



Agenda

**Notice of a public meeting of Community Development
Directorate - Executive Members
and Corporate Director Meetings**

To: Councillors Simon Myers.

Date: Wednesday, 12th June, 2024

Time: 10.00 am

Venue:

Under his delegated decision making powers in the Officers' Delegation Scheme in the Council's Constitution, the Chief Executive Officer has power, in cases of emergency, to take any decision which could be taken by the Council, the Executive or a committee. Following on from the expiry of the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020, which allowed for committee meetings to be held remotely, the County Council resolved at its meeting on 21 July 2021 that, for the present time, in light of the continuing Covid-19 pandemic circumstances, remote live-broadcast committee meetings should continue (as informal meetings of the Committee Members), with any formal decisions required being taken by the Chief Executive Officer under his emergency decision making powers and after consultation with other Officers and Members as appropriate and after taking into account any views of the relevant Committee Members.

The meeting will be available to view once the meeting commences, via the following link - www.northyorks.gov.uk/livemeetings Recordings of previous live broadcast meetings are also available there.

Business

1. Declarations of Interest

Items for decision by the Executive Member for Culture, Arts & Housing

2. Housing Review 2023/24 (*Pages 3 - 120*)
3. Any Other Items of Business
4. Date of Next Meeting : 10 July 2024

Barry Khan

Enquiries relating to this agenda please contact Tel:
or e-mail

Website: www.northyorks.gov.uk

Assistant Chief Executive
(Legal and Democratic Services)

County Hall
Northallerton

Date Not Specified

North Yorkshire Council

Community Development Executive Member Meeting

12 June 2024

Housing Review 2023/24

Report of the Corporate Director of Community Development

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To present the Housing Review 2023/24 which incorporates the summary of the Tenant Satisfaction Measures, the complaints self-assessment and a review of management costs. The report is intended to showcase the end of year position in relation to these items alongside demonstrating compliance with the regulatory standard and the requirements to assess complaints as laid out by the Housing Ombudsman service.
- 1.2 The portfolio holder for housing will also be required to comment on the current progress on complaints management and the position explored within the report concerning the complaints as part of the compliance requirements for the Housing Ombudsman.

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 Throughout the 2023/24 financial year the housing service has been undergoing significant transformation to both ensure the integrated service is effective when delivering services to customers; but also to ensure that it is aware of and able to meet its statutory, regulatory and legislative requirements; which have also undergone revision leading to greater reporting requirements from the services delivered through the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).
- 2.2 In order to demonstrate compliance NYC is required to complete a self-assessment document to review its performance in relation to the Tenant Satisfaction Measures; alongside providing information of its management costs. A single overarching report has been drafted to evidence this compliance alongside highlighting some essential actions that will be delivered throughout the 2024/25 financial year in order to improve future compliance.
- 2.3 At the end of the 2023/24 year a decision to self-refer to the regulator was taken on the basis of NYC being non-compliant with the regulatory standards; primarily regarding its understanding of its stock and the issues posed around understanding the safety aspects of the properties and compliance with the Decent Homes Standard.
- 2.4 The report also contains a summary of complaints handled in relation to the landlord service as compliance with the Housing Ombudsman's complaints reporting requirements. This details the number of complaints received, the nature of the complaints and the associated learning. There is also some discussion concerning the next steps for the management of complaints and actions that will be delivered in 2024/25.
- 2.5 The final section covers the costs associated with the service alongside overhead management costs and financial records.

3.0 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 As a requirement laid out within the regulations for the landlord service set out by the Regulator for Social Housing and the Housing Ombudsman Service all social landlords must undertake an annual review of customer satisfaction (Tenant Satisfaction Measures) and complete a self-assessment of their complaints handling for the financial year.
- 3.2 In addition the landlord should update the regulator and customers as to the management costs associated with the business (including costs attributable to directors).
- 3.3 The appended documents will therefore demonstrate the compliance with these issues. The report itself is an overview of all items providing key summary points across all areas; whilst supplementary and detailed feedback is provided through the relevant named appendices.

4.0 HOUSING REVIEW 2023/24

- 4.1 The Housing Review 2023/24 provides a single view of the landlord service and its performance to three key areas of compliance. The first is the Tenant Satisfaction Measures, the second is the accounting position and finally an overview of complaints. Each section is required individually to meet requirements laid out by the Regulator and that of the Housing Ombudsman.
- 4.2 Performance in relation to the Tenant Satisfaction Measures is mixed with seven indicators being ranked in the 2nd performance quartile, two within the 3rd quartile and three within the 4th, when compared to other stock holding authorities within the Acuity benchmarking model. Overall NYC ranked joint 23rd out of the 93 organisations used within the model (9th out of the 26 Councils)
- 4.3 Areas where the service was ranked in the 2nd quartile include the property being well maintained, repairs over the last 12 months, being treated fairly and with respect, being listened to and communal areas being well maintained.
- 4.4 All of these areas overlap with services where it has been recognised that improvements to processes are required or there are gaps in the data. Therefore, it is felt that this will provide a solid basis for the service as it continues to evolve following merger. In particular they reflect positively on the staff undertaking the work; their customer care and level of service they provide.
- 4.5 This contrasts with complaints handling which saw the Council ranked in the 3rd Quartile with the exact median satisfaction score of 29%. In this case it was clear that customers expressed concerns with the time taken to respond to complaints and the accessibility of complaints services. In many ways this is in contrast to the feedback received in relation to other aspects of the customer experience and is rightly a priority for the authority to address to ensure customers feel supported when making a complaint and that they feel it will be actioned promptly and efficiently.
- 4.6 The review of complaints identifies a number of inherited weaknesses regarding the processing and management overview of complaints largely born out of the use of different systems, definitions of complaints and approaches to complaint handling. Ultimately over the early part of the year this had a noticeable detrimental effect on the ability to effectively respond to complaints; coupled with services that weren't fully aligned and integrated and a lack of visible information that hindered effective responses.

- 4.7 Over the year a total of 101 stage one complaints have been received with 8 progressing to stage 2. Since a review of complaints was undertaken and a dedicated resource introduced performance has improved however, as of the end of the year just 68.32% of stage one complaints were responded to in target time and 0% of stage 2. This is again largely driven by the accessibility of information; especially with regards to stage 2 complaints where managers have struggled to view the necessary information or been dependent on other services, partners or colleagues to provide appropriate support to aid their investigations. Again, recent improvements to the processing will aim to provide greater assurance with regard to the management of complaints, and support improvements to performance.
- 4.8 Additionally, the service has made significant improvements to its complaint handling culture, live monthly data is reported to the Housing Leadership Team setting out the detail of every complaint that comes in, the issue, the timescales for completion, the outcome and any learning to be taken from the complaint. Complaints performance will also be reported to the new Housing and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee on a quarterly basis and to tenants, once the tenant involvement framework is developed.
- 4.9 Staff development is a crucial part of good complaints handling and a training audit and skills development matrix is being collated to ensure that all relevant housing staff have undertaken appropriate complaints handling training and have customer care skills.
- 4.10 Financially the service is strong; and whilst some of the savings are linked to the restructure it should be highlighted that the Council has a strong rent recovery process and arrears figures have consistently been ranked within top quartile across the year via the monthly Housemark benchmarking process.
- 4.11 The yearly outturn for the service was a surplus of £1,775k with the operating margin being 33% against a budgeted 28%. Debt repayments were made within the year as planned.
- 4.12 In terms of spend there was a significant underspend linked to staffing and management costs; again driven by the staffing restructure and streamlining of management structures. Ultimately this has led to a saving of £212k. Once other costs are factored in such as utilities and system / ICT costs a total underspend of £976k has been realised.
- 4.13 This underspend is offset slightly by overspends in relation to the repairs service, which has generated a new overspend of £175k. The areas witnessing the largest overspends include voids works which was over budget by £361k and general repair work which was over budget by £301k. To get to the net overspend position it is recognised that some salary costs have been reduced (£308k direct) and there has been a significant underspend of compensation payments. Over the next few years consolidated and costed standards will likely be introduced that should reduce overspends and budgets become more accurately profiled.
- 4.14 The overarching theme throughout the review is the need for Service Improvement and the final section in the review details the level and pace at which the service has introduced reforms for example to address complaints handling and health and safety compliance and the planned improvement activity it has identified to achieve full compliance with the Consumer Standards.

5.0 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN AND RESPONSES

- 5.1 In gathering the TSM data views were sought from customers via a multi-channel survey. Whilst this survey will support future decisions regarding the development of the HRA service it does not inform specific decision within this report.

6.0 CONTRIBUTION TO COUNCIL PRIORITIES

- 6.1 The housing review supports the following Council Plan priorities:
- Place and Environment
 - Good quality, affordable and sustainable housing that meets the needs of our communities
 - Organisation
 - Good quality, value for money services that are focussed and accessible to all
- 6.2 The self assessment will help demonstrate the ability of the housing stock and housing services to meet the needs of NYC's communities whilst also highlighting aspects of cost and quality of service.
- 6.3 The assessment will also serve as a compliance report; helping maintain reporting standards and ensuring regulatory bodies are informed as to the performance of NYC and therefore that it continues to meet the principles adopted by the authority through this first year of operating to be 'safe and legal'.

7.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 7.1 As a statutory requirement, options are limited. Given the nature of the returns and the requirement to make the information publicly available it has been decided that incorporating all items in one report will not only help customers to have a better understanding of the authorities performance in these areas; it would also support the regulator and ombudsman in understanding how the service is operating overall; supplemented by more detailed appendices documents that provide more in depth analysis and detail regarding compliance.

8.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are no financial implications attached to this report and members will not be expected to make financial decisions on its basis. Any financial considerations for improvements linked to the findings and analysis within this report will be presented through appropriate channels when required.

9.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 This report ensures compliance with the regulatory standards for housing alongside the requirements laid out by the Housing Ombudsman Service

10.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 Throughout the collation of the Tenant Satisfaction Measures consideration of equalities impacts has been at the forefront of the survey design and of the analysis of the results; including analysis of age and gender splits; alongside a multi-channel survey design which allows for a variety of mechanisms for customers to provide their feedback. The results mirror industry trends in terms of satisfaction levels between different demographic groups (i.e. older people being more satisfied etc). See Appendix G.

11.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 There are no climate change implications attached to this report. See Appendix H.

12.0 PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 The report focuses on performance issues. The TSM regulations require reporting of customer satisfaction alongside KPIs attached to compliance with safety requirements; whilst the complaints self-assessment details how the authority has managed customer complaints in terms of the timeliness of responding to customers; outcomes and Ombudsman determinations.

13.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 13.1 As identified one of the major challenges facing the service pertains to the alignment of services into one integrated service operating through clear and consistent policies and procedures. Through this work steps have been already taken to support this integration of policies and procedures; namely in relation to the management of complaints, however, there are further improvements that will be identified using the TSM results to support integration of policies and procedures across the housing service; in particular linked to the management of health and safety compliance, management of anti-social behaviour and neighbourhoods and the handling of repairs.

14.0 RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 14.1 This review identifies areas of improvement and non-compliance; consequently it will have a likely impact on both the reputation of the council and the performance of the service. It is hoped that by maintaining transparency through this process any reputational risks can be effectively managed by the authority being open and honest about its current status and the steps it hopes to take to improve.
- 14.2 In order to better manage the risks posed by the data challenges a number of initiatives have been introduced. The first is a 'Housing Improvement Framework' which will ensure sufficient oversight and scrutiny of performance and activity to align services and the second is a comprehensive action plan that ties all aspects of the identified improvement works together in a single location where dependencies, impacts and overlap can be accurately identified and managed.

15.0 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 15.1 Through the TSM survey customers have been asked for their views regarding how the authority handles ASB and if it has a positive impact on its communities. Results from both questions will likely overlap in to work around community safety and the service will continue to work with colleagues to develop appropriate solutions using this insight and intelligence as required.

16.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 16.1 This report and its appendices provide the first annual review into the performance of the housing service. Due to the challenges faced throughout the year it provides a clear rationale for the reason to self-refer to the regulator alongside an honest appraisal on the current service. Despite the challenges it has identified it does also highlight aspects of positive performance and outlines plans for further improvement. During the 23/24 financial year the team has worked tirelessly to bring the legacy services together and much of this work has focussed on establishing a consistent and clear baseline from which management decisions can be taken. It is expected that as the 2024/25 year progresses improvements should become far more noticeable for customers alongside generating far greater confidence from the regulator in regards to the improvement plans and their impact; especially in light of the strong financial position which will be carried into the new year.

17.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

17.1 This report details the end of year position for the landlord services as required under its regulatory requirements, as such the report and its associated appendices should be accepted as a true and accurate statement relating to the service and therefore should be published as required.

18.0 RECOMMENDATION(S)

18.1 It is recommended that the report be received and approval granted for submitting to the regulator and ombudsman as required.

18.2 The portfolio holder provides a written statement for inclusion in the report regarding the management of complaints and the end of year position; alongside expectations for 2024/25.

APPENDICES:

- Appendix A – Tenant Satisfaction Measures Report
- Appendix B – Complaints Self Assessment
- Appendix C – Complaints Policy
- Appendix D – Complaints Guidance for Staff
- Appendix E – Final Outturn Revenue Monitoring HRA
- Appendix F – Housing Review 2023/24
- Appendix G – Equality Impact Assessment
- Appendix H – Climate Change Impact Assessment

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

Nic Harne
Corporate Director – Community Development
County Hall
Northallerton
28/05/24

Report Author – *Richard Mair, Strategy and Performance Lead – Community Development*
Presenter of Report – *Andrew Rowe, Assistant Director (Housing)*

Note: Members are invited to contact the author in advance of the meeting with any detailed queries or questions.



North Yorkshire Council TSM Survey

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2023/24 Report
February 2023
Prepared by: Acuity Research & Practice



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Introduction

The aim of this survey was to provide data on tenants' satisfaction, which will allow NYC to:

- Provide information on tenants' perceptions of current services
- Act as a baseline to compare future surveys against
- Compare the results with other landlords (where appropriate)
- Report to the Regulator from April 2024 onwards.

The survey used a staged mixed-mode methodological approach. Firstly, those tenants with an email address were sent a link via email to complete the survey online. This was followed by a postal survey (one mailout) to a sample of non-respondents (50%; 3,615 tenants). Finally, a telephone booster survey was undertaken to capture the responses of up to 600 tenants who hadn't responded.

The fieldwork started at the end of October 2023 and eventually closed on 26 January 2024. The aim of the survey was to complete around 2,000 survey responses to exceed the required margin of error and to give as many tenants as possible the opportunity to respond to the survey.

At the close of the survey, 2,241 responses were achieved from the original tenant population of 8,329. Of these 1,046 were online, 600 by post and 595 by telephone interview. The responses were checked against the tenure, area and age of the tenants to ensure they fully represent the whole population, and it was found that there was very little variation, so no weighting has been applied to the results.

For the overall results, Acuity, Housemark and the Regulator of Social Housing recommend that landlords with under 10,000 properties achieve a sampling error of at least $\pm 4\%$ at the 95% confidence level. For North Yorkshire Council, 2,241 responses were received, and this response is high enough to conclude that the findings are accurate to within $\pm 1.8\%$, so well within the required margin and giving good accuracy of results, and these can be said to represent the views of the tenants as a whole.

The survey is confidential, and the results are sent back to NYC anonymised unless tenants give their permission to be identified – 91% of tenants did give permission to share their name and 89% of these tenants are happy for NYC to contact them to discuss any issues they raised.

The majority of figures throughout the report show the results as percentages. The percentages are rounded up or down from two decimal places in the results file to the nearest whole number, and for this reason, may not in all cases add up to 100%. Rounding can also cause percentages described in the supporting text to differ from the percentages in the charts by 1% when two percentages are added together.

North Yorkshire Council (NYC) own and manage around 8,300 properties in North Yorkshire, located across Harrogate, Selby and Richmond.

Acuity has been commissioned to undertake a one-off independent satisfaction survey of its tenants to collect data on their opinions of, and attitudes towards, their landlord and the services provided.

The survey was designed using the new Tenant Satisfaction Measures from the Regulator of Social Housing, which became mandatory to collect from April 2023 and are due to be reported for the first time later this year.



70%

Overall Satisfaction

Seven out of ten tenants are satisfied with the overall services provided by North Yorkshire Council (NYC).

This is among one of the highest satisfaction levels in the survey with just the provision of a safe home and the repairs service in the last 12 months above this at 73%.

However, some measures received satisfaction levels below 60%, these being the positive contribution made by NYC to the neighbourhood and how they listen to tenants' views and act upon them (both 55%), handling anti-social behaviour (50%) and just 29% are satisfied with the way complaints are handled.

As this is the first time the Council have used the new TSMs, the survey will act as a baseline to compare future surveys against.

Key Metrics Summary 2024



68% Well maintained home



50% Anti-social behaviour



73% Safe home



55% Listens & Acts



73% Repairs - Last 12 months



60% Keeps you informed



65% Time taken - Last repair



69% Treats fairly & with respect



61% Communal areas clean & well maintained



55% Positive contribution to neighbourhood



29% Complaints handling

National Context

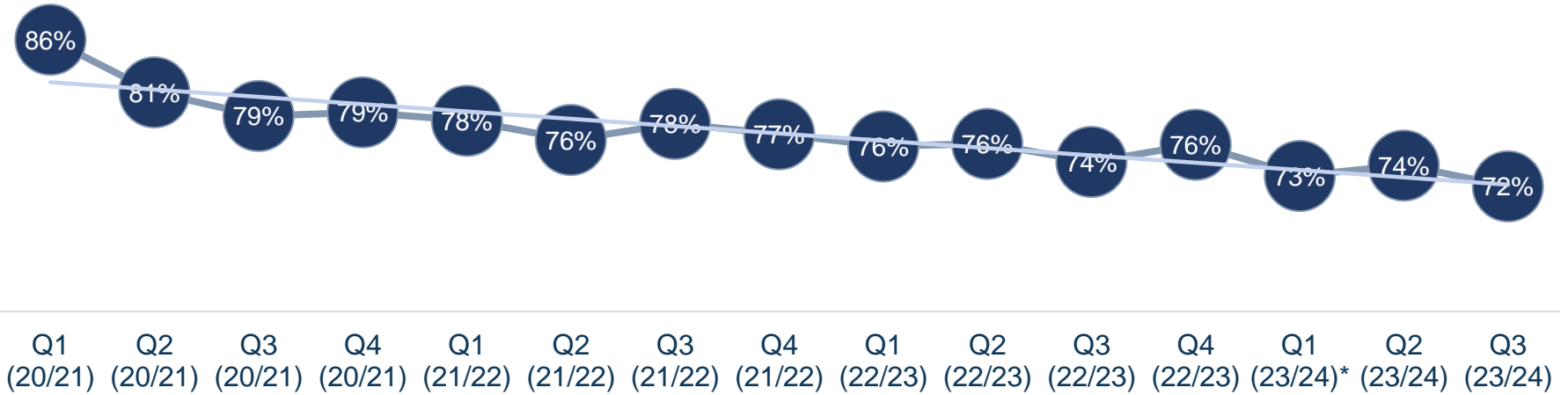
When considering the results, it is important that the national context and external factors should also be taken into account. For example:

- Cost of Living Crisis, rising poverty and reduced local authority funding
- Government & Political Changes
- Uncertainty about the Future
- Brexit and the economy

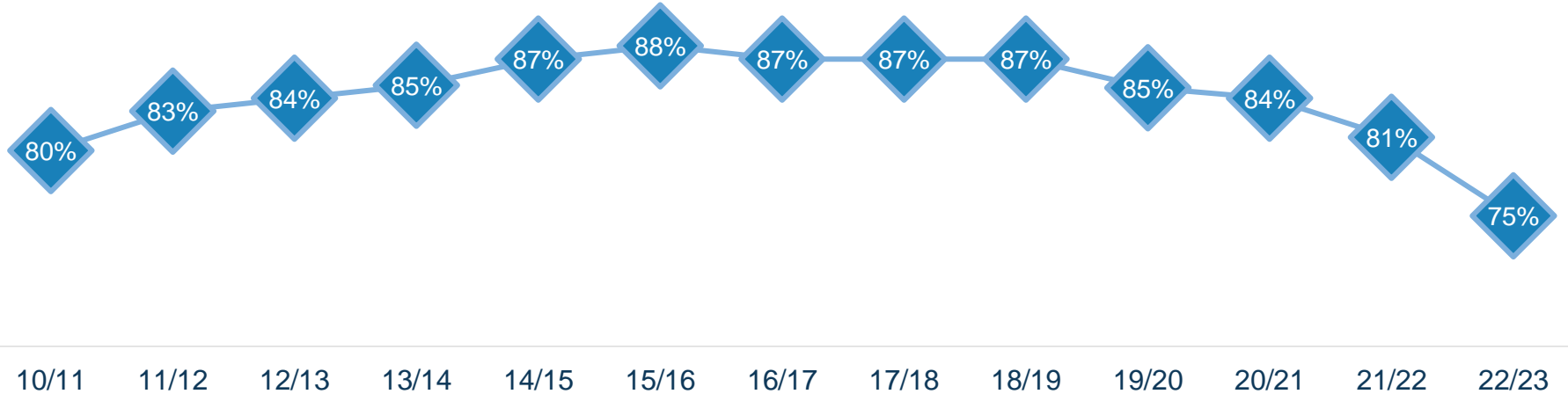
Satisfaction is based on perception rather than specific values so can be affected by these factors and how positive people feel about their lives. Factors such as the pandemic also altered the way social landlords operate, perhaps making them less accessible and responsive.

The top graph demonstrates how overall satisfaction has changed over time for Acuity's clients (tracker only). The trendline is downward over the last few years. The lower chart shows the results from Housemark members with a peak in 2015/16 and a slow decline since, this starting even before the disruption caused by the pandemic.

Overall Services (Acuity Clients)



Satisfaction with services provided (NHF/Housemark median - general needs)



*LCRA only onwards

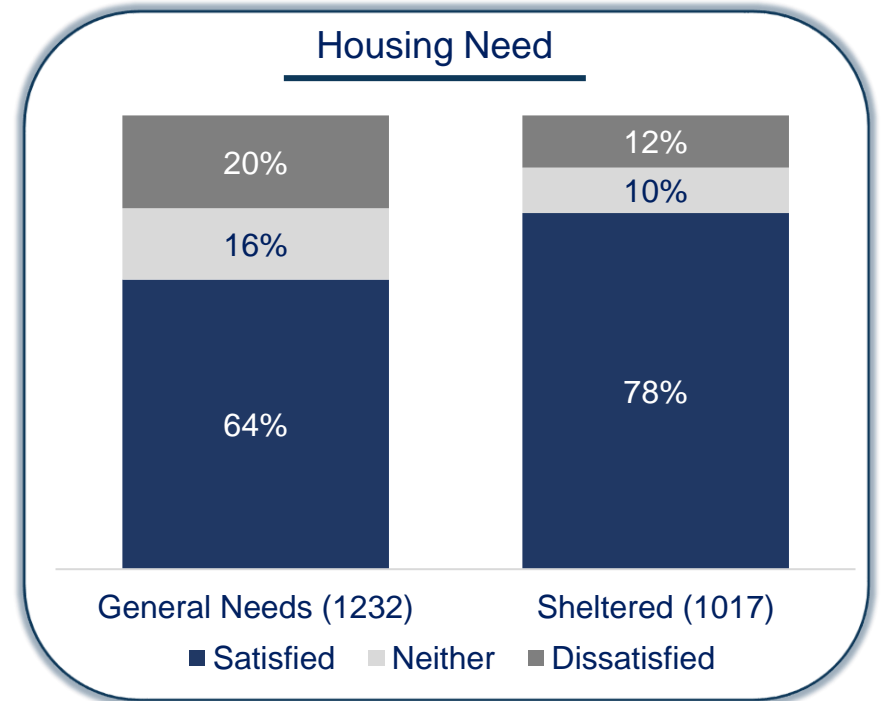
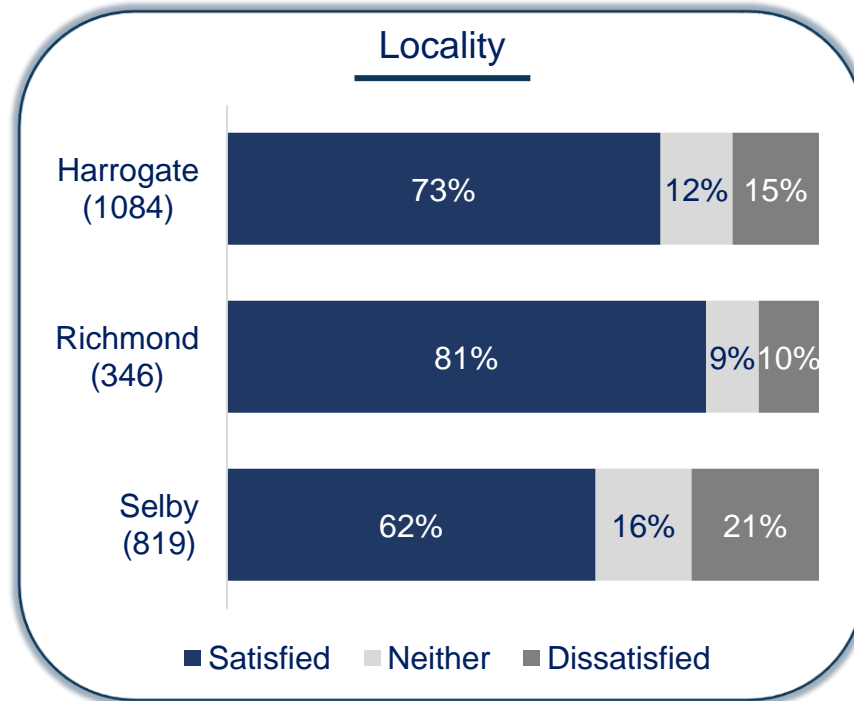
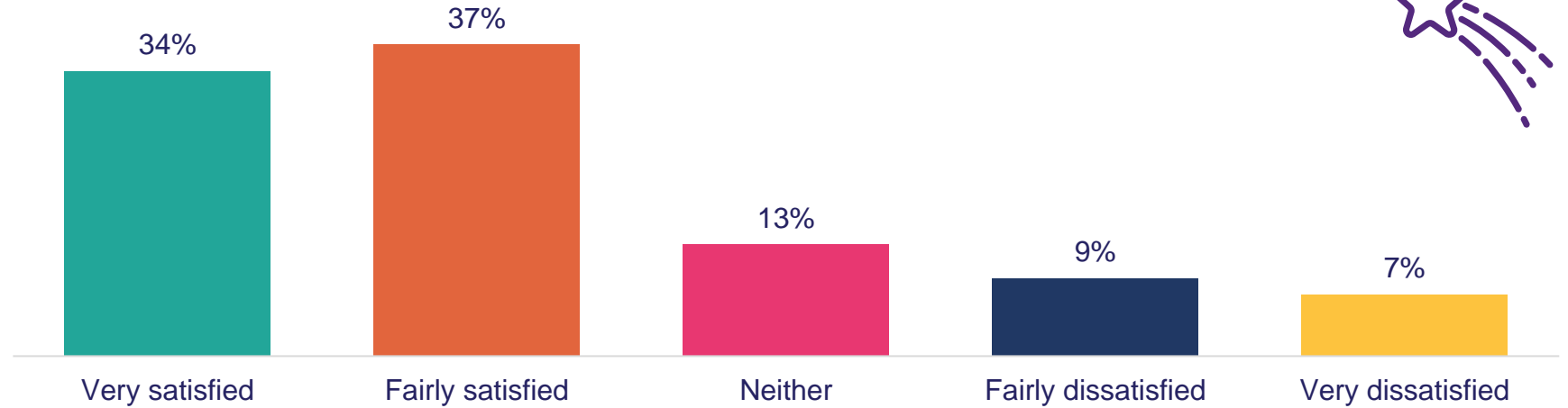


Overall Satisfaction





Overall Satisfaction



Firstly, tenants were asked, "Taking everything into account, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the service provided by North Yorkshire Council?" This is the key metric in any tenant perception survey.

