
STOCKPORT HOMES MEMBER COMMITTEE UPDATE REPORT

1 DAMP, MOULD & CONDENSATION – OUTCOMES OF PILOT APPROACH / SPOTLIGHT REPORT 1 YEAR ON

- 1.1 A pilot of Six Months, to End June 2023 was established in response to the challenge of Damp, Mould and Condensation (DMC) across the portfolio, and commenced at the start of the year
- 1.2 SHG had already implemented a Task & Finish Group (Chaired by the Exec Director of Operations) to review the response to the challenge. This has now been updated to oversee a more BAU approach.
- 1.3 As an organisation and alongside partner contractors, SHG has been actively reviewing its response to damp, mould, and condensation with a governance Structure in place to provide a robust, yet fluid approach to the challenge.
 - Sponsor Board made up of Senior Executives for control and direction.
 - A Project Board with delegates from every area of the business to ensure collaboration
 - Workstreams covering Operations, Data, Communication & Stakeholder Engagement, Asset Improvement for future programmes and Training.
- 1.4 SHG adopt a zero-tolerance approach to DMC and as such all enquiries are processed and acted upon regardless of the extent of the issue. This approach is adopted whether or not the property is subject to any ongoing legal disrepair. SHG goes beyond its obligations under Section 11 of the Landlord and Tenancy Act 1985 and The Homes (fitness for human habitation) Act 2018, by dealing with DMC at the first point of report.
- 1.5 SHG responds to reports of damp by way of providing mould wash and cleaning, treatment with anti-fungal washes, and application of an approved product SureTherm (an anti-mould paintable solution). Alongside overhaul / repair of and installing additional mechanical ventilation to all properties where not present or requiring review.
- 1.6 The initial pilot was to provide a Rapid Response to all calls received and an aspiration to provide the customer with the earliest appointment. An initial 2 Person team attending all calls to treat the DMC found, and survey the property for defects that may be causative in order to raise repairs for the same, alongside issuing guidance and advice for the customer for managing condensation, and wayfinding to energy and money advice for any additional support in heating and ventilation for maintaining their homes.
- 1.7 The volume of calls received was unprecedented and the DMC group has had to remain flexible in its approach and work closely with partner contractors, resulting in an

increase to 3 teams covering 60 appointments per week, and an additional team for larger cases where longer periods may be required to complete the treatments.

- 1.8 Dedicated staff to answer DMC enquiries in the One Number Team initially commenced with just 3 individuals fielding these calls. This has been extended to training and familiarisation for the whole team to manage the number of calls being received and ensure robust and quick response to the customer call, and more recently following delivery of face-to-face training, neighbourhood officer referrals from tenancy visits and repair operatives during routine inspections or repair visits.
- 1.9 At peak SHG were receiving more than 50 calls per week, meaning the response time for a treatment visit extended to as long as 25 days for an appointment. The continued approach and increased teams on the road have led SHG to now reducing that period to less than 14 days for treatment and this number continues to reduce.
- 1.10 Defects & repairs identified from the initial visits are logged with contractors for attendance and repair at the earliest opportunity.
- 1.11 Active review of historical cases from the previous two years have been carried out to ensure that SHG have completed and resolved issues successfully. For those where there has been a recurrence SHG have booked to revisit and treat, raising further repairs where necessary.
- 1.12 As an organisation SHG have raised over 5500 jobs to deal with DMC (mix of 1st visits & the resulting repairs), with over 4000 of those jobs completed and the remaining in programme for completion. The numbers remain fluid as SHG continue to manage new cases.
- 1.13 We have delivered over £90,000 in additional support payments across energy payments or food vouchers for customers meeting the defined criteria.
- 1.14 Stock appraisal to identify archetypes more prone to DMC has been carried out. An ongoing review of properties with sloping eaves, ground floor non-insulated bathrooms for example is currently in progress with over 150 premises visited and recorded for potential future improvement works, utilising Government funding if made available.
- 1.15 We envisage that the Pilot Project approach will continue to develop its approaches and are already looking at revised Policy to be in line with Government changes (Awaabs Law) and timescales for intervention, dedicated resourcing of Surveyor support and potential additional operative support to maintain the swift approach to resolving cases.

