

CHS Scrutiny Report on Gasway Responsive Repairs

For: Debbie Whitfield and Property Services team, Gasway

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1. Purpose: To find out about the tenants' experience of the Gasway responsive repairs service

2. Background:

Gasway responsive repairs were highlighted as an area of interest at a Scrutiny training day where members reviewed corporate KPIs, the customer feedback dashboard and the STAR report to choose a scrutiny topic. In addition, following a Complaints meeting, Debbie Whitfield (Head of Property services) suggested to Trish Laver that the Scrutiny Panel would perhaps like to look at Gasway responsive repairs in depth. This would assist her during the procurement process which is due to take place in 2023 as the contract expires in 2024.

3. Excluded from this review:

- Planned maintenance, such as new boiler installation
- Annual gas safety check and boiler service

4. Method:

Scrutiny members reviewed data including:

- Customer Service Standards relating to heating repairs ([Appendix 1](#))
- STAR comments relating to Gasway ([Appendix 2](#))
- Call to Survey comments from customers who were dissatisfied with the repair plus Gasway's response. ([Appendix 3](#))
- Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for the Gasway contract, monthly reports ([Appendix 4](#)) and quarterly reports ([Appendix 5](#))
- Minutes of Gasway core group meetings ([Appendix 6](#))
- A report from Gasway showing a comparison of CHS with other clients, including data such as breakdowns per property and average first time fix. ([Appendix 7](#))

To gain the customer experience of repairs, scrutiny members surveyed tenants who had had a recent repair. The questions in the survey were chosen after careful consideration to get accurate information without fatiguing the participants. A report of CHS tenants who had received a Gasway responsive repair in the six months between 01/10/2021 and 31/03/2022 showed there were 918 completed repairs. This was not 918 tenants because tenants may have reported more than one repair in that period. Three panel members (J.D. R.D. J.B) conducted telephone surveys with twelve of these tenants who had had a repair done during the last six months. The tenants on the call list had all had repairs completed in March 2022. Three of the tenants on the call list had made

comments in their STAR survey about Gasway. An identical online survey was sent to 467 customers who had a repair done during the same 6 month period. There were 76 replies to the online survey. The response rate for the online survey was 16.5%. The survey was made with Alchemer and sent out with an email on Mailchimp. Participants were offered the chance to be entered into the prize draw if they completed the survey. The data was analysed by TL, LY, MM and CHS staff.

TL and JB met with Mark Whitehead, Contracts Manager and Ian Hitching, Surveyor from CHS Property Services to discuss CHS's monitoring of the Gasway contract. The same questions were put to Gasway and the answers are included in [Appendix 8](#). TL and JB visited Gasway and observed Customer Service Team members handle several repair calls live. TL and JB met with:

- Andy Merrill – Senior Contract Manager
- Dale Rayner – Contract Manager
- Dan Petchey – Installation Manager
- David McDonald – Head of Customer Services
- Will Marshall – Administration Team Leader

Areas discussed included how they prioritise tenants, stock control and replenishment of parts. Gasway demonstrated their Customer Service computer system.

5. Findings

5.1 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

From the monthly KPI spreadsheets ([Appendix 4f](#)) we saw:

KPI8b percentage of routine orders completed within 21 days

The year to date figure in March 2022 was 79.12% compared to the target of 90% and that was rated as red but on an upward trend.

KPI9 percentage of repairs appointments met

The year to date figure was 85.49% compared to a target of 95% and that was rated as red but on an upward trend.

Year to date figures in March 2022 covered the whole year whereas our project covers Q3 and Q4 so it's only fair to focus on those figures. We looked at the quarterly KPIs ([Appendix 5](#)) and saw that the figure for KPI8b in Q3 was 90.38% and Q4 was 85.62% and it was the Q1 and Q2 figures that were bringing the year to date figure down. In the quarterly KPIs the figures for KPI9 are Q3 are 85.60% and Q4 84.12% which are similar to the year-to-date figure and are below target. We looked at the data for KPI8b and saw that the reason for additional appointment in 7 cases was 'Customer changed'. The data for KPI9 showed that the reason for 1st additional appointment in 8 cases was 'Customer changed', in 9 cases was COVID-19 It seems that in most cases Gasway were not to blame for changing the appointment.

The Gasway Core group minutes from 31st May 2022 ([Appendix 6b](#)) included a performance review January to March 2022 (Q4) and made the observation:

'[CKPI7c] Emergency orders completed in 72hrs (75.5%); [CKPI8a] Routine Appointments attended in time (83.33%) and [CKPI8b] Routine orders completed in 21 days (85.62%) – all below target and performance fairly static – area for discussion at Operational meeting.'

