



Winchester City Council
Consumer standards feedback
Kevin Bentley and Suzanne Hemingway
May 2026

General observations: already on an improvement journey

- Self-referral to RSH in January 2023 – graded C3 (based on S&Q and TIA)
- Improvements started so far:
 - New management structure/team
 - New IT upgrades procured but not yet in place
 - Culture – increasing accountability and customer-focus
 - Investment in new approach to hearing the tenant and resident voice
- Mock inspection to provide challenge to the process – but current version of improvement plan not shared
- Summary: strong progress visible in some areas - but more to be done to achieve compliant position
- Staff are committed and keen – but sometimes confused by the rapid changes, struggling to see the bigger picture and where they fit

Overall: *WCC need to continue the improvement journey in order to be certain of evidencing that it is compliant with the consumer standards in all areas*

Governance

- TACT – Tenants and Council Together – brings a range of customer voices from different groups/roles together
- Cabinet member is also the MRC, and chairs the TACT Board – direct link to tenant voice
- Cabinet Housing Committee:
 - Meets three times a year to consider housing issues
 - Now receives reports on compliance and KPI performance (including ASB evictions, other evictions, downsizers, safeguarding referrals, arrears, voids)



Bench mark (LA)	2024/25 result	Change over time	2025/26 result
69%	76%	↑	78%
72%	76%	↓	74%
68%	72%	↔	72%
68%	73%	↔	73%
74%	76%	↑	77%
57%	61%	↔	61%
69%	71%	↓	70%
75%	77%	↔	77%
31%	34%	↑	37%
63%	61%	↑	71%
62%	60%	↑	61%
57%	55%	↓	51%

Tenant Satisfaction Measure

- TP01 satisfaction overall
- TP02 repairs service in last 12 months
- TP03 time taken to complete last repair
- TP04 home is well maintained
- TP05 home is safe
- TP06 listens to views and acts on them
- TP07 being kept informed
- TP08 treated fairly and with respect
- TP09 approach to handling complaints
- TP10 communal areas clean and maintained
- TP11 makes a positive contribution to area
- TP12 approach to handling ASB

statistically significant improvement
 no statistically significant change
 statistically significant decline





Safety and Quality Standard

The headlines – safety and quality

- Regular compliance and performance reports are reported into the governance structure covering all key areas including, fire, risk assessments, asbestos management, lifts, water, hygiene, gas and general health and safety compliance
- Compliance levels in all key areas are high (almost all 100%)
- Good systems in place to cross check, audit and validate compliance (**not** repairs) information
- Stock data, stock surveys, forward investment planning and alignment to the HRA business plan are currently weak and underdeveloped, but an area of focus
- Lack of an asset management strategy, a major weakness
- Decarbonisation plans, particularly towards EPC band C amongst the best we have seen
- Mobilisation of the new R&M contract and the implications of delegation of repairs ordering including DMC cases a major risk

The headlines – safety and quality

Overall, this standard may be able to achieve a compliant C2 rating, providing:

- Upon completion of the stock condition survey, robust up-to-date stock data becomes available for future planning purposes
- This stock condition data is demonstrably used to develop a fully funded, via the HRA, 30-year investment plan and supported by a detailed five-year investment and delivery plan
- A detailed asset management strategy with key objectives and targets, aligned to the delivery plan is developed
- Repairs and maintenance service delivery is improved to achieve performance levels at target levels

Specific observations – stock quality and decency (1)

- Ongoing stock condition survey c.80% stock has been surveyed
 - Currently projected to be at 100% survey data by July 2026
 - Reporting 209 non-decent homes reduced from c.800 – good progress (but c.20% of stock still to be surveyed)
 - All 209 non-decent dwellings in programme
 - HHSRS hazards reported in landlord services scorecard quarterly
- But SCS is yet to be developed into a detailed stock investment programme derived (currently) from Keystone SCS database
- Life cycle and component costs not yet fully updated which may impact significantly on current indicative projections
- Detailed investment plans not yet fully developed – a priority
- NPV option appraisal model for unsustainable stock not yet in place or developed
- Good knowledge of EPC rating – (c.29%) of properties below EPC band C – but funding and plans to achieve band C fully in place

