



Repairs and Maintenance, Gas and Voids 2021-22 year to date performance - Update

For consideration by: Housing Scrutiny Commission

Date: 29 November 2021

Lead Director: Chris Burgin

Useful information

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

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the performance of the Division's Repairs and Maintenance, Voids and Gas functions during 2021-22.
- 1.2 The 2021-22 performance statistics used in this report are those at Q2 (to September 21)
- 1.3 This report will provide an update on the continuing impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic on service delivery.
- 1.4 The report will also provide the Commission with an update about the implementation of service improvements that will drive improved performance into the future.

2. Background

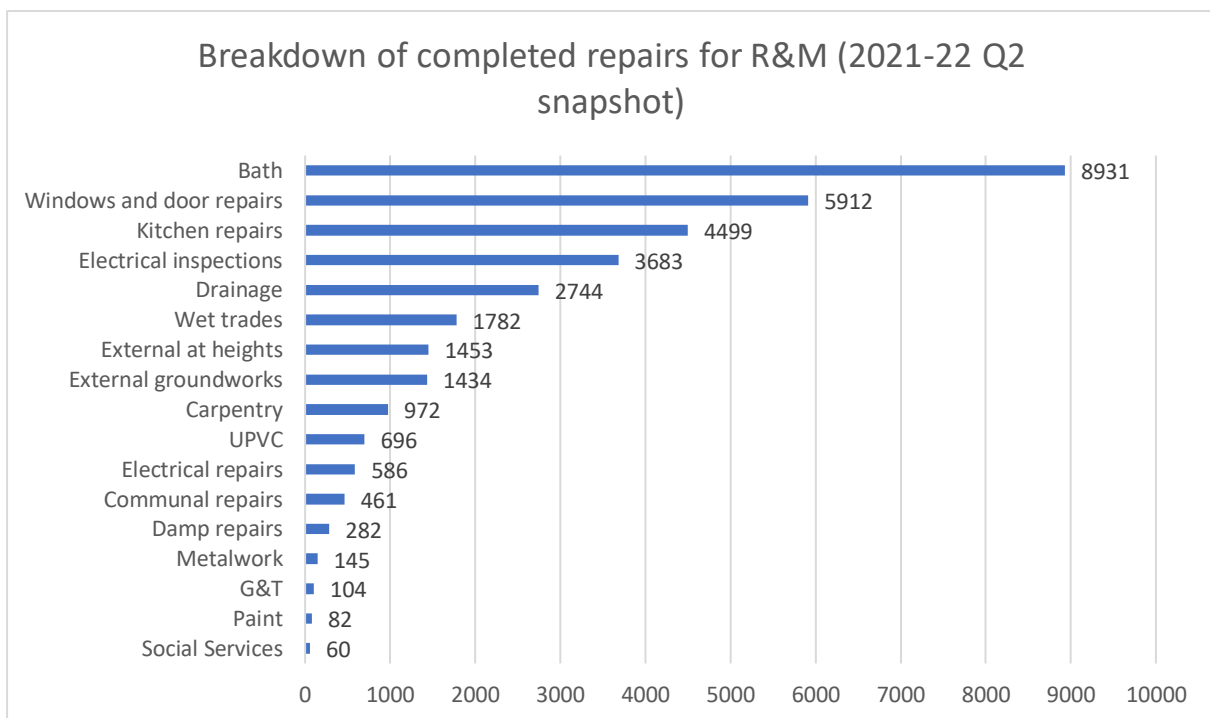
- 2.1 The repairs, gas and void functions operate across the City, providing services to 19,856 Leicester City Council owned homes and 1,536 Leasehold properties.
- 2.2 The current primary channel of access to the repairs and gas services is via the Customer Service Centre (CSC) Tenants Advice and Repairs Line (TARS) 0116 4541007 (option 1), Monday to Friday 8am to 6pm. We also provide an emergency repairs service outside of normal working hours, via the Emergency Repairs Line 0116 2549439.
- 2.3 Up to Q2 of 2021-22, the CSC received a total of 54,004 calls on the TARS line. This compares with 37,888 calls for the previous year. The Emergency Repairs Line received 7,184 calls, which compares to 5,866 for the same period last year.
- 2.4 Tenants can also register for an on-line account enabling them to book repairs and request progress updates on outstanding jobs via the Housing On-Line (HOL) portal 24 hours a day.
- 2.5 Up to Q2 of 2021-22, there were a total of 4,120 tenants registered with HOL. There have been 2,287 repairs reported and 179 updates requested by tenants using the on-line portal. A separate report on the Divisions on-line strategy is being prepared for the Commission.
- 2.6 Up to Q2 of 2021-22 there have been 1,748 tenant satisfaction forms returned, with 92% reporting satisfaction with the service.
- 2.7 As we recover from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic during 2020-21 we have seen workloads rapidly increasing towards pre-pandemic levels during the first two quarters of 2021-22.
 - 54% increase in the number of repairs completed within the R&M service.
 - 44% increase in the number of repairs completed within the Gas & Heating service.
 - 28% increase in the number of Void properties re-let within the Voids service.

