



HouseMark^{HM}

Year-end performance
2018/19

August 2019

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Executive Summary

Customer experience

The sector's focus on the tenant experience is reflected in their complaints handling performance:

1. On average, it took landlords 9 days to respond to complaints and half of all landlords reduced the number of days to respond to complaints
2. ALMOs are the best performers in this area – one third of those with lower than median response times are ALMOs
3. The proportion of complaints responded to within organisation target times increased to 89.3%
4. Local authorities are taking longer to respond to complaints but are still achieving their own targets
5. The proportion of tenants were satisfied with the way their complaint was handled increased by 1.5 percentage points to 69.5% - landlords in the North of England increased their satisfaction rating by 4.4 percentage points

Landlords are answering fewer calls and it is taking longer to answer those they do:

1. It took over a minute for a call to be answered in 2018/19 and 9.7% of calls were left unanswered
2. Almost half of landlords increased their call waiting times and for 1 in 5 the increase was greater than 30 seconds
3. English housing associations are more likely to have increased their call waiting times, particularly those operating in the north of England (increased by 34.2 seconds)
4. Two thirds of those whose call waiting times increased in 2018/19 also increased their total ITC costs significantly over the past five years – a sign of digitalisation and channel shift
5. The longer call waiting time does not appear to have significantly impacted satisfaction with call handling which remains at 93.5%

Housing maintenance

Repairs performance is flatlining while satisfaction rates fall:

1. It took landlords 9.4 days to complete a repair (0.7 days longer than last year) and three quarters of English landlords took longer to complete a repair in 2018/19 than in the previous year
2. A small group of London based associations reduced the average number of days to complete a repair to 7.4 days – shifting London from the worst performing to the best performing region for this measure
3. Landlords kept 97.2% of appointments and 92.3% of repairs were completed at first visit
4. Landlords with DLOs tend to complete a higher proportion of repairs at first visit and keep more appointments, however they take 10.0 days (at the median point) to complete a repair compared to 8.5 days for other landlords
5. 92% were satisfied with the repairs service they received, and we found that landlords who take longer to complete repairs don't necessarily have lower satisfaction

Housing management

Lettings performance has declined slightly this year and there is evidence of a widening affordability gap in the Midlands:

1. Tenancy turnover has remained stable with around 7% of units being re-let during the year for all landlord types at the median point
2. Landlords based in London and Southern England still have the lowest tenancy turnover due to the affordability gap between the social and private rental sectors
3. The median turnover rate for landlords operating in the Midlands dropped by 0.2 percentage points bringing their performance close to the Southern regions – this coupled with increasing private rents in the Midlands could be evidence of a widening affordability gap in the region
4. On average, landlords took 0.3 days longer to re-let a property than in the previous year - largely due to a small group of landlords that recorded increases in re-let times of more than 10 days
5. The median proportion of tenants satisfied with the lettings process dropped by 2 percentage points to 95% but almost half of landlords increased their satisfaction

Increased vacancy rates in the north of the UK and declining performance in void works is impacting landlords' void loss:

1. The median vacancy rate remains largely unchanged across the sector at around 1% of properties – just over half of these were vacant and available
2. Vacancy rates are still lowest in low demand areas such as London (0.6%) and highest in areas with lower demand such as Northern England, Scotland and Wales
3. If landlords in the low demand areas vacancy rates similar to the national median they could gain £400-£900 per property
4. The number of days taken to complete a void repair has increased by 0.9 days nationally from 11.1 days in 2017/18 to 12.0 days in 2018/19
5. Landlords operating in London and the South of England have improved the time it takes to make a property ready for re-letting, at the median point

Rent collection

Landlords are successfully managing the impacts of Universal Credit though managed migration remains a significant risk:

1. The number of UC claimants has almost doubled – 1 in 10 tenants are now in receipt of UC
2. The current tenant arrears rate for UC tenants is 0.78% which represents average arrears of £510 per UC tenant, around 6 weeks' worth of rent
3. Once managed migration completes, we estimate that the median national current tenant arrears rate will increase by 0.8 percentage points
4. Despite the increase in UC tenants, the median total arrears rate increased by only 0.12 percentage points over the year to 4.27% - largely due to increases in current tenant arrears
5. The median rent collection rate saw a 0.29 percentage point improvement and write offs were reduced

