

Review Update (Follow up) – outstanding actions

Review:	Watford Community Housing
Committee/Task Group:	Watford Community Housing Task Group
Committee/Task Group Chair:	Councillor Asif Khan
Final report published:	February 2019
Watford Community Housing response received:	April 2019 Update discussion at O&S 26/09/19

Service Charges

Recommendation:	Provide information to residents explaining how to notify them when a service, included in their service charge, was not provided.
Watford Community Housing's response:	<p>When residents believe they have not received a service that they are paying for, they can inform us via our Customer Service Centre on 0800 218 2247 or enquiries@wcht.org.uk</p> <p>We will then acknowledge this and communicate it to the appropriate department within the business for further action and feedback. Information on how to raise concerns is already included as part of our service charge letters sent in both February and September and is also available on our website.</p> <p>Timescale: Already in place</p>
26/09/19 update:	<p>This is in place as indicated in our response in February 2019.</p> <p>O&S requested a further update at a subsequent meeting.</p>
17/12/20 update:	<p>The process remains unchanged. Residents are informed of any financial adjustments to their service charge in the annual service charge letters. If the resident believes a service is not being provided this will be investigated by our staff in the first instance and if the case, actioned through the relevant contract manager. This would</p>

	include a credit being applied if the service was not provided. This is a legal process which follows the Housing Act requirements. If customers remain dis-satisfied, a complaint can be raised as part of our customer feedback policy, through our two-stage process with an independent review by the Housing Ombudsman Service at appeal stage if required.
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Maintenance

Recommendation:	Work collaboratively with Hertfordshire County Council and Watford Borough Council to help improve local amenities for tenants and residents.
Watford Community Housing's response:	<p>We welcome this suggestion from the Task Group and any assistance that can be provided to facilitate greater partnership working with regards to grounds maintenance. This is a subject that has been raised with WBC. The challenge is synchronisation of contract standards which has been subcontracted to WBC by HCC. The current arrangement operates on fewer cuts per year than the WCH standard. We are open to exploring with WBC / HCC options whereby we take responsibility for cutting grassed areas adjacent to our land. Our new grounds maintenance contract starts with Accuro Environmental Ltd on 1st May 2019. We would welcome this as part of our exciting new contract, which ultimately would benefit all parties.</p> <p>Timescale: September 2019</p>
26/09/19 update:	<p>Met with Alan Gough- Group Head of Customer Services in June 2019 to discuss grounds maintenance. Agreed to produce maps and complaints data clearly identifying the areas of concern by end of September 2019. Meeting to review maps in place in October to review with Alan Gough.</p> <p>O&S requested a further update at a subsequent meeting.</p>
17/12/20 update:	<p>Maps and frequency of complaints received by us, supplied to WBC regarding HCC (which WBC maintain on behalf of HCC through its contractor partner) land adjoining WCH in November 2019. A joint working group has been established with Councillors, which most recently focused on fly tipping around the Borough and a joint campaign to help tackle the issues following the start of the pandemic. The aspect of service consistency and joint working on grounds maintenance will be picked up again in the new financial year.</p>

Recommendation:	Outline any major works that will be required, including when these will be completed and the property ready for habitation, when void properties are placed on the 'home choice letting' scheme.
Watford Community Housing's response:	As part of our voids process a stock condition survey is undertaken before the property is let. This allows us to set the future programme of works for the next 30 years. In order to improve our service we will make available the planned maintenance forward guidance as part of our signup process for incoming tenants. Timescale: September 2019
26/09/19 update:	The Planned Investment Programme is available on our new website link as follows and forms part of our signup process : https://www.wcht.org.uk/WCH_Site/media/Watford-Community-Housing/PDFs/Planned-works-improvement-programme.pdf O&S requested a further update at a subsequent meeting.
17/12/20 update:	Our Planned Investment Programme is available on our website as previously stated. Any major works are highlighted to the customer on sign up. Anything more immediate is completed before the property is let. We are in the process of reviewing our "Home Standard" with our customers, which includes the standard to which we let properties. This is in the process of being reviewed by our Operations / GMT Committee in December 2020 and March 2021 and approved by our Group Board in June 2021. This will then be in place from Summer 2021.

Repairs

Recommendation:	Complete repairs on the first visit to the satisfaction of tenants in 85% of cases with details published in the annual report.
Watford Community Housing's response:	We are currently achieving between 80-83% first time fix rate which is collected as part of our tenant survey. Part of our Business Plan 2020-25 and our tenant offer is to provide a First Class Repairs Service and achieve 90% first time fix by 2025. The first time fix rate forms part of our Corporate Objectives for 2019/20 and will be reported to our residents in the annual report. Our current target is to achieve 80% which was agreed by our Group Board, Gateway Membership Team and Operations Committee. This was previous included in our Annual Report 2017/18 and was reported as 83%.

