

Report to: Housing Review Board



Date of Meeting 30 January 2025

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Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A

Housing Performance Report – Q3 2024/25

Report Summary

The following report outlines the Housing Service's performance through quarter 3 of FY 2024/25.

Is the proposed decision in accordance with:

Budget Yes No

Policy Framework Yes No

Recommendation:

The Housing Review Board receives the report and our performance at end of quarter 3, 2024/25.

Reason for recommendation:

To ensure the Housing Review Board have assurance around service delivery, performance and compliance with our health & safety responsibilities. To enable the Board to scrutinise and challenge the performance of the housing service.

Officer: Andy King, Interim Assistant Director for Housing (Regulated Services)

Portfolio(s) (check which apply):

- Climate Action and Emergency Response
- Coast, Country and Environment
- Council and Corporate Co-ordination
- Communications and Democracy
- Economy
- Finance and Assets
- Strategic Planning
- Sustainable Homes and Communities
- Culture, Leisure, Sport and Tourism

Equalities impact Low Impact

Climate change Low Impact

Link to [Council Plan](#)

Priorities (check which apply)

- Better homes and communities for all
 - A greener East Devon
 - A resilient economy
-

Financial implications:

To be completed by Finance.

Legal implications:

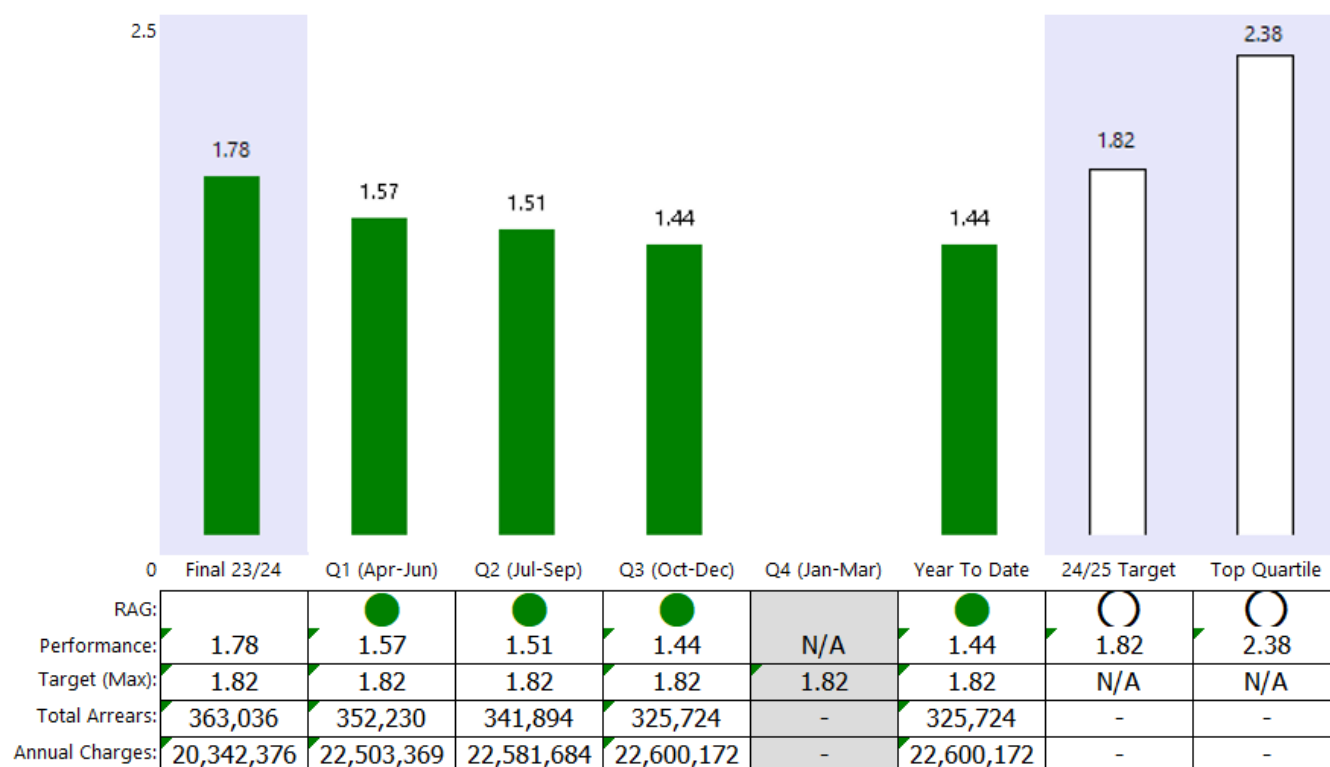
To be completed by Legal.

1. Understanding This Report

- 1.1. The data presented in this report is colour coded in a traffic light system. Green means we are meeting or exceeding our targets, amber that we are close to target, and red means we are outside of target.
- 1.2. Targets are set annually and are our benchmark for where we would like our performance to be.
- 1.3. Top Quartiles are the benchmark figures from Housemark, which tells us whether or not we are in the top 25% of best performing landlords.
- 1.4. The 'Final 23/24' data shows us where our performance was at the end of the last financial year, which gives us an indication of how we are doing compared to last year's performance.