Neighbourhood

ASB caseloads remain stable in the face of a significant decline in satisfaction with case handling:

1. 75% of ASB complainants were satisfied with how their case was handled – a significant reduction on last year's median of 82%
2. Median satisfaction with the handling of ASB complaints dropped by 8.8 percentage points for housing associations to 74.5%, 8.2 to 60.1% for local authorities and 3.3 to 84.8% for ALMOs
3. Satisfaction with the outcome of ASB complaints also fell (by 1.7 percentage points) to 79%
4. The number of new cases landlords deal with has been low since 2013/14 however this year there was a small increase at the median point – for every 1,000 properties they own, landlords dealt with 3 more ASB cases than last year
5. ALMOs record the most new cases per property and have the highest case handling (85%) and outcome (82%) satisfaction rates of any other landlord type

Many landlords appear to be supporting and listening to tenants however there is room for improvement:

1. 30% of landlords that had submitted year end performance data reported that they have changed, implemented or removed at least one service as a result of tenant feedback
2. At the median point, landlords made a change to 12 services based on feedback – and increase of 1.5 percentage points on last year
3. The total number of tenants supported into employment has increased by 13% and at the median point, landlords supported around 41 tenants in this way
4. The total number of tenants provided with training and education increased by 15% and at the median point, landlords supported 93 tenants in this way
5. The total number of households who were given money advice by their landlord increased by 27% and landlords who support a greater proportion of their tenants with money advice often have higher current tenant arrears due to UC

HR

There have been some improvements in HR performance possibly due to reduced merger and restructuring activity:

1. The median number of days lost due to sickness absence has fallen by 0.3 days to 8.9 days – largely due to reductions in long-term sickness absence which fell by 0.4 days
2. The largest reductions were made by local authorities for which the days lost due to overall sickness absence fell by 1.1 days
3. 81% of staff are satisfied with their employer – 2 percentage points more than in 2017/18
4. There is a stronger relationship between staff satisfaction and sickness absence than satisfaction and turnover
5. Staff turnover rates reduced by 0.6 percentage points to 13.4% – particularly in Scotland and Wales where 80% of landlords reduced their turnover rate

Introduction

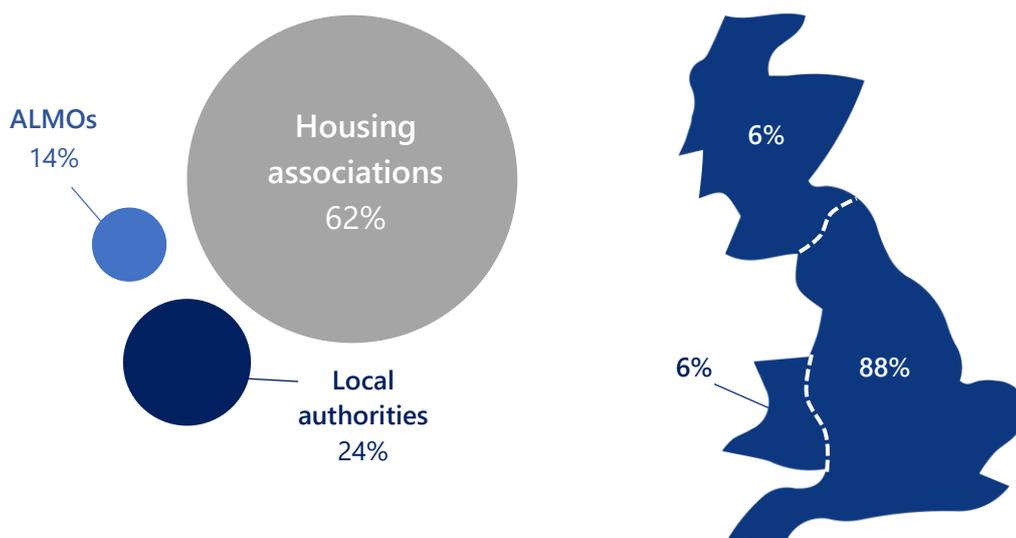
This end of year analysis report for 2018/19 uses performance data from more than 130 landlords owning more than 1.3 million units across England, Scotland and Wales. It is being released four months from year end (August 2019).

