

COVID-19 Impact Monitoring

February 2021

This summary highlights the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on the social housing sector in Wales up to the end of January 2021.

Based on 11 months of data collection, our analysis focuses on submissions made by Welsh members. With Wales experiencing different phases of lockdown to other UK nations, this analysis highlights the similarities and differences compared to the rest of the UK.

To find out more about the detailed impact reports, HouseMark's new forecasting solutions and the wider ways we're supporting the sector through COVID-19, please contact data@housemark.co.uk.

As the UK's leading data-driven solutions provider for the sector, HouseMark remains the only UK-wide organisation monitoring and forecasting the impact of these unprecedented times on the social housing sector.

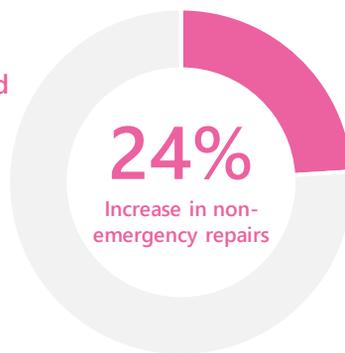
Only with HouseMark can you access this essential level of analysis.

Repairs

Non-emergency repairs reporting increases as services are suspended

Non-emergency repairs reporting increased by 24.3% between December and January as demand for services continues in spite of the country's lockdown measures.

As the vaccine rollout continues and infection rates fall, we hear that tenants are losing patience with restricted repairs services.



Sickness absence

Staff sickness absence increases by 13%

Welsh landlords' sickness absence days increased by 13% between December and January. This is slightly higher than the UK-wide figure of 8% and is likely to be driven by the surge in positive COVID-19 cases.

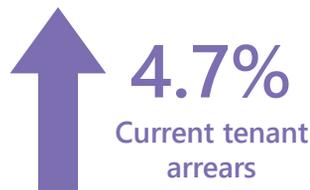
Across the UK, we recorded sickness absence increase of 40% from pre-pandemic levels.

Arrears

Arrears increase as economic effects of lockdown reduce tenants' income

The January lockdowns across the UK have served to intensify income management issues for landlords in the social housing sector. The drivers we highlighted in last month's report – new debtors, persistent debtors and tenants needing help – have all crystallised in the period since Christmas.

Landlords in Wales reported arrears rates rose to 3.9% at the end of January, which is close to the UK-wide figure of 3.8% and shows that the lockdown is affecting rent-payments and debt for all landlords in the sector.



Vaccinations

1 in 50 housing workers 'have been vaccinated'

We found that vaccination rates are growing in the sector, as the rollout covers health and social care employees.

Only landlords with significant supported housing stock reported vaccinations above 0%. One landlord reported that 25% of staff had received their first vaccination dose by the end of January.

Gas safety

'Full compliance' for gas safety inspections continues

While we have seen a drop in access and compliance in other parts of the UK, median compliance rates in Wales continued at 100% in January.

All participants reported full or near full compliance with gas safety regulations at the end of the month.



Lettings

Lettings reduce by 16%

The number of lettings fell by 16% between December and January, which has increased vacancy rates to 1.4% of stock.

While most landlords are continuing to let properties, we found that letting are being delayed by COVID infections, safe ways of working and slowing nominations from local authorities.

