

	<p align="center">Housing Scrutiny Committee 6 February 2019</p>
	<p align="center">Report from the Strategic Director of Community Wellbeing</p>
<p align="center">Housing Management Performance (April – December 2018)</p>	

Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision:	Non-Key
Open or Part/Fully Exempt: <small>(If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)</small>	Open
No. of Appendices:	None
Background Papers:	N/A
Contact Officer(s): <small>(Name, Title, Contact Details)</small>	<p>Hakeem Osinaike, Operational Director of Housing Hakeem.Osinaike@brent.gov.uk 0208 937 2023</p> <p>Troy Francis, Head of Customer Services Troy.Francis@brent.gov.uk 0208 937 2794</p> <p>Sean Gallagher, Head of Property Services Sean.Gallagher@brent.gov.uk 0208 937 1147</p>

1.0 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 This report outlines the current performance for Brent Housing Management from April – December 2018 in key improvement areas for the service. Performance targets are presented alongside monitoring data, commentary and progress against the improvement plan work.

1.2 This report is also shared with the Housing Transformation Board which monitors the progress of the Housing Transformation Project implementing the CRM system for Housing Management.

2.0 Recommendation(s)

2.1 Housing Scrutiny Committee is asked to note the progress made on the Improvement Action Plans for Housing Management.

3.0 Detail

CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

What are we trying to achieve?

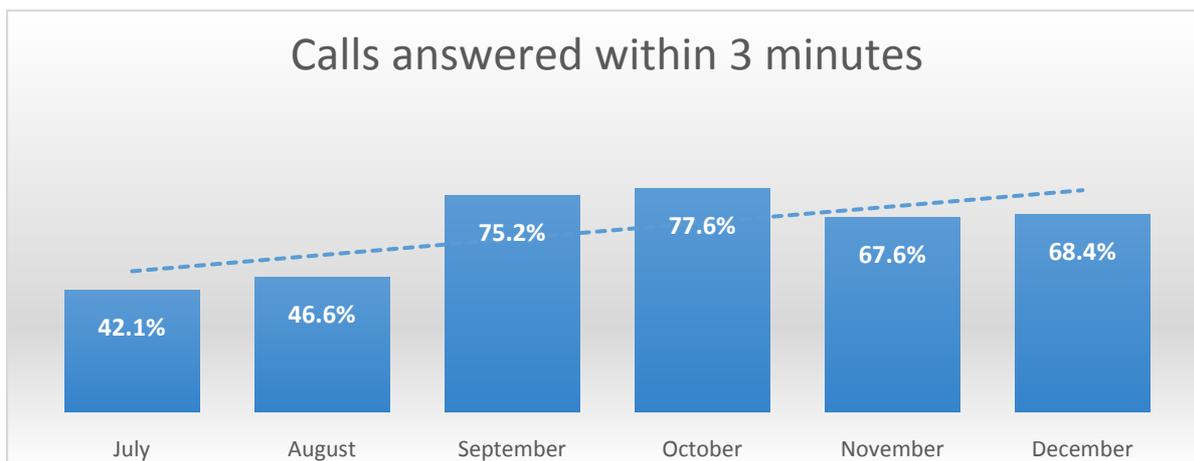
	Target	By when	Benchmark Median
To improve call handling response time	90% calls answered	March 2019	90%
To reduce wait time (3 minutes target derived from residents' feedback).	80% calls answered within 3 minutes	March 2019	N/A

Are services improving?

The chart below shows our calls answered performance year to date



The chart below shows our calls answered within 3 minutes from July December 2018



Commentary on current performance

Telephone response time is one of the two major areas customers have told us they are concerned about. Therefore we have set high targets for improvement in this area. Not only are we measuring call answering but also the length of time a customer will wait for a call to be answered. As part of the design work for the housing transformation programme residents told us that they felt a wait time of 3 minutes was reasonable. Based on this our target for 2018/19 is that 80% of all calls should be answered within that time.

The average wait time in Q3 was 2.38 minutes; an improvement from 5.44 minutes in Q2. This shows that although our performance was below target at peak times, the average length of time people had to wait to speak to a Customer Service Officer is reducing.

High performance in September and October in the service were due to a combination of fewer calls and a full complement of management and officers in the team. This has raised a question about whether the resource levels are aligned with customer demands. We will review this as part of our planned 6 month review of the new housing structure.

Improvement Plan

Project	Deadline	Status
Complete analysis of failure demands and put in place plan to reduce this	30 April 2019	On track
Develop initiatives to drive channel shifting agenda in lieu of the launch of the new Customer Portal	30 April 2019	On track

Progress / impact

The recruitment programme linked to the restructure has been completed, but contact centre resources remain an important factor. The contact centre is designed as a launching pad into other areas of the organisation which means there is a high rate of internal movements within the service. A recruitment campaign is underway to backfill these and apprentice roles, which is due to be completed at the end of January.

A number of IT solutions have been developed to help us quantify the sources of

demand on the contact centre, and to design out repeat contact resulting from known failure demand. These include the implementation of the CRM system across the contact centre, integration of the CRM system and telephony system (8x8) and the implementation of the new appointment system being delivered by Wates. These IT investments will ensure we're more responsive in dealing with service requests. It will also enable the Customer Service Officers to provide more wrap around service which will drive more a positive customer experience.

