



Irvine Housing Association  
Tenant Scrutiny Report

‘Satisfaction with the Quality of their Home’

August 2019

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## 1. Introduction

**1.1** When the Scottish Government commissioned the delivery of the learning and training programme, 'Stepping Up to Scrutiny' in 2013, Irvine Housing Association (IHA) became one of the 'early adopter' organisations who helped shape the programme. Opportunities for tenants to analyse and challenge our performance have been offered ever since. Our Scrutiny Panel, which looked at and reported on aspects of our performance since 2013 was formally disbanded following the approval of our new Formal Customer Involvement Strategy (the Strategy) by the Board at its meeting in March 2019.

Our approach to Scrutiny is now managed through our Customer Panel which is integral to the new Strategy. Members of the customer panel are asked to rank which service areas they would like to see scrutinised based on our performance in key areas. There is an option for them to suggest an area of scrutiny that we have not suggested from our analysis. Once an area of performance or topic has been selected, a small, self-nominated group analyse our performance, conducting their own research as necessary, and suggest areas for improvement. The process is managed and supported by a dedicated officer. The outcome of scrutiny activities are presented to our Board and an action plan drawn up to address any areas which have been identified for improvement.

**1.2** Our Customer Panel were presented with information from IHA's Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) for 2018-19 in both graph and table format, comparing results with those from 2017-18 & 2016-17. The customer panel (55 members – 51 Online and 4 Offline) were given the opportunity to review our performance information and to rank which service area they would like to see scrutinised based on our four least performing areas, or suggest a topic not listed. The four least performing areas provided to the panel to rank were:

- Percentage of tenants satisfied with the quality of their home
- Percentage of tenants satisfied with the management of the neighbourhood they live in
- Percentage of tenants satisfied with the opportunities given to them to participate in the landlord's decision making process
- Percentage of tenants who feel the rent for their property represents good value for money

A total of 10 customer panel members submitted their response. The results from the customer panel vote for their first choice of topic to be scrutinised were:

- Percentage of tenants satisfied with the quality of their home – **5 votes**
- Percentage of tenants satisfied with the management of the neighbourhood they live in – **4 votes**
- Percentage of tenants satisfied with the opportunities given to them to participate in the landlord's decision making process – **1 vote**
- Percentage of tenants who feel the rent for their property represents good value for money – **0 votes**

On the basis of this review the Customer Panel voted to scrutinise the topic 'Percentage of tenants satisfied with the quality of their home'. A focus group of 3 self-nominated customers was formed and during their first meeting verified the results from the customer panel vote. The focus group also reviewed the performance information provided to the customer panel and highlighted the following:

- The **‘Percentage of tenants satisfied with the quality of their home’** shows a **decrease of 6.61% in 2018/19** - from 87.55% in 2017/18 to 80.94% in 2018/19
  - Satisfaction levels with the quality of their home increased by 1.5% from 86.05% in 2016/17 to 87.55% in 2017/18, before dropping to 80.94% in 2018/19
- Despite the decrease in satisfaction levels with the quality of their home, the figures show a **steady increase of 2.04% in 2018/19** in the **‘Percentage of tenants satisfied with the standard of their home when moving in (tenants who moved in during the past year)’** – from 78.87% in 2016/17 to 80.77% in 2017/18, rising to 82.81% in 2018/19

### 1.3 The purpose of the scrutiny exercise was therefore to:

- Determine the key reason(s) for decreased levels of customer satisfaction with the quality of their home
- To improve customer satisfaction levels relating to ‘satisfaction with the quality of their home’

## 2. The scrutiny process

The (Customer Panel) Scrutiny focus group volunteers carried out the following activities as part of their scrutiny of Satisfaction with the quality of home:

- Review of Void Management Policy
- Review of STAR Comments (Detractor responses August 2018 – March 2019)
- Review of ‘Our House, Your Home’ leaflet
- Review of ‘Improvements’ section of Website

## 3. Acknowledgements

The scrutiny focus group would like to thank the following, who provided information or assistance:

- IHA Customer Panel members
- John Watson, Asset Services Manager
- Caroline Cameron, Project & Planning Officer
- Lyndsay McLaughlan, Customer Involvement Officer

The scrutiny focus group members who took part in scrutinising this topic:

- George Wilson
- Jean Johnston
- George Paton

## 4. Findings

### 4.1 Review of Void Management Policy

#### Summary

The scrutiny focus group requested information on Irvine Housing Association's Re-Let standards to determine why there may be a rise in the percentage of tenants satisfied with the standard of their home when moving in (tenants who moved in during the past year) compared to those who may have been in their property a number of years. The focus group reviewed IHA's Void Management Policy and requested further information noted below before agreeing findings:

#### Monitoring performance – How is this done?

The Void Management Policy states,

*"In addition to key performance monitoring, regular contract monitoring meetings are held with all our external contractors to discuss performance against contractual obligations and quality of services"*

The focus group asked if this meant that one month's performance is discussed with contractors or if it is reviewed over a period of time? How are any low performance or low satisfaction levels addressed and solutions implemented? The Asset Services Manager advised that this is monitored on a monthly basis with the Operations Asset Team\Contractor meetings and a performance report to management quarterly.

The Void Management Policy states that,

*"Identified staff will be given specific responsibility to ensure the effective processing of void properties and will receive appropriate training."*

The focus group wanted to know the process for checking work has been done as instructed on a void property prior to re-let. The Asset Services Manager advised that the Asset Officer carries out 100% post inspections on properties at handover stage from the contractor.

#### Positive Points

- Clear outline of what is included in IHA's Safe, Clean and Clear standard
- The focus group liked the New-Let MOT approach – the customer is assured that repairs picked up within the first 14 days of moving in will be completed within a timescale of 28 days
- Regular contractor meetings help to address issues around quality of repairs etc. and provides a great way to monitor and implement solutions

#### Findings

- Monitoring of performance – monthly meetings with contractors and quarterly performance reports to management. Does not state if customer satisfaction performance is reviewed alongside other forms of feedback received through complaints etc.
- Not clear from policy if analysis is carried out throughout the year to determine if issues around low satisfaction are still occurring after discussing with contractor.
- There is no mention of reporting to customers changes made after reviewing performance or, if the same issues are still occurring, what will be done about it.

## 4.2 Review of STAR Comments (Detractor responses August 2018 – March 2019)

### Summary

The scrutiny focus group reviewed an anonymised report containing comments from IHA's STAR Survey, the comments were from customers who gave a low score in satisfaction and chose to answer the question around why they would/ would not recommend IHA or what they'd like to see IHA improve on. The focus group's aim when reviewing the comments was to determine if there were any clear underlying issues highlighted that may explain the reason(s) why customers are dissatisfied with the quality of their home.

### Positive Points

- Great survey to capture customers suggestions for improvements – enables IHA to review and dig deeper to find out real issues and ways to improve
- 26.3% (26 of the 101 comments) of customers who gave a 'detractor' score were happy with the service and home provided by IHA

### Findings

- **Out of 47 comments for Irvine Area:**
  - 23 comments for improvements were about repairs or modernisation of properties
  - 11 comments were customers who thought IHA overall were good
  - 8 comments touched on improvements needed in relation to communication as well as the customer contact centre
- **Out of 21 comments for Kilwinning Area:**
  - 8 comments for improvements were about repairs or modernisation of properties
  - 8 comments were customers who thought IHA overall were good
  - 5 comments were mixed – generally unhappy, housing management issues etc.
- **Out of 15 comments for Dumfries Area:**
  - 5 comments for improvements were about repairs or modernisation of properties
  - 4 comments were customers who thought IHA overall were good
  - 5 comments – various housing management suggestions
  - 1 comment around better communication
- **Out of 3 comments for Drongan Area:**
  - 2 comments for improvements were about repairs or modernisation of properties
  - 1 comment around facilities in the area
  -
- **Out of 15 comments where area could not be identified:**
  - 7 comments for improvements were about repairs or modernisation of properties
  - 3 comments were customers who thought IHA overall were good
  - 5 comments were mixed – generally unhappy, use of communal areas etc.