Seven out of ten tenants are satisfied (70%), although fewer are very satisfied (34%), than fairly satisfied (37%). There are 16% of tenants dissatisfied, with the remaining 13% neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.

NYC operates over three main areas and the chart shows the levels of satisfaction from the tenants in these areas, the figures in the brackets show the number of respondents per area. This shows that those in Richmond are the most satisfied overall (81%), more than either those in Harrogate (73%) and especially in Selby (62%). Correspondingly, those in Selby are the most dissatisfied (21%).

It is common that sheltered tenants are more satisfied than their general needs counterparts, and this is the case with NYC, 78% compared with 64%.

The 'understanding satisfaction' section of this report, further analyses the results by a range of different groups, including age, gender and response method.



Keeping Properties in Good Repair



Keeping Properties in Good Repair

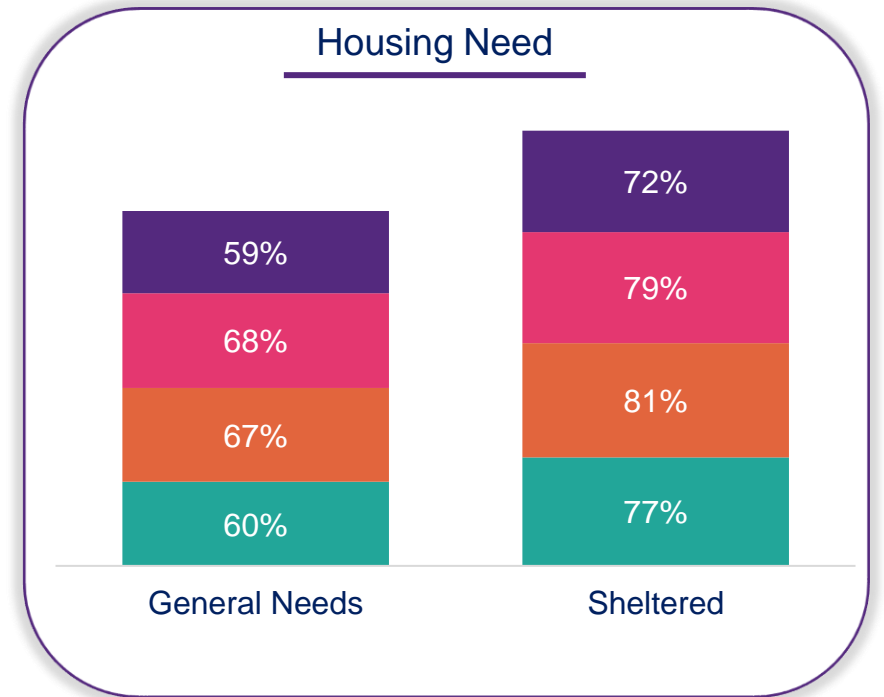
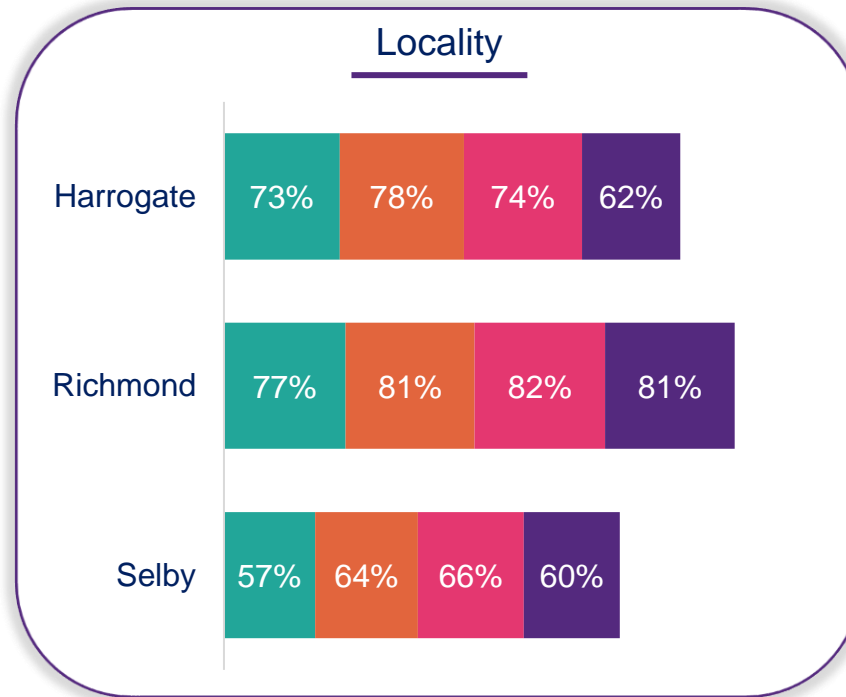
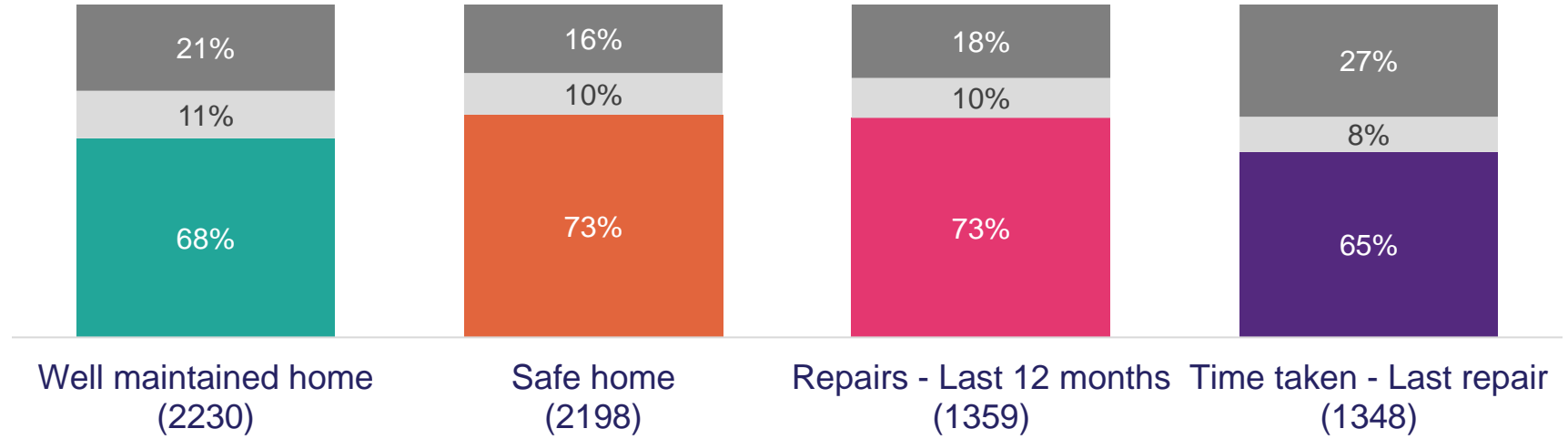
It is common in the TSM based surveys that tenants tend to be more satisfied with the safety of their home than its maintenance. This is the case here with 73% satisfied that NYC provides a home that is safe and 68% that it is well-maintained; 16% and 21% respectively are dissatisfied.

Again, it is those in Richmond who are a little more satisfied with their home than the other areas and sheltered tenants are also more satisfied than general needs tenants.

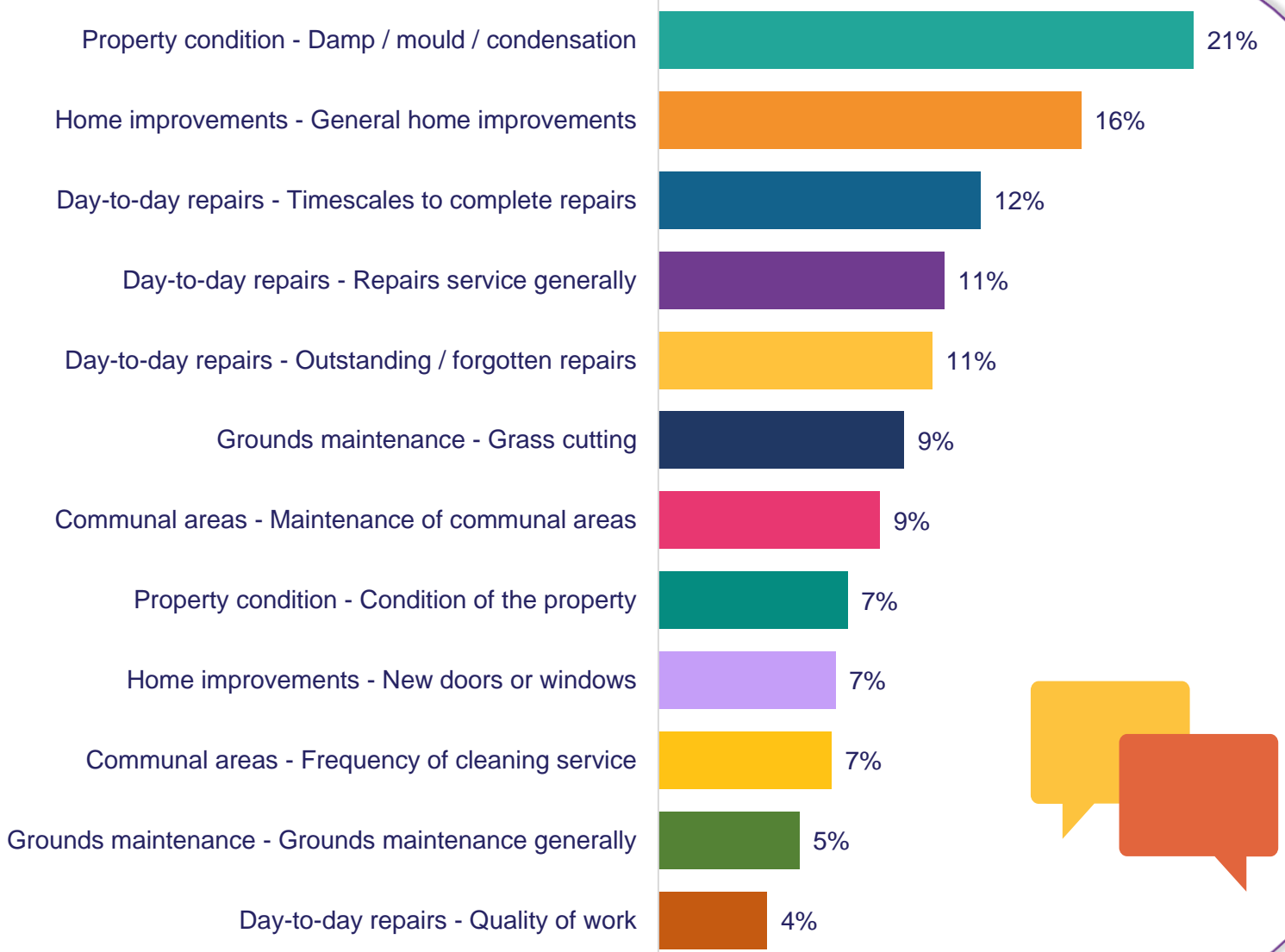
Just under two-thirds of tenants (64%) had a repair carried out by NYC in the last 12 months and of these 73% are satisfied with the service over that period, although 18% are dissatisfied.

Fewer tenants are satisfied with the time taken to complete the most recent repair (65%) and a quarter of tenants are dissatisfied with how long this takes. However, this is a common pattern with tenants of other landlords often less satisfied with the time taken than the overall repairs service.

Again, tenants in Richmond are the most satisfied with the repairs service, Selby tenants the least and there is also some difference between the sheltered and general needs tenants, a common theme throughout this report.



Comments – Home or Communal Areas



Tenants not satisfied with their homes or communal areas were asked to explain why and what could be done to improve this; 644 tenants gave comments, under a third of those responding, suggesting most are happy with their home and communal areas.

The main issue highlighted is damp and mould in the property, this amounting to a fifth of all the comments made. Clearly this is an issue for some and will need addressing as a matter of urgency.

Some tenants would like improvements to their home, whilst others highlight the repairs service, in particular the time to complete repairs and dealing with those repairs that remain outstanding or appear to have been forgotten.

The maintenance of the communal areas, both internally and externally also attracts a number of comments, tenants wanting better cleaning and grass cutting.

Overleaf includes examples of these comments which help to provide insight into what tenants feel about their home and the communal areas and should help NYC target those areas that may be in need of review or improvement.



Number of respondents: 644

Home or Communal Areas – Comments

Property condition

“My home’s damp. My front door leaks water and the carpets knackered as a result. Door was reported 3 months ago.”

“It is due to the severe damp in the home which I have reported numerous times as it is covered in mould. They have said they will come and treat it at the end of the month.”

“Damp, living room windowsill is coming away from the window, concrete coming down from window, draughty living room.”

“I had mould when I moved in, but they never came to treat it. I did it myself.”

“Still full of damp, windows seals gone, and cracks in all the new plaster. The council could do with fixing the issues reported several times, within a decent frame time.”

“All the roof is collapsing on the inside and there is no insulation.”

“We have Damp. A surveyor has been, but it was least year.”

“Damp The gaps around my windows.”

Home improvements

“The flats I live in are very old. All windows are dropping, and draft comes through all windows. It’s hard to keep warm in winter, and kitchen and bathroom are both outdated, they have been in over 20 years.”

“[I was] allocated a flat and was very grateful, but the void team and housing officers really need to up the standards. The wet room was disgraceful and not functioning. Flat dirty and walls bashed and skirtings also... I have a new bathroom now after a lot of stress. There are still holes in the walls, etc.”

“The building is full of paint falling off walls. Lino is in a disgusting state: large parts are missing, and it is overall unkept - embarrassing and dirty but impossible for tenants to keep on top as it needs repairs.”

“Heating could be better, we wanted to open the fireplace up to put in a log burner but were told no.”

“The place is a state. I need a new bathroom and there is mould everywhere I am very dissatisfied.”

Day-to-day repairs

“Still waiting for joiner to come out and repair cupboard under sink after one of the stop taps failed and caused the back board and side of cupboard to swell and warp.”

“Just got repairs that have been outstanding for ages, haven’t heard anything, no communication.”

“Do repairs when asked. Not done any repairs since reported – [it’s] gone past time given.”

“We had an issue with our front door, and I reported and reported it and it took over a year for someone to come and fix it and it still isn’t fixed adequately.”

“I have been waiting 10 years for a bathroom replacement, chasing up every few months to be told excuses. Asked to apply for new kitchen as only have one top cupboard and as per I hear nothing back!”

“Repairs are taking too long.”

“It seems to take a long time to get any issues fixed.”

Communal area maintenance

“Outside entrance could be painted more often/ I have been here 6 years and no painting.”

“They are well maintained but not clean. They never get cleaned.”

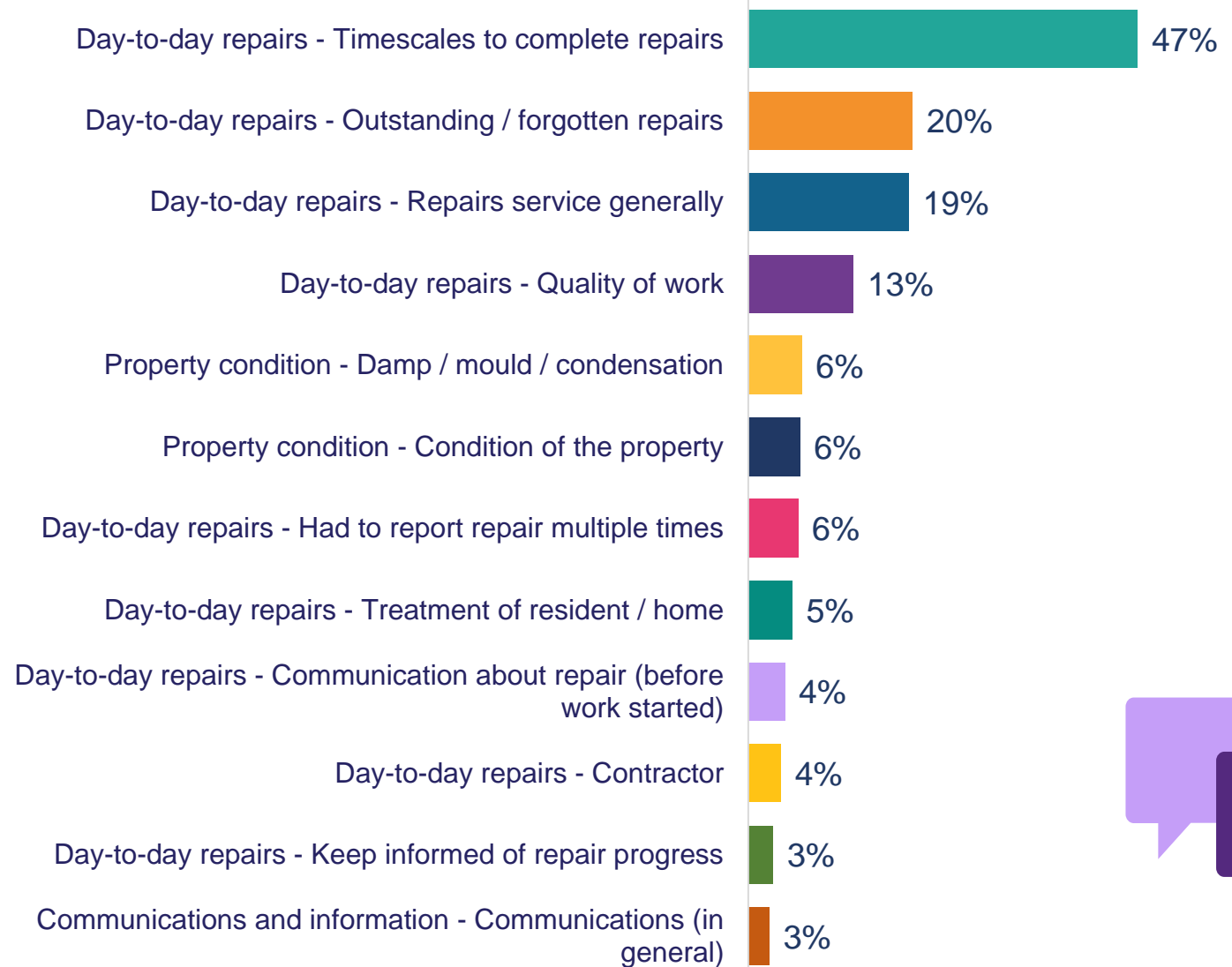
“Whether or not there is rubbish blown in or been dropped on the grass, it’s either left and cut up when the grass has been cut or the residents have collected it regardless of if it’s anything to do with them or not.”

“Grass cutting service now poor. No pride taken by those providing this service, just get it done as quickly as possible with least effort.”

“The council does not keep the communal areas clean in our flats, it is down to the tenants. The Council would do well to inspect the communal areas regularly regarding maintenance.”

“They don’t clean up leaves from the trees that they refuse to prune. There are always excuses as to why they can’t make proper repairs.”

Comments – Dissatisfaction with Repairs



Number of respondents: 438

Tenants not satisfied with the repairs and maintenance service were asked to provide more information and what could be improved, and 438 tenants gave comments.

Tenants most frequently referred to outstanding or forgotten repairs and the timescales to complete repairs. These are also common areas of concern for other social landlords, which is partly due to landlords still trying to catch up after the pandemic, as well as being faced with issues around increased costs and shortages of labour and materials. In addition, expectations about times to complete work can be high and difficult to match. We now live in a society where items can be ordered and delivered the next day, but it is virtually impossible to operate a repair service on this basis.

Therefore, it is vital that North Yorkshire Council keeps tenants clearly informed about repair schedules and how long they can expect to wait, with updates if this changes.

Tenants also commented upon the quality of repair work, and reporting issues, whilst others again mentioned problems with damp and mould in their homes.

Overleaf are examples of these to help better understand the issues that some tenants face.



Dissatisfaction with Repairs – Comments

Day-to-day repairs - Timescales to complete repairs

“Waited for over 6 months for windows and doors to be replaced after they had all blown and still waiting for joiner to repair cupboard under sink after leak.”

“Time between reporting & actual repair is not acceptable. Kitchen tap leaking. Shall I send water bill to council?”

“The waiting time was too long for them to come out.”

“The time of executing repairs after a report is made which is not satisfactory. We still have issues which have not been attended to for some years.”

“Told 6 week as it’s not an emergency. Fixed it I think, 3 weeks later but left with soaking wet floors. Still can’t use the room.”

“Satisfied that our heating was repaired quickly but not with the long wait to replace our front door.”

“it’s the waiting times for repairs that we’re not happy with.”

“Communication and time it takes to carry out repairs.”

Day-to-day repairs - Outstanding / forgotten repairs

“I have mould in the bathroom. It took 5 months for someone to come. Said they would post out a treatment for the walls. I am still waiting 3 months now. Nothing received.”

“We have quite a lot of outstanding repairs.”

“I have been waiting over a year for a fan which has been reported 2 possibly 3 times, extraction for the bathroom, which is causing damp.”

“Continuous fault with my boiler and some repairs still not rectified.”

“We reported our chimney pot about 2 years ago and were told it would be a year before it was done but still hasn’t been done.”

“I reported my windows in March 2023, a joiner came to measure up for replacement units. I am still waiting for this work to be done!”

“Sure, maintenance came to my flat, I was out, phoned up and they said they would send me a new appointment - that was 7 to 8 months ago.”

Property condition

“If it’s mould/damp related, it should be a high priority as it’s a health hazard. I had to report it numerous times before it got dealt with.”

“It’s a difficult problem, I moved in during lockdown, so they didn’t examine it properly, [or] they would’ve noticed tiles missing. They couldn’t replace them, so they skinned it, I paid to get it done properly. It should’ve been done properly or replaced totally but they just left it in a right mess.”

“I have black mould in my bedroom [that] seems to be forgotten. As a disabled pensioner too, it’s imperative for my health.”

“Badly needs painting, gutters leaking. Mortar on eaves broken off.”

“Broken drain in bathroom. Still leaking bedroom next to bathroom is very damp & clothes are mouldy. Waiting for a follow up to this.”

“Front door needing to be adjusted as it wasn’t properly fitted and still having draughts & wind whistling through gaps.”

Day-to-day repairs – Other issues

“Finishing the job properly and cleaning up after themselves.”

“They haven’t completed the jobs properly or haven’t even done them.”

“The communication about repairs is unacceptable. A repair request is confirmed via email ... then? Nothing until someone appears on one’s doorstep... more than once I’ve been out when someone’s called.... what a waste of time and resources. Just a text or email with time, etc., would be appreciated.”

“Extremely difficult to get through on the phone to report fault on central heating boiler. Three repair men came. Very pleasant but still have the problem with the cut-out button. I am 93 still have a problem with the boiler and can’t face the thought of ringing through to sort it out. Horrendous.”

“Actually carry out the correct repair and stop being so tight on the purse strings to ensure tenants get the correct repair.”

“Have more pride in the finish of the work.”



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Responsible Neighbourhood Management



Responsible Neighbourhood Management

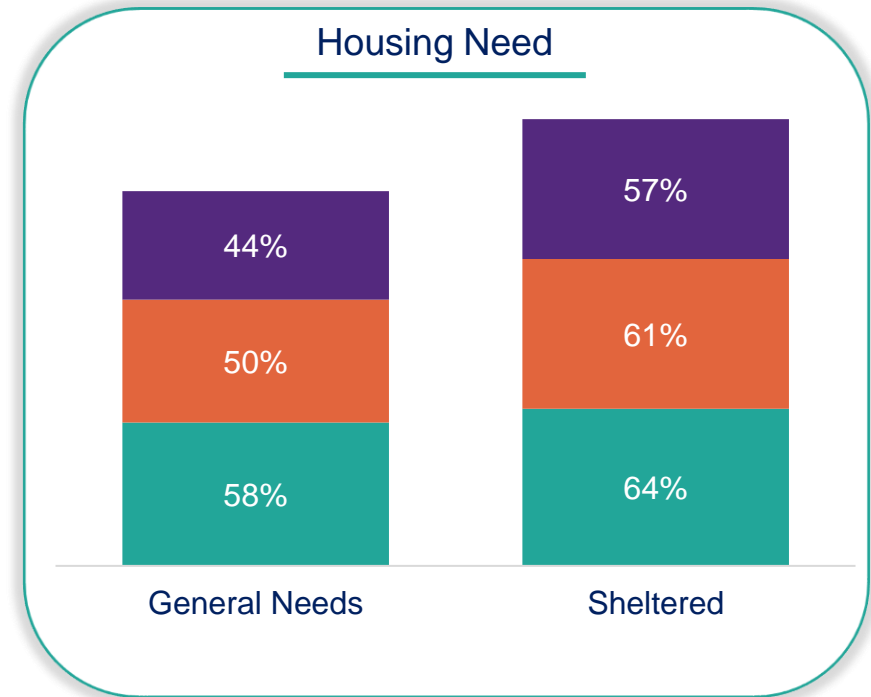
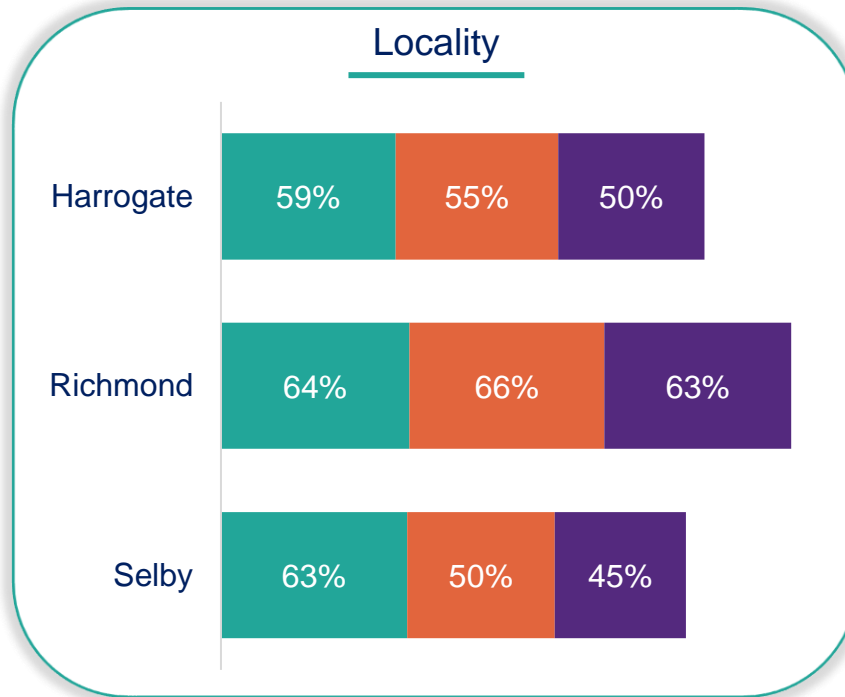
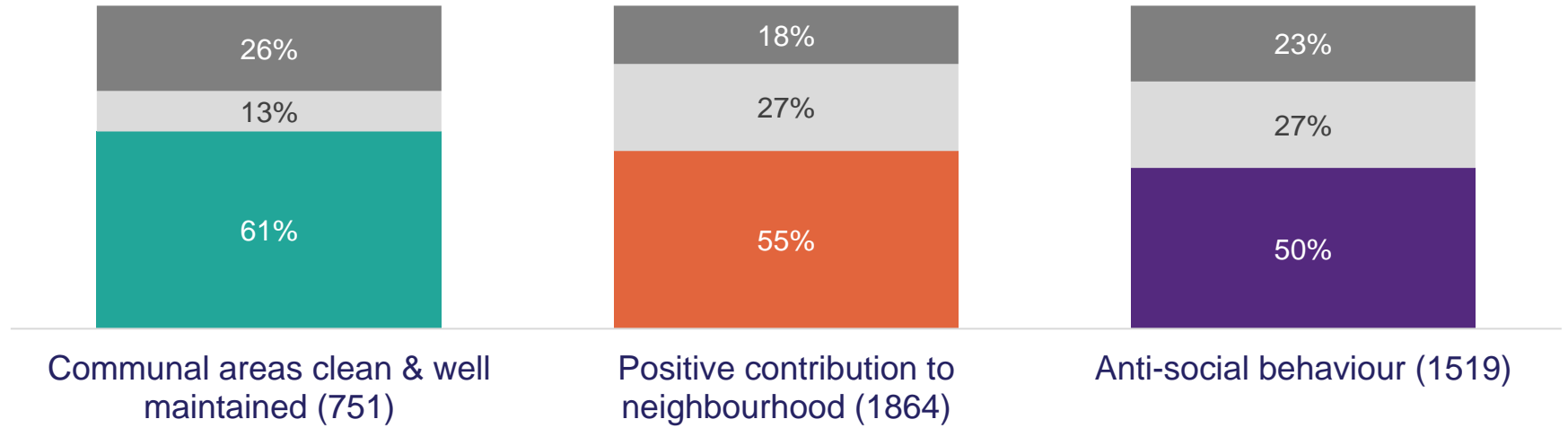
Over a third of tenants stated that they live in a building with communal areas that North Yorkshire Council is responsible for maintaining (37%). Of these tenants, 61% are satisfied with the cleaning and maintenance of their communal areas, although a quarter are dissatisfied.