The failure demand analysis planned for March 2019. After which time we will have access to wrap up codes through CRM to provide us with a better understanding of the service issues driving avoidable contact.

The Housing Management website has been revamped and is due to go live in mid-February. The new platform will enable better access to online services and improve accessibility to basic information which will increase residents' ability to self-serve. The new customer portal is due to go-live in April and a promotional campaign is being scoped to increase take up. Enrolment to the customer portal will be a strategic performance indicator and will be reported through future KPI reports.

COMPLAINT AND MEMBERS CASEWORK

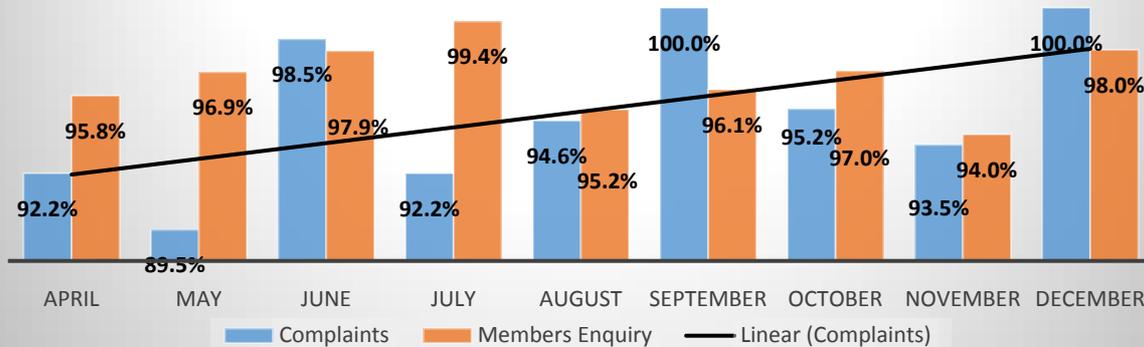
What are we trying to achieve?

	Target	By when	Benchmark Median
To improve complaint and Members Enquiry response time	100% complaints responded to within 20 working days	March 2019	90%
	100% Members Enquiries responded to within 20 working days	March 2019	N/A
To reduce the number of stage 1 complaint escalating to stage 2	5% reduction in stage 1 complaint escalating to Stage 2	March 2019	N/A

Are services improving?

The chart below shows the proportion of Complaint and Members casework responded to on time

Complaint and Members Enquiry Performance April to December 2018



Commentary on current performance

Performance has improved in Q3 for Complaints and Members Enquiries responses. Stage 1 complaint handling times have reduced from an average of 18.8 days in quarter 1 & 2 to 16.3 days in Q3 (excluding outliers mentioned below). We continue to provide challenge through the weekly complaint and members casework case conferences to improve case handling and responses.

A particular area of focus for the quarter has been getting a handle on property services complaints. A number of long term complaints have been closed by the team in October and November and the caseload administration is now being managed within the property services team. The average turn around for Property Services complaints responses in Q1 and Q2 was 19.4 days, excluding the long term outliers this has reduced to 16.3 days in Q3. The team are now working on improving quality of response and completing actions before sending response rather than making promises in response. This offers a more resolution focussed outcome for complainants. A number of improvement initiatives are also underway based on our learning from complaint over the past quarter. This includes developing a strengthened Access Procedure to accelerate how we are able to deal with leaks affecting residents living in blocks.

Improvement Plan

Project	Deadline	Status
Establish weekly case conference to review complaint, Members enquiries casework and corrective actions	September 2018	Completed
Develop quality assurance regime to improve the quality of responses and reduce stage 2 escalations	30 November 2018	Completed

Progress / impact

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Heads of Service have carried out a root cause analysis alongside the Corporate Complaints Team, using the outputs to carry out local procedure and operational improvement. The Corporate Complaint performance report provides some examples of some of local improvement work currently underway in response to some of the learning from complaints over recent months.

Heads of Service have also carried out sample quality checks on an ad-hoc basis. This has been used to provide feedback and coaching to individuals where required. The Council is currently working with an external training organisation to provide some training on 'Customer Friendly Writing' this training will improve quality and consistency in way we communicate with customers, particularly in response to complaints.

In addition to this, the newly formed Performance, Insight and Improvement Service within CWB has formalised a process of targeted independent audits to gain a better understanding of the underlying drivers behind complaints so that these can continue to inform policy reviews and service improvement work, as well as ensuring that quality assurance is routinely undertaken.

VOIDS AND LETTINGS

What are we trying to achieve?

	Target	By when	Benchmark Median
Improve re-let time	Average re-let time for standard void – 24 days	May 2019	27 days
	Average re-let time for major void – 72 days	May 2019	N/A

Are services improving?

The chart below show re-let time performance up to the end of December

Average days taken to re-let minor voids



Average days taken to re-let major voids



Commentary on current performance

Void turnaround target continues to improve with quarterly performance of 42 days for standards voids and 91 days for major voids. Voids is a key area of focus for BHM with high targets set for improvement as the impacts of an empty property are twofold for the business

1. We are not collecting rent on the property
2. We are not able to house a family in need and continue to pay rent on emergency accommodation solutions.

The property services team have been working closely with voids contractors to reduce the time in works and improve the overall void turnaround. The team have improved the works turnaround from an average of 34 days in April to 23 days in December for minor voids and an average of 57 days in April to 27 days in December for major voids.