Specific observations – stock quality and decency (2)

- Using energy efficiency software modelling to assist in prioritising and planning
- Lack of integrated approach between retrofit team and strategic approach to DMC, eg, risk profiling of properties and new tenancies, etc
- Lack of integrated approach between the retrofit team and asset management particularly evidenced by the draft investment plan we saw not including EPC band C and future decarbonisation costs

Building safety performance/compliance – most recent data

Compliance	Latest reported data (March 2026)
BS01 – Gas safety checks	100%
BS02 – Fire safety checks	100%
BS03 – Asbestos safety checks	100%
BS04 – Water safety (legionella) checks	100%
BS05 – Lift safety checks	96.49%%
BS06 EICR inspections (domestic)	99.19%

Specific observations – building safety

- Good structured cyclical inspection systems are in place covering all key areas including, with good compliance performance reported in all key areas
- Surprisingly, not on MOT style gas servicing arrangements
- Validation and compliance software in place – ‘TCW’ and ‘True Compliance’
- Reporting is somewhat fragmented, and can be difficult to read/analyse – no ‘over-arching’ compliance dashboard in place – this is good and increasingly common practice (we can send you a good example)
- Good knowledge and management of follow up actions in all key compliance areas, eg, low/medium actions following FRAs
- Follow on actions following compliance on-site inspections/assessments are raised through Orchard meaning performance reports, outstanding job reports etc can be easily tracked and produced

Specific observations – health and safety (1)

- All 'big six' policies (+ damp and mould) – all in place
- Need to develop a policy and overall approach to the risk of radon in dwellings – there appear to be some higher risk areas in the Council area
- Good range of policies and associated information are on the published the Council website in line with good practice
- Low levels of disrepair cases are reported – appear to be well managed

Specific observations – health and safety (2)

Damp, mould and condensation

- Good process in place for DMC – including policy and service standards
- Good information for tenants on website
- System in place at first point of contact, early qualified surveyor involvement – we are concerned at the delegation of this extremely important function to your new repairs contractor
- No clear analysis/profiling of damp, mould and condensation, eg, by age of property, archetype, geographical location, tenant profile
- No system to identify high-risk properties/tenancies
- Follow up assessments and post inspections not being delivered to target
- Analysis of cases by principal rising damp, penetrating or condensation, poor ventilation systems etc – not in place

Specific observations – repairs, maintenance and planned improvements

- Website includes information for tenants on repairs and improvements
- Tenant information on website with some good advice, information and guidance (but underdeveloped compared to BP, eg, video guides etc)
- Well written repairs policy in place published on website as well as repairs guidance
- Tenants can report repairs online – book an appointment, but not modify, track and change an appointment – will the new contract enable this?
- But ... poor repairs performance information is consistently reported (March):

Repair category	Performance	Target
Category A Emergencies (2 hours)	80%	100%
Category B - Urgent (5 days)	77%	93%
Category C - Routine (20 days)	84%	90% (U and R)
Customer satisfaction	88%	93%

Priorities (1)

- Urgently develop a detailed five-year investment plan, using up-to-date stock condition data when this becomes available
- Ensure costs component costs, life cycles and other key financial data in day stock modelling software are up to date and based on either actual costs were known or good comparative market data
- Ensure the future investment program derived from stock data is fully fundable and incorporated into the asset management strategy/the investment planning framework and demonstrably part of future investment plans. Headroom in the HRA BP will need to be demonstrated
- Ensure future investment programs demonstrably ensure for compliance with decent home standards, including new requirements of DH2
- Ensure the investment plans fully incorporate anticipated costs for achieving EPC band C by 2030, and future decarbonisation costs

Priorities (2)