Slightly fewer tenants are satisfied with the positive contribution NYC makes to their neighbourhood (55%). However, dissatisfaction is at 18%, with 27% neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. This may partly be due to a lack of visibility and awareness; maybe the Council could do more to communicate and promote the impact it has in the area.

Half the tenants are satisfied with the handling of anti-social behaviour (50%), there are 23% dissatisfied, although, again, a significant number of tenants gave a neutral response (27%).

There is little between the areas in terms of their satisfaction with the upkeep of the communal areas, Richmond tenants marginally the more satisfied. However, tenants here are more satisfied than the other areas with the contribution to the neighbourhood and how ASB is dealt with.

Sheltered tenants are consistently more satisfied than those in the general needs properties.





Respectful & Helpful Engagement



Respectful & Helpful Engagement

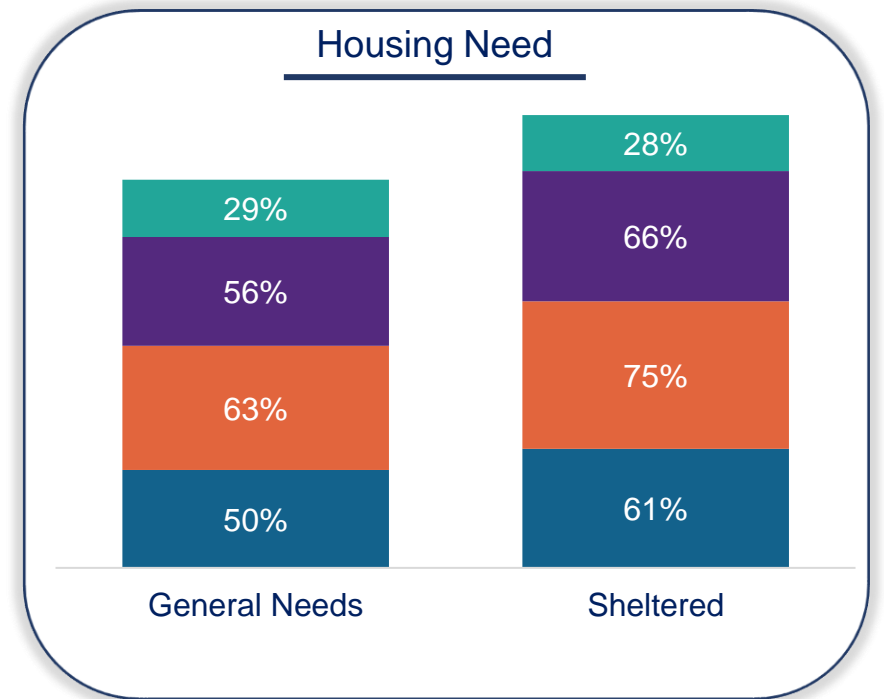
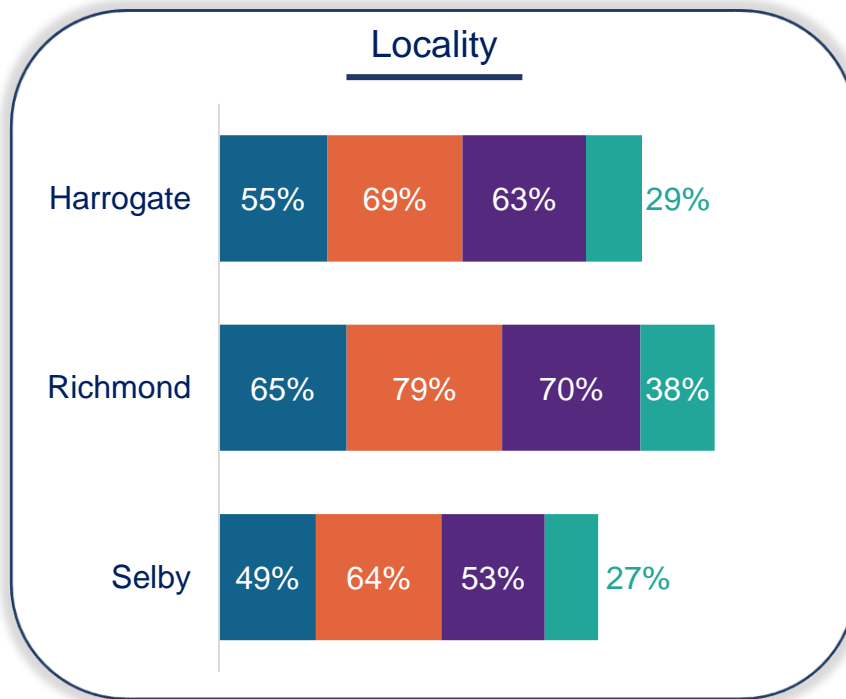
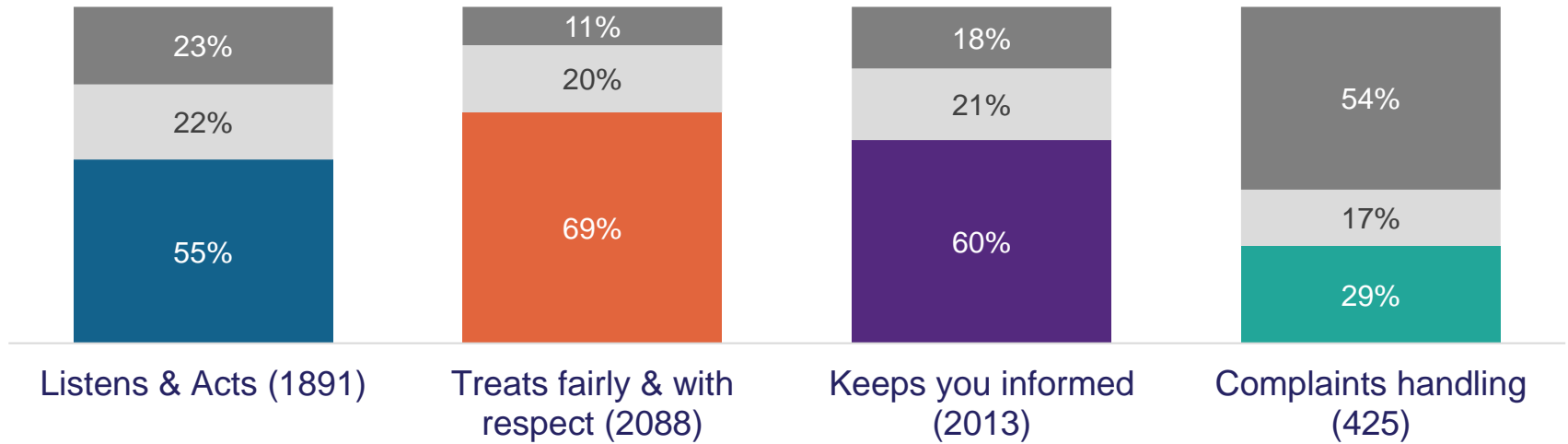
Six out of ten tenants are satisfied that NYC keeps them informed about things that matter to them, but fewer are satisfied than the Council listens to their views and acts upon them (55%), with almost a quarter dissatisfied.

Around a fifth of tenants are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with each of these measures. It is likely that, with targeted service improvements, these groups would be receptive and likely to move into the satisfied category.

Positively, more tenants feel they are treated fairly and with respect (69%), with just 11% being dissatisfied in this area.

A fifth of tenants (21%) said they had made a complaint to NYC in the last 12 months, but it is not clear how many of these are genuine complaints following a failure of service, or service requests yet to be fully actioned. Nevertheless, just 29% of tenants are satisfied with the handling of their complaint with almost twice as many dissatisfied (54%). Dissatisfaction for this measure commonly outweighs satisfaction, and it is likely that this has to do with more than just how complaints are handled.

Again, Richmond sheltered tenants are the most satisfied.



Comments – Customer Service & Communications

Tenants who stated that they are not satisfied with customer service and communications were asked to provide more information and what North Yorkshire Council could improve; 458 tenants gave comments.

A quarter of comments are about communications and improvements in general, which is mostly around a lack of communication: *“We never hear from them at all”, “There is a lack of communication and organisation”*. One tenant mentioned that they felt *“neglected and very much forgotten about.”* Other tenants highlight having issues getting through on phones, while others raise issues with accessibility: *“Website [is] difficult. Little other communication avenues for many without access to internet or smartphones”*.

Also, some would like the staff to show them a little more care, empathy and support when they make contact.

Issues with repairs are also mentioned again together with call management, complaint handling and listening more carefully to tenants’ concerns and keeping tenants more up-to-date.



Communications and information - Communications (in general)



Customer services & contact - Care, empathy, support etc



Day-to-day repairs - Repairs service generally



Day-to-day repairs - Outstanding / forgotten repairs



Other - No comment/suggestions



Day-to-day repairs - Timescales to complete repairs



Customer services & contact - Complaints handling



Communications and information - Keep tenants up to date



Other - General negative comment



Property condition - Damp / mould / condensation



Communications and information - Listen carefully, take interest



Customer services & contact - Return call / email



Number of respondents: 458



Customer Service & Communications – Comments

Communications & information

"I've had no support or help since I moved even when I've asked for it."

"I do not hear for them, not even a newsletter, nothing about what is going on."

"Everyone here in this complex feels we are very neglected and very much forgotten about . It would be nice to be acknowledged and occasionally see a face from the Council."

"It is incredibly hard to get in touch when you cannot go online. Always seem to have one department blaming another when there seems to be little inter-departmental communication."

"...I have never met my housing officer; nobody was with me when I viewed the flat. Had a short chat with housing officer over the phone then informed her about various issues in the flat but was totally ignored."

"Make it easier to report things. It took me a long time and it is very difficult to get through on the telephone and impossible online. Website is very difficult to navigate since things have been changed / merged."

Customer service & contact

"... to ring for anything, [it] takes a long time waiting on the phone then once you're through you are asked what area you live in, you are put through to Harrogate. Why on earth we can't just ring the old number is ridiculous. I have been on hold for 5 minutes to 40 minutes – why?!"

"My housing officer is rude, aggressive and condescending. She seems to enjoy belittling people for living in Council properties."

"Respect the fact that good people get overlooked which creates distress and struggle in one's life!"

"For people to not be so harsh when they speak to you, when you ask a few times about a job that needs seeing to, they seem to look down on you."

"Have had many issues with the Council over this last year. Felt very lied to and treated unfairly. Felt like I was not valued or looked after very well at all."

"They simply just don't care."

Day-to-day repairs

"We have reported the same repair and have to report it again to get an answer to when it is going to get done."

"They could attend when they say and return calls."

"Sometimes they don't tell me that a job is being done."

"I had a gas safety check done recently and the young lad that came to do it was rude, weird and horrible. He was aggressive about my dogs (which were safely out of the way) and that if I didn't let him in he would report me. Quite unnecessary behaviour. I called the Council about this experience and was told there was nothing they could do about it because it was another company doing the checks."

"They did not tell me they were putting up scaffolding and they do not tell me when the repair to my roof will be done."

"They need to stop lying to people and tell them when they are coming out for repairs."

"Listen to repairs that need doing."

Other matters

"I can't really say as I [don't] get much communication from the Council, but on the whole the customer service I have received has been pleasant and respectful."

"When contacting the Council about repairs or the repairmen sent, they were polite in dealing with me."

"Rural areas seem to be low priority as far as maintenance is concerned."

"I have been waiting for a back fence to be attending too for a long time it's losing pieces off and it's on a communal path where children go to school the council have been informed, I live in a pension bungalow."

"My kitchen is falling apart, and my floor tiles have been down forever. I reported a kitchen cupboard had fallen in June, still not on, my tiles are not even the same colour."

"Keeping council property homes updated. The people who look after their home appear to receive no help."



Understanding Satisfaction



Satisfaction & Dissatisfaction

The charts opposite show both the levels of satisfaction and dissatisfaction with the range of services provided.

Sometimes where satisfaction is low, the remaining tenants can be split between those who fall into the neutral middle ground and those who are actually dissatisfied. This difference can signal areas where tenants do not have strong opinions or areas where a high percentage of tenants are actually dissatisfied.

For NYC, satisfaction is highest for the home being safe and the recent repairs service, whilst overall satisfaction is towards the top of the range of measures.

At the other end of the scale is listening to tenants' views, handling ASB and complaints, which are typically the lowest performing metrics.

Correspondingly, the most dissatisfaction is for the way complaints are handled.

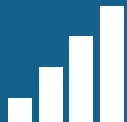
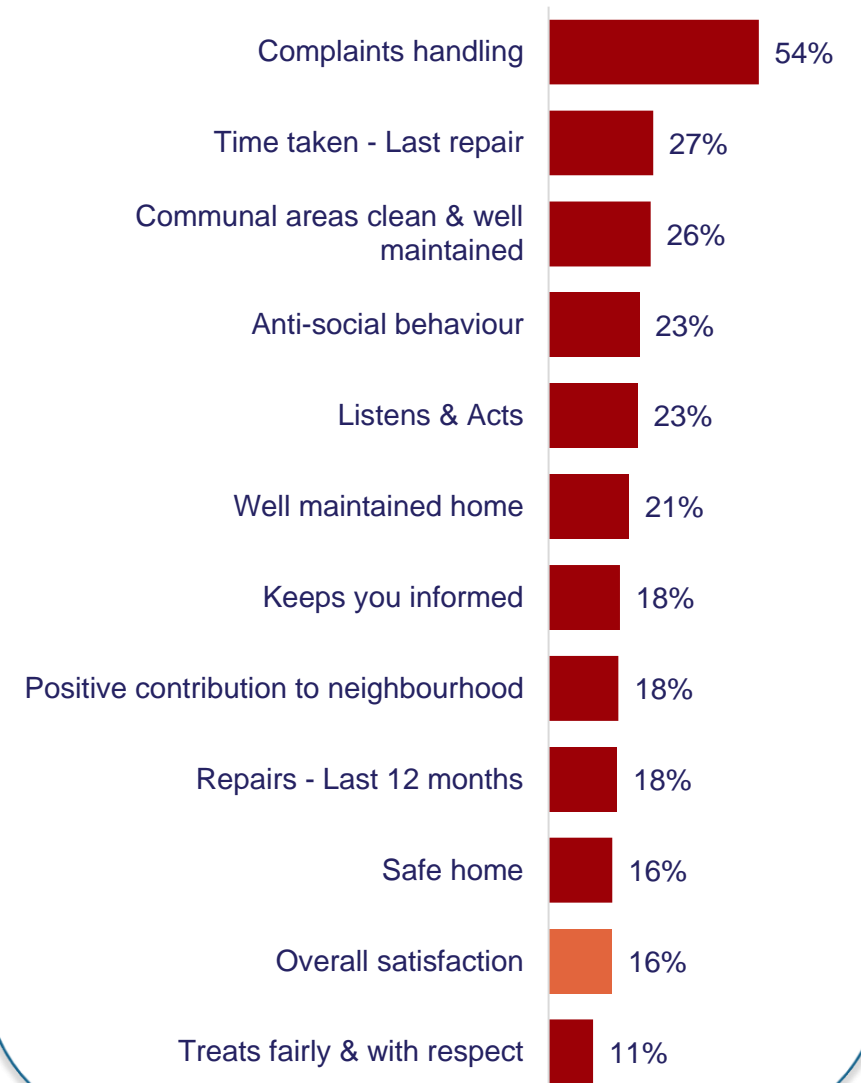
However, dissatisfaction is next highest for the time taken to complete repairs and the upkeep of the communal areas.

As is commonly found, the metrics that drew the highest number of tenants in the neutral category (neither satisfied nor dissatisfied) were ASB handling and the positive contribution NYC make to the neighbourhood, both 27%.

Satisfaction with measures 2024



Dissatisfaction with measures 2024





Combined Comments

As shown above, the survey included three questions giving the tenants the opportunity to expand on their responses and explain why they might be dissatisfied with their homes and communal areas, the repairs service and customer service and communications. This chart combines these to show the most commented upon areas.

In line with many other landlords, the majority of comments refer to issues with the repairs service – in particular, the time it takes to complete repairs and dealing with outstanding and forgotten repairs.

The second most common area is around problems with the condition of their home, which centre largely on damp and mould issues. Others want better communications from NYC and improvements to their homes.

The upkeep of the communal areas could also be improved according to some, particularly the cleaning of communal areas and the grass cutting.

These comments are important in setting out areas which could be improved, but it shouldn't be forgotten that these questions are aimed at those not satisfied with the service and many didn't respond, perhaps suggesting that they are happy with the way things are.



Top Comment Areas

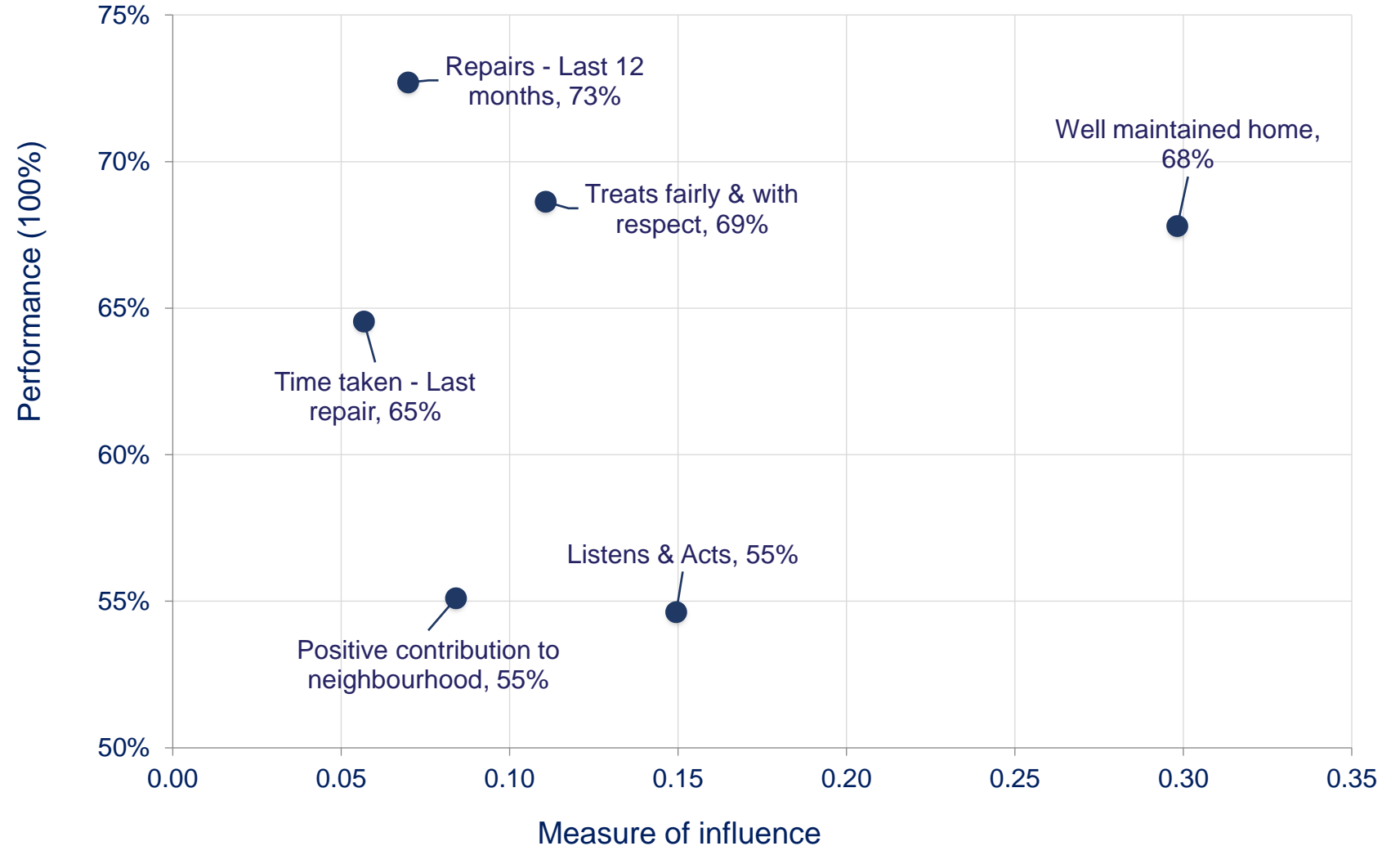
Day-to-day repairs	48%
Property condition	19%
Home improvements	14%
Communications and information	13%
Customer services & contact	9%
Grounds maintenance	9%
Communal areas	6%
No comment / don't know	4%
Tenant services and management	4%
Neighbourhood problems	4%
Safety and security	2%

Hot Topics

Day-to-day repairs - Timescales to complete repairs	20%
Day-to-day repairs - Repairs service generally	12%
Day-to-day repairs - Outstanding / forgotten repairs	12%
Property condition - Damp / mould / condensation	11%
Communications and information - Communications (in general)	9%
Home improvements - General home improvements	8%
Property condition - Condition of the property	6%
Day-to-day repairs - Quality of work	6%
Grounds maintenance - Grass cutting	4%
Home improvements - New doors or windows	4%
Communal areas - Maintenance of communal areas	4%
Day-to-day repairs - Had to report repair multiple times	3%
Customer services & contact - Care, empathy, support etc	3%

Key Driver Analysis

Key Driver Analysis – Overall Satisfaction



Key driver analysis is used to examine the relationship between the different variables (the questions asked in the survey) and determine which elements of the service are the key drivers for tenants' overall satisfaction.

Each landlord produces a unique pattern of influence and for NYC the most important driver for tenants' satisfaction with the overall services is that the Council provides a well-maintained home; This ties in with comments which often refer to property condition and repairs.

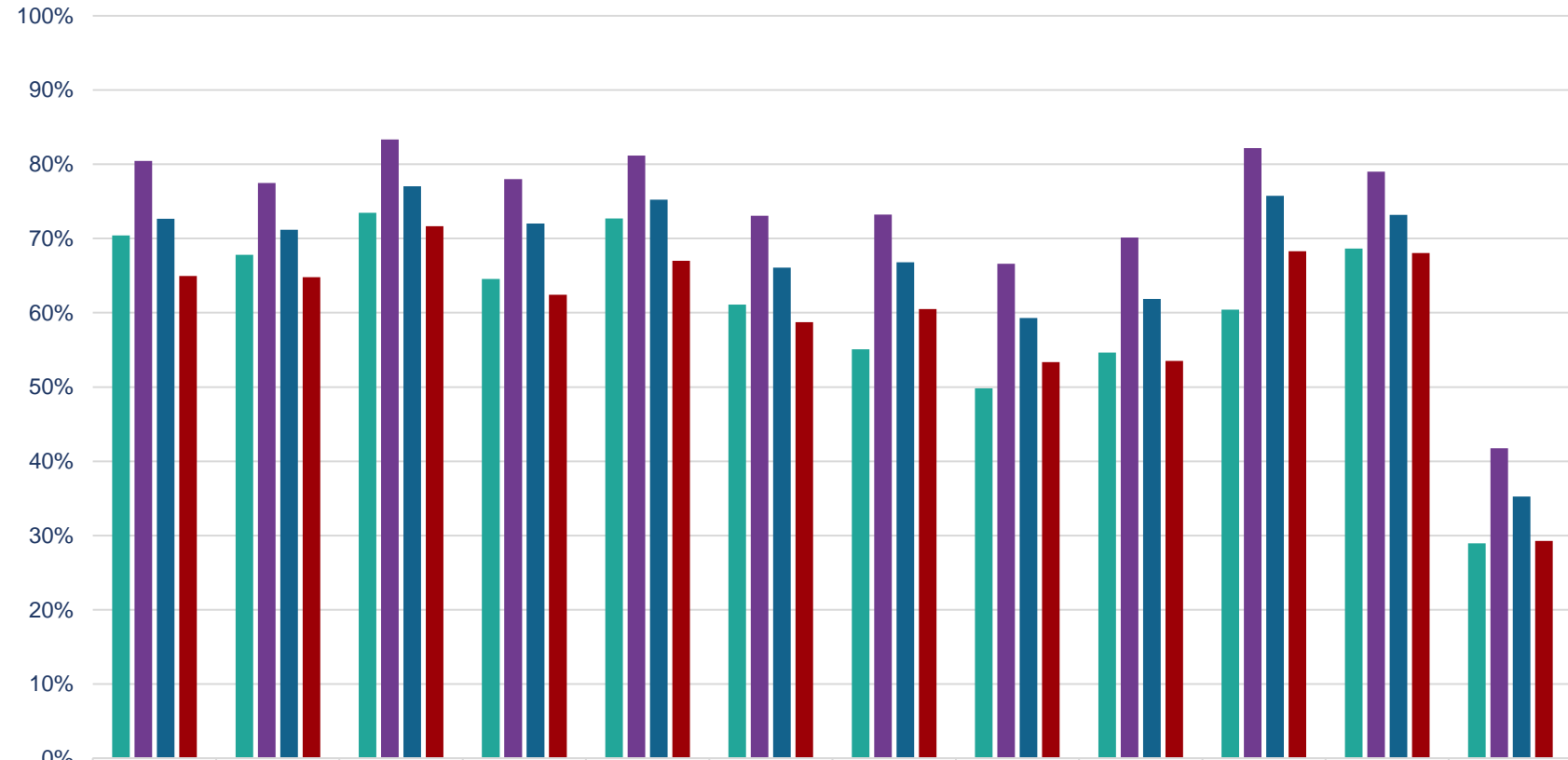
Also of importance, but slightly less influential, is the way the Council listens to tenants' views and acts upon them, treats tenants fairly and with respect, makes a positive contribution to the neighbourhood, the recent repairs service and the time to complete repairs.

The implication of this analysis is that if improvements around the most influential measures can be achieved, it is more likely to lead to increased satisfaction with the overall services provided.



Benchmarking – Acuity Clients (LCRA)

Satisfaction Levels Acuity Median Q1 – Q3 23/24



	Overall satisfaction	Well maintained home	Safe home	Time taken - Last repair	Repairs - Last 12 months	Communal areas clean & well maintained	Positive contribution to neighbourhood	Anti-social behaviour	Listens & Acts	Keeps you informed	Treats fairly & with respect	Complaints handling
■ NYC	70%	68%	73%	65%	73%	61%	55%	50%	55%	60%	69%	29%
■ Upper Quartile	80%	77%	83%	78%	81%	73%	73%	67%	70%	82%	79%	42%
■ Acuity Median	73%	71%	77%	72%	75%	66%	67%	59%	62%	76%	73%	35%
■ Lower Quartile	65%	65%	72%	62%	67%	59%	60%	53%	53%	68%	68%	29%
Quartile Position	3	3	3	3	3	3	4	4	3	4	3	4
Number of Landlords	101	92	93	93	93	92	92	99	100	92	94	93

It is possible to compare performance on the core questions against Acuity clients that have been using the new TSM questions during the past year. The chart to the right shows quartile positions based on the results collected from Q1 to Q3 2023/24.

