



LEEDS HOUSING BOARD AGENDA

Meeting: Leeds Housing Board Meeting
Date: Friday 21st July **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. Consumer Standards Self-Assessments	Gerard Tinsdale/Adam Crampton	10:10-10:30
4. Regulatory Compliance Update	Simon Baker/David Glaister	10:30-10:45
5. Housing Leeds Annual Report	Ian Montgomery	10:45-11:00
6. Tenant Satisfaction Measures Q1 24/25	Adam Crampton	11:00-11:20
7. AOB	Councillor Lennox	11:20-11:30

Date and Time of Next Meeting: 10am, Thursday 26th September 2024

INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES

MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

CONSUMER STANDARDS SELF-ASSESSMENTS

REGULATORY COMPLIANCE UPDATE

HOUSING LEADS ANNUAL REPORT 2023-24

TENANT SATISFACTION MEASURES Q1 DATA - REPORT TO FOLLOW

AOB

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Minutes



Meeting Name:	Leeds Housing Board	
Date:	Thursday 7 th June 2024	Time: 10.00-11.30
Location:	Microsoft Teams	
Chair:	Cllr Jessica Lennox (JL)	
Members Present:	Cllr Kayleigh Brooks (KB), Cllr Julie Heselwood (JH), Zioness-Amaka Curry (ZAC)	
Attendees Present:	Gerard Tinsdale, Chief Officer, Housing (GT), Mandy Sawyer, Head of Housing & Neighbourhood Services (MS), Simon Baker, Policy Officer (Housing) (SB), Adam Crampton (AC), Frank Perrins (FP), Ian Montgomery (IM), Kerrie Murray (KM), Bethan Melling (BM), Deborah Kelly, BITMO Chief Executive (DK), Leon Kirkham, BITMO chair (LK)	
Apologies:	John Gittos, Cllr Mary Harland, Cllr Barry Anderson, James Rogers, Ian Strickland	

Minutes

Item	
1	Introductions and apologies
1.1	Apologies were given and Cllr Lennox noted the resignation of the tenant representative Lynne Al-Muhtaseb and thanked Mrs Al-Muhtaseb for her work on the Board.
2	Minutes of the Last Meeting
	The Board accepted the minutes from March's meeting.
3	Tenant Satisfaction Measures 2023/24
3.1	AC gave an overview of the 23/24 results from the tenant satisfaction survey and the management information data contained in the report. Time taken on repairs is a significant pressure, but targets are being hit and satisfaction levels are improving. Areas of concern remain and there is still room for improvement.
3.2	Validation is ongoing on the MI figures, but don't expect significant revisions. Number of homes not meeting Decency Standard is 3.5%, repairs completed in timescale is 88% combined emergency and non emergency. Improvements plans are in place to improve performance.

3.3	GT commented on the amount of data the report contains, and reminded the Board that overall satisfaction was at 60% at the start of the year, and it now stands at 66%. The latest figures, for March, show that at 70%, significant progress is being made. Still not where we need to be but moving in the right direction.
3.4	AC added that it is recognised that the repairs service is the 'standard bearer' of how our customers see our performance.
4	Tenant Engagement Update
4.1	IM led the Board through the report, outlining work that has been done to bolster tenant engagement, looking firstly at the High Rise Strategy Survey. The Council has committed to do an annual survey of high rise residents, which has recently been carried out. It was completed by 600 residents.
4.2	A number of key themes have been identified from the data, shown at 2.8, which give a guide to the topics which need to be included in tenant engagement and communications.
4.3	The survey has also shown how effective our communications have been and if residents' understanding is improving. The data shows an increased understanding but there is room for improvement. But the awareness of residents in knowing how to do certain things, such as testing smoke alarms, is improving which indicates that communications are having a positive impact. The survey has prompted several residents to join the Tenant Voice Panel.
4.4	Turning to the updated Tenant Engagement Offer highlighted in section 4 of the report, IM outlined the new approach to tenant engagement following the demise of the HAPs. The proposed new offer is outlined in 4.4 and 4.5. Stakeholders will be consulted on the proposals and feedback will be brought to the Board.
4.5	JL requested that members be kept informed as the proposals developed.
4.6	KB noted the mention of the Building Safety Hub in para 3.1 and requested that the link be circulated to Board members so they can see it. IM also highlighted the leaflet available for residents with a QR code included.
4.7	MS added that there is a lot of engagement happening regarding fire safety in Little London, but despite all the information that has been shared, a lot still wasn't known by residents. In Little London mobile office drop-in sessions had taken place. KB asked if these can be extended beyond Little London. MS confirmed that this is the plan once the pilot has been completed.
5	Complaints Handling Self-Assessment
5.1	IM took the Board through the report, starting by highlighting section 2. Performance is above the previous year but there is still room for improvement.
5.2	IM took the Board through the Housing Ombudsman's new approach for cases of severe maladministration, publishing cases on a monthly basis as an opportunity for learning and improvement.

5.3	IM outlined the measures taken in line with the Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code, carrying out monthly satisfaction surveys. Take up has been low but there has been an increase in responses that is seen as positive.
5.4	The Ombudsman has made it clear that LCC is responsible for BITMO's performance. From 1 st May BITMO's complaints will be managed via the Council's complaints policy.
5.5	IM then took the Board through the attached self-assessment against the Complaints Handling Code. This will be reported to the Ombudsman by the end of June.
5.6	GT pointed out the amount of work that is being taken to improve response times to stage 1 and 2 complaints and improve the quality of responses. We will continue to work to ensure that performance is closer to 100% going forward.
5.7	JL pointed out that while we're not where we need to be, we are improving.
6.	BITMO 23/24 Annual Performance
6.1	MS briefed the Board on how LCC remains accountable to the RSH for BITMO's performance and so BITMO will need to provide assurance to the Council that they are meeting the new regulatory requirements. These new arrangements are still developing and will be formalised in an updated performance management framework. This report gives BITMO the opportunity to bring the Leeds Housing Bard up-to-date with their performance and highlight any issues.
6.2	The management agreement, and management fee, between LCC and BITMO will be reviewed in 2025, and the significant issue will be a review of the performance management framework, to strengthen reporting against TSMs and Consumer Standard compliance.
6.3	DK then took the Board through BITMO's submission. Their data shows strong and improving performance. However the Consumer Standards review does show a number of areas of non-compliance currently – in some of these BITMO can have an influence, some are related to LCC's compliance. Need to have a conversation around which expectations BITMO has responsibility for compliance. There is generally positive performance in relation to the TSMs, but with some areas for improvement. BITMO will consult with tenants to inform actions to strengthen compliance.
6.4	GT acknowledged BITMO's good TSM performance for the year. JL agreed and referenced the importance of the strong working relationship with the Council in ensuring the regulatory responsibilities are met.
6.5	DK touched on the findings of BITMO's resident survey, acknowledging need to capture voices of all communities, and under-represented groups, to feed into decision making. ZAC hopes to see improvements at a citywide level around the hearing the voices of under-represented groups – been the case for many years and hasn't improved. IM highlighted the growth of the Tenant Voice Panel to 270 participants, and workshops undertaken to consider how to work better for ethnically diverse residents. Also work going on with community groups. But recognise it is a priority.