Improvement Plan

Project	Deadline	Status
Deliver the improvement contained within the Void Action plan	31 March 2019	On track
Progress / impact		
<p>The new Voids and Lettings Procedure was launched in October. This new procedure brought together input from the various operational teams involved in the process in a more streamlined way.</p> <p>A new void management process was recently launched through the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system platform. This will enable us to develop a more efficient way of managing the key activities associated with the void process. It will also enable us to improve management information to understand the areas of the process performing to optimum levels and those areas requiring further refinement through our continuous improvement programme.</p>		

RESPONSIVE REPAIRS

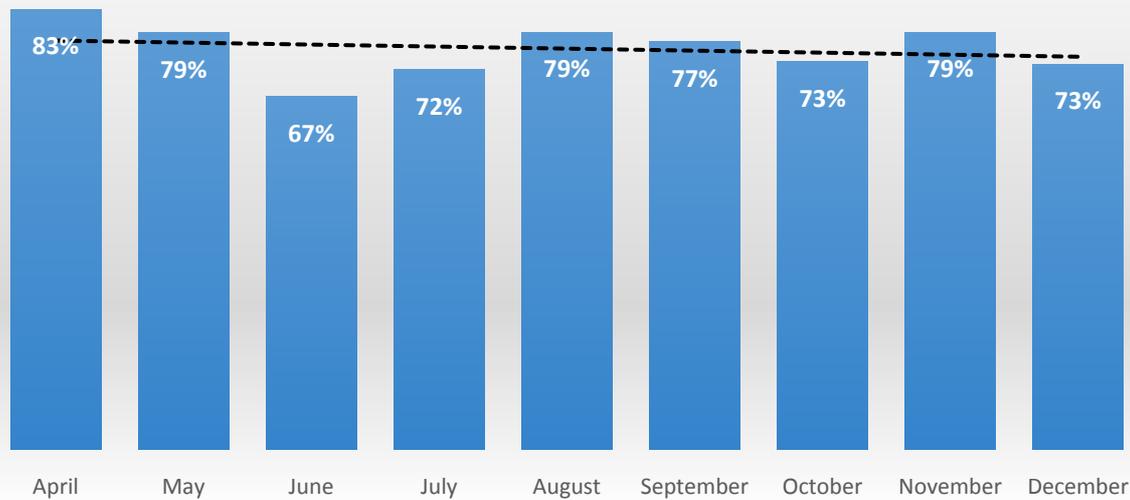
What are we trying to achieve?

	Target	By when	Benchmark Median
Improve the responsive repairs service	82% of customers satisfied with the repairs service received	March 19	72%
	80% of routine repairs completed within 14 days	March 19	N/A

Are services improving?

The chart below shows customer satisfaction levels with repairs based on weekly telephone surveys of customer who have recently had a repair completed.

% customer satisfied with repairs service received



Commentary on current performance

The median performance for repairs satisfaction gathered by text messaging using a single question surveys is 72% for similar housing organisations, top quartile performance is 78%. Repairs performance is the other major area of concern for our customers and accordingly we have set a target of 82% repairs satisfaction. We are currently achieving a cumulative figure of 75.6% and improvement of 5% on 2017/18 results of 71%.

We launched a comprehensive Service Improvement Plan process between October and November 2018 in conjunction with our service provider to establish greater insight into the reasons affecting performance and the implementation of a number of measures to achieve improvements to consistently meet the target of 82% satisfaction

The Improvement plan for raising satisfaction encompasses a number of Brent and supplier team actions under the umbrella of 5 key objectives;

1. Improving survey methodology to gain better insight
2. Dealing with “no access” issues that delay resolution of leaks
3. Managing multi-trades and follow on works
4. Diagnosing faults first time, and scheduling appointments
5. Improving clarity and application of service standards

Improvement Plan

	Project	Deadline	Status
1	Improving survey methodology to gain better insight	July 2019	On track

Progress / impact

- The current survey collection process commissioned by BHP is restrictive and has low levels of returns, and doesn't give us the depth of insight we need to really understand the customer experience.
- Since December "Aftercare cards" are left at the end of all repairs to encourage feedback and resolve any outstanding issues prior to escalation.
- As part of the CRM initiative a customer satisfaction feedback module is being developed with draft prototypes currently in place. Customers will be able to feedback in more timely, comprehensive and proactive way through digital applications
- This involves a series of questions on the repairs service and opportunity for more comprehensive feedback.
- This will provide greater insight to our services, root causes and areas for continuous improvement.

2	Dealing with "no access" issues that delay resolution of leaks	Feb 2019	On track
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Progress / impact

No access and leaks is the single biggest cause of repairs complaint and one of the key issues affecting the opportunity to deliver repairs in a timely manner

The improvement plan is addressing

- Coordination from leasehold and tenancy teams
- Review and update access procedures and policy
- A more responsive & firmer approach
- Closer working with Wates

Progress has been made on actions with updated Access Policy and procedure to be agreed by 11 February 2019

3	Managing multi-trades and follow on works	Feb 2019	On track
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Progress / impact

Customers have noted that this is one of the key areas of dissatisfaction

Actions to be introduced in February include:

- Customers given an appointment or follow-on appointment at every touchpoint of the repairs process from initial call, surveyor visits and contractor visits.
- Wates are accountable for management of all resources to deliver all necessary works including continuous updating of customers.
- Wates to make follow up appointments themselves while in the property with customers
- Impact of these actions will be monitored at time of launch to track improvements.