All of North Yorkshire Council's ratings are below the median, with eight in the third quartile, including overall satisfaction, and the remaining four measures in the lower quartile.

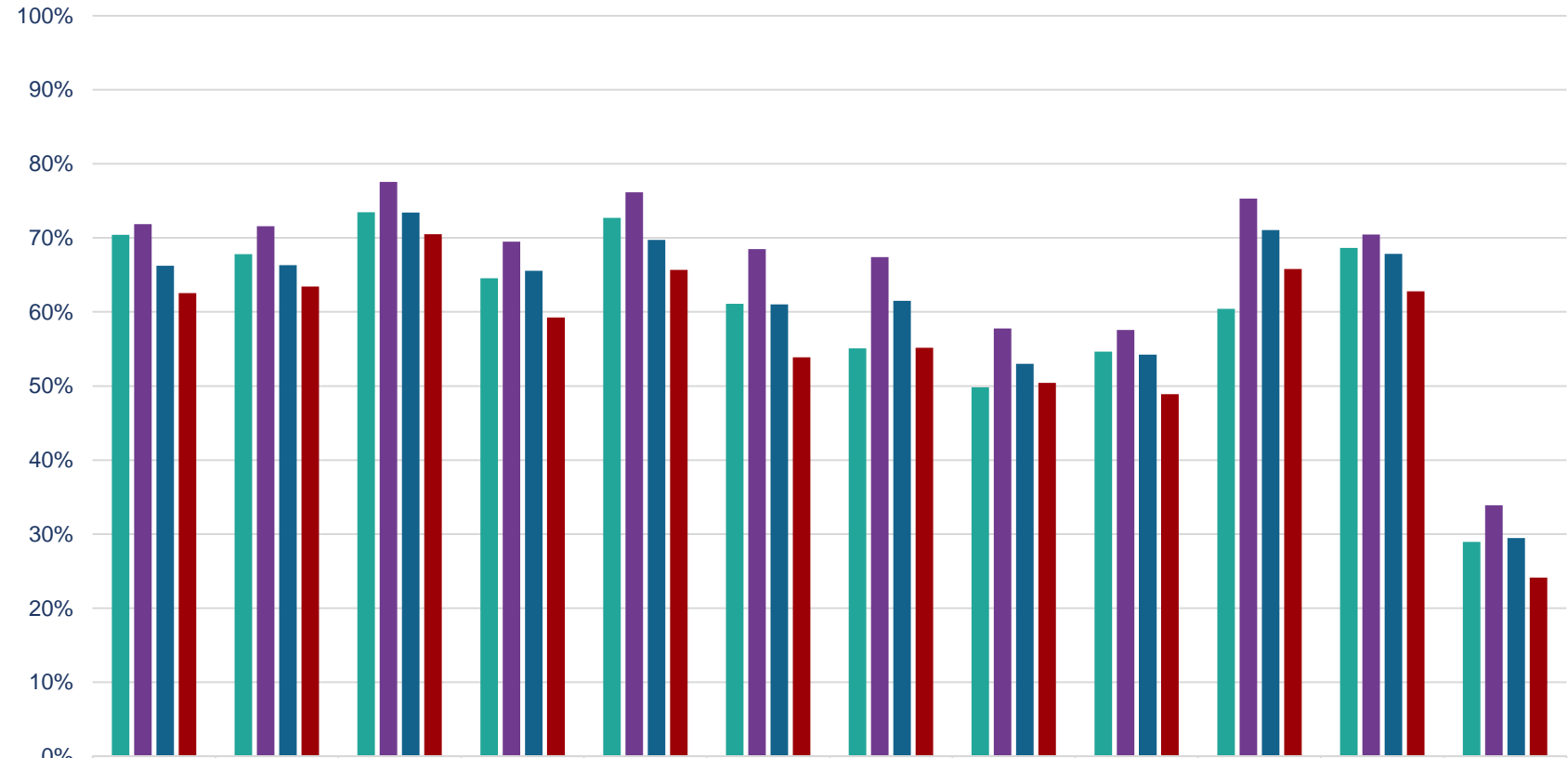
It should be noted, however, that this cohort of landlords varies in type, size and location so will not be directly similar to the characteristics of NYC. However, this does help to give some context to the results.

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Benchmarking – Acuity Clients (LCRA - Councils)

Satisfaction Levels Acuity Median Q1 – Q3 23/24



	Overall satisfaction	Well maintained home	Safe home	Time taken - Last repair	Repairs - Last 12 months	Communal areas clean & well maintained	Positive contribution to neighbourhood	Anti-social behaviour	Listens & Acts	Keeps you informed	Treats fairly & with respect	Complaints handling
■ NYC	70%	68%	73%	65%	73%	61%	55%	50%	55%	60%	69%	29%
■ Upper Quartile	72%	72%	78%	69%	76%	69%	67%	58%	58%	75%	70%	34%
■ Acuity Median	66%	66%	73%	66%	70%	61%	62%	53%	54%	71%	68%	29%
■ Lower Quartile	63%	63%	70%	59%	66%	54%	55%	50%	49%	66%	63%	24%
Quartile Position	2	2	2	3	2	2	4	4	2	4	2	3
Number of Landlords	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26

When compared against other councils that have used the TSMs in the past year, the NYC results fare better, with seven of the measures above the medians for the group and in the second quartile; this includes overall satisfaction which is 4% above the median and just 2% below the upper quartile mark.

However, five measures are below the medians with two in the third quartile and three in the lower quartile, these being the contribution to the neighbourhood, how the Council keeps tenants informed and how it handles ASB.

This year, all landlords will be required to publish their TSM results, which will create a large bank of information to allow for more accurate benchmarking.



Housing Need

	General Needs	Sheltered
Overall satisfaction	64%	78%
Well maintained home	60%	77%
Safe home	67%	81%
Repairs - Last 12 months	68%	79%
Time taken - Last repair	59%	72%
Communal areas clean & well maintained	58%	64%
Positive contribution to neighbourhood	50%	61%
Anti-social behaviour	44%	57%
Listens & Acts	50%	61%
Keeps you informed	56%	66%
Treats fairly & with respect	63%	75%
Complaints handling	29%	28%

Base: General Needs = 1,328, Sheltered = 1,022

It is common in surveys of this type that older people, and those in sheltered accommodation, are more satisfied than their general needs counterparts. This is the case with North Yorkshire Council.

In fact, sheltered tenants are more satisfied on all but one of these measures, the only exception is the handling of complaints where the general needs tenants are marginally more satisfied. A slightly higher proportion of general needs tenants, however, reported that they had made a complaint in the last 12 months – 23% of general needs tenants and 17% of sheltered tenants.

The differences are quite large on some measures, 14% on the overall services, 17% with the maintenance of the home, 11% with the repairs service in the last 12 months and 13% with the time to complete repairs. The average difference is 11%.



Age Group

	0 - 24	25 - 34	35 - 44	45 - 54	55 - 64	65 - 74	75 - 84	85+
Overall satisfaction	71%	62%	56%	63%	69%	77%	80%	83%
Well maintained home	60%	57%	49%	60%	69%	75%	78%	85%
Safe home	60%	65%	56%	68%	75%	78%	83%	92%
Repairs - Last 12 months	63%	69%	61%	66%	74%	73%	84%	92%
Time taken - Last repair	73%	58%	50%	56%	66%	69%	73%	82%
Communal areas clean & well maintained	69%	64%	46%	60%	62%	61%	68%	64%
Positive contribution to neighbourhood	49%	56%	41%	48%	56%	59%	61%	71%
Anti-social behaviour	51%	50%	36%	41%	49%	54%	57%	71%
Listens & Acts	54%	50%	40%	50%	57%	57%	64%	67%
Keeps you informed	50%	59%	47%	53%	62%	64%	66%	73%
Treats fairly & with respect	65%	69%	57%	62%	65%	73%	74%	85%
Complaints handling	9%	39%	23%	28%	30%	27%	32%	26%

Base: 0 - 24 = 42, 25 - 34 = 189, 35 - 44 = 279, 45 - 54 = 303, 55 - 64 = 381, 65 - 74 = 526, 75 - 84 = 354, 85+ = 140, NO DATA = 46

Satisfaction for NYC tenants also seems to increase with age, with the most satisfied group being those over the age of 85. 83% of this group are satisfied with the overall service, and they are most satisfied on ten of the survey measures.

The least satisfied are those aged 35 to 44, with just 56% satisfied with the overall service. This group are the least satisfied on eleven measures. However, after the age of 45, satisfaction starts to increase consistently across most measures.

It is not entirely clear why this pattern exists. It maybe that older tenants are more tolerant and less likely to complain, whereas younger tenants may have slightly higher expectations and are quicker to complain if standards fall.

However, whatever the reason, it does show that age is a major factor in determining satisfaction.



Gender

	Female	Male
Overall satisfaction	71%	70%
Well maintained home	66%	70%
Safe home	73%	74%
Repairs - Last 12 months	71%	74%
Time taken - Last repair	62%	68%
Communal areas clean & well maintained	61%	62%
Positive contribution to neighbourhood	53%	58%
Anti-social behaviour	48%	52%
Listens & Acts	54%	56%
Keeps you informed	60%	61%
Treats fairly & with respect	67%	70%
Complaints handling	26%	31%

Base: Female = 1,260, Male = 930, NO DATA = 70

The results are shown here split by the gender of tenants. There were more female respondents than male respondents, but they are generally less satisfied. This is true on all measures, except from with the overall services where satisfaction is similar.

Whilst it is often shown that male tenants are a little more satisfied, the differences between the groups is very small, with an average difference of 3%, suggesting that gender alone is not a major determining factor.



Length of Tenancy

	< 1 year	1 - 3 years	4 - 5 years	6 - 10 years	11 - 20 years	Over 20 years
Overall satisfaction	81%	71%	65%	67%	68%	73%
Well maintained home	77%	71%	63%	64%	63%	70%
Safe home	83%	74%	68%	69%	71%	77%
Repairs - Last 12 months	81%	75%	67%	67%	70%	76%
Time taken - Last repair	66%	68%	60%	64%	63%	65%
Communal areas clean & well maintained	75%	66%	61%	57%	49%	58%
Positive contribution to neighbourhood	70%	60%	50%	52%	50%	53%
Anti-social behaviour	63%	50%	42%	47%	48%	53%
Listens & Acts	68%	57%	52%	51%	47%	57%
Keeps you informed	69%	63%	57%	55%	57%	64%
Treats fairly & with respect	80%	71%	68%	63%	64%	70%
Complaints handling	41%	25%	30%	30%	30%	25%

Base: < 1 year = 239, 1 - 3 years = 502, 4 - 5 years = 266, 6 - 10 years = 415, 11 - 20 years = 442, Over 20 years = 396

It is also often found that newer tenants, particularly those with tenancies of less than a year, report higher satisfaction which then tends to tail off over time.

One theory for this is that tenants are initially pleased to be offered a property, perhaps having waited for some time, or having been in poor accommodation, but as time passes and they start to experience issues with their home and their enthusiasm starts to wane.

For NYC, 81% of new tenants to the Council are satisfied overall and this group are also the most satisfied on all but one of the survey measures.

In contrast, just 65% of those in the 4- to 5- year group are satisfied. This group are the least satisfied on four other measures.

It also tends to happen that satisfaction picks up again for those with the longest tenancies, who tend to be amongst the oldest tenants. This is also found for NYC, as satisfaction starts to pick up for those with tenancies of over 20 years., who have the second highest satisfaction level with overall services.



Property Type

	Bedsit	Bungalow	Flat	House
Overall satisfaction	82%	75%	73%	63%
Well maintained home	77%	73%	73%	58%
Safe home	77%	78%	76%	67%
Repairs - Last 12 months	80%	78%	74%	66%
Time taken - Last repair	80%	71%	67%	57%
Communal areas clean & well maintained	79%	59%	60%	68%
Positive contribution to neighbourhood	84%	62%	57%	46%
Anti-social behaviour	74%	58%	49%	43%
Listens & Acts	58%	60%	56%	49%
Keeps you informed	89%	62%	63%	56%
Treats fairly & with respect	84%	73%	70%	64%
Complaints handling	75%	26%	29%	31%

Base: Bedsit = 22, Bungalow = 715, Flat = 745, House = 774, Maisonette = 3, Room = 1

The majority of NYC's tenants live in bungalows, flats and houses. There are far fewer in bedsits who here are the most satisfied on the majority of measures. However, we must bear in mind that there were just 22 respondents here.

Tenants in houses are the least satisfied generally, which may be surprising. Compared with tenants in flats and bungalows, tenants in houses are 15% less satisfied that their home is well maintained and 9-11% less satisfied that their home is safe.

However, differences in satisfaction are likely to be linked, in part, to the age of tenants. 38% of respondents in houses are below the age of 25, compared to 25% in flats and 3% in bungalows. Whereas just 7% in houses are over the age of 75, compared to 21% in flats and 38% in bungalows.



Number of Bedrooms

	0	1	2	3	4
Overall satisfaction	92%	73%	72%	64%	68%
Well maintained home	88%	74%	69%	57%	58%
Safe home	92%	77%	74%	67%	58%
Repairs - Last 12 months	91%	76%	73%	68%	56%
Time taken - Last repair	100%	70%	64%	58%	63%
Communal areas clean & well maintained	88%	62%	57%	71%	33%
Positive contribution to neighbourhood	86%	60%	56%	46%	50%
Anti-social behaviour	80%	50%	53%	43%	33%
Listens & Acts	70%	59%	54%	49%	48%
Keeps you informed	91%	63%	60%	58%	55%
Treats fairly & with respect	91%	70%	69%	66%	62%
Complaints handling	50%	29%	26%	35%	25%

Base: 0 = 26, 1 = 713, 2 = 927, 3 = 562, 4 = 31, 5 = 1

This chart shows the results split by bedroom numbers and this largely mirrors results from 'property type'. Those in larger properties with more bedrooms are the least satisfied, whereas those with fewer bedrooms are the most satisfied.

Satisfaction between those in one and two bedroomed homes is largely similar.



Locality

	Harrogate	Richmond	Selby
Overall satisfaction	73%	81%	62%
Well maintained home	73%	77%	57%
Safe home	78%	81%	64%
Repairs - Last 12 months	74%	82%	66%
Time taken - Last repair	62%	81%	60%
Communal areas clean & well maintained	59%	64%	63%
Positive contribution to neighbourhood	55%	66%	50%
Anti-social behaviour	50%	63%	45%
Listens & Acts	55%	65%	49%
Keeps you informed	63%	70%	53%
Treats fairly & with respect	69%	79%	64%
Complaints handling	29%	38%	27%

Base: Harrogate = 1,090, Richmond = 349, Selby = 821

North Yorkshire Council operates over three main areas, Harrogate, Richmond and Selby.

In terms of satisfaction, those living in Richmond are the most satisfied and Selby the least.

On the overall service there is quite a difference between the areas, from 81% satisfied in Richmond to just 62% in Selby. Across all metrics, the average difference between satisfaction in Richmond and Selby is 16%, with the greatest differences coming from satisfaction with the maintenance of the home (20%) and the time taken to complete repairs (21%). Satisfaction with communal areas being clean and well maintained, however, sees only a marginal 1% difference.

It is not clear from the results alone why these differences occur, whether it is linked to property type and condition, local facilities or service delivery. NYC will be aiming to provide a consistent service across all areas, so further investigation maybe needed to ascertain the reasons behind the differences and perhaps target improvements to bring satisfaction rates in Selby up to those found in other areas.



Constituency

	Harrogate and Knaresborough	Richmond (Yorks)	Selby and Ainsty	Skipton and Ripon
Overall satisfaction	73%	81%	63%	73%
Well maintained home	74%	77%	59%	71%
Safe home	77%	81%	65%	80%
Repairs - Last 12 months	75%	82%	67%	74%
Time taken - Last repair	65%	81%	60%	57%
Communal areas clean & well maintained	62%	64%	63%	54%
Positive contribution to neighbourhood	54%	66%	50%	58%
Anti-social behaviour	49%	63%	45%	51%
Listens & Acts	56%	65%	50%	54%
Keeps you informed	63%	70%	53%	66%
Treats fairly & with respect	67%	79%	64%	74%
Complaints handling	27%	38%	27%	33%

Base: Harrogate and Knaresborough = 651, Richmond (Yorks) = 349, Selby and Ainsty = 897, Skipton and Ripon = 363

The results are shown here split by constituency and largely reflects previous locality split, with those in the Richmond constituency the most satisfied and those in Selby and Ainsty the least satisfied.

The raw data extract shows results further broken down by ward and patch.



Area Type

	Urban city and town	Rural town and fringe	Rural village	Rural hamlet and isolated dwellings
Overall satisfaction	69%	69%	75%	75%
Well maintained home	69%	64%	71%	66%
Safe home	73%	71%	78%	74%
Repairs - Last 12 months	72%	72%	74%	76%
Time taken - Last repair	62%	68%	63%	71%
Communal areas clean & well maintained	62%	62%	55%	50%
Positive contribution to neighbourhood	54%	57%	56%	60%
Anti-social behaviour	47%	53%	54%	52%
Listens & Acts	54%	56%	55%	47%
Keeps you informed	60%	61%	61%	57%
Treats fairly & with respect	67%	69%	72%	72%
Complaints handling	29%	30%	25%	50%

Satisfaction can be further broken down by area type / composition. The chart to the right shows the four area types with over 50 respondents.

Satisfaction is higher in rural villages and hamlets than in urban areas with denser populations. However, the differences are not as marked as in other sub-group breakdowns and generally ranges between 4% and 9%.



Base: Urban city and town = 1,098, Rural town and fringe = 662, Rural village = 433, Rural hamlet and isolated dwellings = 67

Response Method

	Telephone	Online	Postal
Overall satisfaction	76%	63%	78%
Well maintained home	74%	61%	73%
Safe home	79%	67%	80%
Repairs - Last 12 months	79%	65%	79%
Time taken - Last repair	71%	57%	70%
Communal areas clean & well maintained	70%	57%	60%
Positive contribution to neighbourhood	72%	48%	56%
Anti-social behaviour	68%	41%	54%
Listens & Acts	65%	47%	59%
Keeps you informed	73%	52%	64%
Treats fairly & with respect	79%	61%	72%
Complaints handling	34%	26%	29%

Base: Telephone = 595, Online = 1046, Postal = 600

Tenants were given the opportunity to respond to the survey in one of three ways: online, by post or by telephone interview. The majority of respondents responded online (47%), while 27% responded by post and a further 27% by telephone.

It is often found in these surveys that satisfaction tends to be lower for those responding online than through other methods, which appears to be the case here. Satisfaction levels for online respondents is, on average, 14% lower than those who responded either by post or telephone. Meanwhile, satisfaction for telephone and postal respondents tends to be more similar, with some exceptions.

It is thought that this difference is largely driven by age differences, with online respondents more likely to be those from a younger age profile.

Looking the age profile of the different response methods, 31% of those who respond online are below the age of 35, compared to 8% for postal respondents and 23% for telephone respondents. Meanwhile, just 12% of online respondents are over the age of 75, compared to 41% for postal respondents and 21% for telephone respondents.





Summary of Results



Satisfaction 2024



Summary of Results

The survey for North Yorkshire Council has incorporated all of the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) for the first time, which became mandatory for all registered providers of social housing to collect from April 2023. These questions have not been used before by the Council, so this survey will act as a baseline against which to compare future survey results.

Overall, the survey shows some good levels of satisfaction with the services provided by NYC. While all scores are below the Acuity median, they perform well against other councils, with seven measures above the median. Seven out of ten tenants are satisfied with the overall service provided by NYC (70%), while just 16% are dissatisfied. This ranks among the highest-performing metrics in this survey. Satisfaction is highest for the provision of a safe home and for the repairs service in the last 12 months (both 73%).

However, some measures received satisfaction ratings below 60%, these being the contribution NYC makes to the neighbourhood, how the Council listens to tenants' views and acts upon them, and how it handles ASB. The lowest performing metric, as is common for most landlords, is complaints handling where just 29% are satisfied.

Correspondingly, the highest levels of dissatisfaction are for the handling of complaints (54%); dissatisfaction with complaints handling is likely to incorporate more than just how tenants' complaints are handled – for example, tenants not getting the resolution they wanted or expected or not having yet received a final outcome. Of the remaining measures, a quarter of tenants are dissatisfied with the time taken to complete repairs and the upkeep of the communal areas.

The survey included three open-ended questions which gave tenants the opportunity to expand on their answers and reasons for dissatisfaction in three key service areas: the home and communal areas, the repairs service and customer service. Across all areas, the most common area for improvement was the day-to-day repairs service, with tenants highlighting outstanding repairs that have not been dealt with, the timescales to complete repairs, the quality of repair work and communications about the repair. In addition, some tenants have problems with damp and mould in their homes, with others wanting improvements to their homes, including new doors and windows. Apart from property-related issues, some tenants would like better communications and to be kept up to date with issues and to receive a little more care, empathy and support when making contact.

This report has also analysed the ratings by a number of different subgroups. This found that tenants in Richmond are more satisfied than tenants in Harrogate and particular Selby. The oldest tenants and those in sheltered accommodation tend to be the most satisfied, as do male tenants and newer tenants (those with tenancies of under a year). It was also found that tenants who responded online were less satisfied than those who responded through other methods, which is commonly found in these surveys and is likely linked to the age profile of those using the different response methods. Tenants in houses also tend to be less satisfied than tenants in bungalows and flats, which again might be partly down to age.

Recommendations

North Yorkshire Council has around 8,300 properties across the main areas of Harrogate, Richmond and Selby. The Council has a significant proportion of sheltered accommodation but also has a range of flats and houses across the area.

The survey reveals many areas of good performance, but it has also highlighted some areas where improvements could be made.

The comments made by tenants give insight into what they are most concerned about and will help North Yorkshire Council target services that may need some improvement.

Shown opposite are some recommendations that North Yorkshire Council may wish to follow up on to help improve satisfaction in the future.



Repairs and maintenance

The way repairs and maintenance is delivered is key for any tenant and whilst satisfaction with North Yorkshire Council's repairs service is generally good, some tenants have concerns about the time taken to complete repairs and that there are still some repairs outstanding or that appear to have been forgotten. Also of concern is the number of tenants complain of damp and mould in their homes which, of course, will need to be addressed as a matter of urgency.

These issues are linked and are a common trend among other social landlords. Problems with damp and mould tend to take priority and can delay work on other, less urgent matters, and this can also add to the time taken to respond to repair requests. In addition, landlords are facing cost increases and, in some areas, shortages of materials and labour. While solving this is difficult and resource-intensive, good communication with tenants is key to managing expectation and easing the impact of delays which can sometimes be unavoidable. This is not just about quality of communication but also frequency. Keeping tenants informed of progress and any delays may have a positive impact on satisfaction in this area, easing dissatisfaction when it arises.



Communications and customer recovery

Just six out of ten feel that NYC are good at keeping them informed about things that matter to them, whilst fewer feel they listen to their views and act upon them. Some tenants have difficulty contacting the Council but when they do, they feel the staff could listen to them more carefully and show them a little more care, empathy and support. It is clear therefore that how NYC communicates with its tenants is an area for improvement. One crucial starting point may be to reach out to those tenants who gave permission to be contacted to discuss issues raised in the survey. This can be an opportunity for NYC to demonstrate that it listens to its tenants' views and acts upon them.

Recommendations

North Yorkshire Council has around 8,300 properties across the main areas of Harrogate, Richmond and Selby. The Council has a significant proportion of sheltered accommodation but also has a range of flats and houses across the area.

The survey reveals many areas of good performance, but it has also highlighted some areas where improvements could be made.

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Complaints handling

The handling of complaints is the lowest-performing metric in the survey, with more dissatisfied with their handling than are satisfied. While this is often seen across landlords, it is difficult to tell whether responses relate to genuine complaints or service requests that are yet to be fully actioned. Nonetheless, it is important that tenants feel confident any complaint they make will be taken seriously and dealt with effectively and in good time. Clear communications around how to make a complaint and the complaints process is vital to increasing awareness and accessibility.



Area differences

NYC operates over three main areas and there is quite a difference in satisfaction across these. Tenants in Selby are consistently less satisfied than those in the other areas, particularly in Richmond. It is not clear why this is the case, whether this is linked to property type and condition, local issues or service delivery. It is recommended that further investigation is undertaken to establish the reasons for these differences as the aim will be to provide a consistent service across all areas. If there is found to be failings in some services, these could be targeted. Also, the Council should work with the tenants in Selby to better understand their issues and help improve the local service.



Demonstrating a positive contribution

Satisfaction that NYC makes a positive contribution to the neighbourhood ranks among the lowest performing metrics in the survey. While dissatisfaction was not necessarily higher than in other metrics, there was an inflated number of respondents in the 'neither satisfied nor dissatisfied' category (27%), suggesting perhaps a lack of awareness or visibility of the positive impact NYC has on the neighbourhood. It may be key, therefore, for NYC to place focus on how it promotes its impact and reaches tenants. This may be part of a larger exercise linked to how NYC communicates with tenants, particularly as many tenants suggested they would like to see improvements here – *"We used to get communications all the time about what was going on but since North Yorkshire took over we get nothing at all"*.

Recommendations



Future surveys

The present survey was conducted as a one-off annual exercise between October 2023 and January 2024. However, for future surveys, NYC may want to consider running it as a quarterly tracker survey. This would allow NYC to track satisfaction throughout the year and keep track of emerging issues and trends, which can be tracked through Acuity's live dashboards. This would also aid in customer recovery and being able to respond more immediately to tenant issues as they arise, which can also be managed through Acuity's live dashboards.

North Yorkshire Council has around 8,300 properties across the main areas of Harrogate, Richmond and Selby. The Council has a significant proportion of sheltered accommodation but also has a range of flats and houses across the area.

The survey reveals many areas of good performance, but it has also highlighted some areas where improvements could be made.

The comments made by tenants give insight into what they are most concerned about and will help North Yorkshire Council target services that may need some improvement.

Shown opposite are some recommendations that North Yorkshire Council may wish to follow up on to help improve satisfaction in the future.



**NORTH
YORKSHIRE
COUNCIL**

This research project was carried out to conform with ISO20252:2019 and the MRS Code of Conduct.

