



Investigation into whether the lettable standard used by Rotherham Council during the voids process is suitable and meets tenant expectations



Report August 2023

Rotherham Federation



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1. Background

Rotherham Federation Tenant Scrutiny was formed in April 2016. The Tenant Scrutiny panel provides an opportunity for tenants to scrutinise and positively challenge service delivery, identifying areas of concern and opportunities for improvement. This process strengthens the involvement of Rotherham tenants and provides links with Rotherham Council governance.

Tenant Scrutiny creates opportunities to:

- ✓ Build an effective partnership between Rotherham Council and its tenants and residents in the spirit of co-production, resulting in a joint-win for all.
- ✓ Provide a means of challenging landlords' services, standards and performance in a professional, constructive and collaborative manner.
- ✓ Help Rotherham Council to improve performance, value for money and tenant satisfaction.
- ✓ Represent the views of Rotherham Council's residents and make a positive difference on their behalf.

This is the seventh investigation by the Rotherham Federation Tenant Scrutiny panel. Previous reports have been submitted on the following topics:

1. Engaging Young Tenants in Rotherham (March 2017)
2. Responsive Repairs: Appointments, Communication Process and Customer Journey (February 2018)
3. Process of Dealing with Anti-Social Behaviour Complaints (January 2019)
4. Home Aids and Adaptations for Tenants (November 2020)
5. Improving Tenant Satisfaction with the Repairs and Maintenance Service (June 2021)
6. How Rotherham Council Could Improve its Communications with Tenants (July 2022)

Choice of topic

Prior to choosing this topic the Tenant Scrutiny panel approached tenants for their views on what was important to them and what could be improved across Council Housing services. These same questions were asked of senior officers from the Council, discussing where they thought that a tenant's view would help them to review and consider potential improvements to their services.

The voids process was highlighted across all participants in this discussion as an area where some improvements could be made. Further discussion revealed that this was a large topic area and that the investigation should be split into three separate sections:

1. Lettable Standard
2. New tenant support and suitability
3. Downsizing

It was agreed that this investigation would focus on the Lettable Standard, with further work planned for the other two parts of the voids process following this report.

The Lettable Standard

Lettable Standards set out the conditions that a property will be in when a new tenant moves in, as regards safety, repairs, and cleanliness. The Lettable Standard used in Rotherham was last reviewed in April - November 2020, alongside the procurement process for a new contract partner. At the beginning of this investigation, work was commencing alongside contract partners to improve the Lettable Standard ensuring consistency across partners and a better offer for new tenants moving into void properties.

Legislation

Legislation that is relevant to this investigation is:

- **Fitness for Human Habitation Act 2018** – which focuses on buildings that are unstable, been neglected, or have an unsafe layout. Also required are enough natural light, ventilation, hot and cold water, drainage and facilities for cooking food. There must not be a serious problem with damp.
- **Housing Health and Safety (England) Regulations 2005** – lists 29 hazards that a tenant cannot be exposed to, including falls, pests, and mould.
- **Department for Communities and Local Government. A Decent Home: Definition and guidance for implementation June 2006** – also includes the need for reasonably modern facilities and services i.e. a kitchen (20 years old or less), a bathroom (30 years old or less), noise insulation.

Social Housing White Paper 2023

Relevant parts of Social Housing white paper to this investigation are:

Chapter 1 – To be safe in your home

- Consult on electrical safety in social housing
- Consult on fitting smoke and carbon monoxide alarms
- Engage tenants in safety issues

Chapter 2 – To know how your landlord is performing

- Tenant Satisfaction Measures including things that matter to tenants and compliance with health and safety obligations:
- Gas safety

- Electrical safety
- Fire safety
- Asbestos
- Water safety
- Lift safety
- Tenant satisfaction with health and safety of their home
- Tenant satisfaction with repairs and maintenance

Chapter 3 – To have your complaints dealt with promptly and fairly

Chapter 4 – To be treated with respect

Chapter 5 – To have your voice heard by your landlord

Chapter 6 – To have a good quality home and neighbourhood to live in

- Decent Homes Standard - including energy efficiency
- Impact of housing conditions on health

2. The panel and officers

The panel was made up of tenant and resident representatives from across Rotherham:

David Ramsden (Chair)	Keith Stringer	Julie Sharp	Ann Hitchens
Winnie Billups	Jo Workman	Sam Sharp	Mary Jacques
Winston Cook	Wendy Birch	Donna Draper	Frank Rees
Mohammed Ramzan Bashir	Barry Dealey	Phillip Clarke	

Thank you to these representatives for the time and commitment they have given to this investigation.

Officer support was provided by:

James Smith, RMBC Tenant Engagement Manager
Callie Lamb, RMBC Tenant Involvement Officer
Jemma Davenport, RMBC Housing Services Officer
Phil Hayes, Rotherham Federation Chief Executive Officer
Laura Swift, Rotherham Federation Administrative Officer
Rebecca Morrison, Project Solutions

Valuable subject matter expertise was provided by four representatives of the Council:

Billy Wilson, Partnering Manager
Andrew Lumb, Partnering Manager
Louise Edwards, Specialist Clean Co-ordinator
Keeley Harrison, Service Operations Manager

The panel wished to express their thanks to the above officers and other Council/contractor staff that are involved in bringing voids up to a lettable standard; having seen the poor condition that some properties are left in when they become void, panel members realised how difficult the task is of making these habitable in a short space of time.

3. Terms of Reference

Aim: To investigate whether the lettable standard used by Rotherham Council during the voids process is suitable and meets tenant expectations

Objectives:

To:

- Review the lettable standard for Rotherham Council homes
- Review the communications around the lettable standard both with contract partners and with tenants
- Review the process and communications around tenants ending their tenancies
- Consider the views of Rotherham Council tenants and their expectations for the standards in their new homes
- Benchmark against other housing providers as regards their lettable standards and communications with tenants
- Review the Social Housing white paper and the impact that the lettable standard could have on compliance with these requirements

Scope

- ☒ It was agreed that the investigation would concentrate only on the lettable standard and the voids process and would not include the content of planned further investigations into new tenant support/ suitability and downsizing.
- ☒ The allocations policy for Council homes would also not be included in the scope.

Measures of Success

- ✓ The lettable standard and relevant policies/procedures have been updated, if necessary, to meet tenant expectations and current practices.
- ✓ Communications around the lettable standard are suitable and work well (with contract partners and with tenants)
- ✓ Potentially greater tenant satisfaction and less complaints concerning the standard of homes when starting new tenancies
- ✓ Compliance with the relevant parts of the Social Housing white paper

Benefits

For tenants:

- ☑ Lettable standards that meet the expectations and needs of the majority of tenants when starting new tenancies
- ☑ Improved communications and clarity about the standard agreed

For the Council:

- ☑ Refreshed lettable standards and policies
- ☑ Possible improvements on the conditions left by tenants vacating properties
- ☑ Increased satisfaction and reduction in complaints from new tenants
- ☑ Potential learning from other housing providers

Risks

The panel acknowledged the following risks when embarking on this investigation. That:

- Staff are unable to attend/take part in tenant scrutiny meetings to share information
- Insufficient responses to the survey are received to be able to assess tenant satisfaction with existing processes and support
- Other Councils will not be forthcoming with information on their voids processes and lettable standard
- Rotherham Council teams' capacity means that recommendations made cannot be actioned

4. Methodology

The panel set out to review the lettable standard. Also to consider the process and arrangements in place to make sure that the agreed standard is met and that new tenants are happy with their new homes.

The investigation consisted of:

4.1 Voids visits

Six of the panel members undertook visits to void properties to look at the 'before' and 'after' conditions i.e. prior to works commencing and after completion of voids repairs and cleaning. The visits took place over a period of 14 weeks. Panel members referred to a copy of the lettable standard whilst conducting the visits. In total 17 visits took place; 12 prior to works commencing and 5 when ready for re-let.

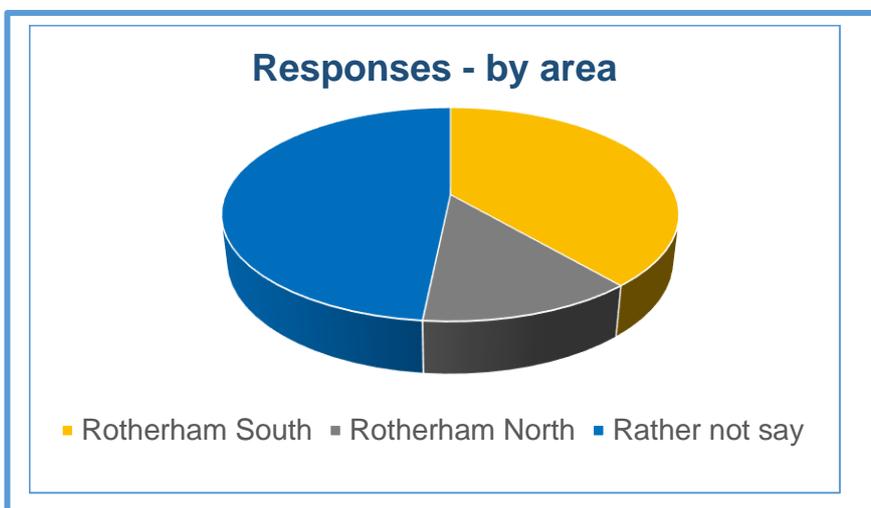
It was planned by the panel that the same addresses would be visited, before and after works, so that a direct comparison could be carried out of the improvements made. However this plan could not be followed due to the voids becoming ready for re-let at different times. Instead, a video of the completed works was viewed at a panel meeting. Unfortunately the panel did not feel that they were able to assess the repairs, cleaning and standards from the videos. Photographs of some of the properties visited can be found in Appendix 1.

4.2 Survey of new tenants

A survey was carried out of new tenants who had moved into their homes mostly between October 2022 and April 2023.

Questions were asked about their satisfaction with the cleanliness, repairs and safety of their new home, and the communications that they received as part of their move.

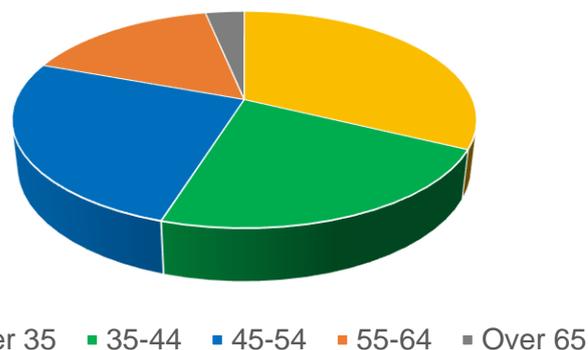
Approximately 200 surveys were sent directly to new tenants' email addresses. 31 responses were received (16% response rate):



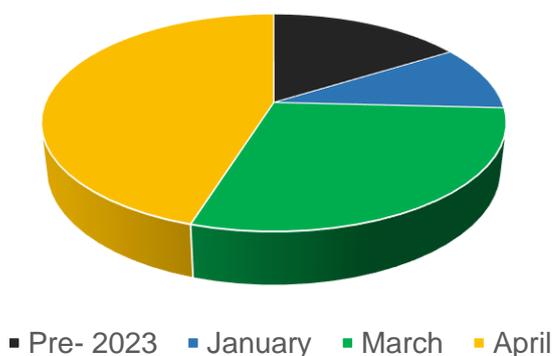
Most people would rather not say which area they live in

Most responses from under 55s.

Responses - by age



Responses - by move-in date



Vast majority moved in during March and April 2023

4.3 Benchmarking

Information was requested from eleven other housing providers of a similar size and demographic as Rotherham Council. Questions were asked concerning:

- Pre-termination visits and forms for the leaving tenant
- Their lettable standard
- Communications about the standard with both new tenants and contractors
- Cleaning arrangements
- Accessibility requirements
- Key Performance Indicators around voids
- Checks made on works carried out
- New tenant surveys

Just three responses were received (Kirklees, St Leger, and Wigan), but a website trawl was carried out on the other eight to find out what information they shared with tenants about the voids process/ lettable standard. Two other lettable standards were reviewed online for smaller housing providers; Red Kite Community Housing and STAR Shropshire.

The findings from the benchmarking exercise can be found throughout this report.

