

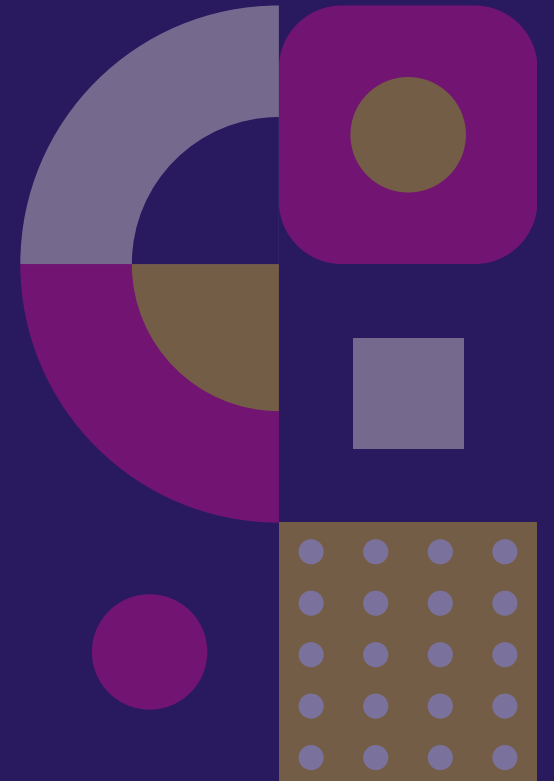
Housemark

Raising the bar

Learning from consumer standards and inspection analysis

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Raising the bar for landlords

The regulatory landscape for social landlords has undergone the biggest change in over a decade in the past 12 months as the impact of the Social Housing Regulation Act takes effect. A key element of this transformation is the shift to a consumer-led regulatory regime with deeper, stronger regulation and heightened consequences.

New consumer standards, introduced in April 2024, compel landlords to provide evidence of adherence. The Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) will proactively monitor this, correlating data returns with an enhanced inspection programme.

This report provides an overview of how the sector is responding to regulatory consumer standards with data and insight to help you make better decisions, create better communities and improve the lives of tenants.

Housemark is here to help you on your journey.



Housemark has **25 years' experience** providing data and insight solutions to help the sector achieve more.



Housemark members represent **67% of social homes** across the UK, providing robust comparative analysis and unique data.



Housemark is unrivalled as the **UK housing sector's data leader** and bring people together with a shared interest in using data to unlock capacity, improve performance and create value.

What the report will cover

Health and safety outliers reflected in inspection results

Our data shows that more than half of landlords recorded full compliance for four out of the five building safety Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) in 2023/24. Outlying results are a factor in early inspection grades, as the regulator targets this critical area.

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Housing quality impact on TSM results

Our year-end TSM data shows a clear relationship between decent homes compliance, and overall satisfaction. Accurate and up-to-date information on property condition is an essential component in understanding this relationship.

5

One million complaints unrecorded

TSM surveys show that as many as eight times more tenants felt they'd complained in the last 12 months than landlords had recorded. This means that around one million complaints have gone unrecorded, as landlords grapple with the new code.

7

Service improvement lag in perception scores

Housemark research has found that it takes around 18 months for positive changes in a service to show in perception scores. Action to engage tenants in improvement activities is needed now to have any effect in 2025.

9

Meeting 'required outcomes'

Our analysis of the early consumer regulatory judgements has found that record-keeping, safety compliance and use of IT systems feature strongly in all inspections as the regulator focuses on the flow of actionable data through the organisation.

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Health and safety

Landlords must meet all health and safety requirements to keep tenants safe

Complying with health and safety requirements is not new for the social housing sector. Key references for the Safety and Quality Standard include the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, gas and lift safety regulations from 1998 and the housing health and safety rating system from 2004.



Previously, it was up to individual governing bodies to monitor adherence to health and safety standards. Now we have a regulator with the remit to investigate potential breaches and substantial enforcement powers. Early inspection results have highlighted gaps in compliance and safety as landlords with lower compliance achieve lower inspection grades.



Where you are and where you want to be...

Housemark membership gives you access to organisation level comparisons that align with your regulatory reporting requirements. We also look at what's behind the headlines to help set your performance in context and identify improvement action.