4	Diagnosing faults first time, and scheduling appointments	April 2019	On target
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Progress / impact

In order to ensure appropriate diagnosis of repairs being raised 3 key actions have been implemented

- Service standards and timescales for "emergency" and repairs by

- appointment have been clarified with the Customer Experience Team.
- This was rolled out in December and has resulted in a 15% drop in emergencies, which has begun to free up resources to deliver repairs by appointment in more manageable timescales
 - Through the CRM initiative – the introduction of diagnosis software systems to support Customer Experience Team in accurately diagnosing repairs – is due to be rolled out by end of April

5	Improving clarity and application of service standards	April 2019	On track
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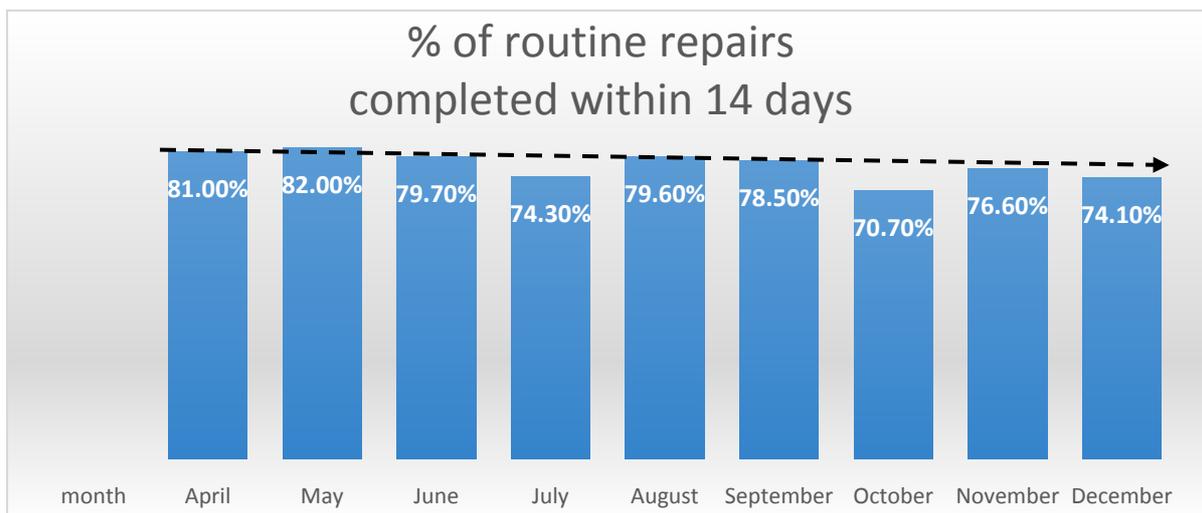
Progress / impact

Ambiguity and conflicts within service standards has identified the need to review and refresh our standards taking into account the Housing Promise, tenancy agreements and customer expectations and prevailing contract arrangements with service providers. This includes

- Brent responsibilities
- Customer responsibilities
- Timescales for works

Service standards have been reviewed and drafts produced for consideration. The Housing Promise will be updated by April so that repairs service standards are clear and are applied consistently.

The chart below shows the percentage of routine repairs jobs completed within 14 days. This excludes emergency and communal repairs.



Commentary on current performance

From April 2018 onwards, in agreement with Wates, we have reduced the target turnaround time for routine repairs from the contractual 28 days, to 14 days to improve the service customers receive.

The 2018/19 target is to deliver 80% of routine repairs within 14 days. The target will be reviewed, and increased during 2019/20.

Q3 and Q4 are seasonally the periods of higher demand on the service and performance has been lower accordingly. Overall we are behind target cumulatively at 76%, action being taken to open up appointment times and diagnosis activities will help us reach this target in the coming months.

