Bury Council

Report to	Housing Advisory Board
Date	19/11/2025
Agenda No. & Title	Repairs Review
Purpose of the Report	To present the findings of the Repairs Review and agree recommendations
Status	Discussion and Approval
Author	Colin Somerville and Esme Davies
Report Contact	Esme Davies
Appendices	Appendix one – Journey Map Appendix two – Data File Appendix Three – Staffing and Productivity Appendix Four – Email All available on request.
Background Documents	Wordnerds Report August Performance Report
Recommendation/s	Implement recommendations with Head of Repairs
Corporate Plan Objective	**X Satisfied Tenants** X Quality Homes ☐ United Communities
Risk Implications	H13 Failure to address tenant dissatisfaction and /or complaints. Inability to learn from feedback resulting in recurring themes or high volumes of complaints. H14 Lack of understanding of repairs Data, policy and procedure. H1 Unsafe, insecure and non-compliant Homes
Mitigations/Controls	The review will provide assurance for mitigations such reporting and tracking of all reported repairs. It is an example of mitigation such as track complaints and dissatisfaction
Financial and Value for money implications	The review has identified that further value for money can be gained with a review of use of contractors, prioritisation of jobs, resource management
Regulatory/	The report considers the specific expectations from the Consumer

governance and legal implications	Standards and how we can better meet them for a Repairs, maintenance and planned improvements service
Assets and Liabilities	High level of emergency repairs needs to be investigated further to ensure assets are being invested in adequately
Resource Implications	Further data analysis will require resources from business analysts, any changes to the IT system will require support from IT and the Performance Improvement and Assurance Team
Customer Impact	The report gives an understanding on where we can focus improvements to improve customer satisfaction with the Repairs Service
EDI Implications	None.
Sustainability and Environmental Implications	There are no sustainability or environmental impacts of this report.
Privacy/Data Protection	None.
Colleague Impact	The report
Stakeholder Communications and Reputational Impact	Inaccurate reporting leads to mistrust with tenants.
Next Steps	Action Plan to be monitored by Head of Repairs – key stakeholders to convene to discuss.

1. Introduction

1.1. In June 2025 the Housing Ombudsman published a spotlight review "Repairing Trust". It highlighted "*Repairs are the single biggest driver of complaints and determining factor of resident trust. This reflects how home is an emotional place, and a repair is more than a job*".

1.2. In Winter 2024 Altair were commissioned to conduct a Repairs Service reality check as part of their assessment of regulatory readiness in recognition of the importance of the service meeting obligations to tenants. Alongside a list of recommendations they identified the lack of a specific repairs Improvement Plan. At the same time Trueman Change worked with our Repairs and Contact Centre teams to identify process improvements that the teams could deliver themselves. These pieces of work have informed the need to conduct a full review of the Service for 2024-25.

2. Scope

2.1. As-Is Journey Mapping – Programme Manager has worked with the Contact Centre, Planners, Repairs Managers, Operatives and Finance to map a high level repairs process. See appendix one.

2.2. Data Gathering – Business Analysts have provided additional data to supplement the regular performance reporting. Appendix two brings together some key data to supplement below tables and graphs.

2.3. Customer Feedback – A report from WordNerds which analysed comments from transactional surveys has been used to contextualise the data alongside complaints themes.

2.4. IT – The journey mapping has identified key areas where IT could be used to improve the services. Infosuite are working with IT to realign the systems in order to provide further information on productivity.

2.5. Tenant voice will use their next scrutiny exercise to follow the repairs process through from reporting a repair to completion as a responsive repair and as a planned repair, documenting each step, shadowing call centre staff and the planning team, going out on site with operatives, going on site with surveyors on inspections and post inspections and providing feedback for each stage. Their primary area of focus is appointment scheduling, keeping and communication.

2.6. The below report highlights areas that require further work and analysis with the Repairs Team and the wider Housing and Council Colleagues.