- Ensure extremely strict protocols and procedures are in place for the new repairs contractor, particularly around triage arrangements for DMC, and going forward the impending requirements under Awaab's Law
- Urgently develop and implement, in partnership with your new contractor, a repairs recovery plan to ensure repairs and maintenance performance is consistently in line with targets in your policy
- Ensure follow-up visits to damp mould and condensation cases, are in place robustly
- As part of a wider integrated approach to DMC, introduce analysis systems, risk profiling and similar exercises to identify high risk properties and tenancies associated with DMC
- Develop a performance framework for aids and adaptations to be signed off within the governance structure

Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard

The headlines – transparency, influence and accountability

- Work on tenant involvement progressing well – tenants are involved in a range of different roles and groups
- Routes in place for tenant voice to influence policy - through housing improvement workshops, and readers panels
- Plans to establish tenant scrutiny and further expand involvement in 2026/27
- Service standards in place for tenant involvement but other areas need review or development
- Complaints service has improved, need to consider how to use insights from complaints more quickly and effectively
- Lack of tenant and household data impacts on ability to demonstrate fair services – collecting tenant data need to be a high priority
- Overall, this standard may be able to achieve a compliant C2 rating if there is a clear plan in place for data collection and use, with evidence of prioritisation and progress

Fairness and respect/diverse needs

- TSM “treated fairly and with respect” – 77%
- Housing values in service plan; staff receive EDI and safeguarding training online at induction
- Managers report a desire to bring in customer experience training to support culture change
- Complaints team reported no complaints about fairness
- Different levels of satisfaction across geographical areas – is there an issue of fairness in outcomes here? Consider why this is happening
- Further work to identify whether services are fair depends on having information on the diverse make up and needs tenants and residents
- A clear strategy and plan for household data collection and use needs to be a high priority – with targets that are monitored (and resource to achieve them)

Tenant and leaseholder engagement

- Strong partnership and influence plan and tenant partnership charter
- Good evidence of involving tenants in a variety of ways and using it to learn
 - Workshops and other participatory activity have an evaluation activity for tenants to feedback on the format/content of the session
- Housing improvement workshops – tenants choose the focus, the workshops include participation to influence service improvements
- Policy co-creation groups – working together on specific areas of policy, feeding into tenants reading and commenting on policies
- Armchair reviewers – digital input
- Complaints scrutiny panel – reviews trends and complaints, plan for group to track improvements from complaint learning
- Tenant voice scrutiny panel and tenant awards ceremony in 2026
- Outreach via newsletters, rotating meeting venues, big summer event

Improvements at tenants' request: benches, beds and shrub planting



Service and performance information

- Information is provided digitally
- Tenant newsletter online – some copies provided to sheltered schemes
- Required information is provided on housing pages of website
- SHINES – Your Housing Newsletter – published quarterly online, with links to key webpages
- Performance information is in the annual report – online
- Staff reported initiatives to support people who cannot access information online including attempts to roll out free laptops – but continued challenges for those who lack digital skills
- Need to consider:
 - How can you meet the needs of tenants who are not confident with digital tech, or who have additional needs?
 - Can you share performance information more often so tenants can see improvements?

Complaints

- The policy
 - Housing complaints policy includes an informal stage – local resolution This needs to be amended – HOS does not allow for a Stage 0 complaint
 - WCC website – page for the Council complaints policy needs to signpost people to Housing Complaints
 - Unreasonably persistent complaints policy in place
- The service
 - Significant number of HOS findings in recent years
 - Recent complaints showed good responses – careful investigations and clear letters
 - Complaints action tracker introduced to ensure promises made are actioned
 - Consider how you can do more to genuinely learn from individual complaints and complaint patterns. How can you demonstrate that this learning has been used to improve services?