The medians and other analysis presented in this report are based on balanced panels of landlords i.e. those who had submitted data for a given measure at both 2017/18 Q4 and 2018/19 Q4. The balanced and unbalanced medians are shown in the Appendix.

The data was submitted from a mixture of Housing Associations (62%), local authorities (24%) and ALMOs (14%) from England (88%), Scotland (6%) and Wales (6%).

The analysis of this performance information has been grouped in to six categories:

- Customer experience
- Housing maintenance
- Housing management
- Rent collection
- Neighbourhood
- Human Resources (HR)



Customer experience

The sector's focus on the tenant experience is reflected in their complaints handling performance



It took landlords 9 days to respond to complaints - 0.4 days fewer than last year



89.3% of complaints were responded to within organisational target times - 1.3 ppts more than last year



69.5% were satisfied with the way their complaint was handled – 1.5 ppts more than last year

Following the Grenfell Fire tragedy and the publication of the Social Housing Green Paper¹ in England, there have been calls for housing providers to improve engagement with their tenants and ensure their concerns are being listened to and actioned. As a result, many landlords have been assessing whether their complaints handling procedures are fit for purpose and we are beginning to see this reflected in performance.

Half of all landlords reduced the number of days to respond to complaints. The majority of those who recorded rises in complaint response times increased it by only one day. ALMOs are the best performers in this area – one third of those with lower than median response times are ALMOs and 93% of complaints made to an ALMO were responded to within organisational target times.

Local authority response times increased by 2.6 days, but the percentage of complaints responded to within target times increased by 8.7 percentage points to 79.1%. Therefore, although local authorities are taking longer to respond to complaints, on average, they are still achieving their own targets.

A comparatively small number of landlords outside England submitted complaints data, those that did tended to improve their performance. This includes Scottish landlords which have been regulated on consumer standards since the Charter came into effect in April 2012.

Landlords based in the North of England recorded the greatest improvement in complaints performance, with an increase in complaint handling satisfaction to 77.8%, this was the highest rate of all regions and 15 percentage points higher than landlords in London.

However, landlords who respond to complaints quickly, and within landlord target times, do not necessarily also achieve good complaints satisfaction. Tenants are understandably more concerned with the outcome of their complaint, and how they are treated throughout the process.

¹ [A new deal for social housing \(Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, August 2018\)](#)

Landlords are answering fewer calls and it is taking longer to answer those they do



Only 1 in 10 inbound calls were left unanswered



It took landlords 66.5 seconds to answer inbound telephone calls - 21.5 seconds longer than last year



93.5% were satisfied with the way their call was handled

It took over a minute for a call to be answered in 2018/19 and 9.7% of calls were left unanswered. Almost half of landlords increased their call waiting times and for 1 in 5 the increase was greater than 30 seconds. These trends could be caused by the sector shifting to more digital methods of contact and encouraging customers to self-serve online.

Digitalisation and channel shift are relatively new trends for the sector, evidenced in our analysis of ITC expenditure and employees over the past five years². In fact, we found that two thirds of those whose call waiting times increased in 2018/19 also increased their total ITC costs significantly over the past five years. Furthermore, we found that English housing associations were more likely to have invested in digitalisation. English housing associations are more likely to have increased their call waiting times, particularly those operating in the north of England (increased by 34.2 seconds). The median call waiting time for local authorities has also increased significantly - by 23.2 seconds.

The longer call waiting time does not appear to have significantly impacted satisfaction with call handling. Fewer landlords report this satisfaction measure but, with a median of 93.5%, it is generally high for those that do. Like with complaints, there is a weak relationship between call handling satisfaction and call waiting times. This may be because tenants are more concerned with the customer service they received during the call and whether their issue was resolved.

