

**YOUR**

**VOICE**

# **The Wrekin** Housing Group

## **Customer feedback**

Q1 – 1 April 2021 to 30 June 2021

Q2 – 1 July 2021 to 30 September 2021

# STAR SURVEY



The survey asks customers to score the service on a five point scale and gives them the opportunity to leave a written comment of their choosing. These are then categorised as compliments, criticisms or suggestions. In some cases these are escalated to the team responsible for immediate action to be taken. This survey is carried out monthly on the anniversary of tenancies that month. The response rate is around 20% and **643 responses** were received between April and September 2020.

		Trend	Q1	Q2
1	How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the overall quality of your home?	↑	80%	84%
2	How satisfied or dissatisfied are you that The Wrekin Housing Group provides a home that is safe and secure?	↔	89%	89%
3	How satisfied are you that the Group listens to your views and acts on them?	↓	66%	65%
4	How satisfied or dissatisfied are you that The Wrekin Housing Group is easy to deal with?	↔	81%	81%
5	How satisfied are you that The Wrekin Housing Group treats you with fairness and respect?	↓	85%	82%
6	Taking everything into account, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the service provided by the Wrekin Housing Group?	↑	83%	85%
7	How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your neighbourhood as a place to live?	↓	75%	73%

## NET PROMOTER SCORE

### WE ASKED OUR TENANTS...

How likely are you to recommend The Wrekin Housing Group to family or friends on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is not at all likely and 10 is extremely likely.

8	How likely would you be to recommend the Wrekin Housing Group to family or friends?	↔	45 NPS	45 NPS
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Of the criticisms received during quarter two there were three main areas of comment:

- Asset management
- Repairs and maintenance
- Housing management

Carried out on completion of major works. **160 responses** to date.

### Mainly in response to the quality of the home question

- Customers are using the survey to make initial requests relating to the components within their homes. We are happy to receive these and pass them on to our Asset Management Team for their consideration.
- **Lack of action:** Where a customer has been told that they would have a kitchen/bathroom or other component replacement but nothing has happened.
- A few customers are not happy with the quality of their home and use this opportunity to tell us.

### So what have we done?

- Where we receive a negative comment we always pass this on to the Asset Management team so that they can act on any comments in their area of responsibility. This happens once a month unless it is an urgent request relating to health and safety. In this case it happens as soon as we see the comment. The Asset Management Team also use this feedback in Team learning and contractor meetings.
- We have restructured our Asset Management Team and appointed a new Senior Manager, Michael Windridge to take the new structure forward and improve the service to you.

### What else are we doing?

- As a result of feedback received, we are carrying out a review of our 'Planned on Demand' system, the procedure in place that decides which components get replaced each year, to make it more customer focussed and improve our service to you.

## REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE

We have received very few comments about our maintenance service through the STAR survey in the first six months of the year. The ones we have received cover a range of service areas including fencing, landscaping and some repairs 'policy' comments where customer have a higher expectation of the service and what are tenant responsibilities and what are the Group's responsibilities.

We also carry out a transactional survey of our repairs service and more information about Repairs and Maintenance is contained on page six.

### What we will be doing?

- We have recently reviewed and updated our summary Tenant's Handbook which sets out our Repairs and Maintenance responsibilities. We give this out to all new tenants prior to signing the tenancy agreement, but we will also send a new version out to existing tenants electronically, and printed versions for those in Retirement Living or ShireLiving homes. We hope to have done this by the end of January 2022.

We receive a small number of comments through the satisfaction with neighbourhood questions (13 up to the end of September) but we can still learn from these. They relate to:

- The upkeep of neighbourhoods generally, litter and the condition of some people's gardens.
- Parking issues due to the number of cars some households have.
- Grounds maintenance.
- General Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) issues within certain neighbourhoods.
- Some of the issues included are not within our remit, such as street lighting, refuse collection and the provision of buses. With most of the other issues, we have a part to play along with a number of other agencies including the Local Authority and Police.

## Learning

While the majority of our customers are happy with their neighbourhoods, over a quarter are not. Restrictions of the Covid-19 pandemic have reduced the amount of partnership working we have been able to do and this is clearly having an impact. We need to address this and properly identify which neighbourhoods have been most affected so that we can target our improvement efforts.

We are also aware that our Grounds Maintenance Team have been impacted by Covid-19 and have been catching up on work

The current shortage of maintenance employees is also causing not urgent work, particularly communal work, to receive less priority than work in people's homes.