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acuity
making sense of housing



Section 1: Definition of a complaint

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
1.2	A complaint must be defined as: <i>'an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the landlord, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting a resident or group of residents.'</i>	Yes	Housing Complaints Policy page 1 <i>We define a complaint as an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the organisation, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual resident/service user or group of residents/service users.</i>	Comply, however the Housing Complaints Policy includes complaints about all housing services not just landlord services and so the definition has been amended with the emboldened words to account for this.
1.3	A resident does not have to use the word 'complaint' for it to be treated as such. Whenever a resident expresses dissatisfaction landlords must give them the choice to make complaint. A complaint that is submitted via a third party or representative must be handled in line with the landlord's complaints policy.	Yes	Housing Complaints Guidance: The Complaints Officer's Role page 2 and Housing Complaints Guidance: What to do if you receive a complaint page 2 <i>It should be noted that a customer does not have to use the word 'complaint' in order for us to deal with it as such.</i> Housing Complaints Policy page 3 <i>A complaint can be made by anyone using a council service, or anyone affected by any error in our service provision, or by any other person on behalf of an individual (in these cases we must have consent from the individual in writing, unless you are a person legally entitled to act for the person using our services – you can use the form at the end of this policy to do this).</i>	
1.4	Landlords must recognise the difference between a service request and a complaint. This must be set out in their complaints policy. A service request is a request from a resident to the landlord requiring action to be taken to put something right. Service requests are not complaints, but must be recorded, monitored and reviewed regularly.	Yes	Housing Complaints Policy page 2 <i>Request for service – a routine request for service, such as a request for repair or a request to us to help with a landlord disrepair issue.</i> Housing Complaints Guidance: The Complaints Officer's Role page 2 <i>Is this a service request? Where the</i>	

			<p><i>customer is asking us to do something that we would do as normal business, for example to make a repair. Sometimes the first time a customer lets us know of a problem, it would be treated as 'business as usual' – a 'service request'. However, if we promise action and fail to deliver it, a second contact about the same thing should be dealt with as a complaint. Service requests fall outside of the complaints policy, however, must be recorded, monitored and reviewed regularly until completion.</i></p> <p>The legacy services do record services requests and monitor and review until completion. We are looking to introduce a single system once services are realigned.</p>	
1.5	A complaint must be raised when the resident expresses dissatisfaction with the response to their service request, even if the handling of the service request remains ongoing. Landlords must not stop their efforts to address the service request if the resident complains.	Yes	<p>Housing Complaints Guidance: What to do if you receive a complaint page 2</p> <p><i>Sometimes a service request can escalate to become a complaint, for example where we have promised action, but have delayed carrying it out, or failed to complete it altogether. In these cases it would be appropriate to escalate to a stage 1 complaint. It is important to note, that a service request can continue even if it has been escalated to a complaint. For example, where a customer has complained that a repair has not been carried out within the timescales we promised, that repair should still be progressed while the complaint runs alongside it.</i></p>	
1.6	An expression of dissatisfaction with services made through a survey is not defined as a complaint, though wherever possible, the person completing the survey should be made aware of how they can pursue a complaint if they wish to. Where landlords ask for wider	No		<p>Within the TSM questions customers are asked for their satisfaction with the way complaints are handled. Previous surveys have not included details of how to make a complaint, but future surveys will include this.</p>

	feedback about their services, they also must provide details of how residents can complain.			
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Section 2: Exclusions

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
2.1	Landlords must accept a complaint unless there is a valid reason not to do so. If landlords decide not to accept a complaint they must be able to evidence their reasoning. Each complaint must be considered on its own merits	Yes	<p>Examples of exclusions are set out on page 2 of the Housing Complaints Policy. In addition:</p> <p><i>If we decide that your complaint does not fall under this policy, we will write to you to explain why and what your next steps could be. We will also provide details of how to contact the Ombudsman should you wish to do so.</i></p> <p>Housing Complaints Guidance: The Complaints Officer's Role page 2 <i>With all exclusions, there should not be any blanket approach; all individual circumstances must be considered when making this decision.</i></p>	
2.2	<p>A complaints policy must set out the circumstances in which a matter will not be considered as a complaint or escalated, and these circumstances must be fair and reasonable to residents. Acceptable exclusions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The issue giving rise to the complaint occurred over twelve months ago. • Legal proceedings have started. This is defined as details of the claim, such as the Claim Form and Particulars of Claim, having been 	Yes	<p>Examples of exclusions are set out on page 2 of the Housing Complaints Policy. In addition:</p> <p><i>If we decide that your complaint does not fall under this policy, we will write to you to explain why and what your next steps could be. We will also provide details of how to contact the Ombudsman should you wish to do so.</i></p> <p>Housing Complaints Guidance: The Complaints Officer's Role page 2 <i>With all exclusions, there should not be any blanket approach; all individual</i></p>	

	<p>filed at court.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Matters that have previously been considered under the complaints policy. 		<p><i>circumstances must be considered when making this decision.</i></p>	
2.3	<p>Landlords must accept complaints referred to them within 12 months of the issue occurring or the resident becoming aware of the issue, unless they are excluded on other grounds. Landlords must consider whether to apply discretion to accept complaints made outside this time limit where there are good reasons to do so.</p>	Yes	<p>Housing Complaints Policy page 2 <i>As time passes it becomes more difficult to investigate events fairly and fully. We therefore ask that complaints are made no later than 12 months after the date you became aware of the problem. However, we understand that there may be reasons why you may not have been able to bring your complaint during that time and if you feel you have good reason please explain them to us and we will consider whether it is appropriate to extend our timescales.</i></p> <p>Housing Complaints Guidance: The Complaints Officer's Role page 2 <i>Is it about something over 12 months old and the complainant has no good reason for not complaining earlier? The Complaints Officer should think about whether discretion should be applied if there is a good reason this has not been brought to us earlier.</i></p>	
2.4	<p>If a landlord decides not to accept a complaint, an explanation must be provided to the resident setting out the reasons why the matter is not suitable for the complaints process and the right to take that decision to the Ombudsman. If the Ombudsman does not agree that the exclusion has been fairly applied, the Ombudsman may tell the landlord to take on the complaint.</p>	Yes	<p>Housing Complaints Policy page 2 <i>If we decide that your complaint does not fall under this policy, we will write to you to explain why and what your next steps could be. We will also provide details of how to contact the Ombudsman should you wish to do so.</i></p> <p>Housing Complaints Guidance: The Complaints Officer's Role page 2 <i>Does it appear on the list of exclusions on page 2 of the Housing Complaints Policy? If so, they should consider the circumstances of the case and if appropriate, reject the case, explaining why and what the</i></p>	

Page 54			<i>complainant should do now. Also include details of the relevant ombudsman – Housing Ombudsman for anything related to landlord services – Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman for other services. Is it about something over 12 months old and the complainant has no good reason for not complaining earlier? The Complaints Officer should think about whether discretion should be applied if there is a good reason this has not been brought to us earlier. If the decision is to reject they must write to explain why and what next steps may be. Also include details of the relevant ombudsman – Housing Ombudsman for anything related to landlord services – Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman for other services.</i>	
	2.5	Landlords must not take a blanket approach to excluding complaints; they must consider the individual circumstances of each complaint.	Yes	Housing Complaints Guidance: The Complaints Officer's Role page 2 <i>With all exclusions, there should not be any blanket approach; all individual circumstances must be considered when making this decision.</i>

Section 3: Accessibility and Awareness

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
3.1	Landlords must make it easy for residents to complain by providing different channels through which they can make a complaint. Landlords must consider their duties under the Equality Act 2010 and anticipate the needs and reasonable adjustments of residents who may need to access the complaints process.	Yes	Housing Complaints Policy page 3 <i>Otherwise you can contact us:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>By telephone – call our Customer Service Team on 0300 131 2 131</i> • <i>Online using the form on our website</i> • <i>In writing:</i> <i>North Yorkshire Council</i> <i>County Hall</i> <i>Northallerton</i> <i>North Yorkshire</i> 	

			<p><i>DL7 8AD</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>In person at one of our public access points – it would be helpful if you could call ahead to make an appointment so that we can make sure an appropriate member of staff will be available for you.</i> <p><i>Although we will accept complaints made via social media, in order to maintain confidentiality and privacy, we will not progress them using this method. We will ask you how else you would like to communicate with us in order for us to investigate and provide a full response.</i></p> <p><i>Housing Complaints Policy page 4</i> <i>If you need help to make your complaint, for example an interpreter, or provision of information in different formats please let us know and we will make all reasonable efforts to help you. There is more information on our website.</i></p>	
3.2	Residents must be able to raise their complaints in any way and with any member of staff. All staff must be aware of the complaints process and be able to pass details of the complaint to the appropriate person within the landlord.	No	<p><i>Housing Complaints Policy page 3</i> <i>In the first instance, if you know the member of staff who delivers the service you can contact them about the problem and they will do their best to resolve the issue quickly. Otherwise you can contact us:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>By telephone – call our Customer Service Team on 0300 131 2 131</i> <i>Online using the form on our website</i> <i>In writing:</i> <i>North Yorkshire Council</i> <i>County Hall</i> <i>Northallerton</i> <i>North Yorkshire</i> <i>DL7 8AD</i> <i>In person at one of our public access points – it would be helpful if you could call ahead to make an appointment so that we can make sure an appropriate</i> 	<p>A mandatory elearning module on customer feedback for all staff is in development and is expected to be deployed in the near future.</p> <p>We will supplement this with messages to staff on the Council's intranet, in the weekly email to all staff and monthly managers' team briefing.</p>

			<p><i>member of staff will be available for you. Although we will accept complaints made via social media, in order to maintain confidentiality and privacy, we will not progress them using this method. We will ask you how else you would like to communicate with us in order for us to investigate and provide a full response.</i></p>	
3.3	<p>High volumes of complaints must not be seen as a negative, as they can be indicative of a well-publicised and accessible complaints process. Low complaint volumes are potentially a sign that residents are unable to complain.</p>		<p>The Council values complaints and welcomes feedback from their residents/service users.</p> <p><i>Housing Complaints Policy page 1</i> <i>We are committed to providing high quality services to those who live in, work in, or visit North Yorkshire, but in any organisation things can go wrong. We want to know when this happens so that we can try to put it right and prevent it from happening again.</i></p> <p>Housing Complaints Guidance: What to do if you receive a complaint page 1 <i>Complaints are valuable. They provide us with useful feedback that can be used to identify issues and inform improvements to our services. As a council we take complaints seriously and prioritise this process in order to both provide a good service to complainants and learn as much as we can from them. This is a core service, affecting all services across the Authority.</i></p>	<p>This is the first year of the unitary North Yorkshire Council and we are working on improving our collective recording and reporting on complaints. Numbers of complaints received will be monitored over time. Should there be any significant drop in numbers this will be examined to ascertain whether there is a reason for it.</p>
3.4	<p>Landlords must make their complaint policy available in a clear and accessible format for all residents. This will detail the two stage process, what will happen at each stage, and the timeframes for responding. The policy must also be published on the landlord's website.</p>	Yes	<p>The Housing Complaints Policy is written in a clear and accessible format. It is available on our website Complaints, comments or compliments North Yorkshire Council, in pdf or printed format and other reasonable formats upon request</p> <p>Housing Complaints Policy page 4 <i>If you need help to make your complaint, for</i></p>	

			<i>example an interpreter, or provision of information in different formats please let us know and we will make all reasonable efforts to help you. There is more information on our website.</i>	
3.5	The policy must explain how the landlord will publicise details of the complaints policy, including information about the Ombudsman and this Code.	Yes	<p>Housing Complaints Policy page 7 Housing Ombudsman <i>The HO is set up by law to look at complaints about housing organisations that are registered with them, including housing associations and local authorities. You can approach the HO at any time during your complaint investigation should you require their advice.</i> <i>The HO is an independent body that will consider complaints about housing. It will normally only consider complaints made within 12 months from the date you first knew about the matter complained about, but can decide to look at older complaints if there is a good reason to do so.</i> <i>Information on how to refer your complaint to the HO can be found at:</i> <i>Website: www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk</i> <i>Telephone: 0300 111 3000</i> <i>Opening hours: Monday – Friday 9:15am to 5:15pm</i> <i>The Housing Ombudsman has introduced a Complaint Handling Code which the Council abides by. Details of this code can be found on their website.</i></p> <p>Housing Complaints Policy page 8 Where you can find this policy <i>This policy is available on our website and can be requested in pdf format or hard copy. If you need it in a different format please let us know and we will make all reasonable efforts to provide that.</i> <i>It will be publicised in any resident newsletter</i></p>	We are looking to reintroduce resident newsletters and a revised tenant communications plan when services in the new Council are realigned.

			<i>or similar.</i>	
3.6	Landlords must give residents the opportunity to have a representative deal with their complaint on their behalf, and to be represented or accompanied at any meeting with the landlord.	Yes	Housing Complaints Policy page 4 <i>You can also ask someone else to make the complaint on your behalf or accompany you to meetings, such as a relative or friend, or you can contact a relevant organisation, such as Citizens Advice Bureau or an advocacy service, or you can contact your local councillor. If you do ask someone else to make your complaint for you, we will need to have your consent in writing for us to progress this with them.</i>	
3.7	Landlords must provide residents with information on their right to access the Ombudsman service and how the individual can engage with the Ombudsman about their complaint.	Yes	Housing Complaints Policy page 7 Housing Ombudsman <i>The HO is set up by law to look at complaints about housing organisations that are registered with them, including housing associations and local authorities. You can approach the HO at any time during your complaint investigation should you require their advice. The HO is an independent body that will consider complaints about housing. It will normally only consider complaints made within 12 months from the date you first knew about the matter complained about, but can decide to look at older complaints if there is a good reason to do so. Information on how to refer your complaint to the HO can be found at: Website: www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk Telephone: 0300 111 3000 Opening hours: Monday – Friday 9:15am to 5:15pm The Housing Ombudsman has introduced a Complaint Handling Code which the Council abides by. Details of this code can be found on their website.</i>	
			North Yorkshire Council website	

		<p>Complaints, comments or compliments North Yorkshire Council</p> <p><i>The housing ombudsman is an independent body that will consider complaints about housing, including the social housing owned by the Council. It will normally only consider complaints made within 12 months from the date you first knew about the matter complained about, but can decide to look at older complaints if there is a good reason to do so.</i></p> <p><i>You can approach the housing ombudsman at any time during your complaint investigation should you require their advice. Information on how to refer your complaint to the HO can be found at:</i></p> <p><i>Website: Housing Ombudsman</i></p> <p><i>Telephone: 0300 111 3000</i></p> <p><i>Opening hours: Monday to Friday 9:15am to 5:15pm</i></p>	
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Section 4: Complaint Handling Staff

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
4.1	Landlords must have a person or team assigned to take responsibility for complaint handling, including liaison with the Ombudsman and ensuring complaints are reported to the governing body (or equivalent). This Code will refer to that person or team as the 'complaints officer'. This role may be in addition to other duties.	Yes	The Corporate Complaints Manager and Team fulfil this role.	
4.2	The complaints officer must have access to staff at all levels to facilitate the prompt resolution of complaints. They must also have the authority and autonomy to act to resolve disputes	Yes	The Corporate Team can contact anyone within the Council in relation to the handling of a complaint and has the authority and autonomy to act to resolve disputes promptly and fairly.	

	promptly and fairly.			
4.3	Landlords are expected to prioritise complaint handling and a culture of learning from complaints. All relevant staff must be suitably trained in the importance of complaint handling. It is important that complaints are seen as a core service and must be resourced to handle complaints effectively.	Yes	<p>Housing Complaints Policy page 1: <i>We are committed to providing high quality services to those who live in, work in, or visit North Yorkshire, but in any organisation things can go wrong. We want to know when this happens so that we can try to put it right and prevent it from happening again. We would also like to know when we do something well, or if you have any comments you would like to make on our services.'</i></p> <p>Housing Complaints Guidance: What to do if you receive a complaint page 1 <i>Complaints are valuable. They provide us with useful feedback that can be used to identify issues and inform improvements to our services. As a council we take complaints seriously and prioritise this process in order to both provide a good service to complainants and learn as much as we can from them. This is a core service, affecting all services across the Authority. We regularly report to management teams and members. The complaints officers and teams sit near directors and services.</i></p>	<p>A mandatory elearning module on customer feedback for all staff is in development and is expected to be deployed in the near future.</p> <p>We will supplement this with messages to staff on the Council's intranet, weekly email to all staff and monthly managers' briefing notes.</p> <p>The complaints service is currently being reviewed to ensure best practice, better quality recording and to ensure that an effective service structure is in place with an appropriate level of resource.</p> <p>We had recognised that more support was required in the housing service and a dedicated Complaints Officer has been appointed.</p>

Section 5: The Complaint Handling Process

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
5.1	Landlords must have a single policy in place for dealing with complaints covered by this Code. Residents must not be treated differently if they complain.	Yes	<p>Housing Complaints Policy page 1 <i>Making a complaint will not affect how you receive our services. This policy relates to complaints, compliments or comments made about housing.</i></p>	
5.2	The early and local resolution of issues between landlords and residents is key to	Yes	The Council operates a two-stage process, with no 'pre-stages'	

	effective complaint handling. It is not appropriate to have extra named stages (such as 'stage 0' or 'informal complaint') as this causes unnecessary confusion.			
5.3	A process with more than two stages is not acceptable under any circumstances as this will make the complaint process unduly long and delay access to the Ombudsman.	Yes	The Council operates a two-stage process	
5.4	Where a landlord's complaint response is handled by a third party (e.g. a contractor or independent adjudicator) at any stage, it must form part of the two stage complaints process set out in this Code. Residents must not be expected to go through two complaints processes.	Yes	Housing Complaints Guidance: The Complaints Officer's Role page 8 <i>Complaints regarding services provided by third parties must be dealt with as part of the two-stage process – there must not be a third, separate stage for this.</i>	
5.5	Landlords are responsible for ensuring that any third parties handle complaints in line with the Code.	No		As legacy contracts come to an end, new contracts will include a requirement that complaints be handled in alignment with this code.
5.6	When a complaint is logged at Stage 1 or escalated to Stage 2, landlords must set out their understanding of the complaint and the outcomes the resident is seeking. The Code will refer to this as "the complaint definition". If any aspect of the complaint is unclear, the resident must be asked for clarification.	Yes	Housing Complaints Policy page 4 (Stage 1) <i>If a response cannot be provided within 5 working days of receipt of the complaint, an acknowledgement will be sent, letting you know who is dealing with your complaint and what will happen next. We will set out our understanding of your complaint and what outcomes you are seeking (the complaint definition).</i> Housing Complaints Policy page 5 (Stage 2) <i>If we decide to carry out further investigation, you can expect:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Contact to confirm who is dealing with the case, our understanding of your complaint and your desired outcomes</i> Housing Complaints Guidance: The Complaints Officer's Role page 3 (stage 1)	

Defining the Complaint

The Complaints Officer should look at the information the complainant has provided and identify what the points of complaint are. The second part of a complaint definition is the complainant's desired outcomes. It is important to recognise what it is that the complainant wants as our response to their complaint, so that we can consider whether or not that is achievable.

However, sometimes it is not clear exactly what the complaint is about. In these instances the Complaints Officer should contact the complainant to clarify these points.

Housing Complaints Guidance: The Complaints Officer's Role page 5 (stage 1)

The acknowledgement will include:

- *What we understand the points of complaint to be and the complainant's desired outcomes (known together as 'the complaint definition')*

Housing Complaints Guidance: The Complaints Officer's Role page 6 (stage 2)


We must make reasonable efforts to understand why the complainant remains unhappy after the stage 1 investigation without requiring the complainant to set this out. However, if a meaningful consideration at stage 2 of the process cannot be made because this is unclear then the Complaints Officer should contact the complainant for clarification.

Housing Complaints Guidance: The Complaints Officer's Role page 7 (stage 2)

This acknowledgement must include:

- *The complaint definition*

5.7	When a complaint is acknowledged at either stage, landlords must be clear which aspects of the complaint they are, and are not, responsible for and clarify any areas where this is not clear.	Yes	<p>Housing Complaints Guidance: The Complaints Officer's Role page 5 (stage 1) <i>The acknowledgement will include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Any points we are not responsible for and if appropriate where we/they can refer the case</i> <p>Housing Complaints Guidance: The Complaints Officer's Role page 7 (stage 2) <i>This acknowledgement must include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Any points we are not responsible for and if appropriate where we/they can refer the case</i> 	
5.8	<p>At each stage of the complaints process, complaint handlers must:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> deal with complaints on their merits, act independently, and have an open mind; give the resident a fair chance to set out their position; take measures to address any actual or perceived conflict of interest; and consider all relevant information and evidence carefully. 	Yes	<p>Housing Complaints Guidance: What to do if you receive a complaint page 3 <i>An investigator must:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Deal with each complaint on its merits</i> • <i>Act independently and have an open mind</i> • <i>Give the complainant a fair chance to set out their opinion</i> • <i>Take measures to address any actual or perceived conflict of interest</i> • <i>Consider all the relevant information and evidence carefully</i> 	
5.9	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.	Yes	<p>Housing Complaints Guidance: The Complaints Officer's Role page 4 (stage 1) <i>In exceptional circumstances, where there is good reason, timescales can be extended beyond this, but in addition to explaining why, the Complaints Officer must agree with the complainant suitable intervals for keeping them informed about their complaint.</i></p> <p>Housing Complaints Guidance: The Complaints Officer's Role page 6 (stage 2) <i>If a timescale is extended by more than 20 working days the Complaints Officer must agree with the complainant suitable intervals</i></p>	

			<i>for keeping them informed about their complaint.</i>	
5.10	Landlords must make reasonable adjustments for residents where appropriate under the Equality Act 2010. Landlords must keep a record of any reasonable adjustments agreed, as well as a record of any disabilities a resident has disclosed. Any agreed reasonable adjustments must be kept under active review.	Yes	Through the housing management systems details of required adjustments and communication preferences are recorded and tracked.	Given the differences in legacy organisation approaches to collecting and updating the data the accuracy and business confidence in the information is limited. As the business develops a new single platform for housing management including a CRM it is expected that far greater confidence in the required adjustments and preferences will develop
5.11	Landlords must not refuse to escalate a complaint through all stages of the complaints procedure unless it has valid reasons to do so. Landlords must clearly set out these reasons, and they must comply with the provisions set out in section 2 of this Code.	Yes	Examples of exclusions are set out on page 2 of the Housing Complaints Policy. If a complaint has completed stage 1 of the policy and a request for escalation to stage 2 is received, the stage 2 process will be started.	
5.12	A full record must be kept of the complaint, and the outcomes at each stage. This must include the original complaint and the date received, all correspondence with the resident, correspondence with other parties, and any relevant supporting documentation such as reports or surveys.	Yes	All housing complaints are logged on our central recording system. This includes the original complaint, the date received, correspondence with the resident, correspondence with other parties and any relevant supporting documentation.	
5.13	Landlords must have processes in place to ensure a complaint can be remedied at any stage of its complaints process. Landlords must ensure appropriate remedies can be provided at any stage of the complaints process without the need for escalation.	Yes	Investigating officers are open, with authorisation from senior staff, to provide an appropriate remedy at stage 1 of the process. At stage 2, the senior officer adjudicating officer will do the same.	
5.14	Landlords must have policies and procedures in place for managing unacceptable behaviour from residents and/or their representatives. Landlords must be able to evidence reasons for putting any restrictions in place and must	Yes	 NYC Unacceptable Complainant Behavi	

	keep restrictions under regular review.			
5.15	Any restrictions placed on contact due to unacceptable behaviour must be proportionate and demonstrate regard for the provisions of the Equality Act 2010.		Unacceptable Complainant Behaviour Policy page 2 Reasonable adjustments <i>Due consideration will be given to any special needs or circumstances the complainant may have, including any related illnesses or disabilities that may be impacting on behaviour and any reasonable adjustments will be made.</i> <i>Customer requirements will be considered in determining any appropriate action to ensure it does not discriminate against the complainant under the Equalities Act 2010 or increase their level of vulnerability</i>	

Section 6: Complaints Stages

Stage 1
Page 55

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
6.1	Landlords must have processes in place to consider which complaints can be responded to as early as possible, and which require further investigation. Landlords must consider factors such as the complexity of the complaint and whether the resident is vulnerable or at risk. Most stage 1 complaints can be resolved promptly, and an explanation, apology or resolution provided to the resident.	Yes	Housing Complaints Guidance: What to do if you receive a complaint page 2 <i>If the complaint is something that you can resolve straight away, do so. For example, a complaint could be made over the phone and you are able to provide an explanation/resolution immediately, but you must provide the Complaints Officer with all relevant documentation/records of conversations in order to complete the central record. This should be sent to ComDev.Complaints@northyorks.gov.uk Otherwise, any complaint (or anything you think may be a complaint) about Housing Services must be sent to ComDev.Complaints@northyorks.gov.uk for assessment, recording, acknowledgement and allocation.</i>	

			Housing Complaints Guidance: What to do if you receive a complaint page 3 <i>The standard timescale for a response is 10 working days from the date of acknowledgement, however you must make all efforts to provide a response as soon as is reasonably possible.</i>	
6.2	Complaints must be acknowledged, defined and logged at stage 1 of the complaints procedure <u>within five working days of the complaint being received.</u>	Yes	Housing Complaints Policy page 4 <i>If a response cannot be provided within 5 working days of receipt of the complaint, an acknowledgement will be sent, letting you know who is dealing with your complaint and what will happen next. We will set out our understanding of your complaint and what outcomes you are seeking (the complaint definition).</i> Housing Complaints Guidance: The Complaints Officer's Role page 5 <i>A complaint must be defined, logged and an acknowledgement sent by the Complaints Officer to the complainant within five working days of receipt.</i>	
6.3	Landlords must issue a full response to stage 1 complaints <u>within 10 working days</u> of the complaint being acknowledged.	Yes	Housing Complaints Policy page 4 You can expect: <i>A response within 10 working days of the date of the acknowledgement</i> Housing Complaints Guidance: What to do if you receive a complaint page 3 <i>The standard timescale for a response is 10 working days from the date of acknowledgement.</i>	
6.4	Landlords must decide whether an extension to this timescale is needed when considering the complexity of the complaint and then inform the resident of the expected timescale for response. Any extension must be no more than 10	Yes	Housing Complaints Guidance: The Complaints Officer's Role page 4 1.4 Setting the Timescale <i>When assessing the complaint, the Complaints Officer must consider if the standard, 10 working days (from date of</i>	

	<p>working days without good reason, and the reason(s) must be clearly explained to the resident.</p>		<p><i>acknowledgement) timescale would be appropriate, or if an extension should be applied. This should only be done if there is a justifiable reason – this should be assessed on a case-by-case basis. Reasons may include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The case is particularly complex</i> <p><i>Whether the complainant is vulnerable or at risk should also be a factor in considering whether to apply an extension.</i></p> <p>Housing Complaints Policy page 5 <i>If the investigation will take longer than 10 working days we will tell you, explaining why and letting you know when you can expect a full response. If we believe the investigation will take longer than 20 working days we will contact you to explain why and to agree a new deadline. We will update you at suitable intervals until the case is completed.</i></p>	
<p>6.5</p>	<p>When an organisation informs a resident about an extension to these timescales, they must be provided with the contact details of the Ombudsman.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Housing Complaints Guidance: The Complaints Officer’s Role page 5 <i>The acknowledgement will include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What the process will be including timescales</i> • <i>If timescales are extended, the reasons for this – if extended for more than a further 10 working days, how often we will update the complainant.</i> • <i>Details of the relevant ombudsman</i> <p>Housing Complaints Guidance: The Complaints Officer’s Role page 4 <i>An extension to timescales can be applied at any time during the investigation. This must be done in agreement with the Complaints Officer and be for a valid reason. The Complaints Officer must write to the complainant to explain why the timescale is being extended and when they can expect a</i></p>	

			<i>response. They should also remind the complainant of the details of the relevant ombudsman.</i>	
6.6	A complaint response must be provided to the resident when the answer to the complaint is known, not when the outstanding actions required to address the issue are completed. Outstanding actions must still be tracked and actioned promptly with appropriate updates provided to the resident.	Yes	Housing Complaints Guidance: The Complaints Officer's Role page 5 <i>Once the response is complete, it should be sent as soon as possible. It should not be delayed, for example waiting for corrective actions to be carried out.</i> Housing Complaints Guidance: The Complaints Officer's Role page 8 <i>Any outstanding actions following the complaint response must be monitored by the Complaints Officer until completion, with chasing as appropriate. They must also provide suitable updates to the complainant.</i>	
6.7	Landlords must address all points raised in the complaint definition and provide clear reasons for any decisions, referencing the relevant policy, law and good practice where appropriate.	Yes	Housing Complaints Policy pages 4/5 <i>A response within 10 working days of the date of the acknowledgement... This will include... a clear statement about whether or not your complaint has been upheld, an explanation of why we have come to that decision...</i> Housing Complaints Guidance: The Complaints Officer's Role page 7 <i>The response must include:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Any relevant legislation, policy or guidance in relation to the complaint</i> • <i>An analysis of the evidence for each point of complaint (these may be grouped together) giving a clear decision and an explanation of how that decision was reached.</i> 	
6.8	Where residents raise additional complaints during the investigation, these must be incorporated into the stage 1 response if they are related and the stage 1 response has not been	Yes	Housing Complaints Guidance: The Complaints Officer's Role page 3 <i>Sometimes the complainant will contact us with additional points of complaint after the complaint investigation has begun.</i>	

