

Item No	Ward	Item Not Open		Page No
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LEEDS HOUSING BOARD AGENDA

Meeting: Leeds Housing Board Meeting

Date: Wednesday 22nd January

Time: 15:00–16:30

Location: via Teams

Item	Presented by	Time
1. Introductions and apologies	Councillor Lennox	15:00-15:05
2. Minutes of the Last Meeting	Councillor Lennox	15:05-15:10
3. TSMs Update	Adam Crampton	15:10-15:20
4. Leeds Housing Board review	Mandy Sawyer	15:20-15:35
5. Communications and Engagement Update	Ian Montgomery	15:35-15:50
6. Complaints Management Update	Ian Montgomery	15:50-16:00
7. Grenfell Tower Phase 2 report – Impact on LCC	Adam Crampton	16:00-16:15
8. Forward Plan	Mandy Sawyer	16:15-16:20
9. AOB	Councillor Lennox	16:20-16:30

Date and Time of Next Meeting: TBC

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Minutes



Meeting Name:	Leeds Housing Board	
Date:	Thursday 21 st November 2024	Time: 10.30-12.00
Location:	Microsoft Teams	
Chair:	Cllr Jessica Lennox (JL)	
Members Present:	Cllr Fiona Venner (FV), Cllr Barry Anderson (BA), Cllr Jordan Bowden (JB), Zioness-Amaka Curry (ZAC), Leanne Kaye (LK)	
Attendees Present:	Gerard Tinsdale (GT), Mandy Sawyer (MS), Simon Baker (SB), Rob Goor (RG), Ian Montgomery (IM), Adam Crampton (AC)	
Apologies:	James Rogers, Cllr Kayleigh Brooks, John Gittos, Lorraine Cooper	

Minutes

Item	
1	Introductions and apologies
2	Minutes of the Last Meeting
	The Board accepted the minutes from July's meeting.
3	Draft Communications and Engagement Policy Workshop
3.1	The Board held it's first workshop session, to give members a chance to hold a substantive discussion and input into the development of the new Communications and Engagement policy.
3.2	IM outlined the key aims of the policy and issues identified through information received from tenant feedback via TSMs and wider engagement. Following comments from LK the Board discussed how tenants can identify and contact their housing managers. JB asked about the software used to manage appointments with tenants and AC outlined the software used.
3.3	The Board then discussed in more detail feedback from tenants. JB pointed out that questioning of tenants could have gone into more detail. MS pointed out that consultation previously has been as hoc, and this policy is designed to make it stronger, showing we capture tenant input and tell people what we've done as a result of that.

3.4	JB questioned the size of the consultation carried out. With 80 responses, FV felt that more needs to be done to increase the response rate. The results match the findings of the TSM surveys but more responses in future are needed.
3.5	MS pointed out the survey was carried out as part of developing the new policy, but in future could link in with transactional surveys, eg completed by a tenant after a repair is completed, to increase feedback. LK suggested including the weblink in rent statements.
3.6	The intention is to finalise the policy asap. IM confirmed that the feedback will be taken into consideration in finalising the policy and will then be rolled out over coming weeks and Housing teams will be asked to complete a self-assessment to ascertain what tenant communication and engagement they currently undertake. Updates will be brought to later Board meetings.
4	Consumer Standards progress update
4.1	After being an item at July's Board meeting, this report brought the Board up to date with the position as at October.
4.2	MS briefly covered main points from the report. BA asked if any of the amber RAGs are in danger of becoming red. MS confirmed that all indicators are moving in a positive direction. GT added that we are engaging and sharing all our information with the Regulator and have also asked our Internal Audit department to look at our work and assessments done so far.
5	Tenant Satisfaction Measures Quarter 2
5.1	AC highlighted the main points from the report, noting that there was a drop in satisfaction in Q2, reflecting a similar dip in Q2 22/23 – the hypothesis is of a seasonal drop but more data is needed. JL noted that Q3 results should show if it is a seasonal impact.
6.	Complaints Management Update
6.1	Covering the content of the report, IM noted that complaints performance remains relatively stable compared to last year, and initial data for September is showing 95% of Stage 1 complaints is indicating 95% dealt with in timescale – a consistently high level of performance. Performance is improving or maintaining from each quarter to the next over the last 12 months.
6.2	JL asked how we are performing in relation to our peers. GT replied that, according to data from HouseMark, we are performing fairly well. MS noted that we were above the sector average in terms of complaints reflecting the hard work and effort of teams to improve our complaints management.
6.3	BA asked if there are any specific areas of the city that have higher complaints levels than others. MS replied that we do measure on an area basis and that this can be shared with the Board. Action – to include area breakdown in next complaints report
6.4	IM addressed one of the report's discussion points, noting that we need to ensure residents are receiving quality responses to their complaints. A Quality Assurance exercise will be carried out, looking at responses that escalated to Stage 2 to understand how to lessen escalation.

7.	Damp and Mould Update
7.1	RG gave a brief overview of the contents of the report, noting that our current approach to damp and mould is performing well, including preparation for Awaab's Law to be introduced.
7.2	He then focused on the discussion points the report highlights. He asked the Board for their input on areas of performance reporting they would like to be enhanced. FV noted that we respond to D&M reports well, but is there a way to be more proactive and identify issues via inspection? GT responded that there are a number of opportunity to identify issues via inspections – ATCIs, repairs inspections and completions, gas safety checks etc and damp and mould is considered and actioned at each of these visits. RG added that we have been proactive on training officers, including Adult and Children staff, and contractors to spot D&M and report the issue if they identify any issues.
7.3	ZAC asked how we can make properties more robust against D&M, such as with better door seals or better extractor fans, and ensure it is of high quality. AC replied that this is an area where good progress is being made. Equipment manufacturers are responding with better equipment which we are installing and diagnosing problems quicker. The specifications that contractors must meet are set out in contracts and compliance is monitored.
7.4	JB asked that it would be useful to monitor repeat repairs, and that this data should be shared with the Board in future. RG agreed that this would be a useful way of monitoring our efficiency.
8.	AOB
	n/a

Next Meeting (Housing Strategy)

Date: Thursday 22nd January 2025

Time: 3pm – 4.30pm

Location: Microsoft Teams

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Leeds Housing Board

Title: Tenant Satisfaction Measures Update

Authors: Frank Perrins/Simon Baker/Lee

Ward

Meeting Date: 22nd January 2025

1. Background

- 1.1. The Leeds Housing Board receives quarterly updates on the TSM performance throughout the year, with Quarter 2 performance reported to Board in November 2024.
- 1.2. The collection of the TSM data and annual submission to the Regulator of Social Housing 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.
- 1.3. There are twenty-two TSMs. Twelve record the perception that tenants have of how we are performing and we collect these via quarterly tenant surveys that are carried out, with tenants selected randomly.
- 1.4. The remaining ten, 'Management Information' (MI), are collected from our internal information in a number of areas such as, for example, the proportion of our stock that meets the Decent Homes Standard and the amount of routine safety checks completed.
- 1.5. Acuity continues to carry out our tenant perception 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.
- 1.6. This report provides the Leeds Housing Board with the latest data from the tenant perception survey and the latest available MI data.

2. Main Points
















2.1. TSM survey Q3 results

- 2.2. During Q3 631 surveys were completed, 505 by telephone and 126 through an online survey.
- 2.3. Many questions have shown higher scores in Q3 compared to Q2, including overall satisfaction, which improved by 4 percentage points since Q2 (to 67%). We saw a similar trend overall in 2023/24, with many scores (including overall satisfaction) improving in Q3 compared to Q2, suggesting that these could be affected by seasonal conditions.
- 2.4. Indicators related to safety, the local area and anti-social behaviour showed a notable improvement in Q3 2024/25 compared to Q2, suggesting

the Q2 results may have been affected by media coverage of disturbances.

These indicators include:

- Home that is safe: 73% compared to 69% for Q2
 - Communal areas are kept clean and well maintained: 61% compared to 51% for Q2
 - Makes a positive contribution to your neighbourhood: 60% compared to 54% for Q2
 - Approach to handling anti-social behaviour: 53% compared to 45% for Q2
- 2.5. Comparing Q3 figures with full year 2023/24 results, the differences for all of the questions are within the quarterly margin of error (approx. +/-4%).
- 2.6. Comparing cumulative full year 2024/25 results with full year 2023/24, the differences for most of the questions are within full year margin for error (approx. +/-2%). The exception is 'Communal areas are kept clean and well maintained' (61% compared to 65% to full year 2023/24), however this will have a larger margin for error due to the lower number of respondents with a communal area.

TSM Survey Results	2023/24					2024/25					Trend	Diff to 23/24
	Full Year	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Full Year			
Count of total completed responses	2571	644	672	632	623	631	630	631	1892			
Statistical accuracy - confidence interval	1.9%	3.8%	3.8%	3.9%	3.9%	3.9%	3.9%	3.9%	2.2%			
Overall												
Overall satisfaction with services provided	66%	62%	63%	68%	70%	67%	63%	67%	66%		0%	
The home												
Percentage of tenants who had a repair in the last 12 months	69%	67%	70%	70%	70%	70%	71%	71%	71%		2%	
Satisfaction with overall repairs service received in the last 12 months	70%	68%	71%	71%	71%	72%	68%	70%	70%		0%	
Satisfaction with time taken to complete most recent repair	67%	63%	67%	67%	71%	69%	68%	68%	68%		1%	
Satisfaction that landlord provides a home that is well maintained	68%	67%	65%	69%	69%	68%	66%	69%	68%		0%	
Satisfaction that landlord provides a home that is safe	74%	73%	73%	76%	73%	73%	69%	73%	72%		-2%	
Contact and communication												
Satisfaction that your landlord listens to your views and acts upon them	55%	54%	54%	57%	56%	55%	51%	56%	54%		-1%	
Satisfaction that you are kept informed about things that matter to you	67%	66%	65%	69%	69%	68%	66%	67%	67%		0%	
Percentage of tenants agreeing 'my landlord treats me fairly and with respect'	74%	75%	73%	75%	73%	74%	71%	74%	73%		-1%	
Percentage who made a complaint in the last 12 months	28%	29%	26%	27%	27%	26%	31%	31%	29%		1%	
Satisfaction with your landlord's approach to complaints handling	29%	29%	25%	34%	27%	25%	22%	33%	27%		-2%	
Satisfaction that your landlord is easy to deal with*	66%	67%	65%	66%	65%	67%	64%	65%	65%		-1%	
Neighbourhood and community												
Satisfaction that communal areas are kept clean and well maintained	65%	66%	62%	68%	64%	66%	51%	61%	61%		-4%	
Satisfaction that landlord makes a positive contribution to your neighbourhood	60%	64%	59%	61%	58%	63%	54%	60%	59%		-1%	
Satisfaction with your landlord's approach to handling anti-social behaviour	53%	50%	52%	55%	55%	56%	45%	53%	51%		-2%	

*Included in telephone survey as key customer services indicator

3. TSM Management Information

Complaints	2023/24 year-end	Oct 23 - Sept 24 - Provisional	Nov 23 - Oct 24 - Provisional
Complaints relative to the size of the landlord - Stage One (per 1,000 homes)	41.1	43.5	43.8
Complaints relative to the size of the landlord - Stage Two (per 1,000 homes)	10.4	11.1	11.3
Stage One complaints responded to within Complaint Handling Code timescales.	88.0%	89.9%	90.8%
Stage Two complaints responded to within Complaint Handling Code timescales.	87.6%	90.4%	90.6%

Anti-social behaviour cases relative to the size of the landlord	2024/25 year to date as at end of Q2 - Provisional	2024/25 year to date as at end of October - Provisional	2024/25 year to date as at end of November - Provisional
Anti-social behaviour cases opened (per 1,000 homes)	41.1	49.3	56.0
Anti-social behaviour cases that involved hate incidents opened (per 1,000 homes)	1.8	1.2	1.9

Homes that do not meet the Decent Homes Standard	2023/24 year-end	2024/25 YTD position (as at the end of September 2024)	2024/25 YTD position (as at the end of October 2024)
Proportion of homes that do not meet the Decent Homes Standard	3.3%	4.5%	4.3%

Repairs completed within target timescale	2023/24 year-end	November 23 - October 24 - Provisional	December 23 - November 24 - Provisional
Number of non-emergency responsive repairs completed within the provider's target timescale	82.3%	94.2%	93.9%
Number of emergency responsive repairs completed within the provider's target timescale	93.7%	92.8%	92.7%

Safety Checks	2023/24 year-end	2024/25 October YTD position	2024/25 November YTD position
BS01 – Gas safety checks: Proportion of homes for which all required gas safety checks have been carried out	99.4%	99.4%	99.8%
BS02 – Fire safety checks: Proportion of homes for which all required fire risk assessments have been carried out.	100.0%	100.0%	100%
BS03 – Asbestos safety checks: Proportion of homes for which all required asbestos management surveys or re-inspections have been carried out.	100.0%	96.8%	96.7%
BS04 – Water safety checks Proportion of homes for which all required legionella risk assessments have been carried out.	100.0%	100.0%	100%
BS05 – Lift safety checks: Proportion of homes for which all required communal passenger lift safety checks have been carried out.	100.0%	96.9%	88.8%

4. Improvement works underway

- 4.1. Actions to improve TSM performance is being driven in the main through our Consumer Standards action plans (for which updates were reported into Board in November).
- 4.2. Considerable work is underway to strengthen our communication and engagement, with the aim of improving satisfaction, as outlined in the Communication and Engagement update on this agenda. We have finalised our Communication and Engagement Policy and teams are currently self assessing the strengths and weaknesses of their approach, and identifying actions. We have also started a review of the Housing web pages.
- 4.3. We have recently reviewed our Anti Social Behaviour (ASB) Policy and are currently reviewing procedures, including letter content to strengthen our communication and information shared. Further work is also underway to strengthen our reporting.
- 4.4. We are working with other Council teams to develop service level arrangements which will help to ensure that robust performance management arrangements are in place for the management of cleaning of communal areas and to the neighbourhood.
- 4.5. Asbestos inspections – access issues relating to a number of sites was experienced in quarter 2, predominantly low rise, low risk sites where lock changes have been undertaken. A programme to resolve these issues is now in place to recover the position.
- 4.6. Lifts – we continue to work with our service delivery partners to ensure all required inspections are carried out at the earliest opportunity. A number of inspections were unable to be undertaken due to additional security measures being implemented on sites experiencing anti-social behaviour. An action plan is in place, including acceleration of some Q3 inspections.

