

REGULATORY COMPLIANCE SELF-ASSESSMENT FOR 2023-24

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¹ There are two other Economic Standards, which are Governance & Financial Viability and Value for Money, however they do not apply to Local Authorities and so have not been included in this report.

RENT STANDARD (APRIL 2023)

Required Outcomes:

Registered providers must set rents from 1 April 2020 in accordance with the Government's Policy Statement on Rents for Social Housing 2023 (hereafter Rent Policy Statement)

Is SHG compliant? **YES**

SHG Statement of Compliance:

Stockport Homes (as a Registered Provider) is required to comply with the Rent Standard. This is the Standard through which the Regulator (directed by the Secretary of State) controls the levels of rents which are set by Registered Providers, and how these are increased over time. The Rent Standard also applies to local authorities and hence Stockport Council's social housing rents, which are managed by SHG. Both SHG and the Council are committed to ensuring compliance with the Rent Standard.

For 2023-24, due to high levels of inflation being seen in the economy, the Regulator introduced a rent cap at 7%. This meant that the previously agreed approach to using CPI+1% for social rents and RPI+0.5% for shared ownership rents was not applicable in 2023-24.

Approach to Compliance

The Rent Standard applies to 'low-cost rental' accommodation, as defined by Section 69 of the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008, and contains a number of exceptions, including (but not limited to):

- Shared ownership low-cost rental accommodation
- Intermediate rent accommodation
- Specialised supported housing
- Relevant local authority accommodation
- Temporary social housing

SHG fully understand the classification of the various property types and rents in place to ensure the Rent Standard is being correctly applied to each.

The strategic considerations of how these various aspects of rent setting are applied within SHG and the Council, and in compliance with the Rent Standard, are contained within the Stockport Homes Rent Strategy 2020-25 and the HRA Rent Strategy 2020-25, which have been approved the SHG Board and the Council respectively. Rent increases for 2025-26 and beyond are currently unknown and SHG awaits more information on this to enable longer-term financial planning to take place, and a new HRA Rent Strategy to be agreed with Stockport Council.

A detailed procedure is in place within the Corporate Finance team which covers all SHG and Council rents and is designed to ensure operational compliance with the Rent Standard. It is aligned with the SHG and HRA Rent Strategies. This procedure includes all of the various rental type classifications in place and for each classification, the respective requirements of the Rent Standard, e.g., setting new rents, annual increases, re-lets, and how these are applied operationally. Roles and responsibilities are also included, with delegated authorities for the various aspects included within the Financial Scheme of Delegation.

Each SHG and Council property is contained within the company's housing management system. Within this system, each property is set up with a "Rental Type" which is used to classify the rent charged at each property in line with the classifications of the Rent Standard. These "Rental Types" are then used to determine how the various aspects of the Rent Standard are applied to each rent, e.g., setting the initial rent, annual increases, how the rent is changed upon re-let. Rents for all new properties are assessed against the Rent Standard and set accordingly, with external legal advice to confirm the "Rental Type" sought as required.

As part of the annual rent increase process, the proposed changes to be applied to rents are presented to the SHG Board and Council for approval (as appropriate). These proposals include how they are aligned and hence comply with the Rent Standard, in order to provide assurance that rents have been set correctly.

Within the Corporate Finance Team, there are a range of checks in place which ensure rents are set and amended correctly. There is a segregation of duties in place with changes needing to be approved in line with the Financial Scheme of Delegation before they are enacted. When data is loaded into the housing management system, further checks are performed to verify accuracy.

In 2023, PwC undertook an internal audit of rent setting. This was a positive report which received a low risk rating, with two findings raised – both of which have been addressed. Several areas of good practice were identified.

SHG Evidence:

- SHG Rent Strategy
- HRA Rent Strategy
- Rent Setting Procedures
- Financial Scheme of Delegation
- Internal Audit Reports – Rent Setting (2020 and 2023)
- Rent Setting Report for Stockport Homes Owned Properties (Annual)

TENANT INVOLVEMENT AND EMPOWERMENT STANDARD (APRIL 2017)

Customer Service, Choice and Complaints

Required Outcomes:

Registered providers shall

- a. provide choices, information and communication that is appropriate to the diverse needs of their tenants in the delivery of all standards
- b. have an approach to complaints that is clear, simple and accessible that ensures that complaints are resolved promptly, politely and fairly.

Is SHG compliant? **YES**

SHG Statement of Compliance:

Customer Choice and Access

SHG has a Customer Access Strategy in place, which outlines the range of ways in which customers can access SHG's services including in person, online and via the telephone. The mission for the Customer Access Strategy is "to develop a welcoming and supportive customer culture which offers an exemplar customer experience". There is the ambition to create a wide range of quality digital services that will attract customers to use them whilst still offering excellent in-person, telephone and face-to-face services for those customers that prefer or need to contact Stockport Homes in this way

Some key achievements to note include having a One Number contact centre, providing an accessible, welcoming and modern reception area in Cornerstone (Head Office), implementing a chatbot and completing an analysis of tenants' appetite to engage digitally, as well as enabling customers to report repairs online. The Digital Strategy will build upon digital outcomes to date and provide more opportunities for customers to engage with the company in more digital, customer focussed ways.

SHG operates a One Number contact centre which can deal with enquiries about rent collection, rehousing, repairs and tenancy management issues. Enquiries can also be raised via the website and email inbox. In addition, customers can now access services via webchat and utilise social media to engage with SHG.

Stockport Homes works with customers to help them get online and improve their digital skills. This will enable them to access services online, at a time convenient for them. For those customers that do not have access online, Stockport Homes will continue to offer a range of ways to contact the organisation and access services.

A Customer Handbook provides information about the services which are delivered and how they can be accessed. Furthermore, the responsibilities of SHG and customers are set out in the tenancy agreement, which is explained in the sign-up process.

Service Standards and Policies

SHG has a set of Service Expectations that reflect the things that customers feel are most important to them. These are framed around Your Voice, Your Home and Your Neighbourhood and link to key performance indicators for each areas. These are updated periodically with the Customer Scrutiny Panel. During 2023, SHG has developed a new Customer Charter to complement this approach, in conjunction with customers and colleagues. This will be launched in March 2024 as part of Customer Experience and Voice Month. The Customer Charter will be structured around:

- Being Responsive
- Listening and Learning
- Being Great at Communication
- Being Flexible and Fair
- Being Respectful

The current Service Expectations are published on the Stockport Homes website and performance against them is reported annually via the website and newsletter and to Board as part of the Tenant Experience Report.

A range of SHG Policies are available on SHG's website for customers to access. These will provide information in relation to repair timescales, how to leave a property at the end of a tenancy, what to do if a customer is experiencing ASB, for example. This enables customers to seek out information and understand the services delivered by Stockport Homes.

SHG has held the Customer Service Excellence (CSE) award for 15 consecutive years, which demonstrates SHG's commitment to meeting government approved standards on customer service.

Appropriate Information and Communication

The monthly Customer Newsletter and the Annual Report to Customers provides a wide range of information on services, including how to access services and how those services are performing. These publications focus on 'good news' stories and promoting the range of initiatives SHG has in place which customers can access and participate in.

In addition, the Stockport Homes website provides a range of information for customers on how they can access services, get in touch with the company and obtain more information about policies and procedures. The website is fully accessible and available on a range of devices. In addition to this, there are a range of related websites available to customers for example the Carecall website, the Viaduct website for shared ownership and the SKylight website for services delivered by SHG's charitable arm. Investment across six new websites between 2021-2023 ensures that SHG is maximising technology to improve accessibility. This has included the

introduction of 'Recite Me' which is a tool to translate into the language of choice. Investment has also been made into a chat bot which has been well received from customers.

SHG also has an active presence on a range of social media platforms, including Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn. This enables SHG to communicate, inform and engage with a range of stakeholders.

Complaints Process

SHG has an open and transparent two-stage Customer Feedback process with a Policy and Procedure in place which outlines how this works. There are clear timelines outlined as to when customers will receive responses by, and performance against these timescales is monitored and reported on. All complaints are managed through a central team via the CRM system to ensure effective management, oversight and reporting. This also includes MP and Councillor enquiries where they are acting on behalf of their constituents.

The Customer Feedback process allows for expressions of dissatisfaction to be treated as a complaint and be investigated and responded to. Response letters clearly outline the understanding of the issues raised by the customer, detail of the investigation and whether there has been a service failure, or not. Responses will also inform the customer of the next stage available to them in the Policy, including how to contact the Housing Ombudsman as required. There are some complaints that may be outside of the Housing Ombudsman's jurisdiction for example those that may need to be raised with the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman. Customers are signposted to the relevant Ombudsman service as required.