Our KPI audits confirm that your data flows from the source to returns and reports within regulatory guidelines – using our unrivalled expertise in measuring the work of social landlords.

Our deep dives help you identify patterns in the data and pinpoint precise areas for improvement in line with regulatory requirements.

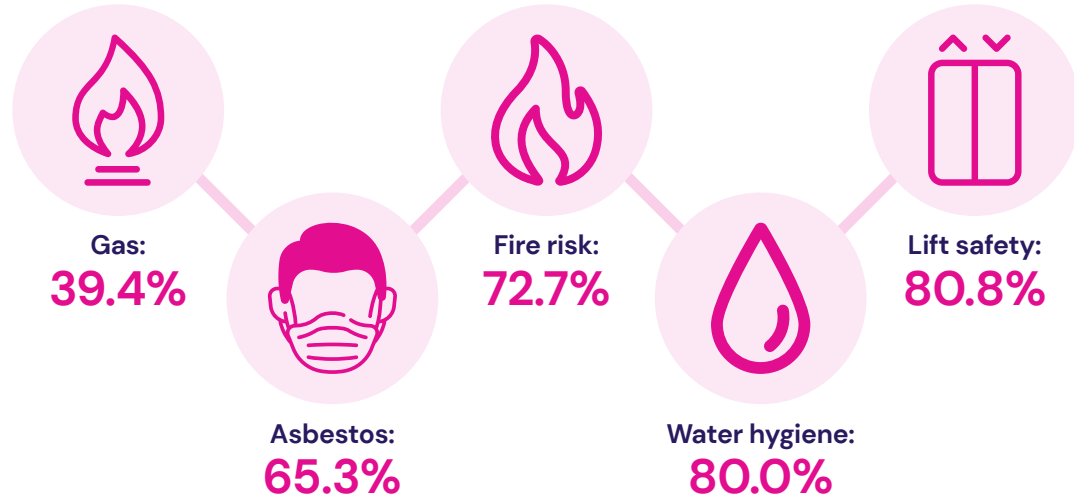
Full compliance is normal?

Housemark data shows that more than half of landlords recorded full compliance for four out of the five building safety TSMs in 2023/24.

As the regulator sifts through the sector's data, landlords reporting less than 100% compliance will stick out, with outlying results likely to attract attention as the regulator targets responsive engagement where improvements are most needed.

Accurate record-keeping and monitoring systems are essential to provide assurance that you are aware of any shortcomings and demonstrate that you are taking action before being inspected.

Percentage of landlords reporting 100% compliance



Taking a proactive stance on damp and mould

Keeping tenants safe goes beyond legal health and safety checks. Having a proactive approach and acting in a timely way to resolve issues is essential.

Housemark has exclusive data comparing how landlords are meeting these requirements with new KPIs covering the size and scale of damp and mould caseloads across the UK social housing sector. Data quality, aligned workflows and prompt action are all areas of regulatory focus.



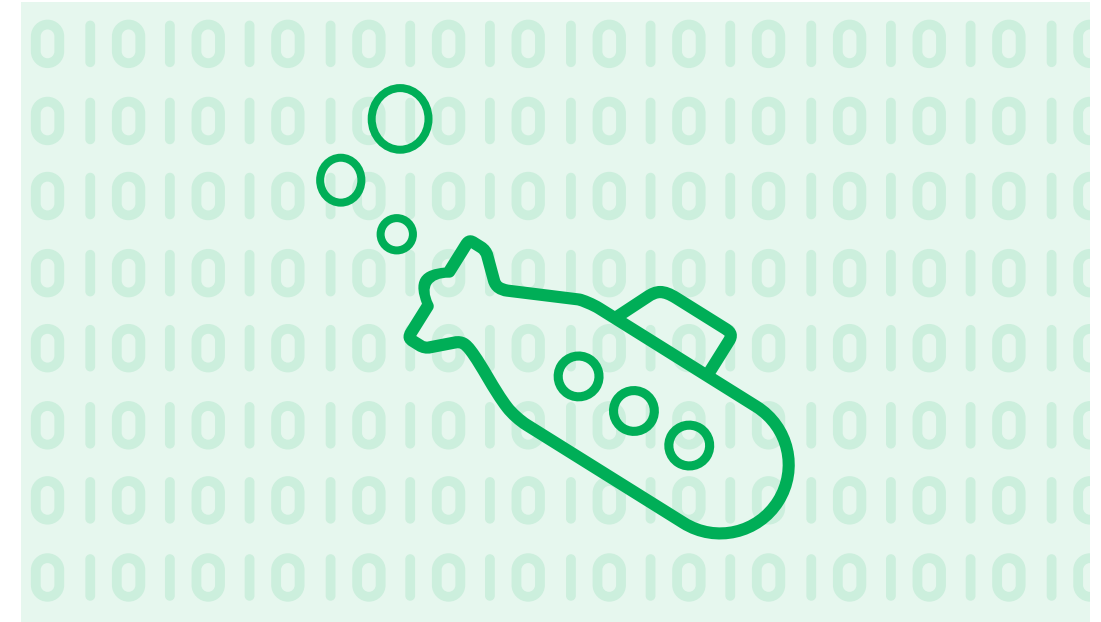
Median 2023/24 results for English registered providers.