6.6	MS noted the good working relationship with BITMO; their positive tenant satisfaction performance reflecting the nature of the organisation being close to the communities that they serve. Also acknowledged improvements in rent collection performance, which reflect hard work over a number of years.
6.7	LK commented on the new relationship between BITMO and LCC. Previously the BITMO Board heard all complaints, which gave it oversight and input – that should still continue, though LCC Policy is for officers hear complaints. BITMO wants to improve, and will do. Raised the different nature of BITMO, which residents voted for, and the importance of any working relationship respecting this difference, but hopes we can work well together to achieve this.
6.8	JL pointed out that BITMO performance will be reporting formally into the Board annually, but welcomed more regular contact going forward, especially in regard to meeting the new regulatory requirements.
7.	AOB
	n/a

Next Meeting (Housing Strategy)

Date: Thursday 26th September 2024 **Time:** 10:00 – 11:30
Location: Microsoft Teams

Title: Consumer Standards – self-assessments

Author: Mandy Sawyer

Meeting Date: 23rd July 2024

1. Background

- 1.1. The government's [Consumer Standards](#) set the outcomes that social landlords must deliver for tenants in terms of quality of homes and services they provide to tenants. Following government consultation updated Consumer Standards took effect from 1 April 2024.
- 1.2. A key part of the Social Housing (Regulation) Act has been to empower the Regulator for Social Housing (RSH) to apply more proactive regulation of the Consumer Standards.
- 1.3. The four updated Consumer Standards are as follows:
 - **Safety and Quality Standard** – requirement to provide safe and good quality homes and landlord services to tenants.
 - **Tenancy Standard** – requirement for the fair allocation and letting of homes and how tenancies are managed and ended by landlords.
 - **Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard** – requirement to be open with tenants and treat them with fairness and respect so that tenants can access services, raise complaints, influence decision making and hold the landlord to account.
 - **Neighbourhood and Community Standard** – requirement to engage with other relevant parties so that tenants can live in safe and well maintained neighbourhoods and feel safe in their home.
- 1.4. Each Standard is broken down into a number of 'Required Outcomes', which set the broad outlines that each Standard requires. Each outcome is then broken down further into 'Specific Expectations', which give more detail on what landlords must do to meet each Required Outcome.
- 1.5. Whilst the Consumer Standards have been in place for some time, the Act has created strengthened and more proactive regulation of the application of the Consumer Standards. The Act sets out a 'co-regulatory' model which requires landlords to their own compliance against the standards, ensuring that an open and transparent approach is taken which hears the customer voice. If a landlord assesses that they may not be compliant with any of the Consumer Standard required outcomes that they notify the RSH. Compliance with the Consumer Standards also then forms a significant part of any RSH inspection.

2. The Consumer Standards

2.1. More detail of each of the requirements of the four Consumer Standards are outlined below.

2.2. The Safety and Quality Standard

2.2.1. The Safety and Quality Standard puts in place the standards we must meet in terms of ensuring the safety and quality of tenants' homes.

2.2.2. It covers the quality of our housing stock and how we keep up-to-date, accurate records of that stock, how we must ensure the health and safety of tenants, how we deliver repairs, maintenance and planned improvements and adaptation to homes where they are needed.

2.3. The Tenancy Standard

2.3.1. The Tenancy Standard outlines how landlords must fairly let their homes and how tenancies are managed.

2.3.2. It requires that landlords allocate and let homes transparently and fairly and takes the needs of tenants and prospective tenants into account, how we support tenants to maintain their tenancies, specifies that our tenancies must be compatible with the purpose of the accommodation, the sustainability of the community and the efficient use of housing stock, and how we support tenants to make mutual exchanges if they wish to do so.

2.4. The Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard

2.4.1. The Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard sets out how landlords must treat tenants with fairness and respect and be open with them.

2.4.2. It sets out how landlords must take tenants views into account when making decisions, how they must communicate and share information with tenants so they know the level of service they can expect and hold landlords to account, the performance information (including TSMs) landlords must collect and share to ensure effective scrutiny of performance, and how complaints must be dealt with fairly, effectively and promptly.

2.5. The Neighbourhood and Community Standard

2.5.1. The Neighbourhood and Community Standard sets out how landlords should work with other organisations to ensure that tenants can live in safe and well-maintained neighbourhoods and feel safe in their homes.

2.5.2. It specifically covers the safety of shared spaces (non-landlord land which forms part of the local environment and community), how we work with partners to promote the social environmental and economic wellbeing of communities, and how landlords must work with partners to tackle Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB), hate crime and domestic violence (DV).

3. Monitoring our Compliance with the Standards.

- 3.1. In January we reported to the Leeds Housing Board that self-assessments were being undertaken of our compliance with the Consumer Standards. We reported the proposed self-assessment approach and the outcome of a self-assessment against the Tenancy Standard, for which the self-assessment approach had been trialled. The Board supported the self-assessment approach and the outcome of the self-assessment of the Tenancy Standard.
- 3.2. Since the January Board Housing Leeds has undertaken self-assessments against the remaining three standards, also incorporating changes to the Standards which took effect in April and refreshed its self-assessment against the Tenancy Standard.
- 3.3. We have put in place robust leadership to overseeing our compliance with the Consumer Standards, with Head of Service Leads for each of the Consumer Standards as follows:

Safety and Quality Standard – Adam Crampton

Tenancy Standard – Mandy Sawyer

Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard – Mandy Sawyer

Neighbourhood and Community Standard – Mandy Sawyer

Heads of Service are responsible for overseeing any self-assessments and remedial actions to strengthen compliance, but also responsible moving forward for overseeing ongoing compliance with the standards.

- 3.4. In completing the self-assessments we undertook a detailed and challenging self-reflection, not just of our overall compliance with the standard, but also considering the extent that we are able to evidence our compliance on the following and opportunities for continuous improvement:
 - **Strategy/Policy/Process** – is there an approved strategy or policy and process is available to evidence our approach in complying with the required outcome, is it up to date, and are there clear processes / guidance available for staff to support them in meeting the expectation?
 - **Quantitative and Qualitative Data** – what data is available to evidence our compliance with the expectation, what quality assurance arrangements are in place to evidence its accuracy, how is the data used and do we collect ongoing customer feedback and use this to improve?
 - **Openness and Transparency** – is the policy published and were customers involved in developing the policy development, how is the policy and our compliance communicated to tenants, how do we report our compliance within LCC governance frameworks.
- 3.5. Each specific expectation of the standard was assessed using a RAG rating to determine the extent of compliance as follows:
 - Red – potentially non-compliant
 - Amber – minimum compliance with improvement opportunities

- Green – robust compliance

4. Self-assessment Outcomes

4.1. A summary of the self-assessment outcomes is outlined in the table below:

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

4.2. A summary of the outcome of the self-assessments against each Consumer Standard and suggested actions are outlined below:

4.3. **SAFETY AND QUALITY STANDARD**

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

Areas of Robust Compliance

4.3.2. As a large landlord we have the benefit of specialist officers in place to oversee our health and safety compliance, such as dedicated fire safety officers, gas and electrical safety teams, meaning that we have robust compliance with the application of health and safety legislation. We have also robustly applied the requirements of the 2022 Building Safety Act for 121 high risk buildings in our ownership. We have a well-established repairs and maintenance service, with robust contract management arrangements in place, offering a range of opportunities for tenants to report a repair. As a local authority landlord we are well connected into zero carbon ambitions of the city and region, delivering energy efficiency home improvement programmes at scale, including the use of innovative technologies.

Areas of Improvement Identified

4.3.3. **Stock Quality and Decency** – we identified a potential area of non-compliance relating to the 'Stock Condition and Decency' expectations. Whilst we hold varying levels of stock condition data on all our stock, only

74% of our stock has received a stock condition survey in the last 5 years. A proportion of these surveys have been 'elemental' as opposed to full stock condition surveys and so there is a risk that our knowledge of the condition of our stock is not sufficient to meet this expectation. A strategy was put in place prior to COVID to increase the rate of surveys but this was disrupted by COVID and remobilisation plans which meant that resources were diverted for a period into reducing the backlog of voids and repairs. Our current stock condition approach targets 20% of stock being surveyed on an annual basis (i.e. 100% of stock on a 5 year rolling programme). Although this target has been broadly achieved for the last 2 years, we are currently reviewing our surveying approach and plan to accelerate stock condition surveys to achieve 100% surveys within the next 2 years by utilising additional capacity over this period. This includes a review of our approach to communications, appointments and planning in order to reduce levels of no access, which currently stands at around 30%. In addition, integration with other internal and external partner systems has identified some flaws in data transfer that need to be resolved. Actions are however already underway to strengthen integration between Council and contractor systems so assist with simplified and robust transfer of stock condition data.

4.3.4. **Health and Safety** – whilst robustly complying with Health and Safety legislative responsibilities we identified improvement opportunities in the 'Health and Safety' expectations. Whilst the delivery of health and safety activities is robust, a number of policies relating to these activities require updating including the overarching Asset Management Strategy. There is also a need for strengthened performance management arrangements where services are delegated to internal service providers, e.g. cleaning. A number of urgent policy reviews are also underway to produce updated health and safety policies and procedures during 2024 which will be published to customers. Work is also planned for us to review service level arrangements where landlord services are provided by other council teams or managing agents, to ensure that service standards are reviewed with customer engagement and that these standards along with performance is more robustly reported to customers.