² Previous HouseMark analysis found almost two thirds of landlords increased their ITC (IT and Communications) spend by more than inflation in the five years to 2017/18. This was found to largely driven by a 22% rise in ITC employees over the period.

Housing maintenance

Repairs performance is flatlining while satisfaction rates fall



Landlords kept 97.2% of appointments –
0.5 pts less than last year



It took landlords 9.4 days to complete a
repair – 0.7 days longer than last year



92.3% of repairs were completed at 1st
visit – a 1.1 ppt increase on last year



92.4% were satisfied with the repairs
service they received – 1.5 pts lower
than last year

Responsive repairs performance has wavered over the year, with small changes evident at year end. Though landlords are completing more repairs at first visit, fewer appointments are kept and it is taking longer to complete repairs than last year. As a result, repairs satisfaction, which is known to be very important for a tenant's overall satisfaction³, has dipped.

The proportion of appointments kept by landlords dropped by 0.5 percentage points over the year. The biggest reductions in appointments kept were made by housing associations with some recording falls of 10 percentage points since last year. Conversely, local authorities improved their performance in this area and increased the proportion of appointments kept by 1.3 percentage points.

The average number of days to complete repairs has been increasing steadily in England since consumer regulation in this area was reduced in the late 2000s, 2018/19 was no exception. In fact, three quarters of English landlords took longer to complete a repair in 2018/19 than in the previous year. Housing associations and local authorities both took longer to complete repairs than ALMOs. Local authorities averaged at 10.1 days to complete a repair with housing associations taking 9.2 days compared to ALMOs' average of 8.6 days. By contrast, a small group of London based associations reduced the average number of days to complete a repair to 7.4 days – shifting London from the worst performing to the best performing region for this measure.

ALMOs are top performers in repairs across all measures except for the proportion of appointments kept. The median repairs satisfaction for ALMOs is 4.5 percentage points higher than for housing associations. This is interesting as landlords with high satisfaction typically also have high proportions of appointments kept as well as high first-time completion rates.

The latest English Housing Survey⁴ found the most common cause of dissatisfaction amongst social housing tenants was the repair taking too long. However, we found that landlords who take longer to complete repairs don't necessarily have lower satisfaction. If landlords have been able to take

³ [New thinking on benchmarking customer experience HouseMark 2015 and 2017](#)

⁴ [English Housing Survey: Social rented sector 2017-18 \(July 2019\)](#)

longer to complete repairs without greatly impacting the service tenants feel they are receiving, they will have less incentive to improve that element of the service.

Repairs performance is generally higher for landlords with a DLO than those who contract-out the service. Landlords with DLOs tend to complete a higher proportion of repairs at first visit and keep more appointments, however they take 10.0 days (at the median point) to complete a repair compared to 8.5 days for other landlords.

Satisfaction with repairs for landlords with a DLO has remained stable, with 93% satisfied with their repairs service at the median point. However, those who contract-out the service experienced a 2.7 percentage point drop in satisfaction (94% to 91.3%). DLOs tend to perform slightly better but they are often associated with higher costs – landlords need to take both factors into account when making decisions about repairs and maintenance.

We estimate that around 4.6m social homes have gas appliances, which equates to 87% of all properties – this figure is set to decrease as gas central heating is phased out for new properties. Compared to other areas of health and safety compliance, gas safety is strictly regulated. At year-end 2018/19 two-thirds of our members recorded that 100% of their landlord gas safety records were up-to-date. Just over half our members (54%) kept 100% of landlord gas safety records up-to-date throughout the year.

Housing management

Lettings performance has declined slightly this year and there is evidence of a widening affordability gap in the Midlands



It took 24 days to re-let a standard property – 0.3 days longer than last year



6.9% of landlords properties were re-let during the year



95% were satisfied with the way the lettings process – 2 ppts lower than last year

Tenancy turnover has remained stable with around 7% of units being re-let during the year for all landlord types at the median point. The established regional pattern of turnover has continued in 2018/19. Landlords based in London and Southern England tend to have lower tenancy turnover than those operating in the North, Scotland or Wales. This is often attributed to the widening affordability gap between the social and private rental sectors. A lack of affordable private rented properties in London and the South East prevents social tenants from moving into private accommodation and as a result, demand for social housing is higher and turnover is lower.

