

Tenant Scrutiny Meeting

Tuesday 12th June 2023, 10:30am at Springwell Gardens Community Centre

Attendees

David Ramsden, Winnie Billups, Ann Hitchens, Julie Sharp, Sam Sharp, Keith Stringer, Jo Workman, Barry Dealey, Mary Jacques, Louise Edwards, Keeley, Andy Lumb, Claire Tester, Callie Lamb, Phil Hayes, Rebecca Morrison, Laura Swift

1	Welcome, introductions and apologies Apologies have been received from Frank Rees. David welcomed everyone to the meeting. There were no declarations of interest.	
2	Minutes and actions from last meeting The minutes were read through. Mary put in her apologies at the last meeting. Callie will circulate a map of Rotherham. James said Callie has been looking at the communications action plan and making amendments. James will also check through it and circulate. We can then get feedback from the action plan in the July meeting.	CL
3	Further questions to officers Gas uncapping was discussed by the panel. Contractors come out for an uncapping test. When tenants are given the keys to their property Callie said the gas is uncapped 1-2 days afterwards and is given a morning or afternoon appointment. Rebecca said other councils have said that all decking would be taken up. The panel went through the questions for officers. ASSA Key – Louise said the keys are charged at the start of the week. Once the property is ready for letting the contractor changes the lock. 1. Lettable standards – accessibility	

Is there a version of the lettable standards that meets accessibility standards? Is there a separate standard that refers to accessible homes/standards for disabled tenants?

Rotherham Council have lettable standards, some properties already have aids and adaptations, the property will be kept up to that standard and would refer back to the lettable standard. At this stage the Council wouldn't know who would be going into the property so what is already there is maintained. Officers try and link tenants to that property. If an aid or adaptation needs to be completely removed (e.g. Beyond repair) it will be replaced with the lettable standard. (e.g. shower would be replaced with a bathroom suite)

2. Lettable standard – contractors

Do contractors have a checklist to make sure that they have completed everything to the correct standard?

It is contractor driven. For smaller work contractors go and schedule the work themselves. Andy presumes they use a checklist. They will then inform Rotherham Council what work has been done and then a spot check is done by the Council.

Contractors do spot checks on every property; the property is then handed back to the Council. The Council's Voids team does random spot checks and then the quality assurance team do spot checks. 100% of the larger works are checked and 10% of the smaller works. Some of the properties the quality assurance team check are the same properties as the voids team checked, it will stop the voids team being complacent with checks.

The main issue coming from the new tenants' survey is the number of repairs that are still required when they move in (52% reported some). Is it still the Council policy that ALL repairs (apart from major works) are completed prior to new tenants moving in?

Some of this will be about expectations and what would be a repair. The Council do not do in person letting/meeting before a new tenant moves into the property.

For plastering, The Council does not strip the wallpaper, therefore wouldn't know if it needs plastering underneath. The heating also won't be on, and this won't really be tested before the tenant moves in.

Another major issue was the length of time for gas to be uncapped after moving in. Is there any reason why it can take up to three weeks for gas uncapping? Who is responsible?

It is the Council's responsibility. There has been an issue in the past with uncapping gas. It is Equans who carry out the gas side of the

<p>work. Andy believes it will be done within 5 days but will check that this is correct. The gas accounts are changed to British Gas if they are with a different provider. Improvements were made to the process of uncapping gas a few years ago.</p> <p>Is temporary heating provided for vulnerable people / families with children?</p> <p>Andy is unsure but will check.</p> <p>The panel discussed that 5 days is a long time and seems unreasonable.</p> <p>Is there a process in place to keep tenants in their old property until the new property is set up with gas/electricity?</p> <p>No, there is nothing in place.</p> <p>Should grippers be removed from wooden floors (can't find this in the lettable standard)?</p> <p>Andy said grippers can be expensive for the tenant and personally believes they could be left in.</p> <p>Clarification is needed in the policy as different officers interpret it differently.</p> <p>Should outdoor decking be removed? (One report of rusty nails sticking up from the decking)</p> <p>Andy said if the nail is left in the Council would be challenged. The nail should be removed.</p> <p>James queries whether the panel believes if carpets are in really good condition whether tenants might want to keep it. 10% of carpets are left in.</p> <p>Barry added in Suffolk anything extra is either passed to the next customer or removed.</p> <p>Is a 'wet-room' floor acceptable in a kitchen?</p> <p>Andy said they are the same material but Kitchen flooring won't be non-slip.</p> <p>Would you ever expect gardens to be left overgrown?</p> <p>Andy said it might have become overgrown from the time the property was finished to the tenant moving in. Staff do not go back to maintain</p>	<p>AL</p>
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it after initially doing the garden and before the tenant moves in. Gardens also grow much quicker this time of year.