4.3.5. **Repairs, Maintenance and Planned Improvements** – again, whilst fully meeting our legislative responsibilities we identified improvement opportunities in the 'Repairs, Maintenance and Planned Improvements' expectations. We identified that we could be more robust in our assessment of tenant vulnerabilities at the point of repairs reporting to ensure that the repairs service is accessible to all customers. We also identified that there are opportunities to improve our ongoing communications with customers where follow-on or multi-trade works are required. Whilst we routinely collect resident satisfaction feedback following responsive repairs this is not robustly in place following major investment works. Actions to strengthen our approach around vulnerability and communication are as outlined in the Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard section of this note. We also plan to introduce resident satisfaction surveys following major repairs and investment works later in 2024.

4.4. **TENANCY STANDARD**

4.4.1. Of the 18 expectations within this Standard, we assessed ourselves as compliant with 15, assessed 1 expectation as potentially non compliant and 2 were not applicable. Of the 16 compliant expectations 4 were identified as needing further work / improvement in order to achieve robust compliance.

Areas of Robust Compliance

4.4.2. Housing Leeds has a robust Lettings Policy which is closely aligned with strategic housing pressures and well connected to PRPs via nominations agreements. This policy is currently under review to identify how we can support increasing housing pressures. We also have robust tenancy management procedures in place around succession, introductory tenancies etc. which are subject to regular review and specialist staff, including a legal team who are able to offer legal support into process application. We also have dedicated staff to respond to possible tenancy fraud. We have a Mutual Exchange policy and procedures in place and support tenants who wish to complete an exchange.

Areas of Improvement Identified

4.4.3. **Allocations and Lettings** - whilst achieving the minimum level of compliance we identified that compliance could be strengthened on some of the 'Allocations and Lettings' expectations. Whilst we have a robust Lettings Policy which sets out our approach to allocations of Council housing we have some Local Lettings Policies (LLPs) in place for some localities and these have not been reviewed for a number of years and so are at risk of no longer being relevant or justified. We also identified weaknesses in our quality assurance arrangements to evidence our application of the lettings policy and CORE returns, impacting on data quality. Actions are underway to strengthen our compliance. Firstly, we are planning a review of all LLPs during 2024/25 alongside our Lettings Policy review. We are also currently introducing more robust training, guidance and QA of housing applications and lettings / CORE during 2024 to ensure more robust data.

4.4.4. **Mutual Exchanges** – we 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. Since the self assessment was undertaken we have now concluded a review of our Mutual Exchange procedures to strengthen our support offer to tenants and to ensure that tenants are advised of the possible implications. We have now published the potential implications on the mutual exchange web page, meaning that we are now compliant with this expectation.

4.5. **TRANSPARENCY, INFLUENCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY STANDARD**

4.5.1. Of the 23 expectations within this Standard, we assessed ourselves as compliant with 20 and identified 3 expectations where we were potentially non-compliant. Of the 19 compliant expectations 10 were identified as needing further work / improvement in order to achieve robust compliance.

Areas of Robust Compliance

- 4.5.2. Housing Leeds has a robust tenant engagement framework which offers a range of opportunities to get involved in service delivery and improvements, along with dedicated officers who work with local communities to hear the local tenant voice and maximise community engagement. We have also delivered a number of improvements to our complaints management over the last couple of years to strengthen our management of complaints and compliance with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaints Handling Code, including training for investigating officers, QA arrangements and embedding lessons learnt.

Areas of Improvement Identified

- 4.5.3. **Diverse Needs** – we identified a potential area of non compliance in relation to the diverse needs expectations. Whilst we collect equality and vulnerability data about customers there are not sufficiently robust processes in place to ensure that data remains updated and reports are not available to enable the routine use of data to undertake analysis of access to services. We also identified that we do not have a Vulnerability Policy or Strategy to inform how we support customers with a vulnerability and some gaps in our use of a CRM solution to record customer contact and consider vulnerability. Actions are underway to strengthen our compliance on these expectations. We are currently reviewing arrangements for the recording and reporting of equality data and reviewing reports available to enable us to undertake analysis of access to services by equality data. Alongside this we are planning to develop a Vulnerability Policy / Strategy 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.
- 4.5.4. **Information about Landlord Services** – whilst achieving the minimum level of compliance we identified that compliance could be strengthened on the 'Information about Landlord Services' expectations. Most information shared with customers on web pages, in the tenant handbook and in routine communications explains how services are provided but does not robustly provide clear details of service standards, tenant rights and landlord responsibilities as required by the updated standard. We assessed ourselves as being potential not compliance with expectation 4.2 because we don't routinely explain tenants rights and landlord responsibilities to customers and have not yet published the responsibilities of senior officers relating to the Consumer Standards. Actions are already underway to strengthen our compliance. We have recently started an urgent review of the web pages and tenant handbook to ensure that we achieve minimum compliance for non-compliant areas , i.e. communicating tenant rights and landlord responsibilities and publishing information about the roles and responsibilities of senior officers. However alongside this we are currently developing a Communication Policy / Strategy which will set out a consistent approach for how we communicate with our tenants and individual teams will be required to self assess against the standard and implement actions to strengthen compliance.

4.5.5. **Performance Information** – we assessed ourselves as achieving the minimum level of compliance with opportunities for improvement with all 4 expectations as at the point of the self assessment we were finalising our TSM submission and it had not been subject to any independent verification. However since the self assessment Internal Audit has concluded their audit to validate the methodologies and data used to report 2023/24 TSM performance and TSM performance has been submitted to the RSH. There are still further improvements to be made to enable easy, routine reporting of TSM performance in accordance with the technical definition.

4.5.6. **Self-Referral** – we assessed ourselves as achieving the minimum level of compliance with opportunities for improvement, as we had assessed some expectations as being potentially not compliant in some areas and had not yet advised the regulator. However, since the self assessment we have shared our self assessments with the RSH and met with them to review the extent of compliance and actions underway and so now consider ourselves to be robustly compliant with this expectation.

4.6. **NEIGHBOURHOOD AND COMMUNITY STANDARD**

4.6.1. Of the 9 expectations within this Standard, we assessed ourselves as compliant with all 9. However there were 3 expectations identified as needing further work / improvement in order to achieve robust compliance.

Areas of Robust Compliance

4.6.2. Housing Leeds is well connected in citywide strategic approaches to managing community safety, ASB and hate crime and policy and process is closely aligned to these strategic approaches, with strong strategic and operational partnerships embedded with specialist officers who are skilled in applying ASB tools and legal powers. Housing has similarly strong connections into citywide strategic approaches in the management of cases of domestic violence and abuse, being part of strategic and operational partnerships, including daily MARAC and Housing Management having the Leeds DVA Quality Mark. We are also well connected into other Council teams which provide services to shared spaces, e.g. environmental management, waste management with robust evidence of joint working along with connections into the Council's priority neighbourhood approach.

Areas of Improvement Identified

4.6.3. **ASB / Hate Incidents** - whilst achieving the minimum level of compliance on the 'ASB / Hate Incidents' expectations we identified that compliance could be strengthened on some expectations. Whilst we do have an ASB policy it has not been reviewed for some time and so is out of date. However a review of the policy is already underway and is due to be completed during 2024. In acknowledgement of low levels of satisfaction on TSM TP12 the policy review will include extensive resident engagement including around how we manage communications and how we achieve ongoing feedback.

5. Ensuring Compliance with Consumer Standards Where Landlord Functions are Delegated

5.1. Leeds City Council as landlord remains accountable to the RSH for compliance against the Consumer Standards where landlord functions are delegated to other Council teams or external organisations. BITMO and PFI contractors perform landlord functions on the council's behalf in specific geographic areas. Some other Council teams undertake landlord functions for a specific landlord service, e.g. Customer Service, Anti-social behaviour. In completing self assessments the following approach has been taken:

- Where landlord functions are performed by another Council service each self-assessment has been undertaken jointly between Housing Leeds and the Council service to assess the extent of compliance and to identify any actions needed to strengthen compliance.
- Contractual arrangements are in place with Belle Isle Tenant Management Organisation (BITMO) to perform landlord functions on behalf of the Council. We have therefore asked BITMO to undertake self-assessments using our template. The outcome of these self-assessments have been shared with the Head of Service lead for the four Standards, who has considered the self assessment's wider implications for the Council's overall compliance, along with giving consideration to action plans developed.
- Contractual arrangements are also in place for two large Private Finance Initiative (PFI) contracts in the city. We are in the process of reviewing the contracts and our processes, to ensure that they are fit for purpose and can hold contractors to account to ensure robust compliance with the Regulations. A self-assessment and joint action plan has been carried out jointly with Leeds City Council and the respective PFI Contractors.