It was also noted

[CKPI5] 'Average days to complete repairs 11.13 days'

This exceeded the target of 8 days.

[CKPI7b] '24hr Appointments attended in time 84.48%.'

This is below the target of 100%

From the August core group minutes

'Average days and routine orders being impacted by:

Parts availability for non-stock items e.g., radiators. Exceptions reviewed at operational meetings and smaller items added to van stocks if reasonable.

Customer availability – Gasway now raising jobs under the Routine priority if customer is not available within the 24hours for an Emergency call out.'

[CKPI 3a] 'Customer Satisfaction with repairs Right First Time 97.06% - positive indication from customers.'

This is above the target of 96%

[CKPI 3b] 'Repairs carried out Right First Time (system data) 85.81%. Some data incorrect due to Gasway using the incorrect reason codes for appointment outcomes. Issue now resolved.'

This is above the target of 75%

The KPI3b results for 'Right First Time' are high compared to the results from our survey: only 60% of customers said that the problem was fixed on the first visit. Mark Whitehead gave the following explanation for the CKPI3a and b figures:

'The customer satisfaction figures come from the Call 2 Survey responses, from surveys which are issued following completion of repair orders by Gasway. We measure Right First Time as the number of customers who express dissatisfaction because the job was not completed in one visit, as a percentage of all responses. So if the customer response is that they were satisfied with the whole repair – even if it needed multiple visits to complete it - it will not show on that figure. On the system data, we are measuring the number of actual QL jobs completed with a single appointment v all jobs with multiple appointments – so that is a more accurate measure. But as noted, just because a job is not completed at the 1st visit, that is not automatically a dissatisfied customer, as things like Operative manner, good communication and a prompt follow on appointment date may mean the customer is quite happy with the repair process.'

CKPI1 % of customers satisfied with the overall repairs and maintenance service by contractor: the year to date figure was 86.47%, above the target of 86% and rated green so that didn't seem to be a problem, but in the quarterly KPIs we saw that the figures for Q3 and Q4 were 79.31% and 70.59% which is disappointing. In the February Core group minutes ([Appendix 6a](#)) covering the performance of October to December 2021 (Q3 & Q4) it was noted:

'**CKPI1** – Year-to-date customer satisfaction above target (92% against target of 86%). Quarterly satisfaction below target (79.31%) due to low level of responses – six dissatisfied responses possibly skewing figures. No trends identified. Volume of surveys has been low, partially due to Gasway not completing orders via the interface within the timescale required to trigger the survey. Jenny Bamford to find out from Voicescape if this window can be extended to 3 days in Summer and 5 days in Winter months. Customer view that the repair would still be fairly fresh in customers' mind as Gasway do not attend too often.' The May minutes ([Appendix 6b](#)) noted 'JB to amend survey trigger from 2 days to 4 days to increase volume of feedback.' Hopefully this will give more data and give a truer picture in future.

5.2 Results for the Survey questions 1-6, 8, 9 and 10 (Appendix 9a)

	Question	Yes
1	When you reported the repair to Gasway, did you get a quick and polite response on the phone?	91%
2	On the day of your appointment, did you receive a notification that the engineer was on their way either by text, email or phone?	67%
3	Did the engineer arrive during the allotted appointment time?	87%
4	Did the engineer show you their ID?	66%
5	Did the engineer explain what the problem was?	82%
6	Could the engineer fix the problem on that visit?	60%
8	Did Gasway Customer Services call you to give you new appointment date and time?	17%
9	Did you have to ring Gasway Customer Services to arrange the next visit?	15%
10	Were you happy with the outcome of the repair?	83%

88 responses to the survey (telephone and online combined).

The results show that customers are getting a quick and polite response on the phone when they first report a repair. The engineers are turning up on time and the majority of people are getting a prior notification, although this could be improved. The result for engineers showing their ID is a bit low although this might be due to them arriving in a sign written vehicle or a shirt with a logo on it. It doesn't seem to be an area of concern for tenants. The engineers were good at explaining what the problem was. The engineer could fix the problem on the first visit only 60% of the time and we thought that was disappointing and an area to target for improvement. A first time fix gives the best experience to the customer. Both CHS and Gasway confirmed that they hold all the information about the customer's model of boiler and heating system, so it's surprising that some of the engineers are not prepared with some basic spare parts for that model of boiler. Several customers commented that an engineer was sent who was not able to fix their boiler because they didn't have the right skills and experience. This seems to be an error by Gasway because if they have taken all the details of the boiler and they know the experience of their engineers, the matching of the skills should work better.