3. Regulation

3.1. The performance and regulation group meets quarterly and the review has considered the specific expectations from the Consumer Standards and how we can better meet them for a Repairs, maintenance and planned improvements service. The requirements are as follows:

3.2. *Registered providers must set timescales for the completion of repairs, maintenance and planned improvements, clearly communicate them to tenants and take appropriate steps to deliver to them*

3.3. *Registered providers must enable repairs and maintenance issues to be reported easily*

3.4. *Registered providers must understand and fulfil their maintenance responsibilities in respect of communal areas.*

3.5. *Registered providers must ensure that the delivery of repairs, maintenance and planned improvements to homes and communal areas is informed by the needs of tenants and provides value for money*

4. Key headlines

4.1. The housing management system QL alongside DRS is able to support the internal Repair service to raise, schedule and complete repairs whilst on site. There are challenges with the interface with the Finance system, number and use of data fields and the administrative burden for contractor jobs, but the overall infrastructure is sound. Understanding how upgrades can support improvements is a priority.

4.2. The contractor process allows for too many opportunities for poor customer service and provides Bury Housing with a lack of understanding of service and cost of contracted jobs.

4.3. There is an overuse of contractors. There needs to be a rationalisation of the number of contractors used and a key focus on this being used to effectively supplement the inhouse team for work peaks and specialist work, not as a regular go to vehicle for day-to-day delivery

4.4. A procurement exercise is required to displace current contractors who are not under contract and replace these with new contractors with valid contracts. This must include clear performance measures and penalties for failure, including service improvement plans and clear routes to early termination. The contracts also need to include for the ability to extend and vary the contracts based on good or excellent service delivery and performance.

4.5. The volume of emergency jobs is in excess of what would normally be expected or sustainable for a repairs service. The current level at 35% emergency exceeds industry targets of 10% and industry norms of 12-18%. Moreover, the next priority (urgent) is underutilised.

4.6. Analysis work has identified that the number of component failures is high resulting in increases in genuine emergency jobs. This is as a result of lack of capital investment in the infrastructure and the need to monitor tenancies to ensure tenants are taking care of their homes.

4.7. Initial analysis suggests that the service could be more productive. However, a deeper analysis is required to breakdown types of jobs and analyse productivity and capacity using standard minute values and percentage time.

4.8. The Council's Stores is not providing value for money or supporting the operatives in delivering an efficient service with operatives dissatisfied with the level of service

4.9. Satisfaction suggests that we are inconsistent with our service with extremes of positive and negative responses. Appointment availability and time to resolve is a key theme leading to negative sentiment, once attended the operatives receive generally positive feedback.

5. Key Data

5.1. Figure one gives an overview of the number of repairs completed by in house team and contractors.

5.2. 30% of in-house jobs are emergencies. This means that 30% of the work is unscheduled. The more jobs that are unscheduled the more difficult it is to plan jobs to meet the timescales and ensure safety such as requirements to visit in pairs. We

would like to reduce this number to ensure that repairs can be delivered on time.

Figure 1 Number of Jobs

Month	In house Emergency Repairs completed	In house Non-Emergency Repairs Completed	Contractor jobs issued	Total
Mar	238	647	351	1236
April	229	654	663	1546
May	222	646	705	1573
June	230	814	656	1700
July	232	778	643	1653
August	240	562	485	1287
September				

5.3. The trade most required for emergencies is plumber, in particular leaks and no other form of bathing from showers breaking. Work with the contact centre should be ongoing to discuss what is an emergency repair and which can be prioritised as urgent. Any trends should be identified for planned works.

5.4. We completed 167 repairs per 1000 homes for August which is low when compared to the HouseMark benchmarking data. The Monthly WIP (figure two) is increasing and the number of jobs completed in time has reduced (see August Performance report). This suggests that capacity or productivity has reduced within the team.

Month	WIP
June	877
July	1007
August	1009
September	1191

Figure 2 Work In Progress

5.5. Figure 3 presents completed Repairs by Priority for quarter 2 2025. The urgent category is potentially underutilised. As further explored in section 15 a significant number of contractor jobs are not updated as *completed* within the system so the data is incomplete.