5. National TSM survey results

- 5.1. In November the Regulator of Social Housing published its analysis of the first year of national TSMs results. See [here](#) for the full report.
- 5.2. For TP01 the results show that for all landlords the average percentage of those very or fairly satisfied is 70%. There is variation in results though – ranging from 64% at the lower quartile to 78% at the upper quartile. Average overall satisfaction varies significantly by landlord type, size and geography. London-based landlords generally perform worse than those in the Midlands and the North.
- 5.3. Smaller landlords report higher performance on TP01. Landlords with more than 40,000 units average performance was 65.9% (exactly matching LCC's 23/24 year end TP01 figure), compared to 73.6% for those with fewer than 5000 units and 71% for those with between 5000 and 40,000 units.

- 5.4. There is strong evidence that local authorities perform lower than PRPs – 68.2% to 73.2% respectively.
- 5.5. A full comparison of LCC’s results compared with the national results is attached at appendix 1.
- 5.6. A summary of our benchmarked performance for 2023/24 is as follows:

2023/24 Quartile Overview	Top Quartile	2 nd Quartile	3 rd Quartile	Bottom Quartile
All	5	5	14	2
LA	5	10	9	2

- 5.7. The two TSMs in bottom quartile for 2023/24 are as follows:
 - BS01 - % Gas Safety Checks carried out – Multiple (a minimum of 3) appointed access attempts are made **prior** to expiry of the Landlord’s Gas Safety Record (LGSR). However, Leeds City Council’s legal access enforcement process does commence until **after** expiry of the LGSR. This is not always the case with other authorities/registered providers who force access to complete the LGST on the day of expiry. As a result, Housing Leeds always has a small number of overdue properties (~ 0.5% of stock). It should be noted that the access enforcement procedure is a mature, well-established process, meaning homes should never be more than 6 weeks overdue at the point at which a court warrant is issued and executed for access.
 - NM01 - No. ASB Cases per 1,000 Homes – when calculating performance for 2023/24 we only included cases reported where a formal case was opened for investigation. For 2024/25 we are now including all cases reported and our performance is now more aligned to other landlords.

6. Discussion Points

- 6.1. During both 2022/23 and 2023/24 we saw a dip in customer satisfaction during the Quarter 2 TSM tenant survey. We are keen to explore with the Board what may have contributed towards a seasonal dip in these quarters.
- 6.2. Then national TSM survey results highlight our performance to be mainly in the second and third quartiles. It is our ambition to be in top quartile for all TSM measures and so we are proposing to set targets for 2025/26 which are realistic and achievable, but also challenge ourselves to progress towards being top quartile. Do you support this approach?

7. Recommendations

- 7.1. Members are requested to note and comment on the TSM Q3 results and actions being taken to improve performance.

TSM KPI	23/24 Year End		September 2024		All LCRA Quartiles			Local Authority LCRA Quartiles		
	Result	Quartile AII/LA	Result	Quartile AII/LA	Lower	Median	Upper	Lower	Median	Upper
Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied with the service provided by their landlord (TP01)	65.9%	Low-Med Low-Med	66% (Q3)	Low-Med Low-Med	63.7%	71.3%	78.4%	61.6%	68.2%	75.9%
Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied with the overall repairs service from their landlord over the last 12 months (TP02)	70.3%	Low-Med Low-Med	70% (Q3)	Low-Med Low-Med	65.7%	72.3%	78.7%	63.3%	70.5%	77.7%
Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied with the time taken to complete their most recent repair after they reported it (TP03)	67.2%	Low-Med Low-Med	68% (Q3)	Med-Upp Med-Upp	61.1%	67.4%	75.3%	59.0%	66.1%	74.2%
Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied that their landlord provides a home that is well maintained (TP04)	67.7%	Low-Med Med-Upp	68% (Q3)	Low-Med Med-Upp	64.4%	70.8%	77.6%	61.1%	66.9%	75.0%
Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied that their landlord provides a home that is safe (TP05)	73.8%	Low-Med Med-Upp	72% (Q3)	Low-Med Low-Med	70.5%	76.7%	82.5%	68.1%	73.5%	79.9%
Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied that their landlord listens to their views and acts upon them (TP06)	55.2%	Low-Med Low-Med	54% (Q3)	Low-Med Low-Med	52.3%	60.4%	67.9%	49.2%	55.8%	63.7%
Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied that their landlord keeps them informed about things that matter to them (TP07)	66.8%	Low-Med Low-Med	67% (Q3)	Low-Med Med	63.8%	70.3%	75.9%	60.2%	67.0%	72.6%
Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied that their landlord treats them fairly and with respect (TP08)	73.9%	Low-Med Med-Upp	73% (Q3)	Low-Med Low-Med	70.8%	76.8%	82.8%	67.2%	73.5%	78.6%
Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied with their landlord's approach to complaints handling (TP09)	28.7%	Low-Med Med-Upp	27% (Q3)	Lower Low-Med	27.5%	34.5%	41.1%	24.7%	29.1%	36.2%
Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied that their landlord keeps communal areas clean and well maintained (TP10)	64.6%	Low-Med Med-Upp	61% (Q3)	Low-Med Low-Med	58.2%	65.1%	71.7%	55.3%	63.1%	69.9%

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* The Regulator has determined these quartiles, so they are saying the more cases opened the higher the quartile. Q3 results for Perception Survey measures. Q2 results for Management Information measures.

TSM KPI	23/24 Year End		September 2024		All LCRA Quartiles			Local Authority LCRA Quartiles		
	Result	Quartile AII/LA	Result	Quartile AII/LA	Lower	Median	Upper	Lower	Median	Upper
Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied that their landlord makes a positive contribution to their neighbourhood (TP11)	60.4%	Low-Med Med-Upp	59% (Q3)	Low-Med Low-Med	55.1%	63.1%	70.4%	51.9%	59.5%	68.1%
Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied with their landlord's approach to handling anti-social behaviour (TP12)	53.2%	Low-Med Low-Med	51% (Q3)	Lower Low-Med	51.3%	57.8%	64.8%	47.6%	54.0%	60.5%
Proportion of homes for which all required gas safety checks have been carried out (BS01)	99.4%	Lower Lower	99.5%	Lower Lower	99.7%	99.9%	100%	99.6%	99.9%	100%
Proportion of homes for which all required fire risk assessments have been carried out (BS02)	100%	Upper Upper	99.8%	Low-Med Low-Med	99.7%	100%	100%	99.1%	100%	100%
Proportion of homes for which all required asbestos management surveys or re-inspections have been carried out (BS03)	100%	Upper Upper	99.6%	Low-Med Low-Med	99.2%	100%	100%	99.0%	100%	100%
Proportion of homes for which all required legionella risk assessments have been carried out (BS04)	100%	Upper Upper	100%	Upper Upper	99.6%	100%	100%	99.5%	100%	100%
Proportion of homes for which all required communal passenger lift safety checks have been carried out (BS05)	100%	Upper Upper	95.9%	Lower Lower	97.8%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Number of anti-social behaviour cases, opened per 1,000 homes (NM01 (1))	16.7	Lower Lower	41.1	Med-Upp Med-Upp	20.7*	35.5*	56.5*	21.0*	35.3*	60.0*
Number of anti-social behaviour cases that involve hate incidents opened per 1,000 homes (NM01 (2))	1.0	Med-Upp Med-Upp	1.8	Upper Upper	0.2*	0.6*	1.2*	0.1*	0.5*	1.4*
Proportion of homes that do not meet the Decent Homes Standard (RP01)	3.3%	Med-Upp Low-Med	4.5%	Upper Med-Upp	0.02%*	0.50%*	3.43%*	1.36%*	3.64%*	8.93%*
Proportion of non-emergency responsive repairs completed within the landlord's target timescale (RP02 (1))	82.3%	Med-Upp Low-Med	86.6%	Med-Upp Med-Upp	70.7%	81.3%	89.2%	73.1%	82.6%	90.7%

* The Regulator has determined these quartiles, so they are saying the more cases opened the higher the quartile. Q3 results for Perception Survey measures. Q2 results for Management Information measures.

TSM KPI	23/24 Year End		September 2024		All LCRA Quartiles			Local Authority LCRA Quartiles		
	Result	Quartile AII/LA	Result	Quartile AII/LA	Lower	Median	Upper	Lower	Median	Upper
Proportion of emergency responsive repairs completed within the landlord's target timescale (RP02 2)	93.7%	Low-Med Low-Med	94.8%	Low-Med Low-Med	87.9%	95.3%	98.7%	87.8%	95.1%	98.7%
Number of stage one complaints made by tenants in the relevant stock type during the reporting year per 1,000 homes (CH01 (1))	41.1	Low-Med Med-Upp	41.7	Low-Med Med-Upp	24.4	42.5	65.1	21.6	37.5	55.7
Proportion of stage one complaints responded to within the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code timescales (CH02 (1))	88%	Med-Upp Med-Upp	91.6%	Upper Upper	64.6%	82.3%	92.9%	55.0%	76.6%	89.0%
Number of stage two complaints made by tenants in the relevant stock type during the reporting year per 1,000 homes (CH01 (2))	10.4	Upper Upper	10.9	Upper Upper	3.2	5.7	9.9	2.7	5.0	9.4
Proportion of stage two complaints responded to within the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code timescales (CH02 (2))	87.6%	Med-Upp Med-Upp	89.6%	Med-Upp Med-Upp	64.0%	83.6%	97.8%	56.5%	80.0%	95.2%

* The Regulator has determined these quartiles, so they are saying the more cases opened the higher the quartile. Q3 results for Perception Survey measures. Q2 results for Management Information measures.

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Title: Leeds Housing Board review

Author: David Glaister

Meeting Date: 22nd January 2025

1. Background

- 1.1. The effectiveness of the Leeds Housing Board will be reviewed by the Regulator when they conduct their inspection. They will want to see how the Board operates and effective it is at holding Housing Leeds to account. The Council needs to create an environment where the Board and its members can thrive. Therefore, it is important that attendees have as much support as they require to be as effective as possible.
- 1.2. A review of the Leeds Housing Board was carried out between September and October 2024 to try to determine if there were any improvements that could be introduced to improve the robustness of the Board.
- 1.3. The Leeds Housing Board is a forum allowing for elected members and tenant representatives to scrutinise activity and challenge where appropriate.
- 1.4. This review was carried out around one year after the Board was established, a good natural point in its evolution to conduct a review.
- 1.5. The full report is attached at Appendix 1.

2. Main Points

- 2.1. Elected members and tenant representatives were interviewed individually for their thoughts on the strengths of the Board, and how it could be strengthened and whether there could be more robust challenge around service delivery.
- 2.2. It was noted that Board attendees commented on the high quality of information presented to them by Council Officers, along with their openness to suggestions and requests for more detail on specific topics.
- 2.3. There was a significant amount of enthusiasm to improve the robustness of the Board and to improve how effective it is at challenging performance and holding service delivery teams to account.
- 2.4. Running concurrently to the Board review was a recruitment campaign managed by the Tenant Engagement Team. This aimed to attract interest in the two vacant tenant representative positions on the Board. As of December 2024, these two vacant positions had been filled.
- 2.5. Several practical and logistical proposals were put forward by interviewees to increase the effectiveness of the Board including:
 - Holding some meetings face to face rather than all being online
 - More support for tenant representatives who may be unfamiliar with the workings of Council Boards

- Re-issuing the terms of reference of the Board, to its members. This will remind them of its aims and objectives.

3. Proposed Changes to the Board - Discussion Points

- 3.1. Following the Board review the following changes are proposed to the Operational Meetings of the Board:
- That of the four meetings per year, that two are held online and two are held in person. It is proposed that the timing of these meetings is spaced out equally during the year, after each quarter end to ensure that meetings are more aligned to reporting cycles.
 - That key points papers are presented briefly by officers, with discussion points identified which focus on more challenging issues. Board Members will be encouraged to read papers and to consider the discussion points before meetings and to participate in meetings.
 - That the Forward Plan is considered at each meeting, to identify future agenda items and to consider if some topics need to be considered in more depth in a small working group.
 - That a Complaints Sub-Group is established, chaired by the Deputy Member Responsible for Complaints and attended by Tenant Members (and any other Board Members wishing to be involved) to enable more detailed input on complaints, including trends analysis and lessons learnt.
- 3.2. It is proposed that the following changes are made to the Strategic Meetings and the way that oversight is provided of the delivery of the Housing Strategy:
- That a twice yearly report of progress is completed outlining progress and challenges in delivering Housing Strategy priorities, which is shared with Board Members along with other key stakeholders.
 - It is proposed that the Housing Strategy Board meetings in their current format do not continue and that instead an Annual Housing Strategy meeting is arranged with Leeds Housing Board Members and the city's stakeholders in the social and private rented housing sector to review progress overall with the Housing Strategy. It is proposed that this is then supplemented with periodic meetings with key stakeholders in response to particular challenges of Housing Strategy themes or issues which require a collaborative approach, e.g. in response to homelessness pressures.