2 UNIVERSAL CREDIT (UC) UPDATE

- 2.1 At the end of May 2023, the number of Stockport Homes' households claiming UC had increased to 4,854, which is 43 per cent of all households. There was an increase over the year of 472 and the average weekly increase in new claimants since the beginning May 2022 was 18 compared to an average of 19 per week over the same period in the year before.
- 2.2 Average arrears on UC claimant rent accounts¹ remain higher than arrears on non-UC accounts². Eighty-two per cent of total arrears balances were on UC claimant accounts at

¹ Average arrears UC claimant accounts £455

² Average arrears on non-UC claimant accounts £178

the end of May 2023 and 49 per cent of all UC claimants were in arrears with their rent, compared to 21 per cent of non-UC claimants.

- 2.3 Monitoring of accounts over time, however, continues to demonstrate that average arrears reduce where households have been claiming UC for over three months. Over the last year average arrears on UC claimant accounts have reduced by £15 per case in arrears and there were 2 per cent fewer UC claimant accounts in arrears at the end of May 2023 compared to 12 months ago. Overall arrears balances on UC claimant accounts were £97k higher than May 2022.
- 2.4 Where rent arrears represent eight weeks or more of outstanding rent, or where tenant vulnerability issues can be demonstrated, landlords can submit a request to the DWP for the housing element of a claim to be switched back to the landlord. This is known as an Alternative Payment Arrangement (APA). At the end of May 2023, APAs were in place on 1,958 or 40 per cent of UC claimant accounts.
- 2.5 Specialist Money Advisors continue to provide intensive support to all new UC claimants during the first six weeks of their claims. Of the 472 new UC claimants since May 2022, 87 per cent engaged with the team and paid as requested after receiving their first payment.

3 EMPLOYMENT UPDATE

- 3.1 Since April 2023, the Employment Team have received 231 new referrals and moved 62 customers into employment. This quarter the team have focused on delivering an improved online presence, the job booklet is now produced weekly in a digital format which has proved highly successful resulting in higher traffic to the Skylight Website. Since April, 833 visits to the Job booklet alone have been recorded, this has resulted in an increase in online referrals to the team. Since the introduction of the online Job Booklet at the end of February the employment website traffic has increased by 346% with 57 employment support forms being completed since April which is an increase of 80%.
- 3.2 This quarter the Employment & Training team worked with Marks & Spencer to recruit for Stockport's new Food Hall. This has been the most successful sector-based event of 2022/23; 91 customers attended the assessment centre, with 28 customers selected to attend the full week of bespoke training. Partnership work with M&S at the final appraisal stage resulted in 13 candidates being selected to undertake a two-week work placement, following which 11 customers were offered permanent employment. In addition, six customers who were unsuccessful in gaining a work placement went on to secure alternative employment demonstrating that customers who take part in sector-based events transition quicker into employment due to a combination of increased skills, confidence and 'job readiness'.
- 3.3 In May, the DWP requested the Skylight Employment & Training team deliver a bespoke training session to support recruitment of 125 Administrative Officers in Stockport. The team designed a unique session which was delivered to five cohorts of 74 individuals at the DWP main office. The session focused on identifying transferrable skills, improving interview techniques and accurate completion of the application system for government vacancies. The DWP are currently sifting the applications and inviting applicants to interview.
- 3.4 Since April, a variety of training sessions have been delivered with 162 attendances. Most popular sessions this quarter have been Mental Health First Aid, Introduction to Photography and Introduction to Housing which has resulted in a number of employment outcomes and one customer securing a role within Stockport Homes.

4 HEALTH UPDATE

Beacon Counselling Service

- 4.1 Following a retender of the counselling service, Beacon Counselling were appointed as the new provider with the new contract starting in September 2022. The service has

proved to be very popular with far more complex cases being referred in than anticipated. At the end of May, 180 customers have had an initial assessment with 36 customers starting Tier One- and Two-level counselling delivered by through student placements and focused on topics such as anxiety, depression, bereavement. 26 customers have commenced counselling for the more complex cases at Tier Three. Topics for the complex workers focus on a history of trauma, abuse substance misuse or more general poor mental health.

- 4.2 Some feedback from customers who have completed sessions with the service:

“Excellent service and very compassionate was the counsellor.”

“I am aware of my illness the service is an excellent and the counsellor is a kind helpful person who listens and advises well.”

“My counselling gave me confidence in myself, and reassurance in what I do.”

Funding support

- 4.3 SHG employ a dedicated Funding Officer who provides a range of support to the VCFSE sector to assist them in obtaining grant funding. This could include providing information on what grants are available for a group to apply to, help with a funding search, support writing a bid or reading over a grant application developed by a group. A wide range of funding bids have been developed to support community activities and events in Stockport. At the end of the financial year 202-23 a total of 88 funding bids had been submitted successfully securing a total £502,361 of grant funding. £469,000 of which is external to the borough. Work continues in partnership with Sector 3 to host monthly funding drop ins at the Cornerstone building.