Q2	In Target	Overdue	Grand Total
EMERGENCY	761	7	768
APPOIN	1357	371	1728
PLANNE	139	29	168
SUBCON	18	28	46
URGENT	248	14	262
Grand Total	**1762**	**442**	

Figure 3 Job by Priority for Quarter 2 2025

Classification	In Target		Overdue	
Complaint Work	3	75.00%	1	25.00%
Damp & Condensation Work	36	72.00%	14	28.00%
Disrepair Work	1	100.00%		0.00%
New Works	2	100.00%		0.00%
Rechargeable Repair	19	90.48%	2	9.52%
Responsive Repair	1696	80.08%	422	19.92%
Void Work	5	62.50%	3	37.50%
Grand Total		**79.95%**		**20.05%**

Figure 4 Repairs by Classification

5.6. Figure 3 also highlights a concern with categorisation. More than 46 sub-contractor jobs were undertaken in this period but these should be classed by priority in first instance. A number of fields on QL are not used consistently such as "trade" "classification" and "priority" for contractor, disrepair jobs, damp and condensation work. It is recommended to agree which fields to be used and training provided to all staff.

5.7. This review has not focused on damp and mould processes however the data suggests that the process should be reviewed especially in line with the introduction of Awabbs Law in October 2025 and how to system can be best used to monitor jobs. Figure 4 shows how categories are currently used in the system which could be optimised.

5.8. Transactional satisfaction is relatively high in line with the tenant satisfaction measures. However, feedback from the surveys suggested dissatisfaction with the time taken to resolve issues and schedule repairs. This is supported by analysis of transactional surveys by WordNerds which shows sentiment is lowest waiting for repairs as per graph 1.
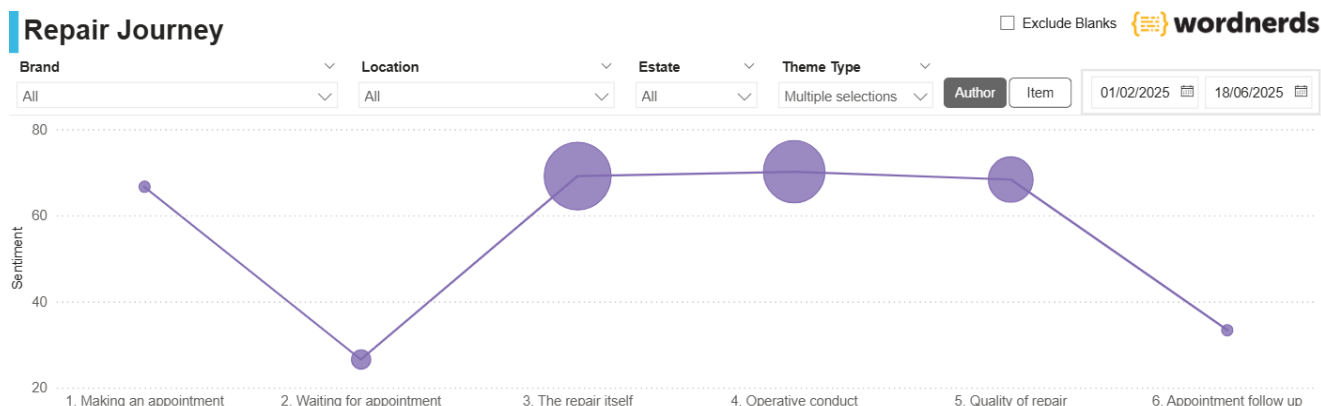
Graph 1 Repairs Journey Sentiment

Figure 5 Transactional Satisfaction YTD

Transactional Satisfaction	Percentage
Very Dissatisfied	7.99%
Dissatisfied	4.00%
Neither Satisfied or Dissatisfied	5.29%
Satisfied	15.04%
Very Satisfied	67.45%
	0.24%
Grand Total	**100.00%**

6. Information about Repairs Service

6.1. Overall information about the repairs service is available but it is limited. When signing up tenants receive a verbal overview but there is no repairs handbook or policy. The tenancy agreement explains the repair obligations and they receive a copy via email. Officers leave a card which gives the contact number and email to raise repairs on.

6.2. Staff feel that we need to be clearer on the "repairs first not replace first" policy to support expectations of tenants. There are a number of outstanding policies which would support the service; no access, recharges, right to buy policy and fencing policy which need to be agreed and shared with the team and any amendments to services and processes made.

7. Reporting a Repair

7.1. Repairs can be raised via email, form or via the telephone. There are approximately 1400 calls a month to the contact centre regarding repairs and around 250 repairs logged a month on the online form. The online form has overtaken the emails which is a great success for the team.

