

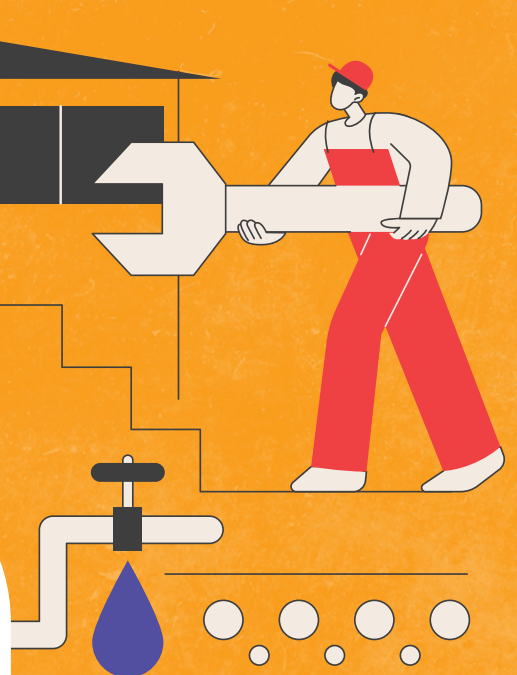
Northamptonshire ruralife

Northamptonshire Rural Housing Association
Residents' Magazine | Winter 2024



Tenant Satisfaction Measures

*What you think of our
services and what
we're doing about the
issues that matter
most to you.*



Merry
Christmas

And a Happy
New Year!

Welcome



In September 2023, we sent out our first official 'Tenant Satisfaction Measures' survey. Thank you again to all the residents who responded.

This special edition newsletter shares what you've told us and what we're doing about the issues you've raised.



In this issue:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">1. What are Tenant Satisfaction Measures?2. 1. Your feedback4. 2. Keeping your home safe and in good repair7. 3. Respectful and helpful engagement and communication11. 4. Responsible neighbourhood management13. 5. Complaints | <ul style="list-style-type: none">14. Meet the teamNoticeboard:<ul style="list-style-type: none">Customer support fundHelp us improve our servicesOffice closure datesReporting repairsAnnual reportWays to get in touch |
|---|--|



What are Tenant Satisfaction Measures?

The Regulator of Social Housing has created a set of measures to look at how well social housing providers in England are doing at providing good quality homes and services. These are called Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM). They help us, our Board, you (our residents), and the Regulator understand where we're doing well, and where we can do better.

The survey

A key part of the TSM is for us to survey our residents to understand how you think we're doing at completing repairs, keeping homes safe, and engaging with you.

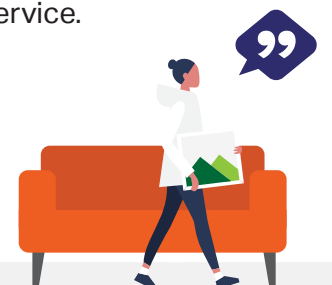
Your feedback gives us valuable insight into our performance and is vital in shaping the future of our service.

We'll send a TSM survey to you every two years and, if we're doing things right, the results will show that we're listening to your views and taking action to improve.

Your voice matters

Last year we only sent the survey to residents who live in homes owned by Northamptonshire Rural Housing Association. Residents living in homes that we manage, but which are owned by another landlord, such as emh, may have been surveyed by their landlord. This is what's required by the Regulator.

However, next year, to ensure that we're giving all of our residents the opportunity to feedback directly to us, we'll survey everyone, regardless of whether they live in a home we own or a home we manage on behalf of another landlord. We'll only need to report the results of the households living in homes we own to the Regulator, but we'll be able to use all the feedback to influence improvements in our service.



1. Your feedback

THANK YOU!

A big thank you to the 123 rental households who completed the survey.

Your feedback is really important to us. It helps us to improve, shape and develop our services to better meet your needs.

Although 123 isn't as many as we'd like, these responses do give us direction on where we need to focus our improvements.



Overall resident satisfaction with our services:

88%

7% Neutral / 5% Dissatisfied

We asked you what you'd like us to call you... customer, resident or tenant?

You said:
Resident: 40%

Customer: 28% / Tenant: 32%

"I like resident, because I reside in the house, and it feels more personal than customer."

