

Report to: Policy and Performance Improvement Committee Meeting - 26 September 2022

Director Lead: Suzanne Shead, Director Housing, Health & Wellbeing

Lead Officer: Nicola Priest, Project Research Officer, 01636 655526

<b>Report Summary</b>	
<b>Report Title</b>	STAR Survey 2021/22
<b>Purpose of Report</b>	The STAR survey aims to establish how satisfied Council tenants are with a range of measures relating to their Council home, tenancy, communal services and neighbourhood.
<b>Recommendations</b>	<p>That the Policy &amp; Performance Improvement Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) notes the overall positive levels in satisfaction for housing services;</li> <li>b) notes the full STAR Report attached at Appendix 1;</li> <li>c) considers the feedback from the Tenant Engagement Board to consider Repairs and Maintenance service as an area of focus for the Directorate in 2023/24; and</li> <li>d) note there will be changes from 2023 onwards with the introduction of the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) that in part, replicate the current arrangements for STAR.</li> </ul>

## **1.0 Background**

1.1 This performance has been presented previously to SLT, the Portfolio Holder for Homes & Health and the Tenant Engagement Board. The Tenant Engagement Board recommend that the Repairs & Maintenance Service be an area of focus for the Directorate to take a deeper dive into the service, identify areas of service development and modernisation.

1.2 STAR has been a recognised mechanism for objectively assessing the Council's landlord services in a number of key areas for tenants for a number of years. In November 2020, the Government published the charter for social housing residents – which set out ways to improve things for people living in social housing. Within the seven strands, four fall under existing Consumer Standards set out by the Regulator for Social Housing (RSH)

1.3 These standards set out guidance for Home, Tenancy, Neighbourhood & Community and Tenant Empowerment & Involvement. One of the ways to measure against these standards is to bring in a range of tenant perception satisfaction measures so tenants could see how landlords are performing and identify which landlords might need to improve called Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs).

- 1.4 Between December 2021 and March 2022, proposed TSMs were developed and widely consulted. 40 of our tenants engaged in our own consultation events and there was a very positive response overall and these were submitted to the Regulator.
- 1.5 STAR satisfaction measures have been aligned with the proposed TSMs, in anticipation that the STAR perception survey can be used to collect the TSM data and enable benchmarking between housing providers. A response is due to be published late Summer/Autumn to confirm the final measures and respond to the consultation as a whole.
- 1.6 From 1st April 2023 the new requirements will come into force and landlords will start collecting the data for the TSMs. In Summer 2024 landlords are required to report their performance against the TSMs. This may change how tenant satisfaction is presented to the Council's governance arrangements moving forward and how/if STAR will continue to exist in any form.

## **2.0 Proposal/Options Considered**

- 2.1 The STAR survey developed and promoted by Housemark has become the standard for tenants and residents' surveys across the housing sector. Much like the residents' survey, it aims to establish how satisfied Council tenants are with a range of measures relating to their Council home, tenancy, communal services and neighbourhood. It is not mandatory to run the STAR survey annually, but there is value in running this survey on a regular frequency to identify key areas for improvement as this also includes customers who may not have contacted the Council's housing services within the previous 12 months. It also enables us to compare against other housing providers via our Housemark membership.
- 2.2 The survey was conducted in February and March this year and surveyed 545 tenants by telephone. The report was provided at the end of April. This work was conducted by our independent survey provider, Viewpoint Research.
- 2.3 The most appropriate questions were selected from the STAR questionnaire template, including some mandatory core questions, providing some comparative information against previous years. There is also some comparative information in the latest report for new questions that were asked for the first time in 20/21.
- 2.4 The full STAR Report is attached at Appendix 1, but some key highlights are provided within this cover report.

## **3.0 Key Highlights of the Report**

- 3.1 The 5 key drivers of overall satisfaction were found to be;
- Dealing with repairs and maintenance
  - Easy to deal with
  - Listens to your views and acts upon them
  - Overall quality of your home
  - Provides a home that is safe and secure (change from Gives you a say in how services are managed)

3.2 86.6% of tenants were satisfied with overall services (compared with 87.5% in 20/21), although an insignificant decline of 0.9% it is 3.6% higher than the Housemark benchmark.

### 3.3 Repairs

3.3.1 78.6% of tenants were satisfied with repairs in general, which is 2% higher than the Housemark benchmark, but is down 1.6% on 20/21 (this change is not statistically significant). This relates to the general view of the repairs service, rather than specifically just those who have received a repair in the last 12 months.

3.3.2 67.2% scored 8 or higher for recommending the service (compared with 72.6% in 20/21). 62% of those surveyed had received a repair in the last year, compared with 49% in 20/21, which is a notable increase.

3.3.3 73.2% of customers were sure that a contractor showed ID, which is 5.1% down on 20/21, highlighting that some work is required here to ensure this happens.

### 3.4 ASB

3.4.1 Generally, satisfaction with ASB is significantly lower than other services and there is a marked decrease in satisfaction across all measures when compared to 20/21, with the exception of a 9.8% increase with the final outcome of the ASB complaint overall.