4.4 Review of complaints relating to the voids process

The reasons for complaint about the voids process and lettable standard were considered for the past two years. Very few formal complaints had been received by the service during this time (less than one every two months).

4.5 Interviewing officers

Council officers representing the Partnering team and Operations team were invited to attend the panel and share information on the voids process. The panel sent questions prior to these meetings to allow for officers to prepare their answers and to gather any necessary information.

4.6 Review of letters for termination of tenancies

The panel carried out a workshop to review the letters used by the Council when a tenant decides that they wish to end their tenancy. The letters were assessed as regards their layout, accessibility, and content/clarity and these comments were submitted to officers for their consideration.

4.7 Meetings

Panel meetings took place between September 2022 and July 2023 to consider, analyse and discuss the information received and to reach recommendations for this investigation.

5. Summary of Evidence

5.1 Void costs and targets

Over the past few years, Rotherham Council have handled approximately 30 void properties per week. However in April 2023, this reached 50 per week. The average cost to bring a void home up to a lettable standard is £3500, which means a spend of over £5.5m per annum from the Housing Revenue Account.

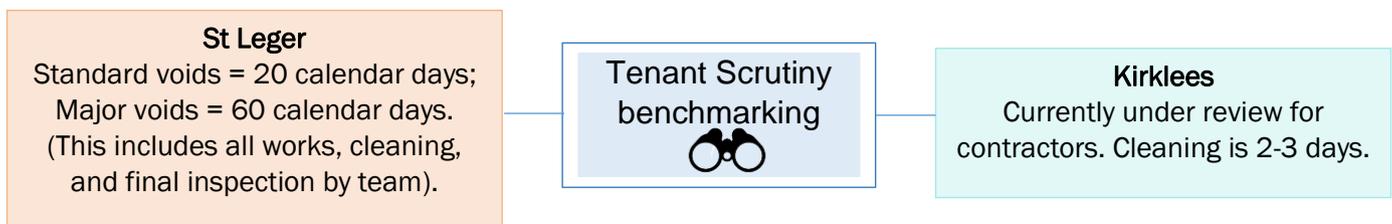
Key Performance Indicator (KPI)

The KPI for the void re-let time is currently under review to try to bring about greater tenancy sustainability (through increased support, checks on affordability, and the offer of tenancy-ready workshops).

The current target (April 2023) for contractors to complete void works is 17 days and current performance against this is 13 days.

In 2022, Council officers benchmarked themselves against some other councils and found that:

- The average void time is 68 days across Yorkshire and Humber
- The longest void time across Yorkshire and Humber was 159 days
- Rotherham's performance was at around 48 days, at this point, making them mid-table.

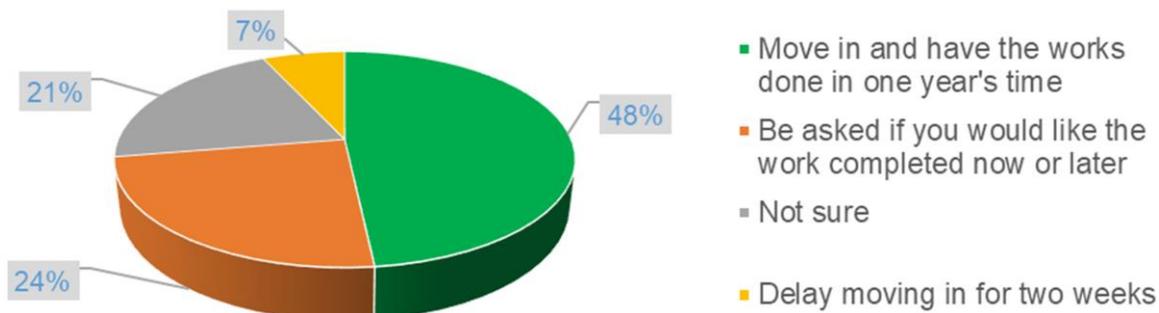


Rotherham seemed to be performing well compared to other housing providers.

Scheduled works

In order to meet the performance targets and reduce the costs of the voids process, the Council will consider whether major works to comply with decent homes standards e.g. new bathrooms and kitchens, should be carried out prior to the new tenant moving in or remain on the planned schedule. As part of the new tenant survey, the panel asked this question:

Would you delay moving in?



- If a new kitchen or bathroom was due within a year, 48% of new tenants would still like to move in and not delay their move.
- 24% of respondents said that they would like to be consulted on whether to move in or delay this.

PANEL VIEWS:

- ✍ The panel were happy with the targets and performance by Rotherham Council compared to other councils.
- ✍ The feedback from the tenant survey suggested that each new tenant should be consulted on whether they would like major works completed before moving in. This is likely to only cause a void delay to less than a quarter of properties.

5.2 Communications with leaving tenants

There are two letters sent to people who are ending their tenancies:

- Termination One – Confirming the request to end the tenancy and a notice form for completion (giving four weeks' notice).
- Termination Two – Confirmation of notice plus a checklist of next steps for both the Council and the tenant.

There are different letters used if a tenant has passed away and the next of kin is being contacted.

These letters were reviewed in 2022.

Tenants are asked to remove everything from the property; however some voids take three days to clear before works can commence. If a visit has been made, some furnishings that are in good condition may remain in the property, at the officer's discretion.

A comparison was made between the different responses to communications with the vacating tenant during the benchmarking exercise. (See Appendix 2 for full summary). All content was very similar to the Rotherham letters, but presented in different formats including leaflets and online information.

The Tenant Scrutiny panel also reviewed the letters in terms of layout, accessibility, content and clarity. Numerous comments were made and the full detail of these can be found in Appendix 3. Suggestions were made for improvement which included:

Layout

Using page numbers on all documents and using tick boxes for the Termination Two checklist.

Accessibility

- Removing council jargon and phrases that are difficult to understand such as 'remedy damage' 'liable to pay', 'notice to quit'.
- Making the information available in other formats such as braille, large print or easy read, plus in different languages.

Content/clarity

Various queries around the phrasing and wording of the letters and forms, such as replacing 'encourages' with 'must' when talking about clearing their belongings; more clarity around what to do with furniture that is part of a furniture package.

PANEL VIEWS:

-  The panel was pleased that the letters were quite clear and that they had recently been reviewed.
 -  However, they felt that further improvements could be made as described in Appendix 3. This would help people leaving tenancies to better understand their responsibilities.
 -  They did feel that including this information online would further help communication with tenants leaving their homes.
-

Tenancy termination letters

Make changes to the tenancy termination letters as summarised in the report to make them easier to understand and consider whether to also provide these online.

5.3 Lettable standard

The lettable standard has been agreed across Council and contract partner colleagues and acts as a standard for the works that are required each time a property becomes void, prior to re-let. The last revision of the standard took place in November 2020.

Feedback from visits

From the visits carried out by tenant scrutiny representatives and the new tenant surveys, there were a number of issues raised about whether these areas/items should be made clearer or be included in the Rotherham Council lettable standard.

These included:

- Leaving carpet grippers on floors

Response – the standard says that unnecessary fixings should be removed, but not specifically carpet grippers.

- Leaving decking in gardens

Response – the new tenant should sign to say they are responsible for any decking that they wish to keep (this should be made clear).

- Smoothing plaster filling ready for decorating

Response – contractors should ensure that plaster is smooth and this is included in the lettable standard (although not evident in all voids).

- Kitchen floor covering

Response – is a 'wet-room' floor the best option for a kitchen (found to be hard to keep clean)? The flooring used for kitchens is polyurethane, which is similar but does not have non-slip properties.

- Overgrown gardens

Response - Contractors have only three hours to complete gardens, without further charges, and sometimes the garden grows again by the time the tenant moves in.

- Collapsing outbuildings

Response – The new tenant would sign to say that they would like the outbuilding to remain, otherwise they should be demolished if in poor condition.

There was some concern expressed by officers that removal of grippers and decking is against the Council's environmental sustainability principles

Benchmarking

Looking at the other housing providers, the panel found five online:

- Kirklees – brief overview
- Warrington – Empty Homes Maintenance Strategy includes quite detailed lettable standard
- Wigan
- Red Kite (High Wycombe)
- STAR (Shropshire)

We were also given access to two paper copies of the lettable standards used in:

- Kirklees
- St Leger

Headlines from a comparison exercise

The comparison exercise looked at six other lettable standards and noted:

1. Areas where Rotherham's lettable standard performed well – where it includes items/more details that makes it better than some of the other lettable standards.
2. Things that could be improved – that were either better explained in other lettable standards or were not explicitly considered in the Rotherham version
3. Things that are missing from the lettable standard but other areas include them.

1. Areas where Rotherham's lettable standard performed well

- ✓ Safe balustrade to stairs,
- ✓ Checking that taps are on the correct sides,
- ✓ Replacing shower heads and hoses,
- ✓ Providing new shower curtains,
- ✓ Using halophane paint to cover mould (and another paint for graffiti),
- ✓ Putting air fresheners in every room,
- ✓ Fitting window restrictors to first floor,
- ✓ Keeping air bricks unobstructed and vermin/water proof,
- ✓ Changing the locks to outbuildings,
- ✓ Smooth plaster for decoration,
- ✓ Removal of unnecessary nails, screws, and fixings.

2. Things that could be improved

- ? Replacement of fences if damaged, without client having to request it (Kirklees and Wigan offer this as standard to the front of properties).
- ? External doors – it is good that number is fitted (but Warrington also fit a door with a spy hole and draught excluder as standard)
- ? Cleaning behind radiators – the lettable standard says 'as far as possible' (Wigan says behind *all* radiators)
- ? External windows – the lettable standard says 'correctly fixed' (Warrington replace any missing putty, and STAR clean them outside at ground floor level)
- ? Toilets – limescale is removed (Red Kite leave cleaning fluid in all the toilets)
- ? Paths – are checked for good run off for water, (Kirklees sweep the paths too)

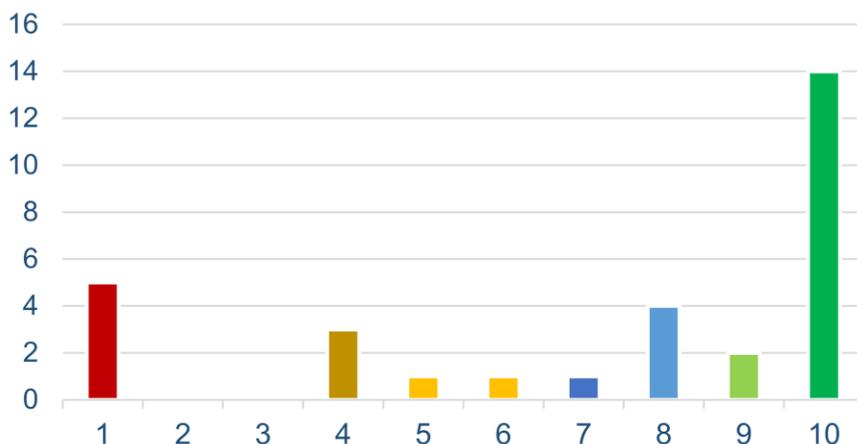
3. Things that are missing from the lettable standards but included in other areas

- Clothes posts
- Security screens
- Outdoor lighting
- Lightbulbs
- Hot water cylinder insulation
- Stop taps – accessibility and ease of turning
- Baths replaced by accessible showers (other areas specify that these won't be replaced)
- Extractor fans
- Curtain battens
- Internally glazed doors - are they replaced?
- Decoration allowance (other areas supply for vulnerable tenants)
- Smoke alarms – testing mentioned but nothing about how many (Kirklees provide heat detector in kitchen, smoke alarms in hall and landing, Carbon monoxide detector next to flued gas appliances)
- Plumbing – not clear if flushed and if any dead legs are removed
- Programmable heating
- Loft insulation (laid to 270/250 mm in Red Kite and Warrington)
- Fire rated kitchen door (half hour fire rated in Warrington)
- Number of electrical sockets (listed how many in each room in Warrington and STAR)

The summary of the full comparison of lettable standards can be found in Appendix 4.

Findings from the survey of new tenants:

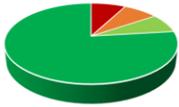
How satisfied with new home (where 1 is poor and 10 is good)?



