

 <p><b>Northwards Housing</b> North Manchester's Council Homes</p>		<b>Report to:</b> Northwards Housing Board 28 April 2020		<b>Item No:</b> <h1>8b</h1>	
<b>Title:</b>		Tenants' View – An Investigation into Northwards Housing day-to-day Responsive Repair Service			
<b>Date:</b>		20 April 2020			
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<b>Confidential:</b>		<b>No</b>			
<b>For:</b> (Please tick action required)		<b>NOTING</b>		<b>DISCUSSION</b> ✓	
		<b>APPROVAL</b>			
<b>PURPOSE OF REPORT</b>					
To report to the Board, Tenants Views findings of their latest scrutiny exercise on the tenant experience of home improvement works at Liverton Court. The attached report is produced by Tenants' View.					
<b>RECOMMENDATION</b>					
The Board is invited to discuss the attached report and to provide members of Tenants' View with a formal written response via the executive management team.					
<b>IMPLICATIONS</b>					
<b>Risk Management</b>		Failure to deliver the Customer Experience Strategy.			
<b>Regulatory &amp; legal compliance</b>		This report illustrates Northwards commitment to tenant scrutiny.			

**Consultation/Consideration:**

	Yes, No or N/A:	Name:	Date:
<b>Sub-Committee:</b>	N/A		
<b>Task Groups:</b>	No		
<b>Ward Councillors:</b>	No		

1. Tenants' View are a panel of tenants, supported by an independent mentor, who volunteer to scrutinise Northwards services.
2. The attached report is the outcome of their work over the past 6 months
3. The Board is invited to discuss the attached report and to provide members of Tenants' View with a formal written response via the executive management team.



## Tenants' View Scrutiny Report

**Date: March 2020**

**Title: An investigation of the tenant experience of home improvement works at Liverton Court**

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### Background

1. A senior manager nominated improvement works for a scrutiny review, particularly with regard to tenant consultation and communication. To understand the service and to decide on our scope we received a presentation from the Design and Delivery team.
2. We noted that the capital investment programme had been impacted by the fire risk assessments that took place at all high-rise properties following the tragic events at Grenfell Tower. The fire risk assessments have meant that many tenants in high rise buildings will receive improvement works to their homes which includes the option of an internal sprinkler system, kitchen and / or bathroom. All properties will receive electrical upgrade works.

### Scope

3. To understand the tenant experience of the service this scrutiny exercise focused on the improvement works being undertaken at Liverton Court and looked at:
  - The effectiveness of communications with tenants before, during and after works had been undertaken
  - How tenant choice was offered and delivered
  - How vulnerable tenants were supported during the improvement works
  - How the service obtained, measured and used tenant satisfaction information to monitor and improve the service.

### How the scrutiny was conducted

4. We completed the following activities:
  - Received a presentation from the Design and Delivery Team
  - Attended a tenants' open day at Liverton Court on 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2019
  - Reviewed all written communications that were sent to Liverton Court tenants throughout the improvement works
  - Completed a mock pre-entry survey



## Tenants' View

- Recruited five mystery shoppers to record their experiences whilst work was being undertaken, two shoppers were able to provide information to us
- Attended coffee mornings at Liverton Court to hear tenants' views
- Shadowed a Resident Liaison Officer and observed improvement work being undertaken
- Shadowed the Clerk of Works when signing off the completed work
- Reviewed the tenant satisfaction survey methodology and results.

### Findings

#### **The effectiveness of communications with tenants before, during and after works had been undertaken**

##### ***What we identified as working well***

5. An open day was held to enable tenants to find out how sprinklers looked and worked. The event was well promoted, all tenants received a letter inviting them to the open day and posters were clearly displayed at Liverton Court.
6. The pre-entry survey was very comprehensive and provided tenants with all the information they needed regarding the planned works. Tenants were able to make key holding arrangements and they could advise the contractor of any specific issues that the work could cause for their household.
7. Written communications from the contractor and Northwards were timely and relevant and provided tenants with all the information they required.
8. The contractors' resident liaison officer provided an excellent service. Customers were known by name to the officer and they were fully aware of each individuals' circumstances and work plan. The resident liaison officer provided a tenant focused service that listened to tenants, valued feedback and responded positively and quickly to any issues that arose.
9. There was a good relationship between the site manager and the resident liaison officer. Feedback from the mystery shoppers, tenant satisfaction surveys and our observations has shown that when problems occurred on site these were responded to and dealt with promptly by the resident liaison officer.
10. Coffee mornings provided an informal opportunity for tenants to discuss the work programme with the resident liaison officer, site manager and the scheme manager.