The process is publicised to customers through leaflets, interactions with customers, the newsletter and Stockport Homes' website and social media channels. Customers are provided with information on complaint processes through the Annual Report to Customers, which includes examples of lessons learnt, numbers of complaints and the services to which they relate.

SHG welcomes all customer feedback, including complaints, as an opportunity to learn and further improve services based on customer voice. Customer feedback data is extracted and analysed to understand lessons learnt and opportunities to improve services. A Customer Feedback Report is presented to Leadership Team and the Customer Focus Committee on a quarterly basis, and information is also reported back to customers so they can see the influence they have had on service design and delivery. Examples of this includes the provision of significant additional resources to target 'Work in Progress' repairs which were found to be driving formal complaints, and a review of the Door Entry and Building Security

Stockport Homes has set up a new Customer Experience team to focus on learning from complaints in addition to other forms of customer voice, such as satisfaction surveys and how to develop the customer experience of our services. Specific 'Delivering Service Excellence' training is being delivered to all customer-facing colleagues to ensure they understand how to have the best possible service interactions with customers, utilising SHG's Customer Charter as a framework. The Customer Charter was developed drawing

upon insights from formal customer feedback and an extensive piece of customer consultation through the annual Customer Roadshow, to ensure that this is relevant to SHG's customers and orientates colleagues towards meeting customer priorities.

Stockport Homes' Customer Feedback Policy and Procedure encourages the use of advocates so that customers are supported in raising complaints and it provides a range of ways for customers to raise complaints, such as via elected member or support service. Through the Customer Feedback process, all complainants are asked if they have any vulnerabilities or support needs which may be relevant to the complaint, provision of services, or accessing the complaints process and require reasonable adjustment.

SHG has reviewed its approach against the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code of Practice and used this to identify improvements to the Customer Feedback Policy and Procedure, which have been put into place to ensure the approach continues to reflect best practice. A report was provided to SHG Board to outline how SHG performed against this Code and what changes would be implemented moving forwards. Stockport Homes has reviewed its policy, procedure and service delivery against all of the Ombudsman Spotlight reports which recently have included Damp, Mould and Condensation and Noise Incidents. This has included, for example, creation of a 'Safer Neighbourhoods Policy' and approach to neighbour and noise concerns, and creation of a Positive Engagement Officer role aimed at mediating lower-level neighbour disputes rather than dealing within the framework of 'anti-social behaviour'.

The Chair of the Customer Focus Committee of the Board is the lead Board Member overseeing complaints.

During 2023-24, the Customer Scrutiny Panel (CSP) undertook a review of complaints. The scope of the review included the CSP considering:

- How tenants can make a complaint and how easy this is to do.
- How effectively customers are communicated with throughout the complaint handling process.
- How customer satisfaction information is obtained and used to improve the service.

The CSP found the complaints service to be responsive, following an agreed process and providing clear responses to customers. Some improvements were identified which included more consistency in signposting when a complaint is raised with a member of staff that isn't in the Customer Feedback Team and updating the website to make sure information is easily accessible and understood. An additional area for improvement identified was to review the approach to collecting satisfaction information relating to the customer feedback process to identify ways to obtain more meaningful feedback and insight to make further service improvements. An Action Plan was agreed with the service area and will be monitored by the CSP.

SHG Evidence:

- Customer Access Strategy
- Digital Strategy
- Service Expectations

- Customer Scrutiny Review of service standards framework
- Tenant Experience Annual Report
- Annual Report to Customers
- Customer Scrutiny Panel Annual Review Report
- Customer Scrutiny Report and Action Plan relating to the Complaints Service
- Customer Feedback Policy 2021-24 approval report
- Customer Feedback Policy 2021-24
- Customer Feedback Procedure
- Customer Voice and Influence Strategy and Action Plan Progress Report

Involvement and Empowerment

Required Outcomes:

Registered providers shall ensure that tenants are given a wide range of opportunities to influence and be involved in:

- a. the formulation of their landlord's housing-related policies and strategic priorities
- b. the making of decisions about how housing-related services are delivered, including the setting of service standards
- c. the scrutiny of their landlord's performance and the making of recommendations to their landlord about how performance might be improved
- d. the management of their homes, where applicable
- e. the management of repair and maintenance services, such as commissioning and undertaking a range of repair tasks, as agreed with landlords, and the sharing in savings made, and
- f. agreeing local offers for service delivery.

Is SHG compliant? YES

SHG Statement of Compliance:

Customer Voice and Influence Strategy

SHG has a Customer Voice and Influence Strategy in place which was approved by Board in December 2023 and has been refreshed in line with the expected new Transparency, Influence and Accountability Consumer Standards and actions arising from the Tpas Accreditation of Engagement in 2023. A review of progress against the Action Plan is presented to Board annually. The Strategy continues the aims of keeping customer voice and engagement visible and high on the agenda with a focus on utilising data and insight together with community networks and partnerships to effectively target and engage with a broader range of customers. The Strategy focuses on developing the Accountability Framework through the introduction of a new customer assurance panel and a shift to 'task

and finish' scrutiny with the aim to open customer scrutiny to a wider and more representative pool of customers along with developing further ways for customers to be involved in learning from complaints, service inspections and building safety.

Stockport Homes provides a broad range of ways for customers to get involved, have their voice heard and influence services, including:

- Consulting and engaging customers in service delivery and design via meetings, online forums and surveys.
- Having three customer Board Members who are at the heart of strategic decision-making
- Having an accredited Customer Scrutiny Panel who review services from a customer's perspective and identify improvements to be implemented
- Introducing a new Customer Assurance Panel in 2024
- Neighbourhood based initiatives such as estate inspections, walkabouts, resident forums and area-based projects through to more traditional approaches

Details of how customers can get involved are provided on the Stockport Homes website and are promoted via local information, social media and newsletters. Wider community engagement activities will also enable harder to reach groups to get involved. A Resident Engagement Strategy for Building Safety has been developed in collaboration with customers and the Building Safety Resident Panel. The Panel present an Annual Report of their activities to the Customer Focus Committee and share this with the wider customer body.

Reporting Back to Customers

Customers are provided with performance information through the Annual Report to Customers, the website, social media and newsletters, and in more localised communications - such as block specific notices.

The Annual Report to Customers contains cost, efficiencies and performance information and is developed in consultation with customers each year. The Annual Report has been converted to a digital format, in consultation with customers, with hard copies being provided on request in any chosen format. This is part of SHG's digital transformation and enables content to be shared in a modern and engaging format. The Annual Report is developed in conjunction with a group of customers to ensure the content was appropriate, accessible and relevant.

Customers are involved in scrutinising services through Customer Board Member roles and the Customer Scrutiny Panel, the latter of which reviews and comments on performance and financial information ahead of certain reports being presented to the Council. The Customer Scrutiny Panel meets regularly to undertake detailed review of services and develop recommendations for improvements, with the report from each review shared with customers in the newsletter, via social media and on the website, along with the CSP's own annual report. In 2024, a task and finish approach to scrutiny will be adopted opening the processes up to more customers.

Information relating to Building Safety is reported back to the dedicated Residents Panel and shared more widely with customers living in blocks of flats to ensure they are aware of SHG's processes. The Building Safety Team work closely with these customers. In 2024 a quarterly update will be sent to customers in the high-rise blocks utilising the CX Feedback system. The update will share 'You Said We Did' information from estate walkabouts and building safety engagement activities and other relevant local information.

Findings and outcomes from consultation activities are reported as 'You Said We Did' feedback to participating customers and shared more widely on social media and the SHG website along with quarterly updates on learning from complaints.

Getting Involved

Stockport Homes offers learning opportunities and support to customers to improve their skills through a range of customer training opportunities, the provision of employment support and bespoke sector-based training with guaranteed job interviews and back to work programmes.

Stockport Homes reviews its Service Expectations on a periodic basis. Performance is reported to the Customer Focus Committee on an annual basis as part of the Tenant Experience Report (2023-24 annual report will go to Customer Focus Committee in August 2024).

In 2023, a consultation exercise canvassed customer's opinions on their satisfaction with ways to be involved in the governance and scrutiny of services. Learning from the findings has been used to shape changes to the Accountability Framework with the introduction of a new customer assurance panel and task and finish approach to scrutiny and a new approach to involving customers in complaints. These are actions in the refreshed Customer Voice and Influence Strategy.

SHG Evidence:

- Customer Voice and Influence Strategy and Action Plan
- Annual Report to Customers
- Customer Newsletter example
- Customer Assurance Panel Terms of Reference
- Customer Scrutiny Terms of Reference
- Customer Scrutiny Panel Annual Report
- Service Expectations document
- Customer Experience Report
- Building Safety Residents Panel Terms of Reference

Understanding and Responding to Diverse Needs

Required Outcomes:

Registered providers shall:

- a. treat all tenants with fairness and respect
- b. demonstrate that they understand the different needs of their tenants, including in relation to the equality strands and tenants with additional support needs.