"Lovely calm receptionists and I'm not handed about departments when I ring up."

"The contractor did not fully complete the repair so had to return."



Why are residents satisfied?

- 😊 Great customer service
- 😊 Supportive, friendly, helpful staff
- 😊 Quick, efficient response
- 😊 Quick repairs service

Why are residents dissatisfied?

- 😞 It takes too long to complete repairs
- 😞 Poor communication from contractors
- 😞 Communal areas are not always well maintained

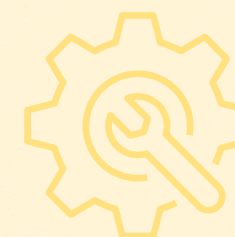
"I've always found everyone I've dealt with at NRHA to be very helpful and really nice."



What we're doing to improve... levels of dissatisfaction

We've created action groups for the two main areas of dissatisfaction:

- ▶ Communal areas
- ▶ Repairs



These groups, made up of colleagues from all areas of the association, have developed action plans to deliver improvements in their areas. Lots of work has already happened, and more is ongoing, which we'll tell you more about in this newsletter.

If a resident commented on the safety of their home (we asked them to supply contact information if safety was a factor), we rectified any issues immediately.

"Get better tradesman for jobs who don't live miles away."



2. Keeping your home safe and in good repair

To understand how well we're doing at keeping your homes safe and in good repair, we asked you four questions.

This is what you told us:



Satisfied with the overall repairs service we provide:

74%

12% Neutral / 14% Dissatisfied



Satisfied with the time taken to complete repairs:

80%

10% Neutral / 10% Dissatisfied



Satisfied that your home is well maintained:

85%

7% Neutral / 8% Dissatisfied



Satisfied that your home is safe:

93%

4% Neutral / 3% Dissatisfied

"Repairs need to be made in a timely manner."

"Get better repair contractors."

"Caring and helpful. Well-maintained home."

"When work has been done, it's always quick and finished to a good standard."

What we're doing to improve... our repairs service

"A very polite young man from Alect came to repair a hot water issue. He was professional, polite and explained everything when he finished."

We have a new gas contractor

► You said:

"The gas contractor is unprofessional and unreliable".

► We did:



We retendered our gas contract and appointed Phoenix as our new gas contractor from 1 April 2024.

The new contract is built around resident feedback, and has a much greater focus on customer service.

We involved residents in the new contractor selection process.

We're improving our contractors' service

► You said:

"It takes too long for a repair to be completed, and the quality isn't always very good".



► We did:

We've recruited more staff for our maintenance team, including a senior maintenance surveyor, a planned maintenance surveyor and a liaison officer.

► Is it working?

Yes. Our senior maintenance surveyor manages and supports our contractors and our team of maintenance surveyors. Having a dedicated senior person has enabled us to respond quicker and work more closely with our contractors.

► You said:

"I didn't know what would happen when my new bathroom was installed".

► We did:

Tony, our planned maintenance surveyor, and Adam, our liaison officer, are out and about visiting homes before, during and after planned works are carried out (such as new bathrooms, kitchens and heating systems), to ensure they're done on time and to a high standard, and to fix any issues as quickly as possible. The 'before' visit enables them to clearly explain what will happen, so there are no surprises once work starts.

We have a new approach to damp and mould

► You said:

"It took too long for the damp issues to be resolved".

► We did:

We've updated our policy and procedure to ensure that we're providing a quick, comprehensive and consistent response to every reported case of damp.

We sent a damp and mould leaflet to every household, with information about things they can do to reduce the opportunity for damp and mould happening. It encourages residents to report any issues of damp as soon as they spot it.

We've completed a self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman's Damp and Mould Spotlight Review to ensure we've met their requirements.

We're upgrading our homes

► You said:

"My heating and insulation should be updated and improved".

► We did:

We know that some of our older homes need to be upgraded. We have an ongoing programme in place to upgrade homes which have the lowest EPC (Energy Performance Certificate) rating, with air source heat pumps, solar panels and insulation.



More checks of completed and overdue repair jobs

► You said:

"Quality of work needs to be checked after completion".