4. Recommendations

- 4.1. Members are requested to comment on the findings of the Review and proposed changes.

Report into the review of the Leeds Housing Board

October 2024

Mandy Sawyer and David Glaister

Background

The Leeds Housing Board (LHB) was established in early 2023 to facilitate scrutiny of Housing Leeds activity and the implementation of the Housing Strategy. Two distinct meetings were established, one to review the delivery of services and one to evaluate delivery against the Strategy. These meetings have a separate attendee list with different agendas and objectives.

At the time this review was commissioned, the LHB had been operating for around 12 months and it was felt this was an opportune time to initiate an assessment of progress. The effectiveness of this Board and how tenants and elected members scrutinize activity will also be evaluated by the Social Housing Regulator when their first inspection is initiated.

The regulator will want to see a robust Board structure with an environment suitable for open and frank debate where all attendees feel comfortable to express an opinion and ask searching questions.

How the Leeds Housing Board interacts with the wider scrutiny landscape will also be reviewed. Opinions will be sought as to how the Board communicates with comparable entities and how its relative performance is perceived.

Review

Prior to meeting with Board members, a series of questions were drafted and shared with interviewees. These were shared in good time to enable adequate preparation.

Meetings were more of a discussion rather than taking a formal structure, with the pre-prepared questions acting as a prompt if required.

Individual meetings were set up with each of the elected members and tenant representatives who attend the Board throughout September and early October 2024. In addition, the considerations of senior Council officers and those participating in other roles with oversight responsibilities will be included.

Those consulted were:

Cllr Lennox	Elected member	Operational and Strategy meetings
Cllr Anderson	Elected member	Operational and Strategy meetings
Cllr Brooks	Elected member	Operational and Strategy meetings
Cllr Venner	Elected member	Operational and Strategy meetings
Cllr Bowden	Elected member	Operational and Strategy meetings
John Gittos	Tenant representative	Operational and Strategy meetings
Zioness Amaka	Tenant representative	Operational and Strategy meetings

Julia Preston	Third sector representative	Strategy meeting only
Helen Lennon	Housing Assoc representative	Strategy meeting only

*Cllr Bowden only recently joined the Board and was not able to fully reflect on its effectiveness. Mandy Sawyer and David Glaister attended each of the review meetings.

General Findings

- Positive

A common theme was that the quality of papers and information provided by officers was of a high quality and well presented. All attendees stated they were happy with how officers engaged with them and provided them with material.

Attendees felt that meetings were structured to enable challenge, and that there was an environment open to posing difficult questions.

Generally, those consulted thought the number of meetings a year was appropriate.

- Could be improved

There was a general feeling that there was not enough scrutiny, or challenge, of Housing activity at the operational meetings. Much of the meeting time is spent on officers presenting papers and there is little challenge / discussion on agenda items. Low tenant attendance has meant that the tenant voice is not strong on the Board

Attendees expressed a general lack of understanding as to what the rationale behind the Board was. There was no detailed knowledge as to how the Board complemented other scrutiny activity within the Council, attendees were not clear how the Leeds Housing Board fitted into the wider oversight structure. Members did not know how it differed from other Council committees.

Operational Meetings - Detailed Feedback and Suggested Improvements for Consideration

Detailed feedback and suggested improvements, much of which was stated by several interviewees including the following:

Board Meetings

- Generally, Board members felt that it is good to have a balance between online and in person meetings. In person meetings help Board Members establish stronger relationships. It was suggested that at least two meetings per year should be held face to face. Generally, Board Members were comfortable with meetings being held during the day.
- Board Members felt that the quality of information provided to the Board was very good and enabled them to understand the issues and actions being undertaken.

- Members felt that there was too much emphasis on officers presenting reports rather than discussion. Board Members suggested a change of approach so that meetings followed more of a workshop style to stimulate more discussion. The focus of the discussion should be on challenges and issues to seek the Board's input to improvements.
- Members felt that there was not enough challenge from Board Members. Elected Members felt that Tenant Members needed to be more challenging, and Tenant Members felt that Elected Members needed to lead the challenge more. There was a general view that staff are working really hard and doing their best in challenging circumstances and so didn't want to appear critical. It is recommended that this needs to be led by the Chair, creating an environment for constructive challenge and feedback.
- Whilst accepting that the Board's role is about overseeing our work on Social Housing regulation and Housing Ombudsman compliance there are other wider issues that are of importance to tenants and so should be considered by the Board. A couple of Board Members felt that it would help the Board's wider understanding if it received updates on other Council projects, e.g., council housing growth. One Board Member raised that there has been no discussion on the final report of the Grenfell Inquiry (although this is on the agenda for the January meeting). It is recommended that the Board reviews its forward plan at each meeting and consider new items that it may wish to receive.
- It was felt that sometimes a separate meeting should be arranged to discuss some topics, e.g., setting up small working groups to have a deep dive into specific topics, which will then report back to the full Board.
- Board Members have specific responsibilities linked to the management of complaints, including the Member Responsible for Complaints (MRC). It is proposed that consideration is given to setting up a formal subgroup of the Board to consider complaints, made up of all tenants and chaired by the Deputy MRC (Cllr Bowden) to enable more detailed input into complaints, which is then reported into Board.

Board Membership, Induction and Support

- Some Board Members, particularly new Members and Tenant Members were not confident on the purpose of the Leeds Housing Board. There needs to be a more detailed induction for new Board Members to explain the role of the Board and social housing regulation.
- There have been low levels of attendance of Tenant Board Members and some turnover in Membership. There are currently two tenant representative vacancies to be filled. As of November 2024, there is a recruitment campaign to attract more interest. It is important that we offer training workshops to tenant representatives to develop their scrutiny skills and help in the effective execution of their responsibilities. Tenant representatives should continue to be offered a session prior to Board meetings to prepare and discuss matters arising. These should complement training that should (proposed) be provided when a tenant representative joins the Board.
- One Board Member felt that the Board make up is not diverse enough and does not fully represent the Council's customer base and that consideration should be given to trying to achieve a more balanced Membership through recruitment of Elected Members and

tenants. The equality make up of Tenant Board members is already considered as part of tenant recruitment but is consideration given to this as part of Elected Member appointments? This would have to be investigated further.

Communication and Relationships

- Currently very little information about the outcome of Board meetings is shared with tenants. Consideration needs to be given to how we provide feedback and how Tenant Board Members can support this feedback.
- Again, the Board papers are not shared widely with all Elected Members. It is proposed that consideration is given to how we ensure that all Elected Members have awareness of the work of the Board, papers etc.
- Some Board Members were not clear of the Board's relationship with wider governance arrangements. There is currently not a strong connection between the Board and the Tenant Scrutiny Board (TSB). As part of the recent Tenant Member recruitment a TSB Member has been appointed. It is proposed that we formalize a requirement for one of the Tenant Members to be a member of the TSB, and that there is an opportunity for the routine update on TSB work into the Board.
- Some Board Members were not clear of the relationship between the Board and the EH+C Scrutiny Board. We currently share an update on the Board as part of the annual Housing update to the EH+C Scrutiny Board where there is an opportunity for consideration for further scrutiny. Consideration should be given as to whether there is anything further to strengthen the connection into the Scrutiny Board.

Strategy meetings - Detailed Feedback and Suggested Improvements for Consideration

- Board Members, particularly the Independent Board Members were unclear of the purpose of the Board and the role of Board Members in ensuring that Housing Strategy priorities are delivered.
- Again, meetings are mostly taken up by officers presenting information already disseminated in Board papers. Board Members felt that it was more important to create opportunities to follow-up on specific areas of discussion and to create an opportunity for networking with other attendees. Currently feels like an information sharing exercise rather than providing detailed scrutiny.
- Strategy meetings would be strengthened by extending the membership, including more people from across the Housing sector. This will enable more coordination in service delivery and more effective use of resources.
- It is therefore proposed that a change of approach is considered for these meetings, which includes attendance of more people from across the sector. A workshop style / partnership discussion should be adopted and that there is a focus on issues / challenges to the delivery of the strategy priorities and how the sector can work together to respond (similar to the Leeds Strategic Housing Partnership previously in place).
- The agenda and invite list would be tailored to the area of discussion, inviting guest speakers, national figures on particular topics. Everyone across the sector is really busy so need to make the sessions attractive to invitees – what will they get out of it?

- It is also important to develop more effective communication with customers in relation to progress in delivering strategy themes. There was a view that often there is a big strategic push for something, but then there are no follow up communications which support operational delivery.

- **Next steps**

Present this report to Cllr Lennox as Chair of the Board, and to SMT. The following will then be developed:

- Delivery plan outlining actions with timescales.
- Communications plan outlining how internal and external partners will receive details of proposed changes to the Board.
- Plan for how to review effectiveness of any changes introduced.
- Mandy Sawyer will arrange a training session with Cllr Bowden to assist him in his role as support for the MRC. Reissue guidance around the governance structure of the Board. Highlight what the agreed scope of the Board is and what are its 'powers'. Reissue the terms of reference to remind Board members.
- Take Simon Baker's guidance on how best to record Board details on gov.delivery website.

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Leeds Housing Board

Terms of Reference

ROLE OF THE BOARD

The Leeds Housing Board will have a dual focus - firstly to provide regular oversight and review of the management of Council Housing services and secondly to oversee the delivery of the Leeds Housing Strategy.

The Leeds Housing Board is authorised to discharge the following functions:

1. **Housing Operations** - to review and advise on the delivery of the Housing Service's landlord functions – receiving regular performance information, assurance of compliance with the Regulator of Social Housing regulatory framework / other legislative requirements including the 2022 Building Safety Act, ensuring an evidence based approach which is open and transparent and hears the voice of customers, advising on policy and strategy etc.
2. **Housing Strategy** - to provide collaborative leadership to the development and delivery of the Leeds Housing Strategy and sub strategies, including the Homelessness Strategy, ensuring that strategic housing priorities are aligned to Council priorities and that partner organisations are working collaboratively to deliver the strategy's outcomes. To also consider the Leeds Housing Strategy within the context of the West Yorkshire Housing Strategy.

MEETINGS

The Board will meet up to six times a year, with meetings dedicated to either operations or strategy:

- **Housing Operations** – will meet 4 times a year in January, April / May, July and November
- **Housing Strategy** – will meet twice a year in March and September

A forward plan of meeting dates and times, including agendas, papers and minutes will be published on the Leeds City Council website. Agendas and papers will be sent to members of the Board at least seven days before the date of the meeting.

MEMBERSHIP / ARRANGEMENTS

Five Elected Members will form the core membership of the Leeds Housing Board covering both Housing Operations and Housing Strategy. Four Elected Members will be from the current Administration and one from the largest opposition group. Membership will be reviewed on an annual basis. The respective Group Whips will nominate their group's representation (excluding the Chair).

The Chair of the Board will be the Executive Board Member with responsibility for the city's housing functions.

The remaining membership will differ for each sub-strand:

Housing Operations – four tenants of Leeds City Council.

Housing Strategy - one representative from a Housing Association and one representative from the Third Sector.

In relation to the Housing Strategy sub-strand of the Board, where there is a significant update to the Board for a strategy priority which is overseen by a different Executive Member, then the relevant Executive Member will be invited to the relevant Board meeting. Other senior officers of LCC or partner organisations, including Homes England, may be invited to specific meetings to support a strategic discussion in relation to specific themes.

The tenant, Housing Association and Third Sector Membership will be reviewed once every two years. The Tenant Members who will attend the Operational sessions will initially be selected following a recruitment process which will involve inviting expressions of interests from members of the new Tenant Voice Panel. As each representative's two year term draws to a close a recruitment process will be carried out.

The Housing Association and Third Sector members who will attend the Strategy sessions will be recruited via a process where suitable organisations are approached and requested that interested suitable candidates submit applications which will then be evaluated. Like tenant representatives, the HA and Third Sector representative membership will be reviewed after two years.

Each tenant representative will be supported to champion a current (and any new) regulatory Consumer Standard.

Tenant representatives will be expected to sign up to the Resident Involvement Code of Conduct, to encourage inclusive and respectful behaviours and other requirements (including confidentiality) to ensure the effective working of the Board. Elected Members of the Board will be expected to adhere to the Councillor Code of Conduct.

The Board will be responsible for deciding the Board's work programme and the reports it receives. Agendas and minutes of the meeting will be published on Leeds City Council's website for reference. The public will be invited to submit issues for consideration by the Board via the webpage which also hosts agendas and minutes. Initially the Board will be held online, but there is the flexibility to develop in person/hybrid meetings as determined by the Chair.

One Board member, in line with the requirements of the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code, will also be supported to have lead responsibility for complaints, building up their knowledge to support a positive complaint handling culture. This most suitable Board Member to fill this role will be identified and supported accordingly to fulfil this role.

Board members are expected to attend as many meetings as possible during the year. If any Board members are unable to attend multiple meetings the Chair may request that the Member is removed from the Board part way through the year and a replacement Board member sought.

RELATIONSHIPS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The Board will not have decision making powers; it will provide oversight feedback and advice alongside decision making in line with the Council's governance arrangements. The work of the Leeds Housing Board will be subject to scrutiny via the Communities, Housing and Environment Scrutiny Board.

Key relationships of the Housing Board will be as follows:

- Housing Operations – with tenants, ensuring that the Housing Service is able to evidence that it is hearing the voice of tenants and its accountability to tenants. Particularly important is the Board's relationship with the Tenant Scrutiny Board and Tenant Voice Panel – this will be achieved through the tenant representation on the Board and regularly reporting tenant feedback into Board.
- Housing Strategy – the Leeds Strategic Housing Partnership will remain as a key relationship, ensuring that there is regular dialogue across the housing and related sectors to identify issues and seek support in delivering Housing Strategy priorities. A programme of periodic

workshops will be held as required with partners throughout the life of the strategy to discuss issues and agree a collaborative delivery approach. Another key relationship is the West Yorkshire Housing Partnership. It is important that the Leeds Housing Strategy is progressed with an understanding of the West Yorkshire Housing Strategy, so as details / progress with the West Yorkshire Strategy's ambitions will be considered at the Leeds Strategic Housing Board and fed into the West Yorkshire Board as appropriate.