Improvement Plan

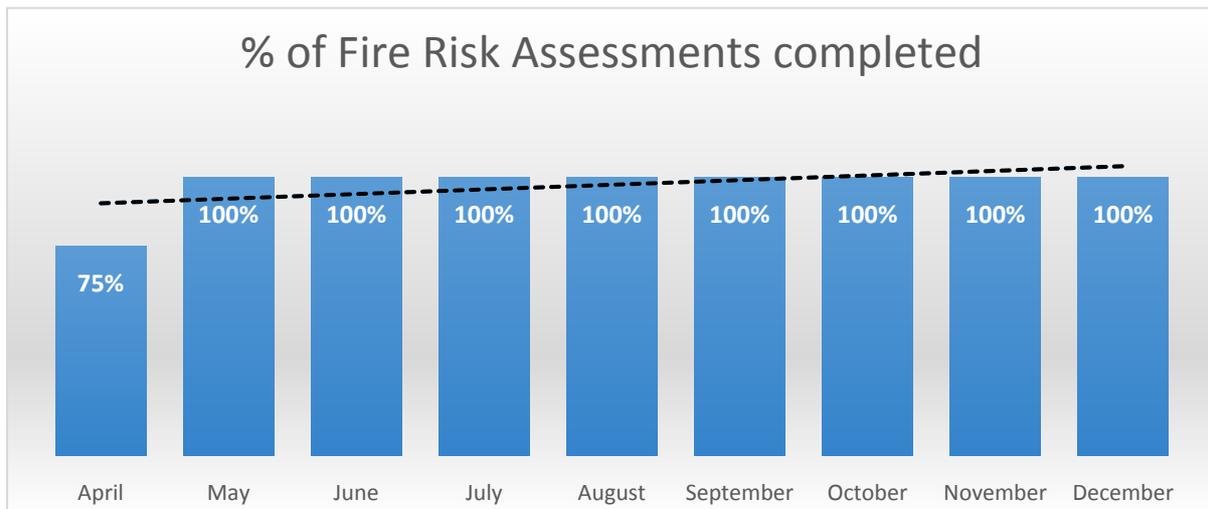
Project	Deadline	Status
Reduce emergency repairs to 10% and free up resources to deliver repairs with 14 days	March 2019	On track
Progress / impact		
Emergency repairs are being reduced (from highs of 38% of repairs raised) by improved call management and diagnosis to free up appropriate trade resources to undertake repairs by appointment.		
Wates have committed to increasing the number of appointment slots per week to 450, which will allow appointments to be given no earlier than 2 but no later than 4 days after the telephone call.		
This is being supported by Wates who are rolling out a new operations management software system which will be available to Brent and will offer a transparent view of all activities within the repairs operation.		

COMPLIANCE

What are we trying to achieve?

	Target	By when
Satisfy statutory landlord duties	100% of properties with valid gas safety certificate	continuous
	100% of high rise blocks with valid Fire Risk Assessment in line with cyclical re-inspection	continuous

Are services improving?



Commentary on current performance

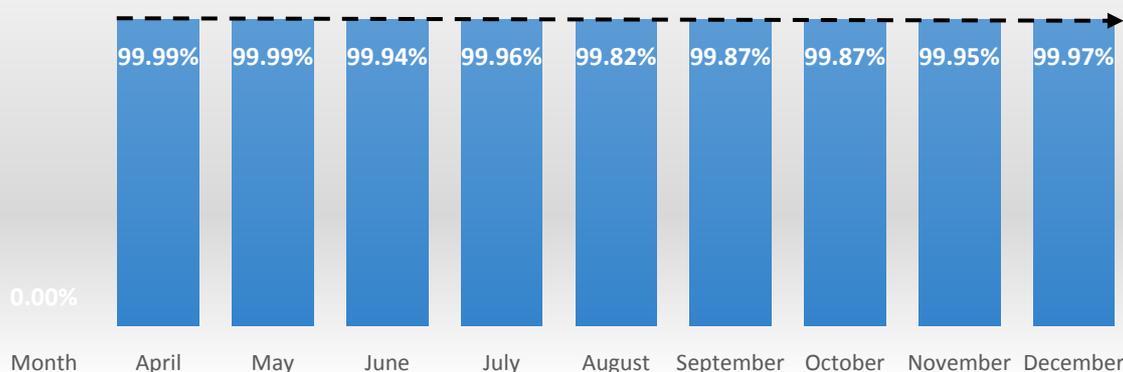
After addressing some short-falls with out of date Fire Risk Assessments (FRA) at the start of the year, these were quickly actioned and from May onwards we have 100% compliance. Each FRA is up to date and available for all blocks. Remedial action on these FRAs are also tracking at 100% completion.

In addition FRA-4 surveys have been undertaken in all blocks over 12 storeys high.

Improvement Plan

Project	Deadline	Status
Migration of existing spreadsheet and operating records to CRM	July 2019	On track
Progress / impact		
Property Services teams continue to operate existing systems to ensure compliance and operational management. They are working closely with the CRM project team to capture requirements for migration to forthcoming CRM systems in mid- 2019 onwards.		

% of properties with a valid gas safety certificate



Commentary on current performance

We consistently maintain valid gas certificates on all stock where gas supplies are present. The very limited exceptions occur where legal action is being carried out to gain access.

In December we had two properties requiring a gas certificate renewal. In these two exceptions access intervention measures have taken place with Warrant to Enter Premises court orders being granted.