## So what are we doing?

- We are catching up with some of the delays in work due to Covid-19 and staffing issues. We have also launched a major recruitment campaign to attract new people to our vacant posts.
- We had already commenced a series of community consultations to try to identify the issues that are important to our customers where they live. We are now talking to our community partners, the Local Authority and other agencies on how we can improve on these issues together
- We have agreed to apply for accreditation for our ASB services from the Housing Quality Network. This will include an initial assessment by them which will result in an improvement programme.
- We have agreed to work towards accreditation for our Domestic Abuse Services with the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance. (DAHA) This will also start with an improvement programme and final assessment.
- We are nearing the completion of our review of the Grounds Maintenance service. The service has recently moved into the Operational Services Team and will be implementing improved arrangements for 2021/22.

# LETTINGS SURVEY



This survey is carried out in three parts, to try to capture the whole customer experience. The first survey is undertaken once an application is made live and relates to satisfaction with the application process and whether or not they were kept informed once they had applied. The second when a customer is offered a home, relating to the viewing process and the time they are given to make a decision. The third when they have moved into the property and covers the information they are given, the quality of the home, the overall lettings process and whether they would recommend Wrekin to others.

Performance is generally high but there is always room for improvement.

<b>Pre-tenancy allocation survey</b>	<b>At 30/9/21</b>
How satisfied are you with the application process?	90%
How satisfied are you with the information you have received?	84%
<b>Post offer acceptance survey</b>	<b>At 30/9/21</b>
How satisfied are you with the property viewing process?	98%
How satisfied are you with the time it has taken to go through the lettings process?	91%
<b>Post move in survey</b>	<b>At 30/9/21</b>
How satisfied are you with the information and advice you have received?	94%
How satisfied are you with your new home?	94%
How likely would you be to recommend the Wrekin Housing Group to family or friends?	71%
Taking everything into account, how satisfied are you with the lettings service provided by the Wrekin Housing Group?	96%

## YOU SAID...

A small number of you were not happy with the condition of your home after moving in (cleanliness, decoration or outstanding repairs).

## WE DID...

We are reviewing the lettings visit process and how this can be improved, working with the Customer Voice Panel. Our last report to them was on the 29th November 2021.

## YOU SAID...

You were not prepared for how much rent you had to pay at sign up and ongoing.

## WE DID...

A new log in area for applicants went live on 13 September. We are developing this area to provide better advice on initial and ongoing rent payments for new tenants.



**YOU SAID...**

You experienced a lack of communication during the application process.

**WE DID...**

The new pages on the website will help with improved communication regarding the progress of an application.

**YOU SAID...**

A small number of customers have felt rushed through the lettings process.

**WE DID...**

We are updating the advice on the website to generally inform customers of the minimum timescales that might apply to some properties. Where a property does have a short re-let period, applicants will be informed at offer stage so that they can make an informed choice.

Generally we continue to update our lettings website pages on an ongoing basis, in response to customer feedback when it is received and appropriate to do so.

Of course, the current survey is sent to customers who have been successful, so phase two of the lettings survey will involve further customer experience work with applicants who have not moved successfully through the lettings process and will include customers who have refused property offers. This will commence in 2022.

# REPAIRS SURVEY



Repairs surveys are sent out following the completion of every repair, with the exception of customers who have told us they do not want to complete surveys or have already received a recent survey. The response rate is 20%, and this gives us a large number of responses and a high confidence level of 95%. **2000+ responses** have been received for the year up to the end of September. The survey covers how the repairs call was handled, the speed of the repair, satisfaction with the repair overall and customer opinion of whether it was completed right first time. Performance is shown below.

	At 30/9/21
How satisfied are you with the way your call was handled?	91%
How satisfied are you that the repair has been completed right first time?	82%
How satisfied are you with the repair overall?	87%
How satisfied are you with the speed at which your repair was dealt with?	91%

While satisfaction remains high, we have seen a reduction of 1% in the Right First Time indicator with overall satisfaction with the repair remaining at 87%. This is reflecting some of our other performance measures, particularly the percentage of repairs completed on the same day. We aim to complete 85% of repairs the same day but at the end of September performance reduced to 81.5%.

## This is due to a range of factors:

- Covid-19 infection rates and self-isolation requirements during the summer months. This temporarily decreased the amount of manpower available to us to carry out work.
- Brexit impact on the construction and maintenance sectors. Due to the number of foreign workers who have returned home and limits on work permits, the whole construction and maintenance sector is currently suffering from a skills shortage. We ourselves have lost a number of skilled tradesmen to short term but higher paid roles in the construction industry and are now carrying a number of vacancies across our repairs and maintenance skills base.
- This is impacting on same day performance and increasing the time it takes us to complete work. We anticipate that this may also impact on customer satisfaction once this work is completed in the near future.