2. Income Collection

- 2.1. Infographic; Rent arrears of current tenants as a % of annual rent debit:



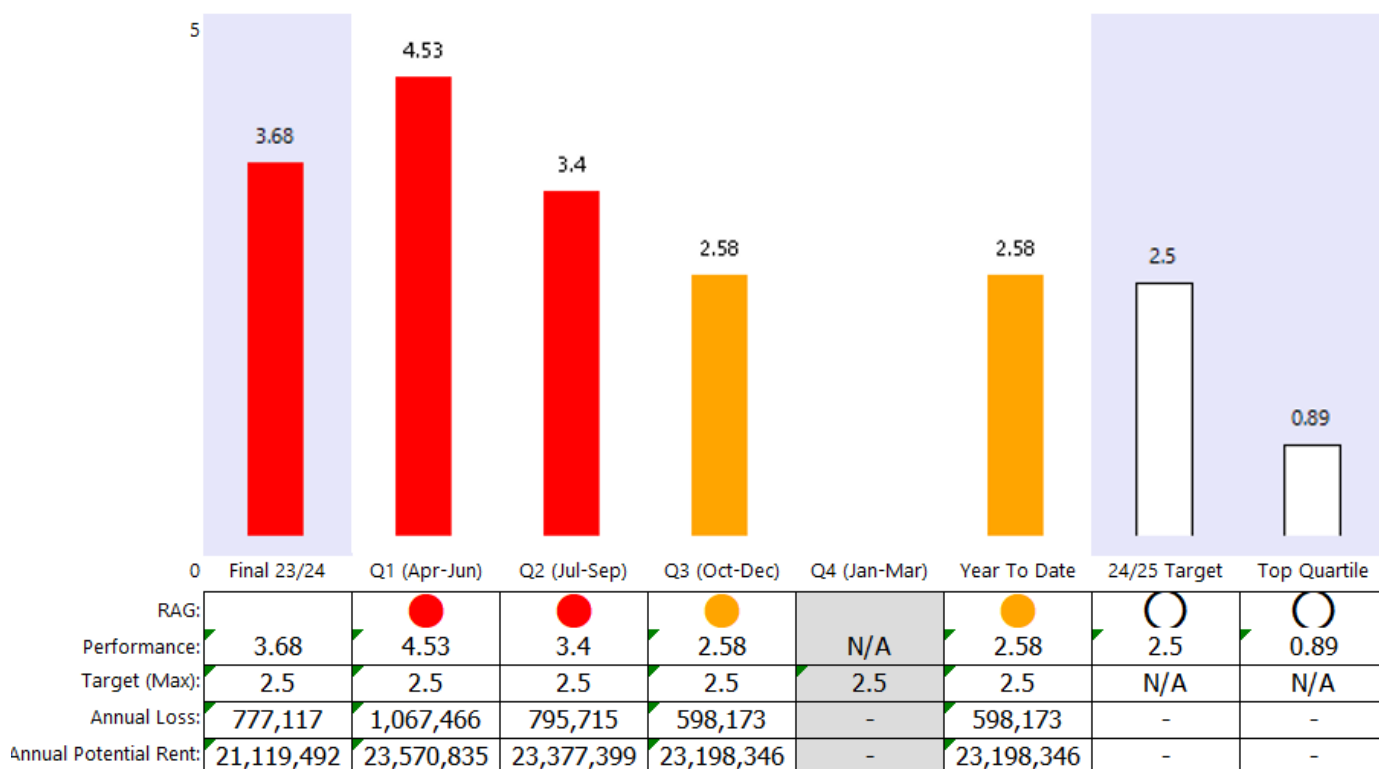
- 2.2. The key indicator for our performance in relation to Income is the Council's rent arrears for current tenants as percentage of the annual rent we should be receiving.
- 2.3. If all of our current tenants paid 100% of their rent and service charges this financial year, we would receive a total income of £22,822,691.
- 2.4. At the end of Quarter 3, you can see that we have a current rent arrear figure of £325,724, which equates to 1.44% of the total income we could receive from our current tenants.

Whilst of course we would like all of our tenants to be paying all of their rent and charges, it is expected by all landlords that for various reasons there will be those tenants who cannot or do not meet with their obligations to pay.

- 2.5. Our target for rent arrears is to be at, or below, 1.82%. Therefore, the figure of 1.44% is extremely positive and demonstrates high performance from our Rentals team.
- 2.6. The top quartile for this area is 2.38%, therefore you can see that we are firmly seated as performing in the top 25% of landlords nationally.
- 2.7. You will also see that we finished FY 23/24 well within target at 1.6%, and performance has improved further this financial year. However, we do note that anecdotally we often see a small increase in rent arrears in Q4. This is often linked to a knock-on effect from the festive period where tenants have prioritised other expenditure above their rents.
- 2.8. Strong income collection performance is important to us as it gives us assurance around the level of income we can expect to generate year on year, giving us greater assurance around our budget setting and plans for investment and expenditure.
- 2.9. The Year to Date (YTD) figure for Income Collection is reported as a snapshot in time (ie, the most up to date figure at the time the report was ran). This is because the income collection figure is a cumulative figure throughout the year.
- 2.10. **Good News Stories from our Rentals Team:**
 - 2.10.1. In the last quarter, the team have been working with a tenant whose arrears were increasing and court action was imminent due to us not being able to engage with the tenant and a sanction against their Universal Credit. The team persisted, and a Rentals Officer was able to arrange to meet the tenant in person at the Job Centre to support them to update their universal credit claim and have sanctions removed. This was successful, and the tenant is now back in receipt of full universal credit and a payment for arrears was made by UC.
 - 2.10.2. Upon visiting a tenant regarding their rent arrears, one of our Rentals Officers discovered a tenant who was struggling significantly with their finances and disclosed that they had over £28,000 of debts owing to various companies. The Officer supported the tenant to successfully apply for a Debt Relief Order (DRO) and set up an affordable payment plan for rent arrears.
 - 2.10.3. One Officer made contact with a tenant regarding their rent arrears, and in the course of working with them the tenant disclosed a severe decline in their mental health due to needing to move home but being unable to because of the level of arrears on their account. The Officer worked closely with the tenant to support with budgeting and sticking to a payment plan, and upon paying off their arrears helped them to successfully apply for a new home, which they have now moved into!
 - 2.10.4. So far this year we have managed to obtain financial grants for tenants of nearly £14,000 through EDDC's financial resilience team, and over £48,000 of financial gains have been achieved for tenants through referrals to Homemaker.

