

## TENANT REVIEW PANEL

Report of the Tenant Review Panel

### 1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report details the issues and recommendations arising from the Tenant Review Panel's first inspection of Derby Homes' services. Appendix 1 is a full report which shows how the panel went about the inspection, observations and background information. We are now aware following these visits that work is being carried out in many areas within Derby Homes to achieve this local offer.
- 1.2 As a panel and after carrying out this review we have a greater appreciation of the complex nature of the work done by Derby Homes' staff and operatives.

### 2. RECOMMENDATION

We have looked at Derby Homes' local offer, "We will complete non-urgent repairs within 30 working days". We ask that the board consider our recommendations and implement where appropriate.

### 3. MATTER FOR CONSIDERATION

- 3.1 Over the last few months, we have carried out the following observations to learn about what could potentially affect this local offer:

- 28 April – Enquiry Centre operatives
- Performance figures review
- 24 June – London Road visit
- 18 July – Toolbox Talk, London Road

- 3.2 Our recommendations are:

**Continue to make improvements to your tracking system (Optitime) to ensure the 30 day jobs are within the timescale.**

- 3.2.1 The new system should incorporate staff availability, stock availability and tenant availability to be able to commit to setting and keeping an appointment. At the moment, this information is not co-ordinated.

**When the new stock control and reporting system is implemented repair job numbers should match up between your systems**

- 3.2.2 Currently it is difficult for both staff and customers to trace the progress of a job. In the new system the job numbers should be the same making it easier to track the job.

### **3.2.3 There needs to be an awareness raising programme of what constitutes a 30 day repair**

It is unclear as to what constitutes a 30 day repair in current documents. Enquiry Centre staff have a scripting system which guides them but, more information on what falls into each priority would help for customers and other staff.

### **3.2.4 Ensure that operatives get the right information to complete a job about any specific tenant needs**

We would suggest that there needs to be a culture change to encourage staff to use their observations when visiting customers and to feed this back to the Enquiry Centre who can update the system and pass this onto the operatives. Customers need to be encouraged to provide this information too; we know there has been a lot of work done on this in the last year.

### **3.2.5 Reconsider implementing the charging of tenants for missed appointments from December 2011**

There is a huge amount of change in working practices, computers systems and new training programmes taking place in the Repairs Team. We feel that it is too early to implement a charging scheme whilst this is happening. In 12 months time, when all systems are operating satisfactorily, the current changes fully implemented and new working practices established, this could be revisited.

### **3.2.6 Manage tenant expectations by giving them a real insight into how their repair is managed, from their phone call to the workman carrying it out**

Customers need to understand how their request is dealt with. Consider how you can keep them more informed which should reduce the follow up calls.

## **4. LEGAL AND CONFIDENTIALITY IMPLICATIONS**

The Housing Act 1985 requires that tenants are consulted on all matters that affect their tenancy. As a result of this we have consulted with affected tenants. Local Councillors, the DACP and the SHOUT residents group were all invited to the consultation events. SHOUT also sent out a questionnaire to tenants independent of Derby Homes. It is one of the objectives of SHOUT residents group to monitor progress on the proposals contained within this report.

The areas listed below have no implications directly arising from this report:

Consultation  
Financial and Business Plan  
Council  
Personnel  
Environmental  
Equalities Impact Assessment  
Health & Safety  
Risk  
Policy Review

If Board members or others would like to discuss this report ahead of the meeting please contact the author, or Phil Davies, Chief Executive, [phil.davies@derbyhomes.org](mailto:phil.davies@derbyhomes.org) – Phone: 01332 888528

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Background Information: None.

Supporting Information: None.

# Review Panel Report – Appendix 1

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## What we observed and found from the Service Managers

### **RECOMMENDATIONS 1 AND 2 – COMPUTER SYSTEMS AND TRACKING ORDERS**

During our visit to London Road, we found that there are still lots of changes being implemented to the new repairs service.