The median turnover rate for landlords operating in the Midlands saw a small reduction of 0.2 percentage points this year, bringing their performance closer to that of Southern regions. Over the 12 months to March 2019, private housing rental prices grew by 2.3% in the East Midlands making it the English region with the largest increase⁵, while rents in the West Midlands grew by 1.6%. This suggests that the affordability issues experienced by tenants in London and the South could be moving north.

On average, landlords took 0.3 days longer to re-let a property than in the previous year. The increase in re-let times is largely due to a small group of landlords that recorded increases in re-let times of more than 10 days. This group represents 17% of all landlords and a third of all ALMO participants.

Though there has been a slight decline over the year, almost half of landlords increased their satisfaction. Northern English landlords were more likely to improve their lettings satisfaction and those in the Midlands were more likely to see a decline.

⁵ [Index of Private Housing Rental Prices, UK: March 2019](#)

Increased vacancy rates in the north of the UK and declining performance in void works is impacting landlords' void loss



0.5% of properties were vacant and available



It took landlords 12 days to complete a standard void repair – 0.9 days longer than last year



0.9% of rent due was lost due to properties being vacant

Vacancy rates remain largely unchanged across the sector at around 1% of properties. Properties which are vacant and available also still make up a slightly higher proportion of the total vacant properties than those which are vacant and unavailable. Vacancies rates are higher in the north of England (1.1%), Scotland and Wales (1.3%)⁶ where social housing rents are closer to the private rented sector and therefore demand is lower. By contrast, vacancy rates are around 0.6% at the median point in high demand areas such as London.

Consequently, landlords operating in areas with higher vacancy rates lose a greater proportion of rental income due to voids. On average, if landlords in the North of England had vacancy rates similar to the national median, they could gain £485 per property. This would rise to £1,140 per property if vacancy rates were similar to London and Southern England. Scottish and Welsh landlords could gain £870 on average per property if their voids rates were like the median landlord⁷.

However, not all this rent loss can be attributed to lower demand and greater turnover in the north of England, Scotland and Wales. The number of days taken to complete a void repair has increased by 0.9 days nationally from 11.1 days in 2017/18 to 12.0 days in 2018/19. Landlords operating in London and the South of England have improved the time it takes to make a property ready for re-letting, at the median point, while the rest of the UK is taking longer to complete void repairs and re-let the property.

⁶ Combined due to low numbers

⁷ Figures are a conservative estimate as total stock figures were used against general needs and housing for older people rental income.

Rent collection

Landlords are successfully managing the impacts of Universal Credit though managed migration remains a significant risk



The average current tenant arrears rate is 2.8% and has only increased slightly since last year



The average former tenant arrears rate is 1.3% and has only increased slightly since last year



On average, the current tenant arrears rate attributable to Universal Credit is 0.78%

Universal Credit (UC) is the largest welfare reform of the current Government, it replaces six legacy benefits including jobseekers' allowance and housing benefit. Since 2016, the Department for Work and Pensions has been working on a steady roll-out of UC Full Service for all claimant types across the UK, incrementally moving new claimants and those with a change in circumstances. This roll-out completed in December 2018⁸.

The next phase is the Move to UC pilot and the 'managed migration' of existing claimants of legacy benefits (e.g. Housing Benefit) without a change in circumstances to UC. The DWP estimates that there are 5.5 million households who will move to UC by the end of 2023⁹. The transition to UC poses a significant risk to housing providers and as a result, many housing providers have been keeping a close eye on their rent collection practices and preparing for increased arrears rates.

In 2017/18, 1 in 20 tenants were known UC claimants however this has since risen to almost 1 in 10. The current tenant arrears rate attributable to UC was introduced as a new measure in 2018/19 with the median at 0.78%¹⁰. This represents arrears equating to £510 per UC tenant or around 6 weeks of rent, on average. Under managed migration, 55% of working age tenants would be in receipt of UC. Once managed migration completes, we estimate that, based on the current average arrears for UC claimants, the median national current tenant arrears rate will increase by 0.8 percentage points¹¹.

