

1. Report title: Your Housing Group Update Report

2. Action:

For information and noting

3. Recommendation(s)

It is recommended that content of this report is discussed, and actions agreed at the meeting.

4. Report of:

Dave Woods - Director of Repairs and Maintenance
Ian Hines – Operations Manager Maintenance

5. Contact details of author:

Dave Woods - Director of Repairs and Maintenance
dave.woods@yourhousinggroup.co.uk

6. Confidential report:

No

7. Additional Contact:

Paula Marshall – Exec Director of Housing & Customer Service
Paula.marshall@yourhousinggroup.co.uk

Aaron Hammersley – Director of Housing & Customer Service
Aaron.hammersley@yourhousinggroup.co.uk

8. Introduction

At the last meeting of the Trafford Council Scrutiny Committee, a report on social housing was requested for the January 2025 meeting.

The Committee requested information on the points below and invited Registered Providers to attend the meeting to provide an update.

- Damp and mould – update from last meeting, plus housing repairs – what waiting times etc
- Void and empty homes – how can we maximise social homes – why are social homes empty – what can be done to re-invest in homes? What is the policy for adaptations?

This report provides an update in relation to the housing stock within the borough owned and managed by Your Housing Group (YHG).

9. Damp and Mould

Volumes

- Between 1st January and 31st December 2024, we received 201 new reports of D&M across our Trafford housing stock.
- We hold 1,998 properties in Trafford, this equates to 10% of our properties reporting D&M issues.

Actions Taken to Resolve

- We have increased resource in all areas of the D&M task force team (triage, surveying, scheduling and trade operatives).
- Cases triaged within 72 hours has consistently been running at over 99% during the last calendar year even during periods of increased volumes during the colder months.
- We have undertaken training and development with our operatives to be able to complete more complex and specialist work internally reducing reliance on subcontractors.
- Provided training to our triage team through an external body to deepen their knowledge on determining the most appropriate approach when triaging cases. This has also been supported by shadowing and pairing with our surveyors.
- We have introduced our aftercare process and are returning to customers' homes between 6 -12 weeks after completion of all works to confirm if the situation has been fully resolved.

Challenges

- We have faced the same issue as other providers in terms of the difficulty in recruiting and retaining operatives in an increasingly competitive market. This in turn has impacted our ability to complete some repairs as quickly as we would have expected. We have success in combatting this through benchmarking and improving

our offer, specific targeted advertising and holding open evenings with a view to an easier and shorter recruitment process.

- We are increasingly finding that rising utility bills are placing greater demand on support services such as our money advice team.

Future Activity

- We are looking to further develop our case management system for improved functionality.
- Introduction of a fabric first asset strategy to ensure homes are free from any water penetration.
- Use of data from the case management system to inform our wider asset strategy on how we may be able to address some cases occurring.
- We are reviewing our categorisation of reports of D&M to be more closely aligned to those of the HHSRS.
- We are reviewing both our D&M policy and associated repair timescales in conjunction with our engaged customers.

10. Housing Repairs

For the period of January 2024 to December 2024 we received 6,626 repairs for our homes in Trafford broken down as below.

- 3,617 Responsive Repairs
- 2,218 Emergency Repairs
- 791 Minor Works

The average time to complete these repairs was 32.5 days. We aim to attend emergency repairs within 24hrs, a significant increase in reported emergencies was impacting overall response times. We have implemented an emergency only team to address this and initial results are positive.

We always look to appoint repairs received as quickly as possible, however recruitment of operatives to carry out repairs continues to be a challenge and has impacted our ability to meet target timescales. Whilst from time to time we utilise sub-contracted resources this has not provided sufficient capacity to meet current demand. We will be carrying out more focused recruitment drives / open days through early 2025 across our operating areas to address the shortfall in resources.

11. Empty Homes

During the past year we have encountered some delays in our turn around timescales, several factors have contributed to this such as, extent of repairs required, tenant damage, as well as the difficulties in recruitment and retention of operatives. We aim to have our turnaround performance back to business-as-usual levels during Q1 2025/26, through pursuing the following actions.

- Recruitment initiatives
- Securing of additional budget for high value works
- Mobilisation of a new subcontractor framework

- Review and streamlining of internal systems and processes (pre termination inspections, prioritisation, property clearance/fly tipping, productivity management)

As of 7th January 2025, YHG had 29 empty general needs homes in Trafford (1.45% of available stock). Of these 3 homes are ready to let with sign up's pending and 26 homes are in maintenance with works underway to make them available to let over the coming weeks.

12. Planned Maintenance

Each year we carry out planned investment works to occupied properties, to replace elements that are beyond economic repair, this includes replacement kitchens, bathrooms, roofs, windows and doors.

These programmes are determined by our stock condition data, insight from repairs data, complaint trends and other property related data. We are currently moving towards a fabric first approach which will see a focus on ensuring our homes are weather tight and free from water ingress.

We are also looking to increase the efficiency of all homes by investing in energy projects that aim to ensure they meet SAP band C by 2030. We will be working with GMCA to apply for funding from WAVE 3 of the Governments Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) to address the SAP rating of homes across our Greater Manchester stock.

13. Policy For Adaptations

When a property with an existing major adaptation becomes empty, we will always try to allocate the property to a customer that can make use of that adaptation, e.g. wet room. We will work with the relevant Local Authority (LA) to identify the most appropriate allocation, or we will allocate based upon a YHG management move.

YHG may request that an LA Occupational Therapist (OT) assesses the potential new customer by attending a joint viewing of the property, to ensure it meets their needs. If the adaptation was provided to meet a specific customers' requirement and cannot be used by another customer, it may have to be removed.

If an existing customer needs a major adaptation, we will initially try to find an empty property that suits their needs. If this is not possible, they will be referred to the LA to apply for Disabled Facility Grant (DFG) funding. If they are eligible for DFG support the LA will contact us for landlord permission to proceed. Our current arrangement with Trafford Council is that YHG will pay for 40% of the adaptation, with the work managed and delivered by Trafford Council. We do also offer a minor adaptations service to all our customers, which is fully funded by YHG.

14. Recommendation

It is recommended that the content of this report is discussed, and any associated actions agreed.