6. Action Planning and Next Steps

- 6.1. Following on from the completed self-assessments, a comprehensive Action Plan has been developed for each Standard which identifies the actions needed to strengthen compliance. The Action Plans were developed under the responsibility of each Head of Service Standard lead with input and support from officers working in specific areas.
- 6.2. Work has begun to implement the Action Plans and strengthen compliance in identified areas giving urgent priority to expectations that are potentially non-compliant. Where actions require wider Council consideration, including digital improvements, reporting, web development, the Corporate Leadership Team have been made aware and will consider actions required.
- 6.3. A decision was taken to undertake the self-assessments in house, but with managers taking a rigorous and self challenging approach which was evidenced based. In order to ensure that there is some independence to the self-assessment approach actions will be undertaken during this year to ensure that there is external scrutiny of our approach:

- Internal audit will be undertaking an audit of our self-assessment approach and undertake some testing of the evidence available for a sample of expectations on each Consumer Standard.
 - We have discussed with the Tenant Scrutiny Board their involvement in providing some external scrutiny of our self-assessment outcomes at their June meeting and they are keen to play a role in this. As they have also embarked on their review into complaints, they have asked for a one-off session for the service to provide an overview of our work to date and to provide wider context and then include a regular agenda item in their future monthly meetings for us to report progress on delivering our actions in response to our self-assessments.
- 6.4. Details of our self-assessment outcomes have been shared with the RSH and a meeting took place in late June to consider areas of possible non compliance and to discuss actions that we have put in place to strengthen our compliance.
- 6.5. It is important that actions are delivered at pace in order for us to provide assurance to the Leeds Housing Board and the RSH that we are strengthening our compliance against the standards. Robust arrangements have been put in place to report progress with agreed actions, with monthly reports of progress into the Housing SMT.
- 6.6. The Leeds Housing Board will also be kept informed of progress with strengthening our compliance, with a further update report planned for November 2024.

7. Recommendations

- 7.1. That the Board consider and comment on the approach being taken to undertaking the self-assessments, the outcomes and actions underway following the assessments.
- 7.2. That the Board agree to a further update report being provided in November 2024.

Title: Regulatory Compliance update

Author: Mandy Sawyer

Meeting Date: 23rd July 2024

1. Background

- 1.1. This report is to bring the Leeds Housing Board up to date with the steps that are being taken by the Council to meet the requirements of the new regulatory regime that has been introduced by the 2023 Social Housing (Regulation) Act.
- 1.2. The new regulatory regime has given the Regulator for Social Housing (RSH) increased powers to regulate social housing providers, and how preparation for them to inspect our services is being carried out.

2. The Social Housing Regulation Project Board

- 2.1. Following several months preparatory work, in January 2024 a Project Brief was accepted, establishing the Social Housing Regulations Project, along with the Social Housing Project Board.
- 2.2. The aim of the project is to co-ordinate the Council's response to the regulatory regime and to ensure we meet all the requirements of the regulator as they develop. The Social Housing (Regulation) Act has put in place many changes, but some aspects of the new regulatory regime are still in development.
- 2.3. The Board is chaired by the Chief Officer Housing and is attended by a wide range of senior officers who are leading on work to ensure robust regulatory compliance. The Board meets on a monthly basis and receives updates on the various workstreams which make up the project and takes any decisions that the project seeks in order to progress.
- 2.4. The Project has been divided into four 'Work Packages', which each focus on a different aspect of the new regulations and how we meet them in Leeds.
- 2.5. The Work Packages are:
 - **Work Package 1 – Tenant Engagement:** A key aim of the new regulations is to empower tenants via sharing more information with them so they can scrutinise us more effectively and to give them a greater say in decision making. The purpose of this work package is to support the development of a new Resident Engagement Strategy, to ensure that a culture of listening and responding to the tenant voice is embedded across the service, ensure clear communications plans are in

place to support the delivery of major projects such as Damp & Mould, REEMAs, the High Risk Residential Building work and the Marmot City project.

- **Work Package 2 – Governance:** This Work Package works on ensuring a robust governance structure that will allow us to be able to effectively scrutinise our performance as the new regime requires. It will look at how the Leeds Housing Board is performing and if any improvements can be made, will support the development of a performance and quality management framework so accurate data is being provided to elected members and the Leeds Housing Board. That we meet the requirement for a designated Health & Safety lead and meet the recommendations in the Housing Ombudsman’s ‘Spotlight’ reports.
- **Work Package 3 – Consumer Standards:** This work package has overseen and co-ordinated the work done so far on the Consumer Standards that is explored in detail in the previous report. It is also concerned with ensuring we meet the requirements of the Tenant Satisfaction Measures, which the Leeds Housing Board has been kept briefed on throughout the year.
- **Work Package 4 – Project Management:** This work package is concerned with the running and administration of the project itself.

3. **Other Key Areas of Work**

- 3.1. Whilst regular reports have been provided to Board around TSM reporting, complaints management and Consumer Standard compliance there are some other key pieces of work which are underway to support robust compliance with the regulatory standards. these are outlines below.

Proposed Competency and Conduct Standard

- 3.2. Between February and April this year the government ran a consultation on proposals to introduce a new Competence and Conduct Standard from April 2025, which, if introduced, will require all social landlords to have a written policy setting out their approach to managing and developing skills, knowledge, experience and conduct of staff. It will also require that all senior managers and senior executives hold, or be working towards, a ‘relevant housing qualification’ – depending on seniority either a level 4 or 5 housing qualification.
- 3.3. Housing Leeds is currently undertaking an exercise to consider which roles may be in scope for the new qualification requirement and which staff in those roles currently have the required qualification. Some staff have the required qualification, others are deemed to be partially qualified, i.e. they have a qualification in a related discipline and so need to undertake some modules in order to be fully qualified. Where staff are not qualified they will be required to have started working towards the qualification requirement within 2 years. A number of staff are quite anxious about the

proposed introduction of this new requirement and so we have developed some FAQs and are offering 121 support to affected staff.

- 3.4. We are already partnered with a training provider to deliver level 4 and 5 Housing apprenticeships. Where staff are keen to progress with the working towards the required qualification now we are supporting them to do so and have a number of staff who have recently started progressing towards the qualification, or are due to start later in the year.

Regulatory Related Processes

- 3.5. It is important that consideration is given to how we respond to new regulatory requirements which could be required at any point, such as how we consider any new areas of potential non compliance with the Consumer Standards and self referral and also how we respond when notified of an inspection and preparations for that inspection.
- 3.6. Process maps along with checklists have been produced to guide how we respond to these new regulatory requirements.

Ombudsman Spotlight Reports

- 3.7. The Housing Ombudsman Service has published a series of 'Spotlight reports' - covering issues where the Ombudsman tends to see a large amount of casework, investigating themes to complaints issues and setting out learning recommendations for landlords. Full details of the published spotlight reports are available [here](#) including on damp and mould, noise, knowledge and information management and attitudes, respect and rights.
- 3.8. For each of these spotlight reports Housing Leeds has undertaken a self assessment against the recommendations and developed action plans to strengthen our approach as follows:
- Damp and mould – to ensure that more rigorous arrangements are in place for the reporting of damp and mould, training for staff and information available for residents.
 - Noise - to ensure that noise is considered as part of void, allocation, and investment to minimise impacts and information is available for residents / processes are robust around noise management.
 - Knowledge and information management – to ensure that there is robust management of data about homes, residents and customer contact so that customers receive a high quality customer service.
 - Attitudes, respect and rights – to ensure that services are customer focused and give appropriate consideration to a tenant's vulnerability and effectively manage complaints.
- 3.9. There is quite a bit of crossover between recommendations in the spotlight reports and the Consumer Standards expectations, so where appropriate actions are being as part of Consumer Standard actions.