3. Income Lost Through Void Properties

3.1. Infographic; % of rent lost through properties becoming vacant:



3.2. Aside from rent lost through current tenant's arrears, the other key area of risk to our income collection each year is when our properties become void (empty).

3.3. All landlords plan for a level of turnover in their properties and we know that homes will be vacant whilst void repairs are carried out and therefore not generating income for us.

3.4. Unexpected levels of void loss can cause issues for our budgets and investment in our stock, so it is important that we balance the cost of bringing a property back to a lettable standard with the rent we will lose if we do not relet the property in a timely fashion.

3.5. The teams are working hard to finesse this balancing act, and this is apparent in the void-loss figures we are seeing at the end of quarter 3, continuing the trend of reducing this loss.

3.6. We can see that void loss spiked in quarter 1 of this year, however it has vastly reduced in quarters 2 and 3, bringing our year-to-date void loss figure to 2.58%. This is just 0.08% above our target of 2.5%.

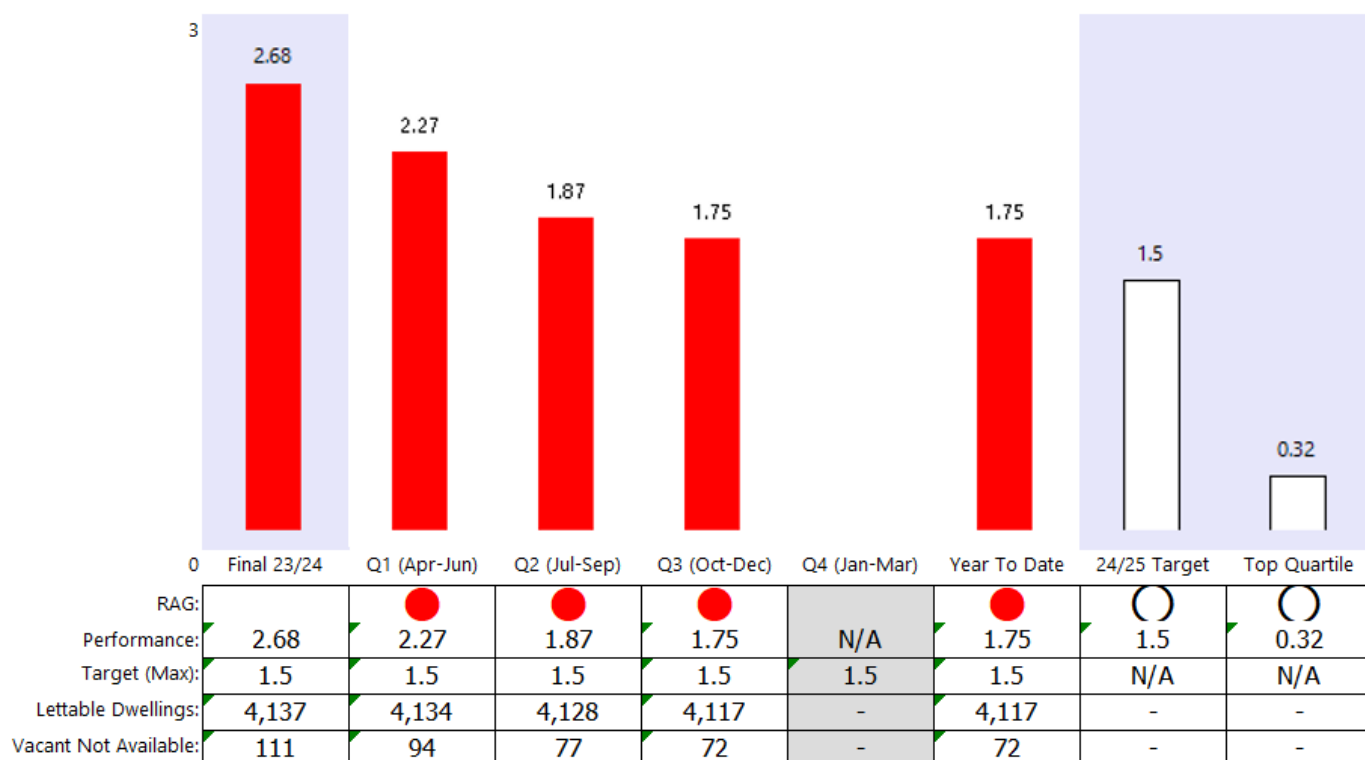
3.7. Our void loss does continue to be significantly higher than the top 25% of landlords nationally, but the Housing Service and the HRB are aware of the challenges we have faced in this area and the journey we have been on to improve performance. Our target takes into account our stock profile and condition, and level of turnover, which will be significantly different to those landlords achieving top quartile performance. The continued improvement is evident through the performance data we are seeing today.