	Timescale: During our Business Plan 2020-2025
26/09/19 update:	<p>We are currently finalising our new business plan 2020 - 2025. Part of the tenant offer is to achieve repairs on the first visit 9 times out of 10. To achieve this we are reviewing our technology, training of staff, alongside our supply chain capability. We are currently working with Jewson to implement automated van stock replenishment, which will be rolled out across all trades by March 2020.</p> <p>O&S requested a further update at a subsequent meeting.</p>
17/12/20 update:	<p>A new material supplier has been procured with Travis Perkins which went live in November 2020 with the objective of achieving 9 out 10 repairs completed first-time. This aim is part of our Customer Promises in our new business plan that launched in September 2020. This new contract includes direct ordering from operatives' smart phone and automated re-ordering of materials for van stocks, which will assist in increasing our first-time fix. Given the challenges around Covid 19, this has taken a "back seat" while we deal with a high number of responsive repairs. Our Operations / GMT Committee will continue to monitor our progress through our usual governance process.</p>
Recommendation:	<p>A) Complete remaining repairs to the satisfaction of tenants within 30 days of the initial reporting in 95% of cases and include the outcomes in the annual report.</p> <p>B) Not close a case until the resident was content with the repair.</p>
Watford Community Housing's response:	<p>A) Our target for 2019/20 is currently set at 95% of non-urgent repairs completed within 30 working days. This forms part of our current service standards.</p> <p>B) Repairs are closed by the operative onsite when the works are completed via their smart phone. This is then registered as complete in our IT systems. As discussed at the Task Group we phone 10% of tenants on the completion of works on a daily basis. The purpose is to spot check tenant satisfaction. We do not believe it would be practical from a resource perspective to phone all tenants to check they are content. Our satisfaction survey is designed to pick up issues and is sent to all tenants where a repair has been marked as complete. Currently this feedback is via a postal survey. One of our planned projects for 2019/20 is to implement a new ICT</p>

	<p>solution which will send out surveys electronically. The benefit will be a more instant understanding of the tenant view of the repair, which will be dealt with by our Customer Relations Team.</p> <p>Timescale: March 2020</p>
26/09/20 update:	<p>A comprehensive review of software providers was carried out over the summer. A brief was produced which suppliers were asked to tender against. We have shortlisted to two providers with final presentations booked for September / October 2019. The outcome of which will be taken and considered by EMT in November 2019 for implementation by April 2020.</p> <p>O&S requested a further update at a subsequent meeting.</p>
17/12/20 update:	<p>Feefo has been selected as our digital customer feedback tool which was mobilised and went live in November 2020. This has allowed quicker feedback and responses to customer issues than the previous paper repairs surveys. The feedback is being monitored closely by our Customer Relations Team, with outcomes and lessons learnt scrutinised by our Operations / GMT Committee.</p>

Recommendation:	<p>Give any positive feedback received from tenants on repair works carried out to the person or team who carried out the repair and include information on the number of compliments received in the annual report.</p>
Watford Community Housing's response::	<p>As part of our current business plan we have been measuring our ratio of complaints to compliments via our feedback software. We measure this on a monthly basis and over the course of the year we target to achieve a 50/50 balance. This was included in our Annual Report in 2017/18 as 51% compliments to 49% complaints, which we believe is very positive. On receipt, positive and negative feedback is already feedback to staff via their manager or team leader. We track satisfaction by member of staff which forms part of monthly one to one discussions around performance.</p> <p>Timescale: Already in place</p>
26/09/19 update:	<p>No further action as per our response in February 2019.</p> <p>O&S requested a further update at a subsequent meeting.</p>
17/12/20 update:	<p>Already in place and was reported in our annual report to customers.</p>

Customer service

Recommendation:	Ensure that records of tenant's casework were comprehensive, timely and kept up to date, and seek to introduce a computerised central recording system during the next financial year.
Watford Community Housing's response::	<p>We currently employ computerised systems for all core operational activities within our business. As discussed at the Task Group this action was about integration and development of our systems to create a more holistic view of customer activities. This forms part of our established ICT road map 2019/20. We are implementing a new tenancy module over the course of 2019/20. This includes a mobile working solution and new work flows. This will allow for all records to be in one place and further enhance the customer experience.</p> <p>Timescale: Already in place</p>
26/09/19 update:	<p>The tenancy visit module is currently in development and is being tested this month. Subject to satisfactory testing this will be deployed in October 2019 to operational staff.</p> <p>O&S requested a further update at a subsequent meeting.</p>
17/12/20 update:	<p>Housing management (tenancy visit) workflows are now in place and recording digitally outcomes from visits in our housing management system Orchard. This went live in summer of 2020.</p>