- Despite giving a detractor score some of the comments were positive, indicating the customer may not be aware the score they gave is not considered to be good
- 44.6% (45 of the 101 comments) of customers comments show they would like to see improvements to the repairs service/ modernisation of their property
  - Removing the 26 comments from customers who were happy with the service provided by IHA shows there were 75 comments to review potential reasons for dissatisfaction with the quality of their home – ***this means that the true percentage of comments which shows customers would like to see improvements to the repairs service/ modernisation of their property is 60% (45 of the 75 comments)***
- Although the results of this review point towards repairs/ modernisation being main reason for dissatisfaction with quality of home, it does not include results of all feedback IHA collect such as complaints and SMS repairs surveys.
  - A fuller analysis which includes all other feedback would be required to show the 'bigger picture' with monitoring to identify what issues pose a risk of lowering satisfaction levels each month/ quarter.

#### 4.3 Review of 'Our House, Your Home' Leaflet

##### Summary

The scrutiny focus group requested the following information:

How are customers informed about what internal fixtures and fittings they are responsible for the upkeep of and will not be replaced by IHA?

The Asset Services Manager advised that all customers were sent out an Our House Your Home Leaflet, this contained all the responsibilities.

The focus group reviewed the 'Our House, Your Home' leaflet which is for tenants to use as a guide to looking after their home and their responsibilities as a tenant. The focus group's aim when reviewing the leaflet was to determine how useful the information is and if it is clear for the tenant to understand what is expected of them.

##### Positive Points

- Great idea to have a guide
- Easy to read
- Simple layout and headings are clear
- Good reminder for customers who may not have tenancy agreement to hand

##### Findings

- A bit ambiguous – 'May be responsible for' – not explicitly clear what the customer is actually responsible for. Why provide the tenant with a leaflet outlining some possible responsibilities if they need to call in to check anyway?

- Information like this is not sent out on a regular basis – if someone has been in property for number of years they may not have copy of tenancy agreement to hand to check.

#### 4.4 Review of 'Planned Repairs' section of Website – Information Available

##### Summary

The scrutiny focus group requested information on:

How can an IHA customer find out when they are due an improvement to their home (i.e. new bathroom/ kitchen)?

The Asset Manager advised that this is advertised on the web page\ through service updates, and if someone calls in staff can check component replacement dates on the Asset Management Information and Funding Strategy.

The focus group then reviewed the 'Planned Repairs' page of the website and were made aware that the 'planned maintenance 2019-20' table was included in the recent service update sent to all IHA customers by email (or post if no email address held by IHA) <https://www.irvineha.co.uk/you-your-home/improvement-repairs/planned-repairs/>

##### Positive Points

- Good idea to have this on the website so customers can check if they are due an upgrade or improvement work – should limit the need to call the customer contact centre.
- Useful to read information explaining there are standards IHA need to comply with.

##### Findings

- As a customer I would be unsure if my property was included in any of the works
  - Some have no street name against it – e.g.
 

- Boiler Replacements	Irvine\ Dumfries	Number of properties: 70
- Bathrooms	Various Addresses	Number of properties: 6
- No information on when works are expected to take place throughout the year
- Not clear when customer will be notified about any works – when customer can expect to be contacted by letter.
- No note on the webpage to contact Irvine Housing Association if they have any questions
- No link to the EESSH Standards mentioned on the page



## 5. Recommendations

	Finding	Scrutiny Panel Recommendation	Irvine Housing Association Action	Implementation Date
1	<p><b>4.1 Review of Void Management Policy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitoring of performance – monthly meetings with contractors &amp; quarterly performance reports to management – Does not state if customer satisfaction performance is reviewed alongside other forms of feedback received through complaints etc.</li> <li>Not clear from policy if analysis is carried out throughout the year to determine if issues around low satisfaction are still occurring after discussing with contractor.</li> </ul> <p><b>4.2 Review of STAR Comments</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Although the results of this review point towards repairs/ modernisation being main reason for dissatisfaction with quality of home, it does not include results of all feedback IHA collect such as complaints and SMS repairs surveys. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A fuller analysis which includes all other feedback would be required to show the ‘bigger picture’ with monitoring to identify what issues pose a risk of lowering satisfaction levels each month/ quarter.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Review the performance feedback used for reporting (monthly contractor meetings &amp; quarterly reports to management)</b> - Include complaints, SMS repairs satisfaction survey, STAR Survey and any other feedback gathered during a quarterly period, analyse and provide in performance reports for management, highlight issues to contractors and implement solution(s). Monitor quarterly to determine if solutions are effective. This will ensure performance information accurately reflects customers’ views.</p>	<p>Additional performance meeting focusing on customer satisfaction results has been added to the contract monitoring framework.</p> <p>Quarterly report now being compiled by Asset Manager which sets out more detailed complaints information and submitted to management each quarter.</p> <p>Operational managers now analysing ongoing complaints on a weekly basis.</p>	January 2020