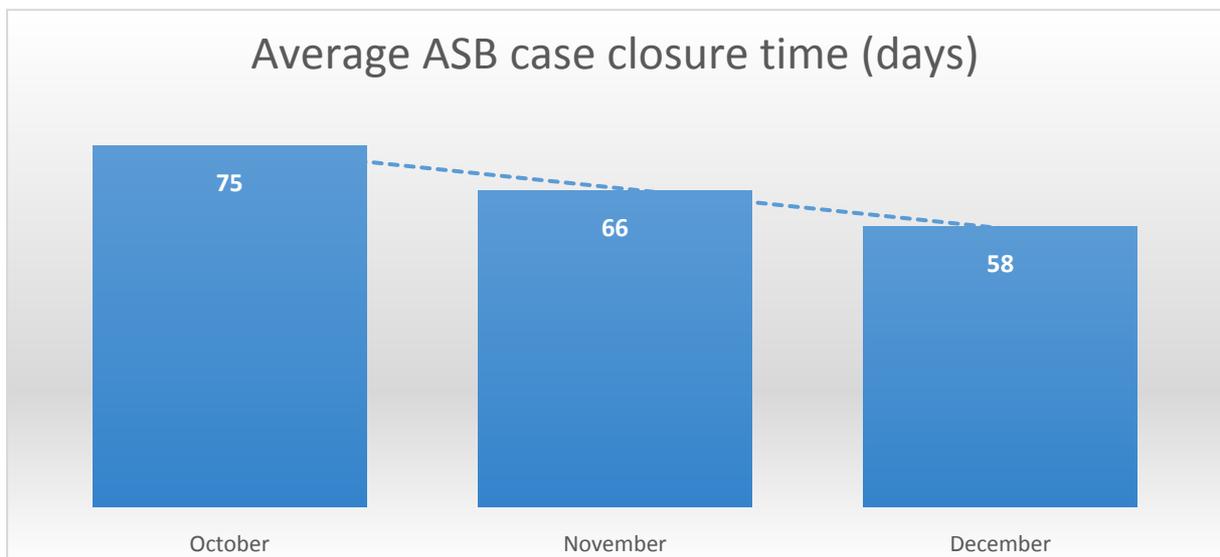
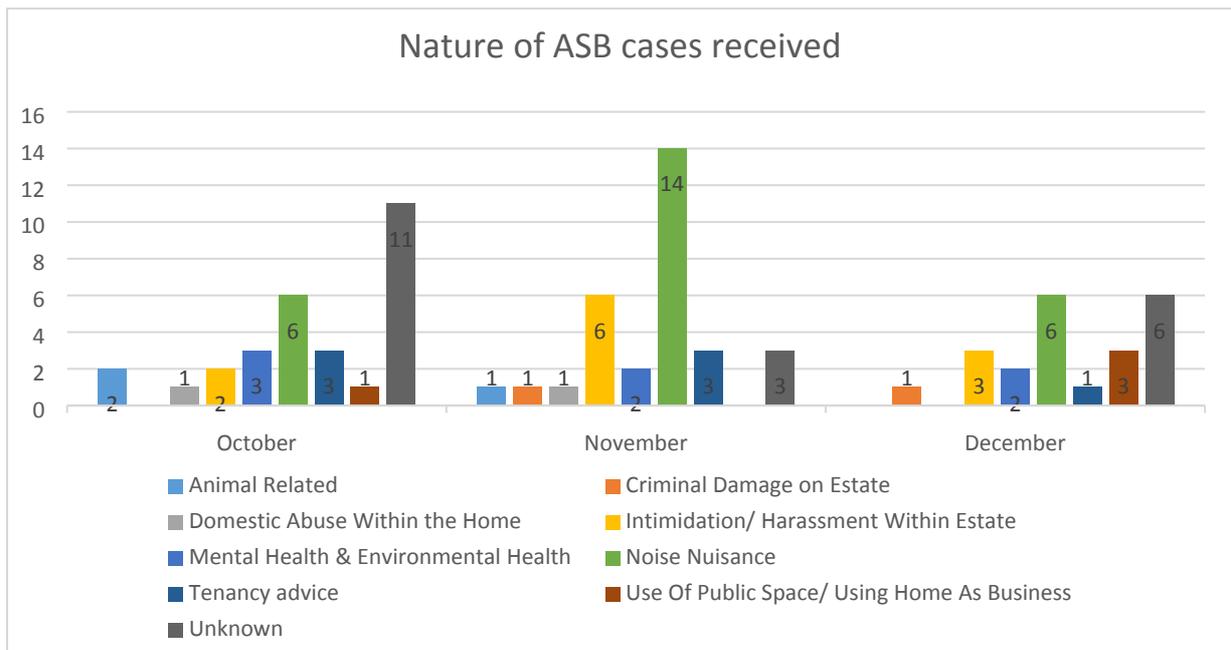
Improvement Plan

Project	Deadline	Status
Migration of existing compliance database and operating records to CRM	July 2019	On track
Progress / impact		
Property Services teams continue to operate existing software data-base systems to ensure compliance and operational management. They are working closely with the CRM project team to capture requirements for migration to forthcoming CRM systems in mid- 2019 onwards.		

TENANCY AND ESTATE

What are we trying to achieve?

	Target	By when	Benchmark Median
Improve estate standard	80% estate meeting a 'excellent or good rating	June 2019	N/A
Improve satisfaction with ASB	61% ASB complainants satisfied with how the Council handle their ASB complaint	June 2019	82%



Commentary on current performance

23 ASB complaints were reported over the last month. The highest ASB complaint type continues to be noise nuisance, followed by Intimidation/ Harassment within the estate. A large proportion of the cases received were from the Kilburn Brent Connect area and the Homes and Communities Team are working with the Community Safety Team (support and enforcement practitioners across the borough) to identify key hotspots and tactical initiatives to address these ASB issues.

The average time to close a case in the last three months is 68.7 days against an SLA of 90 days, with the timeframe reducing month on month as the Housing Officers become more comfortable with the case management procedures. Further management information is being developed in the Power BI reporting system.

We have introduced a new estate inspection solution that went live in December. 85 estate inspections have been completed under this new system to date and we are currently refining our management reporting to provide our assessments against defined standards.

Improvement Plan

Project	Deadline	Status
Deliver the ASB action plan	May 2019	On track
Complete the review of the estate cleaning service	31 October 2019	On track

Progress / impact

A new ASB case management system was rolled over the last few months which has improved our operational processes and management information associated with our ASB case activities.

