



SPECIAL HOUSING AND REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – INFORMATION ITEM

SUBJECT: TENANT SATISFACTION SURVEY 2021

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR SOCIAL SERVICES AND HOUSING

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1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report is to inform members of the outcomes of the tenant satisfaction survey undertaken in September and October 2021.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 Consultants were engaged to conduct and analyse a comprehensive tenant satisfaction survey on behalf of Caerphilly Homes. Welsh Government expect all stock retaining local authorities to submit tenant satisfaction data by the end of February 2022; core elements of this data will be benchmarked against other social landlords.
- 2.2 As no recent comprehensive tenant surveys have been carried out by Caerphilly, there is no previous baseline of tenant experience to measure against. This year's results will now create a baseline for future years to be able to measure our year on year performance as well as being benchmarked against other landlords.
- 2.3 The overall satisfaction with services delivered by Caerphilly Homes is 77%. High levels of satisfaction were recorded with services provided during the pandemic, (especially the wellbeing calls to tenants) safety and security of the home and with property adaptations.
- 2.4 Welsh Government has indicated that it will publish results of tenant satisfaction surveys undertaken by all social landlords in Wales in April 2022 at which time we will be in a position to benchmark our results against both stock retaining local authorities and registered social landlords.
- 2.5 Welsh Government expects the satisfaction data to be refreshed every 2 years.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To note the results of the survey and the requirement to refresh the data every two years.

- 3.2 To note proposals to further analyse the survey data to inform an Action Plan with the aim of improving performance and tenant satisfaction overall. The Action Plan will also take account of the WG benchmarking exercise and Caerphilly's performance in relation to comparable landlords.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 To comply with Welsh Government guidance.
- 4.2 To improve tenant satisfaction with the delivery of services by Caerphilly Homes.

5. THE REPORT

- 5.1 While there has been no single overall tenant satisfaction survey carried out by the Council's housing service since 2001, there have been service specific satisfaction surveys carried out on in various areas of the housing service in the last five years including response repairs, WHQS works (in house surveys WG survey), adaptations, rents, universal credit, tenancy enforcement, tenancy support and housing management. In addition, consultation has been carried out on local housing market assessments, the local housing strategy, gypsy and traveller accommodation, the common housing register, tenants' digital access, welfare benefits and tenants' health and safety issues
- 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 February 2022. 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. There is also an expectation that this data will be refreshed every two years.
- 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.
- 5.4 In order for the data to be benchmarked, the survey questions needed to follow a specific format endorsed by ¹Housemark and contain 12 core questions based on the Housemark standardised STAR survey, identified as essential by Welsh Government, with other questions determined by the landlord.
- 5.5 As no recent overall survey has been carried out in Caerphilly, there is no previous baseline of tenant experience to measure against. This year's results will now create a baseline for future years to be able to measure Caerphilly's year on year performance as well as being benchmarked against other social landlords.
- 5.6 **The Survey**
- 5.7 A bilingual survey form was posted to all tenant households which also included a QR code to enable the survey to be completed online. An incentive of a prize draw was offered for returned surveys. Reminders to complete the survey were sent by

¹Housemark the leading data and insight company for the UK housing sector and is jointly owned by the National Housing Federation and the Chartered Institute for Housing.

text message and email and the survey was 'live' from 3rd September to 8th October 2021, also appearing on the Council's website and social media pages.

- 5.8 1,847 surveys were returned, a response rate of 18%.
- 5.9 For a survey of this type, the consultant's expectation was of a return rate between 18-25%, so the response was at the lower end of the scale but was almost double what was required to ensure the survey was statistically valid. Contributing factors might include the length of the questionnaire and it being the first occasion for many years that tenants have been asked their overall views.
- 5.10 Almost a quarter of the returned surveys were completed online.
- 5.11 The survey form is attached as Appendix 1.

The Results

- 5.12 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 +/- 2.1%.

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
 - Quality of the home
 - Safety and security of the home
 - Listening to views and acting upon them
 - Having a say in management of services
- 5.14 Improving performance in these areas in the future should contribute to an improvement in the overall satisfaction level.
- 5.15 The table below shows the key score against the different categories covered in the survey.

