought and bids for external funding are sourced in-order to maximise resources to the capital improvements programme.
- *Landlords should consider opportunities to implement energy efficiency improvement measures during routine maintenance and other improvement work, to minimise disruption and reduce costs.*  
**Aligned** – Opportunities are taken during essential refurbishment work to make improvements, such as installing thermal plasterboard where large areas of plaster require replacing, and installing EWI where essential work to the fabric of blocks is required.

### 3.17 **Training internal staff and external contractors**

- *All housing professionals, particularly those in tenant-facing roles, should have an understanding of damp and mould issues and why it is crucial to address them. Landlords and/or their workforce (internal staff, and where possible, external contractors) should be trained*

**Meeting** – Robust training packages have been developed internally and rolled out to staff, contractors, support teams, health partners and social care teams.

#### **4. Discussion Points**

- 4.1 Improving our monitoring and performance reporting against Damp & Mould activity is a high priority for us. Do Board have any thoughts on specific areas of performance reporting that would be useful to provide better oversight and assurance around our progress. Perhaps specifically around the customer experience?
- 4.2 The Tenant Scrutiny Board (TSB) have offered some incredibly helpful feedback and recommendations previously around specific areas of our Damp & Mould service offer. This has been particularly useful in helping us set the balance between what we need to do as a landlord and what residents can do themselves through support and education. Do Board have any thoughts about any further damp and mould areas of the service that the TSB could explore and make resident lead recommendations?
- 4.3 Whilst it is important that we meet the standards that the government set us around damp and mould, are there any other key areas relating to damp and mould not identified through this self-assessment that Board feel we should prioritise?

#### **5. Next steps**

- 5.1 A number of actions requiring development, which have been identified through this self-assessment, are already live actions which sit within the Consumer Standard Action Plans. An exercise is now underway to cross reference these action plans and ensure that all the actions from this self-assessment are accounted for and have targets set for completion, based on appropriate priority. Monitoring of the actions will continue.
- 5.2 This self-assessment has been shared with colleagues in the BITMO and PFI areas and a recommendation made that a similar self-assessment is undertaken, in-order to ensure a consistent citywide approach to dealing with damp and mould is taken and to identify areas for development where there are opportunities for collaboration.