3.8. The quarterly % figure is calculated by taking what the annual loss would be if those properties remained empty for the whole year, divided by what our annual potential rental income could be, times by 100 to get the percentage figure. This is why the Year to Date (YTD) always mirrors the last quarter on the report as this is the most up to date calculation that takes into account actual rent lost, and potential rent lost if those properties remain vacant combined. The quarterly figures give us a strong projection for our end of year

position if performance does not improve, but the true picture will never be known until the end of Q4.

4. Properties Vacant and Not Available to Let

4.1. Infographic; % of self-contained dwellings vacant and not available to let:



4.2. Paired with the business need for us to be able to reliably target ourselves with an acceptable level of rent loss, is the need to manage the turnover of our vacant stock and try to ensure reduced numbers of vacant properties held by us at any one time. These two performance indicators naturally go hand in hand.

4.3. At the end of quarter 3 we had 4,117 lettable dwellings within the Housing Service. Of these, 72 were vacant but not ready to be let. This is a decrease of 22 from Q1 and 39 from the end of FY 2023/24. (It should be noted that the lettable dwellings figure can fluctuate over the year for a number of reasons, including disposals, right to buy, acquisitions, and properties taken out of management).

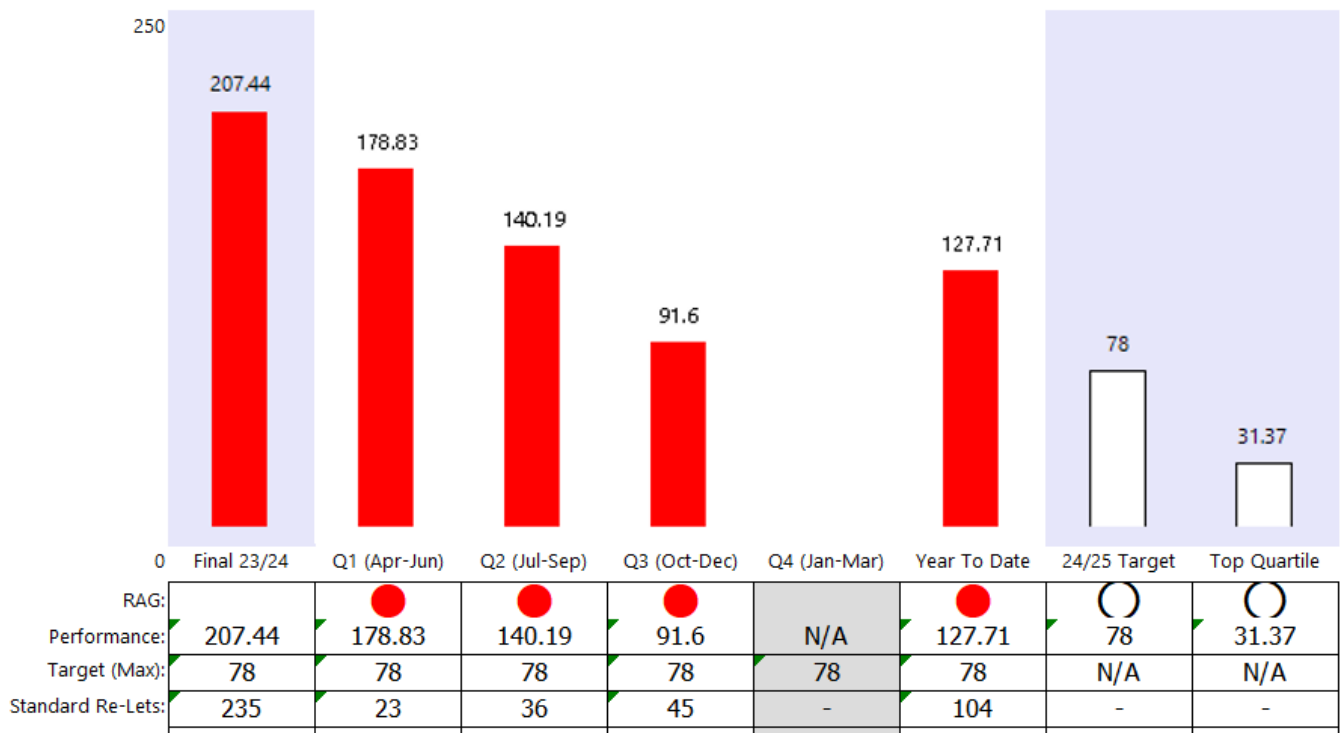
4.4. The 72 vacant, but not available to let, properties at the end of quarter 3 amounts to 1.75% of our stock. This is just 0.255% above our target of 1.5% and a 0.93% improvement on performance at the end of the last financial year.

4.5. Whilst we endeavour to have as few void properties at any one time, this figure should also be read in tandem with the data on how long it is taking us to relet our properties. This is because the number of void properties we have does not mean that these are the same void properties month on month. The following section explores our performance in relation to relet times.

4.6. The Year to Date (YTD) figure is reported as a snapshot in time (ie, the most up to date figure at the time the report was ran). This is because the figure is a cumulative figure throughout the year.

