

Customer Scrutiny Panel

Executive Summary - Review of asset management of supported schemes

Background and context

Of the 9012 mhs homes 46% (4132) are houses; 39% (3531) are flats; 8% (719) are bungalows; 4.5% (389) are studio/bedsits and 2.5% (241) are maisonettes. Some of the flats are located in 4 high-rise blocks. 532 properties are designated as supported housing. Of these, 36 are bedspaces in foyers for young people, 91 are bungalows, 247 are studio flats and 338 are sheltered scheme flats.

The Assets Team is responsible for all property maintenance and repairs. The Assistant Director of Asset Management has the overall operational responsibility for the delivery of all aspects of property related services, including long-term strategic asset management, cyclical and planned works, major repairs, health and safety compliance, physical adaptations, repairs to empty properties and responsive repairs and any other property maintenance issues. She is supported by three key managers: Investment, Repairs and Quality and Property Compliance Manager.

Supported housing is managed by Sue Rudd, the Supported Living Manager who has the responsibility to ensure that the accommodation is suitable for the needs of the residents.

The in-house Kitchens & Bathroom Refurbishment and the Voids Team each has 14 operatives. When circumstances warrant, they support a team of Repairs Operatives who carry out day to day repairs. External contractors carry out most of the work relating to health and safety compliance, maintenance of mechanical and engineering plants and gas heating breakdowns, servicing and boiler replacements. All property-related contacts are managed by the Quality and Property Compliance Team.

Mhs spends around £12m per year to maintain homes and estates. Of this, around £6m is spent on planned and cyclical works, £3m on health and safety compliance and maintenance of mechanical items such as lifts, £2m on responsive repairs and £1m on repairing properties that become empty when tenants leave.

Summary of findings

Key strengths

- a. The overall approach to asset management is sound because mhs knows the condition of its assets very well and keeps the information updated. The long-term business plan and annual budgets are informed by updated information. The Assets Team has sufficient knowledge and expertise and work well with other teams. Annual delivery plans are well organised and the impact on inter-dependencies such as procurement, are considered in a timely manner.
- b. There is extensive evidence that stock renewals and replacement work is completed within agreed budgets and timescales. Properties are generally in a satisfactory condition although a more holistic approach would be more appropriate. Health and safety compliance work is continuing and mhs appears to be legally compliant.
- c. Health and safety is considered when planning and delivering major works, and the needs of diverse customers are considered.

Key areas for improvement

- a. Annual planning is insufficient. Whilst it is positive that investment plans provide sufficient flexibility to meet emerging demands. However, the impact of major changes is not fully considered from the perspective of risk or impact on people and budgets. There is an opportunity to make more use of responsive repairs data to inform the long-term capital programme.
- b. The overall customer experience needs attention. Key aspects include the right level of information being given in a timely manner so that residents can plan for giving access to their homes, reduce disruptions to themselves or others, and, if necessary, make alternative arrangements for short stay elsewhere, for example when kitchen and bathroom works are underway.
- c. The provision of timely information is equally crucial for scheme managers to advise on the implications for the scheme and assist in keeping residents informed and providing access to homes.
- d. Although partnership working across different teams at mhs is strong at senior levels this is not always found at other levels. Site-based staff are not fully involved at planning stages and not sufficiently informed about work before and when it takes place, nor are they asked to provide feedback.
- e. Opportunities to consult and engage residents in strategic decisions and listening to the customer voice when planning and executing projects are missed, given the absence of published capital works programmes, robust arrangements for resident liaison during onsite works and gathering

customer feedback. The position suggests weaknesses in current performance reporting arrangements that are limited to programme delivery and budgets.

As agreed with the CSP, service ratings are classified using a five-point scale of Great, Very Good, Good, Adequate, Unclassified. The overall judgement included is based on the agreed scope and based on the overall balance of strengths and weaknesses. Judgements reflect the seriousness of weaknesses as agreed by the CSP. Service ratings are on a five-point scale: Great, Very good, Good, Adequate or Unclassified.

The overall assessment for the asset management service for supported homes is 'Adequate', based on the following key themes considered:

Theme	Rating
Strategic asset management	Good
Work planning and delivery arrangements	Adequate
Overall customer experience of planned works	Adequate
Overall rating	Adequate

Recommendations

Below is a list of all the recommendations:

Priority	Recommendations
FUNDAMENTAL Fundamental control weaknesses, which expose the Company to a high degree of unnecessary risk	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduce systematic processes to measure the impact of major changes in asset management plans on financial requirements, risks and impact on residents 2. Involve site-based staff before projects start and liaise with them during onsite work and in post-inspection assessments
SIGNIFICANT Significant control weaknesses which expose the Company to a moderate degree of unnecessary risk.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Take into account all aspects of a building when planning work to provide for a more comprehensive and holistic approach 4. Significantly improve information for customers and liaison with site-based staff before, during and after planned projects are carried out inside their homes or in communal areas 5. Review arrangements for consulting and involving residents, both formally and informally, including getting feedback through surveys and complaints 6. Introduce comprehensive performance monitoring of capital works

HOUSEKEEPING

Areas where we have highlighted opportunities to implement a good or better practice, to improve efficiency or further reduce exposure to risk. Such issues are raised directly with management and are not listed within this report.

7. Publish a 'customer-friendly' version of the Capital Works Programme for residents
8. Re-launch the use of notice boards to convey information to scheme residents about work likely to be underway in the near future