	<p>issued. Where the stage 1 response has been issued, the new issues are unrelated to the issues already being investigated or it would unreasonably delay the response, the new issues must be logged as a new complaint.</p>		<p><i>If these points are not related to the existing complaint, they should be treated as a new complaint, so assessed for being in scope and so on.</i></p> <p><i>If these points are related to the existing complaint, the Complaints Officer should then consider whether they should be incorporated into that investigation, or considered as a separate, new complaint.</i></p> <p><i>If the response to the existing complaint has not been issued and including the new points would not unreasonably delay the response, they should be incorporated into that case. If doing so would cause significant delay to the response, but it would not make sense to handle them separately, it would be acceptable to agree an extension with the complainant to cater for this.</i></p> <p><i>Where the response to the existing complaint has already been sent, the new issues must be logged as a new complaint, but linked to the existing complaint.</i></p>	
<p>6.9</p>	<p>Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage 1 in clear, plain language:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. the complaint stage; b. the complaint definition; c. the decision on the complaint; d. the reasons for any decisions made; e. the details of any remedy offered to put things right; f. details of any outstanding actions; and g. details of how to escalate the matter to stage 2 if the individual is not satisfied with the response. 	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Housing Complaints Policy pages 4/5</p> <p><i>A response within 10 working days of the date of the acknowledgement ... This will include confirmation of which stage it is and the complaint definition, a clear statement about whether or not your complaint has been upheld, an explanation of why we have come to that decision, where appropriate an offer of remedy and what we will do to prevent it from happening again, along with how to refer your complaint to the next stage if you are still unhappy.</i></p> <p>Housing Complaints Guidance: The Complaints Officer's Role page 4</p> <p><i>The response must include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The stage of complaint</i> • <i>The complaint definition</i> 	<p>Need to add stage, definition</p>

Stage 2

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
6.10	If all or part of the complaint is not resolved to the resident's satisfaction at stage 1, it must be progressed to stage 2 of the landlord's procedure. Stage 2 is the landlord's final response.	Yes	If a complaint has completed stage 1 of the policy and a request for escalation to stage 2 is received, the stage 2 process will be started. The Council operates a two-stage process.	
6.11	Requests for stage 2 must be acknowledged, defined and logged at stage 2 of the complaints procedure within five working days of the escalation request being received.	Yes	Housing Complaints Policy page 5 <i>If we decide to carry out further investigation, you can expect:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Contact to confirm who is dealing with the case, our understanding of your complaint and your desired outcomes (formal acknowledgement). This will happen within 5 working days</i> 	

			Housing Complaints Guidance: The Complaints Officer's Role page 7 <i>The Complaints Officer must define the complaint, log it on the central record and acknowledge receipt within 5 working days.</i>	
6.12	Residents must not be required to explain their reasons for requesting a stage 2 consideration. Landlords are expected to make reasonable efforts to understand why a resident remains unhappy as part of its stage 2 response.	Yes	Housing Complaints Guidance: The Complaints Officer's Role page 6 <i>We must make reasonable efforts to understand why the complainant remains unhappy after the stage 1 investigation without requiring the complainant to set this out. However, if a meaningful consideration at stage 2 of the process cannot be made because this is unclear then the Complaints Officer should contact the complainant for clarification.</i>	
6.13	The person considering the complaint at stage 2 must not be the same person that considered the complaint at stage 1.	Yes	Housing Complaints Policy page 5 <i>Stage 2 is a review of the stage 1 complaint, with possible further investigation carried out by an appropriate member of staff who has not had any previous involvement in the case.</i>	
6.14	Landlords must issue a final response to the stage 2 <u>within 20 working days</u> of the complaint being acknowledged.	Yes	Housing Complaints Policy pages 5/6 <i>If we decide to carry out further investigation, you can expect:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>A response from a senior officer within 20 working days of the formal acknowledgement</i> 	
6.15	Landlords must decide whether an extension to this timescale is needed when considering the complexity of the complaint and then inform the resident of the expected timescale for response. Any extension must be no more than 20 working days without good reason, and the reason(s) must be clearly explained to the resident.	Yes	Housing Complaints Policy page 6 <i>Where there is good reason, for example a case is particularly complex, or key people are not available, the timescale for response may be extended by up to 20 working days. We will contact you to explain why this has happened and when you can expect a response. In exceptional circumstances we may need to extend the timescale further and will write to explain why and agree a suitable extension with you. We will update</i>	

			<p><i>you at suitable intervals until the case is completed.</i></p> <p>Housing Complaints Guidance: The Complaints Officer's Role page 7 <i>As at stage 1, the Complaints Officer should consider whether the stage 2 can be reasonably expected to be completed within the standard timescale, or if an extension should be applied. The advice in the stage 1 '1.4 Setting the timescale' section can also be used at stage 2.</i></p>	
6.16	When an organisation informs a resident about an extension to these timescales, they must be provided with the contact details of the Ombudsman.	Yes	<p>Housing Complaints Guidance: The Complaints Officer's Role page 6 <i>As at stage 1 if at any point an extension is applied we must provide details of the ombudsman when we inform the complainant.</i></p>	
6.17	A complaint response must be provided to the resident when the answer to the complaint is known, not when the outstanding actions required to address the issue are completed. Outstanding actions must still be tracked and actioned promptly with appropriate updates provided to the resident.	Yes	<p>Housing Complaints Guidance: The Complaints Officer's Role page 7 <i>Once the response is complete, it should be sent as soon as possible. It should not be delayed, for example waiting for corrective actions to be carried out.</i></p> <p>Housing Complaints Guidance: The Complaints Officer's Role page 8 <i>Any outstanding actions following the complaint response must be monitored by the Complaints Officer until completion, with chasing as appropriate. They must also provide suitable updates to the complainant.</i></p>	
6.18	Landlords must address all points raised in the complaint definition and provide clear reasons for any decisions, referencing the relevant policy, law and good practice where appropriate.	Yes	<p>Housing Complaints Policy page 6 <i>A response from a senior officer within 20 working days of the formal acknowledgement confirming the complaint definition, setting out the decision on the complaint... You will also receive a copy of the investigator's full report explaining what was considered, analysis of your complaint</i></p>	

			<i>and how we came to our decision.</i>	
6.19	Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage 2 in clear, plain language: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. the complaint stage; b. the complaint definition; c. the decision on the complaint; d. the reasons for any decisions made; e. the details of any remedy offered to put things right; f. details of any outstanding actions; and g. details of how to escalate the matter to the Ombudsman Service if the individual remains dissatisfied. 	Yes	<p>Housing Complaints Policy page 6 <i>A response from a senior officer within 20 working days of the formal acknowledgement confirming which stage it is and the complaint definition, setting out the decision on the complaint, what actions or remedy we intend to make where appropriate and what to do if you remain unhappy. You will also receive a copy of the investigator's full report explaining what was considered, analysis of your complaint and how we came to our decision</i></p> <p>Housing Complaints Guidance: The Complaints Officer's Role page 7 <i>The response must include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The stage of complaint</i> • <i>The complaint definition</i> • <i>The decision on the complaint</i> • <i>Details of any remedies offered to correct any fault; where outstanding, to include timescales for expected completion</i> • <i>How to escalate the complaint to the ombudsman</i> • <i>Any comments the senior officer would like to make to the complainant</i> • <i>The investigator's report</i> 	
6.20	Stage 2 is the landlord's final response and must involve all suitable staff members needed to issue such a response.	Yes	<p>Housing Complaints Guidance: The Complaints Officer's Role page 7 <i>Stage 2 is the Council's final response on a complaint and the investigation and adjudication processes must include all suitable staff members needed to issue such a response.</i></p>	

Section 7: Putting things right

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
7.1	<p>Where something has gone wrong a landlord must acknowledge this and set out the actions it has already taken, or intends to take, to put things right. These can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apologising; • Acknowledging where things have gone wrong; • Providing an explanation, assistance or reasons; • Taking action if there has been delay; • Reconsidering or changing a decision; • Amending a record or adding a correction or addendum; • Providing a financial remedy; • Changing policies, procedures or practices. 	Yes	<p>Housing Complaints Policy pages 4/5 <i>A response...will include... where appropriate an offer of remedy and what we will do to prevent it from happening again (Stage 1)</i></p> <p>Housing Complaints Policy page 6 <i>A response...setting out... what actions or remedy we intend to make where appropriate (Stage 2)</i></p> <p>Housing Complaints Policy page 6 <i>Where fault has been found, we will apologise and try to put you back in the position you would have been in if nothing had gone wrong. This could be the provision of a service, correcting an error, or a change of decision. It may be that an apology is a suitable remedy for the complaint. The remedy offered will depend on what has happened and the effect, or injustice, that this has caused.</i> <i>We will look at why the fault happened and aim to make sure it does not happen again. This may result in corrective actions such as staff training, improved provision of information or a change to our procedures.</i></p> <p>Housing Complaints Guidance: The Complaints Officer's Role page 8 <i>Where any point of complaint at any stage has been upheld or partly upheld, we must be open and honest about it, acknowledging what went wrong and offering some form of remedy</i></p>	

			<i>The remedies will vary according to the level of fault and how this has affected the complainant</i>	
7.2	Any remedy offered must reflect the impact on the resident as a result of any fault identified.	Yes	Housing Complaints Policy page 6 <i>The remedy offered will depend on what has happened and the effect, or injustice, that this has caused.</i> Housing Complaints Guidance: The Complaints Officer's Role page 8 <i>The remedies will vary according to the level of fault and how this has affected the complainant</i>	
7.3	The remedy offer must clearly set out what will happen and by when, in agreement with the resident where appropriate. Any remedy proposed must be followed through to completion.	Yes	Housing Complaints Guidance: The Complaints Officer's Role page 8 <i>The remedy offer must clearly set out what will happen and when, in agreement with the complainant where appropriate.</i> <i>Any outstanding actions following the complaint response must be monitored by the Complaints Officer until completion, with chasing as appropriate.</i>	
7.4	Landlords must take account of the guidance issued by the Ombudsman when deciding on appropriate remedies.	Yes	Housing Complaints Guidance: The Complaints Officer's Role page 8 <i>The Complaints Officer will assist investigating officers if they need advice on remedies for upheld points of complaint.</i> <i>They should take account of the Housing Ombudsman's guidance on remedies.</i> Housing Complaints Guidance: What to do if you receive a complaint page 6 <i>When considering what would be an appropriate remedy, you must take into account the Housing Ombudsman's guidance on remedies.</i>	

Section 8: Putting things right

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
8.1	<p>Landlords must produce an annual complaints performance and service improvement report for scrutiny and challenge, which must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. the annual self-assessment against this Code to ensure their complaint handling policy remains in line with its requirements. b. a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the landlord's complaint handling performance. This must also include a summary of the types of complaints the landlord has refused to accept; c. any findings of non-compliance with this Code by the Ombudsman; d. the service improvements made as a result of the learning from complaints; e. any annual report about the landlord's performance from the Ombudsman; and f. any other relevant reports or publications produced by the Ombudsman in relation to the work of the landlord. 	No	The annual report for 2023/24 was considered by the Executive Member for Culture, Arts and Housing on the 12 th June 2024 and the Housing and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 10 th June 2024.	North Yorkshire is in its infancy. We are working on introducing a single reporting system which will enable more detailed reporting, including what types of complaints were refused. At present that data is not available.
8.2	The annual complaints performance and service improvement report must be reported to the landlord's governing body (or equivalent) and published on the on the section of its website relating to complaints. The governing body's response to the report must be published alongside this.	Yes	Once the annual report for 2023/24 is considered by the Executive Member for Culture, Arts and Housing on the 12 th June 2024 and the Housing and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 10 th June 2024, it will be found on the Council's website on the 'Complaints, Comments or Compliments' page including response.	

8.3	Landlords must also carry out a self-assessment following a significant restructure, merger and/or change in procedures.	Yes	The Council will do this as necessary	
8.4	Landlords may be asked to review and update the self-assessment following an Ombudsman investigation.	Yes	We will respond to any such requests appropriately	
8.5	If a landlord is unable to comply with the Code due to exceptional circumstances, such as a cyber incident, they must inform the Ombudsman, provide information to residents who may be affected, and publish this on their website Landlords must provide a timescale for returning to compliance with the Code.	Yes	We will do this as required	

Section 9: Scrutiny & oversight: continuous learning and improvement

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
9.1	Landlords must look beyond the circumstances of the individual complaint and consider whether service improvements can be made as a result of any learning from the complaint.	Yes	<p>Housing Complaints Guidance: The Complaints Officer's Role page 8 <i>We must look beyond the individual complaint and consider if there are any wider service improvements that should be made as a result of the learning from the case.</i></p> <p>Housing Complaints Guidance: What to do if you receive a complaint page 7 <i>You should look beyond the individual aspects of the complaint and consider if there are any wider service improvements that should be made as a result of the learning from the case.</i></p>	

9.2	A positive complaint handling culture is integral to the effectiveness with which landlords resolve disputes. Landlords must use complaints as a source of intelligence to identify issues and introduce positive changes in service delivery.	Yes	<p>Housing Complaints Policy page 1 <i>We are committed to providing high quality services to those who live in, work in, or visit North Yorkshire, but in any organisation things can go wrong. We want to know when this happens so that we can try to put it right and prevent it from happening again.</i></p> <p>Housing Complaints Guidance: What to do if you receive a complaint page 1 <i>Complaints are valuable. They provide us with useful feedback that can be used to identify issues and inform improvements to our services. As a council we take complaints seriously and prioritise this process in order to both provide a good service to complainants and learn as much as we can from them. This is a core service, affecting all services across the Authority.</i></p> <p>Housing Complaints Guidance: The Complaints Officer's Role page 8 <i>We must look beyond the individual complaint and consider if there are any wider service improvements that should be made as a result of the learning from the case.</i></p>	
9.3	Accountability and transparency are also integral to a positive complaint handling culture. Landlords must report back on wider learning and improvements from complaints to stakeholders, such as residents' panels, staff and relevant committees.	No	<p>Revised governance arrangements have been installed, a new Member-led Housing & Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee has been created and will receive reports on complaints data and wider learning on a quarterly basis. We will look to replicate this for tenant panels once those are established.</p> <p>Our Housing Improvement Plan includes actions on staff learning from complaint handling.</p>	As the new council works towards unifying its services, our residents panels are paused. We are looking to reintroduce these as soon as possible. We also plan to introduce a 'you said, we did' section on the complaints page of our website.

9.4	Landlords must appoint a suitably senior lead person as accountable for their complaint handling. This person must assess any themes or trends to identify potential systemic issues, serious risks, or policies and procedures that require revision.	Yes	<p>The Corporate Complaints Manager oversees the Housing Complaints Policy and process. Relevant statistical data is produced and shared with others as appropriate. They also review policies and procedures as required.</p> <p>The Housing Complaints Officer produces regular performance reports on complaints which is shared with relevant senior management in the Housing service.</p>	
9.5	In addition to this a member of the governing body (or equivalent) must be appointed to have lead responsibility for complaints to support a positive complaint handling culture. This person is referred to as the Member Responsible for Complaints ('the MRC').	Yes	Councillor Simon Myers is the Executive Member for Culture, Arts and Housing. He is the Council's MRC.	
9.6	The MRC will be responsible for ensuring the governing body receives regular information on complaints that provides insight on the landlord's complaint handling performance. This person must have access to suitable information and staff to perform this role and report on their findings.	Yes	As part of the new governance and oversight arrangements the O&S Committee will receive quarterly updates on complaints performance and will be briefed by the Exec Member on relevant information.	

9.7	<p>As a minimum, the MRC and the governing body (or equivalent) must receive:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> regular updates on the volume, categories and outcomes of complaints, alongside complaint handling performance; regular reviews of issues and trends arising from complaint handling; regular updates on the outcomes of the Ombudsman's investigations and progress made in complying with orders related to severe maladministration findings; and annual complaints performance and service improvement report. 	Yes	<p>As part of the new governance and oversight arrangements the O&S Committee will receive quarterly updates on complaints performance and will be briefed by the Exec Member on relevant information.</p>	
9.8	<p>Landlords must have a standard objective in relation to complaint handling for all relevant employees or third parties that reflects the need to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> have a collaborative and co-operative approach towards resolving complaints, working with colleagues across teams and departments; take collective responsibility for any shortfalls identified through complaints, rather than blaming others; and act within the professional standards for engaging with complaints as set by any relevant professional body. 	Yes	<p>Housing Complaints Guidance: What to do if you receive a complaint page 1 <i>In order to handle complaints in the best way, staff must:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>have a collaborative and cooperative approach towards resolving complaints, working with colleagues across teams and departments;</i> <i>take collective responsibility for any shortfalls identified through complaints, rather than blaming others; and</i> <i>act within the professional standards for engaging with complaints as set by any relevant professional body.</i> 	<p>As legacy contracts come to an end, new contracts will include a requirement that complaints be handled in alignment with this code.</p>

Housing Complaints Policy

Introduction

We are committed to providing high quality services to those who live in, work in, or visit North Yorkshire, but in any organisation things can go wrong. We want to know when this happens so that we can try to put it right and prevent it from happening again. We would also like to know when we do something well, or if you have any comments you would like to make on our services. Making a complaint will not affect how you receive our services.

This policy relates to complaints, compliments or comments made about housing.

Compliments and Comments

You may want to let us know when you have received good service and we would like to hear from you. By finding out what our customers value, we can share that information with services to help us improve.

Comments are more neutral in nature and we appreciate constructive feedback from our service users. This can help inform our service planning and operational decision making.

Definition of a Complaint

We define a complaint as an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the organisation, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual resident/service user or group of residents/service users.

It might be about:

- failure to deliver a service;
- a delay in providing a service;
- unsatisfactory quality of a service;
- the behaviour of a member of our staff; or
- the failure of a member of our staff in following council policy.

What we do not deal with under this policy

There are some things that we will not deal with under this policy. These include:

- Request for service – a routine request for service, such as a request for repair or a request to us to help with a landlord disrepair issue.
- Request for information
- Any matter where another right of appeal already exists, such as homelessness decisions, housing allocations decisions, appeals against enforcement notices or penalty charges.
- Where legal action is underway, complaints may be suspended until the completion of that process. Any decisions made by the court cannot be considered under the Council's complaints procedure.
- Disagreement with policy or decisions properly taken. However, we may accept a complaint about the way the policy or decision was made, or if you feel it has been applied unfairly.
- Complaints that have already been considered under the complaints policy and a final decision given by the Council, or where any further investigation would not achieve any more for the complainant.
- Complaints that fall under a different complaints policy such as adult social care, children's social care, corporate or councillors code of conduct (see below).
- Complaints about Registered Providers. Registered Providers are wholly independent of the Council and have their own separate complaints processes.
- Insurance claims. Insurance decisions will not be considered under this policy, however, we will consider complaints about the insurance process, for example delay.

If we decide that your complaint does not fall under this policy, we will write to you to explain why and what your next steps could be. We will also provide details of how to contact the Ombudsman should you wish to do so.

Other complaints policies

Complaints about some of our services are dealt with by different policies. More information can be found on [our website](#). These services are:

- Adult social care
- Children's social care
- Corporate complaints (all other services)
- Councillor code of conduct

Late complaints

As time passes it becomes more difficult to investigate events fairly and fully. We therefore ask that complaints are made no later than 12 months after the date you became aware of the problem. However, we understand that there may be reasons why you may not have been able to bring your complaint during that time and if you feel you have good reason please explain them to us and we will consider whether it is appropriate to extend our timescales.

Who can complain?

A complaint can be made by anyone using a council service, or anyone affected by any error in our service provision, or by any other person on behalf of an individual (in these cases we must have consent from the individual in writing, unless you are a person legally entitled to act for the person using our services – you can use the form at the end of this policy to do this).

The Council will consider complaints made anonymously, but may not investigate, for example where we do not have enough information. If you do complain anonymously we cannot provide a response and will not be able to provide any information should you contact us about it later.

You can ask that your complaint is dealt with in confidence and we will do this where possible, but in some cases progressing the complaint would necessarily reveal your identity. If this is the case we will let you know and discuss next steps.

How to complain

You can make a complaint in a number of ways:

In the first instance, if you know the member of staff who delivers the service you can contact them about the problem and they will do their best to resolve the issue quickly.

Otherwise you can contact us:

- By telephone – call our Customer Service Team on 0300 131 2 131
- Online using [the form on our website](#)
- In writing:
North Yorkshire Council
County Hall
Northallerton
North Yorkshire
DL7 8AD
- In person at one of our public access points – it would be helpful if you could call ahead to make an appointment so that we can make sure an appropriate member of staff will be available for you.

Although we will accept complaints made via social media, in order to maintain confidentiality and privacy, we will not progress them using this method. We will ask you how else you would like to communicate with us in order for us to investigate and provide a full response.

Ideally the complaint should be made immediately, or as soon as possible after the reason for complaint has occurred.

Putting the complaint in writing can be helpful, as it allows you to clearly set out your complaint and is an effective way of making sure we understand your case. You can do this by email or by post, though using our [online form](#) is a fast and efficient way to reach us.

When making your complaint, you should let us know:

- Your name
- Details of how you would like us to contact you
- What has gone wrong. Provide as much **relevant** detail as possible to enable us to understand and look into the matter. This may include details such as dates, locations, names and any relevant documents, photos or videos.
- How this has affected you
- How you would like us to resolve the matter

If you need help to make your complaint, for example an interpreter, or provision of information in different formats please let us know and we will make all reasonable efforts to help you.

There is more information on [our website](#).

You can also ask someone else to make the complaint on your behalf, or accompany you to meetings, such as a relative or friend, or you can contact a relevant organisation, such as Citizens Advice Bureau or an advocacy service, or you can contact your [local councillor](#). If you do ask someone else to make your complaint for you, we will need to have your consent in writing for us to progress this with them. You can use the form at the end of this policy if you wish for this purpose.

The two stage process

The Housing Complaints Policy has two stages. Complaints will start at stage 1, then, if you remain dissatisfied, progress to stage 2.

Stage 1 (Local Resolution)

Stage 1 is handled by the service team relevant to the case. They are in the best position to know the details of your case and potentially provide a fast response. Depending on the circumstances surrounding your complaint, any member of a service team could handle the case, though if your complaint is about a specific individual, they will not investigate the complaint themselves.

You can expect:

- If a response cannot be provided within 5 working days of receipt of the complaint, an acknowledgement will be sent, letting you know who is dealing with your complaint and what will happen next. We will set out our understanding of your complaint and what outcomes you are seeking (the complaint definition). If the Council is not responsible for any part of your complaint, we will let you know. If we are unclear on any aspect, we will ask you for clarification.
- A response within 10 working days of the date of the acknowledgement (though this may sometimes be extended up to 20 working days, for example for very complex cases, or where key people are not available). This will include confirmation of which stage it is and

the complaint definition, a clear statement about whether or not your complaint has been upheld, an explanation of why we have come to that decision, where appropriate an offer of remedy and what we will do to prevent it from happening again, along with how to refer your complaint to the next stage if you are still unhappy.

If the investigation will take longer than 10 working days we will tell you, explaining why and letting you know when you can expect a full response. If we believe the investigation will take longer than 20 working days we will contact you to explain why and to agree a new deadline. We will update you at suitable intervals until the case is completed.

We may suspend a case for reasons such as where a legal process has started that affects the complaint, or where we are reliant on the outcome of another process e.g. tribunal. We will also suspend a case where it is unclear what the points of complaint are until they are agreed, or if we need more information or documents from you that we require to progress the case.

If you are unhappy with the outcome at this stage, you can ask that your complaint be considered at stage 2. We would expect you to ask for this within 20 working days of the date of the stage 1 response, but will use discretion if we receive this later. We would not consider any stage 2 request received more than six months after the stage 1 response, unless there is a compelling reason to do so.

It would be helpful if your stage 2 request included your reasons for wishing to progress to the next stage and what your desired outcome is.

Stage 2 (Review)

Stage 2 is a review of the stage 1 complaint, with possible further investigation carried out by an appropriate member of staff who has not had any previous involvement in the case.

At stage 2 you can expect:

- An acknowledgement of receipt within 5 working days. We will look at your complaint and the stage 1 investigation to decide whether we will carry out further investigation or whether we consider that the stage 1 response provides a suitable final response from the Council.
 - We may decide that any further investigation would not achieve any more for you, as the Council has said all it can about the subject. It may be the case that we have said that we have provided our final decision on a matter. In these cases, we will not progress any further through the stage 2 process. We will write to you to explain why and to let you know what your next steps are.
 - If we decide to carry out further investigation, you can expect:
 - Contact to confirm who is dealing with the case, our understanding of your complaint and your desired outcomes (formal acknowledgement). This will happen within 5 working days and then the investigation will be suspended until the points of complaint have been agreed with you.

- Once the points of complaint have been agreed the investigator may contact you to discuss the case. This may be in writing, by phone or in person, depending on the complaint or whether you have specified a preferred method of contact.
- A response from a senior officer within 20 working days of the formal acknowledgement (taking into account any suspensions) confirming which stage it is and the complaint definition, setting out the decision on the complaint, what actions or remedy we intend to make where appropriate and what to do if you remain unhappy. You will also receive a copy of the investigator's full report explaining what was considered, analysis of your complaint and how we came to our decision.

Where there is good reason, for example a case is particularly complex, or key people are not available, the timescale for response may be extended by up to 20 working days. We will contact you to explain why this has happened and when you can expect a response. In exceptional circumstances we may need to extend the timescale further and will write to explain why and agree a suitable extension with you. We will update you at suitable intervals until the case is completed.

A case at stage 2 can be suspended under certain circumstances (see Stage 1), which will be explained to you should this happen.

On completion of a stage 2 investigation the Council will consider the matter closed and will not enter into any further correspondence on the issue, unless **significantly new** and **relevant** information is provided **that may alter the outcome** of the complaint. We would expect this information to be provided at the earliest opportunity. This information will be considered, but we may choose not to take any further action if we believe it would not change the outcome to your complaint.

Putting things right

We will ask you what you would like us to do to remedy your complaint (your desired outcome) and, where a complaint is upheld, we will consider this, but it may not be possible to do exactly what you have asked us to.

Where fault has been found, we will apologise and try to put you back in the position you would have been in if nothing had gone wrong. This could be the provision of a service, correcting an error, or a change of decision. It may be that an apology is a suitable remedy for the complaint. The remedy offered will depend on what has happened and the effect, or injustice, that this has caused.

We will look at why the fault happened and aim to make sure it does not happen again. This may result in corrective actions such as staff training, improved provision of information or a change to our procedures.

Ombudsmen

Included in our response at stage 2 we will let you know how to refer your complaint on to a suitable independent body for consideration should you remain unhappy. This will usually be the Housing Ombudsman (HO) or the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO).

Housing Ombudsman

The HO is set up by law to look at complaints about housing organisations that are registered with them, including housing associations and local authorities.

You can approach the HO at any time during your complaint investigation should you require their advice.

The HO is an independent body that will consider complaints about housing. It will normally only consider complaints made within 12 months from the date you first knew about the matter complained about, but can decide to look at older complaints if there is a good reason to do so.

Information on how to refer your complaint to the HO can be found at:

Website: www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk

Telephone: 0300 111 3000

Opening hours: Monday – Friday 9:15am to 5:15pm

The Housing Ombudsman has introduced a Complaint Handling Code which the Council abides by. Details of this code can be found on [their website](#).

Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman

You will usually be expected to have exhausted the Council's complaints policy before referral to the LGSCO and we will make it clear in our responses to you when this has happened. However, if you have not heard from us within a reasonable time, they may decide to look into your complaint anyway.

The LGSCO is an independent body that will consider complaints about councils, adult social care providers and some other organisations providing public services. It will normally only consider complaints made within 12 months from the date you first knew about the matter complained about, but can decide to look at older complaints if there is a good reason to do so.

Information on how to refer your complaint to the LGSCO can be found at:

Website: www.lgo.org.uk

Telephone: 0300 061 0614

Opening hours: Monday – Friday 10am to 4pm (except public holidays)

How you can help us

We understand that it is frustrating when we do not meet your expectations and just the act of making a complaint can be a very emotional or stressful experience. Our staff will work with you to make the process as easy as possible, but we ask that you treat them with respect and do not use abusive language or behaviour. We may ask you for more information, or for relevant documents or other evidence and would appreciate if you could provide this quickly where possible so that we can progress the investigation.

Where we consider a customer to be unreasonable in their actions, we will write explaining why we believe this is the case and what action we will take. This is explained in our Unreasonable Complainant Behaviour Policy. On rare occasions, if behaviour is extreme or unmanageable we may decide that we will no longer progress the complaint through our policy.

Where you can find this policy

This policy is available on [our website](#) and can be requested in pdf format or hard copy. If you need it in a different format please let us know and we will make all reasonable efforts to provide that.

It will be publicised in any resident newsletter or similar.

Complaints Consent Form



Complaint regarding (brief details):	
I consent to (name): pursuing the above complaint on my behalf. I consent to North Yorkshire Council sharing any personal information about me with the above person as necessary in order to deal with and respond to my complaint only. I understand that this may mean disclosing to that person sensitive personal information held about me and that this may include historic information and information from my social care or education record, relating to my physical or mental health or criminal (including alleged) activity.	
I would like correspondence about the enquiry to be (please tick all that apply):	
<input type="checkbox"/> sent to me	<input type="checkbox"/> copied to me
<input type="checkbox"/> sent to:	<input type="checkbox"/> copied to:
Any other information:	
Name (print):	
Signed:	Date:

If you do not consent for the Council to share your information with the above person, we will still reply to any correspondence from that person, but will only be able to include generic, non-personal information in its response. The Council will regard this consent as being valid for 6 months or until the matter is resolved, either by your satisfaction with our response, or by exhausting our complaints procedures.

If required, you should attach this form to your complaint when you send it to us, or send it to your complaints handler if you already know who that is. If you are unsure where to send this, please send to NYC.ContactUs@northyorks.gov.uk or Corporate Complaints Team, County Hall, Northallerton North Yorkshire DL7 8AD providing brief details of your complaint and any contact you have already had with the Council.

Housing Complaints Guidance: What to do if you receive a complaint

This guidance is for staff dealing with complaints about housing. It should be considered alongside the NYC Housing Complaints Policy.

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Introduction

Complaints are valuable. They provide us with useful feedback that can be used to identify issues and inform improvements to our services. As a council we take complaints seriously and prioritise this process in order to both provide a good service to complainants and learn as much as we can from them. This is a core service, affecting all services across the Authority.

All staff must complete the mandatory elearning package so that they are aware of the importance of good complaints handling, our procedures and what to do if they receive a complaint.

In order to handle complaints in the best way, staff must:

- have a collaborative and cooperative approach towards resolving complaints, working with colleagues across teams and departments;
- take collective responsibility for any shortfalls identified through complaints, rather than blaming others; and
- act within the professional standards for engaging with complaints as set by any relevant professional body.

Definition of a complaint

It is difficult to say definitively what is a complaint and what is not. The formal definition is:

An expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the organisation, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual resident/service user or group of residents/service users.

It should be noted that a customer does not have to use the word 'complaint' in order for us to deal with it as such. Similarly, just because someone says 'I want to complain about...' does not mean that the complaints procedure is the appropriate process to follow.

It can be difficult to decide if something should be treated as a complaint or not. To avoid inconsistency the Complaints Officer for the Community Development Directorate will assess all potential complaints to make that decision.

Service Requests

Often a customer will use the word 'complaint' in a request for us to do something which we would see as being 'business as usual', such as a repair. It may be that they are reporting a fault rather than making a complaint. In these cases, we would call these 'service requests'.

Sometimes a service request can escalate to become a complaint, for example where we have promised action, but have delayed carrying it out, or failed to complete it altogether. In these cases it would be appropriate to escalate to a stage 1 complaint. It is important to note that a service request can continue even if it has been escalated to a complaint. For example, where a customer has complained that a repair has not been carried out within the timescales we promised, that repair should still be progressed while the complaint runs alongside it.

Although service requests fall outside of the complaints policy, they must be recorded, monitored and reviewed regularly until completion.

What to do if you receive a complaint about Housing Services from a customer

If the complaint is something that you can resolve straight away, do so. For example, a complaint could be made over the phone and you are able to provide an explanation/resolution immediately, but you must provide the Complaints Officer with all relevant documentation/records of conversations in order to complete the central record. This should be sent to ComDev.Complaints@northyorks.gov.uk

Otherwise, any complaint (or anything you think may be a complaint) about Housing Services must be sent to ComDev.Complaints@northyorks.gov.uk for assessment, recording, acknowledgement and allocation.

The Complaints Officer will check whether the case is within scope and whether it should be treated as a complaint or in a different way. If accepted as a complaint, they will look at the complexity of the case and any vulnerability or risk for the complainant to make a decision on an appropriate timescale for investigation. Following this they will log the case, send an acknowledgement of receipt and will allocate an officer to prepare a response.

They will contact the investigating officer to provide the details of complaint, what is expected from them and the deadline by which to provide a draft response.

What to do if you have been allocated a complaint for investigation

Key actions

An investigator must:

- Deal with each complaint on its merits
- Act independently and have an open mind
- Give the complainant a fair chance to set out their opinion
- Take measures to address any actual or perceived conflict of interest
- Consider all the relevant information and evidence carefully

At stage 1 the investigator should carry out an appropriate investigation and prepare a draft response to the customer. They must send this to the Complaints Officer within the timescales they have been given. For stage 2 it is the same process, however, they will produce a full investigation report rather than a response letter.

The investigator can contact the Complaints Officer at any time for support and guidance.

Stage 1 Complaint

The standard timescale for a response is 10 working days from the date of acknowledgement, however you must make all efforts to provide a response as soon as is reasonably possible. This timescale may be extended by the Complaints Officer if, for example, it is a particularly complex case. If an extension has not been applied and you believe that there is good reason to extend the deadline, contact the Complaints Officer to discuss this.

The investigation

It may be helpful in the first instance for the investigator to contact the complainant to introduce themselves, to clarify anything, or if they think a general discussion would be helpful. The investigator should keep a record of any conversations they have.

Briefly, an investigation should be proportionate to the complaint. In some cases this will be a desktop exercise, looking solely at correspondence or internal policies. Other cases will involve interviewing witnesses to the case, reviewing legislation or national guidance, working with other organisations, seeking legal advice, retrieving documents from archive and so on. Basic steps of investigation are:

- Listen to what the customer has to say in their complaint
- Identify the points of complaint (the Complaints Officer will do this – if you believe they should be different contact the Complaints Officer to discuss this)
- Identify what evidence you need to consider and how you will gather it
- Gather the evidence and analyse it
- Make a decision for each point of complaint – Upheld, Partly Upheld, Not Upheld or Undecided
- If there are several points of complaint, make an overall decision for the complaint
- If the complaint is upheld or partly upheld determine what would be an appropriate remedy – see [Remedies](#) below

Please see the [Investigation Checklist](#) at the end of this document.

Draft Response

The draft response should be set out in a letter format, addressed to the complainant. Producing a good stage 1 response is very important, whether the complaint is upheld or not. It can avoid escalation and therefore time and resource, but most importantly it provides the best service for our customers.

The response must include:

- What stage in the process the complaint is at
- The complaint definition (the points of complaint and the complainant's desired outcomes)
- Any points that were not investigated and why
- Any relevant legislation, policy or guidance in relation to your investigation
- An analysis of the evidence for each point of complaint (these may be grouped together) giving a clear decision and an explanation of how that decision was reached.
- Where there is more than one point of complaint, the overall decision for the complaint
- Where any point of complaint is upheld: an apology; appropriate remedies, setting out timescales for any outstanding; and what we will do to prevent the fault from happening again. This should be in agreement with the complainant where appropriate.
- How to escalate the complaint to the next stage, with contact details and timescale.

It can sometimes be useful to set out a timeline of events, or give a narrative of what happened to make your response clearer.

Response Checklist

Read and check your response. Read and check it again. If it is a complex case you might like to get someone else to proofread it too:

- **Have you answered every point of complaint?** If there is a reason you have not investigated anything, or made a decision to discontinue investigating it, you must set this out and explain why.
- **Is there a clear decision?** There must be a clear decision for each point of complaint. Where there is more than one point you must provide an overall decision for the complaint and make it clear.
- **Would a layperson understand your response?** Is it in plain English? Is there any jargon or unnecessarily complicated language? If you are using acronyms make sure you have explained what they stand for. Use simpler words like 'try' instead of 'endeavour'.
- **Is it clear?** Set out the complaint, the facts and your analysis and how you have reached your decisions. Would the average person understand what you have said?
- **Have you used an appropriate tone?** Check that you have not been defensive or emotional. If you had received the response, would you think it was appropriate? Sometimes you do need to be firmer in your response – but be careful not to go too far. Just think about the situation, the history of the case and the previous behaviour of the customer and adjust your tone as necessary.
- **Be personal.** Use 'you' and write as if you are speaking with the person. Call the Council 'us' or 'we', not 'the Organisation' or 'Authority'. Say 'our' instead of 'the Council's'. If you have to give a bad message, think about how you would like to receive that news. Still be clear and factual, but be human.
- **Check for accuracy.** Dot the I's and cross the T's. Check spelling and grammar. Check that every fact you say is true.
- **Say sorry if something has gone wrong.** A good apology is essential.
- **Is there a reference to stage 2?** You must tell the complainant how to escalate to the next stage.

It is important that we handle complaints promptly. It is best practice and helps to maintain a good relationship with the complainant. The Complaints Officer will set a deadline for a draft response to be sent to them (ComDev.Complaints@northyorks.gov.uk), but this should be sent as soon as you have reached your decision and set it out. Do not delay, even if there are outstanding action points.

Additional points raised

Sometimes the complainant will raise additional points of complaint after the investigation has started. Whether you include these in your investigation or not depends on the situation.

- [If the new points do not relate to the complaint you are investigating](#), they should be treated as a new complaint. Inform the Complaints Officer and they will take that forward.
- [If the new points do relate to the complaint and you have not yet sent your response](#), think about whether including them in your investigation would unreasonably delay your response. Let the Complaints Officer know about the additional points of complaint and discuss how you think they should be handled.
 - If the new points would delay the response but it would not make sense to treat them as a separate complaint, you could contact the complainant to explain why an extension in this case would be appropriate and to agree an extension with them.
 - If the new points would significantly delay the response and you feel that they would be better considered as a separate complaint let the Complaints Officer know.
 - If your timescales would not be affected then include them in your investigation.
- [If your response has already been sent](#), contact the Complaints Officer to let them know about the additional points of complaint.

Stage 2 Complaint

The Stage 1 complaint will include details of how to ask for the complaint to be escalated to Stage 2 – by contacting the Complaints Officer. If you receive a request to escalate a complaint to Stage 2 direct, contact the Complaints Officer.

The Complaints Officer will assess any request for a complaint to move to Stage 2. They will send an initial acknowledgement of receipt, log the request and will then assess the case to decide whether or not it would be appropriate to investigate the complaint any further. They may contact you if you were the stage 1 investigator to discuss the case for this purpose.

- If the Complaints Officer decides that further investigation would not be appropriate they will write to the complainant to inform them, explain why and refer them to the ombudsman.
- If the decision is to investigate, the Complaints Officer will allocate a suitable investigator and will contact them to give them all the relevant information. They will also send a full acknowledgement to the complainant to explain what will happen, who by and by when.

The Complaints Officer will write to the complainant as above within 5 working days of receipt of the Stage 2 escalation request.

As the investigator you will be sent the details of the case including the Stage 1 complaint and response. As part of this, the Complaints Officer will advise what timescale you should work to.

The standard timescale for a Stage 2 complaint is 20 working days, but this can be extended by up to a further 20 working days if, for example, it is a particularly complex case. The timescale for producing the investigation report will be a little shorter to allow time for adjudication. In exceptional circumstances, the timescale may be extended further. If this happens we must keep the complainant informed about their case at suitable details. This will be arranged by the Complaints Officer.

If there has been no extension to timescales and you believe there are reasons why there should be, discuss this with the Complaints Officer.

See Stage 1 for a brief explanation of how to [investigate](#). Also look at the [Investigation Checklist](#) at the end of this document.

If you are not sure of process, or need any guidance or support contact the Complaints Officer (ComDev.Complaints@northyorks.gov.uk).

Investigation Report

At Stage 2 the investigator will prepare a full report of their investigation within the timescales set by the Complaints Officer. This will then go to a senior officer (via the Complaints Officer) for adjudication and a covering response.

The report must include:

- The date of outcome, the complaint reference, complainant name and investigator's name
- The stage of complaint
- The complaint definition (points of complaint and desired outcomes)
- Any points of complaint that were not considered and why
- What evidence you considered – which documents, what legislation/policy/guidance, who you spoke to/interviewed
- A description of what happened
- How you analysed the evidence for each point (or group of points) of complaint and came to your decision
- A clear outcome for each point (or group of points) of complaint
- Where there is more than one point of complaint, the overall decision for the complaint
- Where any point of complaint is upheld, your recommendations for remedy (see [Remedies](#) below) and what we should do to prevent the fault from happening again. These actions should be in agreement with the complainant where appropriate. There may be some recommendations for action even if the complaint itself is not upheld.

Stage 2 is the final response of the Council and all suitable staff members must be included that are required to produce a full report.

When the report is ready use the [Response Checklist](#) at Stage 1 to quality check it. When the report is finalised it should be sent to the Complaints Officer without delay (ComDev.Complaints@northyorks.gov.uk).

The Complaints Officer will review your report. If they feel there is anything missing or unclear they will contact you to discuss this. If the adjudicating officer requires any further information you will be contacted to provide this.

Remedies

Where any point of complaint has been upheld or partly upheld, we must be open and honest about it, acknowledging what went wrong and offering some form of remedy.

This will vary, depending on what the fault was and how this has impacted on the complainant. When considering what would be an appropriate remedy, you must take into account the Housing Ombudsman's guidance on remedies.

You should also take into account if the remedies you are thinking of are actually achievable for the service concerned. For example you may suggest that a full review take place within a month, but resources may not be available at that time, or it may be more complex than you think and would take longer than anticipated.

The aim is always to put the complainant back in the position they would have been in had the fault not happened. This cannot always be done, for example a service that was delayed but was ultimately provided, and so other remedies can be considered.

Examples of remedies are:

- An apology should always be made if fault is found
- Providing an explanation
- Providing a service that should have been provided
- Providing an additional service
- Carrying out staff training or guidance
- Reviewing or changing a decision
- Amending a record or adding a note or addendum
- Changing policy, guidance, procedures or practices
- Financial remedy

Each recommended remedy should be set out clearly with reasoning and an appropriate timescale. They should be made in agreement with the complainant where appropriate.

You should look beyond the individual aspects of the complaint and consider if there are any wider service improvements that should be made as a result of the learning from the case.

If you are unsure about remedies you can contact the Complaints Officer for advice and guidance.

The adjudicating officer will consider the recommendations you make and will have the ultimate decision on what will happen. The Complaints Officer will record agreed actions and will monitor them until they are completed, providing the complainant with appropriate updates.

Suspending a Case

There are some instances where it would be appropriate to suspend a complaint. Some examples are:

- Where the complaint definition is not clear or has not been agreed and we are waiting for the complainant to respond
- Where legal action is underway
- Where we are reliant on the complainant providing further information or documents in order for us to progress the case
- Where the progression of the complaint is reliant on another process

This list is not exhaustive, but any reason for suspension must be justifiable. Suspensions for staff availability or high workload for example would not be acceptable.

If you think there is good reason to suspend the complaint you must contact the Complaints Officer explaining why the case should be suspended. They will let you know if the case can be suspended for that reason, or explain why not. If not, they will discuss with you next steps.

Ombudsmen

If a complainant remains dissatisfied following the conclusion of the Council's complaints process they may refer it to the Ombudsmen. There are two ombudsmen for housing services:

- The Housing Ombudsman deals with complaints in relation to social housing
- The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman deals with other housing complaints

The ombudsman will contact the Council via the Link Officers in the Corporate Complaints Team. If the Link Officers require information they will contact the Complaints Officer who will coordinate a draft response for the Housing Service.

If you have been involved in a complaint the Complaints Officer may contact you for information. You must provide this as soon as possible and within the timescales they set. On rare occasions the ombudsman will visit the Council to inspect records and/or to interview staff. If this happens the Complaints Officer will let you know what you need to do.

Records

Remember to keep good records of your complaint handling. Any correspondence between you and the complainant or other relevant parties, or any relevant supporting documentation (such as report or surveys) should be sent to the Complaints Officer to put on the central record.

Help and Advice

For any help and advice about the complaints process please contact the Complaints Officer ComDev.Complaints@northyorks.gov.uk – more details can be found on the intranet - [Housing complaints \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

If they are not available you can contact the Corporate Complaints Team on 01609 797976. More details can be found on the intranet - [About complaints \(sharepoint.com\)](#) (see Central Services)

Investigation Checklist

Do you understand what the complaint is and what you are expected to do?

If not, contact the Complaints Officer ComDev.Complaints@northyorks.gov.uk

Listen to the customer

Consider the complaint and try to understand why they have complained. It may be helpful to call them to introduce yourself, clarify any points of complaint, or just have a general conversation with them about their complaint. Be honest and open and manage expectations as best you can. Explain what outcomes are achievable and what are not.

Identify the points of complaint

The Complaints Officer will have done this for you, but if you think the points should be different, have a discussion with them.

Is any urgent action necessary at the outset?

You may identify from the complaint that someone may be at risk and that action is required before you look at the complaint. For example, the complainant may say that they are in danger, so that should be addressed first.

Identify the evidence you will need and gather it

Read the complaint. Look at the points of complaint. In order to investigate what happened, what information will you need and how are you going to get it? Some types of evidence are:

- Legislation, policy or guidance
- Correspondence
- Records, documents, archive etc.
- Witness statements/interviews
- Plans, photos, videos or voice recordings

It can be helpful to set this out in a table to ensure you don't miss anything.

Point of complaint (or group of points)	Evidence required	Evidence Source	Plan/schedule

Having a plan is especially helpful if the complaint is complex. Think about how you will get the evidence – you may need to speak with someone – when will they be available? How will you store your evidence? Make sure it is well organised and accessible.

Don't delay – your investigation depends on the evidence you gather. Get as much together as possible as soon as you can so that you have time to analyse it properly and come to your decision.

Analyse the evidence

Be objective, consider the facts, not the emotion. What does the evidence say and how reliable is it? Some evidence is absolute, for example a photo or the date on an email. Other evidence does not carry the same weight, for example hearsay.

Think about how the evidence relates to the complaint and use it to make an informed decision. Use your judgement to decide between differing accounts of what happened. Look at the legislation, policy or guidance to see how that compares to what actually happened.

Make a decision for each point (or group of points) of complaint and the complaint as a whole

Is it upheld, partly upheld, not upheld, or is there no evidence which allows you to make a decision, for example where it is one person's word against another's – in this case it may be 'undecided'.

Where there is more than one point of complaint you must consider the outcome for each point and reach an overall decision for the case. For example if one point is upheld and another not, the overall decision may be partly upheld.

If something went wrong be honest and apologise. Then think about a remedy

We should try to put the complainant back in the place they would have been had the fault not happened. This is not always possible. Think about what went wrong and how this affected the complainant. What should we do to put it right?

If you are unsure about anything contact the Complaints Officer

HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT

Appendix H

2023/24 REVENUE BUDGET OUTTURN REPORT

BUDGET HEAD	REVISED BUDGET 2023-24 £000	FORECAST OUTTURN 2023-24 £000	USE OF RESERVES £000	FINAL OUTTURN 2023-24 £000	VARIANCE (-) = saving £000	COMMENTS
INCOME						
Rents (Council Dwellings & Hostels)	(38,125)	(38,390)	-	(38,390)	(265)	Improved position due to savings against bad debt provision - stable arrears position and minimal write offs in year
Non-dwelling rents	(423)	(416)	-	(416)	8	
	(1,387)	(1,263)	-	(1,263)	125	Various smaller variances, including £33k shortfall in RTB admin fees, £35k shortfall in Lifeline service income and £18k relating to rechargeable works to the GF.
Charges for services and facilities						
Other Income	(378)	(414)	-	(414)	(36)	
Investment Income	(1,350)	(1,912)	-	(1,912)	(563)	Increased investment income due to improved investment returns (4.98% v 4%) and stable HRA balances
TOTAL INCOME	(41,663)	(42,395)	-	(42,395)	(732)	
EXPENDITURE						
	11,057	11,243	(10)	11,233	175	There are overspends totalling £780k within repairs and maintenance budgets associated with void repairs (£361k), other planned maintenance works (£220k) and general repairs (£309k) associated with mould works, roofing works and substantial reliance on external contractors for electrical works. These costs are offset by underspends, predominantly salaries (£308k), repairs compensation payments (£90k) and other items (£154k) to arrive at the net position.
Repairs and Maintenance	9,630	8,654	-	8,654	(976)	Utilities budget are underspent by £520K. Budgets were inflated by 100% as part of 23/24 budget setting, but increases haven't been as bad as expected. £50K underspend in water / sewerage charges £95K underspend associated with a system development charge –linked to planon asset management system not yet being implemented. £212K underspend in salaries across the supervision and management areas (principally linked to vacant posts). £78K underspend relating to HRA contingency (Selby Area H) not being utilised.
Supervision, Management and Admin						
Interest Payments	3,853	3,611	-	3,611	(242)	Savings as a result of lower than anticipated borrowing (no new borrowing in year)
Debt Repayment	2,355	2,355	-	2,355	-	
Depreciation charge to major repairs	7,217	-	7,217	7,217	-	
Capital Expenditure funded from revenue	9,771	17,855	(8,083)	9,771	-	
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	43,883	43,717	(877)	42,840	(1,043)	
Drawdown from Working Balance	(2,220)	-	(2,220)	(2,220)	-	
REVISED TOTAL	-	1,322	(3,097)	(1,775)	(1,775)	

HOUSING REVIEW 2023-24

INTRODUCTION

The 2023-24 financial year saw the commencement of the new North Yorkshire Council; a unitary authority covering the seven former districts and boroughs of:

- Craven
- Hambleton
- Harrogate
- Richmondshire
- Ryedale
- Scarborough
- Selby

alongside the former county council. This has led to the creation of the largest single unitary authority by area; a huge 3,090 square miles, providing an extensive range of services across a diverse and largely rural area. The county is defined as being either sparsely populated (13%) or super-sparsely populated (85%), with a population density of 77 people per square kilometre compared to an English average of 434.

Three of the former Districts and Boroughs have a retained housing stock, preferring to keep housing services 'in house' as opposed to either forming an Arm's Length Management Organisation (ALMO) or transferring entirely to a Housing Association (HA). Consequently, the new authority has taken on the management of over 8,350 properties across the Harrogate, Richmondshire and Selby areas. Maintenance is handled primarily across a number of contracts, with a very small in-house workforce covering some routine repairs and servicing.

As a new Council in its first year of its operation, it has focussed on creating a consistent baseline of performance, integrating systems and aligning processes alongside essential restructuring of services; all against the backdrop of a more stringent and robust regulatory framework. This review will therefore summarise the following items:

- Delivery of the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM; linked to full TSM summary – appendix A)
- Review of complaints (linked to complaints self-assessment – appendix B alongside the updated complaints policy and associated staff guidance appendices C&D)
- Management costs (appendix E)

This review concerns work completed over the 2023/24 financial year, identifies established gaps and highlights plans and proposals that will be introduced over the 2024/25 year.

TENANT SATISFACTION MEASURES

Introduction

The TSMs form part of the revised regulatory framework, with landlords required to survey customers on their perceptions of a variety of key services. For NYC the survey was delivered through a staged mixed-mode methodological approach whereby tenants with an email address were invited to complete the survey first, followed by a postal survey sent to a sample of non-respondents, and finally a telephone 'booster' survey.

In total, 2,241 responses were achieved from the original survey population of 8,329, split as follows:

- E-mail – 1,046 responses
- Post – 600 responses
- Telephone – 595

The return rate is well within the accepted levels for the purpose of meeting the requirements of both the regulator and the benchmarking service, Housemark. The margin of error was $\pm 1.8\%$ against a required $\pm 4\%$ with a confidence level of 95%.

Summary of key findings

To contextualise performance NYC has benchmarked its results with those of similar Local Authority landlords. The results not only highlight how the authority is performing in relation to similar landlords but also help to establish where significant gaps exist in performance.

Table 1: Summary of satisfaction scores vs other retained stock authorities

	NYC	Upper Quartile	Median	Lower Quartile	Quartile Position
Overall Satisfaction	70%	72%	66%	63%	2
Well maintained home	68%	72%	66%	63%	2
Safe home	73%	78%	73%	70%	2
Time taken - last repair	65%	69%	66%	59%	3
Repairs - last 12 months	73%	76%	70%	66%	2
Communal areas clean and well maintained	61%	69%	61%	54%	2
Positive contribution to neighbourhood	55%	67%	62%	55%	4
Anti-social behaviour	50%	58%	53%	50%	4
Listens and acts	55%	58%	54%	49%	2
Keeps you informed	60%	75%	71%	66%	4
Treats fairly & with respect	69%	70%	68%	63%	2
Complaints handling	29%	34%	29%	24%	3

For NYC the results help establish a baseline supporting the ongoing alignment of services and ensure sufficient focus is kept on areas of concern for customers, as well as helping identify areas where performance needs to be maintained as a minimum. By ranking the 'Overall Satisfaction' measure the consultants responsible for the survey placed NYC as joint 23rd out of the 93 organisations benchmarked, and 9th out of the Local Authorities. Traditionally housing associations have performed better than LAs or ALMOs.

In terms of the areas where improvement is needed, the authority had already recognised complaints management as a significant concern at the point of the survey. This is largely attributable to challenges linked to the merger and the visibility of complaints at a corporate level: complaints were locally hosted, with access proving challenging for managers to assess what was going wrong and how appropriate redress could be achieved. Since then, a more harmonised housing complaints policy has been developed which has centralised complaints with a dedicated resource in place to support housing managers to track and respond to complaints in a more effective and prompt manner.

In addition, it was recognised that responses to complaints were not consistent, or at times lacked sufficient acknowledgement of customers' needs. By having senior leaders take a more active role in reviewing and supporting complaints resolution, a more customer-focussed format for responding to complaints has been developed. Progress on both issues is tracked through ongoing Housemark benchmarking alongside regular reviews of complaints with key personnel.

Results also suggested a need to improve the contribution the authority makes to the local area. Judging by the additional feedback provided, this was clearly an area where the merger had had a direct impact, leaving customers unsure as to what the new council handled, its local visibility and lacking awareness of the wider regeneration and development work undertaken by the authority. This poses an important challenge for the authority about how it demonstrates its contributions locally: customers should feel empowered to report issues and become involved in their local communities. Since merger, work has been undertaken to review how customers are communicated with and how information is made available to them; this has highlighted some significant gaps, including around the website, which could improve how information is made available to customers; and elsewhere around more traditional communication methods that would likely reach those who are digitally excluded. It is expected that through the 2024/25 financial year there will be significant progress in this area, which will help customers better understand the functions of the new council and how it is positively contributing to their neighbourhoods.