## So what are we doing about it?

- While Covid-19 transmissions remain high, restrictions in the last quarter around self-isolating have eased and employees can now return to work following a negative lateral flow test or a PCR test. This is already getting people back to work more quickly. However, our priority remains keeping our customers safe!
- We are already running a major recruitment campaign and have appointed six new maintenance operatives and other additional resources to improve our performance and the customer experience.
- There is also a robust plan in place to bring in further resources and re-instate some pre-Covid good practice to make sure we maintain our excellent, high quality repairs and maintenance service provision.

# FORMAL COMPLAINTS



Since the 1 April we have received 218 formal complaints that have been investigated and resolved.

Our aim is to resolve complaints as quickly as possible to the customer's satisfaction and at the end of September 2021, 99% of complainant were contacted within 5 days and 91% were contacted within 24 hours of making the complaint. 84% of cases were resolved with 19 day and 69% resolved within 5 days. All but one complaint that took longer were complex complaints that needed a longer timescale, but 100% of complaints were resolved within 20 days.

The three 'Hot Spot' areas for complaints are:

- Communication
- Repairs
- Tenancy management

## COMMUNICATION

Not getting back to people in a timely manner, not being kept informed if timescales have to change, being told something then nothing happens. This quarter we are also seeing complaints where tenants think that our communication is too enforcement led, with a blanket approach rather than an individual customer approach.

### Learning

We need to improve the quality and consistency of communicating with tenants. We have also identified that it has been some time since we ran a major customer service training programme. Times have changed with more people working remotely who are dealing with people living in challenging times and our training programme needs to keep pace with this.

## REPAIRS

Not turning up when we say we will, delays in some repairs and the quality of some repairs.

### Learning

Please see the previous section on repairs. Complaints are reflecting similar issues to other feedback.



### Complaints relating to neighbourhoods and ASB

Customers' expectations of what we can do and the speed we can do it by, in a number of cases exceeds the reality of what we can do and how quickly we can do it. Some customers are also frustrated by the limitations of the General Data Protection Act (GDPA) on how much we can tell them about what we are doing during a case due to the restrictions on disclosure of third party information.

#### Learning

We need to manage customer expectations better by providing improved advice and information to customers experiencing ASB. We may also need to improve the consistency of our ASB service.

### Complaints relating to tenancy management

We have received complaints that some of our Tenancy management is 'heavy handed' and too rigid, not taking individual circumstances into account. This includes both tenancy enforcement, granting of permissions for pets in flats and income management processes.

#### Learning

On the one hand some customers complain that we don't enforce tenancy conditions enough, and on the other hand, some customer complain that we enforce them too much! We need to find the right balance and train people accordingly.

### Complaints relating to difficulties understanding things

- Some customers find our 'instalment plans' for paying rent difficult to understand.
- Some customers are finding the new heating technologies in our new homes difficult to understand.

#### Learning

We need to provide further training for employees on these technologies and provide better information for customers.

### So what are we doing?

- We are reviewing some of our internal processes and will be working towards the Housing Quality Network accreditation for Anti-Social Behaviour management and the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance accreditation of how we manage domestic abuse to ensure that we meet good practice. We are due to start this shortly.
- We are developing a new customer strategy and as part of this, and the relaxation of Covid-19 rules, will be reviewing and invigorating out Customer Service induction and ongoing training for employees. Even when we have difficult messages to give, we can improve on how we relay those messages. This will start in April 2022.
- We will also be considering becoming members of the Institute of Customer Service to help us improve our customer service overall. A decision on this will be made by the end of the year.

## FORMAL COMPLAINTS



- We will provide more training for employees on new technologies and develop improved up-front information for customers.
- We are reviewing our Tenancy and Estate Management policy and procedures in relation to our policy on keeping pets in flats. This included the discretion employees have to give permission particularly in relation to customers with physical or mental health disabilities.
- We are also working with the Dogs Trust at Roden to deliver training for employees on the therapeutic value of responsible pet ownership and the increasing feeling of wellbeing.
- We will develop improved information for customers about 'instalment' plans and how they are calculated, possibly including a video tutorial and Frequently Asked Question (FAQ) information.

## INFORMAL COMPLAINTS



We have also received 196 informal complaints in the first half of the year. These are instances where a customer tells us they are not happy with something we have done or failed to do. The majority of these are resolved on the same day to the customer's satisfaction, but some then get escalated to a formal complaint.

The main reasons for the dissatisfaction relate to communication. For example, not being able to get in contact with the correct person and Covid-19 restrictions still being in force in communal areas. MP enquiries have also increased and where appropriate, they are now recorded as a dissatisfaction or a formal complaint.