Is SHG compliant? **YES**

SHG Statement of Compliance:

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy

Stockport Homes' Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy 2021-24 outlines SHG's commitment to EDI. During 2024, a new EDI Strategy will be developed and approved.

The current Strategy includes the following objectives:

- Embed equality, diversity and inclusion into the culture
- Create an inclusive and representative business
- Understand the diverse needs of customers
- Support independent living and safe, engaged and inclusive communities

A dedicated Officer within SHG supports managers and colleagues to consider equality, diversity and inclusion with their service delivery models and to undertake Equality Impact Assessments (EIA) when changes are being proposed and new strategies, Business Plans and policies are being developed and reviewed. This approach uses customer insight data to understand potential adverse implications and enables actions to be developed to ensure services remain inclusive to all. Board is provided with copies of the EIAs to gain assurance that equality and diversity needs have been considered when designing services. The role of the Customer Voice and Influence Strategy is also important here.

In recent years, more work has been undertaken to further develop the EDI culture at SHG. This includes the #BeYou approach – SHGs vision for an inclusive workplace - which promotes the importance of people being themselves at work and feeling comfortable to express who they are whilst at work. Building the EDI culture internally has a direct impact on service delivery to customers. This can be through ensuring a diverse range of customer groups are in connected with, such as Houseproud and Rainbow Roofs for LGBTQ+ customers and staff. By having a greater understanding of the workforce profile within SHG, the culture around EDI can be further developed as initiatives to ensure a diverse workforce are attracted to SHG and appointed into roles / promotion opportunities, which in turn increasing the way in which SHG is more representative of the communities it serves.

There are a range of colleague groups in place to support and enhance a culture of inclusivity and identify ways in which SHG can further improve and ensure accessibility and inclusivity for all. There is also training available ensuring the provision of accessible services and supporting the creation of an inclusive organisation which is available to all staff. Particularly, all managers attend an EDI focussed training session to increase inclusivity awareness within SHG.

Reporting and Oversight

An annual report on the delivery of the EDI Strategy is provided to Board as part of a combined workforce and equality and diversity report. This provides data and insight about customers and colleagues and what actions are to be implemented to ensure inclusivity for all. During 2023-24, the report presented to SHG Board considered the previous year's data and compared SHG colleague and customer data with Stockport Borough averages to identify areas for improvement / further investigation to ensure representation is maximised. One of the actions arising from this was a commitment to guaranteed interviews for ethnic minority managerial roles after it was identified that whilst the proportion of ethnic minority colleagues overall was representative, the statistics for managerial roles were not representative and so it was decided to take positive action to address this. The work forms part of a GM-wide project which is ongoing.

The Policy and Strategy review process ensures that all new strategies, policies and Business Plans consider their potential impact on equality and diversity to ensure that they meet the needs of all colleagues / customers (as appropriate). Customers are involved in any customer-facing policy reviews that take place, so that new processes, services and procedures reflect the needs of customers, and this can be coordinate by the Customer Engagement Officers to support managers to obtain this crucial feedback.

Where appropriate, key decisions taken by the Board are subject to Equality Impact Assessments to ensure the Board is aware of equality considerations prior to making decisions. Board front covers contain a section for the Report Author to identify any key EDI considerations which form part of the decision being requested.

Vulnerabilities and Alerts

As part of the Consumer Regulation Project Group, actions have been identified to have a focus on updating customer profile and alert information on CX over the next few months. Consideration is being given to a whether a customer census would be a worthwhile exercise to expediate this. SHG is reviewing all customer facing policies to ensure reasonable adjustments are consistently undertaken (as appropriate) and the approach is formalised into a specific Vulnerable Customer Policy.

Translation / Interpreting Offer

There is an SLA in place for translation services to enable communication with customers that do not have English as a first language or use British Sign Language. Interpretation services can be offered on phone calls or face to face appointments.

SHG has a contract with Stockport Council for delivery of a translation / interpreting service which can be in person, on the phone or over video call. This includes language translation and also British Sign Language (BSL) interpreters. SHG has also partnered with Sign Solutions UK to provide a BSL video interpreting service, on demand and around the clock, enabling Deaf people to communicate more effectively and gain equal access to information and services.

Documents can be translated into different languages / formats as required by customers. The SHG website is also fully accessible and includes a range of features for translation / accessibility needs to ensure everyone is able to access SHG's information in a format that is most appropriate for them.

SHG's website has the Recite Me plug in to increase accessibility and inclusivity for those with dyslexia, visual impairments and literacy issues.

SHG Evidence:

- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report
- Policy and Strategy Review Guidance
- Equality Impact Assessment templates

HOME STANDARD (APRIL 2012)

Quality Of Accommodation

Required Outcomes:

Registered providers shall:

- (a) ensure that tenants' homes meet the standard set out in section five of the Government's Decent Homes Guidance and continue to maintain their homes to at least this standard;
- (b) meet the standards of design and quality that applied when the home was built, and were required as a condition of publicly funded financial assistance, if these standards are higher than the Decent Homes Standard;
- (c) in agreeing a local offer, ensure that it is set at a level not less than these standards and have regard to section six of the Government's Decent Homes Guidance.

Is SHG compliant? **YES**

SHG Statement of Compliance:

Stock Condition

Good quality stock condition information underpins assurance around the Home Standard. Prior to 2023-24, SHG held stock condition data that was based on a rolling programme of property surveys and information from void properties as well as the use of cloned data. In addition, where capital programmes are planned, validation surveys are carried out prior to works commencing which enables more up to date stock condition data to be obtained. Following the completion of works, handover information is recorded on the asset management database system to ensure the stock condition information has been fully updated.

During 2023-24, SHG commissioned a company called Rapley's to undertake enhanced stock condition surveys across the entire stock base. There is an aspirational target of 100% of the stock by April 2025, with 30% being achieved by April 2024. Due to expected levels of 'no access', it is unlikely that 100% will be achieved, but 95% would be considered to be an acceptable and realistic level of attainment.

The types of stock condition data which is currently held includes: condition, safety information and remaining life on major components such as roofs, kitchens, bathrooms, windows/doors, and heating systems. In December 2022, a validation survey of the stock data, based on a 10% sample, was carried out by an independent building surveying company which found the stock data to be 98% accurate within a 2-year life cycle estimate. In addition, a PWC internal audit was carried out on the Asset Management process which made some minor recommendations which have been implemented. Given the increased investment in maintaining up to date stock condition data across all units, validation surveys may, in the future, cease to be required as all stock condition data will be recent and up to date.

The Rapley's surveys focus on:

- Component remaining life and condition
- Assessment against Decent Homes Standard and proposed new standard
- Measurements of key elements such as roofing and fencing
- Housing Health and Safety Rating System assessments (HHSRS)
- Renewable technology review and considering whether the property would accept certain types of renewables
- Recording location presence and location of items such as mechanical ventilation systems

Asset Management Strategy

The Asset Management Strategy (2023-28) was approved by Board in December 2022 along with a new five-year Capital Programme which is set in the context of a 30-year asset management plan. The Asset Management Strategy (AMS) ensures the long-term stock investment needs of the properties that are owned and managed are identified and provides information on how much of this can be met from the current 30 year business plans (HRA and SHG).

The Asset Management Strategy 2023-28 provides assurance that within the current budgeted assumptions it is possible to maintain the HRA housing portfolio to the Decent Homes Standard as well as observe all relevant statutory compliance legislation (including recent Building Safety legislation requirements) over the next 10 years, however, as with other housing providers, future funding remains volatile and based on the latest significant cost increases seen within repairs, maintenance and construction, there are currently funding gaps later across the 30 years. The AMS also estimates the Net Carbon Zero investment required by 2050, however, additional funding will be required to realise SHG's ambitions in this area.

New Build

SHG builds a range of new build properties, and these are constructed in line with the New Build Design Guide which ensures they meet modern standards for living accommodation. Properties built include apartments, houses, bungalows, extra care schemes and supported housing. The Development Strategy outlines ambitions to further improve the new build homes by incorporating things like more digital equipment.

SHG Evidence:

- Asset Management Strategy 2023-2028
- Local Authority Housing Statistics return, section F
- Development Strategy and New Build Design Guide

Repairs and Maintenance

Required Outcomes:

Registered providers shall:

- (a) provide a cost-effective repairs and maintenance service to homes and communal areas that responds to the needs of, and offers choices to, tenants, and has the objective of completing repairs and improvements right first time
- (b) meet all applicable statutory requirements that provide for the health and safety of the occupants in their homes.