5. Average Days to Relet Homes

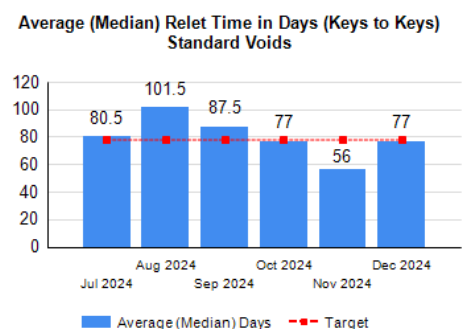
5.1. Infographic; Average days to relet a social housing dwelling (standard):



5.2. At the end of Q3, the average number of days between a property becoming void and being relet is 91.6 days, bringing our year-to-date average to 127.71 days. Q3's performance is a vast reduction of over 48 days compared to Q2's performance, and a reduction of over 115 days from the average relet time at the end of FY 2023/24.

5.3. Our target is to bring our relet times within 78 days or less. Whilst we are still outside of this target, we are continuing on the downward trend and are seeing the best performance in this area than we have for the past couple of years.

5.4. It should also be noted that as we continue to clear long-term voids, the average days to relet will continue to be skewed by these properties but this will improve as the backlog reduces. Presenting the median can statistically 'smooth' out the extreme cases giving a 'clearer' picture of average relet times. The chart on the right shows you that in November we achieved a median of 56 days!



5.5. The Year to Date (YTD) figure is an average across the year so far.

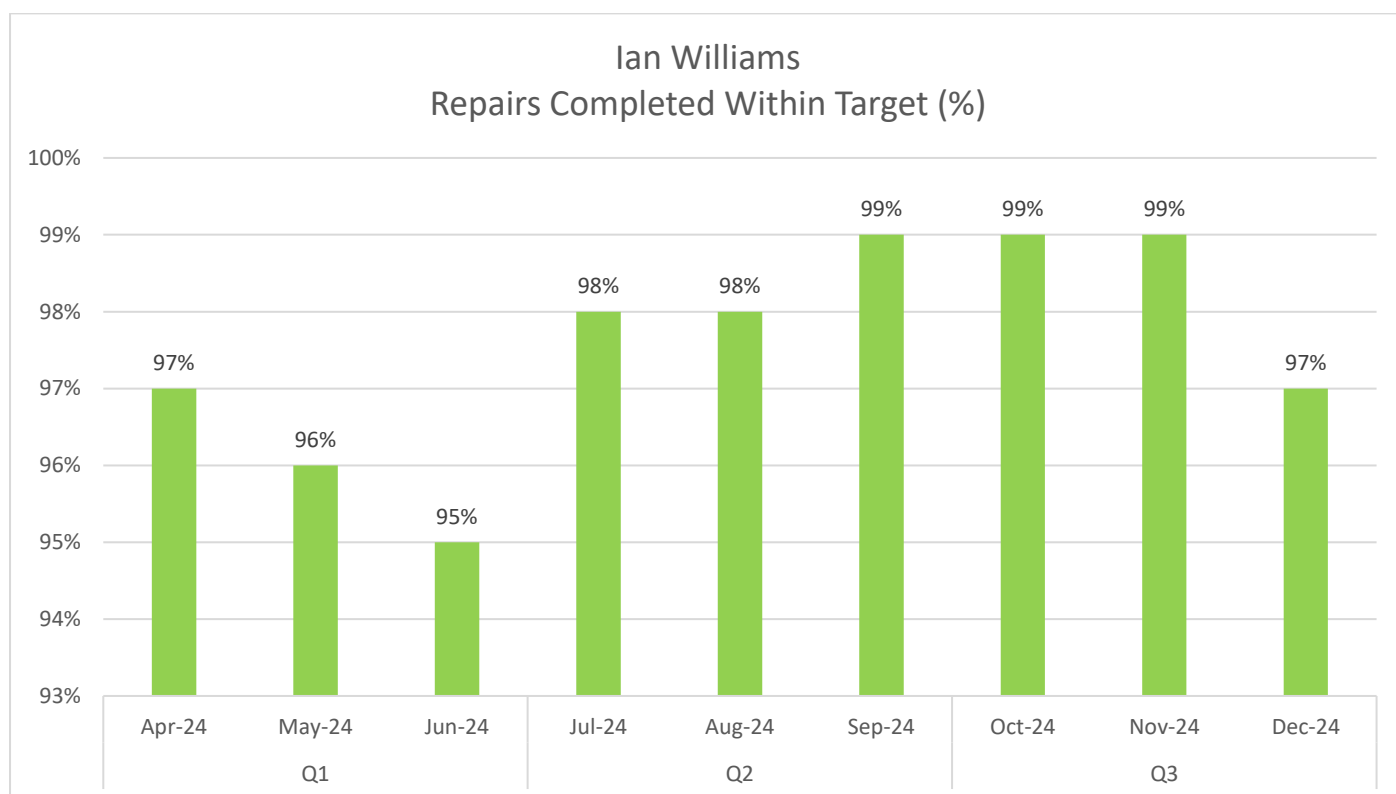
5.6. Good News Stories from our Allocations Team and Voids Manager:

5.6.1. We had a homeless family with two young children living in temporary accommodation. We were able to allocate them one of our void properties, however an issue was discovered with the gas meter that meant the property was uninhabitable until this was resolved. The supplier stated that their earliest appointment date was the 19th December, meaning the family would have to move in on the 23rd December. Understanding how important it was for the family to be moved in and settled in time for Christmas, our Voids Manager persistently contacted the supplier and, through her tenacity, was able to get the works completed a week earlier giving the family more time to move in and celebrate their first Christmas in their new home.

