

Resident Questions for Housing Area Panel

Department	Housing
Date question raised	28-03-2022
Date of Area Panel	17-03-2022
Area in city	Central
Star rating applied by residents	3
Deadline for officer response	22-04-2022, 12pm
Name of officer responding	Grant Ritchie
Department / team	Head of Repairs and Maintenance

Title of question: Repairs service

Issue raised by residents:

An efficient, quick response, high standard repairs service is the crucial service for council tenants. This is not being delivered currently and urgently needs improving. This is not just about dealing with the COVID backlog, but the overall functioning of the service.

Background:

Resident Association representatives are constantly hearing about and dealing with complaints about the repairs service. Trying to get repairs done is often very demoralising and frustrating.

Problems include:

- Difficulties getting through to the repairs line
- Messages not responded to
- Promises to ring back not kept
- Repairs very slow to happen, or not happening at all
- Repairs need constant chasing
- Repairs not done to a decent standard

This cannot be resolved in a piecemeal fashion but needs an overall review of how the repairs service is working and what can be done to improve it. Residents could contribute their experience and suggestions to this.

Action requested by residents:

Central Residents asked for a report from the Council on how they will bring the repairs service up to an acceptable standard.

Officer Response:

Thank you for your question and I am sorry that some residents are finding it difficult to communicate with the service. We receive on average 8,000 calls per month and currently, we are answering 93% of these. Whilst this is a good figure, I do accept that still leaves over 500 calls unanswered on the first attempt. As you are aware on top of Covid this has been a period of transition for the Service. At the time of writing, we are currently interviewing for new team members for Customer Services so we will hopefully be able to improve the first-time call rate going forward.

I have also investigated the concern over messages and call backs. This issue has been discussed with the customer service team by their manager and they do record and monitor response to emails and messages to ensure they are answered. If a repair is more complex it may be passed to the trade team to respond and potentially this is where the service is not meeting the desired standard. This can be quite difficult to monitor, so if the Resident Association representatives have any specific example, I would be happy to review further. As has been previously discussed at Area Panel, the repairs service has a substantial backlog of reported repairs to clear and therefore, we are still attending to works based on priority. Whilst this is the most appropriate approach it does mean that less urgent works will wait a long time and the least urgent jobs may wait many months. I appreciate the frustration this causes and unfortunately this is likely to continue until we have made progress on reducing the backlog.

I am disappointed to receive your comments regarding standards which does conflict with the statistics gathered for monthly monitoring of tenants who have had a repair undertaken which shows a 98% satisfaction rate. As discussed above I agree that residents are waiting in some cases a long time for a repair but the feedback we receive is that once a repair is completed residents are generally happy with the outcome.

Looking forward I agree that a review of the service, its performance, and priorities would be appropriate, and the involvement of residents would be welcome and critical to shaping a service that better serves the community however in the short term I believe our priority remains recovering from the impact of the pandemic and building a solid basis from which to make changes.

Officer contact details:

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Specific Action:

Concentrate on the backlog of repairs and review the service once the backlog has been cleared.

Timeline:**Start date:**

April 22

End date:

Ongoing