Category	Satisfaction Level Caerphilly Homes
Satisfaction overall	77%
Quality of home	75%
Safety & security of home	80%
Repairs & maintenance overall	69%
Neighbourhood as a place to live	77%

Value for money of rent	76%
Value for money of service charge	86%
Easy to deal with	79%
Listens to views and acts on them	54%
Dealing with anti-social behaviour	54%
Taking part in decision making	50%
Having a say in service management	52%
Way services were delivered during the pandemic	68%
Percentage that said wellbeing calls made them feel the Council cared	86%
Trust the organisation	73%

- 5.16 While drafting the survey, it was felt that it would be useful to know how tenants felt about the way services were delivered during the pandemic and how they felt about the wellbeing calls that were carried out.
- 5.17 The satisfaction rate for how housing services were delivered during the pandemic was 68%, and of those that remembered receiving a welfare call from Caerphilly Homes, 86% responded that this made them feel that the Council cared about its tenants. The wellbeing calls also had a positive impact on overall satisfaction with Caerphilly Homes. For these tenants the satisfaction score was higher, at 83%.
- 5.18 Where tenants had added comments to this particular response most said that they didn't think the Council could have done anything more.
- 5.19 For responses relating to quality of home 80% of tenants were satisfied with the safety and security of their home and 82% were satisfied with their overall experience of adaptations they had carried out. 75% of respondents were satisfied with the quality of their home despite the significant investment in WHQS.
- 5.20 For repairs and maintenance overall satisfaction was 69%, while satisfaction with the last reported repair increased to 79%. Repairs is an area that has been particularly hit by Covid restrictions, so results also need to be viewed in the context that at times only emergency repairs could be carried out and there has been a backlog of other repairs and inspections to clear.
- 5.21 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 score for value for money for service charges was 86% but it needs to be acknowledged that service charges only relate to sheltered housing.

Key Areas to Focus On

- 5.22 The result for the way that Caerphilly Homes deals with anti-social behaviour and the result for listening and acting on tenant's views are the lowest in terms of satisfaction levels. Factors contributing to anti-social behaviour were neighbourhood problems such as car parking, rubbish and litter and dog mess, but the key driver for satisfaction with anti-social behaviour was how Caerphilly Homes deals with noisy neighbours, which has seen an increase in reporting since the start of the pandemic but has been difficult to investigate due to restrictions.
- 5.23 The satisfaction rate with whether views were listened to and acted upon was 54%. However, there were around a third who responded in the middle of the scale and were neither positive nor negative for this question. Again, this question can also be impacted by the performance of different areas of the housing service.
- 5.24 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, communication and engagement.

Tenant Priorities

- 5.25 The survey also asked tenants to choose their top priorities that Caerphilly Homes should take forward in the future from a list of seven. These are listed below in order of priority and with the percentage from the results.

Housing Quality - keeping homes safe, warm and secure, meeting people's needs in communities where they want to live - 67%

Housing Availability - building new homes and making homes affordable - 41%

Support and Assistance - providing services that help people access housing, maintain a tenancy and improve their quality of life - 39%

Tenant Focus - listening to tenants and working with them to improve services - 38%

Climate Change - meeting targets to reduce carbon and making homes more energy efficient - 30%

Local Services - access to housing staff and services within your local community - 24%

Technology and Innovation - making sure we make the best use of technology for tenants and staff - 6%

Moving Forward

- 5.26 The results will need to be communicated to Councillors, tenants and staff and the consultant will be helping with our feedback to tenants and councillors. There will also be discussions on the most effective and efficient way to refresh the data every two years which is a Welsh Government requirement.

- 5.27 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.
- 5.28 An Action Plan will be drawn up involving engagement with staff, tenants and councillors.

Conclusion

- 5.29 The survey provides the data needed for submission to Welsh Government. It also provides a baseline of tenant satisfaction to measure future year on year performance, and gives a foundation to analyse our performance within Caerphilly Homes in more detail and create a framework for improvement moving forward.
- 5.30 The main output will be an action plan that Caerphilly Homes will co-produce with ARP research. 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.
- 5.31 Welsh Government plan to publish results of tenant satisfaction surveys undertaken by all social landlords in Wales in April 2022, at which time we will be in a position to accurately benchmark our results against those of both stock retaining local authorities and registered social landlords and this information will also be used to inform the Action Plan.

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.

11. STATUTORY POWER

11.1 Not applicable

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Consultees:

Cllr John Ridgewell, Chair - Housing & Regeneration Scrutiny
Cllr Mike Adams, Vice-Chair - Housing & Regeneration Scrutiny
Councillor Shayne Cook, Cabinet Member for Social Care and Housing
Dave Street, Corporate Director Social Services and Housing
Nick Taylor-Williams, Head of Housing
Fiona Wilkins, Housing Services Manager
Julie Reynolds, Landlord Services Manager
Claire Davies, Private Sector Housing Manager
Jason Fellows, Housing Repair Operations Manager
Alan Edmunds, WHQS Implementation Manager

Background Papers:

Appendices:

Appendix 1 Tenant Satisfaction Survey Questionnaire - English
Appendix 2 Tenant Satisfaction Survey Questionnaire - Welsh