Despite the increase in UC claimants, the median total arrears rate increased by only 0.12 percentage points over the year to 4.27%. The increase in arrears was highest for current tenants which increased to 2.83% - 0.18 percentage points higher than last year. The proportion of rent collected in the sector improved by 0.29 percentage points, pushing the rate closer to 100%. Write offs have also decreased for most providers, suggesting that landlords are focussing on mitigating the impact of UC rather than simply accepting losses to their income. Local authorities were the only landlord type not to reduce their write-off rate at the median point.

However, rent collection performance varies between landlord types. Current tenant arrears attributable to UC are highest for ALMOs (median of 1.59%) compared to local authorities (0.92%) and housing associations (0.59%). Both current and former tenant arrears increased by 0.2 percentage points for ALMOs, at the median point. According to our rollout mapping tool¹², the

⁸ [Briefing paper: Universal Credit roll-out: 2018-19 \(House of Commons Library, June 2018\)](#)

⁹ [DWP response to SSAC recommendations on managed migration Nov 2018](#)

¹⁰ Rent arrears figures quoted in this report exclude voids

¹¹ This estimate is based on the [2017/18 English Housing Survey](#) finding that 63% of social housing tenants are of working age and 55% of those receive housing benefit to help pay for all or part of their rent.

¹² [Universal Credit Peer Groups Tool \(HouseMark, June, 2019\)](#)

majority of ALMOs transitioned in late 2017 and 2018. The rollout was more gradual for stock retaining local authorities and housing associations, which tend to be more geographically dispersed.

Housing associations improved their overall arrears rate slightly – largely due to improvements in former arrears collection. Housing associations may be mitigating the impact of UC by increasing the resource allocated to collecting rental income from former tenants. This is also reflected in the median rent collection rate for housing associations increasing by 0.28 percentage points to over 100% - equivalent to £105k in additional income per provider, on average.

Neighbourhood

ASB caseloads remain stable and there is a decline in satisfaction with case handling



For every 1,000 properties they own, landlords dealt with 50 new ASB cases – 3 more than last year



75% of ASB complainants were satisfied with how their case was handled – a 7 ppt reduction on last year



79.2% were satisfied with the outcome of their ASB complaint – a 1.7 ppt reduction on last year

All landlord types experienced a considerable decline in ASB satisfaction from 2017/18. Median satisfaction with the handling of ASB complaints dropped by 8.8 percentage points for housing associations to 74.5%, 8.2 to 60.1% for local authorities and 3.3 to 84.8% for ALMOs.

Landlords that have recorded an increase in the number of cases tended to see an increase in their ASB case handling satisfaction. This is driven by increases in ALMO case rates, who tend to have the highest satisfaction ratings. There is also a strong relationship between the two ASB satisfaction measures. Unsurprisingly, those who have higher satisfaction with the outcome of the case tend to have higher satisfaction with the case handling, and vice versa. Additionally, landlords who improved one measure over the year, also tended to see improvements in the other.

The number of new ASB cases reported to landlords increased by 3 per 1,000 properties at the median point. Historically, ASB caseloads have been much higher; up until 2013/14 the national median was 70 cases per 1,000 properties¹³, 20 points higher than the current year. The median number of cases then dropped to just 45 per 1,000 properties and has stayed at around 45-50 ever since. The fall in rates of new cases coincided with the Crime and Policing Act 2014, which gave landlords new ASB powers. In the run up to the act coming into force, ASB was high on the sector's agenda and landlords were allocating greater resource to it¹⁴.

Responsible neighbourhood management and tackling anti-social behaviour (ASB) are listed in the Social Housing Green Paper as issues of key importance to residents which any key performance indicators should be focussed on. We would expect to see further rises in ASB case rates in advance of any changes to consumer regulation. The small increase in caseloads this year may therefore be an indication of landlord's increasing the resource allocated to tackling ASB.

The increase in cases was highest for ALMOs (a rise of 5.6 per 1,000 properties) who already record the most new cases per property. In 2018/19, an average of 74,000 cases were reported to each ALMO landlord, almost double the number of cases reported to a housing association or local authority.