- 16/31 (52%) of respondents were very satisfied.
- 5/31 (16%) were satisfied.
- 5/31 (16%) were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- 5/31 (16%) were very dissatisfied.

- There was a combination of areas showing dissatisfaction and satisfaction; Rotherham North showed nothing but satisfaction (but there were only four responses from this area)
- There was also a range of ages showing different levels of satisfaction, with no age group reporting more dissatisfaction than others.

Satisfaction in Rotherham South



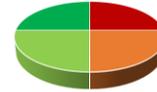
- Highly dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Satisfied
- Highly satisfied

Satisfaction in Rotherham North



- Highly dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Satisfied
- Highly satisfied

Satisfaction in other areas not specified



- Highly dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Satisfied
- Highly satisfied

It feels like 'home' x 7

The view x 2

Moving away from nuisance neighbours x 2

Near my family x 3

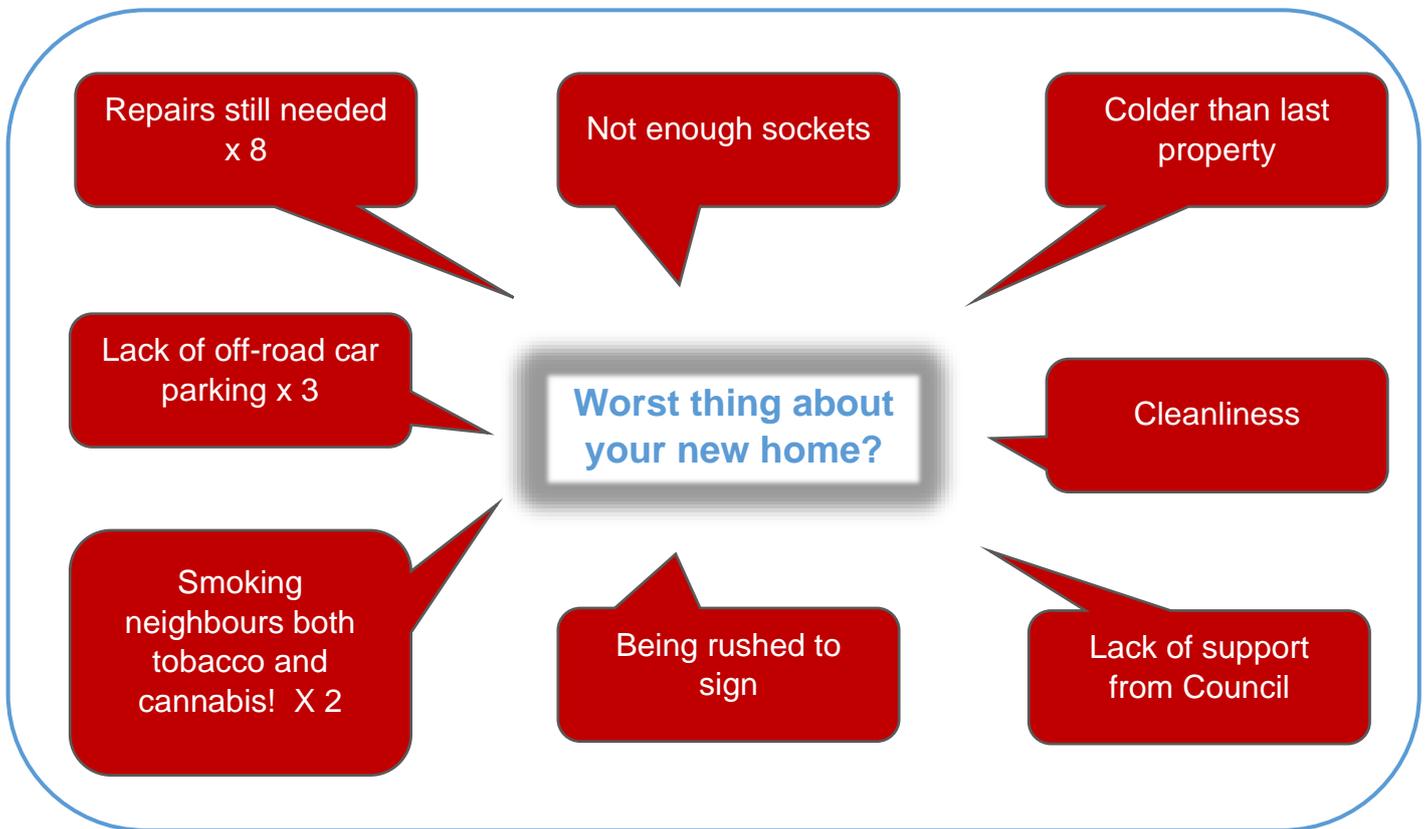
Best thing about your new home?

Accessibility x 5

Good size x 5

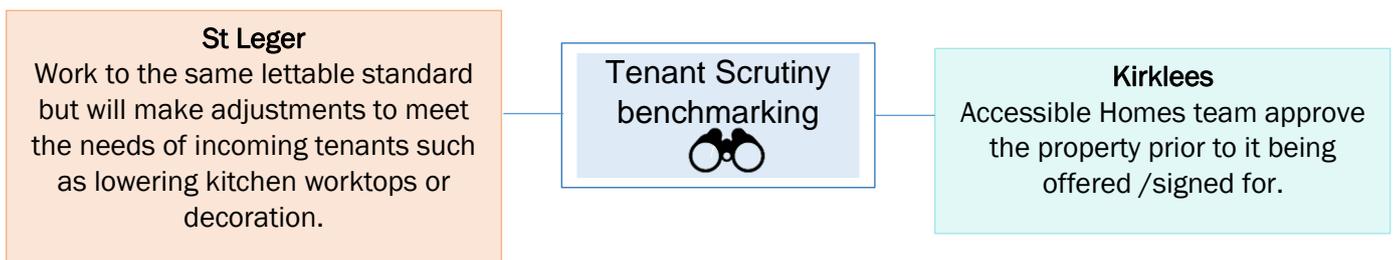
Very impressed with cleanliness

Support from Council e.g. carpet package



Accessibility needs

There is not a different version of the lettable standard in Rotherham for them to meet accessibility needs, as these are not generally known at the time of void works taking place. The Aids and Adaptations policy would be applied once it is known if a new tenant has a disability / accessibility needs. The lettings team will try to match to previously adapted properties as far as possible.



PANEL VIEWS:

-  The panel found it very useful to compare the lettable standard with that used in other areas, and thought that Rotherham performed well overall.
-  They did feel though that the 2020 version requires review, considering the points that other areas perform or explain better e.g. lightbulbs, loft insulation and number of electrical sockets.
-  Concern was expressed that survey respondents had reported rusty nails on decking and collapsing outbuildings that had been left by previous tenants. There was also clearly an issue with being able to clean carpet grippers that were also left in situ.
-  Panel members appreciated the comments made about the environmental impact; however couldn't suggest an alternative to disposing of certain items.
-  It was disappointing that 16% of people were not satisfied with their new homes at all and thought that this could be improved with better completion of repairs or communication with tenants on their expectations.
-  The panel understood the difficulties around tenants having unknown accessibility needs and would like to explore this further in the next panel investigation (Voids – support for new tenants)

Recommendations

Lettable Standard review

- Review/update the existing lettable standard to assess against those standards used by other similar housing providers.
- Make arrangements to review again whenever there are changes in legislation or at least every three years.

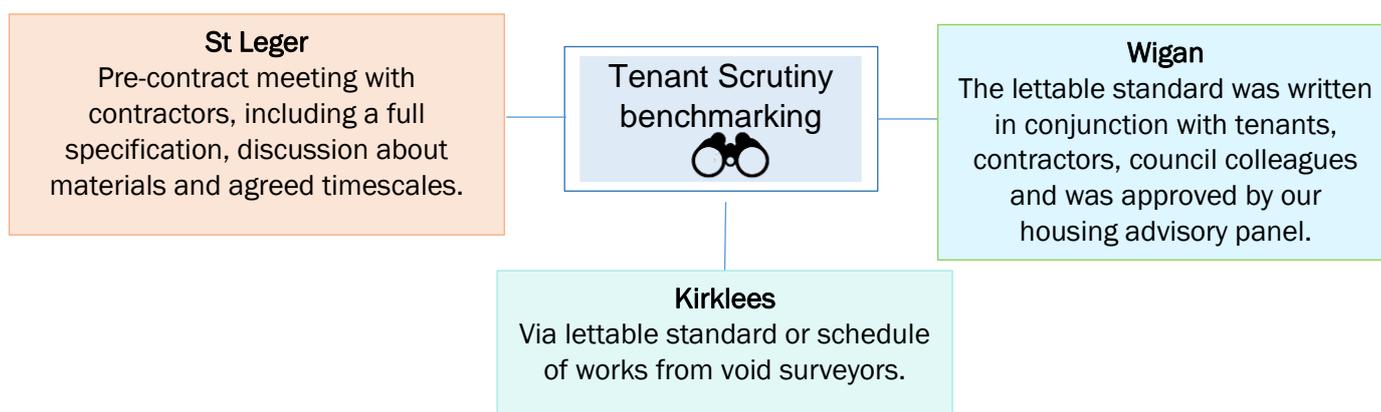
Items left by vacating tenants

Provide more clarity and emphasise the agreement when new tenants sign up for items left by vacating tenants such as outbuildings and decking.

5.4 Communications with contractors

For minor works, the initial voids process in Rotherham is contractor-led; they have the standard and decide what works are required in each void. The scope of work is then signed off by the contracts team and a record kept of the initial assessment and costs. For major works, a joint inspections and assessment of works would take place between contractors and the voids team. Contractors are expected to follow a 'right first-time principle' when completing void works.

Other housing providers follow a similar approach apart from St Leger, who specify full details of the works in each void:



PANEL VIEWS:

- The panel recognised that there were pros and cons in the different ways to contract voids work; whilst it would be safer to conduct pre-contract visits to all properties, this is time consuming and costly to the Council.
- However there is a feeling that closer auditing/ checks on works may be necessary to ensure 'right-first time' and to increase new tenant satisfaction.
- It would be interesting to know how much it costs for contractors to go back and put things right when reported by new tenants as compared to the cost of pre-contract visits by officers.

Suggestions

Spot-check targets

Set some targets for spot checks carried out on both cleaning standards and repairs i.e. how many outstanding /missed /unsatisfactory works are allowed/or provide a grading system. Discuss these targets and findings in the Repairs sub-group.

Pre-contract meetings

Provide feedback on the feasibility of conducting pre-contract meetings on site with contractors, similar to the arrangements for other housing providers, costing out the existing contractor-led approach versus pre-contract arrangements.

5.5 Cleaning of void properties

The process

Voids cleaning is carried out by the Council's facilities team. Cleaning requests are received from contractors at 4:30pm each day and allocated to cleaning staff ready for the next day. If staff cannot clean the properties the following day, it will roll-over onto the next day. The cleaning team is fairly flexible; staff can be moved around if needed. There are 10 cleaning staff for voids with other cleaning teams that can be pulled in if necessary. Supervisors will also help to clean if needed.

Cleaning is included in the target to turn voids around in 17 days, usually expecting cleaning to take up to two days. On some occasions, the contractor also requires a pre-clean to enable operatives to carry out the necessary repairs. A final clean will still be required at such times.

The standard

Cleaning supervisors make sure that their teams take as long as is required for each void, rather than setting a time limit.

Staff have a cleaning specification checklist (Appendix 5) which is taken from the 2020 lettable standard. Cleaning staff tick the list as they have completed tasks and can make comments on the form if they have difficulties/ notice further areas of disrepair. On some occasions, mobility aids such as hospital beds, remain in place waiting for collection. When this occurs, the situation is reported through to the voids team and cleaning is paused.

There are some issues with contractors not clearing their rubbish away prior to leaving the void, and these are reported back to the contracts team if so. On a number of occasions, contractors are still working when the cleaning team arrives, or come back again after the property has been cleaned. Again these are reported through.

An Assa Cliq electronic lock system is used for all void properties which allows keyless access for various team members and provides a digital record of who is entering and leaving the property. Lettings teams arrange for a new lock to be fitted once works are completed, but this may take several days.