### ***Areas we identified for improvement***

11. The open day was clearly advertised as an opportunity to find out about sprinklers. However, conversations relating to improvement works seemed to take priority at the event and there wasn't a focus on the sprinkler system.
12. We observed that the open day lacked structure, it was unclear to tenants when they arrived who they needed to speak to; staff didn't introduce themselves to explain who they were and what their role was.
13. The open day made limited use of visual aids to explain about the sprinkler system. For example, the sprinklers in the room were not labelled and they were difficult to identify. A video explaining sprinklers was available, but tenants needed to ask staff members to see it. Photos or presentations were not used at the event and there were no information leaflets available for tenants to take home.
14. Mystery shoppers identified that on occasion doors to properties were left open by contractors when no-one was working at the property and the tenant was not present. This meant that some tenants properties were at times not secured and tenants were unsure as to why this had happened.
15. At the start of the improvement works tenants were informed of the number of days that it would take to complete the work and that these wouldn't necessarily be consecutive. This information did not prove helpful for two of our mystery shoppers who noted that it was difficult to keep track of the process and to know when works would be completed. In addition, we noted that the programme overran, and we did not see any communications to tenants that advised of when they could expect the works to be completed.

### **How tenant choice was offered and delivered**

#### ***What we identified as working well***

16. Some tenants had opted not to have sprinklers fitted at the start of the programme. The effective delivery of the programme at Liverton Court has meant that as work got underway more tenants opted to have the sprinklers fitted. At the end of the programme over 87% of tenants opted to have sprinklers installed.
17. When shadowing site staff we observed excellent service. At properties we saw staff showing their ID, turning up on time and completing work to a high standard.

### ***Areas we identified for improvement***

18. During our observations we noted in one flat that a beacon had not been installed. This was missed during the post inspection as no checklist was in use to identify what should have been installed at the property.

### **How vulnerable tenants were supported during improvement works**

#### ***What we identified as working well***

19. The pre entry survey identified any vulnerabilities that tenants had, and plans were put in place to provide appropriate support.

20. When improvement works took place in communal areas and the scheme manager was unable to be on site, all tenants were given an additional mobile number to ensure that any emergencies were dealt with.

### **How the service obtained, measured and used tenant satisfaction information to monitor and improve the service**

#### ***What we identified as working well***

21. The home improvement satisfaction survey produced by Northwards was easy to complete and asked relevant questions.

### ***Areas we identified for improvement***

22. Northwards relied on the contractor to conduct the satisfaction survey and did not play a role in obtaining responses from customers. We felt that sixteen responses from seventy flats was not an adequate measure of tenant satisfaction and that more could be done by Northwards to obtain views from tenants, rather than relying on the contractor to monitor their own performance.

23. Data recorded in the analysis of question seven 'how satisfied are you that your personal needs were listened to and respected' does not reflect the response that tenants were required to give on the survey. Tenants were asked to rate the service on a scale of 1-10 however the analysis states answers as 'yes' or 'no'

24. There was no clear system in place for using the findings of the tenants' survey to improve the service.

25. There was no system in place to ensure that feedback was provided to tenants on the survey results.

### **Recommendations**

- R1. Consider how to more effectively structure open days to ensure that the topic advertised is focused on at the event.
- R2. Ensure that relevant visual aids are used to support information given out at open days and consultation events.
- R3. Ensure that all verbal and written communications are jargon free, customer focused and that technical terms are explained, for example FRA and Pendock.
- R4. Ensure all contractors are clear about the code of conduct and that front doors are not left open when no-one is in the property.
- R5. Consider providing a timeframe for the completion of work rather than stating the number of working days. Ensure that any delays in completion are communicated to the tenant.
- R6. Ensure there is a robust post inspection system in place on site to ensure that all required works are completed.
- R7. Review the methodology for conducting the tenant satisfaction surveys to increase the number of responses and ensure independence from the contractor.
- R8. Ensure the survey analysis has the correct data recorded against each question and that a clear system is in place to use the data to inform service delivery.
- R9. Consider how to provide feedback to tenants on what has been learnt, the areas that have been identified for improvement and improvements that have been made as a result of the satisfaction surveys.