► We did:

We've introduced a new process to more proactively monitor jobs.

For jobs that have been completed we'll call you to check you're happy with the quality of the work.

And for jobs that haven't been completed on time, we'll follow-up with the contractor.

Depending on the value of the work done, we may also do additional quality checks.

3. Respectful and helpful engagement and communication

To understand how well we're doing at providing information, communicating and engaging with our residents, we asked you four questions.

This is what you told us:



Satisfied that we listen to your views and act upon them:

78%

16% Neutral / 6% Dissatisfied



Agree that we treat you fairly and with respect:

91%

6% Neutral / 3% Dissatisfied

We want everybody to feel we treat them fairly and with respect, and we're sorry that anyone feels they aren't treated that way.

"NRHA now listen to what residents have to say. They respond with a good clear timescale."

"I was having to chase daily to find out what was happening with my heating repair."

"I find it very frustrating that the tradespeople you contract to maintain the homes do not treat tenants as they would a private customer."

"NRHA have a good open channel of communication. I feel that if I need to discuss anything with them I will be heard and it will be acted upon quickly."

"NRHA allow me my privacy and dignity to embrace my home."

"There are always updates, reminders and great communication."

We need to get a better understanding of what you want to be kept informed about and how we can improve. In the next couple of months, we'll be in touch to ask you some more specific questions to find out more about what you want. We've already started to make changes to improve the things you have told us about.



Satisfied that we keep you informed about things that matter to you:

87%

12% Neutral / 1% Dissatisfied



Satisfied with our customer care team:

96%

4% Neutral / 0% Dissatisfied

What we're doing to improve... our engagement and communication



We're improving gas servicing appointments

► You said:

"I wasn't given enough notice for my gas servicing".

► We did:

We've worked with our gas contractor, Phoenix, to ensure they're following our gas appointment process. This means their first appointment notification letter is sent to a resident no less than 70 days before their gas certificate runs out.

► Is it working?

Yes. We've monitored this over the last two months, and comments about late notice have reduced significantly.

We'll improve our air source heating system guidance

► You said:

"The engineer didn't explain how to use my new air source heat pump".

► We did:

We're creating some easy-to-read user guides for air source heat pumps.

We're keeping you better informed during the repairs process

► You said:

"The contractor needed to order parts – I didn't hear anything for over two weeks".

► We did:

We're being clearer about when a repair job should be completed by so that you have a date to hold us to.

We've started to provide more information about ongoing jobs that are waiting for parts – we've updated our system, so we can update you with a date for the next appointment as soon as a repair/parts order has been approved.

Our contractors will find out as much as they can about your issue when making an appointment with you, so that the engineer is as prepared as possible.

"Explanation on the thermostat control should have been explained... I had to ask."

We've improved our communications for planned works

(i.e. replacement bathrooms, kitchens and heating systems)

► You said:

"Workmen were fantastic.
Communication was not".

► We did:

We provide clear information, either in a letter or a booklet, and one of the maintenance team visit each household at the start of a large project to ensure residents know what to expect throughout the works.



We ask involved residents to review all new policies before they are approved

Recent examples include our Anti-social Behaviour Policy, Customer Support Fund Policy, Complaints Policy and Customer Experience Strategy.

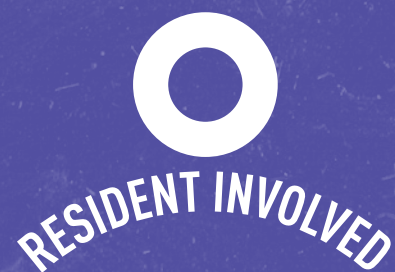


We invite residents to be part of any new contractor selection process

Recent examples include our day-to-day repairs contractor and our gas contractor.

We're reviewing our 'customer journeys' for reporting repairs and for gas servicing

This means we're looking at each step and communication in these processes to understand where we can improve and better manage resident expectations.



We're improving opportunities to get involved

We let all new residents know about the opportunities to be involved in shaping how we deliver our service. And, there's lots of information on our website. We encourage all residents to get involved and welcome all feedback.