Is SHG compliant? **YES**

SHG Statement of Compliance:

Responsive Repairs

SHG's repairs and maintenance service is delivered via its commercial subsidiary: Three Sixty and that is the branding customers are now familiar with in terms of all repairs, maintenance, construction and M&E works.

The Responsive Repairs Policy has an aim to 'optimise the amount spent between responsive repairs and cyclical/planned expenditure to maximise economies of scale savings'. Repairs are categorised into emergency, urgent, routine, planned and programmed repairs. Performance information relating to repairs is reported to the Operations Directorate Management Team to ensure oversight of repairs spend, delivery and value for money.

There are a range of ways in which customers can raise repairs, including online, and the service will endeavour to offer appointments that best suit the customers' availability. Budgets are monitored closely to identify and address any areas of concern. Data is analysed to understand any emerging themes which may be better dealt with through planned maintenance approaches.

In-house repairs staff deliver this service unless it is a specialist area for which a sub-contractor is used and managed by Three Sixty.

During 2023-24, it was agreed that there would be a Service Review of repairs starting in April 2024 which will consider a range of aspects of the repairs service and identify opportunities for change, increased efficiency and improved customer experience.

Capital Programme

The Asst Management Strategy drives the annual Capital Programme that is developed and approved by SHG Board. Works are identified based upon component life cycles and referrals from both staff and customers. These are then verified by surveys and inspections. Customers are involved in determining priorities for Capital Programme works through consultation.

Proposed programmes are costed out to ensure they are affordable and once work is complete, the asset management system is updated with the information about the new components, which feeds into future asset management planning. This enables Stockport Homes to maintain the right balance between planned and responsive repairs.

Information about the annual Capital Programme is provided on the website and customers are contacted, and supported, by a Customer Liaison Officer before and during the works. Much of the programme is delivered by SHG's in-house construction company: Three Sixty and external contractors are used for more specialist works, for example lift replacements.

Compliance

A range of Customer Safety policies, procedures, strategies and management plans are in place detailing how SHG ensure buildings are managed safely and in line with statutory obligations, including gas, electrical, fire safety, asbestos, legionella and carbon monoxide management. SHG also manages a number of lifts in blocks across the Borough and has policies and working procedures in place for the management, servicing and maintenance of those.

SHG's working practices reflect the Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Regulations introduced in 2015 for private landlords, to which SHG was not subject, however, in October 2022, the Regulations were updated and extended to cover social housing. SHG's focus is now on addressing the enhanced requirements, ensuring this is fully documented and improving existing processes to allow for a comprehensive register to demonstrate compliance. The enhanced requirements relate to an obligation to install an alarm on each storey with rooms used as living accommodation and each room with a fixed combustion appliance (excluding cookers), plus a requirement to repair or replace faulty alarms.

SHG's short-term approach was to supply all properties requiring additional Carbon Monoxide detector with a battery-operated detector, these batteries have a life of 10 years and cannot be removed from the appliance. This has been driven through the current gas servicing program, fixed wire testing program, voids, and repairs workstreams. In addition, in the first instance we are picking out easily accessible homes such as sheltered schemes with the aim of being fully covered within this calendar year. Longer term plans are to add these assets to a planned replacement regime whereby the alarms will be replaced by hardwired linked devices.

Performance across the core customer safety areas of building compliance is monitored through monthly operational performance data and corporate KPIs that are reported to Senior Leadership Team monthly and Board quarterly. An Annual Compliance Report is also presented to Audit & Risk Committee for their assurance. Carbon Monoxide compliance will be added to the reporting.

Current work plans indicate that full compliance with the new Regulations will be achieved by 31 March 2024, thereby satisfying the Regulator's expectations that Providers have plans in place to ensure compliance in a prompt and timely way.

Each year, there is an internal audit of at least one Compliance area to provide independent assurance over processes and controls in operation. For 2023-24, the audit focussed on legionella. This is reported to Audit & Risk Committee to provide assurance over Asset Compliance processes.

Building Safety

SHG has a Building Safety Strategy in place which works in conjunction with the SHG Asset Management Strategy. There is a dedicated team in place. During 2023-24, all blocks that require a registration with the Building Safety Regulator, have been successfully registered. SHG has also prepared its first draft Safety Case Report for when that is required to be submitted to the Building Safety Regulator.

Through a range of routine inspections and home visits the Building Safety Team will identify a range of support that customers of high-rise buildings may require. This may be done by signposting to different support services and depending on what their needs are can vary between in house teams such as Neighbourhoods, Safer Neighbourhoods or Customer Finance and those external services such as Adult Social Care and Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service.

SHG conducts Type 4 Fire Risk Assessments and has installed Sprinkler systems in all its high-rise blocks.

The team will also identify repairs both within the homes as well as in the common parts, particularly when the repair is of a fire safety related nature. The repairs are reported through to the contact centre for jobs to be raised and the repairs and maintenance team to complete, the completion of these is monitored to ensure they are completed in timely manner.

Empty Property Management

SHG seeks to reduce the time that properties remain vacant as empty / void residential properties can have a detrimental effect on neighbourhoods, have a negative impact on the financial position of the organisation through void rent loss, and can prevent or delay customers from being suitably housed in appropriate accommodation.

The Empty Property Management Policy outlines the processes to be followed when a property becomes void, up to reletting this to a new customer. This includes the Lettable Standard with works being identified during a property inspection to ensure all necessary repairs and works are undertaken for the next customer. Where possible, this inspection is undertaken in the termination period to expediate the repairs process. SHG sets ambitious targets to meet from void to reallocation and achievement of this requires close working between a number of SHG teams.

Damp, Mould and Condensation

SHG has a Dampness and Condensation Policy and Procedure which sets out how the organisation responds to reports of damp, mould and condensation (DMC). Following the Housing Ombudsman's Spotlight report (in October 2021) on Damp and Mould, SHG has revised this policy with an enhanced focus on supporting customers and it has considered its response to all 26 of the Ombudsman's recommendations.

SHG operate a Rapid Response service with regards to dealing with customer enquiries around DMC. Within 14 working days SHG will have visited the property, clean down any visible mould, redecorated the area with anti-fungal paint and carried out minor related repairs. Call back services are implemented within six months to check-in with the customer; any reoccurrence of the DMC will be addressed accordingly.

The Customer Scrutiny Panel (CSP) has also undertaken a review from a customer perspective, which highlighted a significant amount of customer dissatisfaction. SHG has officers trained in building pathology and recognising dampness and associated building defects. Officers use a range of surveying techniques and specialist equipment to aid in the diagnosis of dampness, the cause and recognised remedial practices.

Further support is offered in the form of available literature and wider supportive services such as Energy Advisors and Money Advisors. Following the Rochdale case, dedicated officers have been set up in the One Number team to deal with all reports of DMC and procedures further enhanced to contact all customers reporting DMC problems after six weeks to check on progress. The importance of customers reporting DMC has been promoted on social media and customers who completed the customer scrutiny survey have been contacted for further follow up. A task and finish group has been established to develop SHG's approach further, which will also address the concerns raised by the recent CSP review

In early 2023, 328 frontline colleagues received face-to-face DMC training. Virtual DMC training was provided to the SMBC learning circle made up of over 300 colleagues from adult & social care teams and, by mid November 2023, 98% of SHG colleagues had completed on-line DMC Training. This on-line DMC training is a mandatory module incorporated into the new starter induction process. Colleagues yet to complete the training are reminded by the system and the 5% non-completion comprises new starters who will complete as part of their induction or those who are absent from the business on maternity leave / long-term sick.

Climate Change Strategy

SHG has a Climate Change Strategy in place which sets out how energy efficiency works are undertaken to provide safe and warm homes, reduce fuel poverty and contribute to the aspiration of the GM net zero-carbon target by 2038. Works undertaken include improvements such as biomass district heating systems, solar panels, heat source pumps and external wall insulation systems. The

AMS identifies the budget that would be required to provide investment to achieve Net Carbon Zero across the portfolio by 2038 (GM target), although the sources of funding for this have not been identified. There is a significant funding gap (circa £195m) and work will continue to consider how this funding gap can be bridged (as the funding and policy environment evolves).

Adaptations

Stockport Homes works with the Social Care Service at Stockport Council to deliver an adaptations service to install physical alterations to customer's home to allow them to live as independently as possible. These can be either minor or major adaptations. Examples of minor adaptations undertaken include grab rails and half steps and major adaptations can include ramps, wet rooms and stair lifts. An Adaptations Policy is in place that sets out the approach for considering property adaptations. The Policy is supported by an Adaptations Procedure that sets out how customers can apply for an adaptation. There are timescales in place for the installation of adaptations, depending on whether this is urgent or not. SHG delivers adaptations funded via the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) on behalf of Stockport Council. Stockport Homes also directly employs an Occupational Therapist to support the delivery of the service and ensures that adapted properties are allocated appropriately as they become available.