An investigation of the tenant experience of home improvement works at Liverton Court

Design and Delivery Response Matrix

Tenants View Recommendations		Existing measures	Design and Delivery Response		
Ref	Item		Immediate	July-20	October-20
R1	Consider how to more effectively structure open days to ensure that the topic advertised is focused on at the event.		<p>We are to produce a framework rather than a standard agenda for all future open days.</p> <p>Assessment of the complexity of the works and the demographic of the residents within who's homes the works is being completed will inform whether the open days should be drop in sessions, structured presentations or a variant of both.</p>	<p>Standard leaflets to be developed that provide the core information for each scheme, which will include:</p> <p>Northwards and contractor key-personel (with photos). Description of the works. Sequence of the works. Start and end dates for the works. Key contact details.</p>	
R2	Ensure that relevant visual aids are used to support information given out at open days and consultation events.	Where possible we do use wider supporting information in its various forms to enable more efficient communication during open days.	We will ensure that all visual aids and supporting information is clearly labelled as to what it is and who residents should speak to discuss it.	Incorporate within our tender process for contractors to confirm and provide what additional aids they will be providing at the open day.	Consult with Northwards resident engagement team to utilize their experience and existing aids.
R3	Ensure that all verbal and written communications are jargon free, customer focused and that technical terms are explained, for example FRA and Pendock.		Through the framework we are developing in response to R1 this will aid our communication of type, scope and complexity of works. All written communication will be reviewed by our COMMS Team before it is issued.	If there are elements that will be difficult to simplify, then we will ensure contractors provide additional aids to help explanation	
R4	Ensure all contractors are clear about the code of conduct and that front doors are not left open when no-one is in the property.	Consideration when working in residents homes part of our tender documents. Monthly progress meetings are used to discuss such failures and establish how the contractor is to rectify the failings. Contractors reinforce good working practices through regular "toolbox talks". Key Performance Indicators and resident satisfaction surveys are used to score contractor performance and are used to challenge and change poor working practices.	Ensure current messages on code of conduct are re-enforced across all schemes.	<p>Incorporate frequent poor working practices into the tender documents and clearly define them as inferior management by the contractor.</p> <p>Include the right to remove contractors site management team and operatives from the scheme should poor working practices continue.</p>	Establish a code of conduct common across all investment work that the contractors team and working operatives sign. This to be incorporated into the contractors induction process for the scheme.
R5	Consider providing a timeframe for the completion of work rather than stating the number of working days. Ensure that any delays in completion are communicated to the tenant.	<p>Each property had different elements of works. A program of works was issued to each residents at pre-entry stage outlining the process of works/disruption and estimated working days in each property, once the pre-entry visit is complete the residents sign to say they understand the process. If a resident was finding it a challenge to understand the program, we would always endeavour to simplify where ever we could, also friends/family members can be invited along to the pre-entry visit to support the customer, or invite the Scheme Manager where a friend or family member was unavailable.</p> <p>If there are delays to the work, we always endeavour to update residents, however this may only be by phone call and revised program of work may not be provided.</p> <p>Residents are invited along to a weekly information meeting with the contractors team and Northwards to update/explain to residents on the delays we were experiencing and to answer any questions/concerns.</p>	<p>The contractors Resident Liaison Officer(s) (RLO) are required to visit each open property at the end of each work day. As part of that visit they will now update residents as to what stage their home has reached along the program of works.</p> <p>At the start of each week, the property is open, residents will be contacted (via a home visit/telephone call/email/text) as to the latest completion date for the work to their home.</p> <p>These practices will be incorporated into the tender documents.</p>		Engage with other social landlords and investigate how they manage this aspect of tenant communication.

R6	Ensure there is a robust post inspection system in place on site to ensure that all required works are completed.	Each investment scheme has a check list for the post inspection of the works completed. However, they are not of a standard format.		Develop a standard handover check list, which incorporates all elements of work. This check list will be amended on a scheme by scheme basis to reflect the scope of works.	
R7	Review the methodology for conducting the tenant satisfaction surveys to increase the number of responses and ensure independence from the contractor.	Engagement with residents has perviously been very challenging. Northwards and contractors endeavour to engage with residents via various means throughout a scheme. Often, once works are completed in residents homes, any engagement by residents ceases.	Northwards to undertake a percentage of reality checks on the submitted satisfaction surveys via phone or email. There will also be a targeting of the no response properties.	Incorporate into the tender documents for contractors allow their RLO to return to the scheme 2 weeks after completion, for 1 week, to target properties which have not returned their survey.	Engage with other social landlord reviewing how they collect this data.  Develop technical improvements using modern communication methods in collecting satisfaction data, consider if this process can be outsourced beyond Northwards and the contractor within 6 months?
R8	Ensure the survey analysis has the correct data recorded against each question and that a clear system is in place to use the data to inform service delivery.			HoS to review each question to ensure the scoring matrix for the questions is suitable and recorded correctly.	
R9	Consider how to provide feedback to tenants on what has been learnt, the areas that have been identified for improvement and improvements that have been made as a result of the satisfaction surveys.	Resident feedback is reviewed at scheme progress meetings with contractors and at Northwards Management meetings.	Develop a process that ensures resident feedback is incorporated into the lessons learnt log.	Decisions on awarding work to contractors to include and assessment of the KPI scores factoring the award of the work if KPI targets had not previously been achieved.	