

Report to Housing Scrutiny Commission

Repairs and Maintenance Service Performance Update Report 2023-24

Lead Member: Councillor Cutkelvin

Lead director: Chris Burgin

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: All
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1. Purpose of the report

The purpose of this report is to provide the Housing Scrutiny Commission with an update on the performance of the Housing Division's Repairs and Maintenance (R&M) service and will include the key performance indicators for 2023-24. This report will also provide an update on key issues and actions that are being implemented in 2024-25 to drive improved performance into the future.

2. Background to the report

The Repairs & Maintenance function provides the following services to 19,641 Council owned homes and 1,796 Leasehold properties across the city:

- Day to day responsive repairs to council homes
- Emergency repairs reported outside normal working hours
- Day to day responsive repairs and annual gas safety inspections for all gas appliances
- Renovation of Void properties to prepare them for re-letting

Our tenants access these services primarily through the Housing Online (HOL) portal and where our tenants are unable to access this service, they can contact the Customer Service Centre (CSC).

During 2023-24 we have seen a steady increase in the number of tenants registering on the HOL platform, which stood at 9,232 at the end of 2022-23 and currently sits at nearly 12,000 accounts for tenants. This increase in repairs reporting via HOL contributes towards a reduction in total calls through to the CSC.

3. Day to day responsive repairs

3.1 There are four main key performance indicators (KPI's) that measure the quality of service within this function.

Indicator	Direction of travel	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Percentage of repairs completed at first visit (excludes external works)	Higher is better. Target is 85%.	78%	76.2%	75.1%
% of all outstanding repairs which are out of category (excludes Gas and Voids)	Lower is better.	26%*	19%*	40%*
Percentage of repairs completed within target time	Higher is better. Target is 90%	87%	85.7%	85.1%

Percentage of repairs reported where a complaint has been received	Lower is better. Target is <0.5%	0.10%	0.08%	0.08%
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*Snapshot at year-end

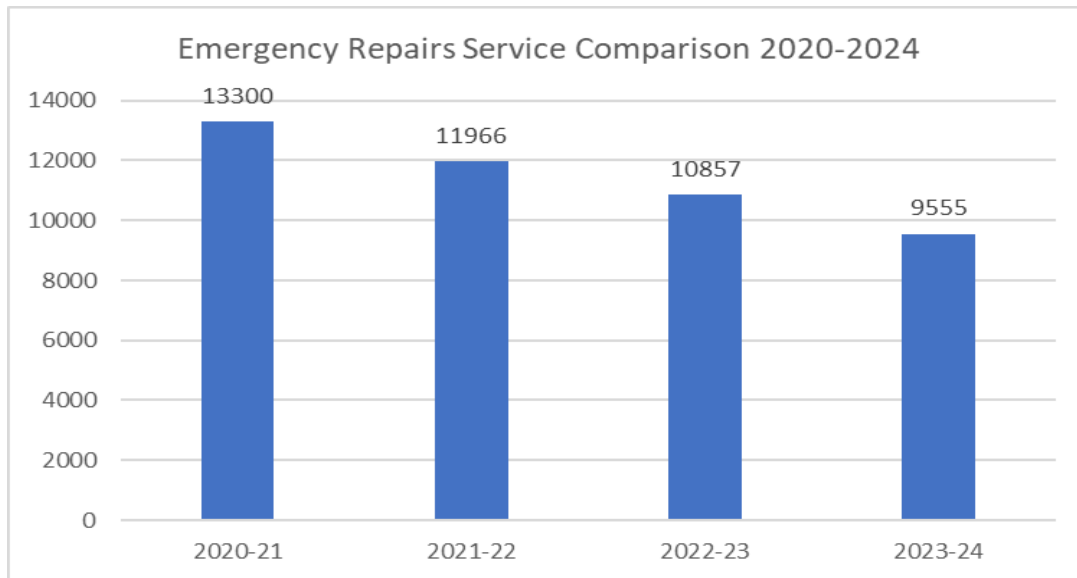
As can be seen from the table above, whilst our performance levels in three of the four KPI's have remained fairly stable over recent years, our main challenge this year has been the focus on reducing the amount of outstanding out of category repairs. The pandemic feels a long time ago now but in reality, the figures are still showing that we have never fully recovered from the impact of running an emergency repairs only service. We have also seen a spike in outstanding repairs since the cyber incident where we also predominantly ran an emergency repairs only service. In addition to this, we continue to have the challenge of recruiting into our craft posts, which has resulted in an increase to our apprenticeship programme. We have also seen a huge increase in demand relating to damp and mould.

We made the decision in 2023 to centralise our Repairs Planning Team and whilst this has delivered a much better response for complex repairs, we are still finding it difficult to significantly decrease the total outstanding repairs. These repairs generally comprise of external repairs, such as guttering, fencing and groundworks. We mentioned previously that we have initiated a project to drilldown on the specific reasons for the higher demand and to formulate a plan for reducing the outstanding repairs. This project is now in full swing and has already stemmed the steady increase which will now hopefully start to go in the other direction. We are exploring all options available to us to help reduce the pressure.