REVIEW

The Terms of Reference will be reviewed on an annual basis.

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Title: Communications and Engagement Update

Author: Ian Montgomery

Meeting Date: 22 January 2025

1. Purpose

1.1 To update the Board on recent communications and engagement activity.

2. Background:

2.1 The 2023 Social Housing (Regulation) Act introduced four updated Consumer Standards, including the [Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard](#) (TIA) standard, which sets 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 Following consultation with residents, drawing insight from our analysis of our Tenant Satisfaction Measures results and taking further feedback from staff and the board into account, the service now has in place an updated Communications and Engagement Policy. This gives the service a clearer and more consistent approach to communications and engagement activity across Housing Leeds and helps us more robustly comply with the TIA Consumer Standard.

2.3 Since the end of November, senior managers within the service have been tasked with self-assessing their parts of the service against the new policy and throughout 2025 we anticipate identifying a number of additional actions and improvements to improve communications, customer care and our resident engagement activity.

3. Update on communications activity

3.1 The **website continues to develop** in response to resident feedback and to help strengthen regulatory compliance. In recent months, a [Social Housing Regulation](#) page has been created which provides information to customers about our regulatory responsibilities, including our Tenant Satisfaction Measure (TSM) performance. There have also been updates to our [repairs pages](#), making timescales for completion clearer, giving more information on our landlord responsibilities and tenant's own responsibilities and additional information about window safety, damp and mould advice and gas and electrical repairs.

3.2 In addition, we have updated our resident engagement pages explaining the ways residents can have a say and influence what we do and created a new '[Housing policies](#)' page that collates our key policies into one area, so residents are more easily able to access information about us and our work. The [Housing disrepair claims](#) campaign page has been refreshed with more recent case studies, highlighting some of the risks to residents

and encouraging residents to contact us with any outstanding repairs so we can put them right.

- 3.3 In September the service increased its promotion of the **Tenant Portal** as residents can now book repairs and confirm an appointment. The communication to date includes features in our regular bulletins and newsletters, social media posts, within the latest rent statement letter and promotion when a new tenancy starts. We are also focussing on day-to-day contact as an opportunity to increase the use of the portal with support from colleagues in the Contact Centre/Community Hubs also signposting.
- 3.4 At a more local level, a Tenant Engagement Officer is currently trialling holding drop-in surgeries to help residents access the portal in local community locations. We have also done bespoke emails to those who had already registered but may not be aware of the new functionality.
- 3.5 Between September and November 2024, we had almost 800 new registrations on the Portal, compared to less than 200 for the same period the previous year. Along with being able to book a repair, the portal can also be used to check a person's rent account, make a payment, download a rent statement, and request some types of permissions.
- 3.6 In terms of our communication activity with **high-rise residents**:
- a) In October, following input from high rise residents on the Tenant Voice Panel, we released our second [high-rise building safety newsletter](#). This ensures all residents, including leaseholders, receive a hard copy newsletter with key building safety information. The content was informed from the results of the 2nd Building Safety Residents Survey, which has been previously reported to the board.
 - b) We continue to issue bi-monthly high-rise e-bulletins to 5,100 residents, recent editions being on the [25 October](#) and [6 December](#). Within these, we have promoted the new [High-Rise Safety Advice](#) booklet from West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service and now include as a standard a short e-form asking any resident to tell us if they may need help to self-evacuate.
 - c) Our communications continue to promote the [Building Safety Hub](#). Since it's inception on the 1 November 2023, the Hub has been visited just over 4,000 times, with 400 views of the page once logged in, giving residents access to building safety information about their home and block.
 - d) Over the summer we increased our window safety messaging, sending short text reminders during hot spells and in the run up to summer school holidays to remind of the importance of window safety. A standard window safety leaflet, in addition to block specific information already provided, has been translated into eight community languages and was used to support local engagement at

the Oatland blocks in Little London. We have also updated [window safety information](#) content on our website.

- e) The electronic noticeboards installed at Cottingley Heights and Towers, are displaying information however, we are having intermittent connectivity issues. We have ongoing enquiries with EE as the network provider and the supplier to resolve and will seek resident feedback once able to benefit from the full functionality.
- 3.7 During 2023 we made changes to the **options given to residents when they ring the Contact Centre or contact a local housing team** directly. If a customer rings a local housing office about repairs, they will be directed to the Contact Centre. Similarly, if a resident calls the Contact Centre about rent matters, this is directed to the local housing team. This ensures customers are directed and speak to the teams best placed to deal with their enquiry at first point of contact. This also helps us give more consistent levels of service and advice to residents, and additional support for rent related calls can be more easily identified and put into place.
- 3.8 The service continues to issue **monthly e-bulletins** to all residents with an email address, recent examples being those sent on the [4th October](#) and [1st November](#). November's message was sent to 42,440 recipients, with 44% (18,150) of recipients opening the message. 600 of these residents then went on to view our 'manage your tenancy online' page of our website.
- 3.9 Reflecting the changes within the Tenant Engagement Team, local Tenant Engagement Officers have consolidated their local **Facebook pages** and have launched new pages reflecting their current roles and areas of responsibility. You can view the [links to these new pages and other changes to our engagement offer](#) on our website. These are in addition to the Housing Leeds citywide Facebook and X (formerly Twitter) pages

4. Communication priorities for the year ahead

- 4.1 Throughout 2025 we will be monitoring the completion and delivery of the improvements identified from the communication and engagement **self-assessments**. An additional temporary dedicated resource to support this activity is in place.
- 4.2 Plans are underway to review the **Council Housing and Leeds Homes web pages** so that they include information relating to all key service areas, and meet the requirement of the TIA Standard, adopting a more standardised layout.
- 4.3 Linked to the above, any changes made to website content need to be reflected in the **Tenant Handbook**. We are currently undertaking informal interviews with tenants who have recently started a new tenancy and have received the Handbook to ask for their feedback on what they find the most useful. We envisage the majority of a future Tenant Handbook being made available online, with hard copy information for

those who need this.

- 4.4 One of our priorities is to finalise our **Individual Needs / Reasonable Adjustments Policy**. We have undertaken initial consultation with partner agencies and their reference groups (like the Autism Partnership Board) and are currently developing our consultation plans for residents more widely. This consultation will help us develop the policy ahead of publication and implementation. The policy when finalised will give staff clearer guidance on how to support residents accessing services and to ensure reasonable adjustments are in place where possible. The policy will also aim to improve resident confidence in the service, build trust and improve the customer experience for all residents.
- 4.5 Our Communications and Engagement Policy outlines the **standards of customer care** residents can expect when contacting us by phone in particular, as is the most common way residents engage with us. To ensure the consistency of service and high levels of customer care we are currently reviewing the content of the Customer Excellence training course that is given to all new Customer Services Officers within the Contact Centre and Community Hubs. This training is delivered through a mixture of group exercises, discussions, presentations and video's and is followed up with regular coaching sessions to ensure the techniques and messages in the training are embedded. There may be useful content within this that Housing Leeds staff can also benefit from.
- 4.6 Much of our **high-rise specific communication** is now 'business as usual'. However, there are other enhancements the service would like to explore, for example, the use of sharing key messages by using short video clips, holding block safety action days in blocks with traditionally less engagement and engaging with more ethnically diverse residents to get feedback on how well our communications work and their ideas for key safety messages to be given differently so they are more accessible and understood.
- 4.7 Further **promotion of the tenant portal** is planned for the year ahead as we encourage residents who can access the portal to do so, helping us to focus resources on supporting residents with more complex enquires.

5. Update on tenant engagement activity

- 5.1 **The Tenant Voice Panel** - since the last update, membership of the panel has increased from 194 to 333 members. There is widespread geographical representation, with 98 residents living in high-rise homes and 24 living in retirement life accommodation.
- 5.2 In October the service created new content about the [Tenant Voice Panel](#) within the [Housing Leeds feedback website](#) and this is used to support ongoing promotion of how residents can join and be invited to take part in various activities and consultations. Digital promotion of the panel is supplemented with flyers and posters for community noticeboards and other community locations and is something local Tenant Engagement

Officers promote when meeting residents or residents groups in person.

- 5.3 Whilst the overall numbers of residents on the panel has increased, there is a slight over-representation of residents within the 45-64 age range, and slight under-representation in the 18-29 age range (there are 19 residents within this age group). Similarly, there are 51 residents from an ethnicity other than White British which is below the proportion of non-white tenants. One in four panel members have some form of disability or impairment. The more the panel grows, the generally more representative the panel becomes.
- 5.4 In recent months, different members of the panel through a combination of surveys and online, hybrid or in-person meetings have:
- a) Been appointed to the Leeds Housing Board
 - b) Given feedback to our tenants insurance provider on the accessibility of their online application form
 - c) Influenced a new ASB and Communications and Engagement Policy
 - d) Given feedback on the design and accessibility of our Lettings Standard
 - e) Been invited to take part in our consultations about setting new standards of customer care of our contractors and research into how we reduce the number of 'no access' appointments.
 - f) Taken part in our consultation with residents about how we strengthen our local tenant engagement activity that is now reflected in our new communications and engagement policy.
 - g) Helped shape the content of September's second annual High Rise Building Safety Newsletter, with more emphasis on how residents can report anti-social behaviour included as a result.
 - h) Four Tenant Voice Panel members have joined the Tenant Scrutiny Board, to help them with their next review.
- 5.5 The Equality Impact Assessment for the new Communications and Engagement Policy has identified a number of actions, including improving the equality monitoring of panel membership to better understand who is taking part and to identify gaps in any representation of certain customer groups.
- 5.6 In December, the **Tenant Scrutiny Board** (TSB) completed their latest review on complaints, focussing on ensuring all customers have a complaint response within timescales, how we learn from complaints and how this learning is shared back with residents. We are in the process of sharing this more widely with residents on social media, in the citywide tenant email and with tenants, residents and community groups.
- 5.7 There are 13 recommendations that are presented to Housing Leeds, the specific content of which is included within a separate complaints management update. During their review the TSB also met with Gateway Housing Association, and in addition to this being a useful source of information to help identify recommendations, it also highlighted different approaches to scrutiny that the board will reflect on early in the New Year

ahead of selecting their next topic.

- 5.8 The report is now being considered by the service and our response will be formally presented back to the TSB. They will then track the delivery of the recommendations throughout 2025. Future communication and engagement policy updates to the Leeds Housing Board will include a position statement on the delivery of the recommendations from this and future reviews that are captured on a recommendations tracker. The board are now reviewing a range of performance, satisfaction and complaints information and will be speaking to senior officers and the Executive Member for Housing to help identify their next topic for review.
- 5.9 Alongside undertaking their review into complaints, the TSB have also received regular updates on the outcomes of the Consumer Standards Self-Assessments, sharing and discussing with the board our respective areas of strength and areas for improvement to enable us to more robustly comply with the regulator's requirements. The board have found this useful to raise their general awareness of the activity and current improvement actions and are minded to ask for a further update on progress so can be used to inform their next topic for review.
- 5.10 At the beginning of October the service launched a **new engagement website** '[Housing Leeds Feedback](#)', a website that allows us to host online engagement with residents. Since it's launch, through our communications and engagement work, the site has been visited by 4,422 residents, with 320 respondents making 553 contributions in the form of completing surveys or making comments on suggestions or proposals. Of these 200 residents have also subscribed for updates which means they receive email alerts when a page is updated, when a news item or new consultation is added.
- 5.11 This has enabled us to host consultations on anti-social behaviour, our approach to communications, safeguarding, how we can reduce 'no access' appointments and how residents can influence new standards of customer care of our repairs contractors. We are also able to post feedback to residents on the difference their input has made and share this feedback more widely using the 'news' items – for example, publishing what we did, what you told us and what we've done in response, [related to the ASB consultation](#).
- 5.12 To ensure we capture the views of residents who may not or who are not confident in being online, the local Tenant Engagement Officers have been visiting residents meetings, coffee mornings etc and talking to tenants to capture their views – using a combination of hard copy surveys and using i-pads to sit with residents to take part in the live consultations.
- 5.13 We are now in a regular pattern of undertaking quarterly satisfaction surveys in line with the Regulator for Social Housing's '**Tenant Satisfaction Measures**' or **TSMs**. The approach to collecting this information and the most recently available results are provided separately to the board. We have used, or are currently using TSM data

to:

- a) Inform service planning and priorities for 2025/26
 - b) Share with the Tenant Scrutiny Board to help them understand the current tenant experience of services to influence the selection of their next topic.
 - c) Monitor the effectiveness of a number of key strategies including our approach to high rise engagement
 - d) Feed residents' priorities into the 2025/6 budget setting consultation process.
- 5.14 The tenant satisfaction measures are reported quarterly in our tenant email bulletin, presented on our website and highlighted on our social media. The autumn rent statement mailing included a hard copy insert, summarising Quarters 1 and 2 information and a summary of our end of year performance is also included in our annual report.
- 5.15 Local engagement continues through our support of the 60 **tenants, residents and community groups**. Our 'Communities on Top' service offer is used as the basis for more supportive conversations with groups across the city, with ABCD principles part of this. In October we provided further funding to West Yorkshire Community Accounting Service (WYCAS) to enable them to undertake free accounts checks for local groups so they can manage their money well and be better able to successfully attract funding. A number of groups are also scheduled in the New Year to have 'Treasurer' training as part of this arrangement.
- 5.16 Alongside Voluntary Action Leeds and Leeds Community Foundation and other key council services, we continue to support the promotion of [Funding Leeds](#). This gives third sector groups free access to local, regional and national funding opportunities. During November 2024, the site was visited 13,760 times by 399 different groups to undertake 505 funding searches.
- 5.17 **Twice yearly walkabouts** continue to be undertaken by local housing teams with invitations to local Ward Members and tenants, residents and community groups to attend. The service are currently improving the monitoring of walkabout activity so that we can better report back to residents our activity.
- 5.18 The **mobile office** has been used by various teams and services to help meet with residents. Examples of recent use include providing a focal point for the Selective Licencing consultations, and being used to carry out housing surgeries in response to local issues.
- 5.19 As described, the new Communications and Engagement Policy self-assessment will highlight the opportunities to engage with residents on a wider range of issues and we are anticipating many teams and services will wish to undertake some form of consultation in the year ahead. To help us manage and communicate these opportunities with residents we are now maintaining a **consultation forward plan**. This also ensures consistency in terms of making sure all methods/approaches to seeking

feedback are used and are promoted widely.