7.2. Reporting a repair online is not frictionless and requires the contact centre to input the repair onto the system. Where the form has been poorly filled in contact centre may have to email or call the tenant multiple times. Tenants are not able to follow their repair through on a portal.

7.3. Housing officers are encouraged to use the online form to report repairs on behalf of tenants, but the majority still go via email. The contact centre would like to direct all repairs to the online form as it is the most effective way of raising a repair as it the equivalent of a "diagnostic tool". Housing Officers do not raise repairs directly for tenants.

7.4. Housing officers who report repairs via email or the online form cannot see when it has been scheduled or the appointment time and date which leads to tensions when they are unable to communicate back to tenants that the repair has been raised or when it will be completed. This is compounded for communal repairs where the job is raised against the building and not a property.

7.5. Operatives report that they are sent to incorrectly described jobs on occasion. 56 jobs were raised wrong in August (figure 6). Further work between the contact centre and repairs will help to alleviate these issues.

7.6. Damp and Mould jobs go directly to the Damp and Mould team via QL action and requires a separate review. Monitoring QL actions may alleviate concerns with responsiveness found in complaints supporting not just repairs but other service areas.

8. Scheduling a Repair

8.1. The Tenant Voice Forum have raised concerns around appointment scheduling and lack of communication. This is supported by the wordnerd analysis which highlighted appointment availability and appointment follow up as some key themes. The comments on transactional surveys suggest that tenants are dissatisfied with time taken between reporting and completing repairs. The mapping and data suggest that this is an area to work through as a team.

8.2. We use DRS as a scheduler. The planning team are overall positive about the system and think that it's effective. DRS can consider location of jobs when scheduling repairs to make travel efficient as possible, shows the Planner when people begin jobs and when combined with Infosuite can provide productivity data.

8.3. Repairs are scheduled until 6pm, at around 4.30pm the Planners review repairs to pass back to call out. The number of jobs passed back to call out has reduced since an operative has been assigned just to emergencies but a significant number are still passed back. See figure 6 below.

8.4. The contact centre are able to schedule most in-house repairs including for communal areas whilst on the phone with a tenant. There are some exceptions such as visit in repairs or complex jobs which are sent to the user queue for Planners to appoint.

8.5. DRS highlights when there is no operative available within the timescale and jobs are sent to the user queue to be planned in by the Planning Team. The contact centre reports this to be a frequent occurrence for emergency and urgent jobs due to the number of available operatives. This collaborates findings from the Altair review and the wordnerds report.

8.6. Certain jobs would not be scheduled e.g. flagging because of weather. Tenants should be informed of this on reporting the repair.

8.7. As with other parts of the process as explored below the same level of service is not consistent with contractor jobs. Contractors are required to contact tenants to make the appointment. Unannounced visits are very common in the feedback. This explains the high level of complaints regarding operatives attending unannounced.

9. Attending a Repair

9.1. Tenants get an automatic text to say the operative is one their way via First Touch. Via first touch operatives complete checks such as risk assessment, report when they begin job, finish job and materials required. Planners are able to see when they are on site.

9.2. Operatives are able to see the tailored services information on their ipads as well as the further information the contact centre has provided e.g. give time to answer door.

9.3. It is suggested that further work be conducted with the tenant voice forum to gain information on operative behaviour whilst attending a repair including provision of ID, communication prior to the job and behaviour on site.

10. No Access and cancellations

10.1.   We do not have a written no access policy however the operatives have a clear internal process. Operatives call their supervisor if there is suspected no access and the supervisor will call the tenant to confirm no access. Where a job is confirmed no access, the operative logs as no access and the appointment is cancelled by the planners. The tenant will get a text to confirm the cancellation, another job is only raised if they call back to the contact centre or it is considered high priority such as damp and mould.

10.2.   No access has not been monitored as a performance indicator until recently. This indicator needs to be reviewed in light of the discovery that no access is not captured for contractors.

10.3.　　We do not have data on the number of rearranged appointments from Bury Housing side e.g. sickness or moving to accommodate emergencies. Infosuite will be able to produce a report for the number of times an appointment is rearranged in DRS. When a job is rearranged, a text is sent. Staff report that this text may be incorrect and needs to be reviewed.