SHG Evidence:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building Safety Strategy • Asset Management Strategy • Climate Change Strategy • Responsive Repairs Policy • Empty Property Management Policy • Adaptations Policy and Procedure • 'Keeping your home free from damp, mould and condensation' video and leaflet (SHG's website) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Damp, Mould and Condensation 2023' – colleague training embedded within Litmos E-Learning Portal at SHG. • Dampness and Condensation Policy and Procedure • Gas Safety Policy and Procedure • Electrical Fixed Wire Testing Policy and Procedure • Asbestos Management Policy and Procedure • Legionella Management Policy and Procedure • M&E Planned Preventative Maintenance Policy and Procedure (incorporating Lift Safety) |
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TENANCY STANDARD (APRIL 2012)

Allocations and Mutual Exchange

Required Outcomes:

Registered providers shall let their homes in a fair, transparent and efficient way.

They shall take into account the housing needs and aspirations of tenants and potential tenants. They shall demonstrate how their lettings:

- (a) make the best use of available housing
- (b) are compatible with the purpose of the housing
- (c) contribute to local authorities' strategic housing function and sustainable communities

There should be clear application, decision-making and appeals processes.

Registered providers shall enable their tenants to gain access to opportunities to exchange their tenancy with that of another tenant, by way of internet-based mutual exchange services.

Is SHG compliant? **YES**

SHG Statement of Compliance:

Allocations Policy

SHG uses the Local Authority's Allocation Policy to let both its own properties, the Council's stock and process nominations to other housing providers. SHG has helped develop the Policy, with the most recent revision in January 2021 after a consultation process including elected members, housing applicants, tenants, key stakeholders and the wider public. The Policy is fully in line with Part 7 of the 1996 Housing Act, related guidance and case law.

The Policy reflects local strategic policies as well as meeting the 'reasonable preference' requirements, for example offering additional priority to people leaving the armed forces, care leavers and people moving to smaller social housing properties. It also seeks to be as inclusive as possible, looking at how people with past tenancy issues can be supported to maintain a home.

SHG engages with initiatives such as 'Housing First' and the Rough Sleeper Accommodation Programme (RSAP), allocating homes to people who have been rough sleeping, but with very intensive levels of support. As well as meeting housing need, SHG has a key role in tackling entrenched social exclusion, a central local authority strategic objective.

Properties are allocated transparently through a choice based letting scheme (Homechoice), with allocation processes clearly detailed on SHG's website. Staff support vulnerable applicants to access the allocation process, with a dedicated officer working with older applicants to explore housing options. All applicants can ask for a review of any decision made and there is a robust complaints process that enables customers to raise concerns about any aspect of the allocations and lettings process.

The Allocation of Adapted Property Policy enables customers requiring the use of a wheelchair on a full-time basis to be prioritised for suitably adapted properties. Customers register on the Choice Based Lettings (CBL) system but will be prioritised for the allocation of a suitable adapted property by the Adapted Property Panel which includes Stockport Homes' Occupational Therapist and a Team Manager from Stockport Council's Occupational Therapy team.

Lettings and sales are all recorded on the CORE system.

Housing Options and Homelessness

SHG provides a housing options service which helps and supports customers to find appropriate housing, either with SHG, another local registered provider, in the private rented sector or by accessing home ownership options such as shared ownership. The Housing Options service also works to prevent homelessness and supports customers making a homeless presentation.

SHG encourages customers to 'rightsize' to properties that better suit their needs, freeing up larger family accommodation for those in need. Customers facing financial hardship linked to rent charges for a property which is larger than they require, will be offered support through the Money Advice Team and Housing Services with the aim to support the customer to 'rightsize' to a more manageable property.

SHG delivers the Council's Homelessness Strategy and statutory duties around homelessness. There are three Temporary Accommodation Schemes in the Borough which are managed by SHG. SHG is also involved in Greater Manchester (GM) wide initiatives to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping including the 'A Bed Every Night' scheme. SHG is also part of the Rough Sleepers Initiative and the GM Housing First project which enables people with multiple and complex needs to begin recovery and move away from homelessness. There has been an increase in homelessness in the Borough and whilst SHG works with customers to prevent homelessness, SHG has had to use B&B accommodation for the first time. SHG is working with the Council and GM partners to ensure this remains a key priority focus.

SHG is working with GM partners through the Ethical Lettings Agency (Let Us) to improve access to and the quality and affordability of accommodation in the private rented sector. This initiative improves the housing options for those facing homelessness when social housing can't meet the demand, offering quality private rented accommodation at Local Housing Allowance rent levels.

Mutual Exchange

SHG has a mutual exchange service which operates and connects customers wishing to exchange their tenancy with another social housing tenant in order to better meet their housing needs, for example, to address under or overcrowding. Properties are advertised online and on social media in order to encourage positive outcomes. A new mutual exchange online system was launched in June 2023 which automatically informs mutual exchange applicants of possible 'matches' based on their current property and criteria. This enables and empowers applicants to take responsibility and control in finding a successful mutual exchange. Stockport Homes is also signed up to the House Exchange scheme enabling customers to search for a mutual exchange nationally.

A Mutual Exchange Policy is in place and dedicated Mutual Exchange Officers are employed to support the process, identify possible matches for customers where support is required and help progress matches. Proactive work is undertaken to work with customers to find matches and the Mutual Exchange Team can also liaise between tenants if they don't feel confident to approach another tenant initially. At times, a mutual exchange can involve a three, four or even five-way exchange which enables a number of people to move to more suitable accommodation.

The team support tenants throughout the mutual exchange process. Telephone support on the actual process and the matching service provides a valuable support stream to customers who may not be confident in using the service. Customers can also have face to face support with the Mutual Exchange Officers via appointment. The use of a dedicated Facebook page provides customers the direct opportunity to comment on any property offered for mutual exchange with customers looking to exchange having the option to manage this process directly and respond to any interested parties or to have all contacts managed through the Mutual Exchange team. This gives customers real ownership of the process when desired.

Right Sizing

SHG has a dedicated service to support tenants who live in larger family sized homes and want to 'right size' in to a more manageable and suitable one-bedroom properties. Tenants can self-refer or be referred through another SHG colleague or service or through a partner agency. In addition, data held by SHG is used to identify tenants who may benefit from right sizing with communication sent to the tenants advertising the service.

The aim of the right sizing service is to maximise use of larger family sized accommodation and the service supports tenants who wish to right size by directly securing a new property for them, removing the need to apply through Home Choice, the Choice Based Lettings service. Customers are supported via named Officer throughout the full right sizing process and working to address any concerns or questions the tenant may have. Financial support is also available, removing barriers tenants may face linked to removal costs, rent arrears and replacement furnishings at the new home. The principal profile of tenants who benefit from the right sizing service is generally single, elderly customers who have held a tenancy for many years and the service will be bespoke to meet the needs of the

individual, working to achieve positive outcomes for the tenant whilst also maximising use of available stock. This helps address the rehousing issues faced within Stockport and enables customers to move into accommodation which more appropriately meets their needs.

Empty Property Management

SHG has robust policies and procedures in place to manage and minimise the period of time between a property becoming empty and being relet. These are documented in the Empty Property Management Policy. The target for void relet time is 11 days and SHG are one of the best performers in the country in this regard.

Steps taken to minimise void periods include advertising properties that are due to have a tenancy ending at the earliest opportunity and enabling prospective tenants to view properties whilst they are still under repair. All viewings take place with a Voids Officer enabling the Officer to meet the prospective tenant, check all known housing information is still correct and also talk to the prospective tenant about the property, any repairs still outstanding and answer any questions regarding the property and the area. If any support needs are identified as part of the viewing which haven't previously been identified and are not currently being met, support will be put in to place prior to the new tenancy sign up taking place. This could be support offered by the Tenancy Ready team, a service which focuses on supporting customers who are due to be offered a tenancy in the immediate future with the aim of working with the customer to understand any issues which may have led to a previous tenancy failing or supporting the customer through their first tenancy to enable a successful sign up and tenancy commencement. Examples include budgeting information, setting up utility accounts and getting furniture. Operating a choice-based lettings system enables applicants to bid for properties which meet their needs, minimising any refusals. All applicants are given 48 hours to refuse or accept offers if a decision is not immediate; additional time will be given in specific extenuating circumstances.

SHG Evidence:

- Allocations Policy
- Homelessness Strategy
- Empty Property Management Policy
- Mutual Exchange Policy
- Interpreter SLA
- CORE returns
- Allocation of Adapted Property Policy

Tenure

Required Outcomes:

Registered providers shall offer tenancies or terms of occupation which are compatible with the purpose of the accommodation, the needs of individual households, the sustainability of the community, and the efficient use of their housing stock.