6. Engagement priorities for the year ahead

- 6.1 The Engagement Team are developing an updated '**virtual walkabout**' model reflecting the move to a different resident engagement platform. The principal remains that residents living within the walkabout area will be invited to give feedback by dropping a pin and leaving a comment in a particular location where they live at a time of their choosing whilst the walkabout is open for comments. This can coincide with an in-person walkabout or can be in addition to, at a different time of the year.
- 6.2 Whilst our overall high-rise communication and engagement improved in response to the Building Safety Act, there are a number of additional opportunities for more engagement focussing on specific issues and/or locations where resident engagement has historically been lower. A draft high-rise communication and engagement plan is in development for 2025 based on resident feedback during 2024.
- 6.3 Following consultation with residents about our local tenant engagement offer and in consultation with the Chairs of the local Community Committees, there is an opportunity for Housing Leeds to take a more proactive role to **support Community Committee activity**. In the year ahead we're looking to develop more localised information sharing with residents, allowing them to have greater insight into our work including sharing with residents local Community Committee activity, inviting residents, especially those on the Tenant Voice Panel, to be more involved. The service looks forward to also reviewing the outcomes from the LCC review of Community Committee so we can align our future activity with the outcomes of this.
- 6.4 In line with the TIA standard, and recommendations from the Tenant Scrutiny Board, to create **new online content** that shares with residents examples of our learning from complaints, and content summarising our changes as a result of using resident feedback – a 'you said we did' approach. We will seek resident input into the content and host these new pages on our Housing Leeds Feedback website, so that all content about open and available consultations and consultation feedback is in one place.
- 6.5 To more proactively share with residents the outcomes of our engagement activity, we are developing an '**impact dashboard**'. We anticipate sharing this with Quarter 3 data, at the beginning of 2025, that presents a summary of our communication and engagement activity along with some examples or highlights of the different resident feedback has made. Designed as a customer facing pdf, this can be shared in our email bulletins, to tenants, residents and community groups, with the Tenant Voice Panel, the Tenant Scrutiny Board and with the Leeds Housing Board and on social media.

7. Items for discussion

- a) Are there any parts of the report that the board would like further information on?
- b) Is there anything missing in terms of our communication and engagement activity that the board would like to see reported?
- c) We will use feedback from Tenant Voice Panel members when developing new customer facing material – to what extent would the board, and particularly Tenant Board members like to be involved in helping shape new content?

8. Recommendations

- 8.1 The Leeds Housing Board are requested to note and comment on recent activity related to tenant engagement and offer support/comment.

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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: 22 Jan 2025

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The service wishes to update the Board on activity related to the management of complaints, specifically:
- a) Updated complaints performance for Quarter 2 2024/25 to include September and latest position for Q3 (October and November 2024) including some further analysis of Q2 complaints broken down by type and Housing Management area
 - b) A reminder of Ombudsman activity and latest position for October and November 2024 and our learning from complaints
 - c) Update on recent Tenant Scrutiny Board recommendations
 - 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:

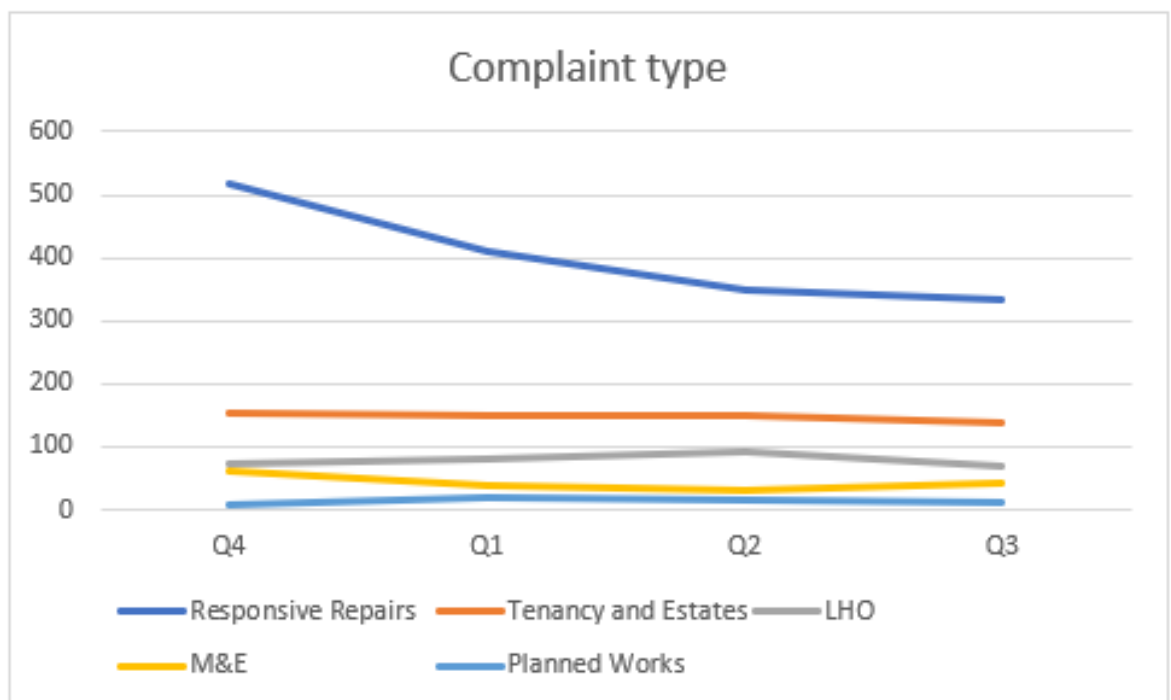
Indicator	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3*
Stage 1 complaints received	696	631	557	388
<i>Previous year comparison</i>	668	590	529	543
Stage 1 responded in code (10 working days or with an extension)	87.5%	90%	95%	95%
<i>Previous year comparison</i>	73.2%	82.7%	93%	88%

Indicator	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3*
Stage 2 complaints received	173	168	137	82
<i>Previous year comparison</i>	136	139	143	134
Stage 2 responded in code (20 working days or with an extension)	90.8%	93%	96%	96%
<i>Previous year comparison</i>	63.4%	88.5%	92%	81%

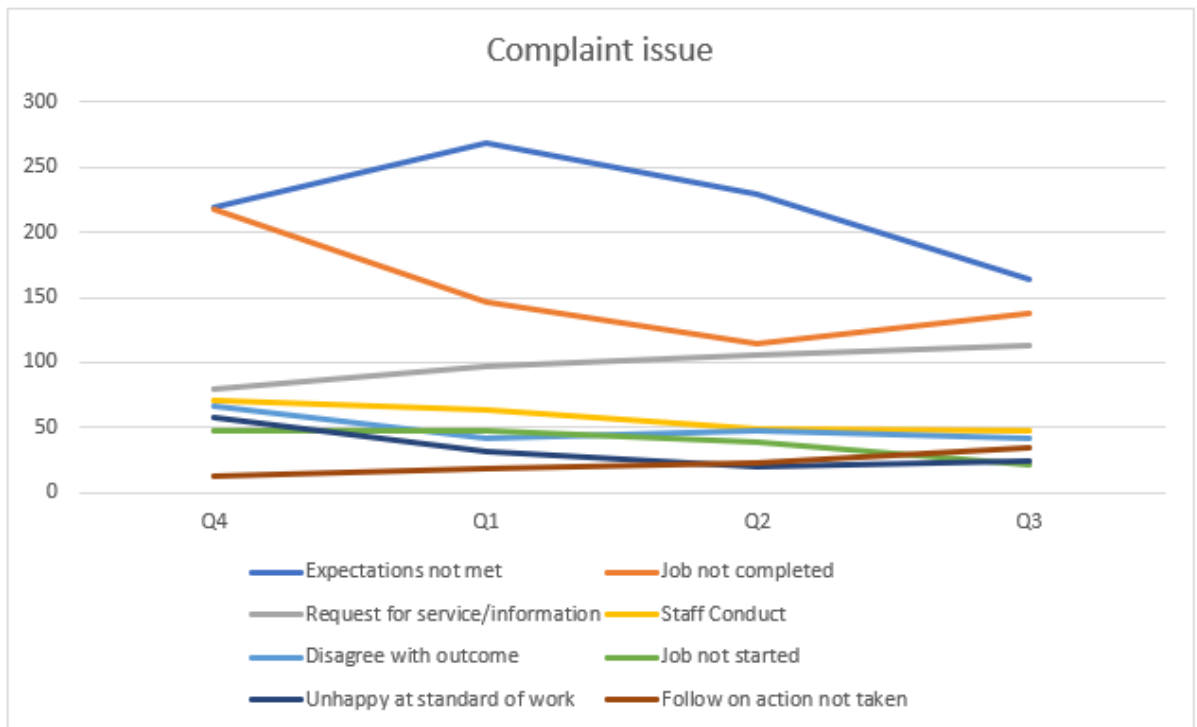
* 24/25 Q3 performance currently only includes October and November 2024.

- 2.1. Tenant Satisfaction Measures (or TSMs) performance related to complaints will be provided to the board separately.

- 2.2. Performance since the last update to the Board in November remains positive, maintaining high levels of response rates for Stage 1 and 2 complaints. December data available to date suggest the final Quarter 3 performance is in line with the previous year.
- 2.3. The total volume of complaints per month generally rises in the Autumn and Winter with a gradual decline in Spring to Summer. When analysing the volume of complaints received, at Stage 1 and 2, these are relatively consistent in the last three years. 2020/21 was impacted by the pandemic and 21/22 saw higher volumes coming out of this, but in each of the last three years 654, 675 and 694 complaints have been received. This is a slight upward trend; however, the increase is gradual and may in part demonstrate the impact of the Complaint Handling Code and the additional promotion of the complaints process to residents this has driven.
- 2.4. The most common complaint type remains those which relate to our day-to-day repairs and maintenance service, reflecting the volume and nature of the activity undertaken, having completed over 204,000 repairs during 2023/34.
- 2.5. The below table shows complaint volumes by type in the last 12 months.



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



2.7 Looking further into the complaints received in Quarter 2, the main complaint types are:

LBS	Q2	Asset Management	Q2	Housing Management	Q2
Joinery	23%	Gas	14%	Staff Conduct	16%
Plumbing	19%	Plumbing	12%	ASB	14%
Damp/Condensation	11%	Joinery	10%	Communal Issues	9%

LBS	Q2 23/24	Asset Management	Q2 23/24	Housing Management	Q2 23/24
Joinery	20%	Roofing	11%	Staff Conduct	17%
Plumbing	16%	Gas	10%	ASB	15%
Damp/Condensation	14%	Inspection	9%	Property Conditions	10%

LBS	Last 12 months	Asset Management	Last 12 months	Housing Management	Last 12 months
Joinery	20%	Gas	17%	Staff Conduct	17%
Damp/Condensation	17%	Damp/Condensation	15%	ASB	13%
Plumbing	14%	Roofing	11%	Rent/arrears	10%

2.8 Within Leeds Building Services (LBS) joinery complaints remain the most common, being 23% of those received. This is consistent with Quarter 1 and the last 12 months overall. Common classifications of Joinery complaints were where a customer was unhappy with the standard of work (expectations not met) and jobs not completed. 52% of complaints were upheld and 14% partially upheld, lower than the LBS Q2 average of 67% upheld.

2.9 Plumbing complaints remain the second most common area of complaints for LBS at 16%. This is again consistent with Q1 and a little higher than the 12-month average of 14%. As with Joinery, incomplete repairs, and

unhappiness at the standard of work were most common. The uphold rate was above the Q2 average at 80% upheld and 12% partially upheld.