4. Responsible neighbourhood management

To understand how well we're doing delivering housing services, maintaining communal areas and managing anti-social behaviour in your neighbourhood, we asked three questions. This is what you told us:



Satisfied that we keep communal areas clean and well maintained:

62%

3% Neutral / 35% Dissatisfied

"Some of the tenants on my scheme don't understand the meaning of keeping their property and the adjacent areas in good order, I feel a sightseeing visit wouldn't go a miss."

"Everything is sorted very quickly and outside is kept tidy."



Satisfied that we make a positive contribution to your neighbourhood:

65%

29% Neutral / 6% Dissatisfied



Satisfied with our approach to handling anti-social behaviour:

65%

27% Neutral / 8% Dissatisfied



These satisfaction rates are a lot lower than we want to see.

We have a dedicated project group looking at this area of our service and how we can improve.

What we're doing to improve... our neighbourhood management and communal area maintenance

We're looking at the bigger picture

We often identify improvements when carrying out scheme risk assessments. Some of these are quick fixes, but we're now taking the approach of considering alternative, more-expensive solutions that would deal with the issue, but also either enhance the scheme or remove the need for maintenance going forward.

We're making more of our scheme visits

We've introduced joint maintenance team and housing team scheme visits – so that we can answer more of your questions on the spot and action your requests quicker.

We've also started to carry out some scheme visits in the evening with the police community support officer.



We visit every scheme, giving residents the opportunity to talk to us in person.

We've enhanced our Anti-social Behaviour (ASB) processes

- ▶ We've updated our ASB policy, process and website information, to ensure all staff and residents are aware of what is (and what isn't) considered ASB and what we can do to support.
- ▶ We continue to work closely with the Police, local council and other partners to tackle issues of ASB.
- ▶ We've also changed the way we record incidents to ensure that domestic abuse and hate crime are recorded separately to ASB.

To further improve our ASB management, we're introducing:

- ▶ Good Neighbourhood Agreements where we've identified schemes with high level ASB.

We're updating our Domestic Abuse Policy

It will help us raise awareness with staff, contractors and residents to ensure safeguarding concerns are identified and actioned.

5. Complaints

We've improved our complaints process

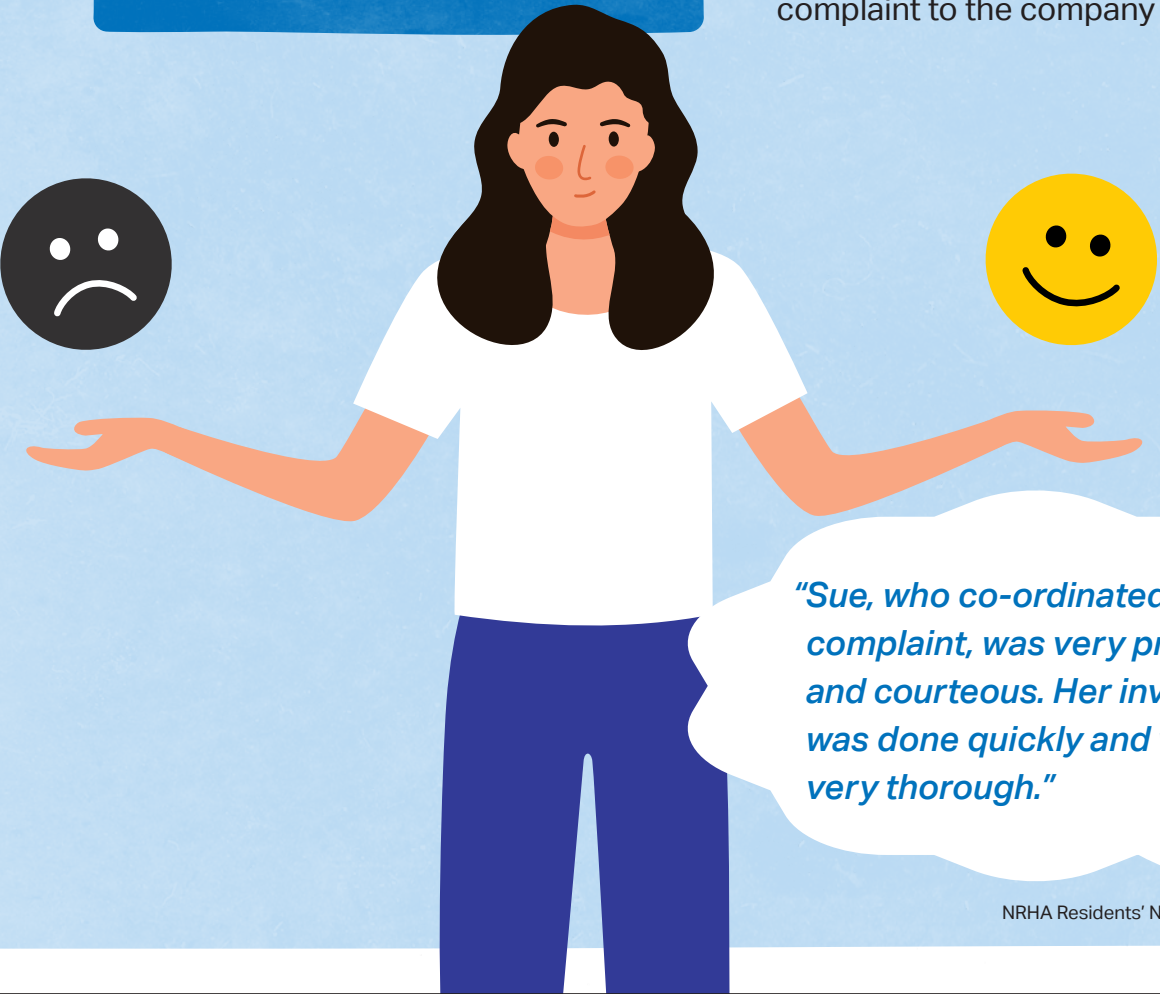
We updated our Complaints Policy in April 2024. This was following an update to the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code, which we're now legally required to follow.