They shall meet all applicable statutory and legal requirements in relation to the form and use of tenancy agreements or terms of occupation.

Is SHG compliant? **YES**

SHG Statement of Compliance:

Tenancies

Stockport Council and Stockport Homes favour using the longest possible tenancies, an approach that is set out in the Tenancy Policy. This ensures that the terms of occupation of a property are compatible with the customers housing need. Fixed term tenancies are not used. Stockport Homes has a number of tenancy agreements in place including Assured Shorthold (starter); Assured; Equitable Tenancy; and a standard Introductory and Secure Council Tenancy Agreement. These are granted depending on the property ownership (SHG or the Council).

Introductory (or Starter) Tenancies are of 12 months duration and move to Secure (or Assured Shorthold) if the initial 12 months have been successful. During this period, a range of visits are undertaken to verify the tenant is complying with the Tenancy Agreement in place, e.g., paying rent and keeping the property in good condition. In addition, these checks also ensure housing fraud is not taking place and the property is being properly occupied.

There is a robust review process in place before the end of the 12-month period. Security of tenure is maintained in line with relevant guidance and legislation, including during major works decants. SHG sought legal advice in Autumn 2020 to ensure the Tenancy Agreement was up to date and that process confirmed there were no changes required.

Licenses are used in Temporary Accommodation for the letting of rooms and properties within those schemes.

In addition to this, SHG has a Rent to Buy Scheme which will allow customers to rent properties from SHG with the option to buy at the end of a five-year period. This offers another route into home ownership for customers.

Managing Tenancies

Tenants are proactively contacted by their Neighbourhood Housing Officer, either as a home visit or a telephone call via the Current Tenants Visit (CTV) process. By using a targeted approach, SHG can ensure that customers are provided with any support / advice they may need to effectively manage their tenancy. When visits are undertaken, any property condition issues that are identified can then be addressed in a timely manner, with repairs being raised as needed or customers being referred to support services if appropriate.

A Managing Tenancy Breaches Policy, an Anti-Social Behaviour Policy and a Good Neighbour Policy are in place to outline both the enforcement and supportive action SHG takes to maintain a safe and secure neighbourhood. In addition, there are Income Collection Policies in place and a Money Advice Service to ensure customers are supported to maintain regular rent payments. SHG also has a Tenancy Fraud Policy in place and a dedicated officer who investigates both proactive and reactive cases where there are suspicions of subletting or other tenancy fraud. There is an Abandonment Policy in place to deal with tenancies where the customer is found to have left the property and not followed the termination process.

SHG has a Tenancy Changes Policy in place to deal with successions to / assignment of tenancies to eligible family members. The Policy also deals with other changes that can impact on the tenancy including relationship breakdowns, name changes and transitioning customers

Intensive housing management is provided to customers living in SHG specialist accommodation managed by the Independent Living team with a bespoke pictorial tenancy agreement having been developed for the scheme for adults with learning disabilities and autism.

Tenancy Support

SHG has a range of support initiatives in place to help support customers to manage and maintain their tenancies. This starts before tenancies are granted through the work of the Tenancy Ready team who provide bespoke support to customers who are highly likely to receive an offer of accommodation imminently, where there has previously been a failed tenancy, or the customer has acknowledged issues which could result in a tenancy not being sustainable. The Tenancy Ready Team works with customers right through to the tenancy sign up process ensuring the tenancy starts successfully and will then engage further support for the customer through the Independent Living Team or other specialist support providers should there be an ongoing requirement. Further examples of tenancy support include:

- Money Advice Team to help with benefit and debt situations
- Employment Support Team to assist customers to find work, training or volunteering
- Independent Living Team to work with vulnerable customers struggling to maintain their tenancies and assist them in accessing other support services.
- Dedicated Independent Living Officer to support customers referred due to hoarding behaviours or poor property condition.
- Positive Engagement Team that works with offenders of ASB to tackle issues and reduce instances of ASB

- Furniture Recycling and Furnished Tenancies Schemes
- Energy Advice to help with the rising cost of heating homes
- Signposting to the Prevention Alliance to link customers with a range of local support to improve their wellbeing
- Regular wellbeing calls being undertaken to approx. 200 customers in general needs housing to support them in sustaining their tenancies

SHG Evidence:

- Allocations Policy
- Tenancy Policy
- Assured shorthold tenancy
- Assured tenancy
- Equitable tenancy
- Standard tenancy agreement
- Tenancy Ready Policy
- Good Neighbour Policy

- Managing Tenancy Breaches Policy
- ASB Policy
- Income Collection Policy
- Decant Policy
- Tenancy Changes Policy
- Tenancy Fraud Policy
- Abandonment Policy
- Pictorial Tenancy Agreement

NEIGHBOURHOOD AND COMMUNITY STANDARD (APRIL 2012)

Neighbourhood Management

Required Outcomes:

Registered providers shall keep the neighbourhood and communal areas associated with the homes that they own clean and safe. They shall work in partnership with their tenants and other providers and public bodies where it is effective to do so.

Is SHG compliant? **YES**

SHG Statement of Compliance:

SHG has a range of policies and procedures in place to manage neighbourhoods and communities so that they are attractive and thriving places to live.

Estate Inspections

The Estate Inspections & Customer Walkabouts Policy details the approach Stockport Homes takes when managing neighbourhoods including communal areas. This policy describes the role of partners and tenants in the estate inspection process. Customers were involved in the most recent review of the approach to estate inspections. By having an effective estate inspection process in place, SHG is ensuring that issues are identified early on, are addressed appropriately and that the neighbourhoods where SHG manage / own stock are attractive places to live.

Stockport Homes has an Eyes Wide Open Statement which sets the guidelines for all employees in maintaining neighbourhoods and reporting any repairs or concerns associated with neighbourhoods or customers.

Management of Blocks

SHG manages a range of different blocks within the Borough, each being visited by a number of different teams to ensure a comprehensive approach to management. Each multi storey block is visited monthly by a Neighbourhood Housing Officer and key partners and colleagues for an inspection to take place and be recorded these are advertised and customers are encouraged to attend so they can raise issues. This will identify any issues which need resolving, including any repairs or waste management issues that may be needed. In addition, the Environmental Services team deliver caretaking services across the blocks, the frequency differs subject to type of block, all tasks completed on site and any issues which are recorded using Sweep Up and share with Housing Services.

SHG conducts Type 4 Fire Risk Assessment and has installed Sprinkler systems in all its high-rise blocks.

In terms of managing fire risk, SHG works in partnership with Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service (GMFRS). SHG has in place a Low-Rise Fire Safety Procedure, Multi-Storey Fire Safety Procedure and Sheltered Scheme Fire Procedure in place. These procedures detail SHG's approach to managing internal communal areas in relation to managing fire risk and keeping areas clean and sterile. There is also an associated Storage of Mobility Scooter Policy. Analysis is undertaken of any fires which occur to derive learning and further improve the approach to fire safety. Key fire safety messages are shared with customers via the newsletter, website and social media.

Communal areas within blocks also form part of SHG's Asset Management Strategy to ensure they are well maintained over time and subject to planned work including decorating, improvement and upgrading as required.

Building Safety Team

SHG has a dedicated Building Safety Team in place alongside a Building Safety Strategy. This ensures that SHG's approach to Building Safety is robust, and customers are engaged with the requirements that are forthcoming. The Building Safety Team work to ensure high-rise blocks are managed in a way which meets the requirements of the Building Safety Regulator and ensures close working with other teams that provide services to multi storey blocks.

The Building Safety Officers will visit residents of high-rise buildings in their homes to ensure they are living safely and offer advice and support where it is required. They will record visits on mobile devices and share some of this information with Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service to give them an indication of where resident who are unable to self-evacuate, may be in the building. The frequency of visits and re-visits will be determined by the needs of the resident.

Along with routine block inspections by the Building Safety Officers, the Building Safety Technician carries out monthly inspections of all high-rise buildings and key assets within them. The Building Safety Technician checks and records assets such as emergency lighting, fire doors and firefighting equipment that they are in a good working order but also raise repairs where required. Their inspection will also include an overall building condition to ensure there are no safety risks.

A High Rise Residents Panel is in place to ensure customer voice is an integral part of the approach to managing high-rise. The panel meet on a quarterly basis as representative to all buildings and have the opportunity to raise concerns and issues being faced by high-rise residents. They can also ask for representatives to attend from other SHG services areas to better understand them but also directly challenge what they may consider poor performance.

The Building Safety Team met the Building Safety Regulator's deadline of 30 September 2023 for all high-rise buildings to registered with them through their portal. There are 24 blocks which meet the Building Safety Regulator's definition of a high rise building and

therefore have been registered. A draft Safety Case Report that was produced in 2022/23 is being used as a guide for all buildings now registered, it is anticipated that the Building Safety Regulator will request these reports in different tranches over the next five years.