- 2.10 Damp and condensation related complaints were also a common type of complaint at 11%, but comparatively lower than Q2 last year, 16%, and the last 12 months of 17% which is positive.
- 2.11 Overall, 16% of complaints within LBS escalated to Stage 2, and was highest in relation to UPVC (33%, 3 of 9). Of the areas receiving more complaints, escalation rates were highest for roofing related complaints (24%, 4 of 17). Escalation for joinery related complaints was 16%, Plumbing 14% and Damp/Condensation 20%, potentially reflecting the complexity of some damp and mould complaints that may be a combination of property repairs being required and advice and support on how to manage/help reduce the amount of moisture in the home.
- 2.12 Within the responsive repairs service (those repairs not managed by LBS), plumbing complaints were the most common, at 17% of all complaints. The number of plumbing complaints received has increased from Quarter 1 to 2, from 10 to 22. Most commonly customers raised dissatisfaction with the quality of work.
- 2.13 Joinery was the second most common area raised. The number of joinery complaints is unchanged from Q1 and is lower than Q3 which saw a peak of 28 cases. Common issues raised in Joinery complaints varied, though common themes look to include unhappiness with work completed and repairs not commencing.
- 2.14 Roofing was the third most common area raised in complaints, however the number of complaints received reduced from 27 in Quarter 1 to 19 in Quarter 2. The most common cause of complaint was incomplete work, which was the most common classification on roofing complaints in the last 12 months overall.
- 2.15 The overall escalation of responsive repairs complaints was 37%, with the greatest escalation from Stage 1 to 2 being in relation to roofing complaints (58%) and Damp/Condensation (55%). Escalation of Plumbing cases (the most common area of complaint) was 38%.
- 2.16 Within Housing Management, staff conduct was the most common cause of complaint in the last year and remains consistent in Quarter 2. One third of these complaints were upheld, which is a reduction in the proportion from nearly half of complaints being upheld in the previous year.
- 2.17 Anti-social behaviour (ASB) was a concern in 13% of cases, the same as the last 12 months overall and has reduced slightly from Quarter 1 where 15% of cases referenced ASB. ASB complaints were commonly categorised as customer's expectations not being met. Housing Management is planning to undertake analysis of ASB related complaints to consider if there is any service wide learning actions, such as policy or

training.

2.18 Complaints about 'communal issues' were the third most common complaint type, however, half of these were classified as a 'request for service/information' and 85% of communal issue complaints were not upheld.

2.19 Following a previous query by the board, the table below shows the breakdown on the number of complaints received in proportion to the size of the local housing management area.

Housing Office	Cases Q2	Complaints per 1k units - Q2	Complaints per 1k units – last 4 Qtrs
Kirkstall	14	3.8	17.0
Moortown	13	4.5	19.3
Wetherby	13	5.7	16.3
Bramley	11	3.8	10.6
Little London	11	4.7	10.7
Wortley	11	4.5	18.4
Horsforth	10	2.8	11.9
Beeston & Holbeck/City & Hunslet	9	2.2	10.1
Burmantofts	8	1.9	8.8
Middleton	8	3.9	14.5
Pudsey	8	3.3	9.5
Armley	6	2.3	6.1
Gipton	5	1.8	8.3
Halton Moor & Osmondthorpe/Swarcliffe	5	1.5	4.2
Seacroft	5	1.2	7.1
Garforth/Kippax	4	2.0	8.1
Morley	4	2.0	11.6
Rothwell	4	1.9	6.6
Total & Average	149	2.9	11.1

2.20 The areas with the most homes (over 4,000 in Seacroft, Beeston & Holbeck/City & Hunslet and Burmantofts) did not receive the most complaints. The rate at which complaints were received varied from Wetherby which received 5.7 complaints in Quarter 2 for every 1,000 units, whereas Seacroft received 1.2 complaints for every 1,000 units. When considering the last 12 months, 19.3 complaints were received for every 1,000 units in Moortown compared to 4.2 complaints for every 1,000 units in Halton Moor & Osmondthorpe/Swarcliffe.

2.21 A number of factors may influence the above, including demographic information and the types of properties. Residents in some communities may be more familiar with the complaints process or have local teams more confident in being able to signpost to the complaints process if something has gone wrong. In order to understand and respond to differences in the volume of complaints by office Housing Management will be undertaking analysis of the 2 Housing Offices with the highest number

of complaints and the 2 Offices with the lowest number of complaints to better understand the reasons why complaints volumes differ and what action is needed in response.

- 2.22 In relation to repairs related service improvements, following work over recent years to remove repair backlogs, and improve repair completion times, we have seen an increase in transactional satisfaction with completed repairs throughout 2024. We await to see the impact this may have on overall complaint levels. However, we anticipate that complaints relating to delays will fall and we will continue to monitor trends.
- 2.23 Complaints about resident's expectations not being met is the highest reason for complaints about repairs and maintenance. A number of actions are ongoing to address this including:
- Developing digitised reports for residents following repair inspections that will provide clarity on outcomes and next steps
 - Commissioning resident engagement activity around key policy areas to seek tenants input into the design and delivery of services
 - A review of webpages and information available to residents about the repairs offer
- 2.24 Staff Conduct continues to be a relatively high area for complaints about repairs and maintenance. In-order to address this, we are currently developing a resident lead review of our Contractor Code of Conduct, and we are awaiting analysis in January of a resident consultation about this to inform the new Code and standards. We are also currently analysing resident consultation results on access procedures for repairs activity. Successful access and good resident communication remains a significant contributing factor to a positive customer experience and we are eagerly awaiting resident thoughts (some 377 residents took part in these consultations) and ideas so that we can work with our repair providers to review and redesign parts of the service where improvement opportunities can be identified.
- 2.25 In previous updates we have highlighted pending improvements to how we deal with repairs and maintenance related complaints. In June this year, we increased our Intervention Team resource aligned to complaint handling to improve our capacity. In November, we completed phase two of our plans and transferred complaint handling staff from Leeds Building Services into the Intervention Team. These changes move us towards forming one single team for all Asset Management related complaints so we can focus on more consistent outcomes for residents in-line with the Housing Ombudsman Code and aftercare aligned to closing a greater volume of complaints successfully at Stage 1. In the new year, we will review the effectiveness of the changes that we have made through some targeted surveys and analysis and will use this intelligence to scope out how we can deliver a final phase and manage all property related complaints through the team.

2.26 BITMO complaints are included in the overall performance figures at the head of this section. Across Q1 to Q3 all BITMO complaints received a response within Complaint Handling Code timescales.

2.27 Ombudsman cases, for 2024/25 we've received:

	HOS assessment	HOS Formal*	LGO assessment	LGO formal
Q4	13	16	5	2
<i>Q4 last year</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>3</i>
Q1	20	22	3	6
<i>Q1 last year</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>5</i>
Q2	18	21	1	1
<i>Q2 last year</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>6</i>
Q3	17	22	4	3
<i>Q3 last year</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>1</i>

*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.

2.28 During the first three quarters of 2024/25, 40 determinations were received from the Housing Ombudsman:

- Fault was identified in 32 cases
- No fault was identified in 5 cases
- 3 cases were closed after initial enquiries (either outside jurisdiction or no further action required)

Where fault was identified, this can be in the form of maladministration, service failure, a combination of both, and where a case is upheld but was satisfactorily remedied by the Council.

Of the cases where fault was identified, and satisfactory remedy was not provided by the Council as part of the complaints process (29 cases):

- 15 cases identified maladministration
- 5 cases identified service failure
- 9 cases identified maladministration and service failure

In the same period, 4 determinations were received from the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman.

- 3 cases were closed following initial enquiries (no further action or outside jurisdiction)
- 1 case identified maladministration and injustice.

2.29 Since April 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 4 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.

3. Update on Tenant Scrutiny Board (TSB) recommendations

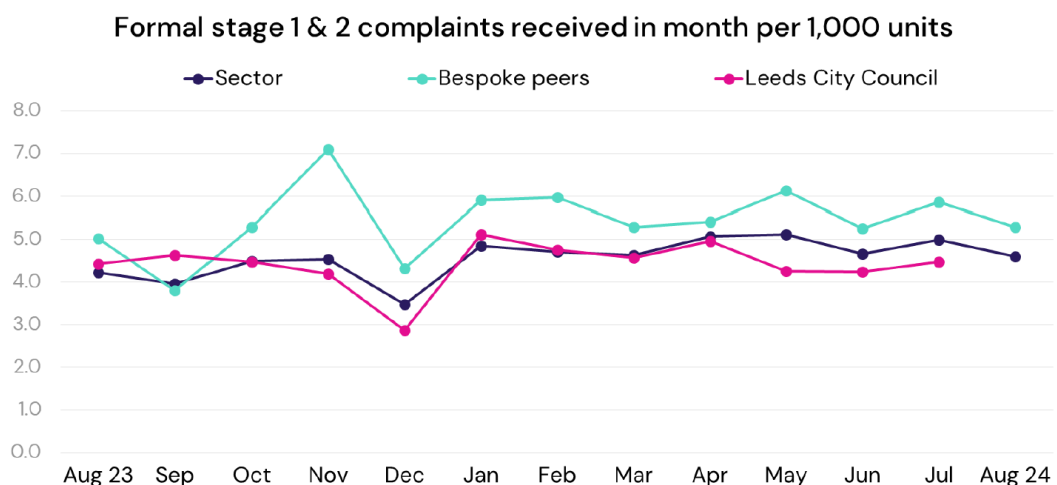
- 3.1. The Tenant Scrutiny Board signed off their review into complaints at their meeting on the 12 December 24. The scope of their review being to help Housing Leeds respond to 100% of complaints within timescale, improve how we learn from complaints and how we share this learning back with residents.
- 3.2. The TSB have made 13 recommendations for improvement, which Housing Leeds have accepted. A copy of the report, including the Housing Leeds response to the recommendations is attached as an appendix. Examples of the recommendations include:
 - a) *To enhance the current complaints web page to allow residents to upload an attachment to their complaint when submitted online.*
 - b) *The service would like Housing Leeds to issue automated reminders to Investigating Officers to let them know the complaint they were managing was due shortly. i.e. 'the response to complaint x is due in x days'*
 - c) *That Housing Leeds promote the option to extend deadline for responses (in line with the Complaint Handling Code) where this is appropriate. This should help Housing Leeds achieve improved complaint responses in timescale and give more clarity to the customer.*
- 3.3. The recommendations were based on gathering evidence and insight from a range of presentations, materials, reports and guest speakers, along with speaking with staff who are involved in complaints management. The board will receive updates from the service throughout 2025 on the delivery of these recommendations and the impact this is having. The report is currently being shared with residents.

4. Wider complaints management activity

- 4.1. To strengthen our approach to complaints management:
 - a) Continue to deliver '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.

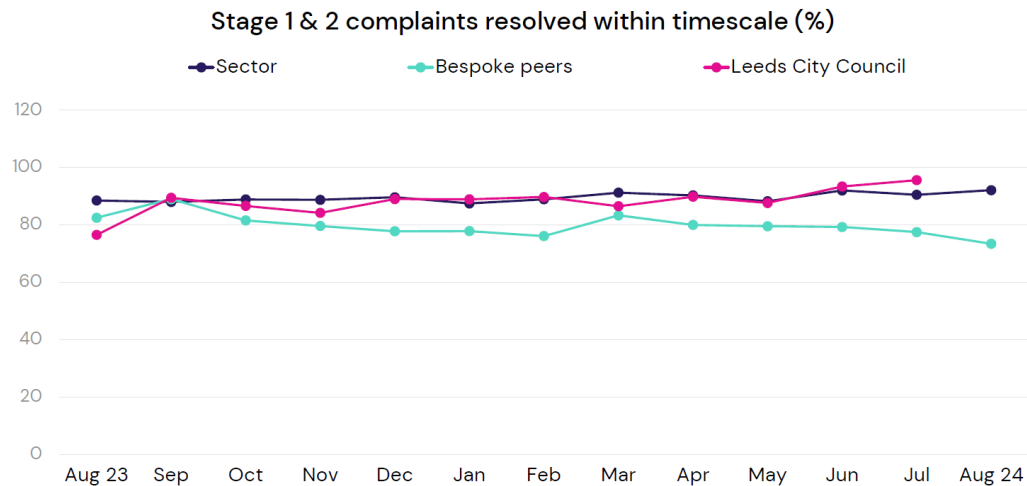
- b) Detailed quality assurance work is underway, focussed on cases which escalated from stage 1 to stage 2. Analysis is being undertaken on cases from all Housing services, with a focus on opportunities to prevent escalation alongside consideration of likely outcome should a customer refer their complaint to the Housing Ombudsman (informed by past decisions received from them). This sits alongside consideration of compliance with the complaint handling code, which had shaped earlier quality assurance work. Full results, feedback and recommendations are expected in mid-Q1. The escalation rate of cases from Stage 1 to 2, for Q2 was 25%.
- c) We have taken part in research led by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) linked to the national [Make Things Right campaign](#). This campaign seeks to raise awareness for tenants on how to raise issues and make complaints if they have problems with their home or landlord. MCHLG are speaking to landlords to hear their experiences of complaints management and to explore how they can support landlords to communicate and share this campaign with residents. Discussions with the agency doing this research has involved two sessions whereby we've been able to advise what works well, and what material would help us reach our communities such as Easy Read versions of leaflets and translated material. We have also fed back the need to use a variety of images that do not portray a negative stereotype of social housing, or the same type of images that are used by disrepair claims companies.
- d) At the end of October 2024, Housemark presented Housing Leeds with it's annual overview of results, that included a range of information about the performance and cost of our service benchmarked against others. This demonstrated that when assessing the number of complaints we receive per month as a proportion of units we manage, the proportion is below that of our peer group and the sector as a whole.

Complaints volumes – year to date



- e) Our performance in terms of responding to complaints within timescales is also positive. Our August 24 performance (that we have maintained) is above that of our peer group and the sector.

Complaints responded to in target time



- f) The service continues to receive compliments on its complaint handling for example, two recent compliments for the same officer received in the Repairs Intervention Team, stated "I would just like to praise how Chelsea has handled my complaint and has **gone above and beyond for me**. We are all quick to complain! So, I would like you to know how much it means to have someone deal with your complaint in a **polite friendly efficient manner**" and "Thank you very much for taking the time to look into my complaint and **keeping me updated** on your progress - I'm very grateful for your detailed response. I also want to thank you for speaking to me about my concerns in such an **open, honest and professional manner**, it really does make such a **positive difference**".

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. Statement from the Member Responsible for Complaints:

The additional information in the report explaining the common types of complaints is useful and I would encourage the service to seek to include examples in future reports of how our service is responding to these in more detail. I'm pleased that our performance compared to other landlords is relatively strong, though as parts of this report indicate, there is room for improvement in terms of specific types of repairs we undertake and in seeking to reduce the escalation rates so more residents are satisfied with the outcome of their complaint at Stage 1.

