



HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – INFORMATION ITEM - 13TH FEBRUARY 2024

SUBJECT: TENANT SATISFACTION SURVEY 2023

REPORT BY: DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 This report is to inform members of the outcomes of the tenant satisfaction survey undertaken during October and November 2023.

2. SUMMARY

2.1 Consultants were engaged to conduct and analyse a comprehensive tenant satisfaction survey on behalf of Caerphilly Homes. This is a perception survey and not one focusing necessarily on any transactional relationship Caerphilly Homes has with tenants. Welsh Government (WG) expect all stock retaining local authorities to refresh their tenant satisfaction data every two years and the last survey was undertaken in September and October 2021. Core elements of this data will be benchmarked against other community landlords and published by WG later this year. Housing Associations have carried out surveys based on the Housemark model for some time.

2.2 The overall satisfaction with services delivered by Caerphilly Homes is 76% compared to 77% in 2021. This is a slight decrease based on the 2021 survey but the survey in 2021 only had an 18% response rate and in 2023 this increased circa 29%. This is slightly below the peer average according to the consultants but still shows a high level of satisfaction across a far greater sample size of our tenants.

2.3 Other figures and comparisons are shown below in 5.15.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 To note the headline results of the survey (based on the 12 core questions) and the requirement to refresh the data every two years.

3.2 To note the Areas for Improvement focusing primarily on the poorer performing areas in the 12 core questions, with the aim of improving performance and tenant satisfaction overall. Areas for Improvement will also take account of the WG benchmarking exercise and Caerphilly's performance in relation to other landlords.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 To comply with Welsh Government guidance.
- 4.2 To improve contract holder (tenant) satisfaction with the delivery of services by Caerphilly Homes and to ensure that Caerphilly Homes meets its overriding vision of providing the highest standard of service to all customers.

5. THE REPORT

- 5.1 An all household tenant satisfaction survey was previously undertaken in 2021. The 2023 survey was also sent to all households and was undertaken in October and November 2023.
- 5.2 Welsh Government gave notice in 2019 that it expected all stock retaining local authorities to have overall tenant satisfaction data available to be submitted to them by end of March 2022 and every two years thereafter. The data will be benchmarked against other social landlords operating within Wales and results will be published so that tenants are able to compare the performance of different landlords.
- 5.3 After a procurement process, ARP Research were engaged to undertake and analyse the survey on behalf of Caerphilly Homes. They have a proven track record in this field, conducting surveys for Welsh social housing landlords and also conducted the 2021 survey for Caerphilly Homes.
- 5.4 In order for the data to be benchmarked, the survey questions needed to follow a specific format and contained questions based on the Housemark standardised STAR survey, the recognised survey model approved by Welsh Government. There are 12 core questions required by Welsh Government with other questions determined by the landlord.

The Survey

- 5.5 The survey form was posted to all tenant households and included a web link and QR code to enable the survey to be completed online in addition to a postal return option. An incentive of a prize draw was offered for returned surveys. Reminders to complete the survey were sent by text message, email and this year, a postal reminder was also sent to encourage further returns. The survey was 'live' from 6 October 2023 to the 24th November 2023. The survey was also promoted through the Council's website, social media pages, press release and by staff during their interactions with tenants.
- 5.6 3036 surveys were returned, with a response rate of 29%. The number of returns and response rate has increased significantly from 2021 when there were 1,847 returns with a response rate of 18%. (999 returns were needed to ensure the results were statistically valid)
- 5.7 Almost a quarter of the returned surveys were completed online, which is a big increase and a positive step in trying to digitally engage more efficiently and frequently with our tenants in the future.
- 5.8 The survey form contained the core questions required for benchmarking by WG, plus additional questions including on responsive repairs, appointment times and digital communication.

The Results

- 5.9 The results were analysed by ARP Research, with appropriate weightings of certain categories to ensure a valid result. The full results also give details on differences by factors such as area and age profile. The error margin for the results is +/- 1.5%
- 5.10 The overall satisfaction with Caerphilly Homes service was 76%. This rate is down by 1% from the 2021 survey. This is within the error margin of the results and given the higher sample size, indicates a consistent level of service since the last survey.
- 5.11 Of the 24% that weren't satisfied; 11% were neither satisfied or dissatisfied, 8% fairly dissatisfied and 5% very dissatisfied. These results will be scrutinised in the key areas of improvement as detailed later in this paper.
- 5.12 The consultant has commented that overall satisfaction rates have decreased across Welsh landlords in the last two years so although statistically significant it does reflect an overall downward trend. The consultant also commented that overall it is a good set of survey results in the current climate.