There are various different computers systems involved in recording and carrying out a repair.

The changes and improvements to these systems are not yet fully implemented, meaning there is a greater chance of work orders being lost or workmen arriving to a job without the correct stock.

We were surprised that different job numbers exist across systems for the same repair. There is a system in place to link up numbers for customer enquiries, but we thought that the fact these different numbers had to be cross-related increased the chance of error.

The current vans the operatives use are inadequate and make their jobs harder than it needs to be. We were pleased that Derby Homes is looking to purchase new vans that are tailored to particular trades, meaning more stock can be carried and work can be carried out more efficiently.

### **RECOMMENDATION 3 – THE DEFINITION OF A 30 DAY REPAIR**

From our visit to the enquiry centre, we noticed that there is no clear cut definition of what a “non-urgent” repair is. This left the system open to abuse. We listened to tenants alter the severity of a repair (from a drip to a flooding kitchen!) in an effort to get it classed as urgent. We understand that this happens quite often and can see that it would have an impact on operative time and scheduling other repairs if a greater proportion of jobs were classed as “Urgent”.

We’re not sure if there is a solution to this, but it will impact on being able to keep this local offer.

More information needs to be passed on to tenants to increase their understanding of what you mean by “urgent” or “non-urgent”.

### **RECOMMENDATION 4 – CAPTURING AND USING INFORMATION ABOUT TENANT NEEDS**

At the Enquiry Centre, we noticed some gaps in the way staff were made aware of or were able to capture key information about a tenant that could impact on a repair being carried out effectively.

The most obvious example is where a tenancy could be flagged for language issues or specific disabilities that Derby Homes would benefit from being aware of when visiting their home to carry out repairs.

There is a flag on some accounts for ASB issues known as a “red triangle”, but there seemed to be problems getting this information onto operative’s handhelds.

There are gaps in the data held by Derby Homes, for example, where tenants have specific disabilities. We are aware of the efforts of Derby Homes to gather this “profiling” information, however have also seen the difficulties they face. It is however, clear that not all tenants are willing to share their personal information with Derby Homes.

We thought that different approaches could be explored in an effort to try to get this information. Perhaps the profile questionnaire could be better worded or delivered a different way to encourage more people to tell us about their needs. Maybe if it included that the reasons for some of the questions are to help you provide better or more tailored services.

There is some work already underway to encourage your Repairs Team staff to capture tenant information or feedback observations from their visits. This is a bit of a cultural change for them, but one we see as being crucial to delivering a service to people with diverse needs.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 5 – CHARGING TENANTS FOR MISSED APPOINTMENTS**

During our many visits, this debate came up time and time again. We were in a unique position to see this debate from both sides. We understand the cost to Derby Homes and other tenants for those people who do miss appointments without good reason or without informing Derby homes.

We are aware that some tenants feel a more exact time slot for a repair appointment should be offered.

From speaking to managers, it’s clear that delivering a service that can commit to a two hour appointment slot would clearly have additional cost implications. Who would pay for this and where would the money come from? Have you been clear with tenants on what the potential costs would be and what it would mean to them (i.e. rent increase or service cuts in other areas)?

We do not feel that this is something Derby Homes would be able to commit to at this point in time. In fact, we have observed that occasionally, some of the AM/PM appointments do get missed by Derby Homes. These are the instances where tenants are able to claim £10. We feel that implementing this “like for like” penalty for missing appointments now, when the current system does let some tenants down, may have a negative impact on how some customers will view Derby Homes.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 6 – MANAGING TENANT EXPECTATIONS**

We learnt a lot from the short time we spent with various staff and managers within the organisation. It had a huge impact on our understanding and on our expectations of the repairs service.

If you could find a way to pass some of the insights that we’ve had about the repairs service to other tenants they may get a greater appreciation of the complex nature of the work done by Derby Homes’ staff and operatives.