I would like there to be more opportunity for Board Members to discuss complaints analysis in more detail and influence the service's response to complaints. I am therefore proposing as part of the review of the Leeds Housing Board that a Complaints Sub Group is established, but with full reports and key points from the sub group continuing to be presented to Board.

I welcome the Tenant Scrutiny Board's recommendations, and I'd like to thank them for their work and input to help us improve. I would like the Leeds Housing Board proposed sub-group on complaints to receive updates throughout 2025 on the services progress on implementing the recommendations and look forward to hearing about the positive impact of these.

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

6. Discussion points

- 6.1. What might some of the local factors be that drive higher volumes of complaints in different management areas?
- 6.2. Is there other information related to complaints the board would wish to see in future complaints reporting?
- 6.3. We will shortly be seeking input from the MRC and ideally tenant board members to help us undertake our Complaint Handling Code Self-Assessment – this is an opportunity to raise awareness of this activity in the new year.

7. Recommendations

- 7.1 The Board are asked to note and comment on any information included in this report
- 7.2 The Board consider the statement on this latest period by the MRC.
- 7.3 That the Board accept the 13 Tenant Scrutiny Board recommendations, seek updates to ensure their successful delivery and thank the Tenant Scrutiny Board for the outcomes of their review.

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Leeds Tenant Scrutiny Board

Findings of a review into complaints performance and how well Housing Leeds learns from complaints.

December 2024

Introduction

This report describes the work of the Tenant Scrutiny Board (TSB) and its review into how Housing Leeds manages and learns from complaints.

This review took place between May and November 2024 and includes recommendations for improvement from the TSB for Housing Leeds to make.

The topic of complaints and specifically, how well Housing Leeds learns from complaints was selected following the board's review of a range of performance and management information. This included the board reviewing the most recent 'Tenant Satisfaction Measures' and hearing from senior officers and the Executive Member for Housing, Councillor Jess Lennox about areas for improvement that could benefit from the board's work.

The board at this time was given assurance from Housing Leeds on their compliance with the [Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code](#), however, there were areas of compliance that could be strengthened, and it is these areas that the board wish to focus on.

The scope of the board's review was to therefore to:

- Assist Housing Leeds and make recommendations for improvement to help them achieve 100% of customer complaints within timescales
- Assess how well Housing Leeds learns from complaints to improve overall satisfaction with services
- Assess how learning from complaints is shared back to residents to build confidence and trust in the complaints process.

The Board also selected complaints as a topic to review as from April 2024 Housing Leeds had a statutory obligation to respond to complaints within timescale and in line with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code.

The board also view complaints as important sources of feedback from customers that should be managed in line with the Code and every opportunity taken to learn from them to improve services. The board noted that whilst complaints performance in terms of responses in timescale was improving, there was still room for improvement so that 100% of customers received a response in timescale.

The TSB are a group of volunteer tenants who are supported to review any aspect of the service given by Housing Leeds. For this review, they were joined by members of the Tenant Voice Panel, strengthening the membership and tenant input into the review and allowing more tenants to take part in the process.

By undertaking this review, the Board have worked collaboratively with Housing Leeds to seek to achieve:

- More tenants having their complaint responded to within timescale – above the current 88% (at the time of the review commencing)
- Higher levels of satisfaction with the complaints process
- Better customer satisfaction for services overall
- More resident awareness about how we learn from complaints
- Support for Housing Leeds to ensure compliance with the Housing Ombudsman's complaint handling code

This report is focussed on the experience and services to Housing Leeds tenants, however, there is the potential to share the learning in this report with other council teams or services.

What the Board did and what we learnt:

The board began their review by receiving an overview of the complaints process from managers who have complaints management as part of their day-to-day role. This helped the board gain a better understanding of the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code and what some of the complaints management challenges currently are.

The board asked complaint handling managers what some of the areas for improvement could be. From this discussion the board observed that there could be greater use of the existing management information, for example, from the 'complaints dashboard' to help managers know the number and status of complaints for their service area. This would help encourage all managers or 'Investigating Officers' who led on complaints responses to have greater visibility of the complaints for their service and the complaint status to assist them in ensuring all complaints are responded to in Code timescales. To ensure that the 'dashboard' is fit for purpose the board also feel that key staff should be given the opportunity to feedback on any suggested improvements or amendments to the dashboard that will help them manage complaints for their service.

The board acknowledge from the overview of the complaints process and from speaking with officers that there was a strong culture of wanting to manage complaints in terms of responding to complaints in timescale and give positive outcomes for customers.

The board learnt of the support put in place for Investigating Officers who lead on the responses to complaints, and the training offered. Whilst the training and support seemed thorough, the board would like Housing Leeds to consider if all Investigating Officers have undertaken this training and to remind all Investigating Officers that help and support is available, especially for those newer in post.

In learning about the requirements of the Complaint Handling Code and the timescales for responses that are required, the board learnt how landlords are able to apply an extension to the deadline for a response if needed, for example, in instances of more complex complaints. From the feedback received and the data reviewed by the board, it's clear that some complaints have been responded to outside of timescales because an extension was not applied. In line with the Complaint Handling Code, the board accepts that extensions can and should be used when needed to give the customer clarity on timescales and to allow Housing Leeds to meet the requirements of the Code i.e. *'Where a response to a complaint will fall outside the timescales set out in this Code the landlord must agree with the resident suitable intervals for keeping them informed about their complaint.'*

The board discussed with officers the opportunity to provide more updates to complainants, for example, by giving an automated update to inform of who their complaint had been referred to. The board are aware of the council's intention to improve the management of all its customer contact and would like to see more complaints updates being shared with residents on the status of their complaint if this was technically possible.

Similarly, the board noted that to help ensure all complaints were responded to within timescales, the service would ideally send automated reminders to Investigating Officers to let them know the complaint they were managing was due shortly. i.e. *'the response to complaint x is due in x days'*.

The board are aware that these points require potential changes or investment into IT systems and this may not be actionable immediately, but wish the service to consider the above, and if not feasible at this

point in time, give an explanation as to what IT related innovation is possible to help improve the customer complaints experience for customers and staff and their teams.

In the course of the review the board met with Investigating Officers from Housing Management and from Property Management. This helped the board gain an understanding of the current working practices in terms of responding to complaints in timescales. The board learnt there is occasionally an incorrect allocation of a complaint to a wrong team or service, and that this can impact on the time available to respond in timescales. The board are not clear or aware of the likelihood or frequency of this, or if this has a significant impact, but is something Housing Leeds should try and minimise. The board also learnt how in more complex complaint cases, a multi-agency meeting is sometimes held to help resolve the complaint and make sure all the issues within the complaint are addressed. The board welcome this approach and are keen for staff to continue to work in this way.

The board noted that some teams in Housing Leeds had discussed learning from complaints in team meetings. Whilst this must be done in a way that does not unnecessarily share personal data, it was something that staff reporting to the board felt was a useful tool to raise awareness of an issue and learn from complaints unique to the particular team or service. The board therefore welcome this approach and ask for all teams who manage any customer complaint to devote time in their team meetings to share and learn together. Where appropriate this learning can then be used as content to feedback to residents more widely.

The board looked at the learning from complaints content from a number of other landlords, including councils and housing associations, and also met with Gateway Housing Association whose own tenant scrutiny panel had looked into the same topic. They also met with an officer who undertakes the satisfaction surveys of those residents who have gone through the complaints process as a way to help monitor what tenants think about how Housing Leeds manages complaints.

The board noted the relatively low responses from customers to the customer satisfaction survey and explored ways this could be improved so Housing Leeds had a more accurate picture of residents experiences. It was suggested that a standard sentence be added to complaint responses to make residents aware that they will be asked for feedback when the complaint is closed. The board also discussed trialling a prize draw or incentive to help increase the number of completed surveys.

In terms of learning from complaints and how this learning from complaints could be better shared back with residents, the board would like Housing Leeds to more proactively share learning with residents, for example by routinely including content on their social media and hard copy/online newsletters.

When reviewing website content from Sanctuary Housing, Together Housing and Karbon homes the board identified aspects of all three of these websites that it would like Housing Leeds to implement. The content was easy to read and engaging and was open about how they were performing, what they had learnt from complaints and what they had done to improve services as a result, along with useful signposting and support.

Liverpool Council's website has a web page with a form that allows residents to upload an attachment. The board feel this could be useful for residents in Leeds and would like this to be made available. Liverpool Council also provides a template for residents about how to construct a complaint, with a model complaint broken down into clear sections that help the customer to clearly explain what the complaint is about, which could help Housing Leeds improve the quality of its complaint responses.

As a general observation, the service were unable to evidence a strong proactive learning from complaints being shared back with residents. The Annual Report for Tenants includes some learning from complaints feedback, as have some occasional email updates to residents, but this is not a regular or well-embedded approach and the board would like to see more examples of this.

In hearing from Gateway Housing Association, the board reflected on the importance of making sure our complaints responses and feedback to residents about how we learn from complaints should be written as clearly as possible, be jargon free, use plain English and use language that encourages building a positive relationship with tenants. It was noted that a theme of the success at Gateway Housing Association was to apply the 'human touch' to everything they did. This would be the expectation of the board for all Housing Leeds complaints responses and learning in the future.

Acknowledgements

The Tenant Scrutiny Board would like to thank:

- Roisin Donnelly – Housing Manager, Customer Care and Inclusion
- Richard Hodgson – LCC Customer Relations Manager
- Catherine Ellis – Neighbourhood Services Officer – Customer Insight
- Lenoard Wright – Repairs and Maintenance Contract Officer
- Charlotte Crispin – Housing Team Leader (Tenancy)
- David Lansdown and Katy Marx from Gateway Housing Association
- Residents who gave feedback through the customer satisfaction survey, used by the board to help them with their review.
- Councillor Jessica Lennox, Executive Member for Housing
- Akbar Khan, Ian Montgomery and Trish Parker from the Tenant Engagement Team who supported the review.

Recommendations

Tenant Scrutiny Board Recommendation	Response from Housing Leeds	'Accepted', 'Partially Accepted', 'Rejected' or 'Further Information requested'.
<p>1. To seek assurance that all managers responsible for complaints regularly access the 'complaints dashboard' In doing so, to also seek feedback on the dashboard and if any improvements can be made to help staff manage complaints more effectively.</p>	<p>Key message to all managers (Sent by Gerard Tinsdale, Chief Officer, by end of January 25): The service propose writing to all managers, to make them aware of this recommendation, and to ask them to confirm they regularly (weekly) receive and access the dashboard. To include ask for feedback for review by the Customer Relations Team (CRT) on the dashboard and to make aware that support to use the dashboard is available from the CRT. Summarise feedback on dashboard usage and include in complaints management update report to the Leeds Housing Board.</p>	<p>Accepted</p>
<p>2. To ensure all Investigating Officers have undertaken Investigating Officer training and to remind all Investigating Officers that help and support is available, especially for those newer in post.</p>	<p>Within the same key message, share this recommendation and remind of help and support available. Review attendance of Investigating Officers at IO training, and book onto training any IO that has not taken part in the last 18 months. Summarise training position in complaint management update report to the Leeds Housing Board.</p>	<p>Accepted</p>
<p>3. That Housing Leeds promote the option to extend deadline for responses (in line with the Complaint Handling Code where this is appropriate. This should help Housing Leeds achieve improved complaint responses in timescale and give more clarity to the customer.</p>	<p>Within the same key message include this recommendation, adding where advice and support is available on this point, a reminder of the requirements of the Code and provide regular updates on application of the extension in the Senior Management Team,</p>	<p>Accepted</p>

	Leeds Housing Board and learning from complaints items in Housing Leeds Matters (the staff bulletin). Provide information about using extensions in complaint management update report to the Leeds Housing Board.	
4. To explore the opportunity to provide more automated updates to complainants informing them of the status or progress of their complaint. For example, by giving an automated update to inform of who their complaint has been referred to and their contact details. The board asks Housing Leeds to also consider how those with translation needs can be supported to access these messages.	We are currently undertaking a project in LCC to assess the viability of adopting Microsoft Dynamics. Proof of concept testing demonstrated the ability to provide customers automatic acknowledgement of complaints, share updates on the progress of their complaint and request further information from customers where required. Further exploration is ongoing, and updates are expected in 2025. Initial proof of concept work did not demonstrate the ability to communicate with customers in different languages, however this can be explored as part of Co-Pilot AI integration.	Accepted
5. The service would like Housing Leeds to issue automated reminders to Investigating Officers to let them know the complaint they were managing was due shortly. i.e. 'the response to complaint x is due in x days'	Similar to above, this is also dependent on the successful delivery of Microsoft Dynamics and would fall into the same timetable of a further update in 2025.	Accepted
6. That Housing Leeds and the LCC Customer Relations team put in place actions to help minimise the potential for a complaint to be allocated to the wrong service (and therefore increase the time taken to respond to the customer).	Housing Leeds suggest the following actions in response to this recommendation: a) To attend CRT training sessions on a monthly basis to share updates on any changes to the service and to allow the CRT to ask any questions related to complaint allocation. b) To share the fortnightly 'Housing Leeds Matters' with CRT staff – where changes are highlighted that may be useful for CRT staff.	Accepted
7. The board noted that some teams in Housing Leeds had discussed the learning from complaints in their team meetings. Whilst this must be done in a way that does not	In the key message above, the service will share this recommendation and instruct managers to include a monthly learning from complaints discussion within	Accepted