5.6.2. A couple living in private rented accommodation were served a Section 21 Eviction by their landlord and were unable to source suitable private rental options. One member of the household had complex medical conditions, including sight loss, which made the prospect of having to move their belongings into storage and stay in temporary accommodation even more daunting. We were able to act fast and ensure the void works on a 1-bedroom bungalow in our Sheltered Housing were completed in time, and the couple moved into their new home without the need to stay in temporary accommodation. They now have a security of tenure they did not have in private rented.

6. Repairs Completed in Target

6.1. Infographic; % of repairs completed within target:



6.2. Previous reports have noted that we are aware of a large discrepancy between our data and that of our contractors. This is due to the WIP (works in progress) between our systems not matching up, therefore causing our system to believe more works are outstanding than is true. Works are ongoing to address this issue within One Housing, however this is a manual process needing to be carried out by Officers in partnership with Ian Williams and Liberty Gas. Therefore, the above graph is demonstrating to you the performance as recorded by Ian Williams of combined routine and emergency repairs completion rates.

6.3. In Q3, Ian Williams' performance is broken down as follows:

6.3.1. Emergency Repairs Completed within Target: 99% (Target 100%)

6.3.2. Routine Repairs Completed within Target: 98% (Target 90%)

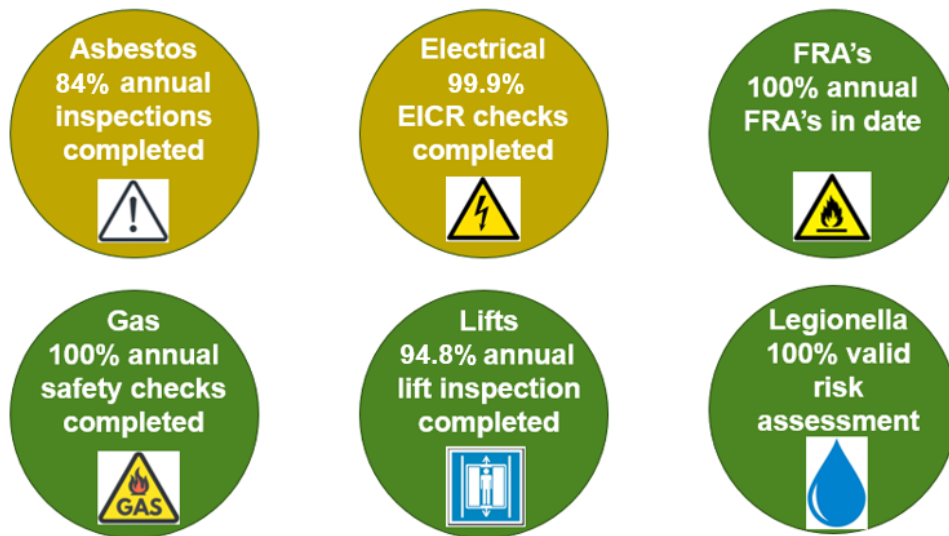
6.4. In Q3, 707 emergency orders were raised to Ian Williams, with 699 of these being attended to within target. 3,151 routine repairs orders were raised to Ian Williams, with 3,095 of these attended to within target.

6.5. So far this year, 13,379 repair jobs have been completed across both contractors.

6.6. We are trying to understand the best route to ensure our systems are producing the same data. As noted above, the current rectification process is very manual which requires a significant amount of Officer time and does not reflect the purpose of having automated and integrated systems. We continue to work on this, but at this time it is assessed that Ian Williams' data is more reliable than our own, hence its presentation to you in this report.

6.7. Unfortunately, we were unable to obtain the same detail for Liberty Gas in time for this HRB, but are aware of similar systems issues with our data.

7. Compliance



7.1. As a landlord, there are a number of checks, inspections, and risk assessments that we are required to carry out. All of these are annual, apart from our Electrical EICR's which are completed at each property every 5 years on a rolling programme.

7.2. 100% of the qualifying properties have received their Gas Check, FRA (Fire Risk Assessment), and Legionella Risk Assessment.

7.3. 84% of our annual Asbestos inspections have been completed. This is an increase from 57% at the end of Q2 and on target to have all inspections completed by year end.

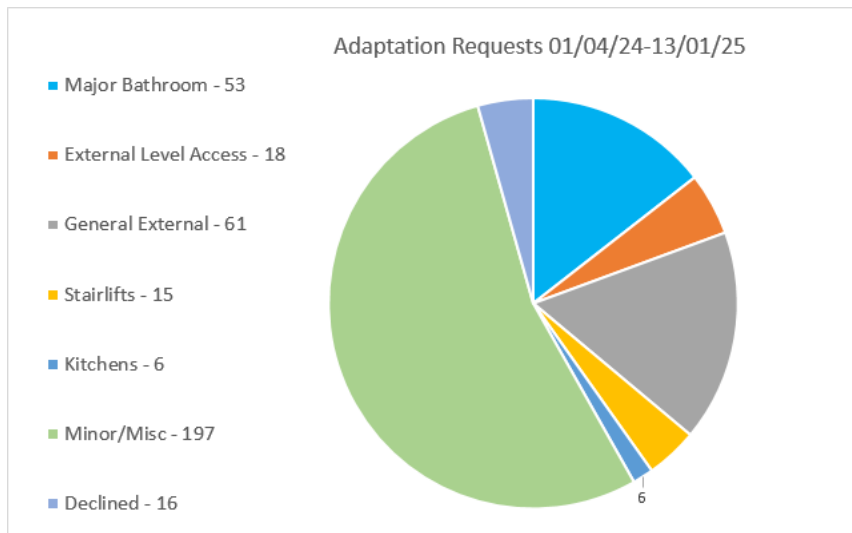
7.4. 99.9% of the electrical checks due this year have been completed, with just one property outstanding at this time. This is an incredible achievement given the difficulties we sometimes face gaining access to some of our homes.