ALMOs also have the highest case handling and outcome satisfaction rates of any other landlord type. 84.8% of ALMO tenants were satisfied with how their ASB complaint was handled and 82% were satisfied with the outcome of their complaint. This is in stark contrast with local authorities for which a much smaller percentage of tenants are satisfied with the handling of their complaint and/or the outcome.

¹³ Historical figures are not based on a balanced panel of landlords and are therefore not directly comparable.

¹⁴ [HouseMark ASB Benchmarking Analysis 2016-17](#)

Many landlords appear to be supporting and listening to tenants, but there is room for improvement



On average, each landlord supported 41 residents into employment – 12 more than last year



On average, each landlord provided money advice to 534 households – 58 more than last year



On average, each landlord provided 92 residents with training or education – 16 more than last year



Following feedback from tenants 12 services per landlord were changed, implemented or withdrawn

All landlords should take feedback from tenants seriously and use this feedback to improve and shape their services. 30% of landlords that had submitted year end performance data reported that they have changed, implemented or removed at least one service as a result of tenant feedback. At the median point, landlords made a change to 12 services based on feedback. The median number of services changed has increased by 1.5 – so there is improvement on the previous year.

Landlords are also supporting more tenants with money advice and into employment, training and education. The total number of tenants supported into employment has increased by 13% and at the median point, landlords supported around 41 tenants in this way (11 more than last year). The total number of tenants provided with training and education increased by 15% and at the median point, landlords supported 92 tenants in this way (16 more than last year). Fewer landlords supported tenants into employment but those who did were more likely to provide education and training, and vice versa.

The total number of households who were given money advice by their landlord increased by 27%. Landlords who support a greater proportion of their tenants with money advice often have higher current tenant arrears due to UC. This may indicate that the increase is being driven by more tenants needing money advice, rather than landlord's proactively supporting tenants to keep arrears rates down. This is the first year we have collected UC arrears rates and so we may see this relationship develop further over time.

Empowering tenants through effective resident involvement and engagement is a key area of consumer regulation. However, at the time of writing, too few landlords had reported on their resident involvement performance to be included in this analysis.

Human Resources

There have been some improvements in Human Resources (HR) performance possibly due to reduced merger and restructuring activity



Landlords lost 8.9 days per employee due to sickness absence



On average, landlords recorded staff turnover rates of 13.4% – this is 0.6 ppts lower than last year



81% of staff are satisfied with their employer – this is 2 ppts more than last year

The median number of days lost due to sickness absence has fallen by 0.3 days to 8.9 days. The largest reductions were made by local authorities for which the days lost due to overall sickness absence fell by 1.1 days. The overall fall is largely due to reductions in the average number of days lost due to long-term sickness absence which fell by 0.4 days. Few local authorities provided long-term sickness data but all those that did reduced their long-term sickness in 2018/19.

Landlords with lower staff satisfaction also tend to have high sickness absence and to a much lesser extent, high turnover. Our data suggests that there is a stronger relationship between staff satisfaction and sickness absence than satisfaction and turnover. High levels of sickness absence therefore may be a better indicator of an unhappy workforce than high turnover.

Staff turnover rates reduced slightly this year, possibly due to a reduction in merger and restructuring activity. Housing associations in Scotland and Wales experienced large falls in staff turnover – 80% reduced their turnover rates and 60% reduced them by more than 5 percentage points. In England, apart from local authorities, most have reduced their turnover rates. 60% of local authorities had greater turnover rates than in 2017/18 and the median for this group increased by 2.6 percentage points, to 13%.

It is difficult to assess the impact of merger and restructuring activity, particularly as the latter is often not publicised. However, by combining our internal intelligence and performance data we can see that unsurprisingly, those who have made significant organisational changes over the past two years, often see this impacting their HR performance. This also includes days lost due to sickness absence.

Appendix

The medians values presented in the table below are provided on a balanced and unbalanced basis for all organisations which had their 2018/19 year-end data approved by 18 June 2019. In a balanced panel, medians are only calculated for organisations which submitted data in both years, allowing for better comparison.