We're open about the number and types of complaints we receive and publish this information in our quarterly e-newsletter and on our website.

To help improve our processes and services, we will also:

- ▶ Review a complaint as soon as we receive it and decide if a visit, or further visits, are required.
- ▶ Inspect completed jobs which are carried out as part of a complaint and any follow-on works.
- ▶ Add lessons learned from each complaint to the company action plan.



"Sue, who co-ordinated my complaint, was very professional and courteous. Her investigation was done quickly and was very thorough."

Meet the team...

hello!

Say... to our Customer Care Team...



Alayne



Leonie



Maxine

We're a small team, which we think is one of our strengths. We work closely together and all want to get to know our residents. Some of us work behind the scenes, but we thought it'd be helpful for you to know a bit more about the team members you're likely to speak to.

"The Customer service team are always kind, helpful, and understanding."

Alayne is the longest serving member of the Customer Care Team – she recently reached her 20 year milestone! If you call in and speak to Alayne, you can guarantee you'll get a friendly welcome, and she'll go above and beyond to help you.

Leonie started out as an apprentice in the team in 2018. There was no way we were letting her go at the end of her course, and she became a permanent team member in 2021. She's always positive, calm and remembers everything!

Maxine has been part of our Customer Care Team since 2019. When asked to describe Maxine in three words, a colleague once said: *'motivated, meticulous and magnificent'* and we think that's a pretty accurate description.

"I get on brilliantly with all the customer care ladies – we're on first name basis and they always deal with everything I ask for, or ring me back straight away with answers."

Lee joined our team in September 2023 as our Senior Maintenance Surveyor. He manages and supports our contractors, and our team of maintenance surveyors, to provide a great service for our residents.

Adam, our Tenant Liaison Officer, also joined us in September 2023. This is a brand-new role in the maintenance team, focussing on supporting residents through planned improvement works. Any residents who have met Adam will know that he always gives 110% to ensure residents are kept informed and happy with the work carried out.

Eleanor, our Maintenance Assistant, is the newest member of the maintenance team. She does a lot in the background to keep things running smoothly, and she'll probably be the person you speak to if you have a maintenance query.

"Lauren has been so supportive, kind and gone over and above to assist us since we moved in and we're very grateful."

Lauren, our Maintenance Surveyor, has been part of the Northamptonshire Rural team for over 15 years. She manages reactive repairs and getting empty homes ready to relet. Lauren started out in our Customer Care Team, so she knows about most aspects of the Association!

