



## CUSTOMER SCRUTINY REPORT – DAMP AND MOULD

The Committee received a scrutiny report and associated recommendations from a recent Customer Scrutiny Group exercise around damp and mould, which was presented by a customer. The customer felt that the process had been valuable, and the Committee praised the relevance and honesty of the feedback.

A discussion followed around the use of AICO Environmental Sensors which both the customer and officers felt were useful, with their use being piloted in some properties where moisture is recognised as being higher than the norm.

## PERFORMANCE AND SATISFACTION REPORT

The Committee received the quarterly Performance and Satisfaction Report. The discussion centred primarily around voids, with most recent data showing 100% satisfaction and it is hoped that quality will improve going forward as the business increases its internal capacity.

The Committee praised that 100% tenancy sustainment rate over the first 12 months from moving into a GCH property.

It was noted that customers in rent arrears had increased slightly and that this should be watched cautiously in the context of any potential rent increase.

In terms of broader satisfaction, it was noted that we are performing well compared to the average across the sector although this was in a context of nearly all housing associations experiencing significant decreases in satisfaction. Concern was expressed around the low levels of compliance across the sector particularly around gas safety, but GCH is outperforming most of those we are benchmarked against.

## Q2 COMPLAINTS REPORT

The Committee received the Complaints Report, noting the figure for the quarter were as follows:

- 43 Stage 1 complaints were received, with 23 being upheld and 77% being resolved at this stage of the process and 97.67% being responded to within target timeframes.
- 14 Stage 2 complaints were received, with 7 being upheld and 3 being partially upheld. 5 of these had an open action plan and 92.88% were responded to within target timeframes.

- The most prominent complaint themes were communication (23.3%), repair standard (13.9%), and damp and mould and repair waiting time (9.3% respectively).

The Committee noted that significant improvements had been made over the course of the year, particularly around the categorisation of lessons learnt.

## COMPLAINTS ANNUAL REPORT

The Committee reviewed the minor amendments made since the previous meeting, including the introduction of new wording around complaint timescales.

**The Committee approved the Complaints Annual Report.**

## HOUSING OMBUDSMAN COMPLAINT HANDLING CODE SELF-ASSESSMENT

The Committee noted adjustments to the Self-Assessment and Complaints Policy following feedback from the GCH Board. It was noted that the Housing Ombudsman expects all dissatisfaction expressed by a customer to be treated as a formal complaint unless the individual states otherwise.

The Leadership Team and Customer Satisfaction Team assured the Committee that we are comfortable that the organisation's processes are comply with the Complaint Handling Code, and a change of language had been introduced in order to prevent dissatisfaction by taking advantage of 'customer opportunities' to listen and act on feedback early.

Officers offered Board and Committee Members the opportunity to spend time with the team in a series of Non-Executive Directors Audits of Complaints in order to gain broader assurance around complaint handling.

## CUSTOMER STRATEGY

The Committee received the draft Customer Strategy which was praised for being a brief, high-level, and customer-friendly document which will be followed by a more detailed annual delivery plan. The focus on treating customers as individuals was seen as very positive.

It was requested that reference to complaints be included in the 'empowered' section of the strategy, given the earlier report from the Customer Scrutiny Group where they felt empowered by learning about the complaints process.

Whilst the Committee recognised that we are a digital-first organisation, they felt it needed to be recognised that we are not digital-only. It was felt that we must ensure that improvements digitally should not be overemphasised, and that consideration is given to having relevant channels in place for a wide range of customers.

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## REGULATORY STANDARD SELF-ASSESSMENTS

The Committee received Self-Assessments against the Tenant Satisfaction Measures, and Tenant Involvement and Engagement Regulatory Standards.

Members queried whether we are partially compliant rather than fully compliant in terms of customer engagement, particularly around given customers a wide range of opportunities to influence and be involved in the formulation of our housing-related policies and strategic priorities. Officers agreed and assured the Committee that we know where the gaps are and how to solve them.

## ASB AND SAFEGUARDING REPORT

The Committee received the quarterly Anti-Social Behaviour and Safeguarding Report, noting that a number of responses to satisfaction questions are low. Officers told Members that various different approaches have been tried to increase engagement with surveys, and that trials via text message followed by a phone call are now taking place.

It was suggested that colleagues could try to reach out to customers via other agencies they are supported by who may have different skillsets that could increase engagement. Officers told the Committee that the approach would be different for customers who have experienced or are experiencing domestic abuse, with this piece of work taking place as part of the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance accreditation.

The Committee noted that Q3 data from our Tenant Satisfaction Measures has just been received, and whilst transactional survey responses are low, we have seen a further 5% increase in satisfaction around ASB handling. 150 customers are being surveyed each quarter by our partners, Acuity, but increasing responses from customers where safeguarding concerns are a factor proves particularly challenging.

The report included a case study, which the Committee valued as it assists in understanding the reality of these areas of work, and shows the effort, multi-agency working, and complexity involved with these issues.

## OTHER MATTERS

The meeting concluded with the Committee reviewing their workplan.