Key Driver Analysis

- 5.13 A 'key driver' analysis is a statistical test to check which other results in the survey are best at predicting overall satisfaction. In descending order of strength, the drivers most closely associated with **overall tenant satisfaction** were:
- Repairs and maintenance overall
 - Easy to deal with
 - Safety and security of the home
 - Quality of the Home
 - Listening to views and acting upon them
 - Taking a part in decision making
 - Grounds maintenance
- 5.14 The top 5 are consistent with results in 2021 with the top two remaining the same, and a change in the order of 3rd and 4th. Improving performance in the key driver areas should contribute to an improvement in the overall satisfaction level.
- 5.15 The table below shows the key percentage score against the different categories covered in the survey for 2021 and 2023 and the changes in the results. The benchmark data used is WG's 2023 data of social landlords in Wales, comprising 46 different organisations.

Category	Satisfaction Level	Satisfaction Level	Change	LA Median	Wales Median
	2021 Result	2023 Result			
Satisfaction overall	77%	76%	- 1 %	76%	81%
Quality of home	75%	73%	- 2. %	76%	81%
Safety & security of home	80%	81%	+ 1%	82%	85%
Repairs & maintenance overall	69%	68%	- 1%	71%	74%
Repair in last 12 months	N/A	79%	-	-	-
Neighbourhood as a place to live	77%	77%	No change	82%	83%
Value for money of rent	76%	76%	No change	76%	82%
Value for money of service charge	76%	71%	-5%	68%	68%
To what extent do you agree with the statement "I trust my social landlord"	73%	73%	No change	73%	77%
Listens to views and acts on them	54%	58%	+ 4.0%	58%	66%
Dealing with anti-social behaviour	54%	51%	- 3%	56%	61%
Taking part in decision making	50%	52%	+ 2%	49%	60%
Having a say in service management	52%	55%	+ 3%	49%	61%

- 5.16 81% of tenants were satisfied with the safety and security of their home, up 1% from the last survey and 73% of respondents were satisfied with the quality of their home, down 2%
- 5.17 For repairs and maintenance overall satisfaction was 68%, while satisfaction with the repairs service for those that had received a repair in the last 12 months (1,760 - 58% of respondents) increased to 79%, suggesting those that have had a repair in the last 12 months were more satisfied than respondents that have not had a recent repair.
- 5.18 Satisfaction for value for money of rent (76%) can also be impacted by satisfaction in other areas such as repairs and quality of the home, but it is not shown as a key driver of overall satisfaction. The fact that value for money for rent has remained the same is an achievement given the current cost of living crisis. The score for value for money for service charges was 71% down 5% from 2021, however, service charges only relate to sheltered housing and at the time of the previous survey, service charges had been reduced to reflect a reduction in services offered due to the Covid pandemic.

Key Areas to Focus On

- 5.19 The results for the way that Caerphilly Homes deals with anti-social behaviour and for providing opportunities for taking part in decision making are the lowest in terms of satisfaction levels. These are down 3 % and up 2% from the last survey respectively.
- 5.20 The satisfaction rate with 'whether views were listened to and acted upon' was 58%. However, there were around a third who responded in the middle of the scale and were neither positive or negative for this question. Again, this question can also be impacted by the performance of different areas of the housing service.
- 5.21 The two areas that had the highest level of dissatisfaction were, dealing with repairs and maintenance and dealing with anti-social behaviour at 22% and 27% respectively. Anti-social behaviour is dealt with by a direct team and has many contributing factors which won't all necessarily be the responsibility of housing and deserve a multi-agency response in some cases.
- 5.22 Improving our repairs service is a constant strand of work through the Caerphilly Homes transformation agenda and key workstream in the corporate Mobilising Team Caerphilly work programme looking at customer journey and contact management exploring the scope for more efficiency and productivity. The results of satisfaction for those that have had a recent repair as stated earlier indicates this is starting to move in the right direction. Therefore, there is no specific work on repair and maintenance or ASB in the key areas of improvement in the action plan, as these are business as usual strands of work.
- 5.23 It should also be acknowledged that for Local Authority landlords many tenants find it difficult to separate the role of the landlord service, such as that provided by Caerphilly Homes, from the services provided by the wider Council organisation, and consequently their perceptions of the landlord service are inextricably linked to, and influenced by, their perceptions of the Council, and the services it provides. This is particularly true of services provided by both Caerphilly Homes and the Council, and can therefore influence views on more generic issues, such as their neighbourhood as a place to live, antisocial behaviour (as referenced), communication and engagement.