Priorities

- Tenant data – create a plan for data collection and use:
 - With timescales and arrangements for monitoring data collection targets
 - Ensure data cleansing included, and data update checks by call handlers
 - Staff training in effective use of data is crucial – consider where this role sits
- Consider how you hear the voices of different groups including rural tenants
- Work with tenants to review service standards across all service areas (2019 standards on website)
- Develop stronger process for/evidence of learning from complaints – both individual cases and themes – in real time
- Review website - check everything is up to date

Neighbourhood and Community Standard

The headlines – neighbourhood and community

- TP10 communal areas clean/maintained well:
 - increased satisfaction from 61% in 2024/25 to 71% in 2025/26
 - The most significant change in TSM results
 - Important to continue to deliver good services here (and to be able to evidence this)
- More evidence of working with partner agencies to deliver wellbeing in communities would be valuable
- DAHA report provides excellent evidence on domestic abuse services
- ASB services are improving, but more to do on identifying what is ASB, and ensuring you can evidence outcomes
- Overall, WCC may be able to demonstrate compliance (C2) with this standard, subject to improving reporting and monitoring of ASB, and collating evidence of wider partnership working

Safety of shared spaces

- No arrangements in place for shared approach to areas with tenants of multiple landlords
- Scheduled inspections in place – using Housemark photobook – but lack of sufficiently clear policy on items-on-landings
- Scheduled estate walkabouts reported – *consider how you can involve tenants and residents here?*
- Consider how you can evidence impact on customers
 - Involve tenants in agreeing clear service standards
 - Reports of walkabouts with photos
 - Review of complaints about shared spaces over last year – what were the issues, what did you learn, are you prepared for seasonal challenges?

Site visits: communal areas mostly well-maintained





Local cooperation to promote wellbeing (economic, environmental and social)

- **Party in the park – summer event for tenants**
- **Community hubs and pop-up hubs in response to local issues**
- **Digital drop-ins** – run by community team – to help people access services online. Offered free laptops, but found the biggest issue is skills
- **Funding to CAB** – who provide support to tenants we refer to them, and also offer drop-ins at various events
- **Economic development service** offers access to employment through local employment skills plans (for new developments), and jobs fairs with employers
- **Local foodbanks and pantries** support our communities – some run from Council community centres
- **LegacyPlus** – project for 12-25-year-olds at risk (of homelessness/causing ASB/asylum seekers) – mentoring and support for tenancy-readiness via police and crime funding
- **Community action days** – supporting local clear-ups with skips
- **Public health campaign “Live longer better”** – including activity programmes in sheltered

ASB and hate crime

- Community safety partnership – WCC is a partner
- Draft community safety ASB policy shared – new housing ASB policy categorises ASB separate from neighbour nuisance to address over-reporting
- ASB reporting shows WCC ASB rate about twice the national average – reportedly due to inclusion of cases of neighbour nuisance
- Service review by Resolve recommended dedicated housing ASB resource – now in place. Other recommendations (eg, on RA) need embedding
- ‘ASB satisfaction’ is improving:
 - But this is across all cases recorded (as per previous definition)
 - Need to monitor ASB cases separately
- Service standards for ASB to be reviewed – clarify how quickly the Council responses/risk assesses/visits
- Piloting new ASB triage tool and undertaking “feeling of safety” surveys in communities /at pop-up events
- Low awareness of hate crime – consider work with tenants and residents to understand local impact/ work with partners to promote safe, confidential reporting as well as more community tolerance (of particular groups)

Domestic abuse

- DAHA gold accreditation achieved after significant amount of work by officers
- Accreditation report is really good evidence – shows that WCC has adopted comprehensive standards, clear procedures and trained staff
- 20 DA advocates trained and in place across Council services
- All staff receive some DA training as part of safeguarding training
- DA policy for tenants and residents reviewed by readers panel and a local lived experience group (Trinity Service)
- Referrals to local perpetrator service – Hampton Trust
- Systems flags applied for DA survivors
- Officer leading on DA also leads on other areas including Housing First and ASB – ensure WCC continues to have enough capacity for DA support
- In workshop, staff shared the impact of the work including a case of a tenant at risk identified by a contractor who stayed until she was safe