7.5. 94.8% of our lift inspections have been completed at the time of writing this report. These inspections became due at the beginning of January 2025 and are scheduled to be completed by the end of January 2025.

8. Planned Works & Adaptations

8.1. Aside from our work to maintain the homes in our stock, we also work to ensure that these homes remain suitable for our tenant's changing needs.

8.2. So far this year, we have received 370 requests for adaptations in our properties, broken down as follows:



8.3. Adaptations works within our homes include:

- Bathroom Adaptations
- Wash/dry Toilets
- Accessible Kitchens
- Door Widening
- Aids for people with hearing loss
- Aids for people with sight loss
- Automation of doors
- Level access into properties
- Ramps
- Handrails and grab rails
- Lifts

8.4. Our adaptations team survey every tenant once works are completed, and so far this year are achieving 98% satisfaction.

8.5. Good News Stories from our Planned Works and Adaptations Team:

8.5.1. The team have been working with a family who have a disabled child with complex care needs that require specialist equipment and very specific adaptations to support them as the child grows older. The family were originally living in a first-floor maisonette, so an emergency move was made to a bungalow to alleviate some of the pressures the family were facing. However, this was not a long-term solution as the property still did not meet their needs nor adequately provide for the size of the family in the longer term. Many properties were assessed and considered, and we are pleased that a suitable option was identified within the EDDC stock and works are now in flow to transform the property. This will include the addition of a ground floor bedroom with wet room and hoist system, and an open plan living space with a kitchen designed for wheelchair access so that the child can continue to learn skills as they grow and participate in everyday family life.

8.5.2. Last year we had a fire in one of our properties. Luckily no one was hurt, and we were able to permanently rehouse the tenant. The planned works team worked swiftly with our insurance company to assess the damage and set about a full refurbishment of the property. The works were brought in 3 weeks early and under budget! Neighbours have provided us with compliments for how quickly the works were carried out with minimal disruption to their daily lives and how considerate and helpful the contractors were.

9. Complaints Handling

9.1. Infographic:

	Q1 23/24	Q2 23/24	Q3 23/24
No of stage 1 complaints received	60	60	69
Average response time for stage 1	31 days	17 days	13 days
%of new housing stage 1 complaints upheld	43%	48%	30%
%of new housing stage 1 complaints partially upheld	26%	21%	18%
%of new housing stage 1 complaints not upheld	31%	31%	52%
No of stage 2 complaints received	13	31	30
Average response time of stage 2	34 days	40 days	54 days
% of new housing stage 2 complaints upheld	61%	Incomplete	Incomplete
% of new housing stage 2 complaints partially upheld	15%	Incomplete	Incomplete
% of new housing stage 2 complaints not upheld	24%	Incomplete	Incomplete

9.2. The data for Q2 and Q3 Stage 2 complaints data is incomplete in some areas due to a significant backlog of complaint investigations and responses required from this period. This is due largely to the departure of our Property and Assets Service Manager and a reduction in senior level officers to review these cases, sign-off on judgements, and provide full responses. The complainants are being kept up to date regarding the progress of their complaint on a regular basis and progress is being made towards the end of Q3 into Q4 on reducing these numbers.

9.3. The data above does continue to show a pleasing improvement in the response times for Stage 1 complaints across the year. From 31 days at the beginning of the year reducing to 13 days in Q3, bringing us closer to the target of 10 days.

9.4. Since April this year, we have had 119 stage 1 complaints relating to repairs in tenant's homes. When you put this into the context of us having completed 13,379 repairs in the same period, this equates to a complaint level of 0.88%. This means that 99.12% of repairs have been completed without formal complaint from tenants; and of course, this does not take into account the complaints that we have not upheld which would lower the complaint level % even further.

9.5. The Housing Ombudsman continues to re-iterate the importance of response times falling in line with the new standards that have been set within the new complaint handling code. Excellent progress has been made in relation to responding to stage 1 complaints, this has confirmed that the change to have a designated team manager in the Property and Asset team only focusing on stage 1 complaints is working well.