There seems to be some confusion about what happens next, if the repair cannot be fixed on the first visit. Some customers were told that the engineer would arrange the next appointment and the office would call them with the date. Some customers were told they need to ring the office to make the next appointment. There needs to be clarification of what is the correct procedure. TL asked Gasway and they said that the engineer can make the follow-up appointment. There needs to be consistency so that the customer knows what to expect and if they need to do something. Several

customers mentioned in their comments that several weeks went by and they hadn't heard anything from Gasway so they were left wondering what was happening. This is poor customer service. Two customers had problems with a new boiler and Gasway asked them to phone the boiler manufacturer directly. Gasway should be responsible for making phone calls to the manufacturer. When a new boiler is still in warranty, Gasway should replace the boiler and get in touch with the manufacturer.

83% of customers were satisfied with the outcome of their repair, which is positive and worth commending Gasway on.

52 people (60%) said the engineer could fix the problem on the first visit. Out of those 52, 51 were happy with the outcome of the repair and 47 people gave Gasway a high score (6-10).

5.3 Results from the analysis of the free text comments (Appendix 9a)

There were 85 comments from 59 people. 26 comments were positive, 47 were negative, 12 were neutral. The positive comments were about the following:

- 5 General positive
- 12 Engineer attitude and skill
- 4 They did what they said they would do
- 2 Fixed right first time
- 2 Good communication with customer
- 1 Length of time to get part

The negative comments were about the following:

- 14 Length of time to complete the repair
- 6 Poor communication with customer
- 5 Length of time to get part
- 3 Engineers unable to find the fault
- 4 Engineer – attitude
- 3 Engineer – skill
- 3 Missed appointments
- 3 Repair did not fix the problem
- 2 CHS policy on repair rather than replacement
- 2 No compensation for expense and disturbance
- 1 Poor communication between Customer Services and Engineer
- 1 Engineer left mess behind
- 1 Solar not working

In our survey, some tenants reported multiple repairs on one boiler. Debbie explained the 'Beyond Economic Repair (BER)' process and that Gasway and CHS would discuss whether a boiler needs to be replaced and will replace it if necessary. We're satisfied that both CHS and Gasway are monitoring this.

5.4 Results for question 12 Based on your most recent repair, what score would you give Gasway out of 10? 1 being the lowest score and 10 being the highest.

As you can see from the graphs in Appendix 9b 70% of customers scored Gasway 8, 9, or 10, which is very good.

6. Conclusion

We would like to draw attention to the fact that these conclusions are based on a total of 88 responses we received from a total of 467 customers who had responsive repairs carried out during the 6 months this report covers.

Many customers were impressed with the Gasway engineer and described them as helpful, polite and lovely. A number of customers mentioned the engineers working hard to find a solution to the problem. Where the repair could not be completed on the first visit but the engineer was able to obtain the part and complete the repair fairly quickly the customers were happy. The customers were happy when they were given a clear explanation of what would happen and Gasway did what they said they would do.

Repairs that are completed on the first visit result in the highest customer satisfaction. Many repairs could not be fixed on the first visit because the engineer did not have the correct part in the van. Another issue seems to be the length of time it takes to receive ordered parts. This may be a supply issue. We understand that Gasway have recently identified a number of the most common parts that have now been added to van stocks or stock levels of current parts have been increased, to improve the chances of a First Time Fix and to reduce repair times.

Gasway needs to update the customer about when the delivery date for the part is. Gasway told us during our visit that they are recruiting a member of staff to phone suppliers to ensure that the parts are in and keep the customer informed. If an engineer calls in sick, they will ring the customers on that engineer's daily rota to inform them that the appointment needs to be re-arranged.

A long repair time was the biggest reason for customer dissatisfaction. The comments from the survey showed the big impact it has on customers when they are without heating and hot water. It can cause a lot of distress. Stress can be increased if they have to make multiple calls to find out when their next appointment is.

The Scrutiny Panel were concerned regarding monitoring and action taken to ensure repairs are not taking too long. After speaking with Jenny Bamford and Debbie Whitfield they explained that this is monitored in several ways: CKPIs 7 & 8 monitor appointments attended in time and orders completed within the target timescales. CKPI 12 tracks the number of Live Orders that are more than 3-months old. Property Services and Gasway review the exceptions to these targets and discuss the reasons for them. So we were satisfied that this is monitored.

