



MEMBER COMMITTEE UPDATE REPORT

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report contains items that fall outside the significance of a full, individual report but are areas Members may find of interest given their wider impact on the community. It also attempts to capture the current context and issues within in which SHG working. Members are invited to comment on or question any of the items covered.

2 THE GRENFELL TOWER INQUIRY PHASE 2 REPORT

- 2.1 As widely publicised, the final (Phase2) report was published on 4 September 2024. The following is an extract from Volume 7 of the report:

Social housing providers

113.46 In Parts 4 and 5 of the report we have discussed the TMO, its relationship with its residents and its management of fire safety at Grenfell Tower. We make a number of criticisms of the way in which it carried out its responsibilities, including in relation to handling complaints, remedying defects identified in fire risk assessments, installing and maintaining fire protection systems and routine inspection and maintenance of fire doors. Others responsible for the management of social housing should give them careful consideration and take appropriate action accordingly.

113.47 In other circumstances shortcomings of those kinds would probably have led us to make a number of recommendations directed to ensuring that they were rectified and not repeated. However, since the fire Parliament has enacted the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023, which enables the Regulator of Social Housing to play a more active role in setting appropriate standards and ensuring that they are met. The regulator also has the power to set standards on the competence and conduct of those involved in the provision of services relating to the management of social housing and to require providers of social housing to make information available both to tenants and the regulator. The Act also makes safety a priority and imposes a duty on landlords to investigate and remedy within a specified time of being reported defects that may adversely affect health.

113.48 In those circumstances, we do not consider it necessary to make any additional recommendations in relation to the matters that we have uncovered

- 2.2 While no specific formal recommendations were made relating to Social Housing Providers, as stated above, SHG have been urged to reflect on the findings in Parts 4 & 5 of the report.
- 2.3 The recommendations made in the report relate to Government and the construction industry, which if enacted would bring changes that would impact on social landlords, particularly the following:
- The establishment of a single construction regulator to take control of overall regulation of the construction industry.
 - An 'urgent' review of the definition of a higher-risk building, which considers factors such as vulnerability of residents, and not just the 18-metre height threshold that exists currently.
 - A review of the building regulations guidance covering fire safety – and a revised version as soon as possible. This should include a reconsideration of the total reliance on 'stay put' advice.
 - The fire engineering profession be recognised and protected by law, with an independent body set up to regulate it.
 - A licensing scheme for principal contractors wishing to undertake the construction or refurbishment of higher risk buildings.
- 2.4 This provides an opportune time to provide assurance on the fire safety of SHG stock. The key point to make is that there is no Aluminium Composite Material (ACM) Cladding on any buildings and all SHG high rise flats have sprinklers installed.
- 2.5 The Building Safety Team was established to address the requirements of the Building Safety Act and the Building Safety Regulator is delivering on their responsibilities. They face some challenges in the volume of actions arising from FRAs which are now more rigorous and performance against target is reported in the Board KPI suite.
- 2.6 There is a culture of listening to customers, through the regular on-site engagement from the Building Safety Officers and with the Building Safety Residents Panel. There is also a co-operative and positive working relationship with Greater Manchester Fire Service.
- 2.7 Taken together these and many other mitigations provide a high level of assurance that SHG managed high rise schemes are fire safe.
- 2.8 For a further detailed briefing, please see attached at Appendix One.

For more information, please contact Tim Pinder, Director of Property, tim.pinder@stockporthomes.org

3 HOUSING OMBUDSMAN SERVICE – CALL FOR EVIDENCE

- 3.1 As part of their remit to promote good practice within the social housing sector, the Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS) periodically undertake thematic

reviews of their casework, to identify areas of poor performance and need for improvement across the sector. These reviews also involve a 'call for evidence', to allow relevant stakeholders to provide their views on the particular theme and help to inform the Report. The HOS have indicated that the next Spotlight Report will focus on the delivery of repairs and maintenance services and has been named 'Repairing Trust'.

- 3.2 The HOS are inviting submissions via a range of different stakeholders and have created online surveys for each of these stakeholders (Landlords, Repairs and Maintenance Contractors, Residents, Elected Representatives). The survey and information about the review can be accessed via the HOS website (['Repairing Trust' Call for Evidence | Engage Housing Ombudsman \(housing-ombudsman.org.uk\)](https://housing-ombudsman.org.uk)).