Youth

- 4.4 SKylight’s Youth Holiday Club was successfully delivered for two days during the February school holiday and included a wide range of activities and a day trip to the Museum of Science and Industry. This was also provided for two days in Easter school holidays. Activities included special effects make-up, a spoken word and poetry session, cooking, bingo and chocolate making. The holiday club is focussed on supporting young people aged 11-17, many of whom have been identified by their schools, or other support worker, such a Family Intervention Worker or Social Workers as likely to derive most benefit from the provision. A significant proportion of the young people have special educational needs and disabilities. Over the February half term 57 places were supported and 53 over the Easter half term holidays.

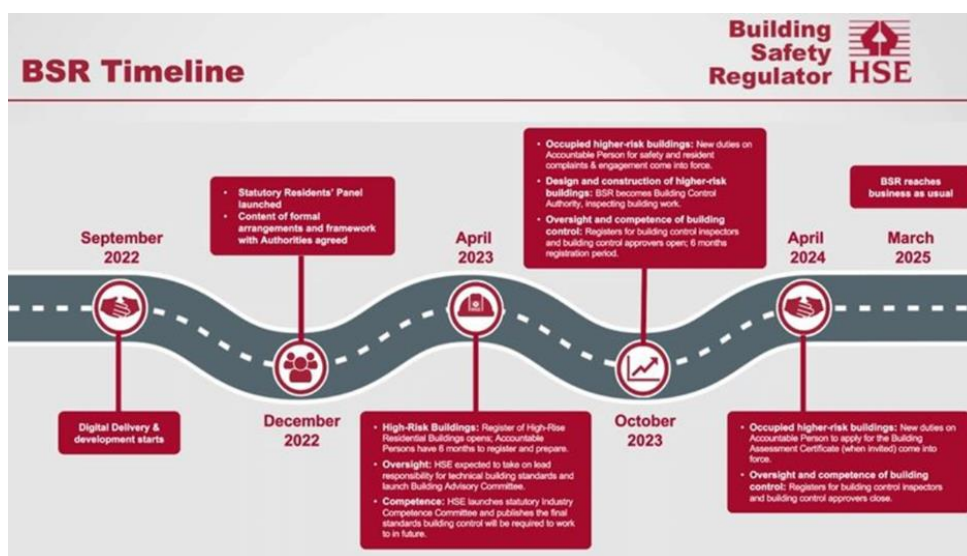
5 BUILDING SAFETY ACT

- 5.1 The Building Safety Act 2022 is new legislation that sets out safety requirements for landlords of high-rise residential buildings (HRRBs). These are categorised as buildings that have two or more residential units and at least 18m or seven storeys high, whichever comes first. The Act received Royal Assent in April 2022 and will be fully implemented by October 2023.
- 5.2 The Building Safety Team have spent the last two years working in preparation for the upcoming legislation ensuring that Stockport Council is compliant by the time the Act is enforceable. Amongst many other duties, the Act has established the Building Safety Regulator (BSR) that sits within the Health and Safety Executive

(HSE); it is they who have the responsibility for monitoring the safety of the buildings that fall under the Building Safety reform.

5.3 From April 2023, the BSR require all landlords of HRRBs to register their occupied buildings with them to a publicly available national register, this will have to be completed by October 2023. The registration will require key information to be provided, this is expected to include each buildings address, height, number of flats, number of stairwells etc. On direction of the BSR, after registration, a Building Assessment Certificate can be applied for with the submission of the Safety Case Report that is designed to satisfy the BSR that any risks within the buildings are being managed.

5.4 The diagram below illustrates the timeline and key dates set out by the BSR.



5.5 In response to the BSR's

requirements, that includes the registration period and expected order in which SHG's buildings Safety Case Reports will be called for, the Building Safety Team are now gathering supporting information and producing the reports for all SHG's 22 HRRB's. This exercise is being prioritised based on a table of indicative tranches that has been published by the BSR, the key factors determining the priority is the building height and number of flats with the tallest buildings being in the first tranche. The aim is to have all Safety Case Reports ready ahead of the date when they could be required.