Travel times

The schedule is sent to the cleaning team and may include homes across the whole of the Rotherham district, meaning excessive travel times. Sometimes staff might lose 40-50 minutes with travel time in between visits and this is of particular importance when the contractors are not ready for the cleaners. However the cost of wasted journeys is far outweighed by the cost of empty homes to the Council.

Feedback/checks on cleaning

Complaints about cleaning standards have not been received by supervisors recently. If a complaint was received the supervisor would visit the property and speak to the new tenant.

Supervisors carry out approximately three spot checks per week to assess the cleaning standard. The cleaning teams are not informed of when/where the spot checks take place. In the past cleaning teams have been brought back in if the standard was not satisfactory.

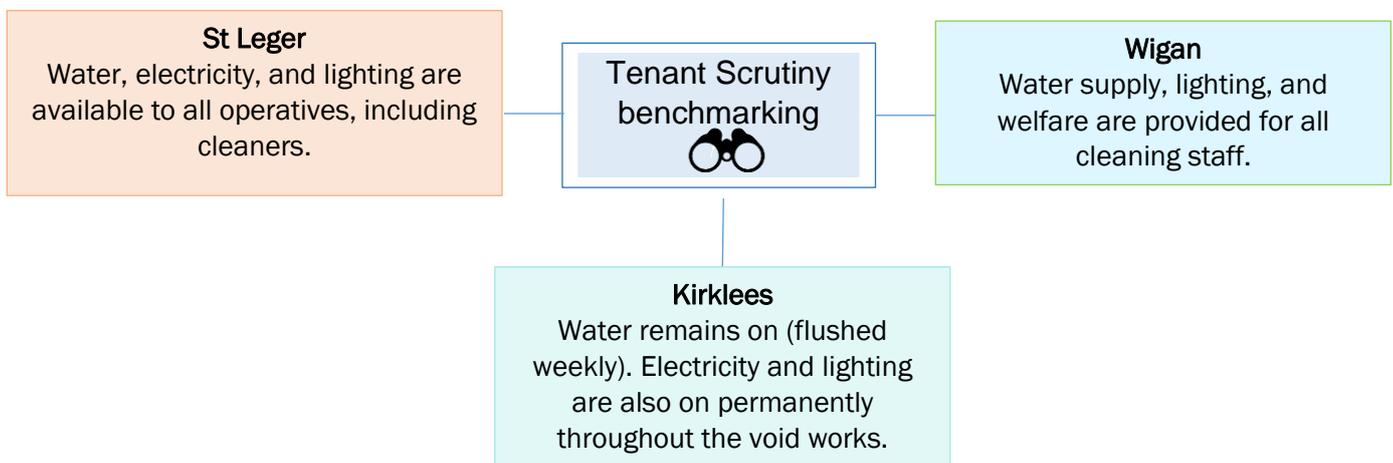
Arrangements - utilities

Water

Water supplies are often turned off and not available, so cleaning teams will bring their own. Cleaning usually takes place with cold water, unless there is a working shower for hot water. The availability of a working shower is the first thing to be checked by cleaning teams when they enter the property.

Lighting

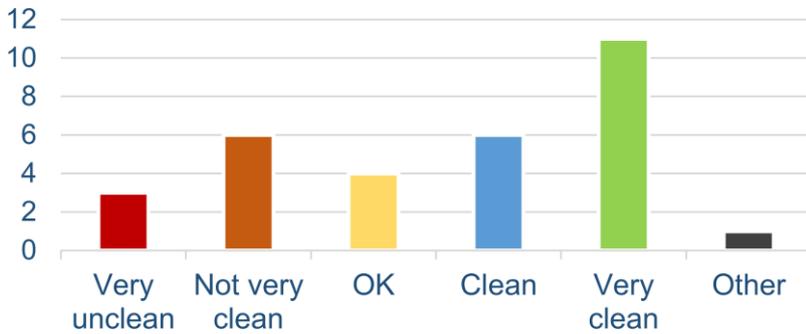
The checklist for each property will state whether electricity is available in the property. There can be an issue with adequate lighting in the winter months. Cleaning staff are provided with both head and hand-held torches for such occasions. Larger pieces of equipment such as floodlights on tripods could be considered, but these would be bulky to store and carry.



Benchmarking against three other housing providers found that Rotherham was the only Council to not provide lighting and water for cleaning.

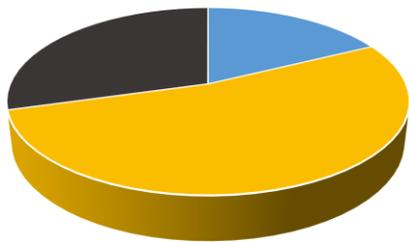
Findings from the survey of new tenants:

How satisfied were you with the cleanliness of your new home?



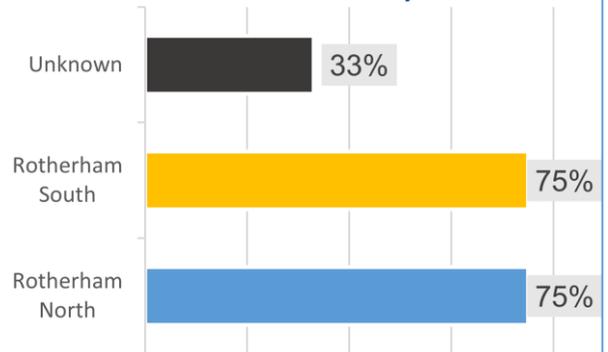
- 29% (9/31) found their new home to be very unclean/not very clean
- 55% (17/31) reported their new home to be clean or very clean

Very clean/clean by area

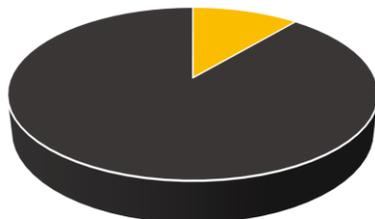


■ Rotherham North ■ Rotherham South ■ Unknown

Very clean/clean by area (Percentage of responses from that area)

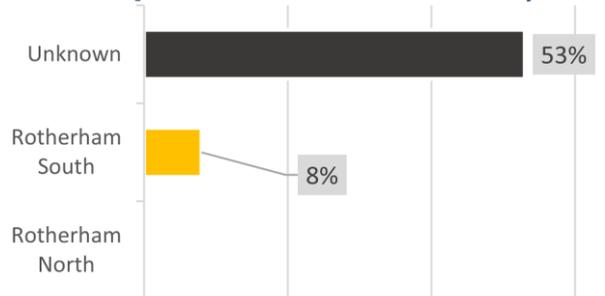


Very unclean/unclean by area



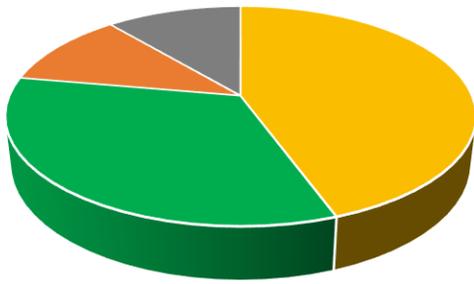
■ Rotherham North ■ Rotherham South ■ Unknown

Very unclean/unclean by area (Percentage of responses from that area)



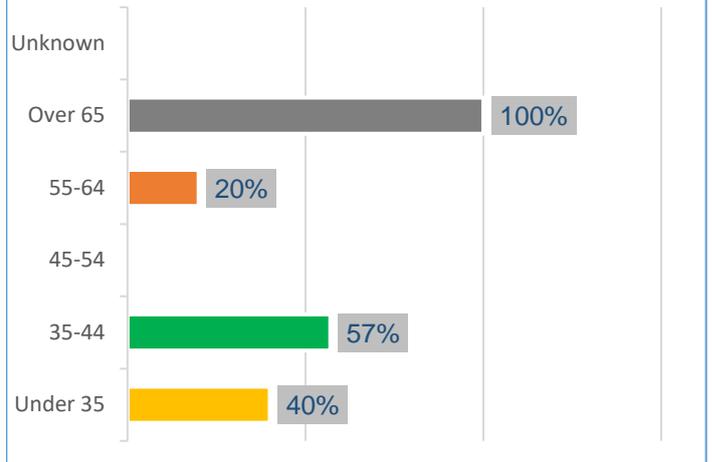
- 75% of people who stated the area that they lived in were happy with the cleanliness of their new home
- The majority of unclean homes were reported by people who did not want to add which area they lived in.

Very unclean/unclean by age



■ Under 35
 ■ 35-44
 ■ 45-54
■ 55-64
 ■ Over 65
 ■ Unknown

Very unclean/unclean by age (Percentage)



- The majority of people finding their homes unclean were below the age of 44.
- 40% of all under 35s and 57% of all 35–44 year olds were unhappy with the cleaning standard.

Comments on cleanliness

Sparkled

Very impressed with cleanliness

Perfect

Absolutely disgusting

Glass all over back yard and side grass

Lumps of concrete on floor – needed to be scraped off

Can't clean kitchen floor properly as like a wet-room floor

Cat hairs everywhere particularly behind radiators

Nails, screws, dust and plaster everywhere

Plaster on taps and floor

Pet hair everywhere and dirty toilet

Comments on cleanliness

Bits of glass everywhere

Feedback from visits made by panel members

Panel members conducting the first visits found that some properties were in extremely poor order and were impressed that these could be brought up to a lettable standard.

There were mixed results from the tenant scrutiny visits to voids, once they were ready for re-let. Some were found to be satisfactory, whereas others were disappointing as regards the level of cleanliness and did not appear to match the checklist that was available to cleaning staff. In particular, there were instances of nicotine staining to light fittings, pet hairs behind radiators, and dust and dirt stuck in old carpet grippers.

PANEL VIEWS:

-  The panel felt that they would like to express their appreciation to cleaning staff having seen the conditions in some of the properties during their first site visits.
-  It was disappointing that contractors sometimes arranged for cleaning staff to visit before they had finished their repairs and/or cleared their rubbish away. The panel wondered if this happened so that the total void time looked better in terms of repairs meeting target days.
-  Panel members were pleased that the cleaning staff show such flexibility across teams in meeting the two-day target.
-  It is important that travel times for cleaners are considered when monitoring the time taken for each void and that grouping of visits is provided as often as possible.
-  It was concerning that 29% of new tenants found the cleaning in their homes to be unsatisfactory, and the list of issues raised.
-  The panel was surprised that there is no target for the number of spot-checks carried out on cleaning standards.
-  It was worrying that cleaning teams are expected to clean with cold water only and torch lighting only, when other Councils say that full electricity and water is provided at their voids for cleaning.
-  Panel members felt that it was important to monitor the use of the Assa Cliq keys and the time taken to fit a new lock, to make sure that contractors are rarely going back to the property once cleaned.
-  There was some concern over the number of issues with cleaning reported in the new tenant survey.

Recommendations

Clear properties before cleaning

Provide clearer guidance to cleaning staff that they should not clean properties where contractors have left rubbish or where aids such as hospital beds remain in the property.

Cleaning staff working conditions

Give consideration to improving working conditions for cleaning staff, in particular lighting and hot water.

Suggestion

ASSA Cliq key monitoring

Monitor the efficient use of ASSA Cliq keys to make sure that operatives are not re-entering void properties following cleaning and that locks are changed immediately after cleaning is completed.

5.6 Tenant Expectations

Outstanding Repairs

It was confirmed by officers that it is at great expense to the Council, through loss of rent, if a void is delayed for any longer than is reasonable to carry out the necessary works.

Despite this, at the start of the investigation, officers were asked if people move into their new home with outstanding repairs still to be completed. It was stated that the only repair that should remain when people move in is the replacement of temporary doors. This is due to the order delays, with new doors taking up to three months to arrive. This only happens in a small number of cases and is explained to the tenant at sign-up.

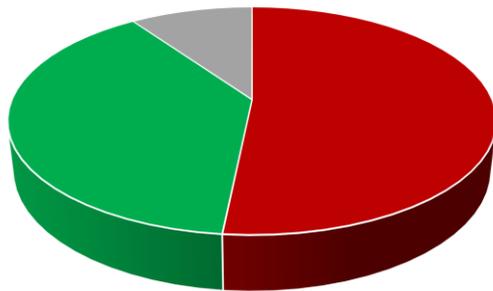
It was expressed by officers that some issues may arise from the lack of 'in-person' viewings so that the standard cannot be discussed and heating and other systems tested.