Caretaking

SHG has an Environmental Services Strategy in place and delivers a caretaking service to customers living in multi storey, mid-rise, low-rise accommodation and independent living schemes, services vary from daily to weekly tasks specific to each location but includes health and safety tasks. The service is resourced and managed through a bespoke IT system 'Sweep Up'.

For blocks which receive a caretaking service, customers can expect to receive services in line with the caretaking service standards. The type of caretaking, cleaning services and frequency differ across blocks, will include health and safety checks, and for specific blocks will include cleaning of internal and external of communal areas, bin management, removal of bulky waste, fly tipping, window cleaning. The caretaking service also provides reactive services to address issues such as fly tipping across This is a valuable service which enables SHG to maintain clean and safe communal areas and have a robust approach to identifying and addressing issues which may arise.

Greenspace

SHG's Greenspace Strategy and Action Plan sets out strategic vision and delivery of Greenspace Services across the Borough. This includes management and maintenance of communal gardens, open spaces, trees, playgrounds. The management is overseen by the SHG Greenspace Team, via external contracts for which there are specific service level agreements and/or contracts in place. Further support and information is available for customers on Stockport Homes web site and access to a link portal provide by the grounds maintenance contractor on schedules of work for customers receiving the grounds maintenance service.

Service Standards are in place and have been agreed with customers for grounds maintenance services. Tasks include grass cutting, flower bed, shrub and hedge maintenance, weed and litter control, hard surface maintenance. Management and maintenance of trees and playgrounds are set out in the Tree Policy and Procedure and Play Area Policy and Procedure. SHG works closely with external contractors and in partnership with Stockport Council, to ensure greenspaces are high quality, clean, green and safe places for all customers.

Building Security / CCTV Service

At SHG's head office is a state-of-the-art CCTV control room which monitors a number of CCTV cameras within the neighbourhoods that SHG manages. They also manage the building security service which does cameras sweeps of CCTV systems within multi-storey blocks. The control room is staffed 24/7/365 in order to ensure the safety and security of all residents and visitors within the blocks.

Additional CCTV monitoring services have been moved into SHG's remit from 1 April 2022, which means SHG now monitor public space cameras on behalf of the Council across the Borough. This allows for a more efficient way of working, more partnership working and greater oversight of neighbourhood issues with the ability to act upon issues in a timely manner.

SHG Evidence:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Estate Inspections & Customer Walkabouts Policy • CCTV and Noise Monitoring code of practice • Building Security / CCTV operating procedure • Lend a Cam Policy • Environmental Services Strategy • Caretaking Service Standards • Building Safety Strategy • Greenspace Strategy and Action Plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good Neighbour Policy • ASB Policy • Low-rise fire safety procedure • Multi-storey Fire safety Procedure • Sheltered Scheme Fire Procedure • Eyes Wide Open Policy Statement • Customer Handbook • Tenancy Agreements • Sign Up Policy for new tenants • Environmental Services Strategy |
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Local Co-Operation

Required Outcomes:

Registered providers shall co-operate with relevant partners to help promote social, environmental and economic wellbeing in the areas where they own properties

Is SHG compliant? YES

SHG Statement of Compliance:

The SHG website contains a wide range of information about the services offered by SHG to customers. Newsletters, social media campaigns and advertisements in local areas (e.g., on notice boards in blocks) enable messages to be conveyed to customers about activities, events and services on offer. For example, information about the Community Fund is promoted to encourage applicants to apply for funding for local initiatives.

Stockport Council and One Stockport

SHG is a key partner in One Stockport, seeking to build upon the community response seen across the Borough during the Covid pandemic and more recently in response to the cost-of-living crisis. Stockport has three key aims, supporting local business, connecting communities and promoting health and wellbeing; and it has developed a Borough Plan and a Council Plan to articulate these aims.

SHG has an involvement in many ways. SHG's mission is strongly aligned with this, particularly SKYlight which seeks to relieve poverty and address economic disadvantage. SHG has been a key partner in the local response to the current cost of living crisis and has worked across agencies and in partnership to deliver support to customers and communities.

SHG has a range of initiatives in place which promote social, environmental and economic wellbeing of neighbourhoods. Some examples include food pantries, employment initiatives, customer training programmes, work placements, the SKYlight Community Fund, community development work and identifying funding opportunities for local groups that make a difference.

Stockport Homes manages ten community centres on behalf of the Council in areas where it manages stock. The centres provide facilities for local residents, including services such as local libraries, Stockport Credit Union, Your Local Pantry, local community cafes access to housing, employment and training services, and a range of spaces used for classes that promote exercise, healthy eating, employment and community interaction.

Neighbourhood Action Plans are in place across the Borough and are published in the Customer Newsletter to highlight key activities benefitting all areas and specific information for each of the neighbourhoods managed to keep customers updated and informed.

Furthermore, SHG's charitable subsidiary SKYlight undertakes a wide range of activities aimed at improving the lives of those that live in SHG properties and communities. This includes working with local schools to deliver sessions in school and holiday activities.

Partnership Working with Others

SHG is a member of the Stockport Housing Partnership, which is a group of housing providers across Stockport that aim to ensure a consistent approach to, and the resolution of, key issues (e.g., anti-social behaviour, tackling domestic violence and meeting housing need).

SHG's Chief Executive sits on the One Stockport Health and Care Locality Board. This Board brings together senior leaders from Stockport, including NHS (primary, secondary, community and mental health), Local Authority and the Voluntary, Community, Faith & Social Enterprise to focus on the shared priorities within the One Stockport Borough Plan and the One Health and Care Plan.

SHG also sits on and attends meetings of the One Stockport Safety Partnership (<http://www.saferstockport.org.uk/>), the local statutory Community Safety Partnership, through which public sector partners work together and alongside community and voluntary organisations to reduce crime, anti-social behaviour and re-offending and substance misuse.

Partnership working with other agencies is key to delivering outcomes. SHG is part of the Place Based Integration (PBI) and Team Around the Place models that operate within the Borough. The PBI is a multi-agency model that involves regular meetings between

partner agencies that are designed to engage residents at an early stage to prevent issues escalating to high cost, reactive statutory services. This is achieved through short and timely interventions that engage residents in service provision. The Team Around the Place (TAP) model offers a similar opportunity for partners to come together to share information, identify particular issues or themes in an area and collectively agree appropriate actions and programmes of work. SHG attends regular meetings with Service Managers from Stockport Council, including strategic housing, to ensure that any services provided by them are fulfilling the needs of the neighbourhoods (e.g., street cleansing, refuse removal). Customers are made aware of their responsibilities in maintaining their home, keeping properties in good condition and keeping communal areas clean through the tenancy agreement. This is also re-iterated in the customer handbook.

SHG is part of the Prevention Alliance Partnership working collaboratively to improve the health and wellbeing of vulnerable people in Stockport. As well as this, SHG is part of the Council's Family Hubs initiative, providing support and information to families across Stockport.

Partnership Working across GM

SHG is an active member of the Greater Manchester Housing Providers Group (GMHP). The GMHP is made up of 24 housing providers working across GM and promotes partnership working, sharing of good practice and opportunities to collaborate to develop new services and secure external funding across a range of different areas. S Officers play a key role in a range of other groups including Supported Housing, Employment & Skills, Health, HR & OD, Building Safety and Older Persons Services.

SHG is a member of the Athena group, a company limited by guarantee with membership drawn from many of the major housing providers within the region. Athena takes a collaborative, partnership approach to a range of areas of work which benefit both organisation and tenants including procurement activity and more recently has been used as a vehicle to bid for contracts and funding. Through Athena, Stockport Homes has secured funding for employability initiatives including Skills for Employment and the Motiv8 programme (until 31 March 2023), which benefits local residents by providing a range of bespoke employment and support programmes. More recently Athena has secured funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) as a sub-contractor to The Growth Company to deliver the Support to Succeed programme across GM, with SKYlight delivering the programme in Stockport.

SHG in partnership with the GM Ageing Hub and Manchester University is progressing a range of age friendly initiatives in Brinnington. Funding has been secured from the Dunhill Foundation for a two-year research project around age-friendly social housing and supporting 'ageing in place'. In addition, funding has been secured from the Worwin Foundation for an Ageing in Place Project (AIPP). The two-year research project will focus on supporting healthy ageing and alleviating social isolation in older adults through events and activities. The AIPP is a GM wide project comprising of projects testing new ways of creating neighbourhoods that support older people to age well, reduce loneliness and improve quality of life with older people placed at the heart of decision making. The SKYlight AIPP project will be led by a steering group of older people within the local area and key partners.

