

## Repairs Service Review Group

Friday 4<sup>th</sup> December 2009

10am – 1pm

### Minutes

#### Present:

Richard Johnston  
Stacey Ashfield  
Helen Bradshaw  
Sandra Lewis  
Terry Gurney  
Gloria Godwin  
Angie Vincent  
June Phillips  
Rob Weale  
Stephen Sheehan  
Helen Greenway

Support Services Manager  
Property Services Manager  
Customer Involvement Officer

#### 1. Welcome

Helen welcomed everyone to the meeting and ran through the agenda for the meeting. The meeting started with Christmas Crackers and everyone telling silly jokes and wearing silly Christmas hats!

#### Actions

#### 2. Feedback on Repairs & Maintenance Policy

Stephen advised that the Repairs & Maintenance Policy changes that were discussed at the last meeting had been to Board for approval. Helen said that she would send out a copy of the finalized policy to all members.

**HG** to post out copy of finalized Repair & Maintenance Policy

#### 3. Voids Standards Leaflet

The group was split into two teams. These then went through the Voids standard leaflet (Property Standards for New & Transferring Residents) to review the information and wording.

The following amendments were suggested:

- Page 1, Change section title from 'When' to Before you move into your new home, we will aim to...
- Page 3, statements about Floors; put a note to refer to page 6 and vica versa, or put both statements about Floors on one page.
- Page 4, 5 & 6: change wording of notifying the resident of

**SS** to discuss with A&P Manager

refurbishing or renewing an element of the property from 'within the next 12 months' to 'up to 5 years'. Stephen will discuss this with the Asset & Partnering Manager to ensure that this is okay to change.

- Minor change on page 8: Grab rails – make lower case to be in line with other bullet points.
- Page 10, add in a statement about the standard being Approved by Board and the date it was approved. Also add in date for reviewing it.

Other than these suggestions, the group agreed that the leaflet should stand as it is. The group skipped the decorations section, as they were looking specifically at this within the following Agenda Item.

Stephen thanked the group for all their work on shaping this leaflet over the last couple of years. He was pleased to report that due to the new standards for empty properties, there was a much higher take up of residents accepting a property at the first viewing (over 80%) and that the time taken to turn around properties ready for re-letting had decreased.

#### **4. Decorating Empty Properties - choices**

Stephen then asked the teams to do an exercise about how we should handle decorating empty properties / decorating voucher scheme. This is following on from the discussion from the last meeting, where the group found it very difficult to come to a resolution.

##### **Temporary Accommodation**

Both teams decided to stay with what we currently do for decorations for temporary accommodation. This is maintaining decorations in a decent condition; involving redecorating rooms or individual walls, ceilings and wood work when necessary.

##### **Sheltered properties**

Again, both teams decided to stay with what we currently do, which is to re-decorate any rooms, which are to be determined by the Building Surveyor. The group has previously visited various sheltered properties through the Voids Challenge Days and volunteers were invariably pleased with the standards.

##### **General Needs properties**

Both teams were happy to continue with the agreed current standards for general needs properties, but Helen's team wanted to increase the Decorating Vouchers allowance per room. This had been £15 per room and the group recommended that this was increased to £30 per room. Rob's team also wanted to review the amount per room for the Decorating Voucher.

**SS** to seek approval to change the budget to reflect increase for Decorating Vouchers

#### **5. Positive Maintenance for properties**

Stephen asked the two teams to investigate the option of carrying positive maintenance to properties – differing from responsive repairs. Things to discuss were:

- What type of things should we be checking?
- How long should each check take?
- What frequency should we be carrying out the checks?

The aim of this discussion was to find out if we should be doing this and if this more positive approach would reduce the amount of responsive repairs we receive.

Each team was headed up by a team leader. These were Rob Weale and Helen Greenway.

**1. What elements of residents' homes should the trades people be checking as a standard when they enter the person's property?**

- To check out what are the most common responsive repairs received to see which of these can be placed on the check list.
- Ask the resident if they have any repairs issues / problems they want looking at on arrival?
- Roofs, any tiles missing, visual inspection of attic space, drains, gutters, garden (untidy gardens reported to Housing Officer), pathways
- Taps, washers, WCs, plumbing (e.g. airlocks, ensure stop tap can be easily turned off), overflows
- Carpentry: Kitchen units, ensure draws are not sticking, internal doors – ensure they close properly, catches, handles are okay etc, no drafts etc,
- Security: External doors and windows, ensure no drafts, locks, does the resident still have keys?, ensure all is secure.
- Electrics: Smoke alarms, consumer unit, extractor fans – link in with periodic electrical inspections, electric sockets, ventilators, trip switch
- General condition of property: cleanliness, check on state of any recent internal improvements – such as new kitchens, bathrooms, new central heating systems etc.
- Awareness of trades people to ensure that when they are visiting a resident, they see if they are vulnerable or have other needs that the trades person can refer back to HHL. Does the resident need any aids or adaptations?
- Heating system check: Thermostats, etc.
- If relevant, check communal areas.

**2. How long should each visit take?**

- One team thought that the checks should take around **half an hour**, but the other team thought the point was for the trades person to carry out as many repairs as possible whilst

they were there. This group thought that each visit should be up to **two hours**, where work could be carried out in priority order as per the Repairs & Maintenance Policy. Anything that would take longer than 2 hours would then be reported back to HHL as a normal responsive repair.

**3. On what frequency should we be carrying out the checks?**

- The teams thought that this would need to be done on an appointment basis
- Operate on a rolling programme, where two multi-skilled trades people carry out three visits a day
- Frequency would then be every three to three-and-a-half years.

The group really liked the idea of the positive maintenance approach and thought it would bring added value to the service. Customer's satisfaction with HHL would go up and you would capture problems with repairs quicker. Eventually, they thought it would lead to fewer responsive repairs and save money in the long term, even though it would take an extra investment to begin with – around £120,000 a year.

Stephen thanked the group for their input and said that he would be discussing their suggestions and recommendations with senior management and feedback to the group on this at the next meeting.

**6. Assessing the group's involvement**

Helen had produced a survey, which would help the Customer Involvement Team to assess how members of the group feel about their involvement and the value they think the Repairs SRG has. Helen explained that this is something that they would be doing for all involvement activities. Members of the group agreed to fill in the survey and post it back to Helen in the Freepost envelopes supplied. For those members not present at the meeting, Helen would be sending the survey form to them via post and asking them to do the same.

**HG** to post out surveys to other members

Helen will feedback the results at the next meeting.

**7. The meeting finished at 12.30pm with lunch until 1pm**

The timetable for meetings for 2010 has not yet been set. Helen will be working on this with Stephen, keeping the meetings to a Friday, because most members prefer this day. Members of the group will be informed as soon as this has been set.

**HG & SS**