Raising Awareness of Regulatory Arrangements

- 3.10. With such significant changes to regulatory arrangements which require cultural change it is really important that we raise awareness of the regulatory changes and their importance, and to share how we are working to strengthen our compliance with regulatory arrangements.
- 3.11. An E-learning package is being developed which will explain to staff at all levels what the new regulations require, why they are being implemented and the responsibilities each member of staff has under the new regulations. The E-learning will be completed as a mixture of team and individual learning as bite-size learning up to the end of October.
- 3.12. The E-learning package can also be used to raise awareness with Tenant Scrutiny Board and the Tenant Voice Panel, so that involved tenants also have an understanding of regulatory changes and actions underway. Sessions are planned with the Tenant Scrutiny Board to deliver this training.
- 3.13. Presentations have been made on the regulatory changes to Elected Members via Leader Management Team and the Environment, Housing and Communities Scrutiny Board. The E-learning material can support any additional requests from Members for more information.
- 3.14. We have started to raise awareness of the new regulatory changes with other Council services / other organisations who provide services to tenants. Meetings will be planned with all Council services and main contractors over the coming months to further raise awareness and outline any changes required around service level arrangements, service standards and resident communications.

Review of Governance Arrangements

- 3.15. Under the new regulatory requirements there is a continued focus on 'co-regulation'. This means that Boards and Councillors are responsible for ensuring that organisations are managed effectively and that they deliver outcomes to the RSH's standards. The RSH will seek assurance that robust governance arrangements are in place to ensure that there is a genuine opportunity for tenants to influence services at an operational and strategic level and that there is appropriate check and challenge of service quality and regulatory compliance.
- 3.16. Leeds City Council established the Leeds Housing Board in June 2024, with representation from Elected Members and Tenants, and this Board has overseen our preparations for strengthened regulation. There are also wider governance arrangements relating to the delivery of Council housing services, with regular reports to the Environment, Housing and Scrutiny Board and Executive Board, and the Tenant Scrutiny Board also has a role in scrutinising our compliance with standards.
- 3.17. A review is planned of our governance arrangements to evaluate if arrangements are sufficiently robust and to identify opportunities for improvement. It is proposed that the review will consider the following:
 - Leeds Housing Board (LHB) – review of its role, terms of reference, strengths and weaknesses and opportunities for improvement.

- The formal reporting arrangements between the LHB and other Boards – Scrutiny Board, Executive Board, Tenant Scrutiny Board to ensure that there are clear lines of accountability.
 - Compare with arrangements in place in other large local authorities to identify any possible areas of best practice.
- 3.18. As part of the review we are keen to provide an opportunity for feedback from all LHB members and supporting officers – we are proposing to offer a meeting with tenant representatives and 121 meetings with other Board members during August / September. We aim to conclude the review and report the findings to the next Board meeting covering Council Housing Operations in November.
- 3.19. Where landlord services are provided by other organisations it is important that we consider what governance and assurance arrangements are in place so that the Council is assured that services provided by the organisation are provided robustly in line with regulatory standards. The review of governance arrangements will give consideration to contractual arrangements in place with organisations along with performance management and assurance arrangements.

4. Recommendations

- 4.1. The Leeds Housing Board is asked to note and comment on the information outlined above.
- 4.2. In particular the Board is asked comment on the proposed scope of the review of governance arrangements linked to regulatory compliance.

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Title: Annual Report for Tenants 2023/24

Author: Roisin Donnelly/Ian Montgomery

Meeting Date: 23 July 2024

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To share with the board the draft Housing Leeds Annual Report for Tenants 2023/24, for comment and to seek support to publish. The report is attached as appendix 1.

2. Main points:

- 2.1 In line with the [Transparency, Influence and Accountability Consumer Standard](#), we are required to produce an annual report for tenants. We produce an accessible online text only version, coupled with an interactive pdf published on social media and shared in our tenant comms.
- 2.2 This year's report follows the same broad format, presenting information in four sections called 'Your Home', 'Your Rent', 'Your Voice' and 'Your Neighbourhood', mirroring the themes of the Regulator for Social Housing's Consumer Standards.
- 2.3 To comply with the requirements of the Transparency, Influence and Accountability (TIA) standard we include content on our performance against the tenant satisfaction measures (TSM's), a range of information on our performance in delivering our landlord service, who our accountable persons are and their role, performance in managing complaints, how tenant input has helped influence what we do, how we have learnt from complaints and our improvement actions and priorities for the year ahead.
- 2.4 In trying to develop annual report content in line with good practice, we also include:
- TSM performance information for both 22/23 and 23/24 year-end – and how this compares to a group of 16 comparable landlords.
 - Content that shows how we are providing services to support residents, for example, helping those residents who may be struggling with the cost of living to maximise their income and benefit entitlement.
 - Small customer facing case studies or quotes from residents – for example on the positive impact of investment work.
- 2.5 Our approach to sharing with residents includes promoting this in the monthly email to the 42,000 tenants with an email address, posts on social media (with a countdown of summary posts in the preceding days) and circulation to staff. Ward Members are made aware via an item in the corporate Ward Member update. We will also share with tenants, residents and community groups.

- 2.6 Last year, sharing on Facebook reached 1.7k people, 104 engaging with the post in some way, clicking on links, leaving a comment, sharing the post, and reacting to it. On Twitter, the Annual Report reached 1.2k people with 168 engagements. The tenant email featuring the Annual Report was opened by 18,184 people, achieving 495 individual views of the digital version and 59 of the text only accessible version. The current [online text only version](#) has been viewed 1,235 times since publication.
- 2.7 We have consulted with the Tenant Voice Panel on their preferences and what like most and least about the previous annual report to inform the current draft. For example, there was a view that we include content about how we support residents with their general welfare. To this end, we include information about our tenancy check in process/activity, a case study about support to reduce arrears and an example of our partnership work with Yorkshire Water to help maximise income.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 For the board to review the draft Annual Report for 2023/24 and agree sign-off for publication w/c 29 July 2024 or make any final comments.



Housing Leeds Annual Report 2023/24

Welcome to Housing Leeds Annual Report for 2023/24

Introduction

Welcome to the latest Annual Report for tenants, updating you on our activity and performance from April 2023 to March 2024. We will also keep you updated on our activity throughout the year so look out for regular updates on some of our key areas of work.

You may notice some changes to our report this year. This is in line with the government's new Consumer Standards as part of the Social Housing Regulation Act. These standards guide us on how to deliver our services to you and what information we need to share. This includes sharing our performance against national Tenant Satisfaction Measures. We've been sharing satisfaction from our quarterly surveys with you for over two years now and you can see these in a table within this report. This is the same information that we report to the Regulator.

I'm pleased to report that overall satisfaction with our services has risen this year. I remain committed to working with you, staff, and our partners, to focus on the key services that matter most to you, and to further improve your satisfaction with our services.

The cost of living continues to add financial pressures to many households. It's great to see that our teams have supported over 5,000 households to claim an additional £3.2 million to increase their household income. We'll continue to work with you and support any tenants who are struggling to make ends meet.

Our commitment to build new council homes continues. I'm delighted to see the homes being built to meet housing needs across the city. We also delivered on our commitment to invest in our current homes.

Over the year we spent £72 million on 100's of schemes helping improve the quality of your homes. This included projects to help make homes more energy efficient and save many of you money on your heating bills. It's great to read your feedback on how this has made a difference.

We're always pleased to hear from you and get your feedback on our services. This report shows how working with you helps to improve the services that we offer. We'll continue to do this over the coming year. To be invited to take part in various consultations and opportunities to influence what we do join our growing Tenant Voice Panel. Visit our website to look at the different ways we work with input from tenants.

I hope you'll find this report a useful summary of our work. Let us know what you think by emailing councilhousingcommunications@leeds.gov.uk



Councillor Jessica Lennox
(Executive Member for Housing)

Your satisfaction with our service

Every three months we send a satisfaction survey to a random sample of residents to ask how satisfied you are with our service. We started this in April 2022, so we now have two years of satisfaction information in this report. We have also included an average of 16 landlords who are similar in size to us to show how we compare.

