

Tenant Scrutiny Meeting

Monday 13th May 2024, 10:30am at Springwell Gardens Community Centre

Attendees

David Ramsden, Barry Dealey, Mary Jacques, Ann Hitchens, Julie Sharp, Sam Sharp, Phil Hayes, Rebecca Morrison, Callie Lamb, Luke Chamoun, Gemma Davenport, Vanessa Dundon, Steph Lowrie, Laura Swift

1	Welcome, introductions and apologies David welcomed everyone to the meeting, introductions were made. There were no declarations of interest. Apologies have been received from Wendy Birch, Keith Stringer, Jo Workman, Winnie Billups, Donna Draper and Stella Parkin. Panel members should complete a declaration of interest form for this investigation.	
2	Minutes and actions from last meeting The minutes were read through. No actions were raised. Damp and Mould is on the Dashboard for August.	
3	Topic Suggestions There haven't been any new topic suggestions through the online form. We have received feedback from complaints, the panel wanted a breakdown of the anti-social behaviour and rent arrears complaints. Most complaints relate to lack of contact and attitude and behaviour of officers. Callie asked for complaints just in housing, so there shouldn't be any complaints included outside of Housing. Gemma said 'tell us once' has room for improvement, however there isn't much influence as it is a government programme. It would be short.	
4	Tenancy Health Checks – planning for this topic Process - How are the properties selected? Which officers carry out Tenancy Health Checks? Is there a process document to follow? Are the tenants notified of the planned visit? It is a four-year process. The officer makes a list of the streets targeting issues. Some tenants need visits more frequently, flats are also done more regularly. Area housing officers and area housing assistants carry out the visits. Officers normally visit individually unless there is a warning on the account, in which case they would take another officer along. Staff have a tracker for lone working which has a button to record. Diaries have to be kept up to date.	

There are 3 warning codes which are currently being reviewed.

There is a process document along with a guidance document.

Letters are sent to tenants. Steph also calls tenants a few days before. The letters state the timeframe (am or pm) the tenant can get in touch if the time doesn't suit. Steph added she had gone out to properties at 6pm in the past as the tenant is working.

Do you feel safe? The panel were concerned about lone working and staff safety however when asked all officers said they felt safe when entering properties.

Arrangements – what do you do if the tenant is not home/not answering the door? How long should each check take? What should the check include?

If there is no answer a 'Tenant not in' card is left. Two to three access letters are sent to the tenant before abandonment letters are sent out to the property. These state that there is reason to believe the tenant doesn't live there. This often prompts a phone call from the tenant.

Checks can take up to 45 minutes however Steph said hers take place between 15 and 30 minutes. It depends on both the officer and the tenant. Steph said that she uses her experience in the job to know whether a property requires a more extensive check.

The check should cover all aspects of the house and property (this includes garden)

The number of times a property cannot be accessed will be built into the system, however at the moment it can be added as a note.

Targets/monitoring – what is the target for completing Tenancy Health Checks and how do you perform against this? How is the target monitored? How are officers monitored/supervised on the checks?

Visits take place on a 4-year programme, there is a target to complete 25% of properties yearly. Last year the central achieved the target however, as a whole the target wasn't met, therefore this year it will be separated into North, Central and South. This is a key performance indicator.

The target does not include properties that need to be visited more frequently than every 4 years.

Gemma will be looking into last year's numbers as she had previously worked out the target was met.

People with mental health issues/disabilities – are people flagged on the system if they have a disability that may affect their tenancy health check? if known to you, are any special arrangements made?

Officers will liaise with social services when necessary and will arrange Tenancy Health Checks with support workers.

	<p>The name – do you think that tenants understand what is involved in a ‘Tenancy Health Check’? do you get any feedback from tenants on the name?</p> <p>Steph has encountered a situation where a tenant was confused as a tenancy health check was being carried out, but another department was coming out to the property as well for another check.</p> <p>Tenants don’t tend to understand what a tenancy health check is. It was originally changed to health check as now there are more questions based on the tenants willing.</p> <p>Anything you would change? – is there anything you would change about the tenancy health checks, if you could? Is there anything else you think we should be considering as part of this investigation?</p> <p>Steph has had some issues with the admin side. Previously the system would bulk print letters, this is not available anymore, so all letters have to be manually altered and printed. Steph now does all her own admin, Vanessa added she can still send her letters to the admin team.</p> <p>Julie said that contractors are using ID on their phones and whether the phone ID is going to be used by Housing Officers as well and how this would work with the tracker/recorder. Gemma will raise this with relevant officers as it should not be happening.</p>	
<p>5</p>	<p>Tenancy Health Checks – planning for this topic</p> <p>The text on the survey is hard to read. The background of the text will be changed to white from blue.</p> <p>Question 2 – the options will be changed to include – less than 15 minutes, 15-30 minutes, 30 minutes - 1 hour, more than 1 hour and not sure.</p> <p>Question 4 – ‘in the post’ will be added after ‘letter’ for clarity.</p> <p>Question 6 – Rebecca has added ‘tick as many as you like’. ‘None of these’ will also be added as well as a comments box if ‘None of these’ is selected.</p> <p>Question 12 and 14 – these questions have a scale between 1 and 10. A shorter scale was suggested. Rebecca will look to see if that can be changed.</p> <p>Callie will ask James about the distribution of the survey.</p> <p>Benchmarking – the panel are happy with the questions. Luke has direct contacts with some other providers and will put Rebecca in touch, this could be quicker than the current process.</p>	
<p>6</p>	<p>Communications</p> <p>Callie has spoken to Stuart Purcell. Actions for the ‘Don’t suffer in Silence’ campaign yet to be completed however something on this will be included in the Home Matters magazine.</p> <p>Stuart will be invited to the meeting in September.</p>	

	It has been unanimously agreed that the communications review be signed off.	
7	<p>Planning for the next meeting</p> <p>Callie will check with Wendy and Daisy on whether they can attend.</p> <p>The terms of reference have changed, these will be sent out.</p>	CL
8	<p>Any Other business</p> <p>Julie and David attended a co-production sub-group, it will follow a similar process to scrutiny but will be helping to create a service than scrutinising it.</p> <p>Callie will contact Andy Lumb regarding the phone ID discussed earlier in the meeting.</p>	CL
	<p>Next meeting date</p> <p>The next meeting will be on Monday 10th June 2024, 10.30am at Springwell Gardens Community Centre.</p>	