2	<b>4.1 Review of Void Management Policy</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is no mention of reporting to customers on changes made after reviewing performance or if the same issues still occurring and what will be done about it</li> </ul>	<b>Report Repairs/ Quality of Home performance to customers in each Service Update &amp; publish on website</b> – what main issues were around repairs/ quality of home and solution(s) implemented, report if solution(s) have been effective in resolving previous issues.	New performance update section will be added to the Service Updates providing a breakdown of analysis over the previous quarter, and will continue to build on ‘you said, we did’.	March 2020
3	<b>4.2 Review of STAR Comments</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Despite giving a detractor score some of the comments were positive, indicating the customer may not be aware the score they gave is not good</li> </ul>	<b>Provide overview of STAR Survey scoring parameters at point of survey and include if publishing any performance from STAR Survey in service update or website</b> – ensures customers are given opportunity to give a score that accurately reflects their views	Information regarding the survey and scoring definitions is explained by Housing Officers at tenancy sign up and customer interactions, will liaise with Customer Satisfaction team at Riverside to see if clarification can be given at point of survey by BMG who conduct the STAR survey on our behalf.	October 2019
4	<b>4.3 Review of ‘Our House, Your Home’ Leaflet</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A bit ambiguous – ‘May be responsible for’ – not explicitly clear what the customer is actually responsible for. Why provide the tenant with a leaflet outlining some possible responsibilities if they need to call in to check anyway?</li> </ul>	<b>Review content of ‘Our House, Your Home’ leaflet</b> – IHA to determine if possible to provide summarised list of tenant responsibilities which are applicable to all tenants regardless of property type, and list examples of those which the tenant should contact IHA to confirm if they are responsible for – update leaflet accordingly	New online tenant’s handbook is in progress which will set out tenant responsibilities, written leaflet will be updated in accordance with this.	December 2019
5	<b>4.3 Review of ‘Our House, Your Home’ Leaflet</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information like this is not sent out on a regular basis – if someone has been in property for number of years they may not have copy of tenancy agreement to hand to check.</li> </ul>	<b>Include ‘Our House, Your Home’ information annually in service update</b> – Providing this information annually in a service update ensures all tenants are reminded of their responsibilities to ensure their home is well looked after.	Yes, will include on an annual basis.	March 2020

6	<b>4.4 Review of 'Planned Repairs' section of Website</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No information on when works are expected to take place throughout the year</li> </ul>	<b>Update 'Planned Maintenance' table on website with the month or season improvement works are expected to take place</b> – If unable to provide this information at beginning of a financial year, implement a plan to ensure website is updated with information as it becomes available.	Will look to update this information every quarter and provide the additional detail requested.	October 2019
7	<b>4.4 Review of 'Planned Repairs' section of Website</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not clear when customer will be notified about any works – when customer can expect to be contacted by letter.</li> </ul>	<b>Update website - Provide timescales on Planned Maintenance page where possible</b> – for example: “customers will be contacted by letter 8 weeks prior to improvement works commencing”. Where possible provide information on any consultation around improvement works and when consultation is scheduled to take place – this will alleviate the need for the customer to contact IHA to find out next steps if they already know when to expect more information.	As above.	October 2019
8	<b>4.4 Review of 'Planned Repairs' section of Website</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No note on the webpage to contact Irvine Housing Association if they have any questions</li> </ul>	<b>Update Planned Maintenance page of website with contact details</b> – advising customer to contact IHA with any questions they have about planned maintenance	Will do.	October 2019
9	<b>4.4 Review of 'Planned Repairs' section of Website</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No link to the EESSH Standards mentioned on the page</li> </ul>	<b>Insert weblink to EESSH standards on the Planned Maintenance page of IHA website</b> – provides customers with option to read more about the standards IHA are working towards.	Will do.	October 2019

End of report



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