10.4.　　Figure 6 provides details of cancellations for August. The number of jobs passed to call out is due to the high number of emergencies. Further work with the team should clarify the number of cancellations due to "done on another job".

Figure 6 Cancellations August 2025

Cancelled reason	Number (August)
Cancelled by tenant	33
Cancelled due to RTB	1
CANCELLED	1
Done on another job	142
Failed to gain access	109
Job raised in error	56
On a Programme	9
Passed to call out	100
Property now Void	1
Work done as part of Contract	1
Work is not Responsive	1
Work not required	35
Grand Total	**489**

11. Follow On

11.1.　　The process for in house operatives is clear with regards to follow on work. Jobs are completed with the tag of "follow on". The Planning team are able then to pick up from a queue and raise the jobs. Tenant will get text with new appointment.

11.2.　　Figure 7 suggests that follow on jobs rather than materials is the key reason for follow on. Work with the team needs to establish if "extra work identified" is a new job or linked to the first job.

Figure 7 Completion Categories

Quarter 2 2025	Completion category
Blank	165
Extra Work Identified	247
Another Trade Needed	138
Arrived	5

Completed	1562
Failed Covid Risk Assessment	1
Failed Risk Assessment	4
Health & Safety Issue	1
Materials Required	39
On Way	3
Second Person Needed	24
Started	5
Tenant Not In	2
Unsafe Situation	6
Utilities Required	1
Wrong Trade	1
Grand Total	**2204**

11.3.   If follow on work is raised for a contractor this would be done via email as there is no contractor portal. The north or south repairs manager approves the request and then admin raise a new job. This increases likelihood of work not being followed on or delays between reporting and scheduling the new jobs.

11.4.   When a job requires a surveyor (journey map 65) this is raised as an action in QL not DRS. Any actions coming from the works must be raised in the system. There is currently no link between the job and the survey. Suggest an opportunity to raise with Programme Manager for Housing IT and Systems Programme to ascertain if QL can improve this process.

11.5.   The transactional surveys ask if the tenant feels the job was done right first time, which is on average 78%. This is comparable to the right first time performance indicator figure 8. The TSM feedback on the other hand suggests that tenants feel we provide temporary fixes and leave work unfinished. TSM data draws from a wider pool and this may reflect the work of contractors.

Figure 8 Right First Time
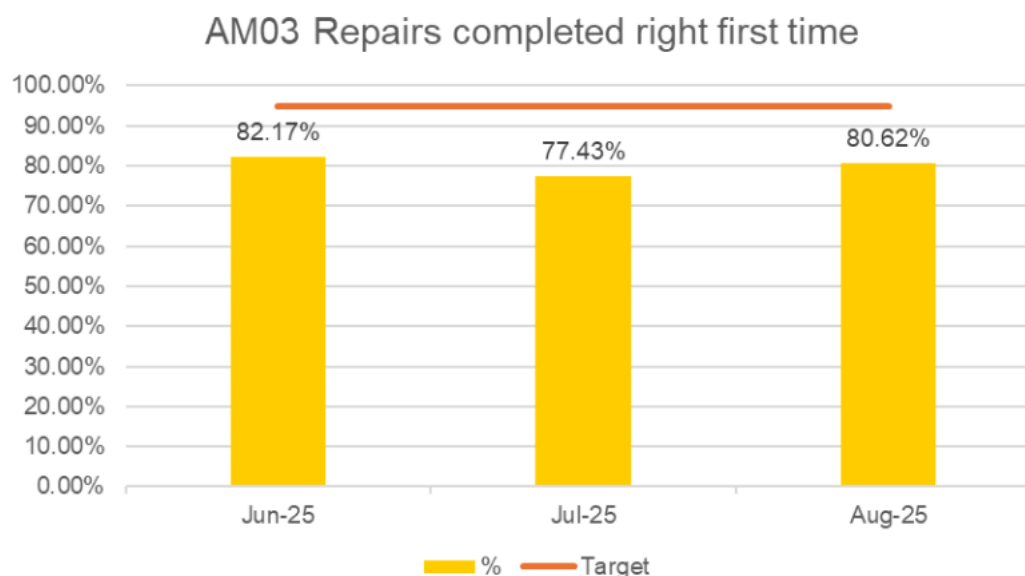
12. Completion and Post-inspection

12.1.   Tenants are asked to sign off the jobs once complete and once the operative or planner completes the job a satisfaction survey is triggered. This will only occur for contractor jobs if they are completed in the system.