For more information, please contact Chris Czyzyk, Customer Experience Manager, chris.czyzyk@stockporthomes.org

4 ANNUAL REPORT TO CUSTOMERS

- 4.1 The Regulator of Social Housing states within its Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard that providers are required to publish an annual report containing relevant and timely performance information, including information on repairs and maintenance.
- 4.2 The Annual Report is a key publication for customers, and consultation on how customers prefer to receive publications and the style and content remains a priority for Stockport Homes Group (SHG). This year, to further strengthen customer involvement, SHG worked alongside the Customer Engagement Team to identify customers classed as 'non-digital' and deliver an in-person workshop to collate feedback on the format, content, look and feel of the Annual Report.
- 4.3 The report follows good practice guidelines on accessibility of language. Read-aloud features on the interactive webpage will be available for those who are hard of hearing or visually impaired in over 100 languages, with alternative text inputted into any imagery used.
- 4.4 Hard copies of the infographic version will be available on request and distributed to non-digital customers identified in the consultation process.
- 4.5 Harder to reach customers, including those who live in sheltered and temporary accommodation schemes, will be provided with a physical copy of the Report.
- 4.6 The method behind tenant involvement throughout the creation process is considered both exemplary and forward-thinking within the Housing Quality Network (HQN). SHG showcased their approach with the group earlier this year, which was recognised as best-practice among landlords, and due to popularity has been invited to deliver the session again.
- 4.7 The annual report can be found [online here](#).

For more information, please contact verity.gleave@stockporthomes.org

5 BEACON COUNSELLING

- 5.1 Beacon Counselling continue to deliver a counselling service to SHG tenants and The Prevention Alliance (TPA) customers, with the contract recently extended by an optional third year. During Quarter 1, the service received 92 referrals and conducted 47 initial assessments to evaluate the appropriate level of support, 28 counselling sessions were delivered by volunteer student placements, 81 sessions were deemed complex and required qualified counsellor interventions. Feedback this quarter included:
- 5.2 “I had been really struggling with my anxiety and depression earlier this year and I started counselling and the advice given to me by my counsellor has been very helpful and beneficial to me.”
- 5.3 “Great service and I can’t thank you enough.”
- 5.4 The service will be retendered in early 2025.

6 INDEPENDENT LIVING UPDATE

- 6.1 Preparations are underway for SHG’s annual Winter Welfare visits. The programme will visit over 500 older and vulnerable customers across the borough in general needs accommodation. Customers are offered a range of services and support including energy advice, benefit checks and money advice, in addition to mobility and adaptation evaluations, and fire safety checks. Partners including Health, Adult Social Care and the Voluntary Sector have been asked to provide any information they would like to include, as part of the visits.

7 FUNDING UPDATE

- 7.1 The SHG Funding Officer supports the VCFSE sector to obtain grant funding, providing information on appropriate grants and advice and guidance on searching for and securing funding. The Funding Officer supports bid writing and reviewing grant applications to ensure submissions meet the required standards for success.
- 7.2 Since April 2024, 17 new bids have been developed and submitted. To date four have secured funding, one has failed while the remainder are pending a decision.
- 7.3 Successes from this quarter include:
- Rising Stars; awarded £50,960 to deliver youth and diversionary work in Adswood and Bridgehall. This award was just over 50% of the total available grant from the GMCA and the Violence Reduction Fund
 - Starting Point accessed £23,000 from the Workers Educational Association to provide services to support individuals with reducing data poverty.

- Working closely with ward councillors, SKyLight continued support the establishment of new community groups in Lancashire Hill. The new Lancashire Hill Green Volunteers were awarded £1,400 by Manchester Airport Community Trust Fund for equipment to carry out events and community clean ups.
- 7.4 SKyLight secured two successful nominations to the Fusion21 Resilience Programme for VCSFE organisations Autisk and Starting Point. These organisations will receive consultancy support and be able to apply for an additional £10,000 grant to support core costs.

8 EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING

- 8.1 The 1st June marked the official start date of the Stockport Social Supermarket Programme. Designed by the SKyLight team and funded by the National Lottery, this programme delivers targeted employment, wellbeing, and cost of living support to men who are either furthest from the employment market or working in insecure jobs with a Working Wardrobe delivered by Groundworks. Promotion of the service has commenced and currently 11 men are engaged on the programme. Discussions are underway with Manchester Metropolitan University to have the programme reviewed by an MSc Psychology student from May 2025, focussing on the outcomes and impact of the programme in the first year.
- 8.2 The Job Fit Programme delivering a bespoke satellite service in Brinnington with access to work placements, monthly training sessions and intensive employment support including confidence building, resilience, and navigating online employment platforms ended in July. Programme participants were also supported to access cost-of-living advice and health and wellbeing support. The programme was contracted to engage 30 customers and provide intensive support over a 6-month period. During the 12 months of delivery, 32 customers were engaged on programme with eight securing employment, seven completed training and two took part in an intensive eight-week work placement opportunities.
- 8.3 In July, the SKyLight Employment & Training team delivered sector-based training to recruit 100 new Administrative Officers for the DWP in Stockport. The team delivered eight sessions over two days, coaching 56 customers to identify transferrable skills, navigate DWP recruitment systems and prepare for interview. Customers fed back: “It was a clear and informative session conducted in a very friendly and professional environment” and “The trainer helped the class identify the necessary skills and was excellent at being optimistic and supportive”. Candidates are currently progressing through the next stages of the recruitment process including psychometric tests and interviews.