2.8 The backlog of outstanding work currently sits at 7,609 jobs, which is 1,320 more jobs than we had outstanding prior to the pandemic in March 2020. This number of additional jobs within the backlog represents around 1-weeks reported Repairs under normal operating conditions.

3. Repairs and Maintenance (R&M)

3.1 Up to Q2 of this year we completed 33,826 repairs. This compares to 22,031 for the same period last year, when, for much of the year, we were only providing an emergency repairs service.

3.2 A breakdown of the type of repairs completed is provided below.



3.3 Key performance indicators for R&M

Indicator	Direction of travel (DOT)	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22 Q2
Percentage of repairs completed at first visit (excludes external works)	Higher is better. Target is 90%.	77.0%	82.6%	80.2%
Number of repairs which are out of category (excludes Gas and Voids)	Lower is better. Target is 300.	*721	*912	1524
Percentage of repairs completed within target time	Higher is better.	82.6%	96.0%	89.5%

	Target is 92%			
Percentage of repairs reported where a complaint has been received	Lower is better. Target is <0.5%	0.1%	0.01%	0.02%

*snapshot at year-end.

4. Gas & Heating Services

4.1 Up to Q2 of this year we have completed 7,010 gas and communal heating repairs. This compares to 4,884 for the same period in the previous year.

4.2 Up to Q2 of this year, we completed 9,785 Annual Service Visits (ASV's), which is a similar amount to the previous year as we continued to carry out this essential safety work during the pandemic.

4.3 Key performance indicators for Gas & Heating Services

Indicator	DoT	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22 Q2
Annual Service Visit compliance percentage	Higher is better. Target is 100%	99.99%	99.17%	99.99%
Percentage of gas repairs completed at first visit	Higher is better. Target is 90%.	74.8%	79.8%	68.6%
Number of gas repairs which are out of category (snap	Lower is better. Target is 0.	*843	*0	323
Percentage of repairs completed within target time	Higher is better. Target is 92%	91.5%	98.6%	93.1%

*snapshot at year-end.

5. Voids

5.1 Up to Q2 of this year, we have completed and re-let 442 Voids properties. This compares with and 346 for the same period last year.

5.2 The number of Voids held currently stands at 299. This represents a significant (40%) reduction from the 495 Void properties held during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2021.

5.3 Key performance indicators for Voids

Indicator	DoT	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22 Q2
Average re-let times in days (all Voids)	Lower is better.	123.3	137.8	133.6
Rent loss	Lower is better.	£835,799.27	£1,115,966.74	£903,999.60*
Voids completed and let	Higher is better.	959	760	442

*part-year rent loss to Q2 of 2021-22

5.4 Void property clearance process

When a property becomes Void, a Voids Technician visits to assess the number of items needing to be cleared from the property. Items that are suitable for re-use, including white goods and items of furniture in reasonable condition, are collected by Work Link, a local charity.

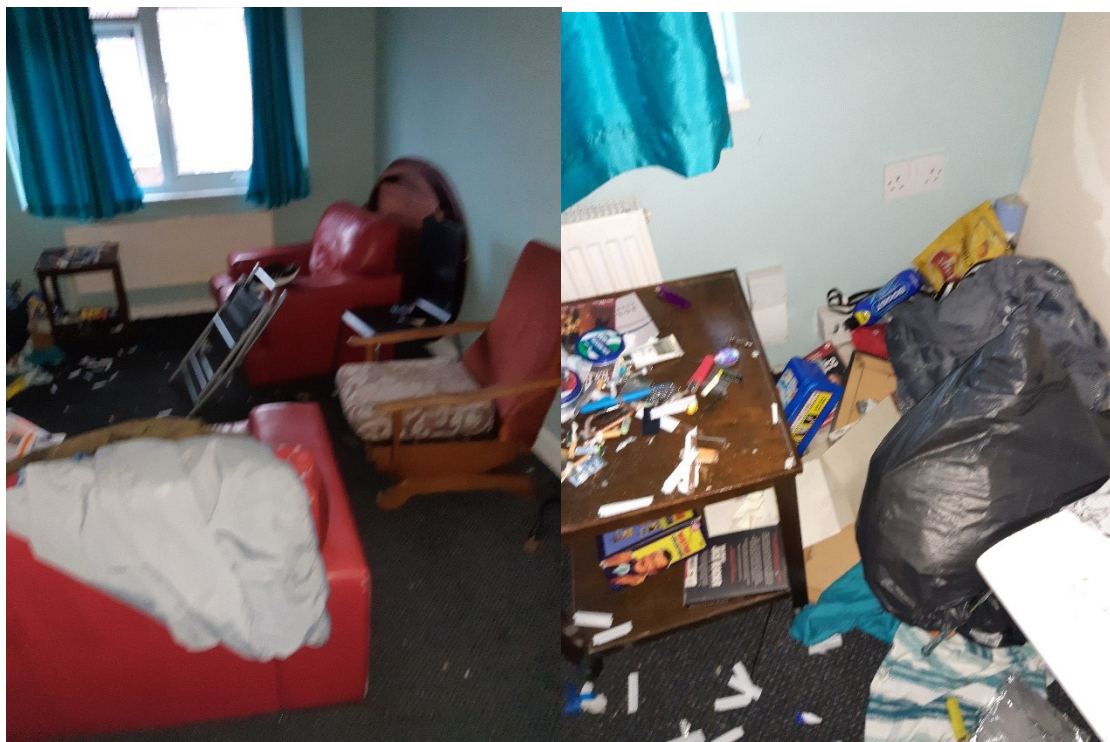
Remaining small amounts of items are then cleared free of charge, but where the time taken and amount of waste meets the limits below, exiting tenants are re-charged in accordance with the following charging schedule.