	2022/23	2023/24	Landlords of a similar size*
With our overall service	60%	66% +6%	64% +2%
With the repair service in the last 12 months	66%	70% +4%	69% +1%
With the time taken to complete your most recent repair	61%	67% +6%	66% +1%
That we provide a home that is well maintained	61%	68% +7%	66% +2%
That we provide a home that is safe	61%	74% +13%	73% +1%
That we listen to your views and act upon them	44%	55% +11%	55%
That you are kept informed about things that matter to you	53%	67% +14%	65% +2%
That we treat you fairly and with respect	62%	74% +12%	74%
With our approach to complaint handling	24%	29% +5%	26% +3%
That communal areas are kept clean and well maintained	56%	65% +9%	65%
That we make a positive contribution to your neighbourhood	44%	60% +16%	58% +2%
With our approach to handling anti-social behaviour	42%	53% +11%	50% +3%

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These questions are part of a standard set of measures, known as the 'Tenant Satisfaction Measures' which we have to report to the Regulator for Social Housing. They require us to ask you about our service so that you have information about how well we are performing. The Regulator will use this information to assess us. Many thanks to everyone who has completed a survey.

Look out for this symbol throughout the report, these are the citywide (including BITMO) figures we report to the Regulator as part of the new legislation.



*These results are taken from Housemark, who collect results from similar landlords for us to compare our performance



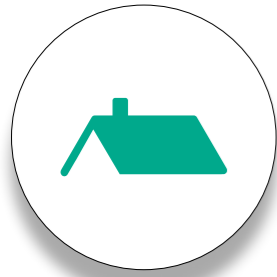
Investing in your home Some highlights of the work we carried out.



New kitchens and bathrooms
199



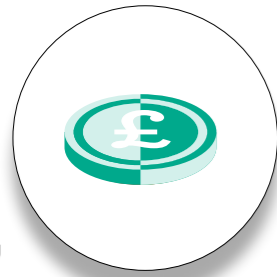
New gas boilers installed
2,263



Re-roofing and insulation
350



Homes supplied by ground source heat pumps
811



Spend on repairs and maintenance
£35.2m



Number of repairs carried out
204,164

How we performed

- Emergency repairs completed in timescale - **93.7%**
- Non-emergency repairs completed in timescale - **82.3%**
- Annual gas safety checks carried out - **99.4%**
- Homes not meeting the decent homes standard - **3.3%**
- Required fire risk assessments carried out - **100%**
- Required communal passenger lift safety checks carried out - **100%**
- Required asbestos surveys or inspections carried out - **100%**
- Required water risk assessments carried out - **100%**



The difference we make

Adapting Homes

We completed 932 major adaptations in council homes and 649 in the private sector alongside 1000's of minor adaptations. The service spent just under £17million on adaptations and the promotion of independent living for people across the city.

Case Study

Leeds has an amazing network of foster carers, but family homes are often not suitable for disabled children in wheelchairs. Working with Foster 4 Leeds we identified a foster family whose home could be adapted to accommodate the most common types of disabilities including, level access throughout, a wet floor shower, a specialist height adjustable bath and hoists to connect to an adjacent bedroom. We now have an excellent accessible home for disabled children.

Reducing energy use

We completed improvement works to over 1,400 homes helping reduce fuel bills by up to 30%. Work included installation of Air Source Heat Pumps to six high rise blocks across the city, providing low cost heating and hot water to replace the electric storage and immersion heaters. We also obtained Social Housing Decarbonisation funding which helped install Ground Source Heat Pumps at two of our high rise blocks.

Insulating homes

This year we installed external wall insulation to 126 back-to-back homes and 150 non-traditional homes, as well as work to seven high-rise blocks across the city.

Our tenants have told us how pleased they are with the works and that the **“finished properties look fantastic”**. Tenants have also said that it is, **“definitely money well spent from the council in tackling fuel poverty”**. One of our residents living in a block with a ground source heat pump expressed to us that they're **“pleased to see their quarterly electric bill in credit”**, and that the work has been **“well worth the installation”**.

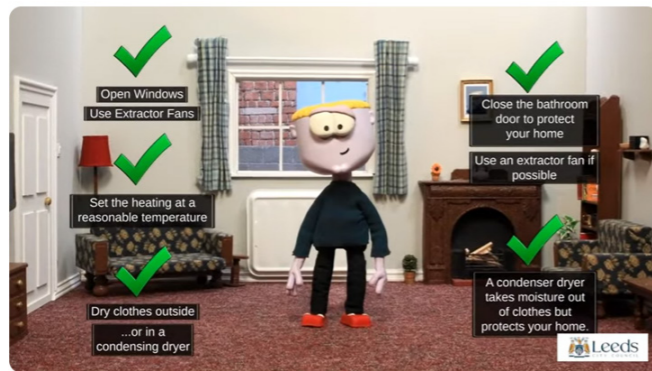


Tackling damp and mould

We want you to live in a home that is free from damp and mould. To make sure that we're dealing with your reports of damp and mould we:



- Created and shared new **advice videos**, explaining ways to help prevent damp, mould and condensation and when to report issues
- Created a new **information site** where staff can access training guides and our damp and mould policy
- Share **regular advice** in our tenant email about how to tackle damp, mould and condensation and how to report this to us
- Set **objectives for all staff** about damp and mould, so everyone is aware of the impact to residents and able to give the right advice
- Published new **website content**.



Fire safety

To keep you safe we have:



- Carried out **338 'Safe & Well' visits** to our more vulnerable residents giving home safety advice
- Fitted **sprinklers to a further 12 high rise blocks**. We've now fitted sprinklers to 70 High Rise blocks, with 4 in progress
- Completed **fire safety work in our 'back to back' homes**, including fitting internal fire doors, fire alarm systems, and fire safety work to basements
- Completed over **7,000 flat entrance and communal door inspections**, in line with the new Building Safety Act
- Completed all **fire risk assessments on 1,139 properties** in line with the fire safety programme and legislative requirements
- Commenced **Person Centred Fire Risk Assessments** for residents who may require assistance to self-evacuate from their high rise home

Building new homes

Over the past year we completed over **200** new build homes, including the **Extra Care housing scheme at Gascoigne House, Middleton** and other **new schemes in Seacroft and Chapel Allerton**. We also acquired, refurbished, and let a further **87 homes** to meet the diverse housing needs of customers across the city



Our priorities for the year ahead

- Ensure **compliance with new and emerging legislation**, including the Building Safety Act and Social Housing Regulation Act
- **Improve re-let times** for our empty homes
- **Increase your satisfaction** with our repairs service
- Continue to ensure you **are safe and feel safe** in your home
- Review our Asset Management Strategy to make sure we can **invest in new technologies** while maintaining the homes we already have.

How we performed



Rent collected
95% (2022/23) **95.45%** (2023/24)



Collected from former tenants
£878k (2022/23) **£985k** (2023/24)



Households supported to claim additional income/benefits
4,680 (2022/23) **5,143** (2023/24)

Tenancy check ins

Some of you get in touch with us regularly and others less so. As a minimum, we aim to check in with you at least once every 3 years. This gives you an opportunity to meet your local Housing Officer, or Retirement Life Support Officer and talk about any issues you may have. We also check that your home is in a good condition and there are no concerns.



26,071 Tenancy check ins completed



418 Hoarding cases identified



649 Safeguarding cases identified and responded to

Rent and support

We support you to pay your rent, reduce any arrears, apply for eligible benefits, and manage your overall living costs. Rent collected is used to keep homes in good repair and to provide services to you. If a tenant leaves their tenancy with arrears, we will seek to collect the money owed.

Rent enforcement

We always try to work with tenants who are having difficulties paying their rent. We will only take eviction action as a last resort, if other attempts to recover arrears are unsuccessful.



Evictions during the year
66

Tenancy fraud

Last year we **recovered 26 properties** where we identified housing fraud. Tackling housing fraud enables us to let homes to those who need them most. Of the fraud cases we investigated:

- **56%** for subletting fraud
- **9%** succession/assignment fraud
- **21%** for right to buy fraud
- **4%** application fraud
- **9%** for non-occupation fraud
- **1%** other fraud

The difference we make

We carry out **benefit checks** to make sure that tenants are receiving the maximum amount of benefit that they're entitled to. We also help tenants to complete **appeals** when benefit applications have been refused. Last year we worked with over 5,000 households helping them secure **£3,175,000** in additional income, an average of £617 per household. Of the households supported, a third of these had children. Our officers also work with partner agencies to provide **advice around debt and budgeting**, and last year we helped award over **£400,000 of British Gas vouchers** to households most in need.

