



Scrutiny Group review findings

- Service Standards

July 2025

Summary

During July and August, our tenant-led Scrutiny Group conducted a review of the WCHG Service Standards. This report details how the review was conducted, its findings and its recommendations.

The Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard sets out that WCHG must provide tenants with accessible information about the:

- available landlord services, how to access those services, and the standards of service tenants can expect.
- standards of safety and quality tenants can expect homes and communal areas to meet
- rents and service charges that are payable by tenants, and
- responsibilities of the registered provider and the tenant for maintaining homes, communal areas, shared spaces and neighbourhoods.

In summary

Service Standards ensure that tenants are aware of what they can expect when contacting their landlord.

Recommendations in this report focus on ensuring the service is accessible in a variety of ways for tenants.

Members were surprised to learn that service standards though in place across various policies, were not available in one service standards document.

The Review

Members set out to answer the following questions

Does WCHG provide tenants with accessible information about:

- The services available?
- How to access services?
- our service standards?
- safety & quality standards in homes & communal areas.
- rents & service charges?
- Our responsibilities for maintaining homes, communal areas, shared spaces & neighbourhoods? tenants' responsibilities?
- What 3 improvements could WCHG make to the information we provide?

In completing the review, members of the Scrutiny Group carried out the following activities:

- Mystery Shopping – Repairs process
 - Application for home improvement
- Desktop Review
- Reviewed current policy.
- Benchmarked against other housing associations, using:
 - Information available on websites about service standards
- Interviewed lead manager Kerry Wood
- Reviewed Transactional Data and customer experiences

Findings

Q1: Do WCHG provide accessible information about the services available?

Findings

Yes - the WCHG website, which is regularly updated with service details, contact information, and news. The reception areas, where printed materials and staff support are available.

The Customer Hub, offer direct assistance and guidance.

Digital display screens in high-rise buildings, which share timely updates and key messages.

Tenant newsletters, which are distributed regularly and include service updates, community news, and opportunities for involvement. Letters and written communications, tailored to individual tenants where appropriate.

*Members were impressed with the new translation service offer with Word 360.

Overall, the website benchmarking identified that though other RP's information was clear and accessible it was apparent that WCHG were providing more information for tenants. Comparatively other RPS were noted as worse overall, with some the same in areas, however there was one other site rated as excellent which was New Charter.

Recommendations

Develop an accessibility service standard to be included within the customer experience standards that are easy for residents to access in a variety of ways that suits them.

Q2: DO WCHG provide information on how to access services?

Findings

Yes – the WCHG website, which offers detailed guidance on available services, contact options, and self-service tools.

WCHG News, a regular publication that highlights service updates, community initiatives, and tenant involvement opportunities. Quarterly rent statements, which often include service-related messages and reminders.

Social media platforms, used to share timely updates, promote events, and engage with tenants, written communications, such as letters and leaflets, tailored to specific services or tenant groups.

Verbal communications, delivered through staff interactions, customer service calls, and community engagement activities.

Recommendations

None

Q3: Do WCHG provide information on their service standards?

Findings:

No

Currently, service standards are embedded within various internal policies across the organisation, which can make them difficult for tenants to locate and understand. This presents an opportunity for improvement in how we communicate our commitments and expectations to residents.

Having a dedicated section on the website or within tenant communications that explains what we can expect from different services — in plain, easy-to-understand language — would improve transparency and help us hold the organisation accountable. It would also make it easier for tenants to know when and how to raise concerns if those standards are not being met.

Recommendations:

Develop a set of customer experience standards that outline what customers can expect from WCHG.

Q4: Do WCHG provide accessible information on the safety and quality standards in homes and communal areas?

Findings:

Yes – Members reviewed the annual building safety booklet and fire safety information available online and direct to residents in high rises.. Though this is accessible and inclusive for high rises there are some low-rise communal areas that do not have notice boards or information relevant to their homes.

Recommendations: None

Low rises with communal areas to have building safety and fire safety notices displayed in notice boards.

Fire Safety information is displayed where boards are available in communal areas.

Q5: Do WCHG provide accessible information on rents and service charge?

Findings:

Yes – Information is available online, via the customer hub, quarterly statements are issued.

Attendance at local meetings by service charge team, i.e Garden City Homes, Community Voice.

Recommendations

None

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Q6: Do WCHG provide accessible information on maintaining homes and communal areas?

Findings:

- **Yes** – A dedicated guidance document outlines both tenant responsibilities and those of the housing provider. This document is available on the WCHG website and has also been distributed to all households to ensure wide accessibility.
- The guidance covers expectations around the use and upkeep of shared spaces, such as communal areas, gardens, and bin stores, as well as individual responsibilities relating to tenancy agreements and neighbourhood conduct. This helps to promote a shared understanding of roles and supports the creation of safe, clean, and respectful living environments.

Recommendations:

None

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Q7: Do WCHG provide accessible information on shared spaces and neighbourhoods and tenant responsibilities?

Findings -

Yes – there is a guidance that outlines tenant responsibilities and those of the housing. This is available online and was sent out to all homes. Additionally, there is the tenancy agreement in place and neighbourhood officers go through this with each new tenant at sign up and information is provided within the packs.

Recommendations

The responsibilities leaflet to be included in the sign-up pack.

Q: From a tenant perspective what are the top 3 improvements WCHG could make to the information we provide about services?

- Customer hub - if unable to answer questions should be able to get you to the right person or have scripts to work from and not say “it is not their responsibility.” A better-informed customer hub about the services provided.
- Communication – say what you are going to do and do it.
- Create an info station (notice board/box) for suggestions, complaints.

MYSTERY SHOP - REPAIR

- Mystery Shopping Dee Billington

“Phoned on one occasion the person knew my voice, so tried a second time. Reported a fault in the toilet, small issue, with the toilet not filling up with water after a flush.

*Phone on the Wednesday 23rd July very happy man from customer hub spoke to me, had good knowledge of what I was telling him. Great manner and a willingness to help. Call was answered within 5 mins. He asked when I would be available and gave me an appointment for Wednesday 6th August between 8am and 12pm The same person sent me a text reminder saying plumber will be here 6th August between 8am and 12 noon and he also sent me a job number which related to my repair, **a very nice experience**”.*

Dee confirmed that the work was carried out on the date.

Recommendations

Scrutiny Group recommendations

- Develop an accessibility service standard to be included within the customer experience standards that are accessible for residents in a variety of ways.
- Develop a set of customer experience standards that outline what customers can expect from WCHG.
- Customer experience service standards to be available in the sign-up pack.
- The responsibilities leaflet to be included in the sign-up pack
- **Low rises with communal areas to have building safety and fire safety notices displayed in notice boards.**

A nice to have addition

Create a tenant approved stamp so residents know that other residents have had input or commented/had input.

NB: Members added the importance of ensuring the website becomes less wordy and should be easy to find what you are looking for as part of the website review.

Management response:

- All the recommendations made have been accepted by management.
- Subject to CXC approval, the recommendations will be added to the Scrutiny Group recommendations tracker with target dates and progress will be reported monthly to Scrutiny Group members.
- The recommendation tracker is reviewed annually by Group Audit & Risk Committee.

SG CHAIR FEEDBACK TO CXC



Wythenshawe
Community Housing Group