3.4.2 The ASB process was revised with involved tenants to address issues with dissatisfaction and implemented in final quarter of 21/22 and it is hoped this will show an improvement in the next STAR survey results. It is worth noting however that only 30 customers who were surveyed had reported an ASB case in the last 12 months, so this is a small sample.

### 3.5 Lettings

3.5.1 Satisfaction with the overall lettings process was 95.1% (compared with 92% in 20/21). In addition to this, 95% of tenants felt that staff were easy to deal with (compared with 88% in 20/21) and there was 82.9% satisfaction with the condition of the property at the time of letting (compared with 72% in 20/21). These are all marked improvements and mirrors our internal findings in relation to satisfaction during the 6-month empty home standard pilot.

### 3.6 Complaints and Queries

3.6.1 81.2% of tenants were satisfied with the way their call was handled (compared with 80.2% in 20/21) and 78.5% were satisfied with the information and advice provided (compared with 80.1% in 20/21). There was a marked increase of 7.3% in relation to being easy to deal with, resulting in 85.6% (compared with 78.3% in 20/21).

3.6.2 Complaints satisfaction is lower than with queries and overall, the lowest throughout the survey. For context, it should be noted that just 9.9% of tenants surveyed had made a complaint in the previous 12 months (compared with 9.4% in 20/21). However, 40.7% were satisfied with the handling of the complaint (compared with 31.4% in 20/21 and 39.6% were satisfied with the final outcome of the complaint (compared with 31.3% in 20/21) which are marked increases. In terms of complaints, there was a 12.6% decrease in being easy to deal with, which identifies some improvement work required.

### 3.7 Neighbourhood

3.7.1 91.5% of tenants said they were satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live (compared with 90.1% in 20/21), which is not significantly up on the previous survey, but is 8.1% above the Housemark benchmark.

3.7.2 83.3% said the neighbourhood had improved or stayed the same (compared with 84.1% in 20/21) and 86.3% were satisfied with keeping communal areas clean and safe (compared with 88.1% in 20/21). Satisfaction with cleaning of the external communal areas is up 6.3% to 92.1%.

3.7.3 In relation to grounds maintenance and grass cutting, 79.4% were satisfied with this service (compared with 81.6% in 20/21). This is not a significant decrease.

### 3.8 Home

3.8.1 86% of tenants felt Newark & Sherwood District Council takes tenants' health and safety concerns seriously (compared with 84.6% in 20/21). 93.7% were satisfied with gas servicing (compared with 94.9% in 20/21), which is not statistically significant. However, 83.9% were satisfied with the heating and energy efficiency of their home (compared with 87.9% in 20/21) and 79.9% of those receiving the careline service were satisfied (compared with 92.3% in 20/21). For context, satisfaction with careline for our transactional surveys for 21/22 was 97% so the drop is not obviously explainable.

### 3.9 Empowerment

3.9.1 77% of tenants feel that their views are listened to and acted upon (compared with 81.8% in 20/21), which is a significant fall, but remains 10% higher than the Housemark benchmark. In addition, 83.2% were satisfied with the opportunity to make their views known (compared with 86.6% in 20/21), which again is a fall, but remains 14.2% higher than the Housemark benchmark. 88.2% said they were able to interact with the Council in the way they wanted (compared with 89.3% in 20/21) so is not statistically significant.

### 3.10 Value for Money

3.10.1 90.1% of tenants were satisfied their rent provides value for money (compared with 90.6% in 20/21), which is 5.6% up on the Housemark benchmark. Satisfaction that service charges provide value for money was 78.8% (compared with 85.3% in 20/21), which is a marked decrease, but was up 10.6% on the Housemark benchmark.

3.10.2 Satisfaction with advice and support with managing their finances and paying rent and service charges scored 89.3% compared with 90.9%, which is not significant.

4.0 Summary of Findings

4.1 All of the areas that are benchmarked are above the Housemark benchmark, with the exception of the repair service received on the last occasion (which is just 0.7% below the Housemark benchmark).

4.2 Overall satisfaction levels remain high, but ASB and complaints require monitoring.

5.0 Implications

Implication Type	Brief Guidance Note	Relevant Officer	Considered (Please tick)
Financial	<u>FIN22-23/6321</u> There are no direct financial implications resulting from this report. Where expenditure is required, it is anticipated this will be secured from the efficiency savings pot to improve services.	Nick Wilson - Financial Services	<input type="checkbox"/>
Digital and Cyber Security	There are significant improvements that can be achieved across all services through improvements with Housing ICT and the Directorate continue to work with ICT, having created a high-level plan of improvements to the system.	Dave Richardson – ICT and Digital Services	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Background Papers and Published Documents**

SLT Report STAR Survey Report 2021/22

Tenant Engagement Board STAR Survey Report 2021/22

TEB Tenant Satisfaction Measures update 25.08.22