The Homes and Communities team are working on a number of initiatives alongside the council Community Safety Team, these include:

- The service has engaged Ealing Mediation Services to support on non-legal interventions to ASB issues. The team had a bite sized training session with the service on 15 January and are now able to make referrals where required.
- Working closely with the Noise Abatement service team in Environmental Services to support on the noise nuisance complaints.
- Developing a quality check template to be used across the services to ensure consistency in response and approach.
- Preparing for the launch of the Online Watch Link (OWL) which is a revamped neighbourhood watch initiative. This launches for Brent Council alongside the revamped website offer for BHM and Community Safety Team in February.

Cabinet agreed the proposal to bring the estate cleaning service back in house. A programme of activities is now being established as part of the mobilisation of the new service. The new cleansing service will go live on 15 September 2019. The initiatives include:

- Completing a resident engagement plan to ensure residents are in the driving seat to shape the specification and standards of the new service.
- Recently started a roll out of the Power Apps tech solution to enable improved monitoring of estate cleaning standards. This includes Wettons cleaning operatives taking before and after photos in the app to evidence the service.
- Continue to work on the Wettons joint improvement plan which addresses fundamental issues with operative activities to ensure that the service is addressed until the end of the contract.

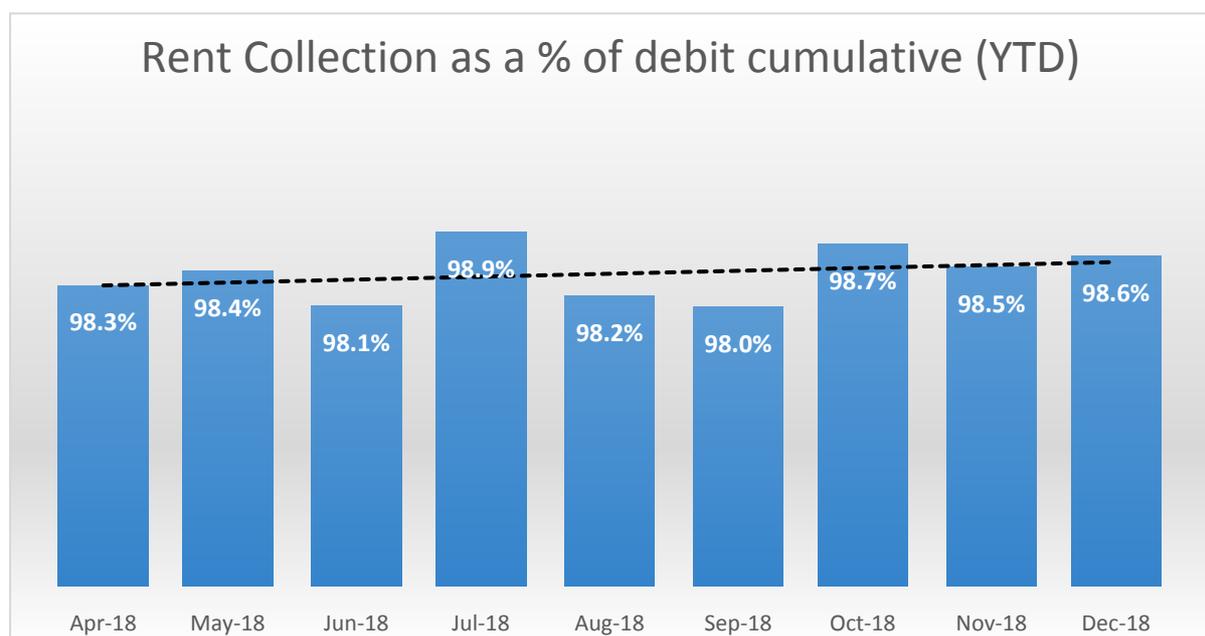
INCOME AND SUSTAINMENT

What are we trying to achieve?

	Target	By when	Benchmark Median
Increase rental income collection	99.5% rent collected	31 March 2019	99.64%

Are services improving?

The chart below shows the rent collected as a percentage of rent due on all social housing homes managed by the Council.



Commentary on current performance

Performance for Q3 was 99.7% an improvement from 98.1% in Q1 and 98.0% in Q2. Year to date performance is 98.6%, 1% off target. Q4 is historically the best quarter for rent collections with 99.75% collected in 2017/18 and 100.1% in 2016/17.

The team are currently targeting arrears collections by making evening calls to engage residents who don't always get access to during core hours. These will enable us to discuss rent arrears and provide support where required.

The SMART income collection feature of CRM went live for the income team on 21 January which prompts officers to make early interventions based on arrears risk factors. For example officers now received data on Direct Debit payments that bounce in real time, they can then get in touch with the resident and make a positive intervention in a timely manner.

There are currently 193 tenants enrolled on Universal Credit a high proportion of which are in arrears based on the payment cycle. The lead time for the first UC payment is between 5-6 weeks on average. We've developed a robust monitoring process to ensure we're able to mitigate the risk associated with this cohort of tenants. We're also making application for Alternative Payment Arrangements (APA) for tenants deemed as vulnerable together with those who owe more eight weeks arrears.