Volume (cubic yards)	Time taken	Recharge cost
4	Half day	£93.31
8	Full day	£193.31
12	Day and a half	£289.97

Void clearance jobs are raised on the system and planned into our clearance teams workloads, who use a 'bin lorry' type vehicle, known as a crusher, to compact the rubbish and take it away to our waste disposal site at 90 Leycroft Road. We also have a smaller lorry for work in inner-city areas, where street access is more difficult.

Void clearance work is just one stage of the overall Voids process, and whilst properties left in a poor state do inevitably take more time to clear, there are other factors adding to the overall delays in the Voids process, and these are being identified as part of the overall Voids Service Analysis mentioned below in this report.

Examples of Void property condition prior to clearance are shown below.



During 2019-20 we re-charged tenants for this work to the value of £4,245.00.

As a result of the closure of waste disposal facilities during the pandemic, the decision was made to cancel all re-charges for Void clearance work during the 2020-21 financial year. This policy remained

in place until May 2021, and we are now applying the re-charges to exiting tenants in line with the charging schedule above where appropriate.

So far during 2021-22 (Q2) we have re-charged tenants to the value of £1,171.00.

6. Impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic on service delivery

Our immediate response to the pandemic in March 2020 was to implement our business continuity plans, which included the cessation of all non-urgent repairs, only allowing single-person working in our Void properties, and the isolation rather than the servicing of independent gas fires, to avoid unnecessary exposure within tenants homes when carrying out the annual service visit (ASV) within their homes. We also lost a significant amount of staff who were self-isolating due to their health vulnerabilities.

At the point we implemented our service delivery recovery plan, we were in the following position when compared to the position immediately before the pandemic.

Indicator	Pre Covid-19	Start of recovery	Current position
Total number of outstanding jobs (repairs and maintenance)	6285	8364	7605
Number of Voids held (snapshot)	295	495	299
Number of gas fires capped off	None	1000	None

We continue to work hard on bringing down the number of outstanding jobs, whilst dealing with new reported repairs, and we are enlisting the help of contractors to reduce both the number of Voids outstanding at any one time, and the length of time they remain Void before being re-let.

Another challenge is to manage the additional amount of annual leave being taken by staff during this year who were unable to take all their annual leave allowance during the various lock-down phases of the pandemic last year. This is impacting on our own resource levels and slowing the progress we are making on bringing the backlog of jobs down to pre-pandemic levels.

7. Improvement actions underway to drive improved performance

7.1 De-scaling programme

An initial de-scaling programme of the drainage system at the 'Burns flats' has commenced, with access issues proving a real barrier to progress. We are working with our Housing Management colleagues to coordinate our efforts to improve multiple property access arrangements at the same time, to undertake the necessary work that needs to be completed.

We are also exploring the option of renewing the external pipes outside individual properties as an initial attempt to improve drain performance without the need to gain access to individual properties. Initial inspection of these external pipes has shown excessive scale build up, that will be affecting overall performance.

Image of cross section of 4-inch stack pipe removed from Crayburn House.



7.2 Introduction of National Federation Schedule of Rates (SOR's)

We have recently purchased the National Federation of Rates, better known as a schedule of rates (SOR's), which are widely used by other local authorities and housing associations and allow the accurate standardised measurement of labour time associated with the various tasks within jobs. This will enable managers to plan work more effectively, maximising staff resources and availability, and providing accurate performance management data for individual staff. This data can then be used to drive productivity and improve overall efficiency.

Work is being planned in to integrate SOR's into our planning system, Total Mobile, after which we will used a phased approach to implementation, starting with the Gas and Heating Service section, then moving to our R&M and Voids functions.

7.3 Voids Service Analysis

Due to the on-going performance issues within the Voids and Property Lettings function, we initiated a service analysis in June 2021. This service analysis is designed to look at the current operating processes and procedures and is scheduled to report on its findings to the senior management team in December 2021.

7.4 Stores Managed Service

We are currently undertaking a procurement exercise to establish a managed stores service. The aim is to have the contract awarded by early 2022, with go-live planned for late summer 2022.

7.5 Emergency Repairs Service (ERS)

We are continually reviewing how we can make the out of hours emergency repairs service more effective, and we are working with colleagues within the Service Analysis and Improvement Team to improve guidance around correct job categorisation, to ensure that only genuine emergency jobs are responded to outside of normal working hours. Improvements in this area will ensure that the service remains fit for purpose, provides an effective emergency response to those that need it, and does this in the most cost-effective way.

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Leicester City Council