9 THE WINTER WELFARE PROJECT

- 9.1 The annual Winter Welfare Project enables Stockport Homes to reach out to the most vulnerable customers to provide them with a wealth of valuable information and support. It is also an ideal opportunity for partner services to do the same

via the literature provided. The project and visits will commence in November 2024 through to January 2025.

- 9.2 Approximately 500 customers aged around 70+ have been identified as having no existing clear lines of support in place (i.e.: their property is not an age restricted 60+ property, nor do they live in a sheltered scheme or have the Carecall service currently fitted in their home) and all these customers will be contacted to undertake a Winter Welfare survey and deliver a goody pack.

THE SURVEY

- 9.3 This survey enables officers to identify potential support needs (and act upon them) and to ensure customers are in receipt of the correct benefits (maximising their income). Winter Welfare survey questions include: make up of current benefits and potential difficulties experienced around the home (cooking, cleaning, gardening, shopping, dressing, bathing, falls and dealing with medication), assistance or help in relation to going out, social activities, managing financially, applying for a blue badge, energy advice, applying for adaptations, booking GP appointments, flu, pneumonia, shingles and covid jabs, moving home, accessing food, fire safety and finally if they would like an ongoing welfare call from the team

THE PACK

- 9.4 Winter Welfare packs are created each year by the Independent Living Team. Each pack contains information from different partner agencies. In recent years this has included the following: Life Leisure SMILE coffee mornings, warm and well information, KOKU (Keep on Keep up), signpost for carers, digital assistance getting help to get online, counselling information, NHS flu vaccinations, energy costs advice, advice around feeling worried/stressed or low, OWLs support information, Age UK winter wrapped up, cost of living joint publication, GMFRS safe and well, cracking good food recipes, Healthwatch Stockport, NHS spotting cancer early, free home library service, One Stockport and Stockport Homes Independent Living Team Activity Calendars. Please see below.



For further information please contact Eva Holt, Head of Independent Living on eva.holt@stockporthomes.org

10 CONTROL ROOM

10.1 The Control Room has recently completed a successful round of recruitment including a Control Room Manager, two new Team Leaders and five operatives. Since joining the Safer Neighbourhoods service the Control room has undergone significant transformation including rolling out induction sessions for staff, designed to allow the new team to implement an excellent culture of working which reflects SHG Values and deliver excellent customer service 24hrs a day. Reviewing, training, sharing good practice solidifying the relationship with SMBC, Stakeholders, key partner organisations, this also includes a full review of the Emergency Procedures including:

- Out of Hours Support Pack
- Emergency Plan
- Disaster Recovery/ICT Contingency
- Reviewing SHG's role within the Local Authority with team embarking on emergency services training aimed at improving knowledge around resilience, contingency management and support SMBC colleagues in the event of a major incident, such as flood, fire, electrical or other major incidents.

10.2 The Control room has been piloting a security patrols service focussing on increased anti-social behaviour on Lancashire Hill and Heaton/Norris Towers, completing block checks, fire exits, reporting damage to internal and external door, dealing with incidents of ASB and providing reassurance to customers from 6pm till 6am every day with a more extensive service at the weekend and bank holidays, an evaluation of this pilot is underway and consultation with customers will take place to determine whether this will be rolled out Boroughwide on a permanent basis.

10.3 The new team have already made a great impact on providing support to customers and improving Community Safety with key arrests being made due to operative proactive monitoring cameras and tracking offenders across the Borough with one operative receiving a Commander's Commendation from GMP for his efforts which lead to key arrests of Organised Crime Gang members.

Please contact Liz Smith, Head of Safer Neighbourhoods if you would like more information: Liz.m.smith@stockporthomes.org

11 EXTERNAL AWARDS

11.1 The Stockport Business Awards took place on 3rd October, SKYlight won in the category of Corporate Social Responsibility and Home Marketing were finalists in the category of Best Internal Marketing Team.

11.2 Viaduct Housing Partnerships 'The Chimneys' new build development has won 'Best small housing development' in the North West LABC Building Excellence

Awards 2024. The scheme, consisting of 16 shared ownership homes designed by DASH Architecture and constructed by Wiggett Construction Ltd, is now shortlisted for the National Grand Final, which will take place in January 2025.