With the introduction of the Social Housing Regulator, we are seeing a growing need to ensure compliance with the main safety aspects, such as, gas, electrical, damp/mould, asbestos, fire safety and water safety. Whilst these have always been integral to our workforce planning, it is a balancing act for us to ensure that we deliver on these aspects whilst also tackling the other demands.

3.2 Emergency Repairs Service (ERS)

The ERS continues to see improved performance year on year as we reduce both the number of non-genuine emergency repairs responded to outside of normal working hours and the costs associated with running the service.



3.3 Improvement actions implemented within this service area:

We continue to scrutinise this service due to the additional costs associated with out of hours repairs but also appreciate the importance of being able to quickly respond to safety critical repairs. We continue to monitor the performance to ensure this is a cost-effective service.

4. Gas Servicing and repairs team

4.1 There are four main KPI's that measure the quality of service within this function.

Indicator	Direction of travel	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Annual Service Visit compliance percentage	Higher is better.	99.94%	99.78%	99.84%
Percentage of gas repairs completed at first visit	Higher is better.	70%	71%	64%
Percentage of all outstanding gas repairs which are out of category	Lower is better.	62%*	60%*	75%*
Percentage of repairs completed within target time	Higher is better.	91%	85%	93%

*Snapshot at year-end

Like the day-to-day repairs service, whilst performance in three of the four KPI's remains stable, our focus is on reducing outstanding workloads and particularly those that are out of category.

Supporting the heat metering project remains a massive factor in the overall performance of the Gas team, this has been extremely resource heavy due to making adaptations to enable installation of the heat meter, upgrading radiators and valves to ensure the system is working efficiently and responding to concerns around high usage. It is anticipated that this demand will naturally reduce over the coming months and we can focus on reducing the outstanding repairs before the busy winter period.

4.2 Improvement actions underway within this service area

The gas team have recently lost some internally promoted staff, something that is a real positive in the ethos of 'grow your own talent', but with the inevitable operational impacts this has, there is a focus on recruiting to fill these vacancies.

5. Voids team

5.1 There are three main KPI's that measure the quality of service within the Voids function.

Indicator	Direction of travel	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Void properties as a percentage of total stock (at year-end)	Lower is better	2.54%	2.45%	1.67%
Void rent loss as a percentage of the total rent roll	Lower is better	2.29%	2.33%	2.31%
Average time to complete void repairs (R&M function)	Lower is better	64 days	63 days	63 days

We continue to see signs of sustained improvement within the Voids function.

It has been a really pleasing year for voids where improved performance has impacted positively the number of voids held at any one time, as a percentage of our total stock. This should now have the knock-on effect of demonstrating a tangible decrease in the rent loss figures.

5.2 Improvement actions within this service area

We have continued to work through the Voids Improvement Plan and have now officially stood down this project to focus on the outstanding works project. We currently have around 100 less void properties at any given time in comparison to the start of the project. Our 'tenant in void' initiative is now seen as business as usual and is providing a streamlined pathway for incoming tenants who want/need to move into their property sooner.

We will continue to monitor the voids performance to ensure no slippage but remain really pleased with the great progress that has been made.

6. Wider improvements within the R&M function

6.1 Damp and Mould

Through collaboration with colleagues in Technical Services, we have created our first Damp and Mould Policy, putting measures in place to allow us to respond quickly to reports of damp and mould and work with residents to provide them with lasting remedies. In addition to this, we will be providing training to all Repairs staff in identifying damp and mould, and promoting pro-active reporting to ensure we are supporting residents. We are also targeting other repairs which may contribute to damp and mould, such as guttering, rendering and roofing to prevent it altogether.

6.2 Recruitment of craft staff

We have an ongoing recruitment board within in our management team who work closely with colleagues in HR to attract talent from across the city and beyond, but this doesn't appear to be enough to fill our vacancies, in what is a very competitive market. Historically, the best route into our craft workforce is through the apprenticeship programme, so it is very pleasing to see this increasing from 30 to 40 and we look forward to welcoming some carpenters into the team in the coming months. We will also be working with colleagues in the Apprenticeship Team to see how we can grow the Women in Construction programme to reach out to even more aspiring women and support them into becoming qualified tradespeople.

6.3 Stores

Following the unsuccessful procurement of the inventory management system (IMS), we have reviewed the specification, and this has now gone back out to tender. We are also close to tendering for the materials framework. Work will now begin on re-designing the stores operating model to reflect the anticipated efficiencies derived from the IMS and regular deliveries of core stock items.

Discussions are ongoing with colleagues in Fleet around supporting them with an in-house stores service to assist with a more efficient operating model.

6.4 Outstanding works project

As stated above, a new project has been initiated to help reduce the number of outstanding jobs across the repairs service. The project has already brought around some changes with housekeeping, focussed van stock to improve first hit completion, more versatile use of multi-skilled operatives to meet demands and localised projects targeting things like gutters, downpipes, and roofing repairs. We anticipate sharing an improved position when we next report on performance.