12.2.   Post inspections have not been resourced up until recently. The new structure will enable more post inspections for contractors and internal repairs. Bury Housing Services operatives do take photos and they are uploaded to QL but this is not consistent.

13. Materials and Stores

13.1.   The use of Council Stores is inefficient and needs to be reviewed to ensure value for money for tenants. Operatives do not know if the item is in stock before they attend and regularly report that stock is not available. Special orders are regularly the theme of complaints due to the time taken to order and a lack of update in the meantime. Analysis of special orders and van stock is required to understand demand and supply further.

13.2.   At the end each job they can order materials to replenish the stock via the tablets. We are unable to track stock with the current system.

13.3.   Discussions with staff show that there is a conscious effort to ensure right first time by using contractors and other providers on the day so that they can complete the job, this might be via Stores or our own arrangement.

14. Operatives

14.1.   Appendix 3 provides an overview of the staff across Repairs, Voids, Planned works and Disrepair and an overview of jobs per trade per day. We currently have 29 Operatives on responsive repairs for North and South in the current structure of which 5 are agency. There are 5 vacancies currently inlcuding 2 electricians.

14.2. Figure 9. overdue jobs by trade alongside appendix 3 suggests that we need to review productivity against demand in order to recruit most effectively. Electricians are in line with expectations for productivity, filling the vacancies would support the number of overdue jobs, other trades need to reviewed further before committing to recruitment.

Figure 9 Status of Repair per trade

Trade	In Target	Overdue
Bricklayer	98.70%	1.30%
Drainage	100.00%	0.00%
Electrician	79.43%	20.57%
Flagger	57.14%	42.86%
Gas	100.00%	0.00%
Joiner	90.75%	9.25%
Plasterer	77.93%	22.07%
Plumber	70.09%	29.91%

15. Contractors

15.1.   Contractor jobs is the area of greatest concern the review has highlighted.

15.2.   Last year we spent £2,148,067.77 on contractors of a budget of £5,963,000 which equates to 36% which demonstrates our over reliance on external contractors. Our IT systems are not robust enough to effectively track work passed to contractors, job completions and invoice management.

15.3.   The majority of contractors do not have contracts with Bury Housing Services. This means that we are not using a set schedule of rates with the contractors and Bury Housing Services are at risk of being over charged. A review of the contractors and rationalisation into "lots" may be beneficial.

15.4.   Moreover, the interface with the P2P system means that a significant number of contractor approvals is a manual "folder system" (see journey map no. 146 and 156 in appendix 1). This places an administrative burden on both the Finance and Repairs Managers to approve invoices.

15.5.   Without a contractor portal contractor jobs are raised on QL by the contact centre and transmitted via the QL email function. Contractors receive the job via an email and relies on the contact centre to ensure tailored services and tenant alerts are transmitted as part of the body of email. Appendix 4 is an example email. This was also captured in the journey map no. 13 and 14.

15.6.   A review of the last 6 months' jobs shows that the contact centre provide information to the contractors about tenant needs although it is inconstant in quality. This is compounded by poor quality information provided to the contact centre regarding tailored services. Once the review of tailored services is complete there is an opportunity to see if we can amend email to include tailored services as a default like the in-house team receive.

15.7.   The contractor is asked to contact the tenant to make an appointment. Bury Housing Services rely on the contractor to email us when a job is complete which opens us up to inaccurate reporting. The job can then be *practically completed* in the system by planners or admin in the planning team, once the invoice is paid, the system is updated to financially *completed*.

15.8.   Feedback from tenants suggest that contractors either do not receive information regarding tailored services or they ignore it. Turning up unannounced is a particular theme.

15.9.   The manual process results in time being spent chasing contractors for individual completions, where a contractor portal would allow a report to be run or automatic reminders sent following the due date. At the time of this report nearly 4000 jobs for contractors are open in the system (see appendix 2). Teams report that capacity to complete jobs on the system has been impacted by vacancies. The restructure should improve completions and chasing contractor jobs.