5.6 The table of indicative tranches can be seen below.

Indicative Tranche Model								
	Number of dwellings	141+	74-140	54-73	49-53	26-48	11-25	2-10
Height of building (metres)	50+ m	1	1	1	1	1	1	5
	30-49 m	1	2	2	3	3	3	5
	18-29 m	1	2	3	3	4	5	5

6 WALK & TALK

6.1 The Housing Management Team are working collaboratively to encourage customers to attend walkabouts and get involved with a particular focus around the multi storeys.

- 6.2 The aim is to encourage residents to 'walk and talk' in an informal way to raise any issues they may have and for SHG staff to advise on matters that are of particular importance including fire safety, damp, mould and condensation, cost of living crisis.
- 6.3 The hope is that by relaunching the walkabout activity the team can improve engagement, contact with customers, and share vital messages and information and address issues that are important to them. Examples below:



7 ASB SERVICE DELIVERING EXCELLENCE

- 7.1 SHG has been the first organisation in the country to undertake the "Resolve Standard for Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)" a process which requires social landlords to show just how effective they are in tackling ASB. The Standard allows landlords to demonstrate to customers, the Regulator and partners how it is responding ASB.
- 7.2 The process is designed to offer an independent assessment of the ASB service, providing a robust and critical challenge to ensure continual improvement. Landlords undertaking the process have its' service assessed against a series of six overarching principles: Leadership Culture and Resources, Performance, Victims and Communities, Challenge and Change, Problem Solving and Partnership, Learning and Development.
- 7.3 SHG has been assessed as an exemplar organisation in its approach to tackling ASB and making communities safer and one which exceeds the RESOLVE Standard principles and underlying commitments. The final report stipulates that SHGs ASB service is seen within the sector as a trailblazer, delivering best practice, at the forefront of innovation, working closely with residents and key stakeholders to support communities to become more resilient and to feel safer.

8 TPAS ACCREDITATION OF ENGAGEMENT

- 8.1 Stockport Homes have achieved the TPAS Accreditation of Engagement with a score of 93%, placing SHG within the top performers of organisations undertaking the accreditation. The evidence-based accreditation process included a rigorous self-assessment, a survey of a sample of 40 staff including Heads of Service and front-line staff, customer focus groups and interviews with senior staff. Stockport Homes

achieved 100% compliance in two of the seven themes for 'Information and Communication' and 'Wider Community Engagement'.

- 8.2 Achieving the accreditation demonstrates Stockport Homes' commitment and effective approach to customer engagement and reassurance that the organisation meets the requirements of the latest edition of the National Tenant Engagement Standards, which exceed the expectations in the social housing charter and are directly influenced from expectations from the Regulator of Social Housing, the Building Safety Regulator, the NHF code of governance and the Housing Ombudsman.

9 GENDER PAY GAP 2022

9.1 Results for Stockport Homes Limited

Women's hourly rate is		
	Mean	Median
April 2018	4.8% or 69p lower	8.7% or £1.14 lower
April 2019	3.2% or 48p lower	9.4% or £1.28 lower
April 2020	2.9% or 43p lower	9.4% or £1.28 lower
April 2021	3.7% or 58p lower	5.8% or 81p lower
April 2022	3.5% or 57p lower	3.9% or 55p lower

- 9.2 Above is the data for Stockport Homes Limited which shows an improving trend. Compared to the information collated for the fourteen GM Housing Providers that published data for 2022 this would place SHL at sixth best out of the fourteen.
- 9.3 The Group structure does add complexity to this analysis for Stockport Homes Group. Skylight which contains primarily customer support roles has a positive gender pay gap (i.e., women are paid on average more than men) whereas Three Sixty (Construction and Maintenance) is reflective of this sector and has a much higher gender pay gap. For this reason, most actions going forward relate to the services in Three Sixty which are nationally male dominated.
- 9.4 Three Sixty has been targeting female applicants for apprenticeships and supported T levels where possible for the last few years. This has led to the appointment of the first female joiner in maintenance from an ex-apprentice. There has also been some success in recruiting more women into roles such as site manager and gas engineer.
- 9.5 Changing gender biased stereotypes about working in trade, technical and construction roles as early as primary / secondary schools is going to be key to more gender diversity in Three

Sixty. To this end SHG attended an open evening at a local college recently to promote careers in construction and more such opportunities will be taken going forward. Opportunities to maximise the promotion of Three Sixty as an inclusive employer such as getting more leverage from the next "Women in construction" week will happen this year. Finally, a working group has been established in Three Sixty to discuss further how to attract, retain and ensure progression of women in construction, and maintenance.