Lack of heating and hot water can be very seriously disruptive for people with disabilities and ill health. It seems like the recording of customers' disabilities and health conditions is not done consistently, because some customers report that the engineer seems to be unaware of them. Not all customers are asked if they have conditions during the repair phone call, that might affect the repair visit, such as the need to knock and wait because of mobility problems, or an illness that means that they need to be given a high priority when they are without heating and hot water, e.g. cancer. CHS need to be more proactive in asking tenants about their health needs and ask for permission to share the information with contractors. Training for both CHS and Gasway Customer Service Operators needs to cover appropriate ways to talk to customers about their health and mobility needs and how they are recorded.

Several customers mentioned that they were given a couple of fan heaters to heat their home in the winter when they didn't have central heating and this was inadequate to heat their home. Especially considering the rising energy costs, using electric heating and the immersion heater is very expensive and it's leaving customers out of pocket.

The CHS compensation policy Appendix A states:

'Customers will be reimbursed for the cost of the service for the period of the failure...

- Loss of heating for more than 5 days between October and April inclusive - £10 per week
- Loss of hot water for more than 5 days - £10 per week...
- Where we or a customer provide an alternative form of heating because of a heating breakdown, we will pay compensation of £2 per day to cover difference between the costs of running the two systems where the alternative one is more expensive.'

This information is provided on the CHS website. We asked Mark Whitehead:

'Are customers made aware of their right to compensation under this policy? Is this compensation automatically offered to customers who meet these criteria? Do customers have to apply? What's the process?

And we received the response:

'Requests for compensation are usually triggered by a complaint, and the complaint and compensation policy are flagged to the customer at that point

Usually issues are resolved inside of 5 days, and in those cases the policy won't apply'

It would be interesting to see a report of the number of customers who were without heating and hot water for more than 5 days and the number of complaints and compensation claims made and awarded. We suspect that the number of compensation awards is lower than the number of people who are eligible for it. The panel discussed this with Debbie Whitfield and she explained that it would be very time-consuming to proactively identify customers and contact them regarding compensation. The panel were satisfied that the complaints and compensation policy were adequate.

The Scrutiny Panel were concerned having seen in the KPI monitoring spreadsheet a column which showed number of appointments and some of these were over 10, which was alarming. Jenny Bamford explained the way appointments are recorded and this number is really 10 points of contact, rather than 10 visits. Jenny had also reviewed all Gasway Repairs orders raised between 01/04/2022 and 04/11/2022 where there were 3 or more appointments. About half of these required further appointment(s) as follow-on works or parts were needed. The other half didn't and there were other reasons for further appointments, such as the customer changed the appointment. (appendix 10) We were satisfied with this explanation.

Scrutiny Chair Trish Laver attends the Gasway core group meetings which are held quarterly. The Gasway core group meetings are a forum to raise issues of concern to tenants and we do see them making improvements so these are of great benefit to tenants.

7. Recommendations

1. Gasway training for Customer Service Team and Engineers – Remember to provide a notification by phone or text that the engineer is on their way. Ask customers how they would prefer to receive it i.e. by text or phone. ACCEPTED

2. The recording of customers' disabilities and health conditions on both CHS and Gasway systems needs to be done consistently. ACCEPTED – 2 ACTIONS
3. The Gasway engineers should consistently make the follow-up appointments. The customer should be told how long they need to wait before chasing any follow-up appointments. ACCEPTED
4. Gasway, not the customer, should contact the boiler manufacturer when there is a problem with a new boiler that is still under warranty. ACCEPTED
5. CHS should review compensation levels so that they are in line with current energy prices. ACCEPTED

List of Appendices

- 1 Service standards relating to repairs
- 2 STAR comments relating to Gasway
- 3 Gasway Call 2 Survey Feedback Apr 21_ Mar 22
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- 4b Gasway_Contractor-KPI-Data_21_22_November
- 4c Gasway_Contractor-KPI-Data_21_22_December
- 4d Gasway_Contractor-KPI-Data_21_22_January
- 4e Gasway_Contractor-KPI-Data_21_22_February
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- 5a Gasway_Contractor-KPI-Data_21_22_Q3
- 5b Gasway_Contractor-KPI-Data_21_22_Q4
- 6a Gasway Core Group Minutes 11 February 2022
- 6b Gasway Core Group Minutes 31 May 2022
- 6c Gasway Core Group Minutes 23 August 2022
- 7 Gasway comparison_12-month Analysis April 1st 2021 March 31st 2022
- 8 Questions to CHS and Gasway
- 9a Scrutiny Gasway all survey results_14.09.22
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