<p>share personal data the board ask this be done periodically within all teams (at a frequency Housing Leeds can determine) and that example of learning be included in the communications back to residents.</p>	<p>their team meetings. Some teams may regularly respond to complaints, others less so, so the expectation is that teams themselves share and discuss the information that is relevant to them. If there are improvement actions identified as a result, that these be shared with the Information Team for inclusion in resident comms.</p>	
<p>8. To seek to increase the number of responses to complaint satisfaction surveys, Housing Leeds:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Add a standard sentence to the template response letters to make residents aware that they will be asked for feedback when the complaint is closed. b. Trial the use of an incentive, with a financial or suitable prize draw, for example a hamper, for those completing the surveys. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) This has been actioned and is now in place, a note was shared with all staff to make aware in the December issue of Housing Leeds Matters and will be included as part of the specific message to Investigating Officers by the end of January 2025. We have also taken the opportunity to signpost the Tenant Voice Panel and the new Housing Leeds Feedback website at the same time. b) We currently receive around 16 survey responses from an average of 160 issued per month. From February 2025, we will give details about the trial of a prize draw to increase responses and seek residents consent to be included. For ease of administration, propose Love 2 Shop vouchers (which can be posted to the resident's address). Any uptake in participation will be reported to the Leeds Housing Board during 2025. The suggested prize is £50 for a winner selected for each month. 	<p>Accepted</p>
<p>9. To make better use of existing communication channels – the Housing Leeds social media and email bulletins to give more regular examples of how learning from complaints.</p>	<p>Alongside these recommendations the service are currently self-assessing ourselves against a new Communication and Engagement Policy. This requires teams to identify where they have learned from complaints on an annual basis – with the current self-assessments due for completion by the end of February 2025. We will use the examples given from this and other sources to keep updated a new learning</p>	<p>Accepted</p>

	from complaints web page (see below) and to commit to including ‘you said we did’s’ in the monthly tenant email (sent to 43,000 tenants) and with regular posts on our social media.	
10. Using a combination of the website content from Sanctuary Housing, Together Housing and Karbon homes as a guide, create an accessible and easy to read web page describing how Housing Leeds has learned from complaints and to share this widely with residents.	The service can commit to launching a new learning from complaints web page by the end of February 2025. This will be promoted on social media and in our tenant emails throughout 2025. We are able to share with the board a draft of this new page for their comment ahead of this going live.	Accepted
11. Add guidance to the existing LCC complaints page about how to construct a complaint, with a model complaint broken down into clear sections (see Liverpool Council).	We accept the value of the recommendation as adopted by Liverpool Council. We have noted as ‘partially’ accepted as further enquiries are being made with our web team to understand if this can be added using the current website platform and for all services. We will clarify if this can be practically delivered as soon as possible and update the board further at this time.	Partially accepted – whilst await IDS feedback
12. To enhance the current complaints web page to allow residents to upload an attachment to their complaint when submitted online.	We accept the value of the recommendation. We have noted as ‘partially’ accepted as further enquiries are required with our web team to understand if this can be added using the current website platform. We will clarify if this can be practically delivered as soon as possible and update the board further at this time.	Partially accepted - whilst await IDS feedback
13. That Housing Leeds commits to using clear and concise language in both its complaints responses and its communications about learning from complaints. Be jargon free and apply the ‘human touch’ to everything you do to help build respect and trust with residents and respond to individual tenants needs.	We fully support this recommendation. We will keep developing our approach by: a) Implementing a ‘responding to individual needs’ policy – giving practical advice to staff about how to put in place reasonable adjustments. b) Completing our annual self-assessments against a new Communications and Engagement Policy which describes how we make our services as accessible and inclusive as possible.	Accepted

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">c) Continuing to undertake and publish the outcomes from our annual self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman’s Complaint Handling Coded) Continuing to share regular ‘learning from complaints’ advice and support for staff in our internal staff bulletine) Encouraging compliments about our service to highlight good practice and thank/recognise the staff and teams who are providing high quality responses.f) Undertake quarterly Quality Assurance exercises – selecting a sample of complaints responses to highlight where could improve and to recognise high quality responses. A summary of this information is reported to the Leeds Housing Boardg) Move complaint handling from Leeds Building Services into Housing Leeds’s Intervention Team who’s focus is on high levels of customer care and seeking swift responses to put things right.	
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Title: Grenfell Tower Phase 2 report – impact on Leeds City Council

Author: Simon Baker

Meeting Date: 22nd January 2025

1. Background

- 1.1. In the early hours of June 14, 2017, in North Kensington, West London, a fire broke out in a fourth-floor flat of the 24-story Grenfell Tower and rapidly spread to engulf the entire building.
- 1.2. The fire claimed the lives of 72 people, making it the deadliest residential fire in the UK since World War II.
- 1.3. The primary factor contributing to the rapid spread of the fire was the flammable cladding material installed on the exterior of the building. This cladding, combined with other safety failures, allowed the fire to quickly climb the building's façade.
- 1.4. A public inquiry was established to investigate the circumstances surrounding the fire and to make recommendations to prevent similar tragedies in the future.
- 1.5. The Inquiry published its first – 'Phase 1' report – on October 30, 2019. It focused on the events leading up to and during the fire on. It detailed the fire's origin and rapid spread, emphasising the role of the combustible cladding system in the disaster and criticising the response of the London Fire Brigade (LFB), highlighting issues such as communication failures, inadequate training, and the delayed evacuation order.
- 1.6. The report made numerous recommendations to improve fire safety in high-rise buildings, including stricter building regulations, enhanced training for firefighters, and improved emergency response procedures.
- 1.7. On September 4th, 2024, the Inquiry published its Phase 2 report, the purpose of which was to look more deeply at the systemic failures that led to the fire. It aims to:
 - Uncover the fundamental reasons behind the fire, including issues with building regulations, construction practices, and regulatory oversight
 - Determine responsibility for the decisions and actions that contributed to the disaster
 - Propose comprehensive measures to prevent similar tragedies in the future, such as stricter building standards, improved fire safety regulations, and enhanced accountability mechanisms
- 1.8. The Phase 2 report contains 58 recommendations, and all have been assessed for any potential impact on Leeds City Council. This report outlines the findings of the assessment.

2. Main Points

- 2.1. Firstly, it is important to note that in its recommendations the report doesn't make any explicit recommendations for social housing providers in terms of the condition of its housing stock or other landlord services.
- 2.2. Whilst the report makes a number of criticisms about how the Kensington and Chelsea Tenant Management Organisation (KCTMO), who had landlord responsibilities at the time of the fire, carried out those responsibilities (for example in relation to complaint handling, remedying defects identified in fire risk assessments, installing and maintaining fire protection systems and routine inspection and maintenance of fire doors), the report says:

...shortcomings of those kinds would probably have led us to make a number of recommendations directed to ensuring that they were rectified and not repeated. However, since the fire Parliament has enacted the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023, which enables the Regulator of Social Housing to play a more active role in setting appropriate standards and ensuring that they are met. The regulator also has the power to set standards on the competence and conduct of those involved in the provision of services relating to the management of social housing and to require providers of social housing to make information available both to tenants and the regulator. The Act also makes safety a priority and imposes a duty on landlords to investigate and remedy within a specified time of being reported defects that may adversely affect health... In those circumstances, we do not consider it necessary to make any additional recommendations in relation to the matters that we have uncovered.

- 2.3. The Leeds Housing Board receives regular updates on our progress in meeting the new regulatory regime, how we are working towards full compliance with the Consumer Standards and the work done by the Social Housing Regulations project.
- 2.4. The report makes recommendations across a number of areas which do not directly impact on, or do not require any immediate response from, Leeds City Council. Examples of these include:
 - The establishment of a national regulator for the construction industry
 - That the government bring responsibility for fire safety (currently spread across a number of departments) into one department under a single Secretary of State
 - A licensing scheme be introduced for contractors
 - A number of recommendations for the London Fire Brigade and fire services across the country
 - A review of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004

3. Phase 2 report impact on LCC

- 3.1. There are a number of recommendations in the report that potentially have an impact on LCC.
- 3.2. A number relate to changes to building regulations; the report recommends that the definition of a higher-risk building be changed from a building above 18m to one that reflects the use of the building and the presence of

vulnerable people for whom evacuation in the event of fire could be difficult. Changes are recommended to building regulations which are designed to strengthen compliance. These, if implemented, will affect LCC-owned properties and impacts will be managed accordingly.

- 3.3. The report is critical of the 'stay-put' strategy in place at Grenfell Tower and recommends that buildings are assessed and stay-put guidance is issued only when a building is assessed as having negligible risk of fire spreading via an external wall. LCC has plans in place to ensure our buildings are suitably assessed.
- 3.4. There are a number of recommendations related to a building's fire safety strategy and the status and accreditation of fire engineers and fire risk assessors. LCC is exploring how to meet the recommendations, including potentially recruiting a suitably qualified fire engineer and that LCC fire risk assessors become suitably accredited.
- 3.5. There are a number of recommendations within the report which consider how local authorities' emergency and resilience functions manage people who have been displaced from their homes by a major incident, how staff are suitably trained, how the information of displaced people is accurately recorded, how displaced people are placed in temporary accommodation, financial assistance available for displaced people, and how displaced people are kept informed. LCC's Resilience and Emergencies Team has reviewed the recommendations and is working towards meeting them.

4. Progress made in Leeds

- 4.1. Since the fire, in its aftermath a lot of work has been done in Leeds to meet the requirements that have come from government, including via the Building Safety Act, and the Inquiry's findings.
- 4.2. With regards to fire safety specifically:
 - Since the Grenfell Tragedy, work continues to review and monitor all fire risk assessments for our social housing in a structured and programmed manner.
 - Following the Dame Hackitt Phase 1 inquiry, the Council is an 'early adopter' of the Hackitt review recommendations. Work with the West Yorks Fire and Rescue Service (WYFRS) has completed, produced, and placed on site Tactical Information Plans for 121 High Rise blocks seven storeys and above or 18+ meters in height. These documents must be maintained and updated when works are carried out in any of these blocks and any changes reported to WYFRS.
 - Passive Fire Protection works (Fire stopping) and the compartmentalisation of flats in high rise blocks across the city have been completed further enhancing resident safety. These assessments include invasive audits of fire safety compartmentation.
 - LCC continues to work closely with WYFRS through partnership agreements and the Concordat agreement further enhancing fire safety.

- Working on Evacuation procedures with regards detailing persons that require assistance to evacuate are ongoing with WYFRS, benefiting all our High-Rise residents citywide. Where a residents has self-referred, we schedule in a Person Centred Fire Risk Assessment.
 - The programme of sprinkler installation, which started in 2013 in High Rise blocks citywide, is continuing and 70 High Rise blocks with four currently work in progress which will be completed by financial year 2024/25, providing the highest safety provision to the residents of Leeds.
 - The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 article 6 was amended in 2022 and our fire risk assessors must report on the structure of walls, their external wall insulations and items such as balconies etc. This allows the Local Fire Authority as the enforcing body to enforce matters in relation to any issues noted.
 - The Fire Safety Regulations 2022 that came into force on January 23rd, 2023, places a duty on the Authority to check the High Rise flat entrance doors of all accommodation – 7000-plus. The results of these checks must be recorded; a web-based Door App was design and developed, where project progress is recorded supporting our KPIs and TSMs. In addition, all communal areas have door inspections every three months. Included in the project is testing our residents’ smoke alarms, if any defects are identified immediate repairs are raised.
 - Educational leaflets are sent to all High Rise residents, 7000-plus, on the importance of their Flat Entrance Doors and the Evacuation Strategy for each High Rise block citywide.
 - It also requires that we inspect and test lifts on a monthly basis, to test all firefighter functions work, and any failure that takes over 24 hours to repair must be passed to local Fire Authority with the fault and a remedy date.
 - High Rise wayfinding signage project surveys, artwork, manufacture and installations has commenced, and we estimate the planned completion to be 2026.
- 4.3. Work done on wider building safety in Leeds includes:
- A project team was established 2023 to assess the impact of the Building Safety Act 2022 and develop proposals to meet the requirements of the new legislation.
 - The recommendations of the project were to create structural changes to services within Property Management (now Asset Management Housing).
 - Posts were created in the Fire Safety Team, M&E team and a Building Safety Team was created.
 - As part of the project it was identified that creating ‘block champions’ would enable officers to become experts on each block. The ‘Stage 3’ quarterly block inspections of the communal areas were brought under the Building Safety Team, undertaken by Technical Officers.
 - The legislation has required Housing Leeds to register all blocks 18m+/7 storeys and above with the Building Safety Regulator.

- All registered High Risk Buildings (HRB) will go through an assessment by the Building Safety Regulator in order to receive a Building Occupation Certificate (BOC).
- IDS developed a Building Safety Hub as an online source of relevant information on building and flat safety for all residents.
- IDS developed a SharePoint system to manage the Golden Thread of information required to be stored for each HRB
- A Mandatory Occurrence Reporting System (MOR) has been developed and rolled out for all building users to report building safety concerns
- Resident Engagement plans have been developed for each block
- Refurbishment projects, within HRB, now need to meet a more stringent approval process and can only be approved by the Building Safety Regulator.

5. Discussion Point

- 5.1. Does the Board have any comments on LCC's response to the Grenfell Tower Phase 2 report?

6. Recommendations

- 6.1. Members are asked to note the content of the report and comment accordingly.

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Agenda Item 8

Date of meeting	xx June	xx September
Proposed items	TSMs - End of 24/25 Consumer Standards update BITMO 24/24 Annual Performance Service Plan Priorities Annual Complaints and Service Improvement report Housing Leeds Annual Report for Tenants 24/25	TSMs Q1 Communications and Engagement update (incl. high rise)

xx December	xx March
TSMs Q2 Consumer Standards update Complaints update Q1 and Q2	TSMs Q3 Communications and Engagement update (incl. high rise)