



MY HOME GROUP

7th of March 2023

Board Room 308 – 11am-12.30pm

Attendees:

Laura Dalton – Housing Manager
Katie Wakefield – Customer Engagement Officer
Joanne Tolley – Business Support
Graham Barnett – Resident
Gilbert Chikomba – Resident
Ken Owen – Resident

Apologies:

Karen Smith – Resident (Online Reporting only)
Cheryl Houkes – Resident
Angela Du Preez – Resident
Dagmar Hilton - Resident

Laura welcomed the group and all introductions done.

Update from the government (Michael Gove) is that all Housing Professionals in managerial positions should hold a higher-level qualification. Something that social workers, teachers etc would hold as part of their roles.

Damp and mould policy has been updated and as an organisation we are looking to help tackle this issue.

Recently a text was sent with the link to the Tenant Satisfaction Measures survey. This is from the government and we will need to report back to them next April 2024. So far the results are looking good

and as expected repairs and maintenance was scoring low. When the data is collated, this information will be shared with the group.

Ken added that at Burnwood Court, customers are generally happy, but the repairs service is hit and miss.

Laura was very open about repairs and budgets and advised the group that she wanted to remain honest and transparent. The organisation has got some budgets restricted and we are being careful what we spend in each team. There are few things alongside repairs that have impacted this.

This means that somethings like fly tipping would not be dealt with immediately like before.

Ken added that working alongside SOTCC to keep tips open longer to try help alleviate the issues with fly tipping and encouraging residents to use bulky waste collections.

Laura also noted that at some schemes people were not recycling and the main rubbish bins were getting over filled, leaving mess in the rest of the bin stores.

Katie updated the group on the Ian Williams (IW) contract coming to an end a year early. This is due to a number of things, mainly because they cannot deliver the contract that was agreed to which was price per property. With inflation and cost of living IW are unable to keep this contract going. A mutual agreement was met with IW and Honeycomb Group to end the contract in August 2023, this has led to Honeycomb Group putting the contract out to tender. The new contract will be based on a schedule of rates and each job will be priced individually. It was stated that the main comments from customers in the repairs and building safety group were that communication, timescales and quality of works were the main things that mattered to customers.

Fair Deal was discussed and it was agreed with the group that name Fair Deal needed to change and become more customer friendly. These points in the document are promises between Staffs Housing and the customers and the document name should reflect that.

Ken added that it was a bit heavy on the tenant as it was as if the tenant was being punished before and compromise or resolution had been

attempted. He felt that there should be something in the document that said about helping tenants out to resolve issues before penalising them.

Gilbert added that there are a lot of changes in 15yrs and the document needs to reflect that. For example, getting contact with someone is hard, there is no one manning reception, phones aren't answered quickly. He said it felt like customers may stick to their part, but Staffs Housing can't stick to theirs. Emails that are received back only ever sign post you to other contacts. There is no personal approach.

Graham added wait times of 25mins are not acceptable, customers will not wait on the phones that long.

He also added that residents should have direct email and contact numbers for staff. Laura advised that this would not be possible as all the staff would be doing is taking calls from residents and dealing with things that can and should be dealt with by customer services. This is because all calls are logged and recorded, and they can set up tasks for staff to call customers back. Laura did agree that the housing posters at schemes need to be updated even if it is with the CST phone number and the team email addresses for each specific specialism.

The group discussed the Fair Deal being a joint relationship between Staffs Housing and Residents. The colours need to be looked at and the "if you don't stick to your part" needs to not be in red/cerise.

Ken added that it may be useful to have scheme champions who would be willing to look at noticeboards and this way the information on them could be fed back directly to Staffs Housing.

Mutual Exchanges:

The website has now been updated and mutual exchanges are promoted on there. If customers don't have someone they could swap with then they can add their name to the database until someone matches them. If customers don't have the internet a paper copy can be used.

Gilbert advised that he had had issues with this form and requested a call back from his housing officer. Katie advised that she would request Vicky contact him.

Front Door Demo – Customer Portal

All customers signed up to this that weren't already signed up. There were a few teething issues with usernames and getting logged back on, this is something Katie and Jo will address with Mary.

It was explained what customers could do on the portal and how it would save time.

Ken did mention that it would be useful for someone to email saying that they had received the response rather than just an acknowledgement email that is always sent. Again this is something that can be followed up with Mary.

Gilbert asked about ASB and who you report it to, Staffs Housing or the Police.

Laura advised that it all depends on the type of ASB, the impact it is having on you and the time of the day. If in office hours and a crime is not being committed then customers are encouraged to call the office. However if the ASB is causing harassment, alarm and distress and there is a crime taking place or it has been going on for a prolonged period of time e.g noise/music for several hours. The police can be contacted on 101 and a report made to them and then also to Staffs Housing.

Katie advised that the way ASB is dealt with has changed over time. Some people believe that noise nuisance can only be reported after 11pm, however with the way people now work doing shifts this is not the case. It also depends on the impact on the person and their tolerance levels for example an elderly lady made feel scared if children are playing football and constantly banging a ball on a fence or wall and to her this would be ASB but someone else it may not be. Each case should be looked at individually.

Laura advised that there is a lot of ASB information on the website and a video and this should hold all the information customers need to be able to report ASB.

The group were asked to do some research ahead of the next meeting.

Pets Policy:

Laura asked the group to go through the policy/procedure ahead of the next meeting to make sure that it was easy to understand.

Graham added that having pets isn't the issue, it is the people who are not responsible who are the issue. At Stoneyfields Court there are people who let their dogs go to the toilet everywhere and not clean it up. This is something that Laura said Katie M could deal with if addresses are given.

AOB:

Ken asked if there was a list of approved trades people that could be put on noticeboards. At Burnwood Court there are no window cleaners and some people need help with decorating. He suggested it would be a good idea for those who don't have a contact.

Katie and Laura advised that there wasn't a database/list as we would be unable to provide advice on services, however if family members could research websites like check a trade that would be a good option.