Moving Forward

- 5.24 The results will also need to be communicated to tenants and the consultant will be helping with a summary of the results to feedback to tenants.
- 5.25 There were opportunities within the survey for tenants to include comments; therefore, there is a significant amount of raw data that can be reviewed which may provide an indication as to the reasons for some responses and also identify other issues and trends. The survey results overall give an opportunity to review the way Caerphilly Homes communicates and engages with tenants in all areas of its business.
- 5.26 An Action Plan has been drafted based on the results of the last two surveys. The overall areas for improvement are listed in Appendix 1. Once the draft and this year's survey results have been considered further, a more detailed operational plan will be developed to address areas where we need to try and improve service delivery and ultimately tenant satisfaction.

Conclusion

- 5.27 The survey provides the data needed for submission to Welsh Government. It also now provides further information to measure against the baseline set by the 2021 survey.
- 5.28 The main output is identification of the areas for improvement listed in Appendix 1. This will focus on those key areas where the tenant satisfaction scores were considered low, and where they indicated more significant cultural improvement is required in the way tenants view their landlord.
- 5.29 Welsh Government plan to publish results of tenant satisfaction surveys undertaken by all social landlords in Wales in April 2024, at which time we will be in a position to update our results against benchmarks of both stock retaining local authorities and registered social landlords and this information will also be used to update the Action Plan going forward.

6. ASSUMPTIONS

- 6.1 No assumptions have been made in this report.

7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 This is not required as the report is for information only.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are no financial implications at this stage but there could be resource/financial implications as the result of any Action Plan to improve future results.

9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no personnel implications at this stage.

10. CONSULTATIONS

- 10.1 All households had an opportunity to complete the questionnaire and a helpline was provided with the opportunity to complete by telephone.
- 10.2 All comments received from the consultees listed below have been noted and, where appropriate, incorporated within the report.

11. STATUTORY POWER

- 11.1 Not applicable

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Consultees:

Cllr Andrew Whitcombe, Chair – Housing and Environment Scrutiny
Cllr Shane Williams, Vice-Chair – Housing and Environment Scrutiny
Councillor Shayne Cook, Cabinet Member for Housing
Dave Street, Deputy Chief Executive
Nick Taylor-Williams, Head of Housing
Fiona Wilkins, Housing Services Manager
Catherine Edwards, Head of Assets, Maintenance and Repairs
Jane Roberts-Waite, Head of Development and Strategy
Lesley Allen, Housing Principal Group Accountant
Julie Reynolds, Landlord Services Manager
Claire Davies, Private Sector Housing Manager
Jason Fellows, Housing Repair Operations Manager
Mike Williams, Planned Asset Maintenance Manager
Gail Taylor, Assistant Tenant and Community Involvement Manager
Kate Isaacs, Performance and Business Analyst

Background Papers: Tenant Satisfaction Survey Questionnaire – hyperlink:-

[Link to Tenant Satisfaction Survey Results](#)

Appendices:
Appendix 1 Areas For Improvement.

Appendix 1 – Areas for Improvement

Key Drivers	Easy to deal with	Listen and act on views	Being Kept informed	Having a say in service delivery
Short term	Customer care/satisfaction as objective for all	Different ways to capture views	Improve trust - customer service training	More formal opportunities to tell us what they want
	Staff accessibility	Recording day to day feedback	Feedback/lessons learnt	Staff to feedback views of tenants via DPA reporting
	Repairs call handling procedures review	Culture/customer care	Increase digital and email comms	More TIE sessions
Medim Term	Internal comms improvements to stop silo working	Desktop checks to update CX system	Launch Customer Portal	Plan of activities
	Annual welfare calls	More transactional surveys throughout the year – impact surveys	Manage expectations, engage more frequently, use more social media	Use tenant engagement strategy for WHQS23
	Evolve team for more home and site visits and hub(s)	Policy and procedure review with customer care focus		Charter for Trust review
Long term	Review accessible comms for BSL user etc	Use learning and development strategy to train staff and update knowledge of evolved ways of customer service and customer care	Stand-alone Housing Webpages to be reviewed with CCBC website revamp	Annual customer service training plan