15.10.   If a job isn't completed within the system it is not included in performance indicators including completed on time, right first time or satisfaction.

15.11.   Moreover, it appears that due to a different approaches of raising a repair in QL for some contractor jobs we do not know the priority of the jobs raised as they are raised as "subcontractor" rather than the priority (figure 3).

15.12.   A practically completed status was introduced at end of 2024 and still relies on admin to update the system. The performance report should be updated to include practically completed.

15.13.   We have assurance that contractors such as Sure and Bell's are managed via monthly meetings with the relevant manager.

16. Productivity and Finance

16.1.   When jobs are raised they are raised against a schedule of rates (SOR) (see journey map 11 and 37) and standard minute values within the system. Staff report that some of the slots are either too long or too short but in general this is not reported as a significant issue. Neither of these are being used to manage performance.

16.2.   All jobs go through the interface priced at £150 (journey map point 147) and then depending on value of invoice its sent to supervisors if it's 2.5% variance. This is not based on the SOR despite jobs being raised with SORs. We do not know how many are varied.

16.3.   The is a lack of data regarding average cost of a repair, a full understanding of costs is required to ensure value for money. Costs from stores in particular is unknown due to the sporadic billing.

16.4.   Appendix three includes an approximate estimate of productivity. A review of standard minute values will be undertaken to ensure that infosuite can be used effectively to measure productivity.

16.5.   Rechargeable repairs used to be managed by a role that straddled Finance and Repairs. This role was not filled post-retirement.

17. Communication

17.1.   There are a number of automatic texts to tenants however teams report uncertainty about texts at certain points during the process such as rearranging appointments and detail in the messages. The team are reviewing text messages to tenants and will suggest additional texts such as a reminder the day before. This will only apply to internal jobs at this stage.

17.2.   Contractors will call to make appointments before attending the repair but it is inconsistent according to reports. Evidence of turning up without notice and without ID in complaints and programme manager experienced direct evidence of lack of communication during the MSV handover process. Contractors do not receive tailored service information if they are raised outside of QL or if the person raising the repair does not include the information.

18. Recommendations

Recommendation	Who
DATA	
Report on operational PI scorecard	**Data and Intelligence Lead**

including QL actions, special orders, no access etc.	
Develop Power BI dashboard for managers including productivity	**Data and Intelligence Lead**
Work with Finance to understand cost per job	**Data and Intelligence Lead and HRA manager**
Review Data fields with business analyst and provide training	**Data and Intelligence Lead, Head of Repairs**
Put more contractors on QL / integrate into the unit 4 transformation	**HRA Finance Business Partner**
Review Standard minute values and SOR and then run productivity reports (either via infosuite or directly)	**Head of Repairs**
Communications	
Review all text messages and introduce new text messages where there are gaps in communication	**Repairs Planning Manager**
Create a digital Repairs Handbook	**Communications with Repairs Managers**
Monthly briefings with contact centre staff	**Repairs Managers and Contact Centre Supervisor**
Support operatives to understand their actions and the impact on data at toolbox talks	**Repairs Managers**
Technology	
Research options for Housing Officers to know when appointments are scheduled	**Digital Change Partner and Head of Neighbourhoods**
Look at customer portal options so they can monitor repair progress inlcuding ihousing	**Programme Manager – Housing IT and Systems**
Review interface with Finance for Schedule of Rates / unit 4 integration	**Finance Transformation Team**
New process of Financial approval following updated interface	**HRA Finance Business Partner**
Explore QL opportunities to improve processes for inspections/surveys, follow on work, complaints, Awabbs Law	**Programme Manager – Housing IT and Systems** **Head of Performance Improvement and Assurance**
Explore technology options to improve customer service	**Digital Change Partner**
Strategic	
Link in with Council Stores review to determine VFM	**Housing Transformation Team**
Conduct productivity review and review staffing	**Head of Repairs and Repairs Planning Manager**
Review all sub-contractor contracts to a)	**Programme Manager Housing and Head**

reduce b) provide VFM	**of Repairs**
Consider offering overtime to close down as many contractor jobs as possible	**Head of Repairs**
Create a Repairs Policy	**Head of Repairs**