	Unbalanced panel		Balanced panel		
	Sample	2018/19 median	Sample	2017/2018 median	2018/2019 median
Customer experience					
Average time taken to answer inbound telephone calls (in seconds)	56	66.50	48	45.00	66.50
Percentage of calls answered	58	89.10	49	90.99	90.30
Satisfaction with call handling	20	92.00	14	93.65	93.50
Average time to respond to all complaints (in days)	57	10.65	45	9.40	9.00
Percentage of complaints responded to within target time	68	86.35	57	88.00	89.30
Percentage of respondents satisfied with the final outcome of their complaint	25	64.00	20	60.50	63.50
Percentage of respondents satisfied with the way their complaint was handled	29	71.40	23	68.00	69.50
Housing maintenance					
Appointments kept as % of appointments made	69	96.91	61	97.68	97.18
Average number of calendar days taken to complete repairs	97	9.50	90	8.75	9.45
Percentage of repairs completed at the first visit	69	91.29	60	91.21	92.27
Percentage of residents very or fairly satisfied with the repairs service they received	75	92.20	69	93.80	92.40
Housing management					
Average re-let time in days (standard re-lets)	92	23.95	89	23.70	24.00
Percentage of units re-let during the year	98	6.98	95	6.94	6.94
Number of tenancies terminated as % of properties managed	93	7.47	87	7.60	7.45
Percentage of tenants very or fairly satisfied with the lettings process	37	95.00	33	97.00	95.00
Average number of calendar days taken to complete standard void repairs	56	12.15	46	11.07	12.02
Percentage of properties vacant	94	1.01	92	0.99	1.02
Percentage of properties vacant and available to let	96	0.51	94	0.50	0.53
Percentage of properties vacant but unavailable to let	94	0.38	92	0.40	0.39
Rent loss due to empty properties (voids) as % rent due	100	0.94	95	0.91	0.94

	Unbalanced panel		Balanced panel		
	Sample	2018/19 median	Sample	2017/2018 median	2018/2019 median
Rent collection					
Rent arrears of current and former tenants as % of rent due (excl. voids)	102	4.37	97	4.14	4.27
Rent arrears of current tenants as % rent due (excl. voids)	102	2.84	97	2.65	2.83
Rent arrears of former tenants as % rent due (excl. voids)	101	1.35	96	1.23	1.31
Current tenant arrears of known Universal Credit claimants as % of rent due	54	0.78	-	-	-
Rent arrears of current tenants attributable to unpaid HB as % of rent due (excl voids)	38	0.72	37	0.60	0.71
Rent collected from current and former tenants as % rent due (excluding arrears b/f)	97	99.91	92	99.67	99.96
Rent collected from current and former tenants as % rent due (including arrears b/f)	94	97.33	81	97.17	97.22
Rent arrears of current and former tenants written-off as % rent due	89	0.39	87	0.39	0.39
Evictions due to rent arrears as a % of all tenancies	97	0.24	93	0.29	0.24
Neighbourhood					
Anti-social behaviour - new cases reported per 1,000 properties	72	48.56	66	46.98	49.96
Percentage of respondents satisfied with the final outcome of their ASB complaint	38	79.15	32	80.90	79.15
Percentage of respondents satisfied with the way their ASB complaint was handled	42	77.80	35	82.00	75.00
Number of services changed, implemented or withdrawn	39	12.00	30	10.50	12.00
Number of residents supported into employment by the organisation	36	25.50	28	29.50	41.00
Number of residents undertaking training or education funded by the organisation	38	92.00	35	77.00	93.00
Number of tenants households provided with money advice by the organisation	36	499.00	32	475.50	533.50
HR					
Average number of working days/shifts lost due to sickness absence per employee	89	8.92	84	9.22	8.92
Average number of working days/shifts lost due to long-term sickness absence per employee	48	4.83	42	5.42	5.02
Average number of working days/shifts lost due to short-term sickness absence per employee	48	3.92	42	3.82	3.83
Percentage of staff turnover in the year	92	13.47	87	14.00	13.36
Percentage of staff satisfied with your organisation as an employer	22	80.50	19	79.00	81.00

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