Housing quality

Landlords must know the condition of their homes

The regulator expects landlords to have effective systems and reliable information on the condition and quality of their homes and ensure that they use this to provide good quality, well-maintained and safe homes for tenants.

Despite being 18 years old in 2024, many social landlords are still unable to evidence whether their homes meet the Decent Homes Standard (DHS). The new requirement is to have accurate stock condition information on every home based on a physical assessment. There are millions of missing datapoints that need filling in a short space of time.



A deep dive into your delivery

Building safety compliance? Strengthening approaches? Or embedding data, process and culture? Our service reviews will help.

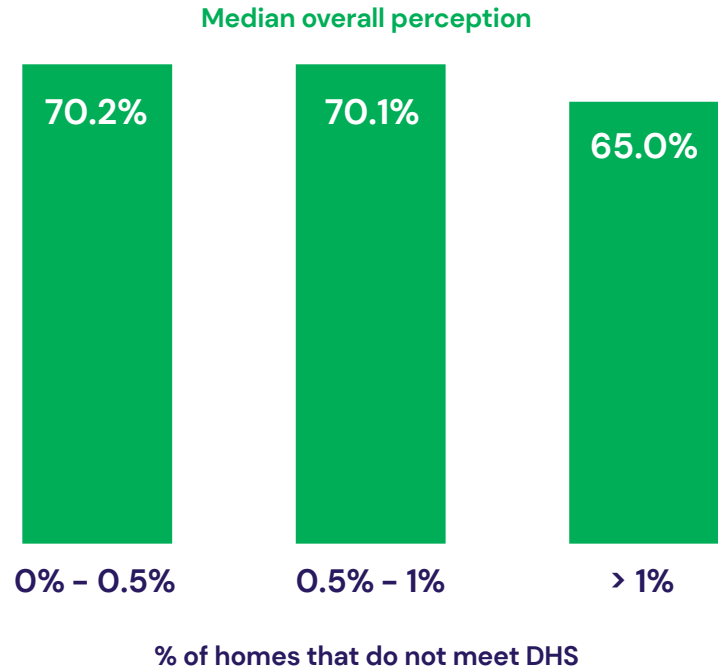
Our deep dive methodology is based on sector-wide comparative data and insight. It allows us to quickly identify gaps and areas for improvement, ensuring that tenant touchpoints meet their needs, improve accountability, and transparency. With consumer regulation live, and operating margins squeezed, there's never been a better time to explore service delivery deeper than ever.

Quality satisfaction drivers

Work to improve safety and quality has a measurable impact on outcomes.

Housemark year-end TSM data shows a clear relationship between perception of safety and decent homes compliance with overall satisfaction.

Accurate and up-to-date information on property condition is an essential component in understanding this relationship.