SHG Evidence:

- Customer Influence and Voice Strategy
- Community Centres information
- Employment Support information
- Your Local Pantry information
- One Stockport Safety Partnership Information Sharing Agreement
- Ageing in Place Pathfinder information

Anti-Social Behaviour**Required Outcomes:**

Registered providers shall work in partnership with other agencies to prevent and tackle anti-social behaviour in the neighbourhoods where they own homes.

Is SHG compliant? YES**SHG Statement of Compliance:****Strategic Approach**

SHG has a strong track record of dealing successfully with ASB including addressing the root cause of the behaviour, supporting victims and witnesses and using a range of legal powers to effectively deal with issues. It is important that customers feel safe in their living environments and able to report ASB, knowing that it will be tackled. Some issues are dealt with in a multi-agency manner including working with our partners in Safer Stockport Partnership.

Stockport Homes has an Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Service that has been assessed through the Resolve Standard for Community Safety. The ASB Strategy and Policy sets out how Stockport Homes will tackle anti-social behaviour with partners. The Strategy was reviewed and renewed in February 2022. The service also delivered its own Lend-a-Cam scheme which sees temporary CCTV installed in victims' properties to help gather evidence of ASB. It also manages its own noise systems to detect statutory nuisance.

As part of pre-tenancy checks for rehousing, a risk assessment is carried out with all applicants to identify any issues that may negatively affect their tenancy. These are addressed as appropriate before the tenancy starts with appropriate support, advice and referrals to other agencies etc. Customers are made aware of their responsibilities as a tenant through the customer handbook and the sign-up process, in terms of the requirements of the tenancy agreement. The SHG website provides more information for customers on their responsibilities on anti-social behaviour and the action that can be taken to address it, should it occur.

Partnership Working

Stockport Homes recognises that it cannot tackle ASB in isolation. SHG is a key member of the One Stockport Safety Partnership (OSSP) which includes partners such as the Police, Local Authority, Probation etc. SHG works with the OSSP, both at a strategic level and locally through the Partnership Delivery Group. SHG work closely with partner agencies through formal processes such as MAPPA (multi-agency public protection arrangements) for high-risk offenders and MARAC (multi-agency risk assessment conferences) for domestic violence cases to ensure victims are protected and the risk of reoffending and ASB minimised for offenders.

In addition, we have a dedicated worker who engages at early stage with those leaving prison or on probation with housing issues to help minimise re-offending. Attendance at Threat Risk and Harm meetings with police and other agencies provide Stockport Homes with opportunity to share information and problem solve neighbourhood's issues as a collective. In addition, there is a robust information sharing protocol in place which allows the police to respond to requests about criminal convictions to support legal action.

Managing ASB Cases

ASB can be reported through any channel, including at reception, via One Number and directly to the ASB Service. There is also an online reporting tool on the Stockport Homes website. Cases are managed in a specific, secure case management system which tracks actions and interventions undertaken and contact with each party.

The ASB Policy and Procedure set out the approach to case management including timescales to be met and service standards to be delivered. There are a range of legal powers available to SHG to be used, however, officers will try and resolve issues outside of court wherever possible. This may be through the use of behaviour contracts to mediation.

SHG will install CCTV cameras or noise monitoring equipment to record instances of ASB, where possible, in order to strengthen cases of legal action and obtain reliable evidence for court. SHG also offers customers an App so they can easily report ASB incidents via a smartphone or tablet and easily provide video and audio evidence that is captured on devices.

Noise Cases

SHG has taken on board recommendations from the Housing Ombudsman following the "Spotlight on Noise" report issued in November 2022. SHG is holding a focus group with customers early 2023 to get input and views on the development of a "Good Neighbourhood Policy and Procedure" to deal with noise outside the ASB Policy. SHG recognises that not all noise cases are deliberate ASB and will work with customers to address issues utilising early interventions such as mediation, support and noise transference reduction strategies. A new Neighbourhood Resolution Officer has been developed to deal with those noise types which can be escalated to a safer Neighbourhoods Officer should investigations determine that the noise is deliberate and intentional to cause nuisance.

Support

There are a range of ways in which victims and witnesses can be supported. Additional security measures can be added to homes including cameras, fireproof letter boxes and additional locks. There is also a Complainant support Specialist in place to customers to ensure victims are supported in bringing their case forward. In addition, there is a mediation service to resolve conflict amicably and for the victim and perpetrator to discuss issues in a safe environment. Support is also provided to perpetrators of ASB which a view to helping them change behaviour to stop ASB being caused. This includes referrals to other services and agencies. A specialist exploitation Protection officer is in post to identify cases of ASB that are being caused by a perpetrator being exploited. This role ensures support is put in place for vulnerable perpetrators to stop exploitation occurring and in turn preventing further ASB being experienced by the community.

Dealing with Domestic Abuse / Hate Incidents

Domestic abuse can occur in a number of ways and can happen in the family, household or between partners. We take this very seriously and our staff are trained to deal with issues sensitively. Victims of domestic abuse are supported by the Domestic Abuse Case Officer or specialist officers in the Housing Options Team and the local organisation: Stockport Without Abuse. SHG will ensure that services are delivered to meet the requirements of the Domestic Abuse Bill. SHG is also working towards the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance accreditation.

SHG has a Hate Policy in place which details how SHG will work with customers to ensure no one is living in fear of hate incidents. Action will be taken when hate incidents are reported and SHG will work in partnership with local agencies to tackle issues and keep customers and communities safe.

SHG is in the process of obtaining the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) accreditation. This is the UK's benchmark for how housing providers should respond to domestic abuse.

Reporting Performance

The Corporate Performance Report contains details of indicators and measures (including customer satisfaction) that demonstrate the action taken on ASB to ELT and Board. The Operations Directorate Management Team will also review more detailed information about case load, successes and legal action taken.

Resolve ASB

SHG has been involved in the development of the new Resolve Standard for Community Safety which has involved working with other providers and community safety organisations (including police forces) to develop the new Standards. SHG is the first organisation to go through the process of being awarded the Standard, which involved an onsite peer review during 2022. The final report from Resolve shows that SHG exceeds the Standard and highlights multiple examples of best practice.

SHG Evidence:

- ASB Strategy
- ASB Policy
- ASB Policy Private Rented Sector
- Noise Monitoring Code of Practice
- Hate Policy
- Domestic Abuse Policy
- Resolve Standard for ASB Final Report
- Corporate Performance Report and appendix (annual)
- Guide to Tackling ASB for customers which includes information on witness support
- Good Neighbourhood Management Policy
- Lend-A-Cam Code of Conduct
- Cuckooing Evaluation Report

TENANT SATISFACTION MEASURES (APRIL 2023)

Required outcomes:

Registered providers must collect and provide information to support effective scrutiny by tenants of their landlord's performance in managing their homes and neighbourhoods.

Is SHG Compliant? **YES**

SHG Statement of Compliance:

In September 2022, the Regulator published the definitions of the 22 TSMs that are to be produced by social housing landlords, covering five themes including:

- Keeping properties in good repair
- Maintaining building safety
- Respectful and helpful engagement
- Effective handling of complaints
- Responsible neighbourhood management

Ten of the TSMs are to be measured by landlords directly, and 12 through the completion of tenant perception surveys.

SHG has been collecting the TSM measures, both survey and management information since April 2023. The Board approved the list of corporate performance indicators, including the TSMs in March 2023. SHG is collecting the data for all stock that it manages (HRA stock and SHL owned stock).

Survey based TSMs which focus on tenant satisfaction with services has been collected via a digital form at current tenancy visits. The creation of the platform to support this collection method has been complex and involved work across data, digital and neighbourhood teams. The RSH have been prescriptive about how the questions should be delivered and have provided technical guidance to support the development of the in-house process. Each question will include supplementary questions, to enable collection of qualitative feedback to support service improvement opportunities throughout the year.

The feedback collected can be analysed on a real-time basis via an interactive performance dashboard, which will in turn support the delivery of continual improvements. This dashboard is available to all accountable people to interrogate on an ongoing basis, ensuring a responsive approach to feedback. It will ensure Stockport Homes is able to dynamically assess statistical representativeness in line with RSH requirements. This is critical to ensuring assurance to the RSH that all profiles (for tenants and properties), have been considered and surveyed as part of this feedback process.

Board has received reporting on the corporate performance indicators, including TSMs, throughout 2023-24.

SHG commissioned an advisory internal audit to review the organisations approach to collation of tenant perception TSMs. The advisory review provided assurance of several areas of good practice and identified one area for improvement in relation to the Framework Document (providing additional information on the method of calculating each measure and sampling approach). This has been completed.

In addition to the above, from January 2024, SHG is piloting an on-line element to collect the TSMs – to provide a further check and balance on the satisfaction figures collected via face-to-face surveys.

END