Gas uncapping

Gas cannot be uncapped until the new tenant has moved in and made arrangements with a gas supplier. The gas will be uncapped within five days of the move-in date.

Findings from the survey of new tenants:

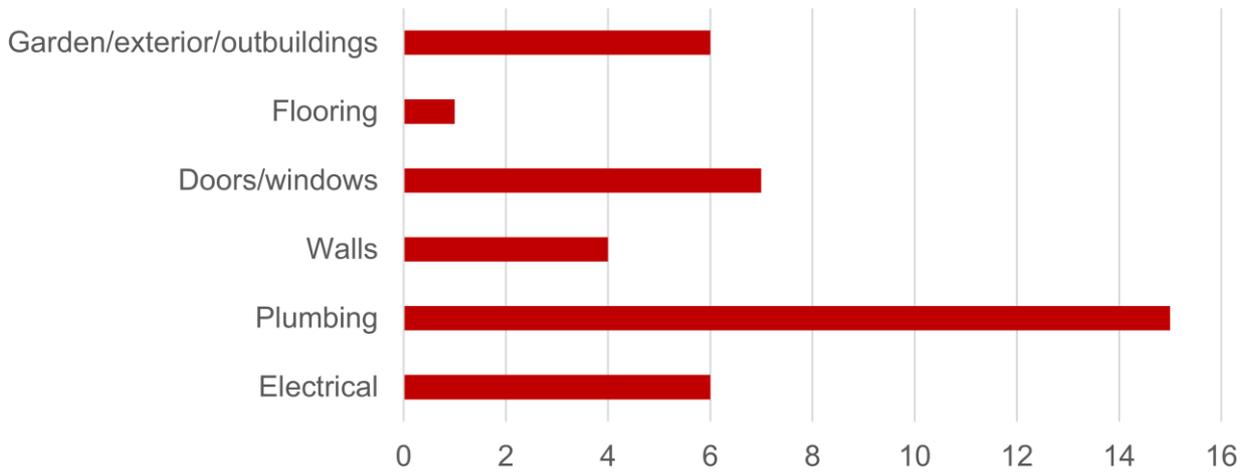
Were there repairs still to be done?



■ Yes ■ No ■ Not sure

- The majority of homes (52%) were reported to still need some repairs to be carried out
- The majority of repairs related to plumbing (39%) and doors/windows (18%). (see below)

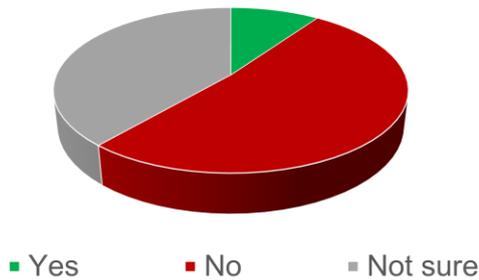
Repairs needed



Comments on repairs still required

- Heating on continuously/ thermostat not working x 3
- Window locks stuck/ new windows needed/ metal grids need taking off x3
- Leaking radiators/ showers/ taps x2
- Gas uncapping took 20 days (another one took two weeks)
- Damage from leak never repaired
- Downstairs wiring all wrong
- Drains outside flooded every time the taps ran
- Outhouse collapsing

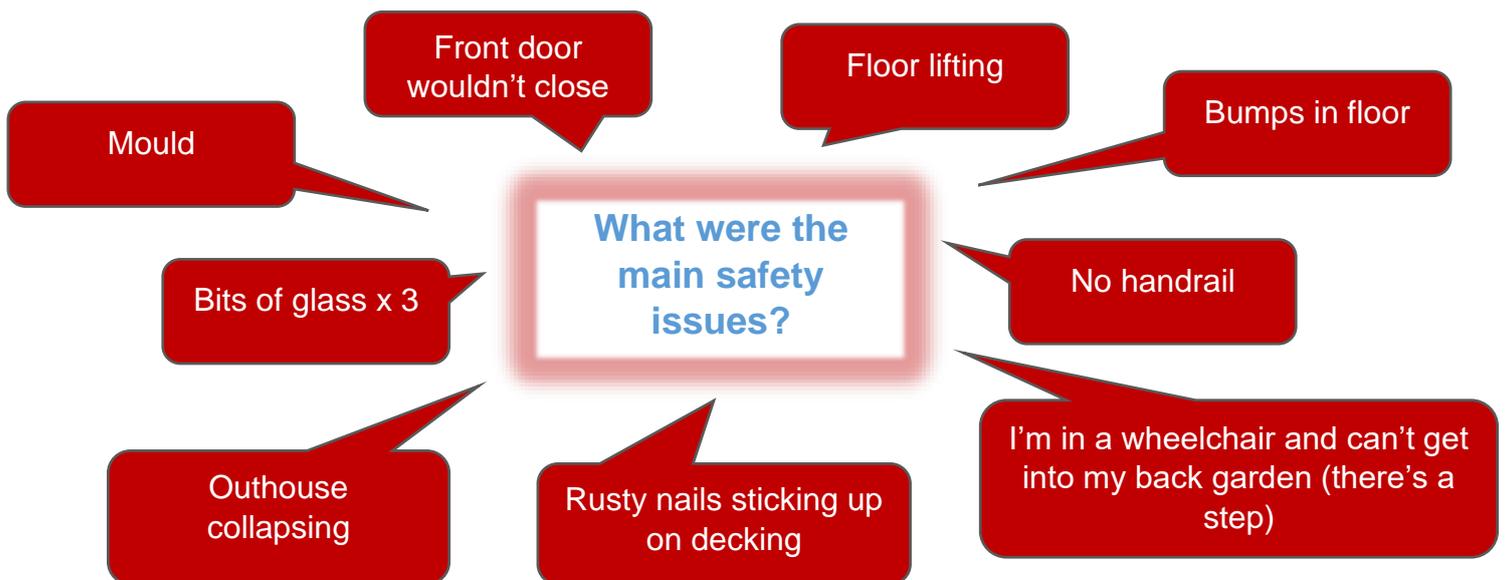
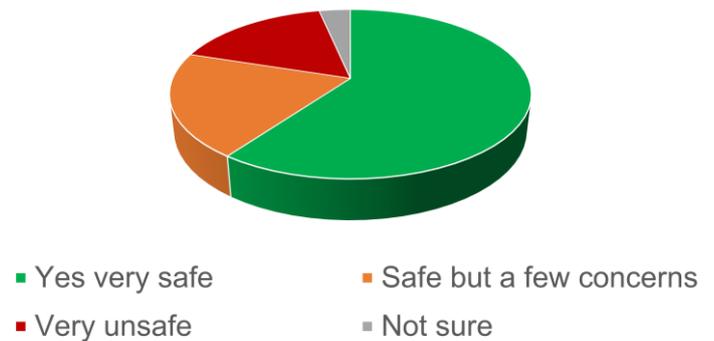
Were you told about the outstanding repairs?



- Over 50% of new tenants were not told about the outstanding repairs before they moved in

- 16% felt that their home was very unsafe when they moved in
- The most common reason seemed to be pieces of glass being left in the property

Was your new home safe?



PANEL VIEWS:

- ✎ The panel was disappointed with the number of people saying that they had outstanding repairs when they moved into their new home; especially as the panel was previously informed that only doors would remain on the list of works.
 - ✎ In particular, there was concern that gas uncapping could take up to five days after moving in; which would be worrying in winter months and if the new tenant was vulnerable in any way.
 - ✎ The panel wondered if the number of plumbing issues reported in the survey were due to the water not being turned on and checked prior to repairs being signed off, plus the gas not being uncapped to test heating systems.
 - ✎ The reported presence of pieces of glass in several properties was concerning.
 - ✎ Panel members thought that feeling safe was a priority when moving into a new home, and were concerned that 16% of survey respondents felt very unsafe.
 - ✎ The panel were not keen on the virtual viewings as they didn't feel that this offered a clear picture of the conditions and dimensions in the properties.
-

Recommendations

Uncap target

Reconsider the target of five days to uncap gas supplies, in particular for vulnerable people and those moving in during winter months.

Outstanding repairs as move in

Carry out a review of which repairs can be safely left until after the new tenant has moved in, and make this clear to both contractors and new tenants.

Plumbing and heating issues

- Develop a plan to try and overcome the main issues with contracted void works, such as plumbing and heating issues.
- Give consideration to gas being uncapped to test heating systems prior to the new tenant moving in.

On-site viewings

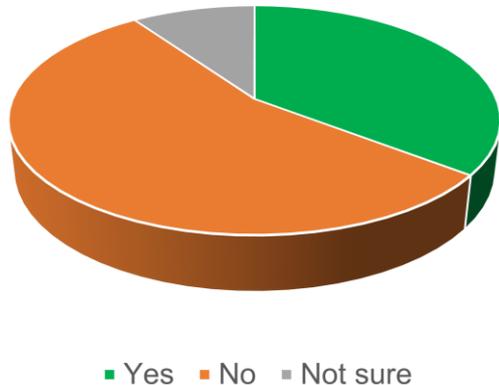
Reconsider the option of in-person viewings being offered to ensure that people can see conditions and receive an explanation of standards on-site. (This suggestion will be investigated further during the next tenant scrutiny topic; Voids – support to new tenants).

5.7 Communications with the new tenant

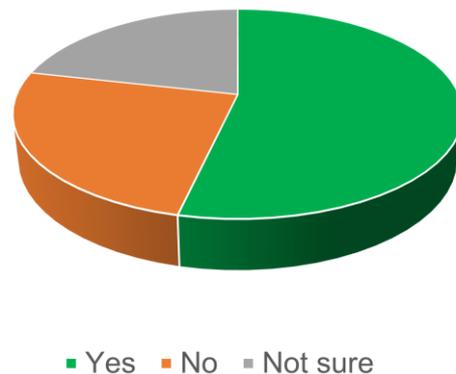
When all the work has been completed, an online viewing takes place; this makes the turnaround process shorter as all works and cleaning have already taken place and prospective new tenants are shortlisted quickly (previously, prior to the Covid pandemic, properties were advertised at the voids stage). If the tenant does not have internet access they are invited to Riverside House to take part in the online viewing. If adaptations are needed the viewing takes place in person, to ensure that all needs can be met.

At the viewing stage, the video or visit allows lettings officers to explain the standard that can be expected by the new tenant when moving into their new home.

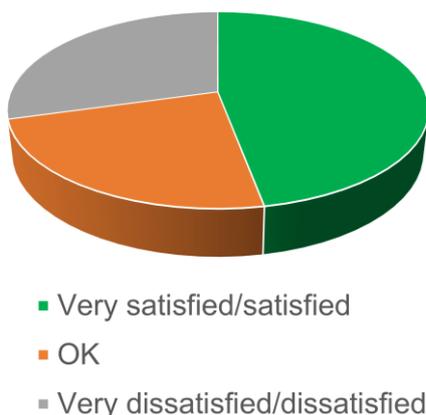
Did anyone tell you about the standard?



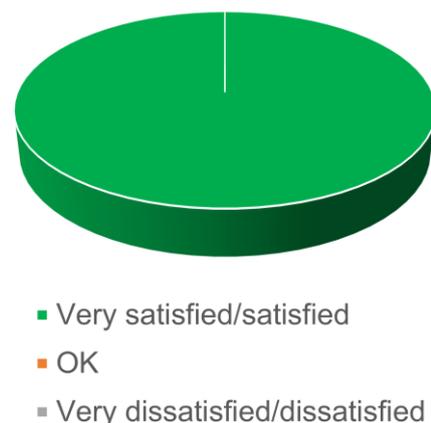
Would you have liked a list of what things should be like in your new home?



Not told about standard versus satisfaction

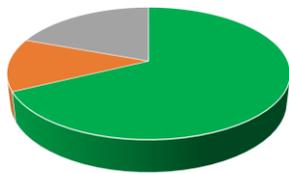


Told about standard versus satisfaction



- Only 11/31 (36%) of new tenants were told about the standard
- People were not dissatisfied just because they weren't told about the standard, with 47% of those who hadn't been told saying that they were still very satisfied/satisfied. Dissatisfaction with the voids process did *not* mean that people had not been told about the standard.
- However, everybody who was told about the standard said that they were satisfied with their new home.
- And 54% of new tenants said that they would have liked to have known what their new home would be like (with only 25% saying that they wouldn't).