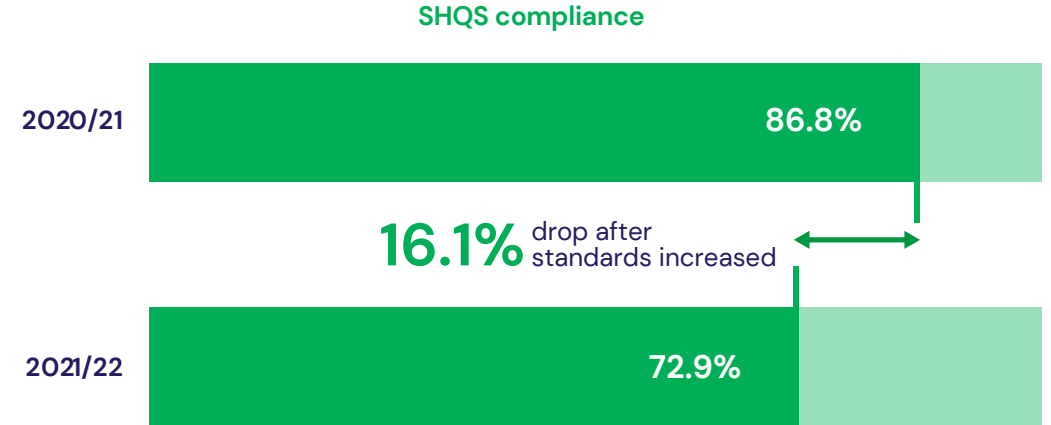


Decency levels 'could nosedive' with DHS2

Housemark is in a unique position collecting data from all types of social landlords operating across the UK.

The Scottish Government updated its housing quality standard (SHQS) in 2020 with modernised energy efficiency requirements. Its official data shows compliance dropping by 16% in a year as stock failed to meet new criteria set in the standard.

On this basis, the more stringent standards likely to be introduced with Decent Homes Standard 2 could see as many as 600,000 additional properties failing to comply in the first year.

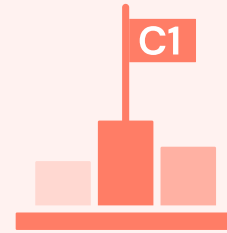
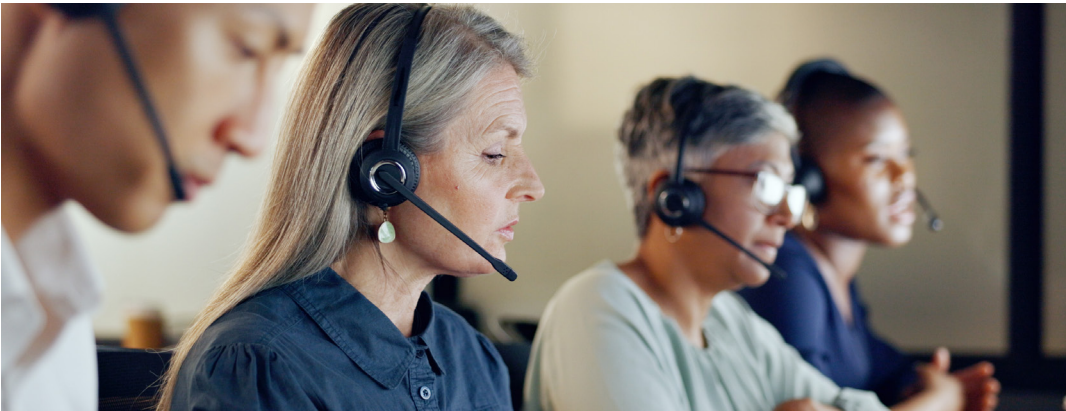


Complaint handling

Landlords must handle complaints effectively

The regulator is working closely with the Housing Ombudsman to ensure complaints are addressed fairly, effectively, and promptly. While there are distinct differences between the way the two organisations operate, the upshot for landlords is that complaints cannot be dismissed or ignored.

The regulator's Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard requires landlords to have a simple, accessible and publicised complaints process, while the 2024 Ombudsman complaint handling code drives the sector towards more accurate recording and a culture of learning from complaint resolution.



Achieved a top **C1 CONSUMER STANDARDS GRADING** from the regulator

Intelligent complaint recording

Nottingham Community Housing Association (NCHA), a housing provider managing 10,000 homes, was struggling with its outdated complaints system. So they came to us to improve customer satisfaction, and comply with a recent complaint handling code.

