



Wythenshawe
Community Housing Group

Scrutiny Group review findings - Home Improvements

September 2024

Summary

During September/October our tenant-led Scrutiny Group conducted a review of the Home Improvements Renewals Programme. This report details how the review was conducted, its findings and its recommendations.

In summary

The Regulator of Social Housing's consumer standards came into force on 1st April 2024.

The Customer Experience Committee is seeking assurance on WCHG's compliance with the Safety and Quality Standard at its November meeting. Working with management, the tenant-led Scrutiny Group has selected a focus area within this standard to provide a customer perspective on:

- How WCHG works with tenants who refuse Home Improvement renewals
- How WCHG communicates with tenants when a stock condition survey on their home is due

The Review

Members set out to answer the following questions

Stock Condition Surveys

Is the communication to tenants about a forthcoming stock condition survey easy to understand? Does it provide them with all the info needed?

Home Improvement Refusals

How many tenants have refused decent homes renewals (by renewal category)?

- Roofs
- Kitchen's
- Bathrooms
- Doors and windows
- Central heating

What communications have gone to each of these customers?

How have customers responded? (see sample) How many people did not respond at all?

Why do tenants refuse decent home renewals?

How do customers feel about WCHG approach to decent home improvements?

What are the current satisfaction levels for those who have had work completed?

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

- Desktop review of key information:
 - Review of letters issued by Savills
 - Review of refusals from a fixed period (kitchens)
 - Review of Letters from WCHG
 - Review of No Access Letters
- Interview lead manager Robert MacDougall, Head of Assets and Building Safety.
- Survey – Selection of residents contacted by SG

Findings

Stock Condition Survey

Q: Is the communication to tenants about a forthcoming stock condition survey easy to understand? Does it provide them with all the info needed?

Findings

Scrutiny asked if the general population of our tenants would understand what we meant by Stock?

Recommendations

Reword the letters from Stock Condition Survey to something simpler,
Property Quality Survey was agreed.

Home Improvement Refusals

Q:

How many tenants have refused home improvement renewals (by renewal category)?

Element	Refusals	
• Roofs	- Currently zero.	
• Kitchen's	- Current programme: 97	Previous programmes - 91
• Bathrooms	- No current programme.	Previous programmes - 92
• Doors and windows	- No current programme	Previous Programmes –Doors 72; Windows 1
• Central heating	- Current programme - 5.	Previous programmes - 49

Finding:

Though refusals are made and not always with reason the SG are happy that those refusals are then revisited at the end of the programme cycle – usually 4 yrs. Though do note that any roofing refusals can lead to tenancy enforcement due to the nature of the work required.

Recommendations

None

What communications have gone to each of these customers?
(sample provided for Desktop review)

Finding:

Overall the communication is clear and there are follow ups to the non responses, however it was felt that the roofing letter was considered to be very wordy and too much.

Recommendations

Simplify roofing letter and include a leaflet to make it easier for residents.

What is the general feeling with residents about the improvements.

Findings

Overall residents are keen to see works carried out with a small number refusing, some state reasons and some do not, how this data is captured depends on the work programme being carried out.

Recommendations

Nothing currently on the website that enables residents to see when their property is due for any works, this should be available.

Why do tenants refuse Home Improvement renewals?

Findings:

SG found that reasons were wide and varied though there were a significant non responses with no follow up over the phone, though SG recognises that a visit does take place at the end of the planned work programme, dependant on programme i.e. roofing would be tenancy enforcement. If a property subsequently came up void then works would be carried out during this time.

Recommendations

All refusal data to be captured

How do customers feel about WCHG approach to decent home improvements?

Findings

Of the 14 residents spoken to 5 advised they did not receive any letters. In some instances contact was made and then the tenant did not hear back again, which was disappointing.

Overall residents were happy with the approach taken.

Recommendations

Ensure call backs are carried out to residents to ensure consistent communication.

What are the current satisfaction levels for those who have had work completed?

Findings:

Current satisfaction is 96%-98% and the overall target is 95%

Recommendations:

None

Survey Outcomes

- SG carried out a telephone survey with with over 33 residents contacted of which only 14 responded to the calls, the remaining were not answered.

- **Overall the findings were**

- Out of the 14 there were 5 who wanted WCHG to do the works

- 6 did not want any works doing for various reasons

- 2 did not need the work due to other circumstances

- 1 had works completed recently

The reasons given for non work requirements were due to age, ill health, quality of current fittings.

Recommendations

None

Recommendations

Scrutiny Group recommendations

Planned works section to be added to website for tenants to locate their property by post code to determine when works will be done.

Rename Stock Condition Survey to ensure it is clear to all tenants.

Rename Decent Homes to Home Improvements.

Roofing letter to be reviewed and leaflet to be implemented

Ensure a revisit to all non responses and refused at the end of the programme

Follow up on calls in each instance

Additional SG Notes

SG asked that all contractors working in homes ensure that roll and stroll is put down in two strips as a number of carpets have been damaged when carrying out kitchen works.

SG were please to hear that the satisfaction levels for works are above target at 96%-98%.

SG CHAIR FEEDBACK TO CXC

- This review was able to pick up some improvement works that had previously not been carried out, though low in number it is believed that revisits after the programme of works is completed is the right direction to go in and following up with customers is essential.
- Scrutiny were delighted that the overall satisfaction rates exceeded the targets.



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