Many of the issues identified in relation to how the authority contributes to the local area were also relevant to how satisfied customers were that they were being kept informed. These included a lack of communication around the service, accessibility issues with digital platforms and physical visibility across estates. In most cases these issues have been born out of the merger and restructures affecting the workforce as procedures and policies are transformed and aligned to a single service. Many of the issues around physical visibility rest with ongoing restructure work and it is expected that a new structure will create capacity for a much more estate-based and visible offer. Furthermore, services have started using a single customer access point to help track enquiries and understand demands and issues to help facilitate some of the transformation exercises; this inevitably has had an impact on knowledge management of particular estates, communities and properties that should be resolved as capacity and knowledge in the services increases alongside digital tools supporting of the council to provide the best possible customer experience.

For the authority the key drivers for satisfaction could be broadly defined as follows:

- Providing a well-maintained home
- Being treated fairly and with respect
- Satisfaction with repairs
- Time taken to complete repairs (last repair)
- Listening and acting on customer views
- Providing a positive contribution to the neighbourhood

Given the challenges facing the service with restructures and alignment of procedures, the level of satisfaction with the provision of a well-maintained home and the repairs service over the last twelve months is testament to the commitment and customer focus of front-line officers in delivering services that instil confidence in the landlord. It is recognised that the authority's knowledge of stock condition is incomplete, which has ultimately contributed to its self-referral to the regulator: however, it is felt that the action plans in place to improve this knowledge will have the desired impact in improving confidence in its investment plans and ultimately in maintaining the housing stock at a high and desirable standard.

Table 2: Service information TSM measures

Building Safety				
Code	Item	LCRA	LCHO	Combined
BS01	Proportion of homes for which all required gas safety checks have been carried out			99.79%
BS02	Proportion of homes for which all required fire risk assessments have been carried out			56.48%
BS03	Proportion of homes for which all required asbestos management surveys or reinspection's have been carried out			Null (this has not been tracked this year due to merger)
BS04	Proportion of homes for which all required legionella risk assessments have been carried out			100%
BS05	Proportion of homes for which all required communal passenger lifts safety checks have been carried out			100%
Anti-social behaviour				
NM01 (1)	No. of antisocial behaviour cases opened per 1,000 homes			62.90
NM01 (2)	No. of antisocial behaviour cases that involve hate incidents opened per 1,000 homes			0.36
Decent Homes and Repairs				
RP01	Proportion of homes that do not meet the Decent Homes Standard	Null – it is currently difficult to accurately assess the number of homes that fail to meet Decent Homes through the data		
RP02 (1)	Proportion of non-emergency responsive repairs completed within the landlord's target timescale	%		
RP02 (2)	Proportion of emergency responsive repairs completed within the landlord's target timescale	%		
Complaints				

CH01 (1)	Number of stage one complaints received per 1,000 homes	12.03		12.03
CH01 (2)	Number of stage two complaints received per 1,000 homes	0.59		0.59
CH02 (1)	Proportion of stage one complaints responded to within the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code timescales	68.32%	%	68.32%
CH02 (2)	Proportion of stage two complaints responded to within the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code timescales	0.00%	%	0.00%

As stated, the biggest issue facing the authority is the identified risk associated with its incomplete records around property condition and its compliance with the Decent Homes Standard. This is indicative of a service that has focussed on delivery at the expense of understanding its stock from a strategic asset perspective. This is a priority for the new authority to ensure its approach to planned maintenance and improvements is fully informed and appropriately costed alongside ensuring the properties are safe for residents. Additional resource is being invested in to help develop this insight and understand the issues in every property through a comprehensive stock condition survey that will help futureproof plans and ensure component information is effectively captured to inform these plans.

In relation to the management of asbestos the issue in identifying an overarching figure has been driven by the different ways this information is managed and stored. Across all sites identification is usually achieved in line with other works; however remedial works are then stored across a variety of platforms in different ways meaning no single picture exists of the work done to manage them (operational records are available per site as required). The creation of a single asbestos register is a priority for the 2024/25 financial year.

The service has also undertaken a significant review of its complaint handling; however, the biggest challenge in this area relates to the implementation of a single complaints policy across eight former councils, all using different systems and processes. This has required significant focus across the year to create a standard policy and centralised approach. Consequently, data for the first part of the year is inconsistent, meaning little confidence should be placed in the final figures. The full complaints summary provides greater insight into how this has developed across the year and the ongoing development of the service.

COMPLAINTS OVERVIEW

It is essential that customers of the service can seek appropriate redress for service failures and that the authority is acting on feedback and using this to inform service design and improvements. Under the previous local government arrangements (county council and district and borough councils) there were eight different complaints process in operation at the start of the financial year, all using different systems, with difficulties in aggregating data and forming a holistic view of complaints.

Providing this consolidated view has been essential to the service design over the year and a dedicated resource has been employed to help collate, track, and oversee housing related complaints (covering those attached to the landlord service, homelessness, management of private rented sector housing and development). As a result, performance in relation to complaints handling has shown improvement across the year; for example, in September (when tracking started) just 36.36% of stage 1 and stage 2 complaints were handled within target time; this figure increased to 75% in February before slipping back slightly in March to 56.25%.

In total 101 stage one complaints have been received across the year; in terms of broad categorisations, they can be defined as follows:

Table 3: Complaints Categorisation

Category	No. of complaints
Damp & mould	13
Disrepair	18
Other repair issues	39
Staff / Communication / Attitude	12
Housing allocations	8
Anti-social behaviour / neighbourhood management	6
Rents and arrears	2
Other	3

A significant proportion of complaints relate to the repairs service (as expected) with sizeable subsets linked to damp and mould and wider disrepair issues. Just seven of the disrepair complaints were resolved within target time and this highlights an area for improvement that the Council will look to address over the coming year. In most cases these have been reflective of more substantial investigation and work being required, and the inefficiency in processes to escalate and manage complaints once received. Furthermore, the feedback received suggests some of these cases could have been handled proactively if more information were available to customers alongside ongoing communication to keep them informed.

Of the complaints received, 51 have been upheld across the year; however just 32 of these were completed within target time. All 19 cases that were not upheld were closed within target time. This again may suggest that issues exist within the complaints process in terms of completing the investigations and feeding back to customers. Two complaints remained ongoing as of the year end, with the remainder being partially upheld; a categorisation the council will be moving away from for the 24/25 financial year.

In merging eight authorities' considerable effort has gone in to reviewing the complaints policy and ensuring it is aligned to the Code of Practice. The completed Self-Assessment can be found as appendix B with the Complaints Policy also included as appendix C and staff guidance as appendix D. In ensuring the council remains compliant with the code there have been several improvements made to the policy and processes throughout the year.

One of the biggest challenges facing the authority related to the definitions used for complaints and this had the impact of misidentification of service requests and complaints. Since aligning the policy to the code, the Council has become much better at separating out such issues, meaning complaints often relate to a service failure and service requests move through appropriate customer service

channels. The authority has also clearly defined what exclusions exist in relation to complaints that can be taken forward; this is again extremely useful for the new organisation as it helps to manage customer expectation whilst also creating a clear standard for staff to work towards.

One of the biggest changes for the service during the year was the introduction of a dedicated Housing Complaints resource located centrally within the Complaints Team. This has ensured that the corporate approach to complaint handling is followed, that management information is much easier to access and there is a single point of contact overseeing statutory compliance. Since introducing this resource performance has greatly improved and managers and senior leaders are much more informed regarding the nature of complaints, issues around resolution and concerns around escalations and referrals to the Ombudsman.

The service is beginning to make significant improvements in its complaint handling culture, live monthly data is reported to the Housing Leadership Team setting out the detail of every complaint that comes in, the issue, the timescales for completion, the outcome and any learning to be taken from the complaint.

This complaints performance will also be reported to the new Housing and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee on a quarterly basis and to tenants once the tenant involvement framework is developed. Staff development is a crucial part of good complaints handling and a training audit and skills development matrix is being collated to ensure that all relevant housing staff have undertaken appropriate complaints handling training and have customer care skills.

Due to the merger of services and significant changes across Housing structures throughout the year, the Council has a weak record of learning from complaints with very little evidence of changes to procedures or organisational learning. Where complaints have proved useful is in helping define, shape and prioritise policy development; a major piece of work that will run through much of the 24/25 financial year. Understanding the level of complaints levied at particular services and the reasons for these complaints will prove valuable for service design and help ensure procedures meet the needs of customers and communities. It is expected that in the next review of complaints more information regarding practical changes will be highlighted.

MANAGEMENT COSTS

The HRA finances are also worth discussing and show a service that has generated a surplus over the last year. There are a number of operational reasons behind this linked to effective rent recovery processes and a significant salary underspend due to the need to restructure and the creation of a single housing service.

Housing Revenue Account – Outturn Financial Year 2023/24 (£1,775k Surplus)

The Housing Revenue Account's (HRA) financial performance has exceeded estimates for the 2023/24 financial year. Some of the in-year savings/surpluses have been generated as a result of fortuitous circumstances, such as improved investment returns and inflation on utilities settling below expectations. Overall, the HRA revenue budget is broadly sound based on current activity and rent collection rates are good.

This, along with assessment of the four key financial performance metrics, provides a stable ground to progress the ambitious housing delivery programme, meet the upcoming challenges around regulatory standards, reduce void turnaround days and continue to move towards active planned maintenance programmes and away from higher-cost responsive repairs.

Performance Metrics

Whilst the performance metrics were introduced as part of the 2024/25 HRA Business plan and Medium-Term Financial plan, the 2023/24 estimates were calculated to establish a baseline for tracking future performance.

The table below sets out the actual results of the four key metrics, showing the benchmark/'golden rule' values against the budgeted position and outturn. All four measures exceeded target and an improvement against budget, with no new borrowing being undertaken in year.

Table 3: Key Financial Metrics

Measure	Benchmark/Golden Rule	Budget	Actual
Operating Margin	(Min) 20%	28%	33%
Interest Cover	(Min) 2.00	2.95	3.71
Debt Turnover	(Max) 4.00	2.57	2.55
Minimum Working Balance	£12,450,000	£18,703,266	£21,079,788

Operating Margin: Operating margin shows an improved position as a direct result of lower than anticipated costs and exceeding income targets.

Interest Cover: This is a measure of the HRA's ability to service its debt interest costs. The improved position is a result of net operating income (income-expenditure) exceeding budget, and lower than budgeted interest costs.

Debt Turnover: This is another measure of debt affordability (the ratio between the HRA's debt and gross income). The improved position is due to income exceeding target. The HRA debt repayments were made in year as planned within the budget.

Minimum Working Balance: The estimated working balance included in the 2023/24 budget was calculated ahead of 2022/23 year end, and therefore, the increase in working balance is a result of improved outturn versus budget for financial year 2022/23, plus the surplus of £1,775k from the 2023/24 financial year.

Revenue budget – summary of the main variances

Income

Dwelling Rents (£265k surplus): Income collection remained high throughout the year and therefore the improved position is due to savings against estimated bad debt provision contributions, following an assessment of the arrears position.

Charges for Services and Facilities (£125k shortfall): There are various smaller variances within this heading, including £33k shortfall in RTB admin fees, £35k shortfall in Lifeline service income and £18k relating to rechargeable works to the GF.

Investment Income (£563k surplus): Investment income exceeded budget estimates due to improved investment returns (4.98% v 4%) and stable HRA balances.

Expenditure

Repairs & Maintenance (£175k overspend): There are overspends within repairs and maintenance budgets associated with; void repairs £361k, other planned maintenance works £220k and general repairs £309k associated with mould works, roofing works and substantial reliance on external contractors for electrical works. These costs are offset by underspends; predominantly salaries £308k, repairs compensation payments £90k and other items £154k to arrive at the net position.

Supervision & Management (£976k underspend): Utilities budgets are underspent by £520K. Budgets were inflated by 100% as part of 2023/24 budget setting, but increases haven't been as high as expected. There has been a £50K underspend in water/sewerage charges, £95K underspend associated with a delay in system development, £212K underspend in salaries across the supervision and management areas (principally linked to vacant posts), and £78K underspend relating to HRA contingency not being utilised.

Interest Payments (£242k underspend): Saving as a result of lower than anticipated borrowing as no new borrowing has been undertaken in year, with £2.355m voluntary revenue provision made in year towards existing debt repayment (as budgeted).

The full 2023/24 Revenue Budget Outturn Report can be found as appendix E, and is taken from the final accounts documentation.

HOUSING IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK AND ACTION PLAN

In response to the challenges facing the Housing Service and informed by an external review of the Housing Revenue Account and our compliance position conducted by Savills, a Housing Improvement Framework has been developed. The framework sets out the key drivers for change; Consumer Standards, Health and Safety, Tenant Satisfaction Measures, the action plan and the governance arrangements we will install in order to ensure that officers, Elected Members and Tenants are informed and involved in delivery of and improvement to services.

The Housing Improvement Framework has been presented to the Council's Management Board and Elected Members where it was widely supported. As a result of this, governance arrangements have already been updated with an officer-led Housing Improvement Board created to oversee the improvement programme and dedicated resource provided within both the Housing Service and the corporate Transformation Service. A new member-led Overview and Scrutiny Committee has also been created, this committee will receive regular reports from the Improvement Board as well as service performance reports on specific areas of compliance for example, complaints, repairs and maintenance and tenant satisfaction.

Progress on the delivery plan and key performance information will also be made available to tenants in whichever format they choose to receive it, this will form part of the Tenant Involvement Strategy which is currently being developed.

A thorough gap-analysis of our compliance position has informed the action plan, work on the bulk of which will commence in the 2024/25 financial year. Throughout the year it has baselined knowledge in order to develop and scope the plan, understanding where it is not compliant with the regulatory standards but also where gaps in data, intelligence or poor performance are recognised.

The plan is fully risk rated, with a clear acknowledgement of the organisational dependencies that exist that will be required for its delivery; largely linked to ICT and other central service support. The plan, whilst high level also allows for emerging issues to be identified and tracked through a live action tracker that is regularly reviewed and updated at the Housing Improvement Board that is ultimately responsible for overseeing the delivery of the action plan.

Whilst the Action Plan was being developed work continued at pace to address the priority issues identified through the gap analysis:

- External consultants were asked to undertake a deep dive of the Councils financial capacity within its Housing Revenue Account (HRA). This work was important with key implications for the Housing Investment Plan. In summary they concluded there is headroom within the overall business plan to free up resources where needed to ensure compliance where gaps are identified that have key resource implications, including for example the need to undertake a rolling programme of stock condition surveys. The Council approved a new HRA Investment Plan in February 2024 that makes sufficient financial provision (£2.1million) to ensure compliance going forward.
- The same consultants performed a ‘health check’ on the Councils preparedness for the new regulatory standards. Whilst this was a light touch exercise (it was not a mock inspection) the outcomes from this very much supported the conclusions of our own gap- analysis.
- A dedicated Complaints Officer has been employed within the Community Development Directorate to ensure that complaints are handled consistently, in line with Housing Ombudsman requirements.
- The first Tenant Satisfaction Survey has been undertaken. As detailed above.
- Work to meet our Health and Safety compliance requirements has been prioritised. As of 31 December 2023, we were able to report 100% valid gas safety certificates. All eligible properties in Harrogate and Richmond have carbon monoxide alarms installed, Selby locality has improved their position greatly and is now reporting 80% carbon monoxide alarms installed. Fire Risk Assessments have been completed in all localities with essential remedial works including full compartmentalisation of the Independent Living Schemes completed in Harrogate and plans in place to upgrade alarm systems in 2024/25.
- Policy harmonisation work has commenced with the Housing Strategy, Housing Allocations Policy and Domestic Abuse Policy all being approved for adoption.

- A new staffing structure has been implemented for the housing service, bringing together the three stock holding authorities into one. This was a key priority as it creates the necessary platform to take forward the changes that are needed. The new structures reflect the requirements of the consumer standards and have been benchmarked against other Councils. As well as simply bringing three into one, key changes include a greater degree of emphasis around tenant engagement and tackling anti-social behaviour. The new structures provide the platform for growth where needed, particularly in relation to the asset management and repairs and maintenance. In addition, new roles have been created to help drive forward necessary improvement within the service.

As of Q1 2024/25 the main restructure exercises will be complete, meaning work will progress at pace on the creation of single processes and procedures that capture the best of the legacy organisations where possible or even developed anew. The new structures will also allow for increased capacity in key services such as tenant involvement, anti-social behaviour and tenant safety; areas the authority has already recognised as being of concern, whilst a single allocations policy and CBL system will be live for the whole county as of April 2025.

Financially the HRA is in a healthy position however it is recognised that investment is needed to improve services; this will be delivered through a dedicated HRA Business Plan, this will have a number of benefits for the authority but the most significant is the creation of a dedicated £2.1M fund to help drive towards future compliance ensuring that our plans are resources appropriately.

CONCLUSION

The 2023/24 year has been a challenging one for the service. Forming from three areas as part of a wider merger has created several issues that continue to be developed and resolved. For North Yorkshire Council the priority has been to create a solid, consistent and transparent baseline from which to operate; however, this has proved to be far more challenging than envisioned due to the inability to merge data sets accurately, different recording means and methods, different procedures and policies and a constantly evolving workforce that has led to the loss of key personnel and ultimately their skills and knowledge.

The authority is determined to provide the best possible service for customers and through much of the feedback received from tenants' satisfaction is largely positive, although there are areas for improvement. Creating this transparent baseline and becoming a more data-rich and insight-led business will continue to be a key driver for the authority, with the understanding that this will help create a much richer customer experience and ensure value for money across the housing service.

Financially the authority is in a strong position with its HRA, and this bodes well for its future investment and improvement plans. Ensuring that this is now targeted in the right areas will be a priority and this will be informed by a comprehensive stock condition survey programme that will begin early in 2024/25; thereby creating a consistent and solid baseline of stock data and ensuring the authority has all required information up to date concerning decent homes status, safety and compliance issues and identifying short, medium and long-term priorities for future investment programmes.

Given the position inherited by NYC and the challenges it has experienced this year it fully recognises that its self-referral to the regulator for non-compliance reflects its determination to improve. Whilst there are some good practices and examples of compliance across the business its inconsistency is

ultimately the biggest risk at this moment in time; coupled with a lack of accessible data and intelligence from which effective business decisions can be made.

Implementation of the Housing Improvement Framework, its action plan and improved governance arrangements are key to ensuring that our improvement journey remains focussed and on track to deliver a compliant service to our tenants and achieve the ambition set out in our Housing Strategy 2024-29, to become an exemplar social landlord.

Equality impact assessment (EIA) form: evidencing paying due regard to protected characteristics

(Form updated October 2023)

Title of proposal

Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) are public documents. EIAs accompanying reports going to County Councillors for decisions are published with the committee papers on our website and are available in hard copy at the relevant meeting. To help people to find completed EIAs we also publish them in the Equality and Diversity section of our website. This will help people to see for themselves how we have paid due regard in order to meet statutory requirements.

Name of Directorate and Service Area	Community Development - Housing
Lead Officer and contact details	Andrew Rowe (AD of Housing) andrew.rowe@northyorks.gov.uk
Names and roles of other people involved in carrying out the EIA	Richard Mair – Strategy and Performance Lead (Community Development)
How will you pay due regard? e.g. working group, individual officer	Individual officer
When did the due regard process start?	Considered as part of the report writing process

Section 1. Please describe briefly what this EIA is about. (e.g. are you starting a new service, changing how you do something, stopping doing something?)

The housing review 2023/24 summarises key work across the department in regards to its compliance with specific statutory requirements; notably:

- Tenant Satisfaction Measures
- Complaints self assessment
- Management Costs

The findings of the review; specifically in relation to the TSMs highlight some equalities items that will be considered within future service design and policy / procedure revisions where wider work on impact assessing will be required. As this document reviews past performance there is little impact on equalities groups on which decisions can be made.

In order to improve accessibility for customers they could complete the TSM survey through a variety of means; with an online survey open to all; a follow up postal survey and telephone surveys for customers who request personal engagement through their communication preferences.

Section 2. Why is this being proposed? What are the aims? What does the authority hope to achieve by it? (e.g. to save money, meet increased demand, do things in a better way.)

The housing review meets a number of statutory requirements laid out by the Regulator for Social Housing and the Housing Ombudsman. It is a self assessment document focussed on performance over the previous financial.

Section 3. What will change? What will be different for customers and/or staff?

The housing review in itself will not lead to changes for customers or staff; instead will provide insight and information relating to the service that will need to be addressed through the ongoing service improvement plan. The review focuses on three areas; the first is the presentation of the Tenant Satisfaction Measures, which helps assess customer perceptions of the service and provides insight regarding improvements and priorities; alongside establishing what services matter most to customers (key driver analysis).

The complaints section highlights the performance of complaints handling from the number of cases received to their resolutions within target time and finally any learning from complaints. Finally, the report also includes details of the financial position of the Housing Revenue Account.

In all cases the focus is largely retrospective and any changes will be delivered through the service improvement plan where actions will be equality impact assessed accordingly.

Section 4. Involvement and consultation (What involvement and consultation has been done regarding the proposal and what are the results? What consultation will be needed and how will it be done?)

The tenant satisfaction measures are an annual requirement under the regulatory framework. They help establish a baseline for customer satisfaction that is used for benchmarking purposes. The results are broken down against key demographic markers, such as age, gender and ethnicity; helping establish valuable insight regarding the experiences of these groups; traditionally the results show lower levels of satisfaction amongst younger people and males with the results for ethnicity being limited in their statistical validity and reliability due to the very small sample size.

Despite the headline findings this the survey in itself does not provide solutions to the issues and will inform additional policies and procedures that will likely require a dedicated equality impact assessment in order to evaluate potential implications.

Section 5. What impact will this proposal have on council budgets? Will it be cost neutral, have increased cost or reduce costs?

Please explain briefly why this will be the result.

This review will have no impact on council budgets.

Section 6. How will this proposal affect people with protected characteristics?	No impact	Make things better	Make things worse	Why will it have this effect? Provide evidence from engagement, consultation and/or service user data or demographic information etc.
Age	x			
Disability	x			
Sex	x			
Race	x			
Gender reassignment	x			
Sexual orientation	x			
Religion or belief	x			
Pregnancy or maternity	x			
Marriage or civil partnership	x			

Section 7. How will this proposal affect people who...	No impact	Make things better	Make things worse	Why will it have this effect? Provide evidence from engagement, consultation and/or service user data or demographic information etc.
..live in a rural area?	x			

...have a low income?	x			
...are carers (unpaid family or friend)?	x			
..... are from the Armed Forces Community	x			

Section 8. Geographic impact – Please detail where the impact will be (please tick all that apply)

North Yorkshire wide	
Craven	
Hambleton	
Harrogate	✓
Richmondshire	✓
Ryedale	
Scarborough	
Selby	✓

If you have ticked one or more areas, will specific town(s)/village(s) be particularly impacted? If so, please specify below.

Currently the housing stock is located within the three former districts of Harrogate, Richmondshire and Selby; therefore this work is most applicable to these areas; potentially as stock moves to the HRA from the other districts and boroughs the findings and associated work will need to be considered to take account of these areas.

Section 9. Will the proposal affect anyone more because of a combination of protected characteristics? (e.g. older women or young gay men) State what you think the effect may be and why, providing evidence from engagement, consultation and/or service user data or demographic information etc.

N/A

Section 10. Next steps to address the anticipated impact. Select one of the following options and explain why this has been chosen. (Remember: we have an anticipatory duty to make reasonable adjustments so that disabled people can access services and work for us)	Tick option chosen
1. No adverse impact - no major change needed to the proposal. There is no potential for discrimination or adverse impact identified.	✓
2. Adverse impact - adjust the proposal - The EIA identifies potential problems or missed opportunities. We will change our proposal to reduce or remove these adverse impacts, or we will achieve our aim in another way which will not make things worse for people.	
3. Adverse impact - continue the proposal - The EIA identifies potential problems or missed opportunities. We cannot change our proposal to reduce or remove these adverse impacts, nor can we achieve our aim in another way which will not make things worse for people. (There must be compelling reasons for continuing with proposals which will have the most adverse impacts. Get advice from Legal Services)	
4. Actual or potential unlawful discrimination - stop and remove the proposal – The EIA identifies actual or potential unlawful discrimination. It must be stopped.	
Explanation of why option has been chosen. (Include any advice given by Legal Services.) As a retrospective exercise there are no specific actions attached to the report.	

Section 11. If the proposal is to be implemented how will you find out how it is really affecting people? (How will you monitor and review the changes?)

N/A

Section 12. Action plan. List any actions you need to take which have been identified in this EIA, including post implementation review to find out how the outcomes have been achieved in practice and what impacts there have actually been on people with protected characteristics.

Action	Lead	By when	Progress	Monitoring arrangements

Section 13. Summary Summarise the findings of your EIA, including impacts, recommendation in relation to addressing impacts, including any legal advice, and next steps. This summary should be used as part of the report to the decision maker.

Section 14. Sign off section

This full EIA was completed by:

Name: Richard Mair

Job title: Corporate Strategy and Performance Lead – Community Development

Directorate: Community Development

Signature: R Mair

Completion date: 31/05/2024

Authorised by relevant Assistant Director (signature):

Handwritten signature of Andrew Rowse in blue ink.

Date: 31/5/24

Initial Climate Change Impact Assessment (Form created August 2021)

The intention of this document is to help the council to gain an initial understanding of the impact of a project or decision on the environment. This document should be completed in consultation with the supporting guidance. Dependent on this initial assessment you may need to go on to complete a full Climate Change Impact Assessment. The final document will be published as part of the decision-making process.

If you have any additional queries, which are not covered by the guidance please email climatechange@northyorks.gov.uk

Title of proposal	Housing Review 2023/24
Brief description of proposal	<p>The Housing Review 2023/24 provides an update on activity in relation to the housing service and its compliance with a number of statutory items; namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Tenant Satisfaction Measures standard• Complaints self assessment• Management costs <p>There are no climate change implications or considerations attached to this report.</p>
Directorate	Community Development
Service area	Housing
Lead officer	Andrew Rowe
Names and roles of other people involved in carrying out the impact assessment	Richard Mair – Strategy and Performance Lead (Community Development) Victoria Young – Service Improvement Manager Dani Reeves – Complaints Manager Michelle Oates – Management Accountant

The chart below contains the main environmental factors to consider in your initial assessment – choose the appropriate option from the drop-down list for each one.

Remember to think about the following;

- Travel
- Construction
- Data storage
- Use of buildings
- Change of land use
- Opportunities for recycling and reuse

Environmental factor to consider	For the council	For the county	Overall
Greenhouse gas emissions	No effect on emissions	No Effect on emissions	No effect on emissions
Waste	No effect on waste	No effect on waste	No effect on waste
Water use	No effect on water usage	No effect on water usage	No effect on water usage
Pollution (air, land, water, noise, light)	No effect on pollution	No effect on pollution	No effect on pollution
Resilience to adverse weather/climate events (flooding, drought etc)	No effect on resilience	No effect on resilience	No effect on resilience
Ecological effects (biodiversity, loss of habitat etc)	No effect on ecology	No effect on ecology	No effect on ecology
Heritage and landscape	No effect on heritage and landscape	No effect on heritage and landscape	No effect on heritage and landscape

If any of these factors are likely to result in a negative or positive environmental impact then a full climate change impact assessment will be required. It is important that we capture information about both positive and negative impacts to aid the council in calculating its carbon footprint and environmental impact.

Decision (Please tick one option)	Full CCIA not relevant or proportionate:	✓	Continue to full CCIA:	
Reason for decision	The report provides an overview of the housing service and its compliance with key statutory requirements. There are no decisions attached to this report and in demonstrating compliance there are no climate change impacts that are associated with the report, therefore the report would not require a full Climate Change Impact Assessment.			
Signed (Assistant Director or equivalent)	Andrew Rowe			
Date	30/05/2024			