Priorities

- Collate clearer evidence of partnership work to support tenants
- Develop case studies to show social/economic/environmental impact
- Involve tenants and residents in monitoring their local area/reporting issues :
 - Estate walkabouts /local area surveys/feedback
 - Block or neighbourhood/area champions who have access to report issues
- ASB – focus on effective triage and separation of data for monitoring service
- Promote safe reporting of hate crime
- Ensure continued training and support for staff in relation to DA work

Tenancy Standard

The headlines – tenancy

- Key policies in place
- Review of Hampshire Home Choice underway needs to inform future policy on best use of stock
- Good range of support services available to tenants with additional needs
- Reporting on tenancy outcomes not seen – numbers of evictions, mutual exchanges, demotions, etc
- Consider how you can evidence effective support provided to maintain tenancies
- Overall, WCC may be able to satisfy the Regulator of compliance with this standard (C2) – subject to providing clear evidence of outcomes in tenancy services (and reviewing/updating tenancies if required)

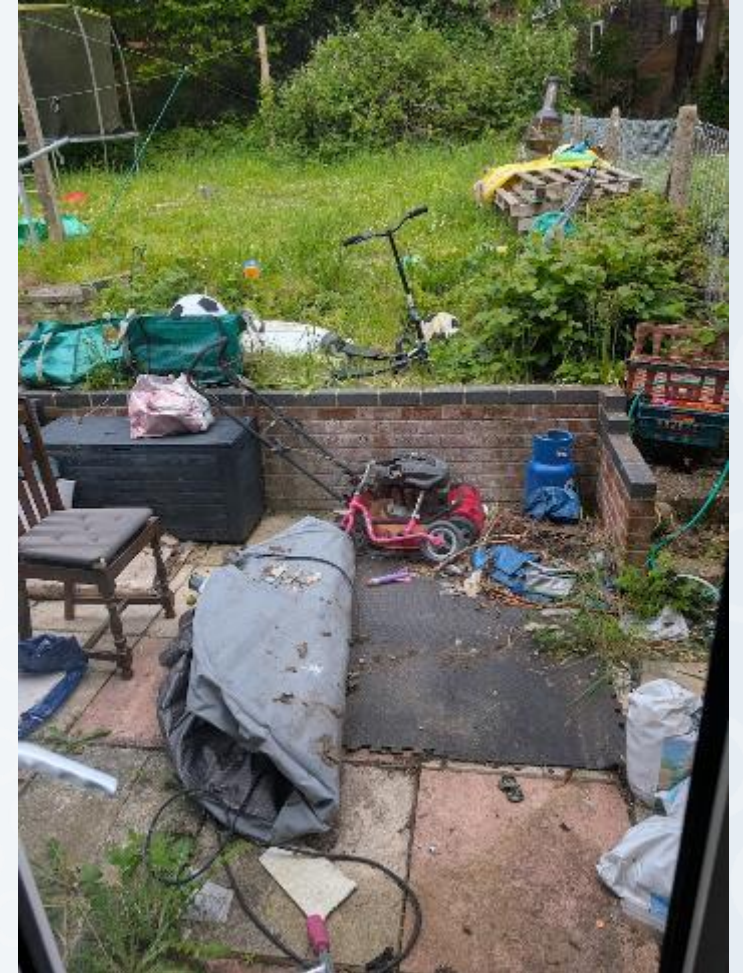
Allocations and lettings

- Hampshire Home Choice – CBL in place, now under review – to consider improving customer journey, reducing priority of non-bidding applicants
- Flexible approach to local connection across neighbouring areas, and acceptance of people in private renting looking to move
- Significant refusals of offers at present – especially of two-bed flats (people want to wait for houses) – this may be addressed by revisions to the allocation scheme
- Lettings process is mostly online, unless tenants are already known to have additional needs, but sign-ups will be done on site in future
- Are opportunities to identify tenants at risk missed at lettings stage?
 - Tenants coming from TA go through a tenancy ready programme and an automatic referral to tenancy sustainment once rehoused
 - Sheltered tenants are signed up by a housing officer and supported from the viewing to the start of the tenancy, with a new tenant visit after five days and a follow up after a month (with drop-in surgeries available every week)