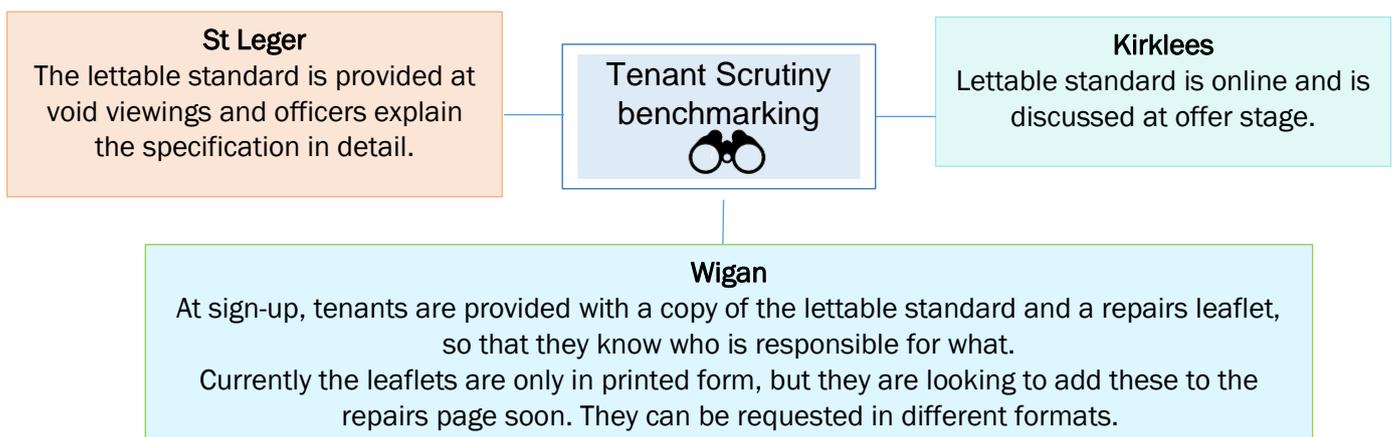
Did you know who to contact if there was a problem with your new home?



■ Yes ■ No ■ Not sure

- It was reassuring that 68% of respondents knew who to contact with any problems in their new home.

Information handed to new tenant



Online information

Rotherham Council has a 'Guide to you Home' document on their website, which has a section on 'moving into your new home'. This section includes who to contact e.g. Council Tax, Housing Benefit; Reconnection of utility supplies; tenant responsibilities; Council responsibilities.

The web trawl found that there was no new tenant advice online for five Council housing providers (Hull, Leeds, St Leger, Warrington, Wolverhampton).

Other Councils had some partial information:

- Dudley – Your New Home, which talks all about tenancy visits
- Sheffield – which is very vague and just talks about landlord commitments
- Wigan – just general tabs to follow for snippets of advice.

Three others had full information for new tenants online:

- Berneslai - 'what to expect when moving in', covering rent, insurance etc.
- Kirklees – 'Moving in and moving out', including what you can expect from your new home
- Nottingham – 'Information for Tenants' - tabs on tenants' safety responsibilities, documents required before renting etc.

PANEL VIEWS:

- ✎ It was worrying that only 36% of new tenants reported that they were told about what to expect from the standard during their viewings.
- ✎ Although the videos for online viewings did say about areas needing work, the panel felt that it wasn't fully emphasised that the new tenant would need to carry these works out when they moved in or live with them.
- ✎ Although only a small majority of people (54%) said they would like information on the standard before they moved in, the panel felt that it would be helpful to publish a leaflet or similar to manage new tenant expectations better. This would hopefully increase satisfaction levels with new homes.
- ✎ Panel members were keen for Rotherham to make improvements to help with them being exemplary against other providers, and would prefer both online and printed information for people moving into their new home.

Recommendations

Publicised Lettable Standard

Provide a public version of the lettable standard, so that new tenants know what to expect when moving in e.g. decoration, cleanliness, heating. Provide this as both printed and online versions. The information should be compact and easy to read for everyone.

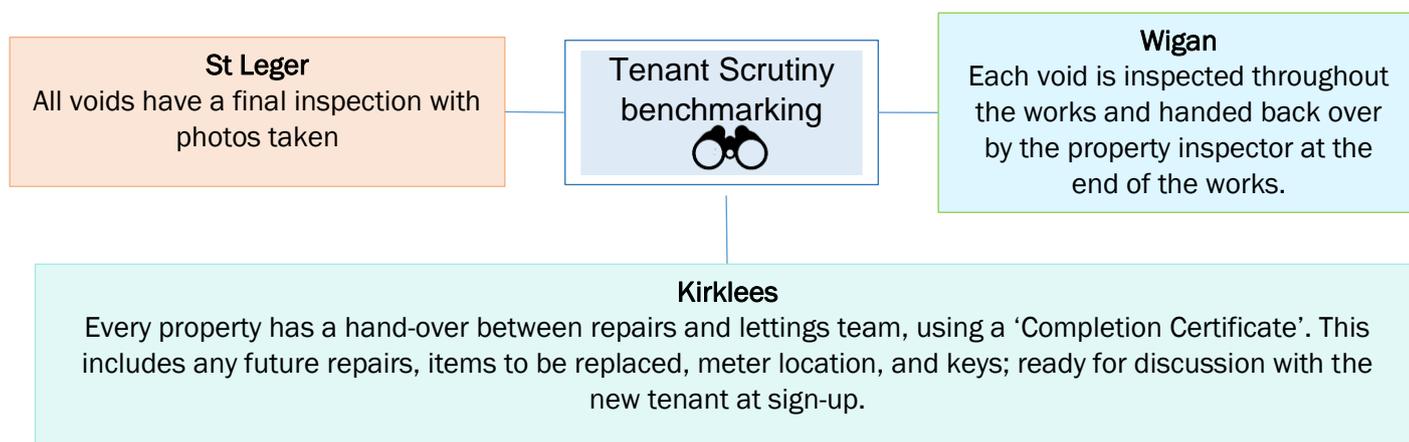
5.8 Quality Assurance/ Customer feedback

Quality checks on void works

Other than the cleaning checks made by supervisors as described in section 5.4, quality audits are also carried out on repairs:

- 100% of all voids are inspected by contract partners before handing back to the voids team
- For all major works, joint handovers take place between contractors and Council officers
- Random spot checks by the voids team for 10% of minor works
- Quality assurance team carry out spot checks on both minor and major works at random.

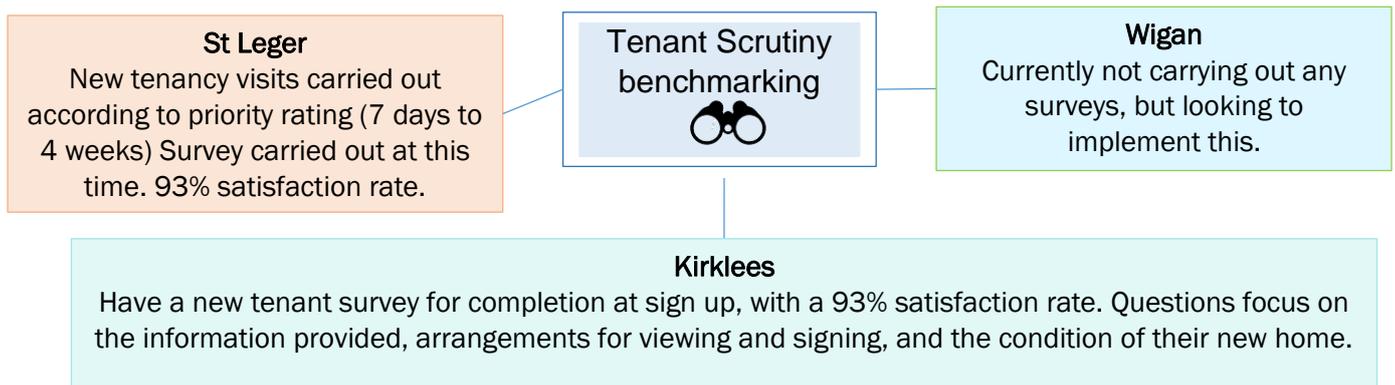
There is a healthy challenge culture across teams (particularly if the same void has been checked) and some items are discussed at contractor meetings.



Customer feedback

During the virtual viewings, Advice Officers will highlight any issues that potential tenants raise whilst watching the videos and feed these back to the voids team.

For all new tenancies, a welcome visit is made by housing officers after six to eight weeks, allowing the new tenant to settle in first. The welcome visit form includes asking new tenants if there are any issues with their new home. Feedback from new tenants is not requested before this time. At the welcome visit, the officer will report any further repairs and issues through to Key Choices or voids team for them to action. Issues raised on the welcome visits form are not collated anywhere central.



Customer complaints

Not many complaints are received by the voids team (less than six each year). Of those that were upheld from May 2021 to May 2023, these related to:

- Central heating, boiler, gas uncapping, water leaks x 6
- Flooring defective
- Leaking roof
- External paving
- Plastering
- Old pipework embedded in plaster
- Property not cleared of soiled clothing
- Pieces of broken glass x 2
- Poor high-level cleaning (tops of cupboards)
- Missing skirting boards

PANEL VIEWS:

- The panel acknowledged that it is difficult to carry out an inspection at the conclusion of all works, but were surprised that other areas can achieve this.
 - Panel members thought that a survey similar to other areas would help to monitor satisfaction levels amongst new tenants and highlight areas that may need improvement in a timelier manner.
 - It would also be useful to collate information from the Welcome Visits to further support contract management and improve standards in new homes.
 - There was some concern that the majority of upheld complaints again seemed to focus on heating and plumbing issues (similar to those issues raised by survey respondents).
-

Recommendations

Sub-standard repairs

Ensure that repairs that are sub-standard or missed by contractors are discussed at every contract performance review meeting (as a standard agenda item) and make sure that remedial actions/ improvements are agreed.

Customer feedback

- Introduce a 'new tenant survey' or similar to provide a feedback system prior to welcome visits taking place.
- Provide a system to collate issues raised at welcome visits to identify trends.

Suggestions

Spot-check targets

Set some targets for spot checks carried out on both cleaning standards and repairs i.e. how many outstanding /missed /unsatisfactory works are allowed/or provide a grading system. Discuss these targets and findings in the Repairs sub-group.

6. Recommendations

Recommendations (in order of priority):

Priority ranking	Recommendation	Page Number
A	Recommendation A: Uncap target Reconsider the target of five days to uncap gas supplies, in particular for vulnerable people and those moving in during winter months.	31
B	Lettable Standard review <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Review/update the existing lettable standard to assess against those standards used by other similar housing providers.○ Make arrangements to review again whenever there are changes in legislation or at least every three years.	21
C	Publicised Lettable Standard Provide a public version of the lettable standard, so that new tenants know what to expect when moving in e.g. decoration, cleanliness, heating. Provide this as both printed and online versions. The information should be compact and easy to read for everyone.	34
D	Outstanding repairs as move in Carry out a review of which repairs can be safely left until after the new tenant has moved in, and make this clear to both contractors and new tenants.	31
E	Plumbing and heating issues <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Develop a plan to try and overcome the main issues with contracted void works, such as plumbing and heating issues.○ Give consideration to gas being uncapped to test heating systems prior to the new tenant moving in.	31

F	<p>Clear properties before cleaning</p> <p>Provide clearer guidance to cleaning staff that they should not clean properties where contractors have left rubbish or where aids such as hospital beds remain in the property.</p>	28
G	<p>Sub-standard repairs</p> <p>Ensure that repairs that are sub-standard or missed by contractors are discussed at every contract performance review meeting (as a standard agenda item) and make sure that remedial actions/ improvements are agreed.</p>	37
H	<p>Customer feedback</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Introduce a ‘new tenant survey’ or similar to provide a feedback system prior to welcome visits taking place. ○ Provide a system to collate issues raised at welcome visits to identify trends. 	37
I	<p>Cleaning staff working conditions</p> <p>Give consideration to improving working conditions for cleaning staff, in particular lighting and hot water.</p>	28
J	<p>Tenancy termination letters</p> <p>Make changes to the tenancy termination letters as summarised in the report to make them easier to understand and consider whether to also provide these online.</p>	15
K	<p>Items left by vacating tenants</p> <p>Provide more clarity and emphasise the agreement when new tenants sign up for items left by vacating tenants such as outbuildings and decking.</p>	21