We set to work conducting a comprehensive review, analysing complaints, and benchmarking against industry best practices. Our recommendations included a revised categorisation system, staff training, and text analytics to enhance data-driven decision-making. Thanks to the changes, NCHA can now better understand customer concerns, improve services, and ensure regulatory compliance.

In July 2024, NCHA achieved a top C1 consumer standards grading from the regulator.

Missing complaints masking results

Our analysis of TSM data highlighted that as many as eight times more tenants stated that they had made a complaint in the last 12 months than landlords had recorded. We estimate that around one million complaints have gone unrecorded by the sector.

This is driven by landlords continuing to use informal mechanisms to record complaints, which masks sentiment and now doesn't comply with the Ombudsman's handling code.

Record-keeping and data analysis are key features of the regulator's inspection programme, so it is imperative that all landlords have compliant systems in place.

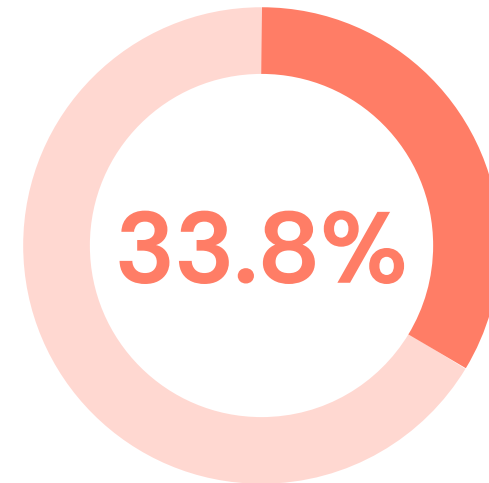


**1 million
Complaints
not recorded**

Landlords not meeting complainant expectations

Our TSM data analysis shows that tenants' perception of landlords' complaint handling is the lowest out of all the regulatory measures, with just 1 in 3 respondents expressing satisfaction in the survey.

This year-on-year drop from an already low base highlights how far the sector still has to go. Effective communication about accessing and using landlords' complaints services is vital to improving perception in this key activity.



Median satisfaction with approach to handling complaints

Tenant engagement

Landlords must engage effectively with their tenants

With regulatory consumer standards requiring landlords to take tenants' views into account in decision-making, resident involvement teams are strengthening and evolving. After years of cuts to tenant engagement activity, the changes in regulation mean that skills to involve tenants in meaningful two-way communications are at a premium as we see increased investment in this key area.

As inspectors look for evidence that tenants are empowered to lead engagement and self-direct landlord scrutiny, now is the time to invest in people and expertise in this key area of consumer regulation.



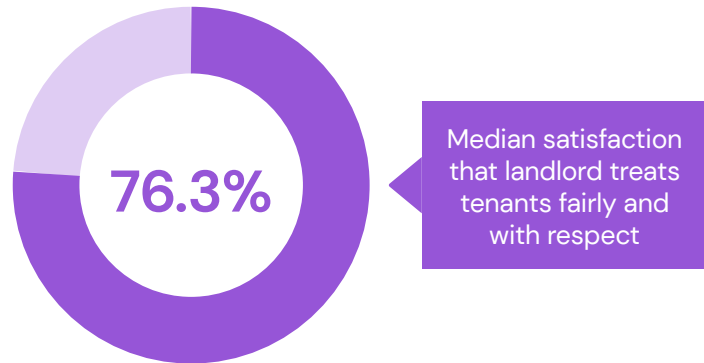
How to listen and take action...

With the sector now focused on ensuring tenants are at the forefront of decision-making processes. Our experience of resident involvement across the UK is based on real-life examples of helping landlords to listen and take action. Our unique insight is helping landlords explore optimal structures for meeting the needs and preferences of tenants and transforming processes and service design and delivery.

Tenants respond positively to individuals

Our 2023/24 TSM analysis shows that tenants' feelings about being treated fairly and with respect by landlord employees are positive.