Would you expect a 'collapsing' outhouse to be removed/ repaired?

For health and safety this shouldn't be left.

6. Cleaning of voids – arrangements

Were you aware that sometimes contractors ask cleaning staff to attend and then the property is not ready for cleaning when they get there (wasting time and mileage)

Andy said this will happen every now and then.

Is electricity, water and gas turned off in all void properties?

Water is not turned off. It was changed 4/5 years ago. Water just needs to be activated from the stop tap. This information wasn't shared with the cleaning team who believed it was turned off from the mains.

Do you have any thoughts on how properties can be lit for cleaning in winter months if the electricity is switched off?

Andy suggested flood lights. Louise's team have an issue in storing and transporting these as they take up too much room.

Can it be checked if contractors go into the property after cleaning has taken place?

It can be checked. The property is accessed by ASSA click until it is handed back to the letting team.

Do cleaning staff ever notice new repairs during their work and report these back to contractors?

If the cleaning team notice any repairs, it is reported to Neil Muscroft.

Louise said the majority of the time items in cupboards left by the previous tenant are removed in advance by the repairs team.

Would you expect cleaning staff to visit a property only once on completion or several times between repairs?

Properties are cleaned one time. Louise is sometimes asked for a pre-clean if needed but it isn't often.

	<p>Has it ever been considered that it would be more efficient to ‘group together’ cleaning tasks in the same area? Or does this elevate costs from delaying the release of voids?</p> <p>Andy said they are always looking at doing better and being as efficient as possible. It is not always possible to group together properties by area.</p> <p>7. Cleaning of voids - standard</p> <p>What happens if cleaners report that a lot of rubbish has been left by contractors? Or if aids such as hospital beds are still there?</p> <p>If a large amount of rubbish has been left by the contractors, then the cleaners will not clean it, this is very rare. It is down to the company to remove aids, such as hospital beds and Rotherham Council’s responsibility to inform them that the equipment needs removing.</p> <p>Who is responsible for the cleaning of light fittings e.g. strip lights? Are cleaning staff allowed to work at height?</p> <p>Louise’s team can work at hight. The cleaning team will dust and wipe down the strip lighting but will not take them down and clean.</p> <p>Andy added if the lights are as bad as what Winnie saw on a second visit it should have been picked up by voids to replace rather than the cleaning team.</p> <p>Who is responsible for clearing pieces of glass away (three properties reported pieces of glass – two inside and one in the garden)</p> <p>It is both the voids and cleaning team’s responsibility.</p> <p>Rebecca asked Andy whether there has been any recent complaints on voids. Andy will look into this and get back to the panel.</p>	AL
4	<p>Repairs and Maintenance Policy feedback</p> <p>Andy presented the repairs and maintenance policy.</p> <p>There are potentially some new laws that will impact the service.</p> <p>It is a more modern system. In the past if a boiler broke down on a Friday night it would be fixed by the end of Monday (next working day) now it would be fixed by the end of Saturday. Boiler priority is 24 hours.</p>	

	<p>Appointments are given so tenants know when a contractor will be attending. Appointments shouldn't be changed.</p>	
5	<p>Update on Communications training for staff</p> <p>Claire went through the training package.</p> <p>Winnie, Jo and Julie viewed their video clips and were happy for Claire to use them in the training package which will be delivered to Rotherham Council housing staff.</p>	
9	<p>Any other business</p> <p>None</p>	
	<p>Next meeting date</p> <p>The next meeting will be on Monday 10th July 2023, 10.30am at Springwell Gardens Community Centre.</p>	