Lettable standard



Challenges



Tenancy sustainment and evictions

- Good offer on tenancy sustainment – in-house tenancy sustainment team provide support to tenants and residents (4 TSOs and 1 TSA))
- Service to new and existing tenants includes:
 - Help with benefit claims financial inclusion work; referrals for other support
 - Tenancy-ready programme for homeless in TA
 - Resettlement officer for refugees
 - Grants for people who need help setting up home
 - Early intervention on rents/debts
 - Support for hoarders including a “deep clean” option
 - “No eviction” policy – working to keep people in their homes even with debts (option to write off after long period or for specific reasons, eg, DA)
 - **682 residents supported in 2024-25 (includes 45 private sector)**
 - **Report for 2025/26 is a priority for evidence**

Tenure, mutual exchange and right-sizing

- Tenancy strategy/policy – use of introductory and secure tenancies only
- Tenancy agreement document not supplied – not reviewed by HQN – consider whether an update is needed
- Mutual exchange is offered and promoted in tenant publications
- No proactive rightsizing schemes in place – but housing assistants have been “tasked with” looking at rightsizing through mutual exchange
- Housing improvement workshop with tenants on downsizing identified fears and worries – WCC now working on a new recharge policy to support people who have been in a home a long time to move

Tenancy fraud

- Established approach to identifying tenancy fraud – regular work on this, reported to Cabinet member
- 36 RTBs declined ahead of discount change (Sept 2024) – saved £3.3m in discounts
- Since August 2025 – five properties recovered and four more awaiting interview under caution
- Ensure new staff/staff who have changed roles are trained to help them understand and identify fraud

Priorities

- Allocations policy review
- Consider when tenancy agreements should be reviewed
- Consider one clear (quarterly) report to senior officers/members on Tenancy Standard – to support your evidence (and help identify future risks) – this could include:
 - New tenancies let/tenancies converted to secure
 - Tenancies ended in first year/later – by transfer/eviction/abandonment
 - Households supported to maintain tenancy
 - Mutual exchanges completed
 - Tenancy review visits completed against targets

Overall conclusions

Conclusions

- WCC is demonstrating progress against the consumer standards – culture change, systems implementation, policy work and performance management
- A clearer action plan is needed in order to be confident of achieving a compliant grade – but this is achievable. We recommend that it includes:
 - Description of evidence required to demonstrate compliance
 - Identification of actions to achieve compliance and lead officers
 - Dates for staged completions
 - Clarity on priorities and timelines
- Programme management needs to be more robust to ensure all staff are clear on expectations – and know who is monitoring progress and how
- Staff are keen to support improvement but struggling with rate of change

Staff focus group

- Strong staff participation
- Lots of positive comments about working for WCC/supportive approach and particular mention of SHINES
- Concerns raised about:
 - Restructures and frequent changes
 - IT systems – need training, need time to learn new systems, and want to be able to raise specific issues (to avoid people using system badly, eg, notes in wrong part of Orchard)
 - Lack of training and skills for current roles – want clearer guidance on expectations. Would like more support in identifying where they can get training and skills advice from, how they can develop in their roles
- Culture – reports of people not taking ownership of cases
- Induction reported to be poor
- Access to key policies and procedures is difficult – they are all over the place and people can't find them

Priority actions

- Focus on data: review the quality and completeness of data for stock/ homes and for tenants/residents too. A clear plan to fill data gaps is needed; RSH wants to see you using tenant data to drive services
- Review improvement plan:
 - Ensure clear actions, with deadlines are included, tracked and chased
 - Increase accountability/visibility of key areas you are focusing on – build a clearer focus of improving services and listening to customers
 - Fill gaps identified from our review
- Keep your evidence library up to date with regular reviews including:
 - Updated policies and procedures
 - Tenant newsletters
 - Evidence of community activity



**Thank you for listening
Questions?**