Case Study

Successful Universal Credit challenge of under occupancy arrears

A family with two disabled boys were classed as under occupying their property following a mutual exchange to a larger property. All bedrooms were occupied as the children required their own rooms due to their specialist support equipment. Nevertheless, they were refused an increase in the housing element of their Universal Credit claim.

Working with the family, we provided evidence that the request for the additional bedroom award did comply with regulations and that the rent arrears accrued by the under-occupancy deduction was causing unnecessary distress. Following discussion, the family were awarded the additional bedroom entitlement and given a backdate, clearing the rent arrears balance in full.



Working alongside **Yorkshire Water** we helped tenants in Gipton, Burmantofts, Little London and Moortown to reduce their water bills. Some residents had water meters fitted, meaning they only pay for the water they use. Where water meters couldn't be fitted, residents were put on capped bills which reduced their spend on water. Over **200 customers** were supported with savings of over **£70,000**.

A lot of our tenants pay their rent by Direct Debit. You can also pay your rent online, by phone, or in person. Visit www.leeds.gov.uk/rent for more information.



Many of our tenants are still impacted by the cost of living. If you are **worried about paying your rent, we are here to help**. Please contact your local housing office. We can support you and check your entitlement to welfare benefits.

Our service supports over 4,500 residents to live independently in their homes in our 125 Retirement LIFE schemes across the city.

- Our dedicated and friendly team of Support Officers are available to provide **regular well-being checks**, offering choice and flexibility to suit changing needs.
- ‘**Living in a Friendly Environment**’ is at the heart of the services we deliver and across all schemes, staff are regularly on site attending meetings with residents and social activities.
- We are committed to scheme improvements. In 2023/24 schemes at Rycroft Green, Dulverton Court & Wellington Gardens had **new furniture, carpets and decoration** and 12 communal lounges had new blinds to improve the communal areas.
- In 2023/24 we started to explore opportunities to **improve our Service Offer**, this included: engaging with residents to take part in a survey to understand what they value most about our service. We also consulted over 45s to learn what future customers may want and need.

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Extra Care update

We opened our **third Extra Care scheme** in October 2023, Gascoigne House. This state of the art building has 60 apartments and is connected to a further 12 **accessible bungalows for working age adults with a physical or sensory impairment**. In partnership with us, Home Group has built a further Extra Care Scheme in Woodlesford. The scheme has 63 apartments with allocations well under way. The scheme is due to open soon.

Community-based activities are strong and running at all Extra Care schemes, including bingo; a mother and toddler group; and a lovely partnership with a local primary school where the children write to, and read with, the residents. A Middleton resident has even set up a domino club.



Our priorities for the year ahead

This year we will:

- Build on our engagement with residents and partners to continue to develop our Service Offer for the future
- Work closely with Adults & Health to support older people better, helping them to live independently, including exploring digital opportunities to improve our service
- Make sure our engagement with residents and activities are diverse and inclusive
- Progress with plans for a new 65-unit Extra Care Scheme in Armley, which we aim to start building in late 2024.

If you want to find out more about the service we give contact the Older People’s team on 0113 378 3696 or email housing.leeds.olderpeople@leeds.gov.uk

How we performed

- Supported **67** local tenants, residents and community groups
- Appointed new tenant board members to the **Leeds Housing Board**
- Continued to support 100's of **health and well-being activities** in our Retirement Life Schemes
- **Consulted with over 600 high rise residents** about building safety to help us understand how well our engagement is working and to improve how we listen and respond to high rise residents in future.
- Involved 100's of tenants in helping **design day to day services** through surveys, focus groups, or workshops.

Tenant Scrutiny Board

The Tenant Scrutiny Board reviewed the **advice and support** we give to tenants about **damp and mould**. Speaking to different teams, researching with customers, and looking at what other landlords do, they submitted **12 recommendations for improvement** to us. We accepted these and have now published new advice and information to residents as a result. We're grateful to the board for helping us improve and look forward to supporting them in their next review about how we learn from complaints in the year ahead.

Who are the Tenant Scrutiny Board?

The Tenant Scrutiny Board are a group of tenant volunteers who **review our services** and make **recommendations for improvement**. When carrying out a review, they may speak to tenants, staff or any of our partners or contractors. They'll also look at management and performance information, and good practice from elsewhere to help them identify areas for improvement.

Growing our Tenant Voice Panel

Since our last annual report, our **'Tenant Voice Panel'** has **grown from 170 to 240 members**. We invite the panel to take part in various consultations and service improvement work. This helps us **strengthen your influence**, and gives us a more **diverse range of feedback**.

Consulting the panel has helped us to:

- **Design the 'Building Safety Hub'**, where high-rise residents can access information about their home or block
- **Write** the first hard copy **building safety newsletter**.
- **Select a new gas servicing contractor**, making sure any future contract has high levels of customer care.
- Get **feedback from Retirement Life residents** about what's valued most about our service and to help shape a wider residents consultation plan
- **Design this annual report!**

Panel members have also **become Leeds Housing Board members** and **joined the Tenant Scrutiny Board** to help them with their reviews.

To read more about all the ways we listen and respond to your feedback visit www.leeds.gov.uk/tenantinvolvement

The difference we make

Housing Advisory Panels

During the year HAPs made **250** local funding decisions, giving grants and funding projects to a value of **£395,000**. These helped improve neighbourhoods in response to residents feedback and supported community activity. You can see some examples of HAP funded activity in our [10 year anniversary HAP film](#). **A massive thank you** to everyone who helped the HAPs in their final year of operation to invest in local communities.



Meanwood Olympics



Bawn fun day

Case Study

Making it easier to give your feedback:

In addition to traditional walkabouts, where residents and officers meet to jointly identify any environmental issues, we also carry out 'virtual' walkabouts online. These allow residents to contribute at any time, to highlight areas that might need attention to help keep them clean, safe, or in good repair. The **Holtdales virtual walkabout** was visited by **181 local residents**. **57 comments** were left about issues that officers could look into. Using this approach, we included and involved many more residents than an in-person walkabout alone.

Our priorities for the year ahead

We'll continue to offer local opportunities for tenants to **give feedback on how we deliver services**, and to influence local priorities. We've been consulting on how best to do this and we'll be releasing more information about what we're doing and what this achieves in the year ahead. Other priorities include **improving the accessibility of our communications**, ensuring we **comply with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code**, reporting back to you in better ways how we **learn and respond from all your feedback**, and developing **new digital engagement approaches**. We look forward to delivering these and other improvements with your input.

How we performed

Number of complaints received

Stage 1 – 2,175 (equivalent to 41.1 per 1,000 homes)

Stage 2 – 549 (equivalent to 10.4 per 1,000 homes)



Complaints responded to within Complaint Handling Code timescales

Stage 1 – 88.0% (within 10 working days)

Stage 2 – 87.6% (within 20 working days)

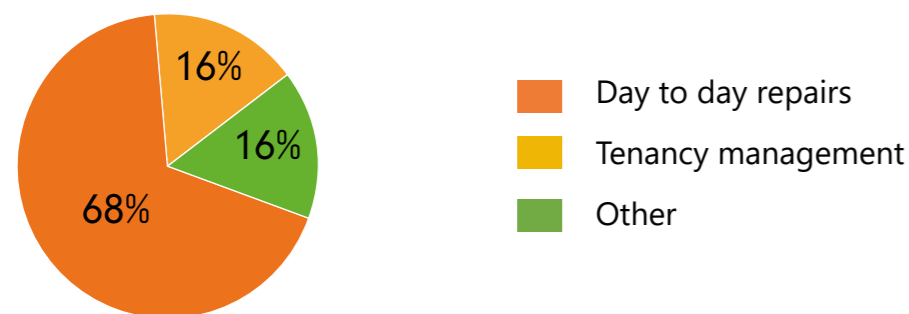
All social landlords must meet the requirements of the [Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code](#). Our [annual assessment against the code](#) is available online.

We welcome your feedback as it helps us improve the services we give. If our service fails you, you can complain to us so we can put things right. If you remain unhappy with our response, you can approach either the **Housing Ombudsman** or the **Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman** depending on what your complaint is about.

Three out of four complaints were resolved at **stage one** and **96%** were resolved without involving either Ombudsman. We work closely with both Ombudsman services to make sure that residents are given advice and information on how to access their services if they wish to.