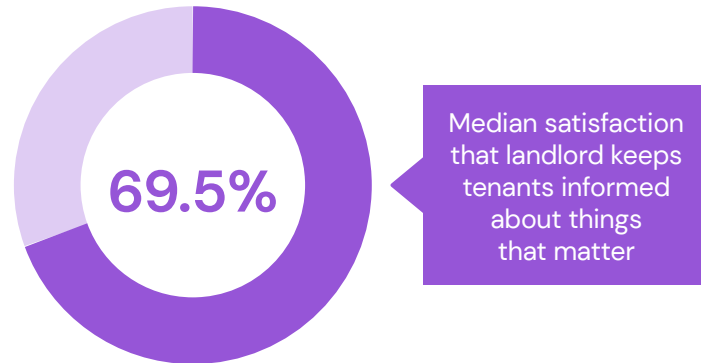
Over three-quarters of tenants reported satisfaction with this area – which was one of the highest scores across all 12 perception TSMs. It will be interesting to see if this positivity can transfer to other activities.



Proactive communications needed

Our work with customers has found many landlords are still struggling with disparate communications. Important information is placed on a webpage or notice board.

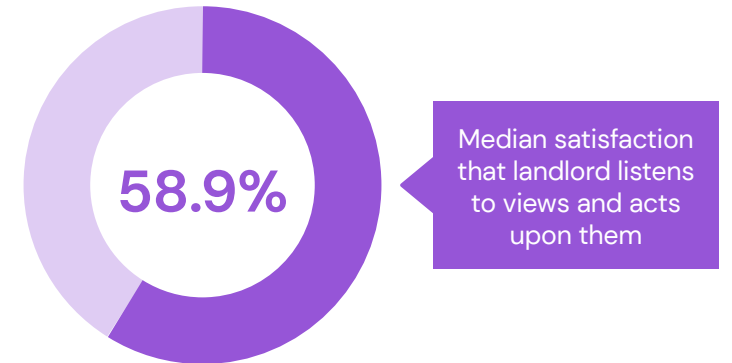
Such passive approaches to information sharing is holding down perception rates below 70%. Proactive engagement about key services such as major works or grounds maintenance is needed to push this result higher. Understanding tenants needs and preferences is key to tailoring communication and improving reach.



Tenants sceptical about being heard

Even with a regulatory requirement for landlords to let tenants know how their views have been considered, TSM results for 2023/24 are showing a lack of faith that action will follow.

Housemark research has found that it takes around 18 months for positive changes in a service to show in perception scores. Listening and acting now is investing in future outcomes and improved satisfaction.



Meeting 'required outcomes'

All landlords must meet the required outcomes of new consumer standards

'Required outcomes' are the headline elements of each consumer standard. The regulator expects boards and councillors to understand the required outcomes of each standard, with good oversight and scrutiny of performance.

Results from the first rounds of regulatory inspections have been published, with the regulator planning to reach all 1,000+ unit landlords over the next four years. With landlords being given relatively short notice of an inspection visit, preparations to ensure everyone understands consumer standards should be at an advanced stage – if it's not, now is the time to act.



To reach 1,000+ unit landlords over the next four years

Raising standards, improving satisfaction

We found that 3 in 10 landlords are improving satisfaction with some common themes:

- Actions plans already in place – with the goal of higher satisfaction
- Asking for help – 44% of landlords with rising satisfaction engaged Housemark consultancy
- Data Quality – robust approaches to data quality and intelligent use of information

Taking a strategic approach to raising standards is key to improving satisfaction.



Inspections focus on accurate data

The regulator has published 23 consumer standards regulatory judgements. Our analysis has identified common themes to all judgements:

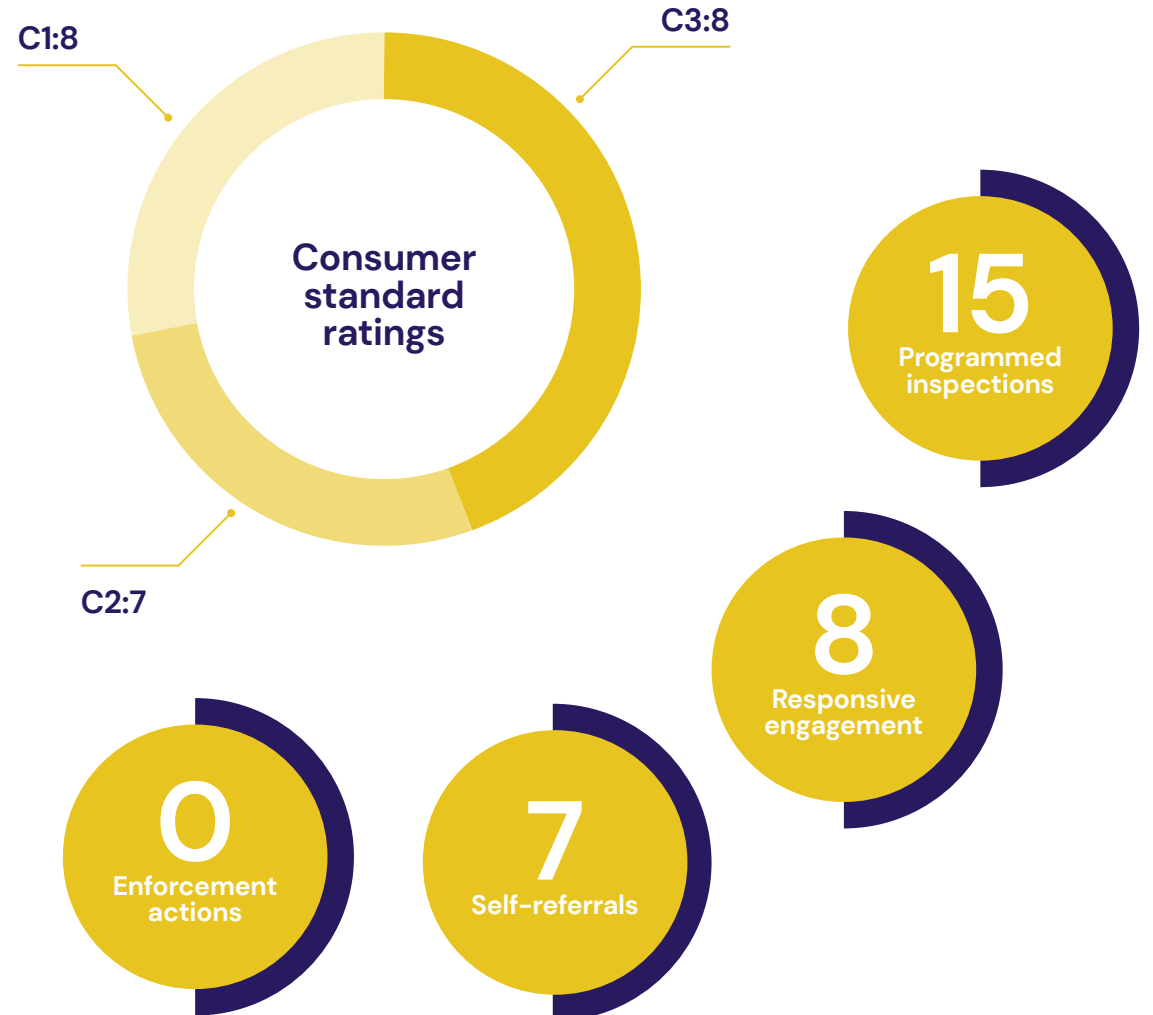
- Record-keeping across all standards covered by the inspection
- Safety compliance inspected at strategic and operational levels
- Landlords use of IT systems for analysis, reporting and data storage

Even with a small sample, we see the regulator's strong focus on the flow of actionable data from source to governance level at a landlord.

Other patterns emerging from the regulator's consumer regulatory judgements include:

- The published summaries make few references to inspectors' contact with tenants although they do feature in inspections.
- Responsive engagement inspections focus on one or two standards based on concerns.
- Programmed inspections cover all four consumer standards plus economic standards for HAs.

The inspection process is necessarily resource intensive. With a maximum of six weeks' notice, being prepared is crucial to a positive outcome.



About Housemark



Leading data and insight company
for the UK housing sector.



Jointly owned by the **Chartered Institute of Housing and National Housing Federation.**



Over 300 members across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

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This report presents results from Housemark's monthly and annual benchmarking with publicly available data. The report is freely available and accessible to all. If you use material from this report, please state that it is sourced from Housemark.

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