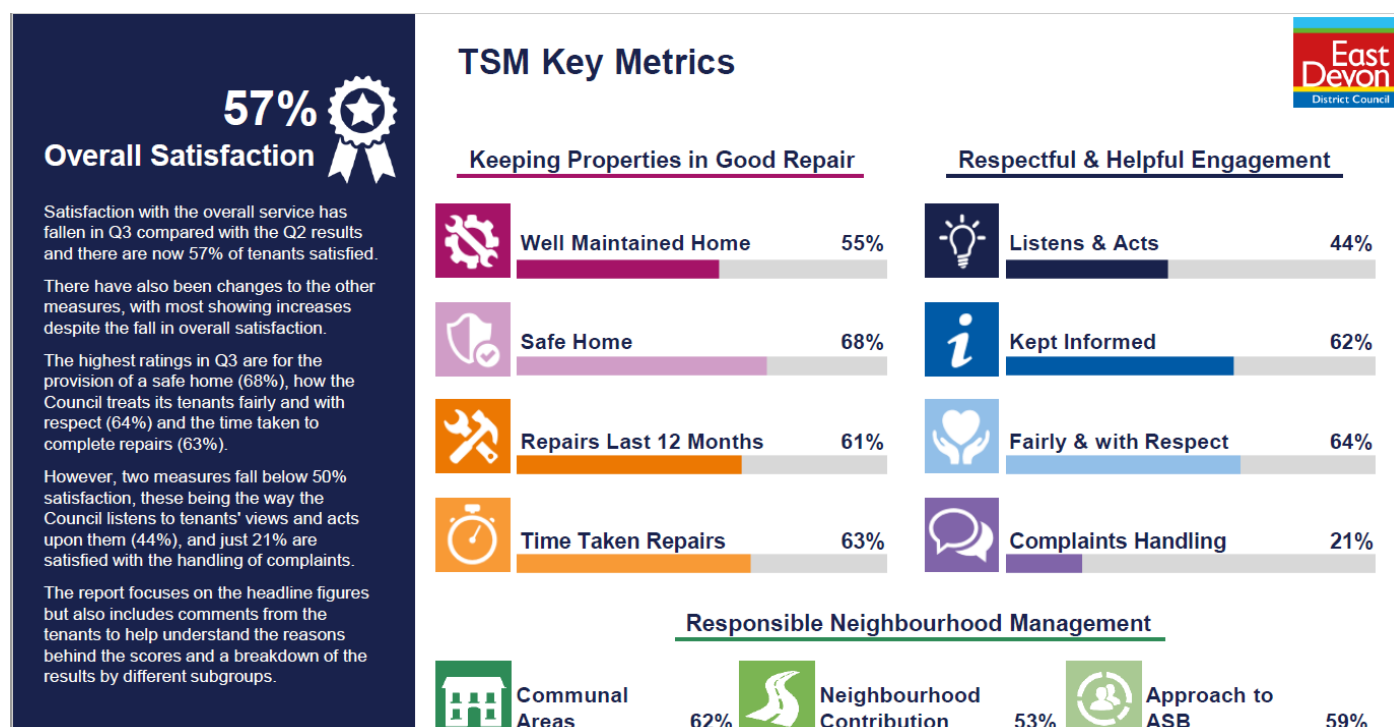
9.6. The Housing Performance Officer is continuing to support Service Managers with a diary system to ensure alerts and deadlines are managed through a calendar system. Weekly lists of outstanding complaints are also circulated at the beginning of each week in order to assist Officers with prioritising responses.

9.7. In the quarter 1 complaints report, we outlined ongoing work in relation to reviewing the internal processes that sit behind formal complaints. The first part of this work to map the current process is complete, however this work is now on hold, as directed by ELT, due to the opportunity for this area of service delivery to be managed through the new Corporate Performance System, this is continuing to be explored.

9.8. We recognise the improvements that need to be made in relation to improving our stage 2 response times.

10. Tenant Satisfaction Measures

10.1. The following shows the headline results of our Q3 TSM Survey:



10.2. The below analysis details each category questioned in the TSM Survey, showing how this compares between Q2 and Q3, and the change from the 2023/24 survey results:

Survey Area	Q2 Result	Q3 Result	+/- from 23/24 Survey	23/24 Benchmark
Overall Satisfaction	63%	57%	+4.3%	72.3%
Well Maintained Home	65%	55%	+8.6%	72.2%
Safe Home	72%	68%	+10.7%	78.7%
Satisfaction with Repairs	60%	61%	+9.5%	74.5%
Time Taken to Complete Repairs	48%	63%	+17%	70%
Landlord Listens and Takes Action	43%	44%	+4.8%	61%
Tenants are Kept Informed	67%	62%	+17.9%	71.4%
Treated Fairly and with Respect	65%	64%	+7.8%	78.2%
Satisfaction with Complaints Handling	15%	21%	+0.8%	34%
Communal Areas	46%	62%	+22.9%	66%
Contribution to Neighbourhood	48%	53%	+16.4%	64%
Approach to ASB	47%	59%	+22.6%	57.6%

- 10.3. As this is a live survey being completed throughout the year, we are aware that figures will increase and decrease as we move through. A number of factors can affect sentiment, such as a higher level of repairs reported and completed during winter, therefore likely to decrease satisfaction with the maintenance of their home, and we know that there is a true seasonal affect on positive survey results during winter periods.
- 10.4. With that said, there have been increase in tenant satisfaction in 7 of the measures since Q2, including the time taken to completed repairs (up 15 percentage points) and the upkeep of communal areas (up 16 percentage points), both of which are statistically significant changes.
- 10.5. Acuity, who carry out our surveys on the EDDC's behalf, have told us that around eight out of ten tenants in social housing continue to be concerned about the cost-of-living and this tends to affect the way they feel about the services they receive. Within EDDC's results, we see satisfaction increase with the age of the tenants, a similar trend to other providers, and those with the longest tenancies are often more satisfied than those who have been tenants for a shorter period of time.
- 10.6. Complaints handling tends to be the lowest performing measure for all landlords, which can be seen in the 23/24 benchmark figure of 34%. Whilst we are a way off achieving this, there has been a 6% satisfaction increase in Q2 and, as outline earlier in this report, work in this area is ongoing and focussed.
- 10.7. What we are seeing in our Q3 results is that, so far this year, we are showing improvements in all measures when compared with 23/24. Whilst no trend data for 2024/25 has yet been published, we know last year the general trend was an overall decrease in satisfaction measures across landlords. Therefore, it is pleasing to see a trend of continued increased satisfaction for EDDC tenants.
- 10.8. So far this year, we have received 350 completed surveys, which accounts for a sample of c.9% to date.