Improvement Plan

Project	Deadline	Status
Develop a Housing Income Collection Strategy	30 November 2018	Completed
Deliver the action plan specific to the roll out of the Universal Credit change	30 September 2019	On track

Progress / impact

An Income Collection Strategy has been established to support the Council maximizing the level of rental income received from residents living in Council homes, whilst also keeping our resident debts to a minimum. Brent Housing Management aims to provide a high performing, efficient and effective income management service. The strategy has already started delivering a number of improvements including:

- Launch of the new income collection case management system through our new customers relationship management technology.
- Review of the income management procedure to incorporate some of the considerations linked to Universal Credit
- Deliver welfare benefit training to core income collection staff
- Straightening the sign up process to embed the rent payment culture
- Trialing an initiative to change behavior towards rent payments, using different communication style

A number of operational processes has been put in place to help embed the introduction of the Universal Credit across the Council Housing stock. This include revising our rent collection arrears procedure, strengthening the sign up procedure to reinforce rent payment culture and nudging residents to sign up to direct debit. Brent Housing Management has been given 'Trusted Partner' status by the DWP, which enable access to the landlord portal to fast track the verification process and application for alternative payment agreements

The Financial Inclusion Team continues to provide support to residents who need it, basic debt advice and/or signposting to the other agencies including CAB and other financial advice organisation. The Council has renewed its commitment to funding the Employment and Skills scheme to assist residents get back into work.

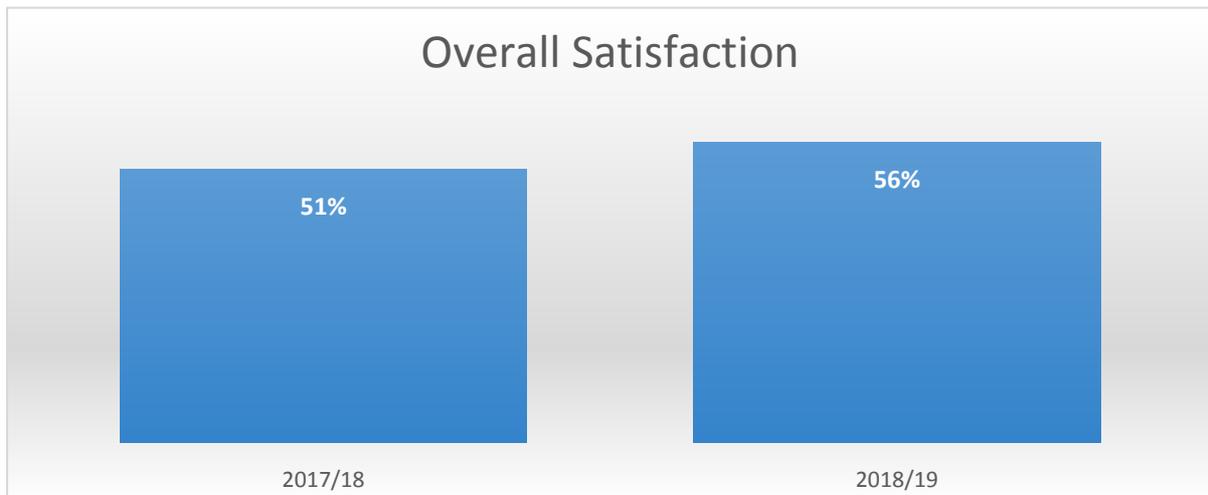
OVERALL SATISFACTION

What are we trying to achieve?

	Target	By when	Benchmark Median
Improve overall satisfaction with landlord services	65%	September 2019	75%

Are services improving?

The chart below relates to overall satisfaction result for the past two years



Commentary on current performance

We are using a nationally benchmarked “Survey of Tenants and Residents” (STAR) format to measure perception of the service. Two annual surveys have been carried out by BMG Research Ltd an independent survey company.

The results show that overall satisfaction has improved by 5% since the ALMO has come in house. The main factors of improvement were:

- Satisfaction with the cleaning of internal cleaning – 68% (10% up on last year)
- Satisfaction with quality of home - 65% (3% up on last year)
- Satisfaction with VFM (rent) - 76% (1% up on last year)
- Satisfaction at with VFM (service charge) - 54% (3% up on last year)
- Satisfaction with repairs and maintenance - 56% (4% up on last year)
- Satisfaction with neighbourhood - 73% (2% up on last year)

It is known that overall satisfaction as a measure is slow to change, and can be driven by perception of a service, rather than experience. As a result we are in the process of reviewing the methodology by which we carry out the STAR survey, and are looking to supplement this with a suite of measures that will capture satisfaction with individual transactions, such as us carrying out a repair, managing an anti-social behaviour case, or letting a property, to give us richer,

more useable insight in real-time that can be used to drive service improvement.

Improvement Plan

	Project	Deadline	Status
	Develop action plan arising from the STAR customer satisfaction survey results	April 2019	On track

Progress / impact

The new Housing Promise sets out clearly the service standards our customers can expect from us. These standards if delivered consistently will create the right experience for our customers. Our performance management framework has been aligned to enable to track progress against the standards and to react to ensure areas requiring improvement.

Analysis tells us that the key driver behind overall satisfaction is communication, which is being addressed through a wide variety of changes delivered by the Transformation Programme, and through design of the customer portal which will improve access to real time information.