Suggestions

- 1. Spot-check targets**

Set some targets for spot checks carried out on both cleaning standards and repairs i.e. how many outstanding /missed /unsatisfactory works are allowed/or provide a grading system. Discuss these targets and findings in the Repairs Sub-group.
- 2. ASSA Cliq key monitoring**

Monitor the efficient use of ASSA Cliq keys to make sure that operatives are not re-entering void properties following cleaning and that locks are changed immediately after cleaning is completed.
- 3. On-site viewings**

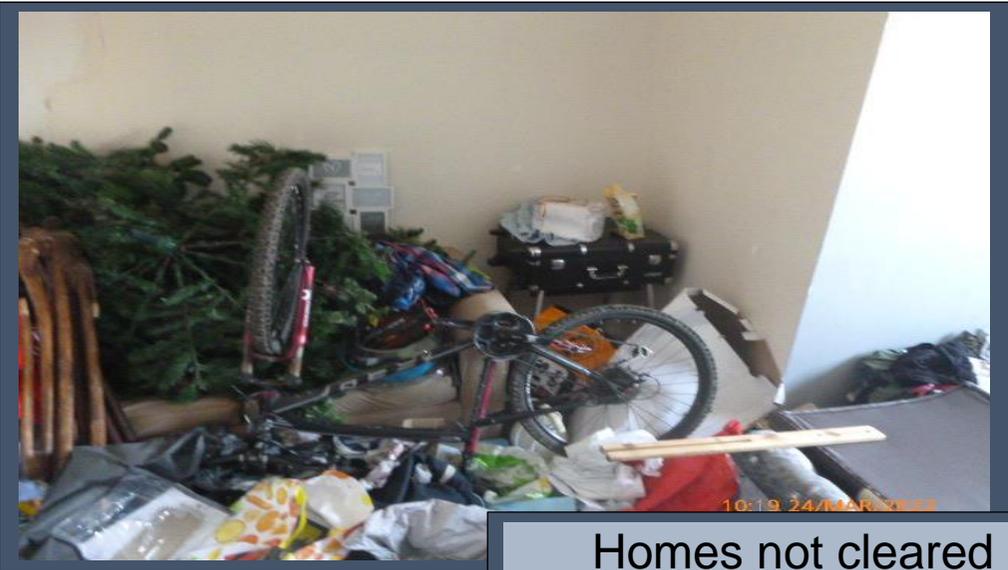
Reconsider the option of in-person viewings being offered to ensure that people can see conditions and receive an explanation of standards on-site. (This suggestion will be investigated further during the next tenant scrutiny topic; Voids – support to new tenants).
- 4. Pre-contract meetings**

Provide feedback on the feasibility of conducting pre-contract meetings on site with contractors, similar to the arrangements for other housing providers, costing out the existing contractor-led approach versus pre-contract arrangements.

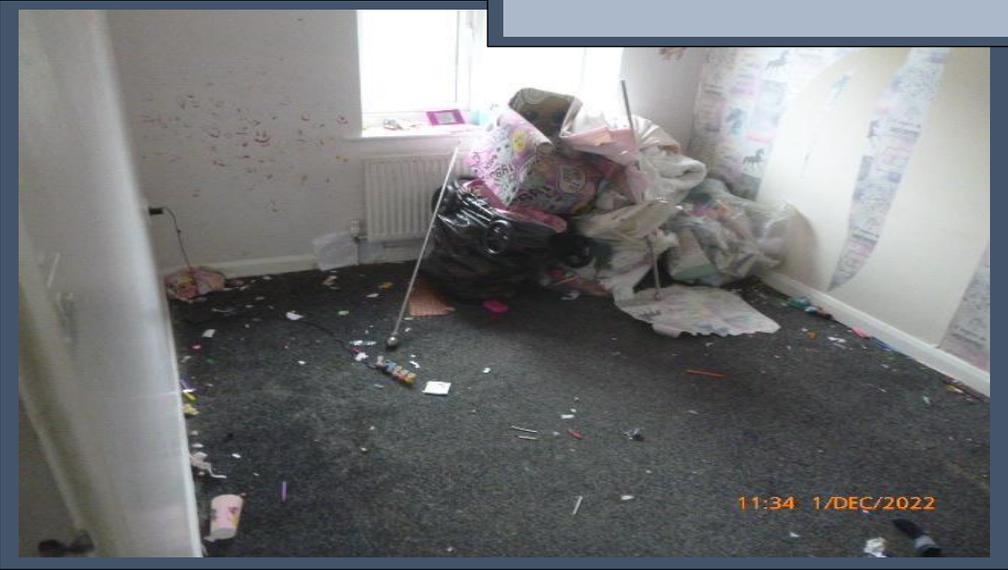
7. Appendices

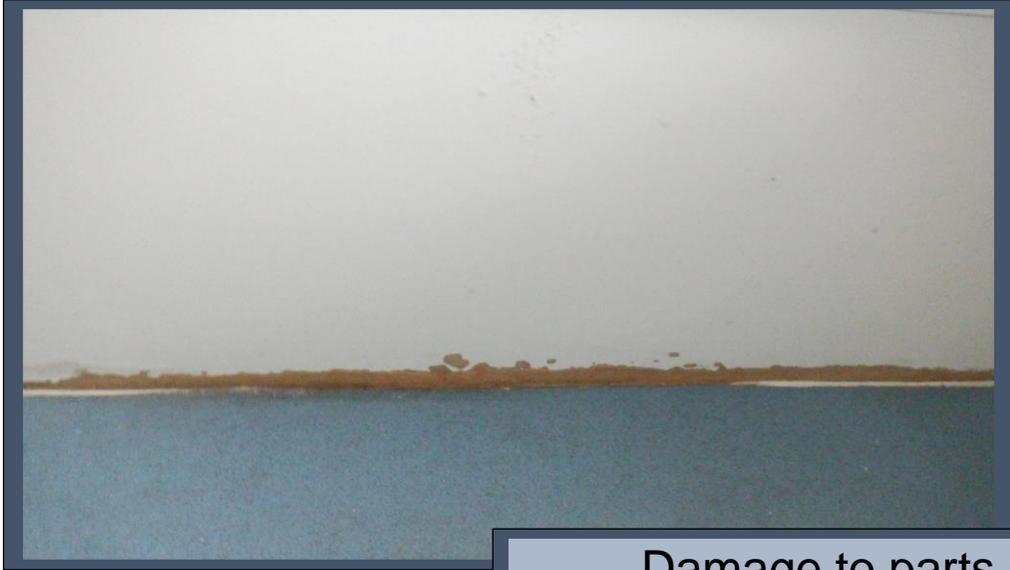
- 1 – Photographs of some of the properties visited
- 2 - Communications with vacating tenant
- 3 – Tenant Scrutiny comments on Rotherham termination letters
- 4 – Summary of full comparison of lettable standards across benchmarking providers
- 5 – Cleaning specification checklist

Appendix 1 - Photographs from some of the void properties visited



Homes not cleared by tenants leaving





Damage to parts of the properties

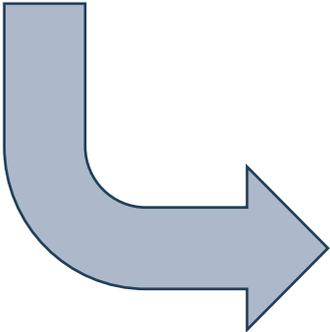


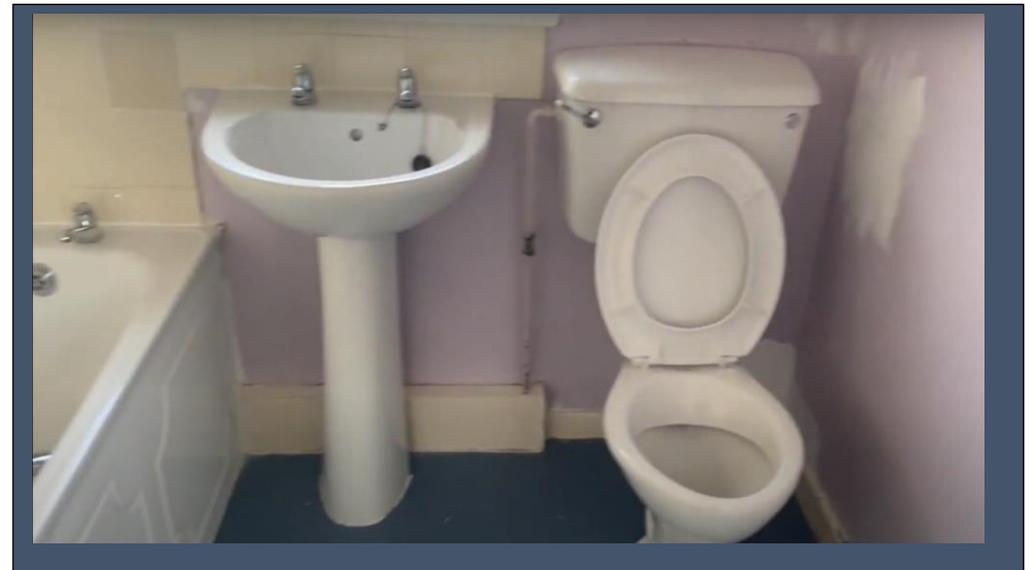
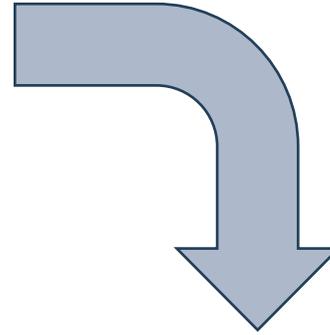
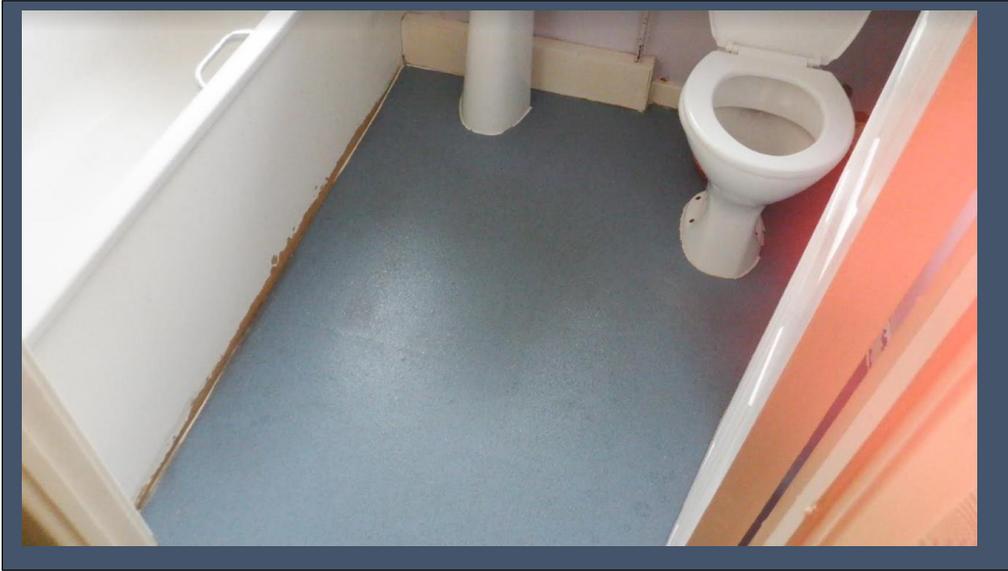


Damage to garden and items left behind, including large play equipment



Before and after – new kitchen window





Before and after – new bath panel fitted

Appendix 2 - Communications with vacating tenant

Barneslai - online:

- Ending your tenancy – can notify online
- Moving to another property
- Letting us know someone has died
- After you've given notice:
 - Clearing the property
 - Rent payments
 - Gas, electric, water
 - Post
 - Property condition inside
 - Gardens and outside
 - If you need to extend your notice

Kirklees – leaflet:

- Four weeks' notice and termination online form
- Paying your rent – till tenancy ends
- Belongings left in property – charged for removal/ bulky waste charges/ recycling sites
- Removal of Gas installations – cookers and fires
- Meter readings – on leaving day
- Turning off supplies – gas/electric/water and open taps in winter
- Improvements made during tenancy – list of things that may be reimbursed (charge for removal of unauthorised works)
- Next steps – key safe outside to drop keys in
- Moving Out Checklist – tick boxes

St Leger – fact sheet:

- How to give notice – in person – complete a form
- How much notice – four weeks unless to another Council home or residential care
- Anything I don't want – remove everything or get charged
- Before hand keys in – must be unoccupied, clear of everything and clean. Fill in fish ponds and sand pits in garden.
- Changes made to home – must be replaced/ fixed, or will be charged
- Carpets and curtains – check with Empty Homes team
- Security alarms – hand in keys and codes
- Extending notice period – apply to St Leger
- Retract notice – in writing within four weeks
- Hand in keys – Monday 12 o'clock
- Rent owed – legal action
- Furnished tenancies – furniture collected before they leave
- Unwanted furniture – charged for removal. List of charities that collect
- Bulky waste – phone number (small charge)
- Moving out checklist
- Contacts

Wigan – letter

- Keys – hand-in arrangements
- Gas and Electric – British Gas take over day after move out
- Security (alarms)
- Rent – and recovery of debts
- Housing benefit – cancelled once move out
- Pre-termination inspections and rechargeable repairs – all inspected. Charged for removal of furniture and rubbish left; cleaning if in poor state; putting back things that have been removed; putting right any unsatisfactory alterations; renewing locks if less than two keys handed in.
- Meter Readings – final readings
- Advertisement – advertised in weekly property list
- Further help – if can't settle account

Appendix 3 – Full list of tenant scrutiny comments on termination letters

All documents

Layout -ve

- Need page numbers.