Tony joined the team earlier this year as our Planned Maintenance Surveyor. He focusses on ensuring our planned programme of works, such as external painting, kitchen and bathroom replacements and heating upgrades are done efficiently and to a high standard. With his 30 years' experience in construction, you can be sure he knows how to get a job done well!

"Adam answered all our questions and more. We were very impressed."

hello!

Say... to our Maintenance Team...



Lee



Adam



Eleanor



Lauren



Tony

hello!

Say... to our Housing Team...



Mark



Claire



David

"We're very satisfied with the care and consideration shown, especially with the attention given by Claire."

Mark is our Area Housing Manager, and with over 20 years experience in the housing team, you're in very safe hands. He oversees two housing officers, ensures that all processes and policies are up-to-date and is the main contact for our shared ownership households.

Claire is our Housing Officer for residents living in the West Northamptonshire Council areas: Daventry, Northampton Borough and South Northamptonshire. Claire always goes above and beyond for residents, and is one of the calmest and most helpful people you could meet.

David is our Housing Officer for residents living in the North Northamptonshire Council areas: East Northamptonshire, Kettering and Wellingborough. David is great at finding solutions in challenging situations and his background in specialist housing support is a great benefit to our residents.

Both Claire and David co-ordinate all things to do with housing and tenancies, including allocations, advising on rent queries, scheme visits, benefit notifications and anti-social behaviour.

"I've had a really rough year with losing my job and not really knowing where to turn, but David has been great in providing support and help."



Did you know...
we have a support fund for our customers?

If you're struggling financially and need some support, we may be able to help.

Find out more at: www.northamptonshirerha.org.uk/csf

Last year
we gave over
£6,500
from our Customer
Support Fund
—
Helping
33 households

Would you like to help us improve our services?

You don't need to wait until the next Tenant Satisfaction Measures Survey. There are lots of ways you can get involved – including short surveys, discussions and reviewing our policies. It won't take up much time and there's no commitment to regular meetings.

We want to ensure that our residents are at the heart of everything we do. The best way to do this is by listening to you, the experts at living in your homes!

Visit our website to find out how you can get involved: www.northamptonshirerha.org.uk/get-involved



We Want Your Feedback

If you'd like to be included in future surveys or discussions, please send an email to communications@midlandsrural.org.uk just letting us know your name and first line of your address, and we'll be in touch.

Our office will be closed on the following dates...

Friday 13 December

Christmas closure: We close at 12pm on Tuesday 24 December and reopen at 9am on Thursday 2 January 2025.



CLOSED

If you're a resident with an emergency repair request during this time, please call **0300 1234 009** and select the option to report an emergency repair.

If this number is unavailable, please call **0203 7013 553** for our out-of-hours service.

Reporting repairs

If you have an issue that needs a repair, **PLEASE LET US KNOW AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.**

This will help us sort the issue quickly for you and stop things getting worse.

You can report repair requests to us anytime on:

- ! MyHomeOnline
- ! Our website:
www.northamptonshirerha.org.uk/contact-us
- ! By email:
enquiries@midlandsrural.org.uk
- ! Or you can call our Customer Care Team, Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm, on 0300 1234 009.



Emergency repairs

If you have an emergency repair, please call 0300 1234 009. If you call outside of office hours (after 5pm and before 9am or at a weekend) you'll be transferred to our out-of-hours team.

Annual report



Each year we produce a report to show how we've performed during the previous year and how we've continued to invest in and improve our services.

Our annual report, covering April 2023 to March 2024, is now available at: www.northamptonshirerha.org.uk/annual-reports

If you'd like a hard copy of the report, or any further information, please email enquiries@midlandsrural.org.uk or call us on 0300 1234 009.

Ways to get in touch with us...

Phone: 0300 1234 009, 9am – 5pm, Monday – Friday

Email: enquiries@midlandsrural.org.uk

www.myhomeonline.org.uk/midsrur/www

Facebook: @NorthantsRural

Like us on Facebook to see all our latest news

We only have one phone number – it's the same one for routine enquiries and emergency requests.