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What your complaints were about



Our priorities for the year ahead

This year we will:

- Continue to support staff and contractors to **listen to you and put things right**
- **Carry out any recommendations** made by the Housing Ombudsman
- **Provide more feedback** to residents on how we're learning from complaints
- Complete our annual complaints self-assessment with **tenant input**
- Work with the **Tenant Scrutiny Board** to support them in their review of complaints
- Continue to support staff with **training and development** to better respond to complaints

To read more about all the ways we listen and respond to your feedback visit www.leeds.gov.uk/tenantinvolvement

Case Study

What happened?

The Housing Ombudsman investigated a complaint from one of our tenants and found 'severe maladministration' in our handling of a complex structural repair and subsequent actions and impact to the family. Severe maladministration is a formal decision by the Ombudsman that a landlord has failed to do something, done something it shouldn't have or, in the Ombudsman's opinion, has delayed unreasonably. In this case the tenant was waiting for repairs to be completed over a long period of time. The Ombudsman found that our repair records were unclear or incomplete and this led to duplicate visits and inspections. The Ombudsman also found that we failed to communicate effectively with the tenant in advance of appointments, leading to unannounced visits which caused the tenant anxiety.

What did we do to make it right?

We apologised to the family for the delay in completing the repairs and the time taken to resolve the complaint. We worked with the family and agreed a plan to complete the works safely in line with their individual needs.

We welcome feedback from our customers to help us improve the service that we offer. We continue to ask all customers to complete a satisfaction survey after we have responded to their complaint and after every repair. This allows us to understand what works well, and where we need to improve. Our aim is to continually learn from customer feedback, and we are currently working with our Tenant Scrutiny Board to review our complaint response times, and how we can be more effective at learning from complaints.

What changes have we made?

The case provided an opportunity to identify the lessons learnt and actions have been implemented as a result. For example:

- Sharing the learning as a case study with all staff and our contractors
- Providing refresher training/extra guidance for all officers who investigate and respond to complaints to make sure that we are meeting our service standards
- Introducing improved procedures for managing this type of complex repair
- Reviewing our procedures for capturing and tailoring our services to meet vulnerability needs.

Other improvements made as a result of your complaints

- Continued to **share** our monthly 'hints, tips, and reminders' for all staff
- Continued to **invest** in our damp and mould team to help with early intervention and triage of cases
- Used customer satisfaction data to **address dissatisfaction** and put in place service improvements

Your Voice

How we performed

Number of anti-social behaviour cases
886 (equivalent to 16.7 per 1,000 homes)

Number of anti-social behaviour cases that involve hate incidents
53 (equivalent to 1 per 1,000 homes)



Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour

Leeds Anti-Social Behaviour Team (LASBT) work with us to respond to anti-social behaviour (ASB) complaints and concerns from across the city. We've seen an **overall decrease** in ASB over the past year. Working with West Yorkshire Police, we've focused on **early intervention and prevention**, as well as enforcement.

Highlights from the year include:

Supporting young people

Our aim is not to criminalise young people, but to ensure they are aware and **understand the impact of their behaviour**. A range of partnerships and forums help reduce the impact resulting from young people causing ASB. Helping identify, intervene, educate, and put in place appropriate diversions at the earliest opportunity, to try and **change behaviours** and reduce the need for enforcement.

New ASB problem solving team

We have secured funding from the West Yorkshire Authority to create a new **Problem Solving Team**. They can deploy 10 temporary CCTV cameras alongside other targeted equipment. This helps us to support residents and our partners to tackle problematic areas of ASB.

Successful Problem Solving Groups (PSG) in Beeston and Holbeck

PSG's help resolve short term issues through intensive partnership work to achieve a positive impact in a short timescale.

- We carried out two weeks of action on **Dewsbury Road** in relation to the supply of drugs. This resulted in **premises closure orders** and **injunctions**.
- In **Holbeck**, challenging ASB and criminality, and carrying out **environmental work** including clearing waste ground, improving lighting, and clearing bin yards.

Working together to look after your neighbourhood



- We completed **425 walkabouts** throughout the year. These happen at least twice a year in the Spring and Autumn months. Contact your local Housing team to get involved.
- We work closely with the **Cleaner Neighbourhoods Team** and other partners to take a proactive approach to managing the environment
- Thank you to **West Yorkshire Probation Service** who have completed **150 jobs**, helping keep estates tidier, cleaner, and greener.
- Continued to respond to local issues, working with residents to achieve positive outcomes, such as holding **estate action and clean up days**

Our priorities for the year ahead

- **Promote** more widely how residents can report ASB and **raise awareness** of how we can help
- Complete our **ASB policy review** using feedback from residents
- Publish our **service standards** in an accessible format for residents
- Provide more **training and support** for staff to help them deal with your reports of ASB
- Continue to **work with residents and our partners** to improve local areas

Belle Isle Tenant Management Organisation

Belle Isle Tenant Management Organisation (BITMO) manages 1,800 council homes in Belle Isle on behalf of Leeds City Council. It is run by tenants of Belle Isle and is the largest estate based TMO in the country.

I'm pleased to share with you a short summary of the work of BITMO. As a tenant-led organisation we rely on the commitment of our tenants to tell us what their priorities are, and to provide leadership through our Board.

If you would like to find out more about BITMO or get involved in our volunteering programme, please get in touch, we'd love to hear from you - www.belleisle.tmo.co.uk

Deborah Kelly (BITMO Chief Executive)



Percentage of rent collected
96.22%



Investing in your homes
£1.8m



Additional income generated
for customers **£386k**



Homes with a gas safety
certificate **98.97%**



Number of complaints
received **45**



Complaints responded to in
timescale **87%**

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Working with our tenants we have:

- Continued to provide a programme of **FREE tuition in Maths and English** for primary school aged children
- Created a **garden tool library** helping provide gardening tools to people who don't have access to any. We have also provided **skips** to help clear waste for our tenants
- Increased the **frequency of cleaning** in our flats at no extra charge to tenants.
- Improved the **CCTV and lighting** in areas following concerns about anti-social behaviour, highlighted by our tenants and the Police
- Repurposed a bowling green as a **community orchard** and **planted trees** across the estate with the help of volunteers
- Redecorated, carpeted, and refurnished communal rooms in our **Retirement Life schemes**
- Fenced off **Belle Isle Circus** with improved lighting to come



Building a better future for Belle Isle

New social housing regulation

As a social landlord we are subject to regulation by the **Regulator of Social Housing**. The Regulator sets standards for the **management of your home** and carries out the regulation of landlords against these standards to ensure that:

- We are well governed, financially viable, and offer value for money
- Home are well managed, safe, energy efficient, and of appropriate quality
- Tenants and potential tenants have an appropriate level of choice and protection
- Tenants have an opportunity to be involved in our management and hold us to account
- We act in a transparent manner
- We contribute towards the environmental, social, and economic wellbeing of areas.

This Annual Report helps us **share information** with you and makes us more **transparent** about what we do. We provide many ways for tenants to **influence** how we work and we **value** your input. We give regular updates about how we're **performing** and your views about our service in our **tenant communications**.

The service is led by our **Senior Management Team** who report to **James Rogers** the Director for Housing, Communities, and Environment. We also have a governing body, the **Leeds Housing Board** which includes **tenant members**. Information on the salary of our Director is published on the [Leeds Data Mill](#).

Gerard Tinsdale, as Chief Officer Housing, is responsible for overseeing the delivery of all landlord services to Council tenants and so is responsible for ensuring overall compliance with the Regulator of Social Housing's Consumer Standards. He also has overall responsibility for complaint handling. He is supported by:

- **Adam Crampton**, Head of Property Management, who oversees the repairs, maintenance, and investment service. Adam is responsible for overseeing compliance with the Safety and Quality Standard.
- **Mandy Sawyer**, Head of Housing and Neighbourhood Services, oversees tenancy and neighbourhood management services and is responsible for overseeing compliance with the Tenancy Standard, the Neighbourhood and Community Standard, and the Transparency, Influence, and Accountability Standard.
- **Jon Andrews**, Health and Safety Lead Officer, who is responsible for monitoring compliance, assessing risks, and reporting any concerns linked to health and safety requirements. If you have reported a health and safety concern to us, and you don't feel we've taken appropriate action, you can email Jon on buildingsafety@leeds.gov.uk



**Regulator of
Social Housing**

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Agenda Item 6

Q1 Tenant Satisfaction Measures – report to follow

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