Layout +ve

- Clear and straightforward.

Accessibility -ve

- Is it available in different formats like braille, audio, large print or easy read?
- Needs to be available in different languages.
- Lots of Council jargon – see separate slides for lists.

Content / clarity +ve

- Useful contact numbers are good.
- Additional information is clear and makes sense on the whole.

Layout -ve

- Need to be able to tick more than one box for reason to quit.

Accessibility -ve

- Council jargon and phrases that are difficult to understand:
 - Notice to Quit
 - Tenancy notice period
 - Legally binding
 - Forwarding address
 - Fixtures and fittings
 - Put right the damage
- Section six – is very complicated and confusing (would cause anxiety). The panel feel that this could be clearer.

Content / clarity -ve

- Letter - It is not a 'request to end' but a notice
- Letter - Doesn't say where to hand keys in to – needs an address
- Letter - Needs to define 'empty property'
- Section One – the tenancy address may not be the current address if they have moved out already
- Section One – needs more explanation of what happens if only one person leaving

Content / clarity -ve

- Section Two - Needs the option of 'prefer not to say' and 'other reason' boxes on reason for leaving
- Section Two - Should you ask for more information about domestic abuse as well as hate crime?
- Section Three – needs to be clear that you mean where you will live after leaving this home (some people may already have left too)

Content / clarity -ve

- Section Four - The garage notice period is shorter and so needs to be a separate form (They will need the garage up until moving in to their new property)
- Section six – do people know what 'good condition' means?
- Section six - Panel is not happy that people can look around your home before it is vacated – this part of the form needs re-wording

Term Two Letter and Next Steps

Layout +ve

- The information is good as it's set out in sections It would be better as a checklist you could tick off.

Accessibility -ve

- Council jargon and phrases that are difficult to understand -
 - Legally binding
 - If applicable
 - Bulky items (needs further description)
 - Fixtures and Fittings
 - Rectified
 - Liable to pay
 - Confirmation
 - Remedy damage

Content / clarity -ve

- Letter - 'Encourages' tenants to clear – shouldn't this be 'must' or 'expect'
- Letter - No mention of arrangements for leaving items behind – how to get permission.
- Letter - Needs to be clear that you are charged for bulky items.
- Next steps - Should repeat where to hand keys in to.
- Next steps - Furniture package section needs re-wording for clarity. What do you leave and what goes? Don't think 'be left in the property' is needed, as later it says to contact a number.

Content queries

- If technical officers visit before the tenancy has finished why are they left in such a state?
- If the tenancy is finished early why can't one rent be stopped. Avoiding the tenant from paying two rents.
- Housing Benefit - You aren't allowed housing benefit on two properties at once how does this work when ending one council tenancy and starting another council tenancy.

Content queries

- Removal service - Who will help disabled people to get items outside for the removal service 'bulky items'?
- Property keys - How does the end of tenancy work if you are moving to another council property? Often you do not get the keys in advance, so you would not be able to get keys at midday Monday and hand keys in on the same midday Monday. Has any council officer followed this process or a customer on the journey?

Appendix 4 - Summary of the full comparison of lettable standards across benchmark

	Rotherham	Kirklees	St Leger	Wigan	Warrington	Red Kite	STAR
Loft insulation	Existing loft insulation laid equally				Loft insulated to 250mm	270mm	Insulated
Balustrade to stairs	Replaced if missing/damaged				Replaced if missing/damaged	Replaced	
Internal doors	Kitchen door?				Kitchen door half hour fire rated with door closers		
Electric sockets	????	Adequate			4 double sockets in kitchen and living room, 2 doubles in bedrooms, 1 double in hall and landing		Minimum 5 single in kitchen and 4 singles in all other rooms
Removal of gas fires	Removed and wall/flue made good				Removed and fireplace bricked up	Removed and bricked up	

	Rotherham	Kirklees	St Leger	Wigan	Warrington	Red Kite	STAR
Smoke / heat/CO detectors	Test – but no mention of how many CO detector – need to seek authorisation to fit	Heat detector in kitchen Smoke alarms each floor – hall and landing CO detector adjacent to flued gas appliances				Hallway, landing, living room and heat detector in kitchen	
Sink taps	Check that taps on right sides (R cold, Left hot)						
Plumbing	Not sure if flushed?	Any dead legs in pipework removed All pipework flushed					
Heating	Programme not mentioned	Programmable					
Toilets	Limescale removed					Cleaning fluid left in all toilets	
Hot water cylinder	No mention	Compliant			Jacket provided for cylinder		Insulated
Stop tap	No mention			Accessible	Eased		Turns freely

	Rotherham	Kirklees	St Leger	Wigan	Warrington	Red Kite	STAR
Shower head	Replaced shower head and hose every time				Disinfected or replaced		
Shower curtain	New every time						
Missing baths	Not mentioned?					Not replaced if previously removed to fit a shower	
Extractor fan	????	Mechanical extracting in kitchen and bathroom			Serviced		
Polystyrene tiles	Removed			Removed	Removed	Removed	
Plastering	'Smooth for decoration'				Smooth finish		
Internal doors		Any glazed doors replaced					
Decoration Allowance	No mention?				If supported/ sheltered housing	For sheltered homes or elderly/disabled tenants	Decorating packs supplied
Graffiti/ mould	Halophane paint used to cover mould					Decorated	

	Rotherham	Kirklees	St Leger	Wigan	Warrington	Red Kite	STAR
	and other paint for graffiti						
Air fresheners	Yes					All around the house	
Carpet grippers and nails	Unnecessary nails, screws and fixings removed					Removed	
Lightbulbs						Low energy bulbs fitted in entrance, landing, lounge, and bathroom	
Curtain battens							In every room
Behind radiators	Clean as far as possible to rear	As far as possible		Clean behind all radiators			
External Windows	Correctly fixed				Putty replaced if damaged		Cleaned outside at ground floor level
First floor windows	Restrictors fitted				Restrictors fitted		

	Rotherham	Kirklees	St Leger	Wigan	Warrington	Red Kite	STAR
EXTERNAL							
External doors	Number fitted				Spy hole and draught excluder fitted		
Clothes post	No mention?					Not fitted	
Security screen	No mention?					Fitted during void and removed day before occupancy	
Paths	No mention of sweeping, but does say laid so water runs off	Swept					
Outdoor lighting	No mention?	Adequate and suitably located					
Fencing	Repair if possible. Remove if dangerous. Only provide replacement if requested by client.	Fencing to the front of the property will be repaired/replaced where required		Fencing and gates replaced only at the front, not rear unless on to public land			

	Rotherham	Kirklees	St Leger	Wigan	Warrington	Red Kite	STAR
Air bricks	Mention air bricks not obstructed and are vermin/water proof						
Outbuilding	Change the lock						

Appendix 5 - Cleaning Standard Checklist

Property Address: _____

Deep Clean: Yes / No

Electricity in Property: Yes / No

Clean all kitchen work surfaces and grease from, fans, walls and ceilings	Tick when checked/cleaned
All work surfaces to be cleaned thoroughly and all traces of food and grease or any other type of stains removed	
Any paint drips to be removed	
Work surfaces to be disinfected	
Shadows caused by heated appliances to be removed	
No wipe marks or smears to be left on the surfaces	
Grease on fans, walls and ceilings to be removed	
Clean all kitchen units and cupboards (internally and externally)	Tick when checked/cleaned
All surfaces of the kitchen units to be cleaned thoroughly. Pay particular attention to the sides of the cooker, fridge and washer space	
All door and unit edges to be cleaned and particular attention given to the finger pulls on unit doors.	
All shelving to the kitchen units to be cleaned including the underside of shelves	
The kick boards and any other trims to be thoroughly cleaned and no dirt or rubbish is to be left between kick boards and floor or unit sides and walls	
Clean all wall tiles in property	Tick when checked/cleaned
All wall tiles within the property to be thoroughly cleaned to remove all dirt and grease	
All grout, mastic joints and corners to be cleaned	
Tiles to be disinfected	
Clean Bathroom Suite and WC	Tick when checked/cleaned
Bath and wash hand basin, including brassware to be thoroughly cleaned	
All stains to be removed including lime residue from the washbasin or bath caused by dripping taps	
Paint splashes to be removed from any items of the suite	
Floor to be disinfected	
Remove/scrape WC pan to remove all lime scale deposits	
Label left attached to WC to confirm clean	
WC to be cleaned to front, rear and all pipework including waste pipe	
Clean down all interior paintwork, doors, skirting boards and architraves	Tick when checked/cleaned
Remove all dirt and debris from tops of skirting boards and architraves throughout the property	
Wipe clean skirting boards and architraves throughout the property to remove dirt and grease	
Wipe dirt and stains from all door faces and casings (internal and external) and from any other areas of paintwork within the property	
Clear debris and dirt from door threshold strips (internal and external)	
Remove dirt from the rear of all central heating pipe work	

Clean fronts of all radiators and as far as possible to the rear	
Windows	Tick when checked/cleaned
All internal windows to be cleaned and buffed	
All smears to be removed from windows	
Sweep all floors to property including staircase treads	Tick when checked/cleaned
Sweep all floors to the property to remove all dirt and debris	
Remove all rubbish from open floor board joints	
Clean dirt and debris from all corners of rooms	
Deodorise rooms as necessary	Tick when checked/cleaned
All rooms in property to be deodorised with a suitable agent	
Leave internal doors open for air circulation	
Mop all hard floors	Tick when checked/cleaned
All hard floors (including storage cupboards) to be swept, mopped clean and disinfected	
Particular attention should be paid to the removal of scuffmarks and paint splashes	
Mopped/cleaned floors are to be left clear of bad smearing	
Vacuum clean any carpets left in property	Tick when checked/cleaned
Carpets which the Void Technical Officer allow to be left in the property will be vacuumed and cleaned to a good standard	
All timber/chip board flooring to be hoovered and cleaned to a good standard without using water/liquids	
Remove all cobwebs from property	Tick when checked/cleaned
Sweep all corners, window frames and cupboards to remove all cobwebs from the property	
Leave air freshener in each room of property	Tick when checked/cleaned
Deodorise all rooms	
If property is accessed via a communal area, leave deodorising block in communal entrance way	
Clean external doors	Tick when checked/cleaned
External doors are to be free from dirt, dust and cobwebs, including door surround and door cills (inside and outside)	

To be completed by a member of staff upon completion of cleaning to the property;

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Comments:

Report produced by:



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On behalf of:



Rotherham Federation